



Sponsor Toolkit

Bond or Parole Sponsors
of
Transgender Asylum Seekers

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I. General Introduction to Parole

What is Parole?

- Qualifying detained immigrants can submit a request to be “paroled,” or released, from detention while their cases are proceedings in immigration court.
- Once submitted, parole requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a branch of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the burden of proof is placed on the applicant to establish that parole should be authorized.
- Individuals petitioning for parole need to have the support of a sponsor and if their parole request is approved, the petitioner will be released to the custody and care of their sponsor.
- Parole has a stipulated time frame and it can expire in one of two ways: 1. when the parole recipient leaves the United States or 2. if they receive an immigration status following the decision on their case in immigration court.
- Parole is granted under the discretion and jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security and its sub-agencies. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may revoke parole at any given point if it is no longer warranted or parole regulations and conditions are violated by the parolee.

II. Sponsor Overview

The following is a general timeline of the sponsorship process:

- 1.) Following initial conversation with the legal and advocacy teams, you will participate in a call that begins a vetting process. There will be follow-up calls and a potential home visit to establish that the space the parolee will be staying in is safe and secure.
- 2.) If there is a mutual decision to move forward in the sponsorship process, you will be matched with a detained asylum seeker, hereby referred to as “*compa*” who will be petitioning for parole and provided their information from the legal and advocacy team.

3.) Establish contact with the *compa* over the phone by adding money to their commissary funds, which is money that detainees can use to buy a phone call or necessities while in detention. This will enable them to make a call out of the detention center to you. Detainees cannot receive incoming calls. Most asylum seekers will be predominantly Spanish-speaking and have few English-language skills, so if you do not have Spanish fluency, it will be necessary and helpful to find someone with translation.

4.) Gather and submit documentation (see “Documents for Parole Requests”) to Wesley Brockway of the Santa Fe Dreamers Project in a timely fashion at wes@santafedreamersproject.org. Once your documentation is submitted, the formal parole request will be submitted to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

5.) You can begin to prepare a community and network of resources for the *compa* to integrate into. A community can consist of friends, neighbors, health care providers, mental health care professionals, nonprofit organizations, LGBTQ+ resource centers, community centers, faith-based groups, immigration advocates, et cetera.

6.) If parole is granted, you will be notified and coordinate the logistics of their release and travel with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the legal and advocacy team. There is support in place for transportation and temporary housing in New Mexico, where the detention center is located, should there be a brief interim period before the *compa* travels. Please do not purchase any tickets until you have an explicit request from ICE to do so.

There are various degrees to which one can sponsor/host or support an asylum seeker petitioning for parole. Presently, you are in the process of becoming an official parole sponsor, but can take on additional roles or recruit others to assume said roles.

It is very important that an individual released from detention has a strong support group, also known as Community Support Network. The following is a holistic overview of the roles and responsibilities of different forms of being a sponsor or member of a Community Support Network:

Official Parole Sponsor: Person or people willing to provide a safe, secure home for their *compa* to live in and will be the official contact responsible for authoring

a sponsor letter and submitting supplementary documentation to the legal team for their *compa's* parole packet to USCIS. The *compa* will reside in the official parole sponsor's home for the duration of their immigration proceedings.

Temporary Sponsor: In the event that the official parole sponsor is temporarily unable to host, this person will provide safe, secure lodging, meals and general necessities for a limited period of time.

Community Support Sponsor: This person may write an additional letter of support for the *compa's* parole package submitted to USCIS but not in lieu of the letter of support from the official parole sponsor. The community support sponsor forms part of the community that will welcome the *compa* into their new home and surroundings. They will be available and willing to facilitate their transition to a new environment through activities such as providing accompaniment to ICE check-ins, bringing them to medical appointments, taking them on day trips, et cetera.

Professional Services Sponsor: This person will provide services free-of-charge to the *compa*. This could include, but is not limited to: medical professionals (dentists, dental hygienists, doctors, nurse practitioners, OB/GYN, psychiatrists, psychologists, family therapists, translators, hairdressers, manicurists, ESL educators, art teachers, and dance teachers). These sponsors are crucial to provide resources to the *compa* that will allow them to integrate into the United States and their community, as well as render services for trauma support.

Commissary Sponsor: This person will deposit a certain amount of funds, with their discretion, to the *compa's* commissary account prior to release on parole, while they are still detained. This will enable the *compa* to purchase necessary hygiene items, food, phone calls, et cetera.

Phone call sponsor: This person is available around-the-clock to answer phone calls from the detained asylum seeker while they are still in detention. Within this role, to answer the calls while they are detained, including collect calls, to provide emotional support over the phone, pass messages to and from the parole sponsor, and serve as a connection to the outside world. *Please note that the detainees are allowed very little phone time. It is very important that this sponsor answers most calls and has a pen and paper ready for messages. Ability to speak Spanish or access to a translator is helpful. Please note all calls are recorded by the detention center.

III. Parole Request Documents

Documents to be provided by the sponsor in order to complete a parole request include the following:

- 1) Letter of support (see template below)
- 2) Copy of State ID
- 3) Proof of citizenship
 - Copy of US Passport
 - Copy of Lawful Permanent Residency Card
- 4) Proof of address
 - Copies of utility bills with name and address
- 5) Proof of income
 - Tax forms
 - Pay stubs
 - Bank statement

Please scan documents so that the signature is in ink. Once complete, you may send your letters of support, identifying document, and proof of address to Wesley Brockway at wes@santafedreamersproject.org. Please include the words “Parole Packet” with the name of your guest in the subject line. Letters should include both the legal and preferred gender name of your guest in addition to their A-Number (nine-digit number used for identification by USCIS).

IV. Responsibilities and Expectations

The following are the responsibilities and expectations of sponsors following their *compa*'s release:

- Provide a safe and stable home for the duration of their immigration proceedings
 - In addition to being safe and stable, it is expected that the household has a strong, working knowledge of LGBTQ+ identities and diversity and inclusion
 - Another expectation is that there is a general understanding of trauma and how to support individuals with experiences of trauma

- Accompany *compa* to ICE check-ins and appointments
- Orient *compa* to cultural norms and competencies in the U.S.
- Support *guest* in English-language studies
- Coordinate transportation (introduction to public transit if available)
- Procure clothing, shoes, toiletries and other necessities for *compa*
- Secure legal representation for *compa*'s asylum case (a change of venue allowing for a change of immigration court jurisdiction will be taken care of by the legal team)
- Help *compa* obtain mental and physical health care services
- Find local consulate from *compa*'s country of origin to be granted an updated form of personal identification

Upon release from detention, asylum seekers may be eligible for a Work Permit. The Legal Team at the Santa Fe Dreamers Project will help to facilitate this process, and the *compa* can then potentially begin working about three to four months after release, when the Work Permit is granted. Once the Work Permit has been granted, you can help them apply for jobs.

TEMPLATE: Letter of Support

Sponsor's Full Name

Sponsor's Address

Date

RE: Letter in Support of Parole/Bond Request for Legally-Recognized Name of Compa
a/k/a/ Preferred Name of Compa

Dear Officer,

I, Full Name of Sponsor, am respectfully requesting that you release Preferred Name of Compa (A-Number of Compa) into my custody during the pendency of his/her/their removal proceedings.

While she applies for asylum, I will welcome Preferred Name of Compa into our home at:

Sponsor's Address

I will financially support Preferred Name of Compa and will secure transportation for all future appointments/hearings related to her immigration case.

I have built a strong community support network to welcome Preferred Name of Compa into our community, including transgender support organizations, health care professionals, service care providers, faith leaders, who have committed to providing food, clothing, healthcare, counseling, transportation and accompaniment to all future ICE check-in appointments and court hearings.

I have included copies of my proof of citizenship, proof of address and proof of income.

Thank you for both your time and consideration of this request. Should you have any questions, points of clarification, or to make travel arrangements for Preferred Name of Compa, please do not hesitate to contact me directly anytime at Sponsor's Phone Number.

Sincerely,

Sponsor's Signature
Sponsor's Full Name
Sponsor's Address
Sponsor's Phone Number