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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION TO SEND VOLUNTEERS TO AID DETAINED
IMMIGRANT FAMILIES AT THE SOUTHERN BORDER**

*Administration will recruit City staff to provide pro bono legal services at detention center in
Texas*

NEW YORK—Mayor de Blasio today announced a multi-agency public-private project to provide pro bono legal assistance to families facing detention at the southern border. The Administration is recruiting City staff—attorneys and licensed clinical social workers—on a volunteer basis to travel to Texas for a week to help address the immense need for legal assistance. Travel expenses will be covered by donations to the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City.

“The Trump Administration has repeatedly violated the fundamental human rights of families fleeing violence and seeking refuge in our country,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “The federal government has reunited some of the families it broke apart, but parents and their children are now together in family detention centers at the border. New Yorkers have showed these children overwhelming support, and my Administration is taking the next step in addressing this crisis by recruiting volunteers to help families access the humanitarian protections they deserve. New York values demand that we act to ameliorate this inhumane situation.”

“New York City will continue to fight for families detained at the border under this inhumane policy,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “In addition to the trauma these unnecessary detentions have caused, there is the great expense of legal services. New York City will send clinicians and attorneys to help families at the border navigate this crisis and get the competent legal counsel they need. I am proud of the generosity of New Yorkers, and enthusiasm of our volunteers for this effort.

“The Trump Administration is now attempting to pressure detained immigrant families to surrender their legal rights. After all the confusion and chaos they have instigated, we’re mobilizing to tackle the immense need for pro bono legal help,” said **Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs**. “Detaining families and forcing parents to navigate a complex legal landscape for themselves and their children alone is wrong. With this volunteer group, we aim to support immigrant families exercise their legal rights, putting New York values in action.”

“New Yorkers have once again answered the call to support those in need, and the Mayor’s Fund is proud to play a role in helping bridge the good will of private funders and the reach of government. As families are reunited, they will have to navigate an incredibly complex immigration system with little to no support. Today, we can say that through the generosity of New Yorkers and private partnerships, more families facing detention will receive the legal help they deserve,” said **Darren Bloch, Executive Director of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York.**

Hundreds of migrant children remain separated, continuing the unnecessary trauma meted out by the Trump Administration’s policies and practices. Under federal court order, many separated children are finally being reunited with their parents. However, some of these children have been brought to family detention centers, reuniting them with their parents but re-introducing the trauma of detention.

After the trauma of forced separation, many immigrant families continue to face horrific conditions in immigration detention. In addition, immigration law is extraordinarily complex, and detention only adds to the complexities of pursuing immigration relief, including applying for asylum. The de Blasio Administration—including the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, Law Department, Administration for Children’s Services, NYC Health + Hospitals, and Department of Social Services—is joining with the pro bono legal community to provide additional resources for these families.

Organized by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), the City volunteer group of approximately 15 individuals will travel to Dilley, Texas from September 9 to September 15 to work with the Dilley Pro Bono Project, a partner of the [Immigration Justice Campaign](#). From September 10 to September 15, the volunteers will work at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas to assist in this pro bono work. MOIA and the Mayor’s Fund are also exploring private partnerships to cover costs of airfare, travel, lodging, and meals for the City volunteer group. The need for legal assistance at detention centers like the one at Dilley is immense, according to local and national partners, so the de Blasio Administration is stepping up to help.

Since the unaccompanied migrant children (UAC) crisis in 2014, New York City has played a leading role in addressing the needs of migrant children who have come to our city. The de Blasio Administration took the unprecedented step of stationing City staff at Immigration Court in order to enroll UACs in public school and Medicaid. In addition, the Administration helped establish the Immigrant Children Advocates’ Relief Effort (ICARE)--a public-private partnership between the City Council, the Robin Hood Foundation, and New York Community Trust--to provide immigration legal help for UACs facing deportation. More recently, as the Administration learned about the crisis of separated children placed in New York City, the City mobilized to help ensure these children were receiving proper care. Working with federally-contracted foster care providers, advocates, and legal services providers, the City assisted addressing the needs of these children, including by offering health care, recreational activities, and offering immigration legal help to these children and potential sponsors. The City will continue to aid separated children in any way we can.

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