**Immigrants’ Rights and Responsibilities**

Materials: Handout Information Resources, WCCC booklet (see handout).

Objectives: To provide students with resources to clarify their rights and responsibilities in the United States, to inform them of services that are available, to discuss parenting issues that may be very different from their home country.

 NOTE: As teachers we are not qualified to give legal advice to students about their rights and responsibilities as immigrants. We can, however, make sure that they are aware of the resources in their community that can help them with legal issues and other problems. As a separate class you may want to have a Police Officer come to class to answer student questions about traffic stops, accident, reporting crime, etc.

1. Ask each of the students to say what country they came from, how long they have lived in the U.S., and if they are U.S. citizens or plan to become U.S. citizens.

2. Have the students discuss as a group or in pairs the biggest difference they found between life in the U.S. and their home country. For some students it may simply be the climate!

3. Ask the students what information they were given when they came to the U.S. about their rights and responsibilities. Do they know who to ask or where to go for help if they have problems or questions? Have students share their knowledge. This can be particularly helpful. If a student has had a positive personal experience with a particular agency, it can greatly encourage other students to seek the help they need. Write this information on the board so that all the students can copy it and/or give a typed copy of the information to the students at the next class.

4. Do they know if our laws are different from their laws regarding family interactions. For example, we learned from a Worcester Police Officer that if a wife calls 911 and reports that her husband pushed, slapped, punched, or physically assaulted her in any way, the police MUST arrest the husband. Ask the students if they have similar laws in their home country.

5. The Officer also cautioned that children under the age of twelve should not be left home alone even for a short period of time. Children under the age of twelve should be supervised when they are playing outside. If children are physically harmed or neglected by their caregivers, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will investigate and may remove the children from the home. What laws protect children in their home country? Is physical punishment used at home and in schools in their home country? Are they aware that teachers, doctors, and other professional are obligated to report suspected child abuse (suspicious marks on a child’s body) to DCF?

6. Rules about driving licenses may be obtained from the Massachusetts RMV (Registry of Motor Vehicles). Check to see if you must obtain a MA license or if you can drive with your home country license for a year.

7. Referrals for all types of services can be obtained from the Worcester Community Connections Coalition. Use the booklet they publish to review some available services.

8. You can copy the ACLU *bustcard* and distribute these to the students. The ACLU notes on the card that the information is not intended as legal advice. If you get into trouble with the law you need to get help from a qualified lawyer. Students may want to read the card in class and ask questions or it may be more time efficient to have them read it as a homework assignment and come to the next class with questions.

9. As a fun wrap-up, ask the students to share information about services they use. For example, what food stores, hairdressers, clothes stores, and cultural venues have they patronized and enjoyed?

Information Resources

[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) (search Welcome to the USA) an online booklet with general information about life in the USA. Information on how to avoid Immigration Help Scams is available.

<http://www.welcometousa.gov> Links to the Welcome to USA booklet and other resources.

[www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org) (search WHAT TO DO IF YOU’RE STOPPED BY THE POLICE, IMMIGRATION AGENTS OR THE FBI bustcard)

[www.worcestercommunityconnections.org](http://www.worcestercommunityconnections.org) Worcester Community Connections Coalition (WCCC) 484 Main street, Suite 460, Worcester, MA 01608, 508-796-1411 (This is the Denholm Building). This is a place to go to get local referrals for help. They publish a small booklet which you can ask for that lists referrals for all types of services.

[www.massrmv.com](http://www.massrmv.com) MA Registry of Motor Vehicles – Get information on driver’s licenses. Check CONVERTING AN OUT OF STATE LICENSE, and then click on *1949 Road Acts Convention* to find out if your home country driver’s license is valid and for how long it is valid.