



Reproductive Justice and  
Housing Instability: Implications  
for Immigrant Communities

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# Introduction



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# Overview

- About SSFTX
- Housing is a Reproductive Justice Issue
- Intersections of Immigration & Housing Instability
- Housing access as an essential element of holistic reproductive care

# About Us



# Sueños Sin Fronteras de Tejas

## Mission

Sueños Sin Fronteras aims to co-create positive health and healing outcomes and transform the conditions for immigrant communities that affirm their experiences, human dignity, and well-being.

## Vision

We envision liberation for people of all intersecting identities and the conditions that affirm our human dignity and enable us to create families of our choosing, achieve reproductive justice, freely express our gender and sexuality, and live in joy and love in a healthy and sustainable environment that is free of violence.

## Collective Governance

SSFTX operates around a shared leadership structure, centering the autonomy, health, and healing of our team members, prioritizing the needs of our community.

# Our Community



- SSFTX uplifts and supports the innovation, joy, and resilience of undocumented pregnant and birthing cis-gender, Black, Indigenous, women of color from Latin America
- Ranging from 17–50 years old
- Majority of them lead low-income, single-parent households & are survivors who have experienced or witnessed harm and violence

# Our Programs



## Empowerment Fund & Direct Service

The Direct Service & Mutual Aid provides support to undocumented people and families to survive and thrive in their communities through wraparound case management, mutual aid, peer support, and education.

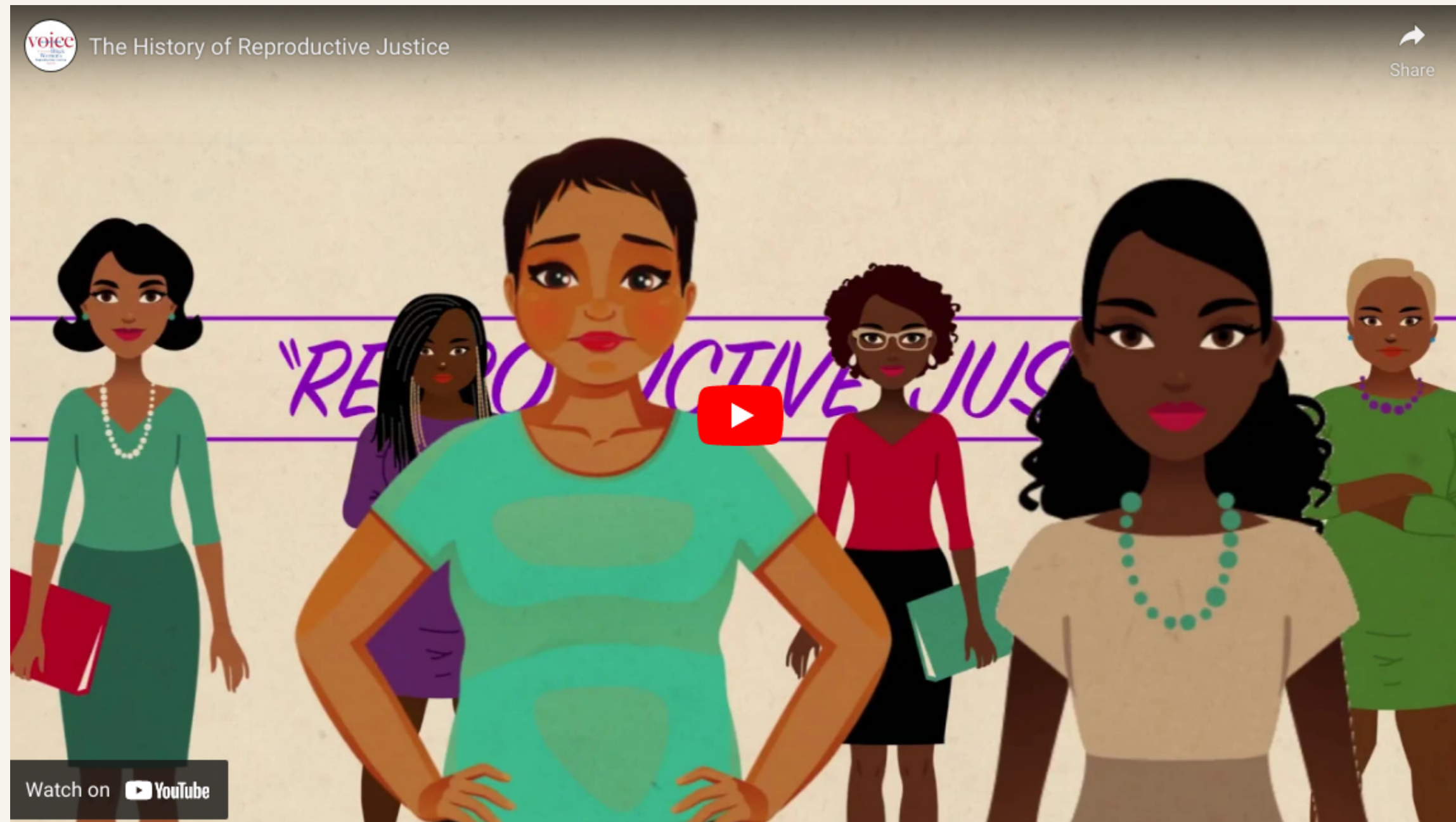


## Health Advocate Project

The Health Advocate Project aims to build self and community power through education, reproductive health kits, connections to health resources and postpartum care.



# Reproductive Justice



**THE HUMAN RIGHT TO MAINTAIN  
PERSONAL BODILY AUTONOMY, HAVE  
CHILDREN, NOT HAVE CHILDREN, AND  
PARENT THE CHILDREN WE HAVE IN  
SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE  
COMMUNITIES.**

*Sister Song*



# Why we use an RJ framework

- A Reproductive Justice framework draws on the intersectionality of identities and experiences that affect individuals and their communities such as gender identity, immigration status, race, class, age, and disability
- Reproductive Justice is a tool for liberation, it's where we weave together consent, healing, intuition, solidarity, and interdependence to co-create a world where people can live joyful, wholesome lives that value and affirm their human dignity
- Using an RJ framework is essential in developing support programs and services for undocumented and immigrant people and their families
- To us, Reproductive Justice means the following:
  - We respect the decisions people make about their bodies, their families, and their social, economic, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs
  - We acknowledge the intersections of age, race, class, trauma, gender, sexuality, disabilities, and immigration status
  - We create and hold spaces in a compassionate way, checking our privilege and respecting people's culture & ancestral knowledge



**THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A  
SINGLE-ISSUE STRUGGLE BECAUSE  
WE DO NOT LIVE SINGLE-ISSUE LIVES**

*Audre Lorde*



**LANGUAGE JUSTICE**

**HEALING JUSTICE**

**IMMIGRATION JUSTICE**

**DISABILITY JUSTICE**

# **Reproductive Justice Is**

**WORKER'S JUSTICE**

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

**RACIAL JUSTICE**

**FOOD JUSTICE**



**Access to safe and affordable housing is integral to achieving Reproductive Justice for our communities**

**Housing is a human right. A human right without accessible means of exercising the right means nothing**

- It is not enough for housing to exist if it is inaccessible (e.g., unaffordability, unsafe, health risks)

**Housing must safely and adequately meet the needs of all people of all genders, races, ethnicities, disabilities, and ages.**

- It must be accessible to all people not just people with privilege

**Housing instability in all its forms negatively impacts health & wellbeing**

- Navigating housing crises, inability to pay rent, unsafe living conditions, eviction, and homelessness poses significant risks to one's physical and mental health and well-being

**Housing impacts people's self-determination and decision-making around their well-being**

- Access to safe and affordable housing is linked to people's ability to care for themselves, sustain their families, and promotes positive wellness outcomes



# **Intersections of Immigration & Housing Instability**

# The Issue

Pregnant and birthing undocumented and immigrant people in the U.S. experience a multitude of barriers inextricably linked to housing instability & exacerbated by anti-immigrant and anti-reproductive policies in Texas

For undocumented immigrants barriers to securing housing are far greater & exacerbate existing interpersonal challenges that have direct implications on health and wellbeing including trauma, chronic illness, mental health, exploitation, labor trafficking, low wages, poverty, housing insecurity, and general inaccessibility to resources that promote health and wellbeing

# Barriers To Housing for Undocumented People

- **Government-Issued ID Requirement**

- In cases where an ID from the country of origin is accepted, undocumented immigrants may face challenges in accessing one from their country of origin
  - While there are several consulates in Texas, some require crossing immigration checkpoints while others have limited appointments and can be difficult to reach due to transportation issues
  - There are also associated risks accessing an ID from their country of origin specifically for asylum seekers, increasing the possibility of being deported

- **Proof of income**

- Many undocumented people are left with no choice but to work under the table to avoid leaving a paper trail and providing proof of income in the form of paycheck stubs is impossible
- Employers are not always open to writing a proof of employment letter for an undocumented employee due to fear of liability risks

- **Resources are not accessible to disabled undocumented people**

- Housing programs for people with disabilities can have requirements that undocumented people are unable to meet



# Barriers To Housing for Undocumented People

## Cont.

### Discriminatory Laws

- In Texas, landlords can still discriminate against people who receive subsidized housing benefits such as Section 8 vouchers, because the state allows landlords to deny people according to their source of income
- Undocumented individuals do not qualify to receive Federal Housing Vouchers in San Antonio, TX
- Undocumented individuals & families cannot receive shelter at Haven for Hope

### • Poverty & Exploitation

- Inability to pay rent due to limited employment & low wages
  - Risk of Eviction
  - Fears of Eviction Court
- High rates of exploitation by landlords based on status
  - Spaces are not livable and are flooded with feces-contaminated water posing serious threats to health
  - Maintenance Requests are ignored
  - Changing locks without notice
  - Denial of lease renewals without probable cause
  - Lack of alternative options prevent people from making reports

# Barriers Further Exacerbated

## COVID-19 Pandemic

- Existing housing insecurity and barriers were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Magnified the gaps in support and inaccessibility of community resources for undocumented immigrant communities
- Exemplified the need for increased access to resources, networks of care, and healing practices addressing injustice and oppression

## Winter Storm Uri

- Marginalized communities with the least amount of access to resources are disproportionately affected by issues related to climate change like Winter Storm Uri in Texas

## Commentary: Need for affordable housing grows

Laura Molinar, For the Express-News  
April 28, 2021



As the federal eviction moratorium ends, we must ensure that aid like the city's Emergency Assistance Program are available to undocumented residents who do not qualify for federal housing assistance.  
Will Waldron /Albany Times Union

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown why housing assistance is so urgent for undocumented individuals and families in San Antonio. Last year, Felicia (a pseudonym) and her children were pushed out of a shelter for families of :tive

## WINTER STORM 2021

### Already hit hard by pandemic, Black and Hispanic communities suffer the blows of an unforgiving winter storm

Texans of color, disproportionately devastated by death and unemployment during the last year, tend to live in neighborhoods with older homes, more vulnerable pipes and fewer food options. That's made it harder to withstand the cold temperatures and power outages.

BY ALEXA URA AND JUAN PABLO GARNHAM FEB. 19, 2021 5 AM CENTRAL



### Undocumented Texans are reeling from last month's storm - and they're cut off from federal aid

After four years of family separations and deportations, many are reluctant to seek help after the natural disaster



Austin Texas Musicians distribute FEMA emergency disaster relief boxes to residents affected by the winter storm crisis. Photograph: Sandy Carson/Zuma Wire/Rex/Shutterstock

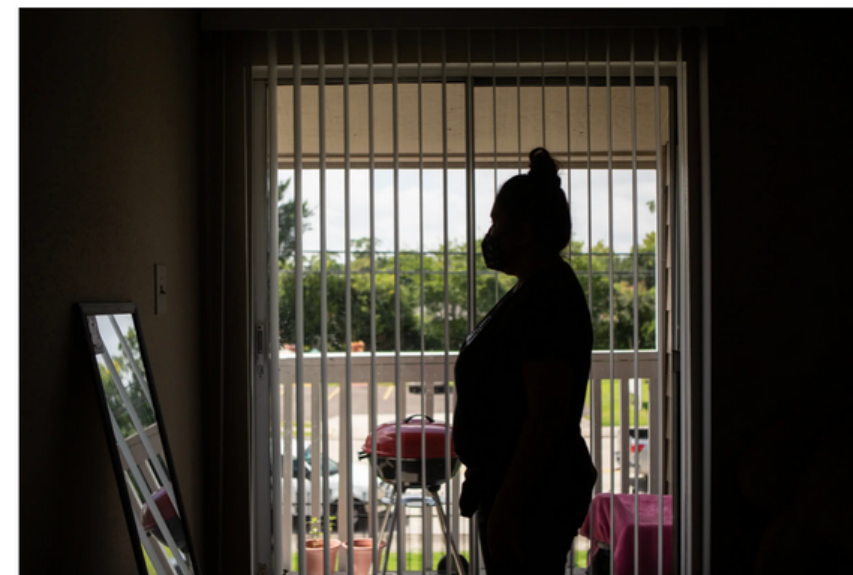
Weeks after a deadly Arctic blast walloped **Texas**, Maria still didn't have reliable water at her Austin home.

## CORONAVIRUS IN TEXAS

### Undocumented immigrants behind on their rent are self-evicting across Texas

Without money to pay rent, facing pressures from landlords and afraid of courts, people without legal immigration status have limited options.

BY MEENA VENKATARAMANAN AND JUAN PABLO GARNHAM JULY 22, 2020 5 AM CENTRAL



Maria, an undocumented immigrant, had to leave her apartment in Houston in mid-March. © Pu Ying Huang for The Texas Tribune

**Housing is a  
Reproductive  
Justice Issue**



# Housing Justice as an essential element of Holistic Reproductive Care

When we hear the phrase Reproductive Justice it's possible that the first thing that we think of is access to safe and legal abortions. Reproductive Justice is access to safe and legal abortions ***and*** much more

It is not enough for us to solely focus on access to safe & legal abortions when other elements of Reproductive Justice like safe and affordable housing remain inaccessible or unsafe

# Where do we go from here?

**Continue to center & uplift the voices of our community who are most impacted by intersecting systems of oppression and capitalism**

**Provide essential mutual aid such as distribution of food, clothing, diapers, communication, transportation and rental assistance**

**Create intentional, culturally-sensitive spaces and resources for sharing information and knowledge around health, wellness, collective care, healing, immigrant's rights, housing rights, and medical rights**

**Ground our programs in methodologies rooted in dignity, autonomy, and self-determination such as Language Justice & Popular Education, where we are all teachers and all learners**

**Advocate for sustainable long-term housing solutions in San Antonio and Texas that are inclusive to undocumented immigrant communities**

**Aim to dismantle top-down capitalistic structures and instead build solidarity economies (e.g., housing cooperatives) to promote the economic mobility of undocumented people**

**Prioritize the leadership development and economic mobility of undocumented people through skills development opportunities and connections to relevant resources**





**A HOME THAT IS STABLE,  
AFFORDABLE AND SECURE NOT ONLY  
MEANS THAT WE ARE ABLE TO  
CURATE A LIFE FULL OF COLOR,  
TRADITION, AND MAGIC, BUT IT ALSO  
PAVES A WAY FOR ONGOING HEALTH  
AND HAPPINESS FOR FUTURE  
GENERATIONS.**

*Nina Yagual*