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**MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF ACTIONNYC**

*Initiative represents largest investment by a municipality to prepare for executive action, advance nationwide immigration reform*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs Nisha Agarwal today announced the creation of ActionNYC, the nation’s largest investment by a municipality to prepare for executive action and in response to the need for nationwide comprehensive immigration reform. The \$7.9 million initiative, through the Executive Budget and in partnership with the City Council, will create a citywide system rooted in immigrant community organizations to provide high quality immigration-related information and legal support to thousands of New Yorkers starting in early spring 2016.

“New York City’s commitment to our immigrant communities will not waver. While the courts delay executive action and much-needed relief, while some voices may attempt to create hostility toward immigrants, while more than 30 governors tried to resist the resettlement of Syrian refugees, New York City will demonstrate the power and values of our city. ActionNYC will demonstrate that there is another way. We can build the capacity of community-based organizations and legal service providers to ensure that all New Yorkers can come out of the shadows and live their lives freely. This program demonstrates New York City’s commitment to ensuring everyone can live their own American dream,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

The Mayor made the announcement today at the National Immigration Integration Conference (NIIC), the nation’s preeminent gathering of municipal and nonprofit leaders, donors, and community-based advocates who work for the betterment of immigrant communities across the United States. ActionNYC will create community navigation hubs at immigrant services organizations across the five boroughs, where immigrant New Yorkers can receive a safe and secure legal screening regarding their immigration legal options, community navigator support to prepare applications, assistance from high-quality lawyers, and connections to relevant services, such as IDNYC, the City’s municipal ID program. In addition to these community hubs, ActionNYC will also feature rotating legal clinics across all five boroughs. A mass marketing campaign and cadre of trained organizers will do outreach to immigrant communities in multiple languages to direct them to ActionNYC programming. Specialized technological tools will be developed to connect providers across the system and provide web-based legal screening support, and funding will be available to community organizations to offer educational programming needed to qualify for certain immigration legal benefits.

More than half a million New Yorkers are estimated to be undocumented and an estimated 700,000 additional New Yorkers are eligible to become U.S. citizens. Immigrants across the spectrum face tremendous legal needs. ActionNYC will be the first model of its size to connect outreach and community navigation and legal support in a way that can be scaled and connected to even the hardest to reach populations. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, in collaboration with the Human Resources Administration and the Research Foundation of the City University of New York, will administer the program. ActionNYC will award over two dozen contracts to community-based organizations and legal service providers that will serve as the program's implementing partners, accepted into the initiative after a competitive process and review.

This innovative model will optimize the use of attorney time by delegating non-legal case management to trained navigators, while providing immigrant families with high-quality, free resource in their communities to prevent reliance on fraudulent and predatory providers of immigration law. Community navigators are community members who receive specialized training to assist in the provision of quality immigration services at scale in their communities. This model was designed with input from a range of City agencies, legal service providers, community partners, and philanthropic partners.

“Today many New Yorkers qualify for permanent immigration relief and do not know it. ActionNYC will reach New Yorkers in the languages they speak and in the neighborhoods in which they live. Community-based organizations will be a critical factor in ActionNYC’s success, as they are the places trusted by immigrants, and they provide a host of related services that immigrants need. This model, inspired by executive action, will create a scalable way to ensure all New Yorkers have access to legal justice and key social services,” said **Commissioner Nisha Agarwal of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs**.

“ActionNYC is a much-needed program that will empower New York’s immigrant communities and provide essential immigration legal services. HRA is proud to support this new innovative model that seeks to address the need for immediate immigration relief,” said **Human Resources Administration Commissioner Steven Banks**.

“The City University of New York is pleased to partner with the City of New York in this important new initiative to provide critical services to immigrants. CUNY has a long history of offering educational opportunities to new New Yorkers and this project supports that important mission,” said **James B. Milliken, Chancellor of The City University of New York**.

"New York is a city built by the heart and soul of immigrant communities, and I am proud to see our city continuing this legacy of support with ActionNYC. With new hubs of support rooted in immigrant communities, we will be reaching immigrants where they are and helping them navigate complex with legal systems," said **Public Advocate Tish James**.

"Forty-seven percent of Brooklynites speak a language other than English at home, and we need to tailor government to serve the varied needs of this population, particularly immigration legal assistance. I am pleased that ActionNYC seeks to do more to assist Brooklyn residents that face difficulties accessing the information and resources needed to uplift themselves and their families," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

"Immigration is the foundation on which New York was built, and helping our city's immigrant population to become new Americans is smart, practical, and in the best traditions of our city," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "Cities can't pass immigration reform ourselves, but until we see federal action, innovative programs like the one the administration is announcing today can set an example for the nation and empower immigrant communities within our city."

“New York City has always been a beacon of hope for immigrants all over the world and with initiatives like ActionNYC it continues that tradition by doing everything it can to help New York families stay strong and stay together,” said **Congressman Joe Crowley**. “There is no question that we need broad, bold comprehensive immigration reform, but in the absence of action by Republican leaders in Congress, investments like these provide our local advocacy organizations with the resources necessary to provide the legal support and navigation our immigrant families need. I thank Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Nisha Agarwal for launching this program, which will have a profound impact on our communities.”

"While Republicans in Congress continue to twiddle their thumbs on immigration reform, its exciting to see local municipalities like New York City take the initiative and invest in programs geared toward helping the immigrant community. ACTIONNYC will provide \$7.9 million for community navigation hubs that will help

bring vital services and legal expertise to the more than 1.2 million people living in New York City who are either undocumented or eligible for citizenship. Like most of our ancestors, these people came to America for a better life. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and the City Council for helping them live the American dream," said **Congressman Eliot Engel**.

"We continue to send the message to immigrants in our city: we are on your side. Mayor de Blasio's announcement of ActionNYC is particularly timely given the incredible need of immigrant New Yorker's to be assured that local government is working tirelessly to make sure that they can continue to live and work in the communities they helped to build. ActionNYC is innovative and it will help New Yorker's connect to important resources, often through well-known and trusted community partners; this is incredibly important. ActionNYC gives us the opportunity to build on programs like IDNYC and participatory budgeting which have been successful in no small part because of our immigrant friends and neighbors. I thank the Mayor for his vision on keeping our city open, safe, and accessible for all," said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca, Chair of the Committee on Immigration**.

"ActionNYC is truly a ground-up, grassroots, municipal immigration program tailored to New York City's unique and diverse immigrant communities and the struggles they face. Mayor de Blasio's proposal is both effective and efficient: connect and communicate among and between our citywide network of immigrant services. The new tools and greater access these organizations will have thanks to ActionNYC will provide greater support to New York City's immigrant communities," said **State Senator Martin Malavé Dilan**.

"In a moment where some political forces seem to be escalating their attacks upon our immigrant communities, it is imperative that those who are eligible to become American citizens do. I encourage immigrants to participate fully in our political process," said **State Senator Jose Peralta**. "I support Mayor Bill de Blasio's efforts to provide legal support for the many unique problems that face our immigrant communities."

"Immigration legal services are other resources are crucial," said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. "I thank the City for continuing to work towards expanding important immigration resource access."

"It is clear that a great deal of thought went into developing ActionNYC," said **Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte**. "I know from my own lived experience as the daughter of Haitian immigrant parents, that the coordinated services will not only benefit the immigrant population with an efficient and reliable process, but it will alleviate immigration fraud, which has prohibited many people from becoming new Americans. With different languages incorporated into the program, the navigators will certainly play a critical role in ensuring that the immigrant population understands the process and that they are getting their needs met."

"It is easy to see the great potential of ActionNYC to provide much needed support to the many immigrants of NYC. I commend Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Agarwal for the launch of this innovative program, and hope it will provide the type of legal assistance and educational programming to effectively guide our newest New Yorkers," said **Assembly Member Robert Rodriguez**.

"The services made available through ActionNYC will provide invaluable immigration assistance to the thousands of New Yorkers looking for a pathway to citizenship. By creating these community hubs, ActionNYC will connect immigrants with free legal resources that will hopefully reduce the need for reliance on unscrupulous and untrained attorneys. I look forward to working with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to ensure that even the hardest to reach immigrant populations take advantage of the legal support they desperately need," said **Council Member Margaret Chin**.

"The City of New York is home to one of the largest and fastest growing immigrant population than any other municipality across the U.S. Due to barriers such as language, income, and legal status, many immigrants often become victims of fraud and scams. ActionNYC is an opportunity to curb these occurrences and increase access

to legal services by working in partnership with community-based organizations to empower immigrants through education," said **Council Member Laurie A. Cumbo**.

"ActionNYC truly demonstrates City's commitment to the well-being of our immigrant families," said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**. "I applaud Mayor de Blasio for launching this important initiative which will provide our newest New Yorkers with the sound legal advice and access to City services they need in order to live happy and healthy lives. I will continue to work with the Mayor and my colleagues in government to implement and development programs that improve the quality of life for immigrants and all people who call our city home."

"Today's announcement of a \$7.9 million investment in immigrant social and legal services makes one thing clear: our city has been and will remain a place that supports immigrant communities. I thank Mayor de Blasio for his continued commitment to the well-being of each and every person living in this city," said **Council Member Vanessa Gibson**.

"While hundreds of thousands in New York City are impacted by Congress' failure to act on comprehensive immigration reform, our city refuses to wait to ensure essential services are provided to our immigrant community. This new innovative program will provide much needed support to immigrant families and strengthen community organizations that serve them on the ground each and every day. I applaud Mayor de Blasio for taking this creative approach so that immigrants throughout our city can receive the support and services they need most," said **Council Member Mark Levine**.

"Immigration reform is a pressing issue which we have not fully addressed as a nation, and with New York City being a premier destination for those seeking to come to America we understand the importance of ensuring there are proper resources for those who would like to become American citizens," said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. "ActionNYC puts us at the forefront of the conversation on immigration reform in the hopes to invoke real change. As a resident of Queens, the nation's most diverse county, I see families from all backgrounds contributing to advance our society, and fully believe that they deserve the support needed to become American citizens. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Agarwal on their bold steps for New York to advocate for the many residents in our city and nation who continue to be neglected due to the lack of comprehensive immigration reform."

"ActionNYC is the latest in a string of commitments to the immigrant communities of NYC by the de Blasio administration," said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez**. "Easing the minds of undocumented persons will have a lasting impact, encouraging families to put down roots and fully incorporate into our growing community. As inaction at the federal level continues to fail aspiring Americans across the country, cities like New York are stepping up to fill the void. I applaud the initiative of Mayor Bill de Blasio and his strong commitment to immigrants and true and progressive immigration reform."

"As anti-immigrant rhetoric heats up once again across the country, it is important to me that New York City remain welcoming to those who seek opportunity here. Our city was built on the hard work of immigrants, and I thank the Mayor and his administration for working to ensure that those who want to work for a better life for themselves and their children have access to the opportunities that previous generations had," said **Council Member Debi Rose**.

"New York City is a city of immigrants, and ActionNYC will invest in the future of our newest residents. The legal support provided in this initiative will help immigrants become citizens and open up a world of new opportunities for jobs and scholarships that would otherwise not be available to them. I am grateful to Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Nisha Agarwal for their leadership on this issue," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

ActionNYC grantees include:

Arab American Association of New York  
Asian Americans for Equality  
Atlas: DIY  
BronxWorks  
CAMBA  
Catholic Charities Community Services  
Center for Family Life  
Center for Popular Democracy  
DRUM – Desis Rising Up & Moving  
Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Services, Inc.  
Lutheran Social Services of New York  
Make the Road New York  
New York Immigration Coalition  
Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation  
The Research Foundation of the City University of New York

"The new ActionNYC program will be of tremendous benefit to immigrants across our beloved city. We applaud Mayor de Blasio for creating this bold first-of-its-kind initiative that marks the largest such investment by a municipality in our country. By reaching out to immigrant New Yorkers across the five boroughs and connecting them to much-needed legal screenings and services, ActionNYC will ensure that immigrants have access to the information and support they need and mark another strong step towards immigrant integration. Make the Road New York is proud to be a partner in this forward-looking new program," said **Javier H. Valdés, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York.**

"ActionNYC is the boldest initiative any large American city has taken to reach out to its immigrant population and say 'We are with you and we are here to help.' At a time when hateful rhetoric towards immigrants dominates politics, ActionNYC stands as a powerful statement of a more inclusive and just alternative. We commend Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Agarwal for their leadership," said **Shena Elrington, Director of Immigrants' Rights & Racial Justice at Center for Popular Democracy.**

"We look forward to the opportunity to work with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs on ActionNYC, a new initiative to provide immigration legal services at a large scale and to build capacity within legal and community-based organizations in New York City," said **Steven Choi, Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition.** "We are pleased that New York City continues to make critical investments to support New Yorkers navigating a complex system to receive the best possible immigration legal support. As we continue to fight for the implementation of broader immigration relief, we are looking forward to playing a key technical assistance and clinic coordination role with ActionNYC to ensure that our communities can take full advantage of any relief they are eligible for."

"ActionNYC will demonstrate New York's commitment to our immigrant communities, an important signal to the world these days," said **Shawn Morehead, Senior Program Officer at The New York Community Trust.** "We were honored to participate in planning ActionNYC and, through our Fund for New Citizens, are pleased to contribute to a citywide effort to help immigrants as part of making New York better for everyone."

"One of Catholic Charities' core commitments in New York is to welcome immigrants – be they families seeking to reunify, refugees, the undocumented, or workers – in a way that upholds their dignity and recognizes the value they bring to our communities of work, of family, and of faith. This new initiative, developed in conjunction with the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs, will build on the professionalism, skill, and compassion that Catholic Charities brings to its service with immigrants and represents an exciting, new opportunity to expand on important work that is done in communities throughout New York City," said **C. Mario Russell, Esq., Director of Immigrant and Refugee Services at Catholic Charities NY.**

"Atlas: DIY is powered by immigrant youth. NYC is powered by immigrants. It's time for immigrant voices to matter and to be elevated in our city. It's time for us to take action at this critical anti-immigrant moment. ActionNYC is a call to all of us to step up for our communities. We are proud to stand behind Mayor de Blasio and his administration in elevating immigrant voices and empowering them to build a movement that is stronger and louder than any opposition," said **Lauren Burke, Executive Director of Atlas: DIY**.

"We are grateful to Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Agarwal and CUNY Chancellor Milliken for this most recent demonstration of New York City's ongoing commitment to the needs of immigrants. We are so pleased to be a part of this collaboration across legal and social service providers, volunteers, City leaders and community organizations – all dedicated to helping immigrants understand their rights, to providing outreach and legal assistance, and to protecting them from unethical and fraudulent immigration services providers," said **Beth Goldman, President and Attorney-in-Charge at New York Legal Assistance Group**.

"Asian Americans for Equality is very excited and honored to be part of ActionNYC. ActionNYC embodies the hopes and dreams of New York's many vibrant immigrant communities, and we believe that all immigrants deserve the opportunity to turn those hopes and dreams into reality. We look forward to partnering with the City University of New York and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to provide much-needed services, assistance, and information to immigrants in New York," said **Christopher Kui, Executive Director of Asian Americans for Equality**.

"The health and civic engagement of immigrant communities is directly proportional to the extent of services, advocacy, and organizing infrastructure present in those communities. ActionNYC takes an important step to deeply engage immigrant communities that is to the benefit of our communities and of our city," said **Fahd Ahmed, Executive Director of DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving**.

"The Arab American Association of New York, based in the largest Arab community in the city, is proud to be an ActionNYC host site. For 14 years, we have been the only organization in Southwest Brooklyn with the language capacity and cultural competency to assist recent Arab immigrants, and were unable to meet the demands of the growing community. Through ActionNYC, we will be able to meet client demand at scale, helping thousands more per year with immigration applications and referrals for much-needed services. We thank the Mayor's Office for this critical initiative, and for their support of the Arab community in NYC," said **Linda Sarsour, Executive Director of Arab American Association of New York**.

"The ActionNYC Program provides a smart, efficient approach to streamlining legal services for New York City's immigrants, and we are proud to be part of this new system," said **Joanne M. Oplustil, President and CEO of CAMBA**. "With skilled navigators handling time-consuming tasks – such as drafting applications and helping clients gather documents and apply for additional services – our staff attorneys can provide more and better legal services."

"Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation is very excited to partner with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to provide a range of immigration services under the new ActionNYC initiative. NMIC strongly believes that this program will provide New York City's diverse immigrant community with safe and efficient access to legal services to successfully adjust their legal status enabling them to continue contributing to this great city," said **Maria Lizardo, Executive Director of Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation**.

"The ActionNYC initiative is an amazing opportunity for Center for Family Life to connect our low-income, immigrant community to much-needed legal support and help them navigate the services they need," said **Julia Jean Francois, Co-Director for Center for Family Life**.

"We at BronxWorks are very excited to be part of this new initiative with The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Research Foundation of the City University of New York. ActionNYC will allow hundreds of

people in the Bronx gain access to important application and legal immigration services. BronxWorks views this new program as one of the most important services added this year," said **John Weed, Assistant Executive Director of BronxWorks.**

"Lutheran Social Services of New York is excited and proud to be a part of ActionNYC, a program that will help so many immigrants in need. At a time when we are seeing so much divisiveness on the news, it's great to see New York City setting an example of inclusiveness and diversity," said **Cecilia Aranzamendez, Executive Director for Community Services at Lutheran Social Services of New York.**

"We at Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service are excited to partner with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Research Foundation of the City University of New York to connect more immigrant families with essential legal services. When we help immigrant families thrive, we make our communities stronger and our city stronger," said **Traci Lester, Chief Executive Officer of Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service.**

"The City's important investment to integrate new immigrant families into the fabric of the city follows the historic values of so many New Yorkers, whose families have come from around the world and found safe haven in our city," said **32BJ SEIU President Hector Figueroa.** "Our members and so many people in our city understand that the energy, ideas and hard work of immigrants and their families keep our city, and our country, evolving and vibrant. We applaud Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Agarwal for leading the way and shining a light for immigrants everywhere."

"Hispanic Federation applauds Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Agarwal for launching ActionNYC, another important initiative from City Hall that will help immigrants in New York gain access to essential legal services. At a time when anti-immigrant rhetoric is spiking and perverting our national discourse, it is refreshing to have leadership in New York City that is committed to protecting and uplifting our immigrant communities. We are excited to be a part of ActionNYC and look forward to working closely with the Mayor and his administration to ensure that credible information and resources are available for our city's immigrants," said **Jose Calderon, President of the Hispanic Federation.**

"New York has been and always will be an important gateway city for newcomers. We thank the Mayor for his visionary leadership and investment in our community groups to build capacity for immigrants to navigate the complex immigration and naturalization process. ActionNYC is an important program in guiding newcomers to becoming citizens, providing them with the support to flourish and contribute to our city, which continues to be the melting pot of our country," said **Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director of the Asian American Federation.**

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