

## **Agreements and Expectations between Visiting Group Leaders and BorderLinks Staff**

We are thrilled that you will be joining BorderLinks on an upcoming delegation. We hope that your participation with us will be a transformative experience. We look forward to building a relationship leading up to, during, and following your delegation.

Below are some agreements and expectations to facilitate our communication and time working together. This list is not exhaustive. It is intended to be a guide through some of the most common questions and points of collaboration. Carefully read this document prior to signing your contract.

During your conversations with the BorderLinks' staff person responsible for delegation scheduling, you'll have the opportunity to address any questions and concerns you have regarding the points below. We will assume you agree to these expectations unless you tell us otherwise.

While it's important that all group leaders understand and agree to these points, we strongly encourage you to convey this information to your delegation participants (delegates) prior to their arrival at BorderLinks. This document may answer many of their questions and helps manage expectations before arrival. You can find this document on our website under the "Resources" tab.

### **Communication Prior to Arrival**

Communication between BorderLinks' education staff and a group's leaders is an utmost priority.

- Education staff will contact group leaders no later than a month from their arrival to start planning their delegation.
- In the month prior to a group's arrival, BorderLinks' education staff and group leaders will need to speak often, both by phone and email. Group leaders should prioritize and have the capacity for weekly (or more frequent) communication with BorderLinks during this time.
- These conversations allow education staff to better know the interests and orientation of each delegation, as well as address logistics, itinerary changes and questions that arises.
- Group leaders are expected to be a communication bridge to the rest of the delegates. We do not have the capacity to answer emails and phone calls from individual delegates.

### **Itineraries and Programming:**

Borderlinks has a strict policy of not allowing groups to be divided.

- Delegation participants come with differing financial resources, accessibility needs, safety concerns, and immigration statuses. It is our policy to prioritize these needs and

adapt itineraries accordingly. BorderLinks' staff insists that groups do all itinerary activities together (unless otherwise stipulated in the itinerary).

- We believe **all people** -- regardless of documentation and/or financial resources -- are equal participants in the educational process, and we will not allow group members without certain immigration documentation to be left out of a part of that group's experience and learning.
- A key component of BorderLinks' experiential learning process is developing trust, rapport, and shared experiences amongst delegation participants. This is crucial in being able to delve deeper into difficult topics that are encountered on the itinerary. It also brings the concept of solidarity into practice.
- Visiting group leaders at times promote BorderLinks' delegations as including travel to Mexico, but often fail to realize that some people interested in the BorderLinks experience may lack the necessary documents -- or the financial resources to obtain documents such as passports. To avoid limiting participation, we strongly urge group leaders not to promote a BorderLinks delegation as including time in Mexico.
- No particular programming can be guaranteed, so making promises to delegates is highly discouraged.

We do not meet with Border Patrol (BP), or any arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

- It is essential to our staff, community partners, and participants that the BorderLinks community and BorderLinks' physical facility be a safe space for anyone, no matter their immigration status. Meeting with immigration enforcement officials and/or inviting them into our facility puts people at risk and makes BorderLinks an untrustworthy partner.
- We agree that it is important to learn about the BP and DHS operations. Past presentations with BP have been slick public relations presentations that omit many truths. BorderLinks maintains relationships with academics, journalists, and community members who have ample first-hand experience researching and interacting with immigration enforcement. We center their experiences during delegations. They are lesser known and under reported. We know groups can access BP PR materials on the news and through the internet at any time.

BorderLinks does not provide tourism experiences.

- Groups desiring tourism activities should make those arrangements on their own (outside of the delegation) or with other organizations that provide tourism services.

BorderLinks does its best to tailor programming to the interests of their delegations. While requests and preferences are welcome, specific programming cannot be guaranteed.

- Requests and preferences on a delegation schedule should be articulated by the group leader during the initial conversations with education staff, not later. To the best of their abilities, group leaders are responsible for knowing whether specific requests are accessible for the needs of their group.

- In preparing the delegation itinerary there are numerous factors staff must take into consideration including, but not limited to, reaching out and confirming availability of community partners. Our relationships with community partners and presenters sustains our work in the borderlands, is of utmost importance to our organization, and is one way we work to strengthen migrant justice work in Tucson. We prioritize the capacity, needs, and schedules of our community partners in designing delegation programming.
- BorderLinks reserves the right to design and alter delegation programming to best address the needs and issues impacting the border region, BorderLinks, and its partners.

### **Registration, Covenants and Preparation:**

Registrations should be completed by all delegates as soon as possible.

- As soon as delegates know they are coming on a delegation, they should fill out a registration. Delegation registrations can be found [here](#) and also through our website, under the Resources/Prepare tab. BorderLinks is glad to meet the dietary needs of delegates **if delegates complete registration forms no later than one week prior to the start of a delegation.**
- Registrations provide critical information that helps BorderLinks staff prepare for a delegation. For example, health and mobility information is used to plan accessible activities during a delegation. Allergy information is used to plan and prepare meals. Gender identity informs rooming assignments. Spanish language skills and citizenship information informs what programming is scheduled. Questions about delegates' experiences help us understand the orientation and priorities of a group. Without registrations planning an itinerary is made extremely more difficult.
- The Participation Agreement and Behavior Covenant, which must be read and signed before participating in a delegation, are part of the registration.

Delegates are required to read and agree to BorderLinks' Behavior Covenant before attending a delegation.

- A checkbox that says delegates have read, will sign and will abide by the Covenant is located on the registration form. If delegates have not printed and signed the Covenant in advance, they will be required to do so upon arrival.
- Youth participants (under 18 years old) will also need their parent or guardian to read and sign the Behavior Covenant. Group leaders are responsible for ensuring that all youth participants bring a printed and signed Covenant with them to Borderlinks.
- We encourage you to review the Behavior Covenant as a group, especially if you anticipate it to be a challenge for your delegates. Staff is happy to support you in having these conversations with your delegation.

Participants should familiarize themselves with the BorderLinks' website, particularly the "Resources" tab.

- You can find FAQ, delegation preparation materials, and a packing list under the "Resources" tab.

### **Number of Participants:**

The minimum number of participants we require to host your group is a total of 7 people. We rent 15 passenger vans for delegations and need to save a space for the BorderLinks Delegation Leader. If you are going over 14 people we ask that you add a minimum of 7 additional members to your group. This will help us meet the cost of adding an additional Delegation Leader and renting a second 15 passenger van. The maximum number of people we can take is 28 participants. The daily rate does not change depending on the size of the group.

### **Travel:**

BorderLinks' staff is happy to do one group pickup and drop off between the hours of 8am and 8pm at the Tucson airport or Tucson Greyhound station.

- We encourage groups to coordinate their travel, so a single pickup and drop off can be taken advantage of.
- If travel times are sporadic and outside of these hours, delegates are responsible for their own transportation to BorderLinks.
- Delegates' travel plans should be communicated to staff with as much anticipation as possible, preferably no less than a month in advance.

### **During Delegation:**

Maintain dorm, kitchen, and common spaces as neat, clean and tidy as possible. BorderLinks' staff is not responsible for cleaning up after delegations.

- Groups are responsible for meal clean-up and storage of leftovers.
- Please keep common spaces clear of notes and personal belongings. Personal belongings should be stored in participants' rooms.
- Borderlinks' items, including food, cups, plates etc., should not be kept in the dorms.
- Additional guidelines to keep space clean are posted throughout BorderLinks. Please read these carefully and ask staff if you have any questions

It is the mutual responsibility of both BorderLinks' staff and group leaders to maintain open dialogue at all times.

- We encourage group leaders to check in with BorderLinks' delegation leaders on a regular basis. Delegations are often physically, mentally and emotionally challenging spaces. Groups encounter experiences and opinions that challenge prior beliefs and understandings. Frequent and open dialogue regarding delegation dynamics, changes in the itinerary, and any other concerns facilitate a positive experience for all.

Flexibility is key!

- Challenges that may come up during a delegation include but are not limited to changes to the itinerary, limitations due to weather, missed comforts of home, and the challenges of communal living. We ask that delegates prepare to adapt and be open to these possibilities.

### **Action Planning:**

Commit to carrying out action planning at home.

- A key part of the popular education model that Borderlinks utilizes includes taking action for justice. A significant amount of time at Borderlinks will be spent preparing future steps that your delegation can take to resist and build alternatives to the injustice you witness here in the Borderlands.
- It is highly encouraged that your group assess their action-taking availability (i.e. free hours per week) prior to your arrival at BorderLinks. This will help create attainable goals to implement when they return to their home communities.
- Some key questions for reflection would be: What kind of capacity does your group have for post-delegation actions? Do you know the needs in your own community? What are the organizations in your community struggling for migrant justice and other social justice advances? How can you learn more about them? What social justice issues are delegates already involved in? How might you deepen that involvement? These questions will be brought up during the delegation.
- BorderLinks' staff will do our best to maintain contact with you and support you in your next steps after your delegation. We are currently working to build our capacity to do so.