

# Vera Institute of Justice

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.vera.org/publications/support-universal-representation-safe-initiative-101>**

## Policy Issue Resources

### Publication

The SAFE Initiative is a unique collaboration among governments, immigration legal service providers, and advocates building a movement for universal representation for people facing detention and deportation. Universal representation advances a public defender system for people facing deportation, one in which every person facing deportation is represented by a lawyer regardless of income, race, national origin, or history with the criminal justice system. At a time when the stakes for people in immigration detention could not be higher, universal representation advances due process, helps secure release from detention, defends family unity, stabilizes communities and economies, and advances racial justice. Learn more about the growing momentum for universal representation for immigrants in this at-a-glance fact sheet.

Communities advancing universal representation are leading the way toward ensuring fairness and dignity for everyone facing detention and deportation. Amid unabated federal immigrant enforcement and a public health crisis, these programs are needed now more than ever.

More than 40 communities in 18 states, including 21 partner sites of the SAFE Initiative, have funded deportation defense programs.

Universal representation advances racial equity and helps restore fairness and dignity to a system that sets immigrants up to fail.

The overwhelming majority of people in the United States believe it is important for people in immigration court to have access to lawyers.

ARTICLE

PUBLICATION

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