



# STATE OF OUR IMMIGRANT CITY

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) Annual Report for Calendar Year 2020

# Message from the Mayor

Dear Friends:



Immigrants define New York City. Over 200 languages are spoken across the five boroughs and more than one in every three New Yorkers identifies as an immigrant. Immigrants are the very fabric of our city, fuel our economy, and define the vibrancy that is at the core of our identity.

During the height of the COVID pandemic, hundreds of thousands of immigrant New Yorkers made up the essential workforce that kept our city running in its time of need. And we have seen that our immigrant communities are bearing the brunt of the pandemic: ongoing barriers to healthcare, lack of

labor protections, exclusion from many forms of federal relief, and the former Trump administration’s xenophobic and unconscionable policies.

But in the ultimate city of immigrants, we have stood firmly in support of our immigrant communities. Our City’s residents can get free and safe immigration legal help through ActionNYC. Over 50,000 New Yorkers who cannot afford or do not qualify for health insurance have enrolled in NYC Care to receive low-or no-cost health care. We offer Know Your Rights workshops, English language classes, and multilingual virtual town halls to answer community members’ questions and to address their concerns. And we ensure that whenever possible, our City-funded programs and pandemic resources — from eviction prevention assistance to free meals — are available to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status.

Immigrants are central to our recovery. As we reflect on an incredibly difficult year, New York City is grateful to the immigrants amongst us and committed to ensuring a future in which immigrant communities thrive in New York City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill de Blasio  
Mayor

# Message from Commissioner Bitta Mostofi

To my fellow New Yorkers:



This past year was a year of struggle for too many New Yorkers. This is especially true for our immigrant communities, many of whom have been working as essential workers even as they were left behind in federal relief and state programs. When many of us were sheltering in place, immigrant New Yorkers headed out to work in essential roles as the first responders, transit workers, pharmacy employees, teachers, and others who we all relied on to keep the city running.

Our fourth annual report highlights the work that MOIA has done over a difficult year to address the deep and enduring barriers facing our immigrant communities during the COVID-19 pandemic: lack of language access to stay up to date with the latest trusted information, restricted healthcare access, limited labor protections and little recourse to address workplace issues, and exclusion from many public services and benefits.

This report uses an analysis of publicly available data to explore the trends in the barriers that our immigrant communities face, including an exploration of the ways in which the pandemic has affected immigrant New Yorkers. It also highlights the vast amount of work that the office and our partners undertook to ensure that the city, state, and federal government provide equitable support to all our communities, and close loopholes to ensure that immigrants are never excluded again in moments of crisis.

2020 was a year of tremendous change and loss for all of us, but it has also left us with an important opportunity to rebuild a better, more integrated, and more welcoming city. With the end of the Trump administration, our communities can breathe easier and look to the future with renewed hope and commitment at the federal level. As we begin to recover from the pandemic, we will ensure that immigrant communities are never forgotten or an afterthought. Because when immigrants thrive, we all thrive.

Bitta Mostofi  
Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Mostofi', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

# Table of Contents

Message from the Mayor.....	2
Message from Commissioner Bitta Mostofi.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
Acronyms.....	5
Acknowledgments.....	8
Executive Summary.....	9
Mission of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs.....	11
Immigrant New Yorkers and Their Families – Barriers and Contributions.....	12
2020 Policy in Review.....	37
Reviewing MOIA’s Progress.....	42
MOIA Programs and 2020 Activities.....	44
Response to COVID-19: Resources for Immigrant New Yorkers.....	44
Response to COVID-19: Community Outreach and Engagement Tools.....	50
Interagency Coordination.....	55
Equity and Justice.....	57
Empowerment.....	83
Advocacy.....	102
Conclusion.....	109

# Acronyms

Official and Non-Official Acronym	Full Name
ACS	American Community Survey
NYC ACS	NYC Administration for Children’s Services
BORTAC	U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol Tactical Unit
C4A	Cities for Action
C4C	Cities for Citizenship
CAU	NYC Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CCHR	NYC Commission on Human Rights
CEC	NYC Civic Engagement Commission
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CUNY	The City University of New York
CY	Calendar Year
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DCWP	NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
District Court	U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
DOE DML	NYC Department of Education’s Division of Multilingual Learners
DOF	NYC Department of Finance
DOHMH	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DSS	NYC Department of Social Services
DVS	NYC Department of Veterans’ Services
EIDL	Economic Injury Disaster Loan
ELL	English Language Learner
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ENDGBV	NYC Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence
EOIR	U.S. Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FFCRA	Families First Coronavirus Response Act

<b>Official and Non-Official Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
H+H	NYC Health + Hospitals
HEAP	Home Energy Assistance Program
HEROES Act	Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HPD	NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
HRA	NYC Human Resources Administration
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IERF	NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund
IHW	Immigrant Heritage Week
KYR	Know Your Rights
LAC	Literacy Assistance Center
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LL30	Local Law 30 of 2017
LRIF	Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness
LST	MOIA's Language Services Team
LWWI	Low Wage Worker Initiative
MCC	IDNYC Mobile Command
MOCJ	NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
MOCTO	NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer
MOIA	NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
MOPT	NYC Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants

<b>Official and Non-Official Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
MWBE	Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises
NWNY	New Women New Yorkers
NYC Law	NYC Law Department
NYC Opportunity	NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity
NYCHA	NYC Housing Authority
NYLAG	New York Legal Assistance Group
NYPD	NYC Police Department
NYS DREAM Act	New York State DREAM Act
OCME	NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
OPHC	NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RFP	Requests for Proposals
RRLC	Rapid Response Legal Collaborative
SBS	NYC Department of Small Business Services
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
T2	NYC Test and Trace Corps
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act
WSNYC	We Speak NYC

# Acknowledgments

In loving memory of our colleagues Peterson Napoleon, Ola Balogun, and the many community members we lost over the past year. Peterson and Ola dedicated themselves to the communities they served and impacted thousands of lives. We miss them dearly.

This report is issued to the Mayor and the Speaker of the City Council in accordance with Local Law 185 of 2017, which mandates annual reporting on the city's immigrant population and MOIA's activities during the previous calendar year. This is the fourth such report, covering calendar year 2020.



# Executive Summary

The New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) promotes the well-being and full inclusion of immigrant New Yorkers in the City’s civic, economic, and cultural life. Through collaborative partnerships with City agencies, elected officials, cities and counties across the country, advocates, and community-based organizations (CBOs), MOIA advocates for policies and leads, supports, and manages a range of programs that increase justice, equity, and empowerment for the New York City’s immigrant communities, allowing them to live in safety and dignity. This report presents a snapshot of the City’s work in this area and does not cover the breadth of work that New York City agencies do to serve immigrants.

In 2020, New York City was faced with an unprecedented health, economic, and social crisis, which revealed and exacerbated underlying inequities and injustice. To address these issues, MOIA primarily focused on empowering communities through advocacy, outreach, and information-sharing. This includes: combatting inequities and addressing the impact of COVID-19 on New York City’s immigrant communities; institutionalizing immigration legal services and promoting guaranteed health care access and language access; and furthering civic engagement and immigrant rights and education programs. Some of these efforts included: spearheading virtual, digital, and in person outreach efforts to share information about critical COVID-19 updates, immigration policy changes, and available resources in up to 26 languages; empowering diverse communities to seek the care and support they need and are eligible for without fear, furthered by our participation in a citywide taskforce dedicated to racial inclusion and equity; and reviewing programs and service coverage to identify gaps and develop inclusive strategies to address them.

This report also reviews MOIA’s work in 2020 that demonstrated New York City’s leadership in fighting the Trump administration’s federal immigration policies that directly attacked and caused confusion among immigrants, threatening the safety and health of our communities during the global public health crisis. Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, and with the New York City Council’s coordination and support, MOIA’s work has helped ensure the City’s unwavering commitment to protecting, serving, and safeguarding the rights and well-being of all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status.

Highlights from MOIA's 2020 Annual Report include:

- **Tracking COVID-19 impact to immigrant communities through data.** In 2020, MOIA produced original research that helped to inform the debate and advocacy around inclusion of immigrant communities in pandemic relief, as well as research that helped to track the impacts of significant immigration developments, such as the public charge rule. The data also show that in 2019, New York City's non-citizen population experienced a decline for the second year.
- **Responding to the inequities of COVID-19.** MOIA worked to help counter the crushing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately ravaged the communities we serve, by creating innovative solutions to address gaps in federal relief, engaging in creative outreach, expanding language access, and by advocating for pro-immigrant policies at every level of government.
- **Institutionalizing legal services and support.** Recognizing the continuing demand for immigration legal services that is expected to further increase under the new federal administration, MOIA worked to institutionalize its legal services programs and embed the ActionNYC programs into the City's civil legal services infrastructure.
- **Empowering immigrants to be counted and participate in civic society.** MOIA collaborated with the NYC Census 2020 team to empower all New Yorkers to get counted through virtual and in-person events, direct sign-ups, and amplification of Census messaging through all public channels and other programs like We Speak NYC.
- **Advocating extensively at all levels of government in the last year of the Trump administration.** Whether it was sharing crucial information about public charge, launching a campaign in support of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), or joining the fight in court against the government's attempt to increase U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) immigration fees, MOIA worked with our partners across City government and across the country to push against anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric.

In 2021, MOIA looks forward to advancing our priorities in the final year of the de Blasio administration. This includes coordinating with our agency partners to ensure that every New Yorker can access the vaccine, advancing efforts for comprehensive immigration reform, and building on the critical work of economic relief to protect immigrant communities so that these communities can thrive and so that we may see a recovery that is fair and equitable for all.

# Mission of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

MOIA's work is focused on advancing three priorities: 1) furthering equity and justice with a focus on economic justice, language access, and access to legal and health services; 2) empowering immigrant communities through both civic and cultural engagement; and 3) advocating for immigration law and policy reforms at local, state, and federal levels in order to combat inequalities that harm New York's immigrant communities. To advance these goals and its mission, MOIA conducts research and analysis; provides guidance to other city agencies; develops partnerships with community-based organizations and other community leaders such as faith and business leaders, elected officials, and consulates; and advocates at all levels of government for immigrant New Yorkers.

New York City is and has always been the city of immigrants. In recognition of its rich heritage and the important role that immigrants play in New York City's economic, civic, and cultural life, Mayor Edward Koch established the Office of Immigrant Affairs as a division of the Department of City Planning in 1984. In 1990, Mayor David Dinkins elevated the office to a mayoral office, and four years later, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani merged the Offices of Immigrant Affairs and Language Services to expand MOIA's mandate to promote programs and policies that advance the civic, economic, and social inclusion of immigrant New Yorkers. In 2001, New York City voters adopted a ballot proposal via referendum, placing the Office of Immigrant Affairs within the City's Charter, making it the country's first chartered office dedicated to serving immigrants. The Office's first commissioner was appointed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2002.

Under the Mayor Bill de Blasio administration, MOIA has seen a substantial budget and personnel increase in the work of the Office. This expansion has led to a number of flagship accomplishments for the office, including an unprecedented investment of over \$30 million in immigration legal services; the creation of the IDNYC program, the largest municipal ID program in the country; and significantly expanding language access in the city, among others.

# Immigrant New Yorkers and Their Families – Barriers and Contributions

Using the latest available data, the following is a demographic snapshot of immigrant New Yorkers and a new analysis that examines the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant communities in New York City. This annual report uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) augmented by the NYC Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity). MOIA works in close partnership with NYC Opportunity to derive a methodology that estimates immigration legal status in the ACS. Due to the one-year lag in the U.S. Census Bureau’s release of ACS data, the demographic overview is presented using the most recent 2019 ACS data set and the City’s response and interventions cover 2020 throughout the report. To capture some of the COVID-19 impact on immigrant communities, this report also incorporates findings from the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund (IERF).<sup>1</sup>

The 2019 data show that the total number of immigrants in New York City has declined for a second year. Despite this shift in the overall number of immigrants, the data continue to show that the city’s immigrant population remains extremely diverse in terms of immigration status, languages spoken, and country of birth. Likewise, immigrants continue to contribute substantially to the city’s economy. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, immigrants kept the City going during this challenging time representing half of the one million essential workers serving on the frontlines. However, despite the critical role that immigrant New Yorkers play in the city, they continue to face impediments to full inclusion and well-being, such as access to health insurance and over-crowding, which has made it difficult for these communities to practice social distancing. And while COVID-19 case and mortality data are not available by immigration status, we have seen how the virus has disproportionately impacted communities who already experience the adverse impacts of persistent structural and institutional racism: a recent analysis of the City’s COVID-19 data found that as of February 2021, Latinx New Yorkers have died from COVID-19 at nearly twice the rate of White New Yorkers (300.9 compared to 157.0 per 100,000 people) and Black New Yorkers have died at 1.8 times the rate (275.9 compared to 157.0 per 100,000).<sup>2</sup>

Understanding and monitoring these disparities over time is critical to the City’s ability to provide effective services that are responsive to the needs of immigrant New Yorkers. MOIA released a fact sheet in July 2020 that shows the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on immigrant New Yorkers: the higher the make-up of immigrants or non-citizens there were per ZIP code, the higher the COVID-19 case and death rates were in that area. In fact, in ZIP codes where immigrants made up over 50 percent of the population, the COVID-19 case rate was over 20 percent higher than the citywide average and the death rate was more than

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1 See page 45 for more information about the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund.

2 Based on NYC DOHMH data as of February 10, 2021 available here: <https://github.com/nychealth/coronavirus-data/blob/master/totals/by-race.csv>.

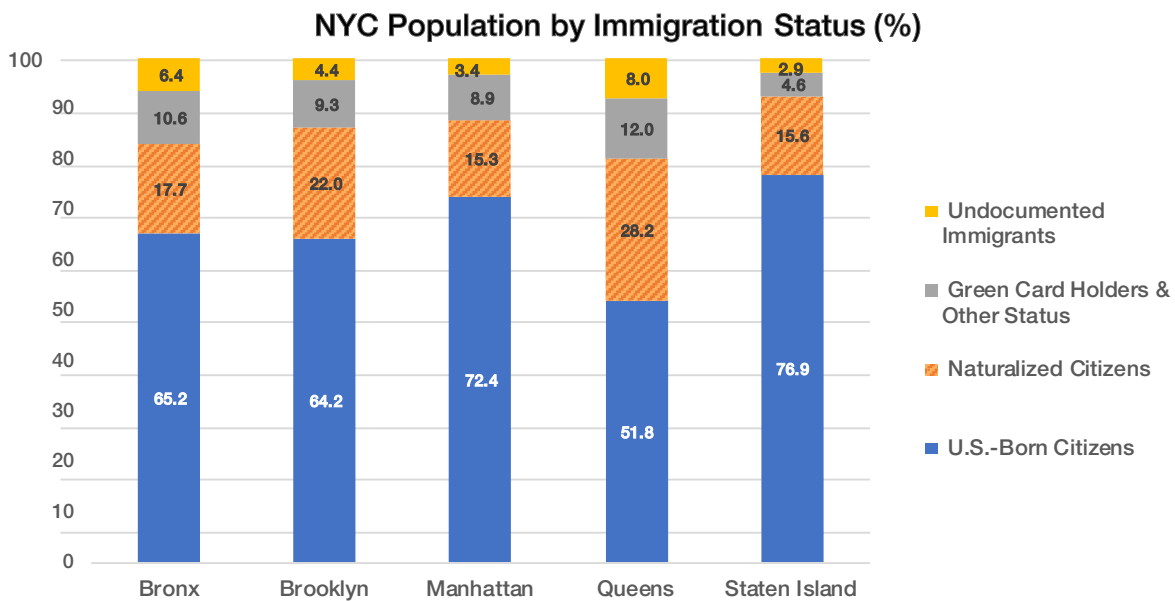
40 percent higher than the citywide average.<sup>3</sup> MOIA will continue to assess the pandemic impact and disparities in collaboration with other government and community partners.

## Overview<sup>4</sup>

New York City is home to 3 million immigrants who comprise about 36 percent of the city’s population and 43 percent of its workforce.<sup>5</sup> The foreign-born population resides in all corners of the five boroughs. A particularly high concentration of immigrant residents can be found in certain neighborhoods across the city, predominantly in Queens and Brooklyn but also in certain areas of the Bronx and Manhattan.<sup>6</sup>

## Immigration Status

All five boroughs have significant immigrant populations, including undocumented immigrants.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

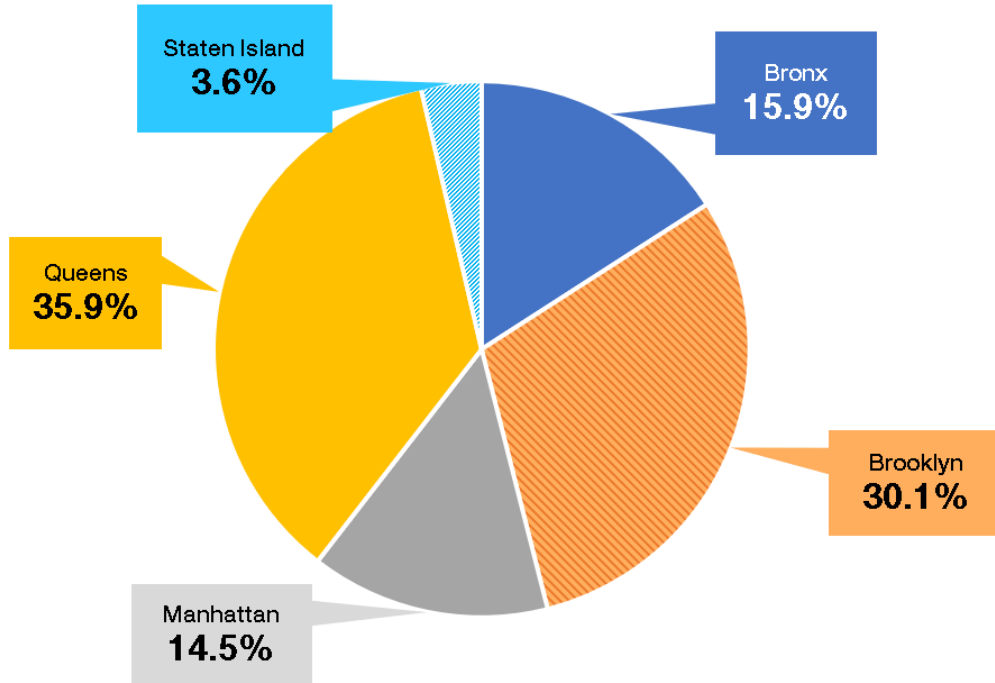
3 Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Fact Sheet : COVID-19 Health and Economic Impacts on Immigrant Communities: July 2020*, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/covid-immigrant-fact-sheet-20200731.pdf>

4 All data in this report that uses immigration legal status is based on 2019 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS) as augmented by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity). For more information on the methodology, see “An Economic Profile of Immigrants in New York City,” NYC Office for Economic Opportunity, accessed December 6, 2019, <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/immigrant-poverty-report-2018.pdf>. For all other data that does not use immigration legal status, this report uses the American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS), which includes persons that reside in group quarters, a difference of about 200,000 in New York City.

5 U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

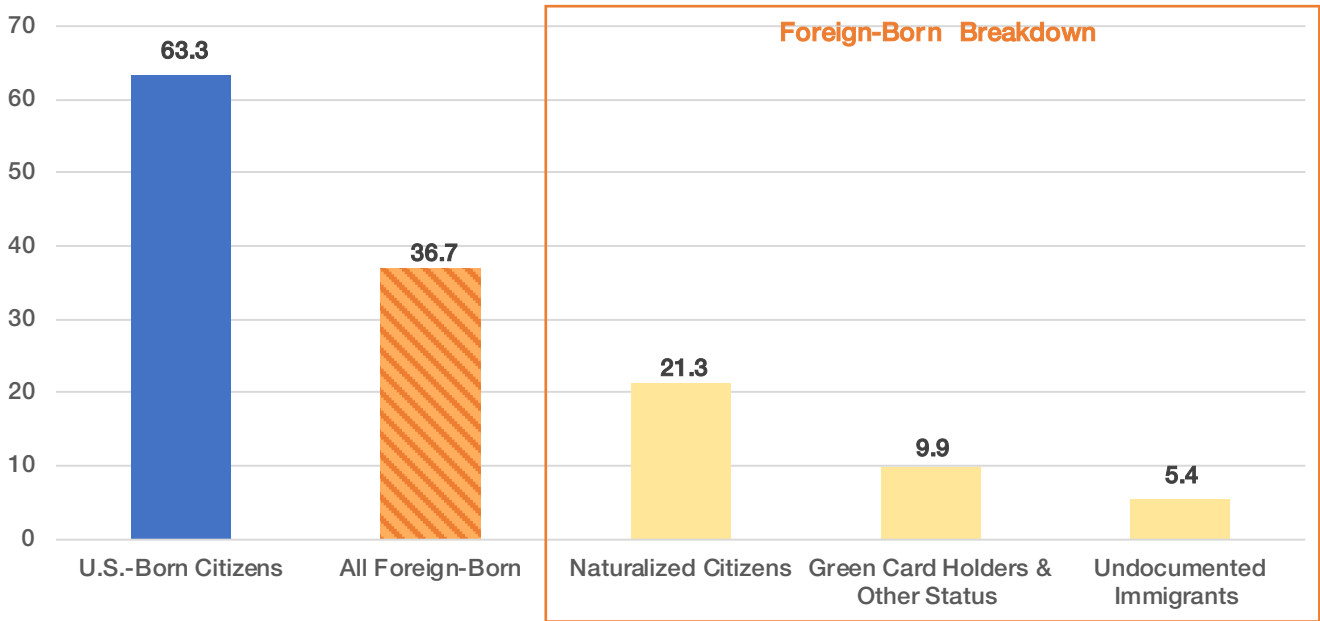
6 Several terms are used throughout this section. “Foreign-born” and “immigrants” are used interchangeably to mean either naturalized U.S. citizens or non-citizens. “Green card holders & other status” includes individuals with lawful permanent resident status, immigrant and nonimmigrant visas, and other forms of status. Undocumented immigrants in this context include persons who either entered the country across a U.S. border without inspection or entered the U.S. legally and subsequently lost legal status. Also included in this population estimate are immigrants who have a quasi-legal status known as “PRUCOL,” certain individuals who are allowed to stay in the country for an indefinite period with the authorization of the Department of Homeland Security, such as pending asylee applicants, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

### Immigrant Population by Borough (%)



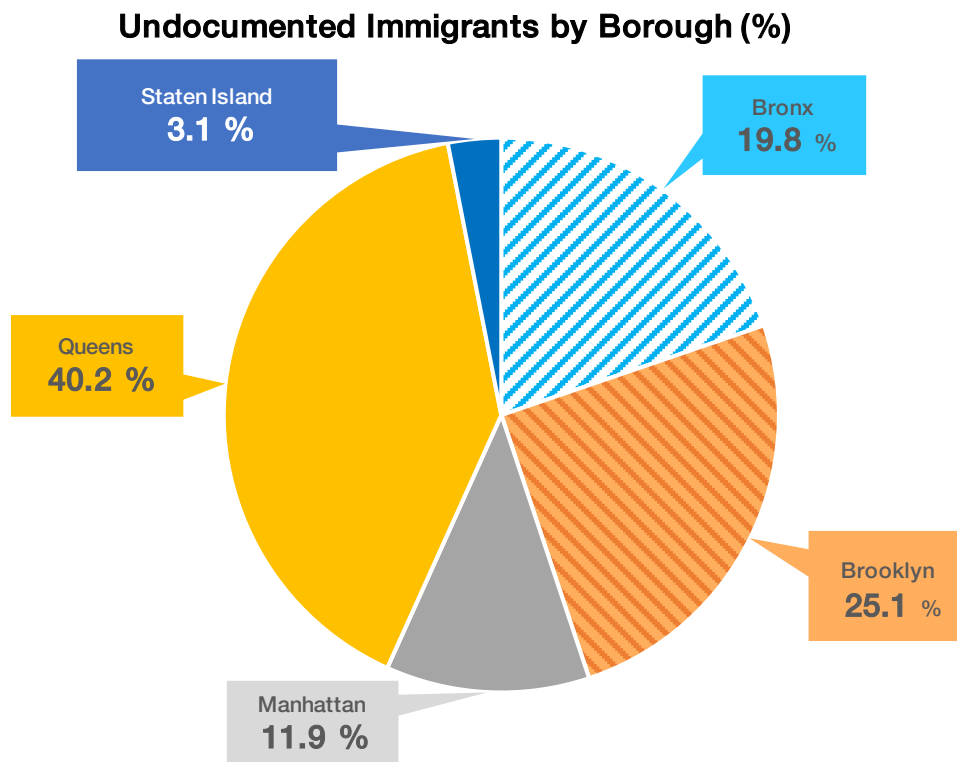
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

### NYC Population by Immigration Status (%)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

Approximately 58 percent of immigrant New Yorkers are naturalized U.S. citizens. In addition, an estimated 589,000 immigrant New Yorkers are lawful permanent residents (i.e., green card holders) who are potentially eligible to naturalize.

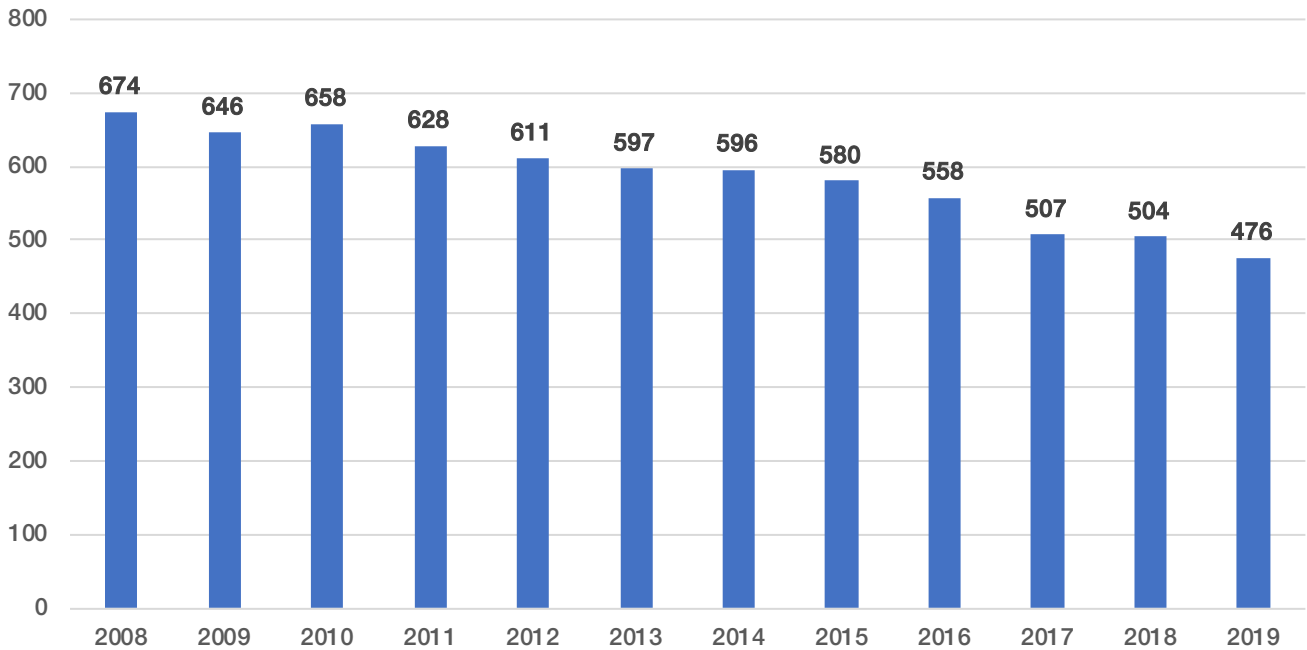


*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

New York City was also home to approximately 476,000 undocumented immigrants in 2019, as compared to 504,000 in 2018. In the last decade, the overall undocumented population has been on the decline both in the City and nationwide. Between 2008 and 2019, the undocumented population declined by 29 percent. This can be attributed to several factors, including a weak U.S. economy following the 2008 housing market collapse, improved economic conditions in Mexico, and heightened enforcement at the U.S. and Mexico border.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Robert Warren, Center for Migration Studies, U.S. Undocumented Population Continued to Fall from 2016 to 2017, and Visa Overstays Significantly Exceeded Illegal Crossings for the Seventh Consecutive Year (2019), available at <http://cmsny.org/publications/essay-2017-undocumented-and-overstays/>; Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, Pew Research Center, U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Total Dips to Lowest Level in a Decade, (2018), available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2331502419830339>.

### NYC Undocumented Population Over Time in thousands



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

For the second year, the number of non-citizens in the City has declined. In 2019 the non-U.S. citizen population was about 220,000 lower than at the beginning of the decade in 2010.<sup>8</sup> The decline in the overall foreign-born population in the last few years is due in large part to this large drop in the number of non-citizens. The foreign-born population in 2019 represents a decline from the peak of 3.2 million in 2015. This decline can potentially be attributed to a variety of factors, including the indirect effects of the Trump administration’s immigration policies.

<sup>8</sup> Based on U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2019 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample.



## Diversity of NYC Immigrants

The top 10 countries of birth for the three million foreign-born City residents are:

	Country of Birth for NYC Immigrants	Population in 2019	% of all Foreign-Born
1	Dominican Republic	399,586	13.4
2	China	352,818	11.8
3	Jamaica	169,812	5.7
4	Mexico	153,052	5.1
5	Guyana	126,161	4.2
6	Ecuador	111,307	3.7
7	Bangladesh	90,955	3.0
8	Haiti	83,384	2.8
9	India	77,996	2.6
10	Trinidad & Tobago	70,023	2.3

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

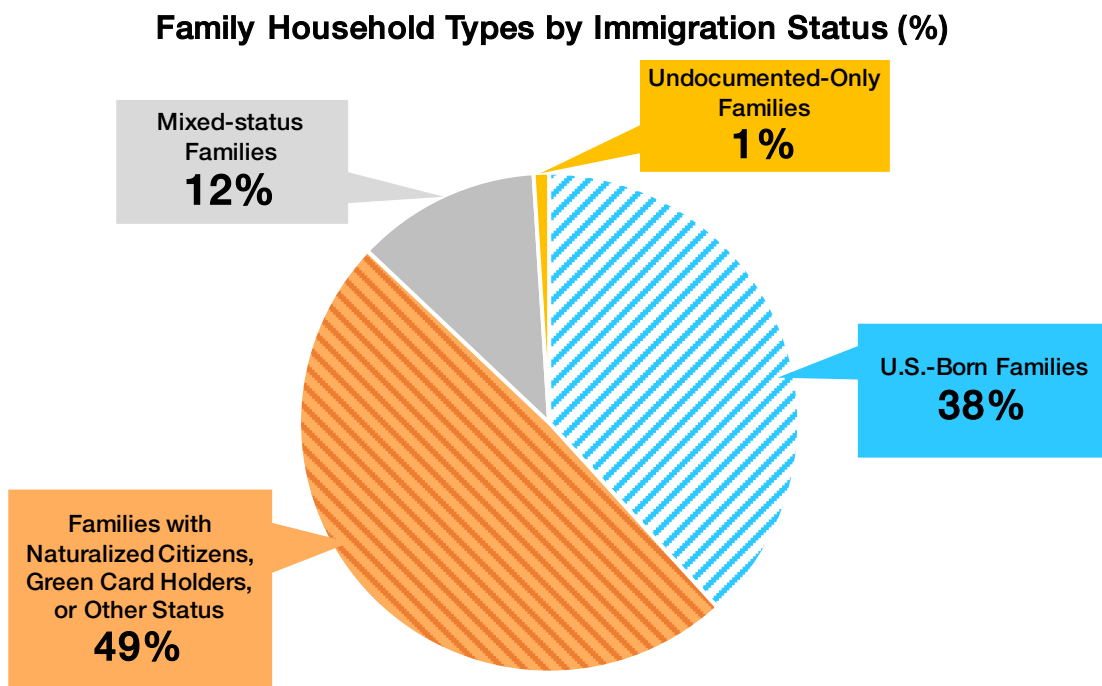
Immigrants from the Dominican Republic remain the largest group of the foreign-born population, followed closely by China. The foreign-born population from China increased the most rapidly between 2010 and 2019 (18 percent). The number of immigrants from Mexico has declined substantially over the decade (18 percent). Bangladesh emerged as one of the top ten countries of birth increasing by 61 percent between 2010 and 2019.

## Families by Citizenship and Immigration Status

This section provides an overview of mixed-status families in New York City.<sup>9</sup> By examining the composition of families, we show more clearly how connected U.S. citizen New Yorkers are to their undocumented fellow residents, and how all New Yorkers are impacted by federal policies that exclude undocumented workers and families from protections or relief. About 62 percent of New Yorkers live in families with at least one immigrant. We describe four categories for families:

<sup>9</sup> This analysis of mixed-status families uses the family type construct defined by the NYC Office of Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity). Family type was created to reflect resource sharing or poverty units for NYC Opportunity's alternative poverty measure. This variable differs slightly from the household/family typed used in the American Community Survey (HHT). For example, unmarried partners are considered to be in the same family using NYC Opportunity's definition of family but not recognized as a family in the ACS. Persons living alone or with other unrelated individuals are excluded from this analysis. For more information on how NYC Opportunity defines families or resource sharing units, see: this analysis, see [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/NYCGovPoverty2020\\_Appendix\\_A.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/NYCGovPoverty2020_Appendix_A.pdf)

- 1. U.S.-Born Families:** Every person is U.S.-born. This category comprises 38.4 percent of all New York City families.
- 2. Families with Naturalized Citizens, Green Card Holders, and Other Status:** Every person is a citizen (naturalized or U.S.-born), green card holder, or other lawful status. Approximately 49 percent of all New York families fall into this category.
- 3. Mixed-status Families:** At least one person is undocumented. This accounts for 12 percent of families in New York City.
- 4. Undocumented-only Families:** Every person in the family is undocumented. This represents approximately 1 percent of all New York City families.



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

These categories help differentiate the effects that immigration status has on family outcomes and well-being.

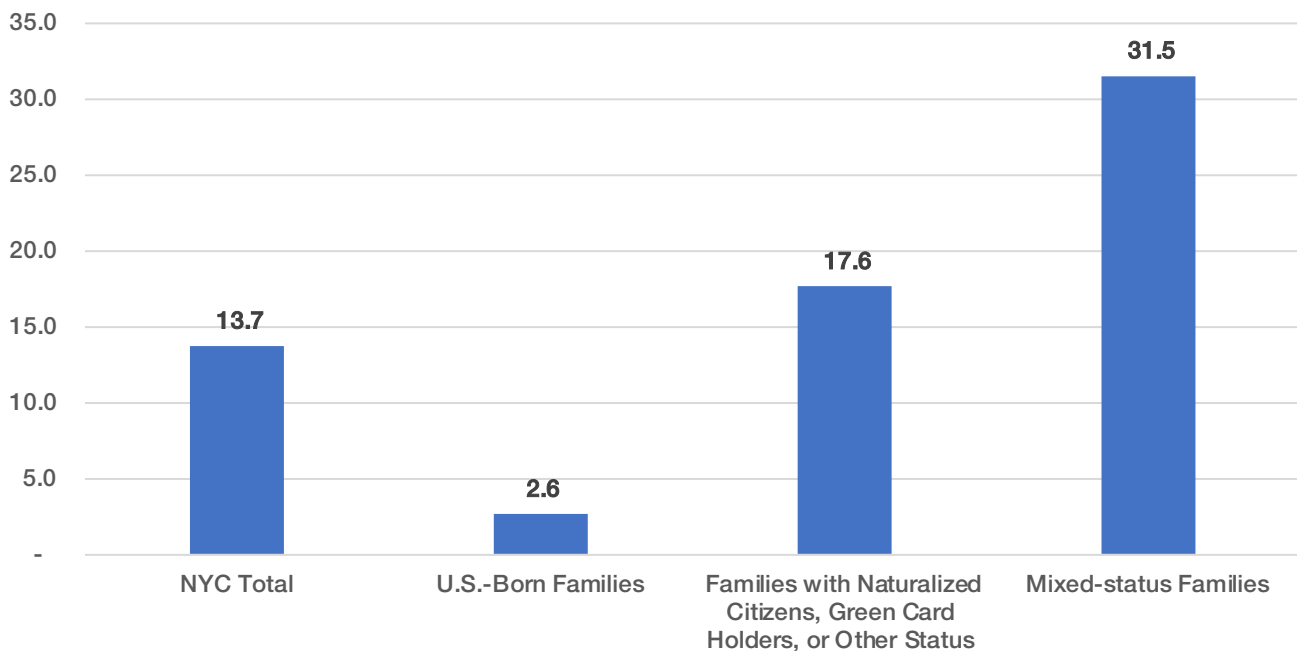
### Children in Mixed-Status Families

In New York City, there are about 1.7 million children (persons under 18 years of age). Over one million, or 60 percent, of those children live in families with at least one foreign-born family member. About 14 percent of all children or 240,000 live in mixed-status families.

Children in mixed-status families are situated differently than their peers in other household categories in terms of English proficiency, overcrowded housing, and rent burden:<sup>10</sup>

- Linguistic Isolation.** Children living in mixed-status families tend to be less proficient in English than their peers in other household categories. Nearly a third of children (32 percent) in mixed-status families live in linguistically isolated households (where all persons in the household – aged 14 and over – speak a language other than English and in which no adults speak English well), compared to 18 percent of children born in families with green card holders or other status, and just three percent in U.S.-born families. This suggests that children with English proficiency in these families may bear a disproportionate level of family responsibility as the only proficient English speaker in the home.

**Children in Linguistically Isolated Families**



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

- Overcrowded Housing.** Over half (56 percent) of the children living in mixed-status families in New York City live in an overcrowded household (having more than one person per room), which is more than double the rate of overcrowding among U.S.-born families (22 percent).
- Rent-Burdened Households.** Over half (63 percent) of all children in mixed-status families live in households where rent is 30 percent or more of the total family income, as compared to 53 percent of children in U.S.-born-only households.

<sup>10</sup> The number of children in families with only undocumented persons is too small to produce reliable estimates and are therefore excluded from this further analysis.

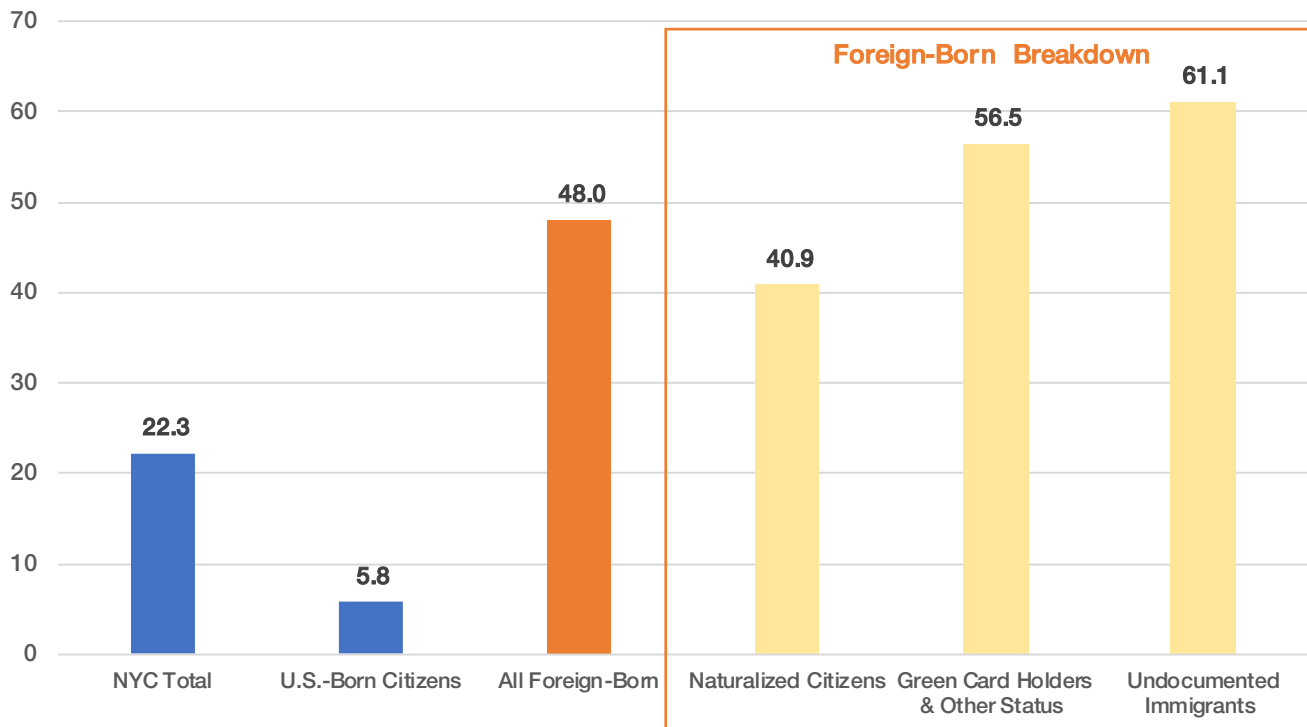
## Demographic Overview and Barriers

While the City has come a long way in helping to close gaps for immigrants, persistent barriers remain – many of which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following section uses census data and data from the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund<sup>11</sup> to provide an overview of some of these hurdles, as well as some work that MOIA has either led or collaborated on with agencies to address these barriers. Note that this is a highly targeted snapshot of the City’s work and does not cover the breadth of work that City agencies do to serve immigrants. All city agencies strive to serve and protect immigrant New Yorkers, with many of their services available to every New Yorker, regardless of immigration status and attuned to cultural and linguistic diversity of New Yorkers. For further information about how MOIA partners with agencies to do this work, please see 56 about our interagency taskforce.

### Language Access

Approximately half (48 percent) of immigrants have Limited English Proficiency (LEP).<sup>12</sup> Nearly 61 percent of undocumented immigrants are LEP. Overall, 22 percent of all New Yorkers are LEP – regardless of immigration status.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP) by Immigration Status (%)**



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

11 See page 45 for more information about the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund.

12 LEP is defined as persons, 5 years and older, who speak a language other than English at home and who reported speaking English “not at all”, “not well”, or “well” as reported by the US Census Bureau.

The City has significant linguistic diversity with more than 200 languages spoken by residents across the five boroughs. The top 10 languages spoken by foreign-born New York City residents with LEP are:<sup>13</sup>

	Language Spoken by the foreign-born with LEP	% of all foreign-born LEP
1	Spanish	44.5
2	Chinese, including Cantonese and Mandarin	21.6
3	Russian	7.2
4	Bengali	3.8
5	Haitian Creole	2.2
6	Korean	2.1
7	Arabic	1.6
8	Polish	1.5
9	Urdu	1.4
10	Italian	1.2

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

Speakers of these 10 languages accounted for 87 percent of immigrants with LEP.

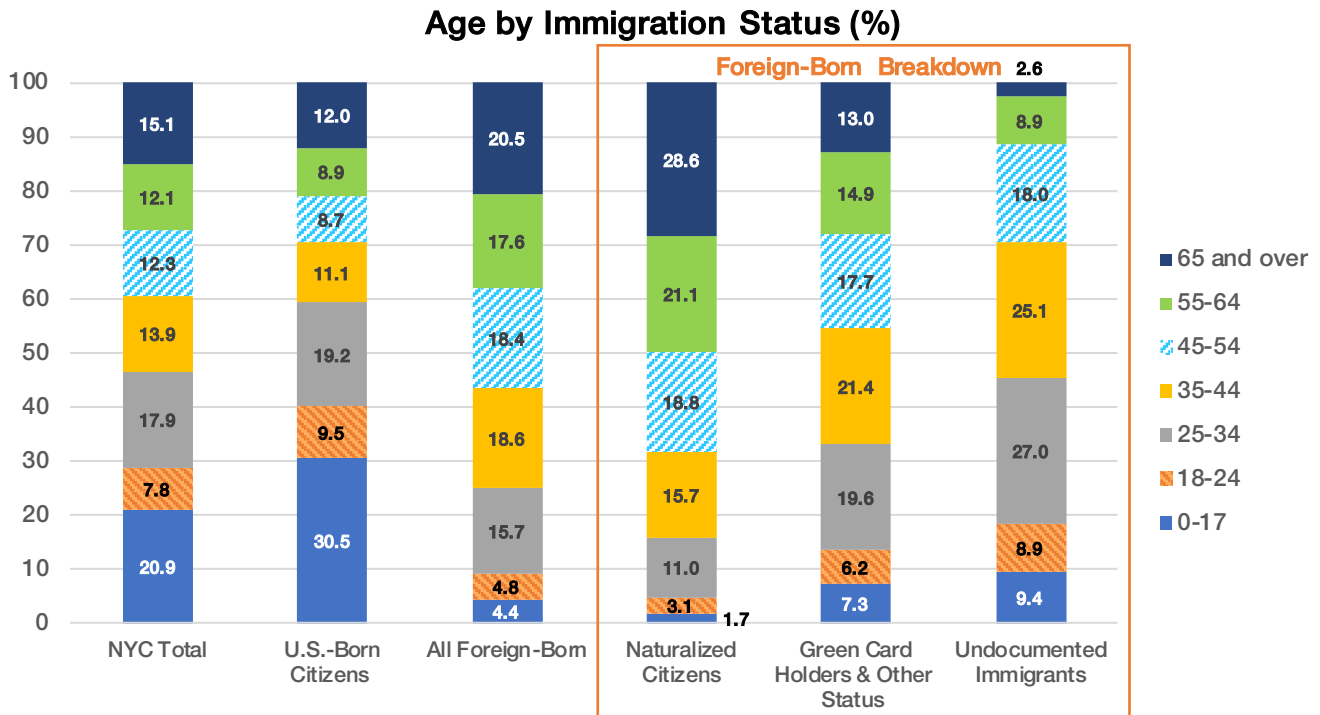
To meet the needs of such a linguistically diverse city, MOIA works at multiple levels to ensure all New Yorkers, including those who are LEP, have access to the same information. This includes MOIA’s work to provide technical assistance to sister agencies in implementing Local Law 30, the City’s language access law, to ensure that city government can effectively communicate with and serve New Yorkers with LEP and MOIA’s flagship We Speak NYC program (WSNYC). See page 53 for more information on MOIA’s language access work and page 66 for more on the We Speak NYC program.

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13 These languages differ from the City’s ten designated Local Law 30 (LL30) languages. This report looks at foreign-born with LEP, whereas LL30 considers LEP data for New York City regardless of immigration status. For more information about the LL30 methodology, refer to the statute available here: [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/Local\\_Law\\_30.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/Local_Law_30.pdf).

## Age

Immigrant New Yorkers in general are older than U.S.-born citizens. The median age for the total foreign-born population is 48 years compared to 29 years of age for U.S.-born citizens. Within the immigrant population, however, there is wide variation. Naturalized citizens are the oldest (median age of 54 years) compared to 36 years for undocumented immigrants.



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

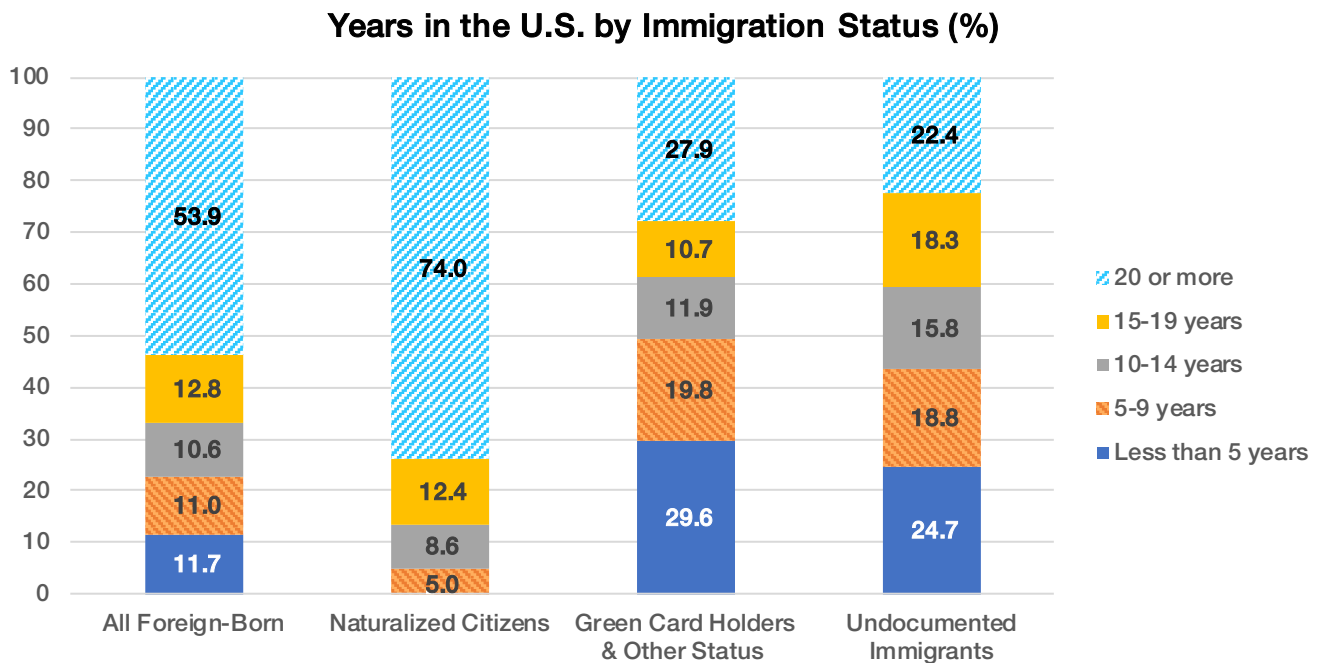
## Median Age by Immigration Status

Immigration Status	NYC Total	U.S.-Born Citizens	All Foreign-Born	Naturalized Citizens	Green Card Holders & Other Status	Undocumented Immigrants
<b>Median Age</b>	37	29	48	54	42	36

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

## Years in the U.S.

In addition, over half (54 percent) of immigrant New Yorkers have lived in the United States for 20 years or more. This percent is consistent with previous years.



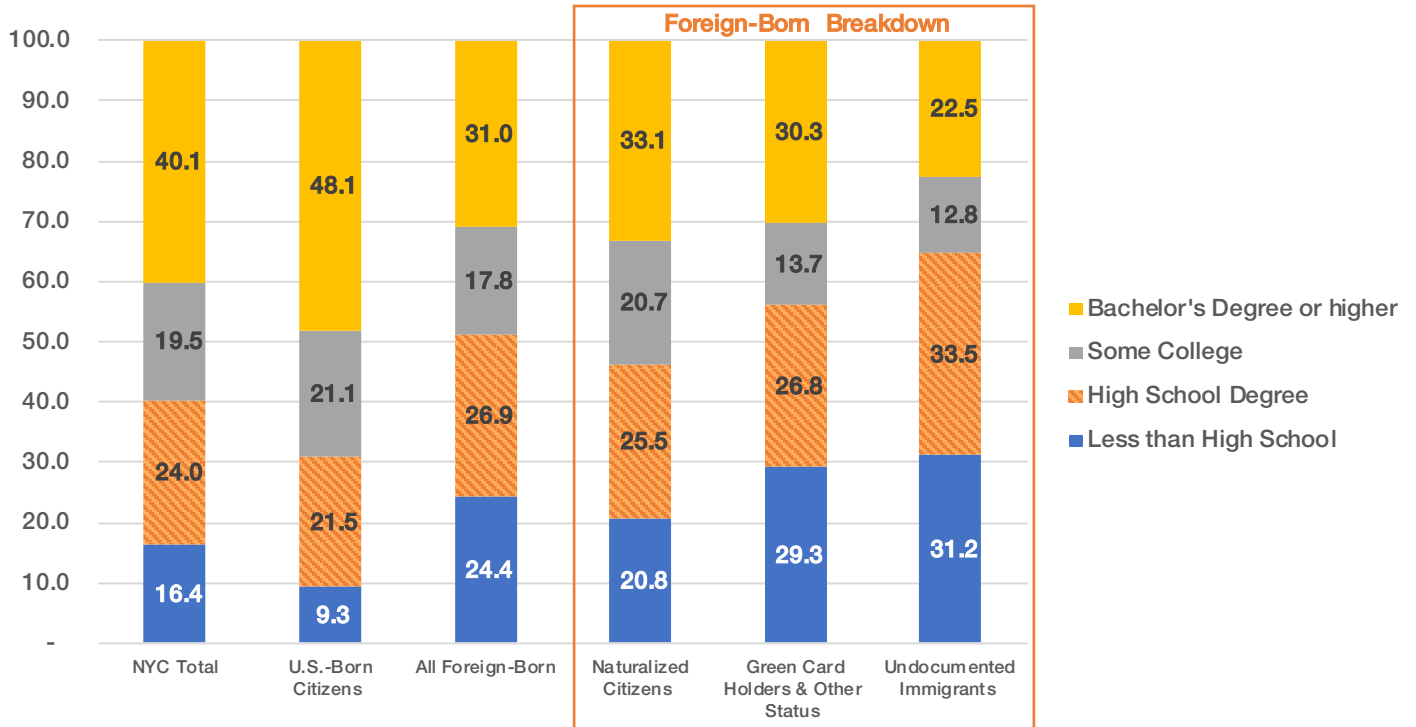
*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

## Education

Almost half (49 percent) of immigrant New Yorkers age 25 or older have attended college for some years or graduated from college. These rates are notably higher for naturalized citizens compared to other immigrant groups. About 31 percent of undocumented immigrants living in New York City have not obtained a high school diploma, compared to 21 percent of naturalized U.S. citizens, and 9 percent of U.S.-born citizens.

To further access to education, MOIA supports application assistance and outreach for immigrant New Yorkers applying for financial aid through the New York State (NYS) DREAM Act. For more information on MOIA’s work to reduce barriers to higher education for immigrants in connection with the NYS DREAM Act, see page 84.

## Education Attainment by Immigration Status (%)\*



\*For those aged 25 and older

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

## Health

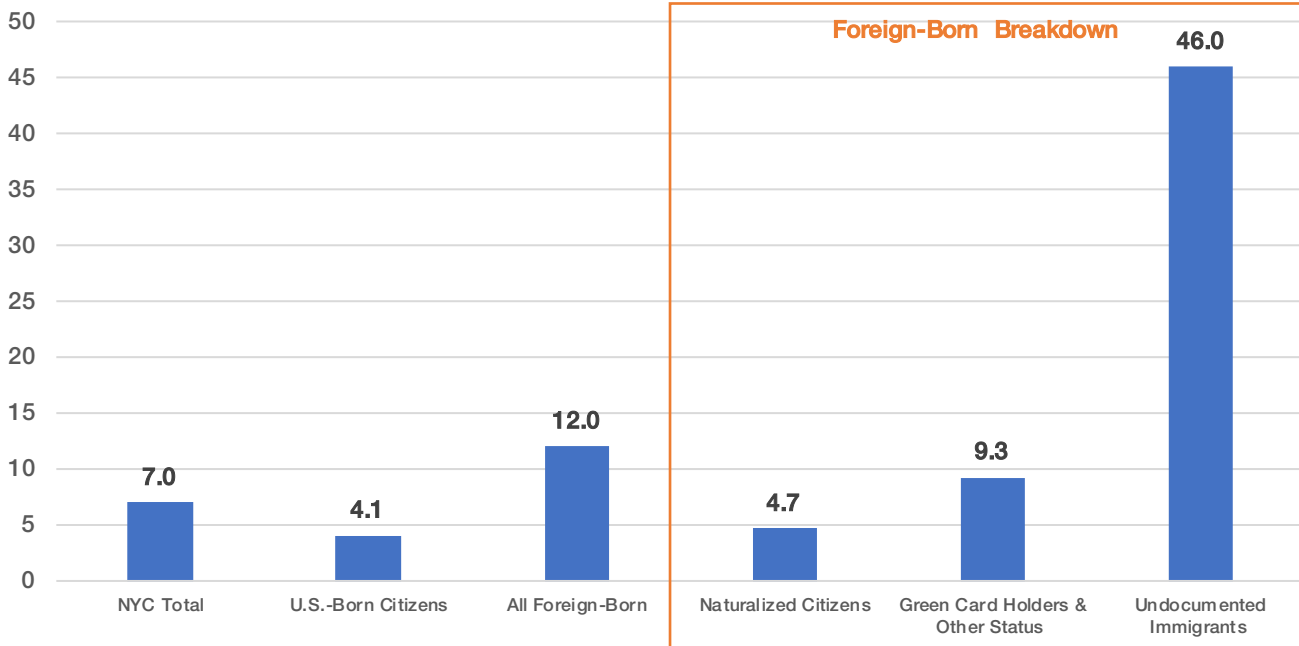
As we have seen, the COVID-19 crisis has laid bare many long-standing disparities. Additionally, barriers to social supports are exacerbating the vulnerability of under-resourced communities to the impacts of COVID-19 and challenges in the recovery process. This challenge is reflected in immigrant disparity in access to health insurance. In New York City and nationwide, there are persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizens. Approximately 96 percent of U.S.-born New Yorkers have health insurance, compared to only 78 percent of non-citizen New Yorkers. The disparity is starker between citizens (both U.S.-born and naturalized) and undocumented immigrants, where only 54 percent of undocumented immigrants have health insurance compared to 93 percent of NYC's total population.<sup>14</sup>

The gap in insurance coverage by immigration status also persists among children, under age 19, even though universal coverage is available for them under state law. In New York State, all children are eligible for Child Health Plus regardless of their immigration status or ability to pay. Yet, 13 percent of undocumented children are uninsured, compared to two percent of U.S.-born citizen children. Overall, there are nearly 40,000 children of all immigration statuses in New York City who are uninsured.

<sup>14</sup> Undocumented immigrants may have health insurance through state-mandated universal coverage for children, coverage as a dependent, employer-sponsored insurance coverage, coverage purchased on the private market, or, for those who have forms of temporary status or quasi-status like DACA or TPS, public health insurance programs for which they are eligible under federal or state law.

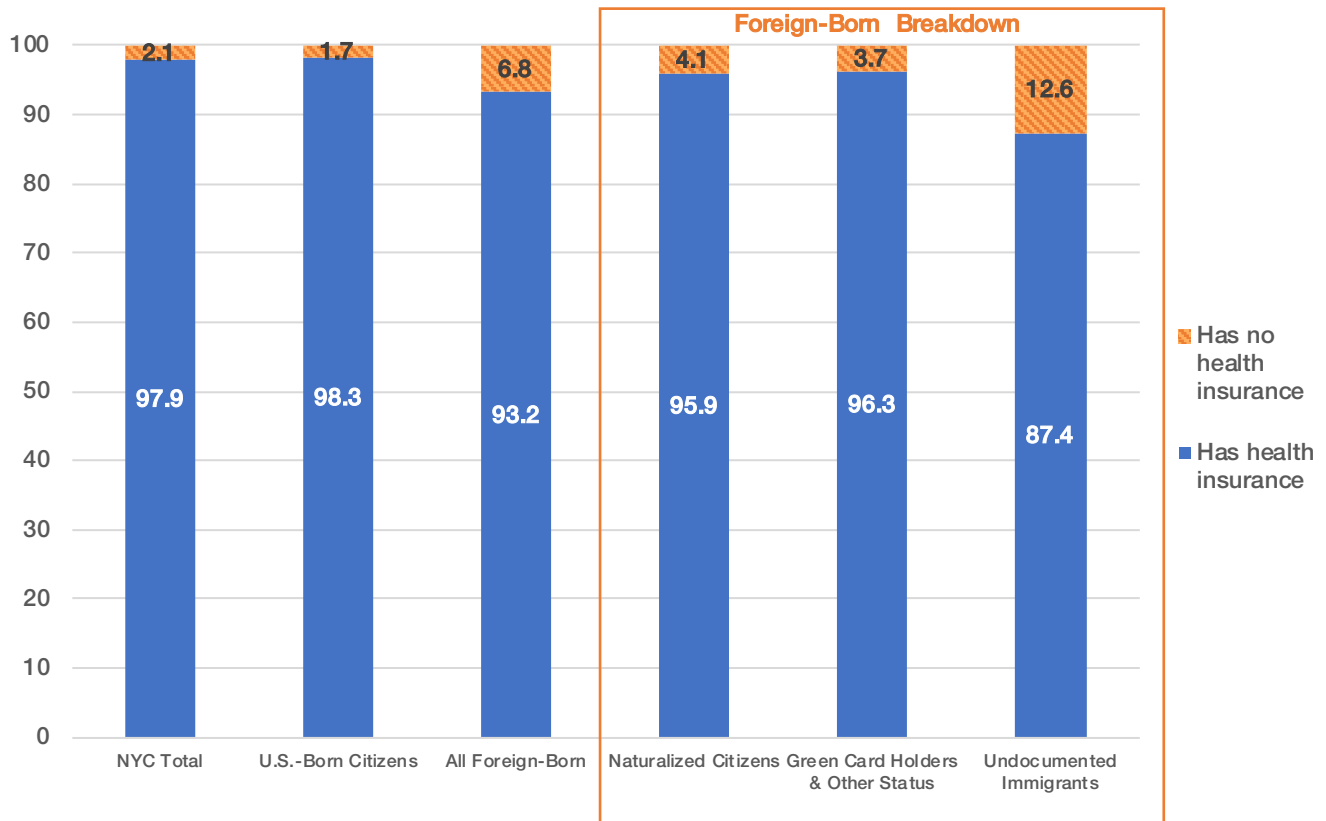


### Uninsured Rate by Immigration Status (%)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

### Health Insurance Coverage by Immigration Status (%) Children (under 19)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

The gap in health insurance coverage between the U.S. citizen (including both U.S.-born and naturalized) and the non-U.S. citizen populations, the latter of whom are far more likely to be uninsured, has closed considerably in recent years: in 2019, 22 percent of non-citizens were uninsured — much lower than just six years earlier in 2013, when about 35 percent of non-citizens were uninsured.<sup>15</sup> This is largely due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the City’s GetCoveredNYC effort. However, after several years of coverage gains following the ACA, the uninsured rate increased slightly in 2019. This is in line with the nationwide trend, likely due to the concern and confusion surrounding the federal administration’s efforts to alter the availability and affordability of coverage. Despite the recent increase, the number of uninsured individuals remains well below levels prior to enactment of the ACA.<sup>16</sup>

The public charge rule may have also discouraged immigrants from enrolling in health insurance out of fear that it may have immigration consequences. A 2020 survey of immigrant-serving organizations reported that significant shares of families were avoiding public health programs, even if they had not been included in the rule: 44 percent reported avoiding emergency Medicaid, 41 percent reported avoiding free or low-cost medical care for the uninsured, and 37 percent reported avoiding ACA marketplace health insurance coverage.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to these achievements in health insurance coverage, the City has also made historic progress with its Guaranteed Healthcare for All initiative, the largest, most comprehensive plan in the nation to guarantee health care for every resident. The plan aims to serve the approximately or 569,000 New Yorkers without insurance by strengthening the City’s public health insurance option, MetroPlus, and offering anyone who cannot afford or is ineligible for health insurance — including undocumented New Yorkers — to enroll in NYC Health + Hospitals’ NYC Care program. NYC Care provides members with a dedicated primary care provider and affordable health care services, including routine screening and vaccinations, mental health care and medications. For more information about how NYC Care reached immigrants in 2020 and MOIA’s work in the program, see page 81.

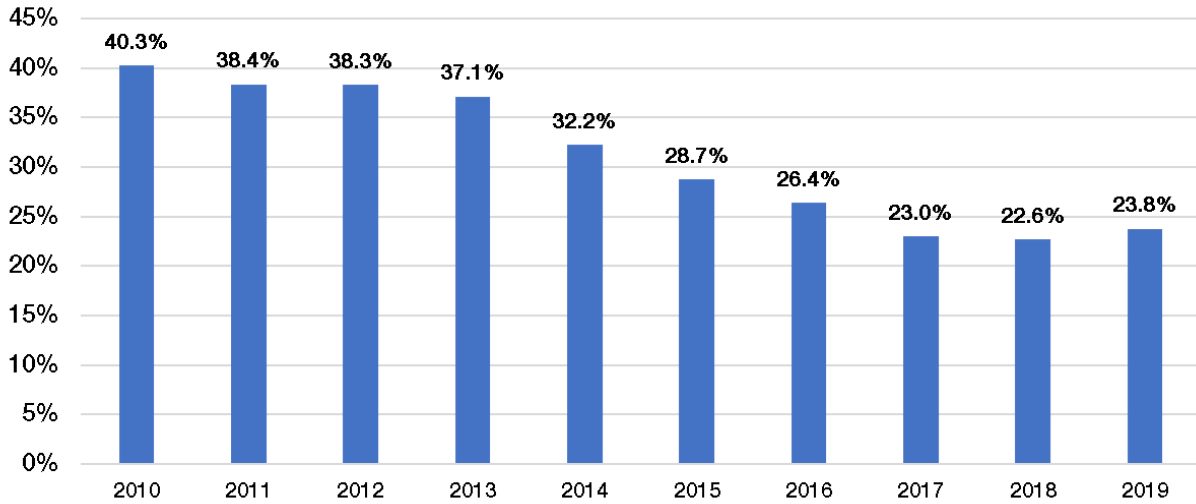
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15 Based on American Community Survey 1-year Public Use Microdata Sample.

16 Jennifer Tolbert, Kaiser Family Foundation, *Key Facts about the Uninsured Population* (2020), available at [https://www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/#:~:text=The%20uninsured%20rate%20increased%20in,from%202016%20\(Figure%201\).](https://www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/#:~:text=The%20uninsured%20rate%20increased%20in,from%202016%20(Figure%201).)

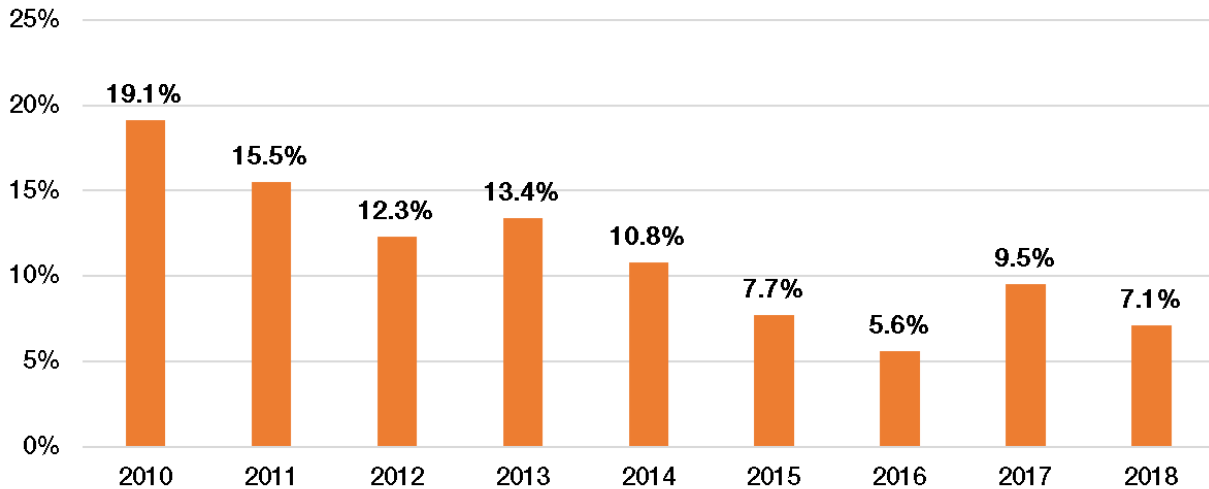
17 Hamutal Bernstein, Urban Institute, *Immigrant-Serving Organizations’ Perspectives on the COVID-19 Crisis* (2020), available at [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102775/immigrant-serving-organizations-on-the-covid-19-crisis\\_1.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102775/immigrant-serving-organizations-on-the-covid-19-crisis_1.pdf).

### Uninsured Rate for Non-Citizen Adults (19+) (%)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

### Uninsured Rate of Non-Citizen Children (Under 19) (%)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

## Housing

One in five (21 percent) immigrant New Yorkers reside in overcrowded households, defined as more than one person per room. The number includes the approximately eight percent of the total immigrant population who live in extremely overcrowded housing, defined here as having more than 1.5 persons per room. The prevalence of overcrowding is particularly high among non-citizens as compared to naturalized citizens, who have the same overcrowding rate as U.S.-born citizens (15 percent). This barrier is particularly notable this year since higher rates of overcrowding have made social distancing for this population more difficult.

**Persons in Overcrowded Households by Immigration Status (%)**

	NYC Total	U.S.-Born Citizens	All Foreign-Born	Naturalized Citizens	Green Card Holders & Other Status	Undocumented Immigrants
Overcrowded	17.0	14.9	20.8	14.9	26.6	33.1

**Overcrowded Households by Immigration Status (%)**

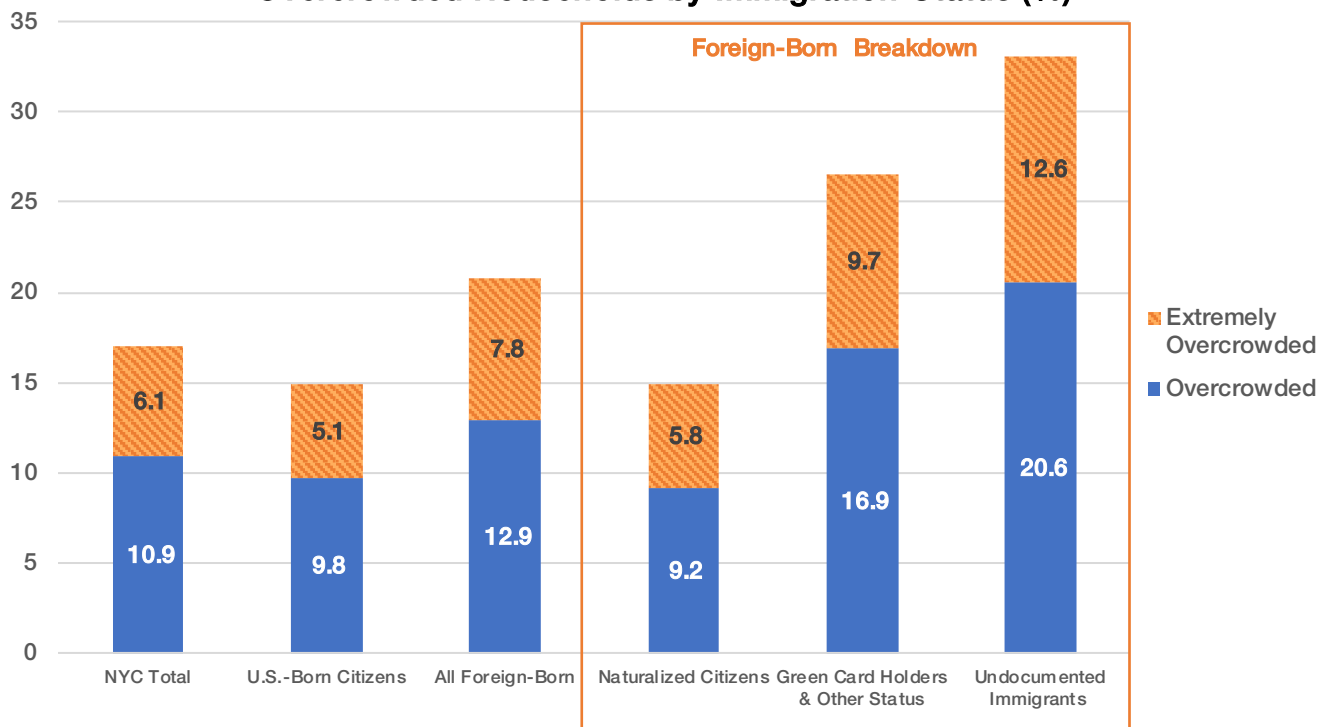


Figure above: Overcrowded households are defined as having more than one person per room. Extremely overcrowded households are defined as having more than 1.5 persons per room.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

Regardless of immigration status, about one-half (47 percent) of all New Yorkers are rent-burdened, defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as spending 30 percent or more of their household income on rent. This problem is greater for non-citizens – green card holders and undocumented immigrants alike. The percent of persons who are rent burdened is lowest for U.S.-born citizens (46 percent compared to 51 percent for undocumented immigrants).

**Persons in Rent Burdened Households by Immigration Status (%)**

	NYC Total	U.S.-Born Citizens	All Foreign-Born	Naturalized Citizens	Green Card Holders & Other Status	Undocumented Immigrants
Rent Burdened	47.1	45.6	49.4	48.6	49.9	50.9

**Rent Burdened Households by Immigration Status (%)**

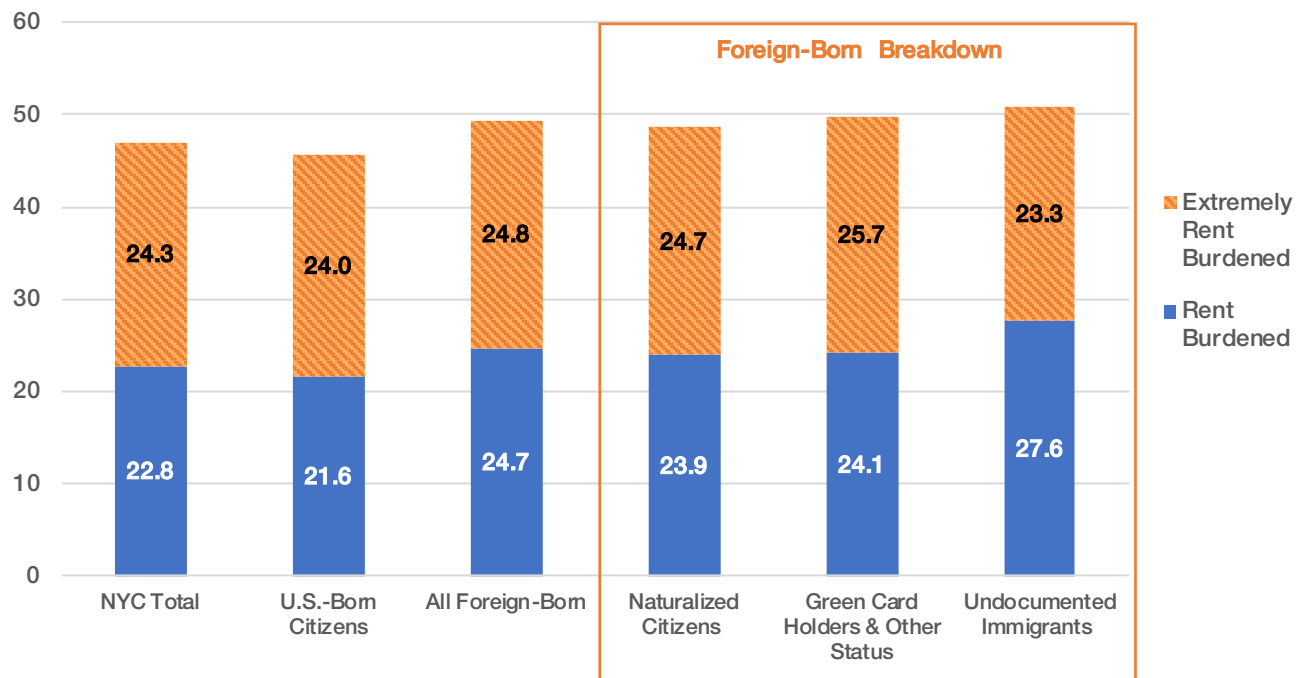


Figure above: Rent-burdened households are defined as paying 30 percent or more of their household income on rent. Extremely rent-burdened households are defined as paying more than 50 percent of household income on rent.

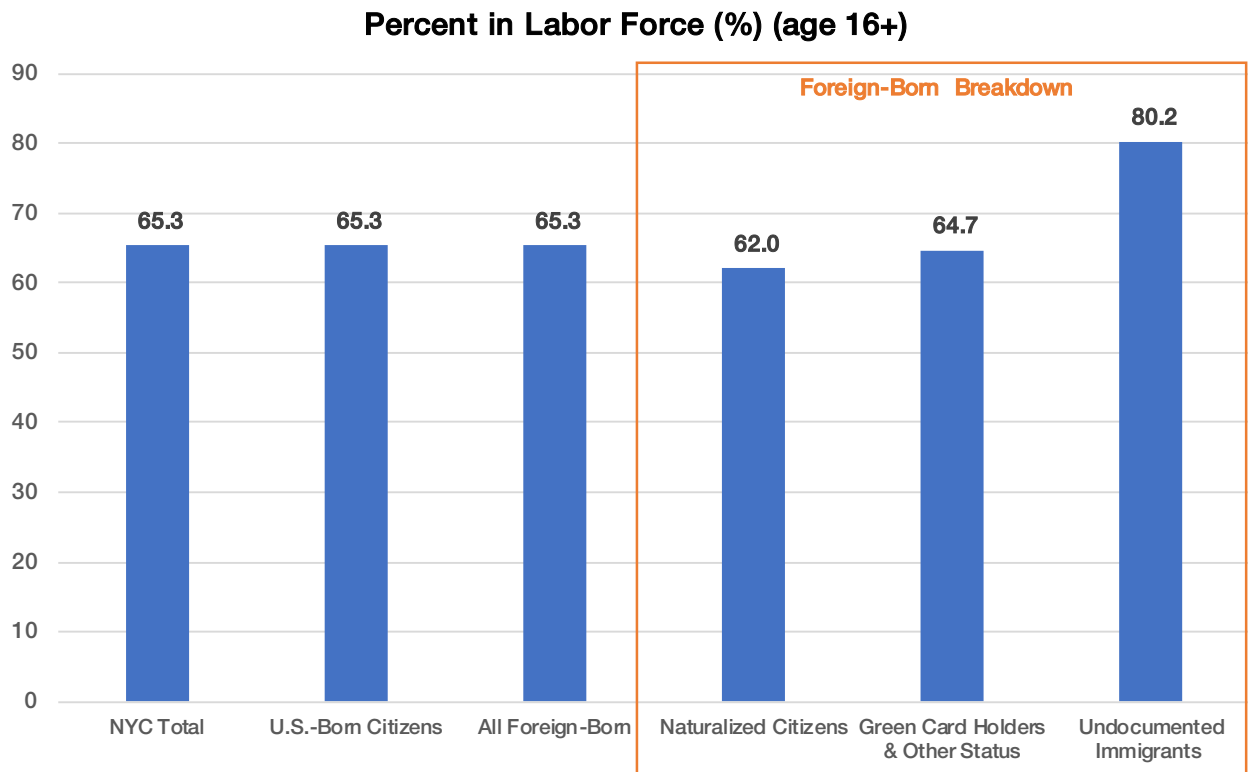
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

The COVID-19 pandemic has since worsened economic conditions and made it harder for all New Yorkers to afford rent. To help address this, MOIA, the NYC Department of Social

Services (DSS), and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) have supported Project Parachute, a coalition of property owners, nonprofits, and city agencies committed to helping vulnerable and underserved New York residents, regardless of immigration status and who were generally ineligible for federal assistance, to stay in their homes during the COVID-19 crisis. In 2020, Project Parachute launched FASTEN (Funds and Services for Tenants Experiencing Need), a program that offers eviction prevention services and legal and financial resources, including rent relief, to help vulnerable and underserved New York City residents, regardless of immigration status. MOIA has been working with the DSS’s Homebase program and Enterprise Community Partners on Project Parachute, a \$15 million initiative to provide rental assistance to undocumented immigrants who are ineligible for other housing assistance programs.

## Labor and Earnings

While immigrants generally participate in the labor force at a rate similar to the general population, the rate of participation is significantly higher for undocumented immigrants. Eighty percent of undocumented immigrants are in the labor force compared to 65 percent of U.S.-born residents. Notably, the foreign-born proportion of New York City’s labor force has grown significantly compared to several decades ago; in 1990, foreign-born workers made up 31 percent of the City’s labor force compared to 44 percent in 2019.<sup>18</sup>



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

<sup>18</sup> New York State Comptroller, *The Role of Immigrants in the New York City Economy* (2015) available at <https://osc.state.ny.us/osdc/rpt7-2016.pdf>.

While immigrant New Yorkers are employed in a wide range of industries, they comprise a majority of the frontline essential workers who continued to operate in-person throughout the pandemic. In fact, foreign-born workers represent approximately 56 percent of the workforce in essential industries and 58 percent of the workforce in essential occupations.<sup>19</sup>

Top three industries that employ immigrant New Yorkers are restaurants and other food services, construction, and home health care services.

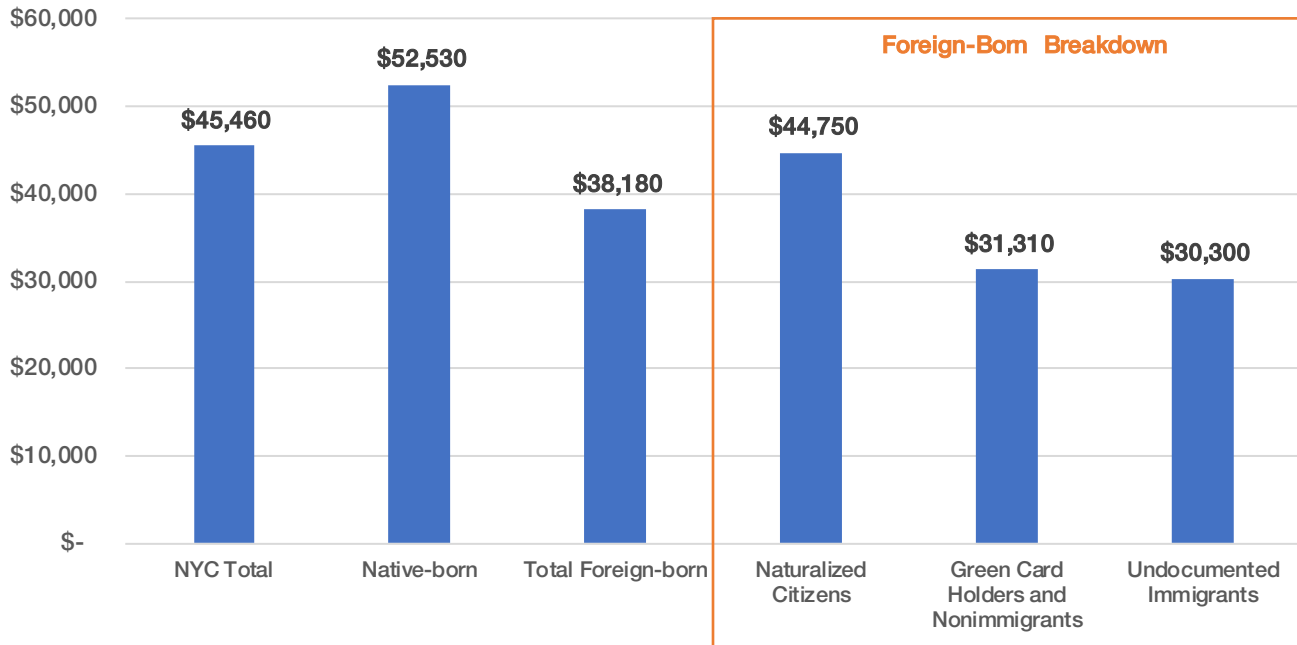
Top Ten Industries		All foreign-born who work in this industry	% foreign-born of total industry	Total New Yorkers who work in this industry
1	Restaurants and Other Food Services	164,582	58.7%	280,167
2	Construction	139,463	60.2%	231,535
3	Home Health Care Services	108,445	75.8%	142,998
4	General Medical And Surgical Hospitals, And Specialty (Except Psychiatric And Substance Abuse) Hospitals	99,531	44.9%	221,505
5	Elementary And Secondary Schools	66,587	27.3%	244,333
6	Taxi and Limousine Service	60,135	81.2%	74,023
7	Individual and Family Services	54,251	48.8%	111,176
8	Services To Buildings And Dwellings (Except Cleaning During Construction And Immediately After Construction)	41,534	71.8%	57,840
9	Colleges, Universities, And Professional Schools, Including Junior Colleges	39,943	32.7%	122,248
10	Child Day Care Services	35,897	52.7%	68,173

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

<sup>19</sup> Declaration of Sabrina Fong at page 5, State of New York v United States Department of Homeland Security, No 1:19-cv-07777-GBD (S.D.N.Y., Sept. 9, 2019); New York State Comptroller, *New York City's Frontline Workers*, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/new-york-citys-frontline-workers/>.

Although foreign-born New Yorkers participate in the labor force at the same or greater rates than U.S.-born New Yorkers, immigrants’ median earnings (\$38,200) are significantly lower than those of U.S.-born residents (\$52,500). Median earnings also vary significantly by immigration status.

### Median Earnings by Immigration Status\*



\*For those aged 16 and over with an income.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity

Despite lower median earnings, foreign-born New Yorkers nevertheless contribute significantly to the City’s economic health. Immigrants own half of New York City’s businesses. In 2019, immigrants contributed \$244 billion to the city’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or about 23 percent of the city’s total GDP.<sup>20</sup>

During the COVID-19 pandemic, immigrants serving as essential workers have kept our city running. As noted above, immigrants were more likely than U.S.-born residents to have continued working in public settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. MOIA’s analysis found that the higher the make-up of immigrants or non-citizens there are per ZIP code the higher the COVID-19 case and death rates are in that area.<sup>21</sup>

20 NYC Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) calculations based on U.S Personal Income, U.S. Nominal GDP from BEA (St. Louis Fed, FRED). City GDP measures the value of the goods and services produced by the New York City economy in a given time period. Employment counts, and average earnings from the 2019 1-Year ACS microdata (via NYC Opportunity).

21 NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity, Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, *Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Health and Economic Impacts on Immigrant Communities* (2020), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/covid-immigrant-fact-sheet-20200731.pdf>.



Despite many immigrant essential workers continuing to work in those critical roles, immigrant workers in industries hit hard by the pandemic, such as restaurant and hospitality industries, have suffered from lost employment. MOIA estimates that 60 percent of undocumented workers have already lost their job or are at risk of losing their job during the pandemic, compared to 36 percent of all workers.<sup>22</sup> And yet, undocumented immigrants have been largely excluded from unemployment insurance benefits or means-tested public benefits programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), New York State cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) due to immigration status restrictions.<sup>23</sup>

To help address these economic barriers, MOIA, together with the NYC Mayor’s Fund to Advance NYC, established the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund which has helped more than 76,000 immigrant workers among those hardest hit by COVID-19, but ineligible for federal direct relief through the CARES bill or unemployment insurance, with direct monetary support.

Since the latest census data predates the COVID-19 pandemic, administrative data from this program covering the 24,000 New Yorkers screened and additional 52,000 people in their households, has helped to provide a more current snapshot of the economic state of the undocumented population during COVID-19. Based on program data through the end of 2021, we found that undocumented workers and their families had experienced significant job loss, which in turn has critically impacted their abilities to afford food, rent, and childcare among other expenses:

- **Significant job loss.** About 21,000 or 86 percent of recipients reported job loss.
- **Little to no savings.** 93 percent of recipients had savings of less than \$400.
  - 82 percent had no savings at the time of their screening.
- **Low income.** Over half of recipients (56 percent) reported having no income at the time of their screening.
  - For those reporting some income at the time of their screening, the average income of recipients ranged from \$23,000 to \$28,000 annually.
- **Most recipients used the funds for cash, food, and clothing.** Recipients received debit cards of up to \$1,000. As of March 2021<sup>24</sup>, \$15.2 million funds had been spent in the following manner:
  - About \$8.9 million (59 percent) was cash withdrawals.
  - The remaining \$5.9 million (39 percent) was spent on purchase transactions.

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22 *Id.*

23 Undocumented immigrants are not “qualified aliens,” a term of U.S. immigration law that refers to immigrants who are eligible for federal public benefits after 5 years in a qualified status, unless they meet an exemption.

24 Debit cards have not yet been completely spent down as of the drafting of this report.

- Top purchase transactions were:
  - Grocery and food locations, i.e. supermarkets and restaurants (42 percent);
  - Clothes and shoes (11 percent); and
  - Money transfers (i.e. money orders, Western Union, bill pay) (5 percent)
- \$173,000 (1 percent) went directly to third party bill payments

The spending breakdown above is in line with the areas in which the recipients had said that they needed financial support during the eligibility screening:

What recipients reported needing support for	# of recipients <sup>25</sup>	Percent (%)
Childcare expenses, incl. school costs	2,540	4.1%
Food and groceries	17,500	28.0%
Funeral/burial costs	350	0.6%
Healthcare expenses, incl. mental health	3,330	5.3%
Rent/mortgage	22,220	35.5%
Utilities, phone, and other bills	16,620	26.6%
Remittances	20	0.0%

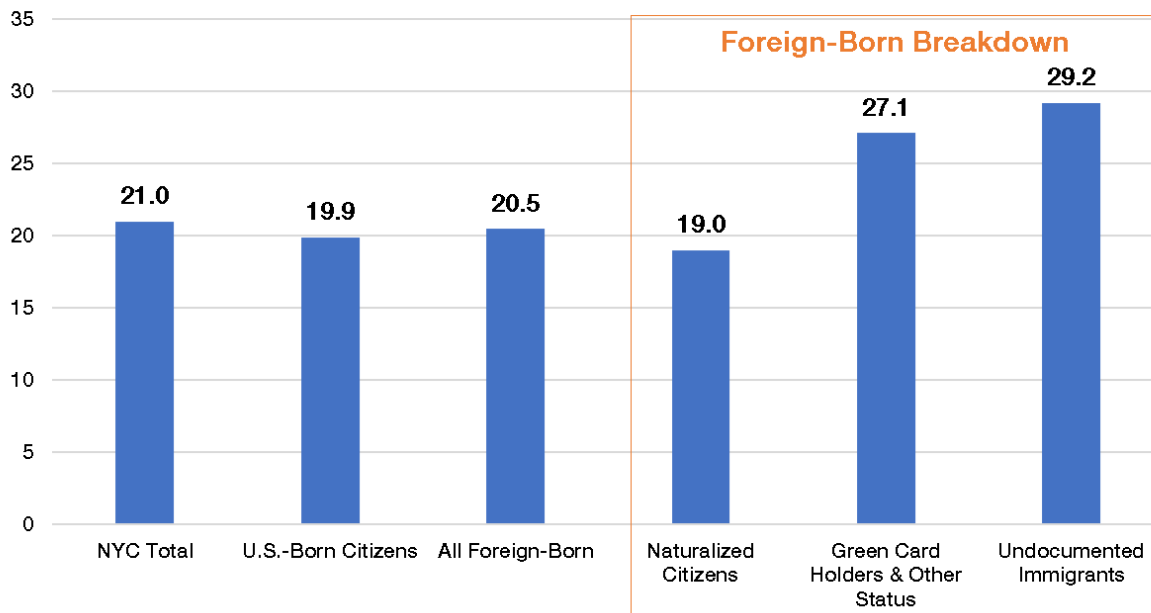
## Poverty

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, immigrant communities faced greater likelihood of living in poverty compared to the U.S.-born population. Immigration status is an important predictor of poverty among New York City residents: a higher percentage of immigrant New Yorkers live in poverty despite working more hours and participating in the labor force at the same or greater rates than U.S.-born New Yorkers. This can be in part attributed to the fact that median earnings vary significantly by immigration status. Using New York City's poverty measure,<sup>26</sup> we find that while the poverty rate for all New Yorkers was 19.1 percent in 2018, when accounting for immigration status this rate increases to 21.0 percent for foreign-born New Yorkers. Notably, the poverty rate for undocumented immigrants is 29.2 percent, higher than the 27.1 percent for green card holders and immigrants with other statuses. Additionally, the two groups with the lowest NYC poverty rate are U.S.-born citizens and naturalized citizens.

<sup>25</sup> Most recipients cited 5+ reasons for why they need the funds, thus the n is greater than the total number of recipients.

<sup>26</sup> NYC Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity, *An Economic Profile of Immigrants in New York City*, (2019), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/immigrant-poverty-report-2017.pdf>. Data based on 2018 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity.

### NYC Poverty Rate by Immigration Status, 2018 (%)



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by NYC Opportunity*

Because of the significant economic hardship and disparity faced by immigrant communities, MOIA’s work is heavily geared towards addressing poverty and its related hardships. This work has included MOIA’s ongoing efforts to combat the public charge rule<sup>27</sup> and its harmful deterrent effect on immigrants’ use of public benefits for which they are lawfully eligible.

While the public charge rule applies only to a narrow subset of immigrants, anecdotal accounts shared with MOIA and research conducted during the pandemic highlight a broad chilling effect on public benefits enrollment among immigrant New Yorkers, regardless of whether the rule actually applies to them. A survey of immigrant-serving organizations, conducted by the Urban Institute at the height of the pandemic (May-June 2020), found that immigrant communities were still afraid to access available services and supports they need, including new pandemic-specific relief, due to fear of the public charge rule and immigration enforcement. For example, 43 percent of survey respondents reported that “some” clients are avoiding testing or treatment for COVID-19 because of immigration enforcement or immigration status concerns. An additional 26 percent indicated that “almost everyone” or “many” had been deterred from testing or treatment by immigration concerns.<sup>28</sup> This evidence indicates that this rule may have lasting impact on immigrants’ access to benefits.

<sup>27</sup> See page 64 for more information about the public charge rule.

<sup>28</sup> Hamutal Bernstein, Urban Institute, *Immigrant-Serving Organizations’ Perspectives on the COVID-19 Crisis* (2020), [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102775/immigrant-serving-organizations-on-the-covid-19-crisis\\_1.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102775/immigrant-serving-organizations-on-the-covid-19-crisis_1.pdf).

To combat this “chilling effect” — eligible immigrants avoiding benefits out of fear of perceived immigration consequences — MOIA and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) launched a multilingual ad campaign, “Support. Not Fear.” to educate and assure immigrant communities that many health and social services are available to them regardless of immigration status, ability to pay, or insurance status, and that they should call ActionNYC for connections to City-funded, free and confidential immigration legal help if they had questions about immigration and use of public benefits. For more information on the City’s work to combat the impacts of the public charge rule, see page 64.

**FOOD ASSISTANCE**

**COVID-19 TESTING, VACCINE AND CARE**

**TENANT PROTECTION**

**SUPPORT.**

**NOT FEAR.**

All New Yorkers can access health care and social services **regardless of immigration status, ability to pay, or employment status.**  
Learn more at [nyc.gov/immigrants](https://nyc.gov/immigrants) or call **311.**

**EMERGENCY MEDICAID**

**FREE LEGAL HELP**

Questions about immigration and use of public benefits?  
Call **ActionNYC** at **1-800-354-0365** for connections to City-funded, free and confidential immigration legal help.

**NYC** Department of Health & Mental Hygiene  
Bill de Blasio Mayor  
Don A. Chokshi, MD, MPH  
Commissioner

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs  
Edo Muekt  
Commissioner

## 2020 Policy in Review



Members of MOIA's Outreach and Organizing team, David Sosa, Nick Gulotta, Violeta Gomez-Uribe, Sandro Navarro, and Danny Mendoza, distribute critical information about COVID-19 and PPE at a pop-up testing site in Corona, Queens.

## State and Federal Developments

### State Developments

The state legislative and budget process in 2020 was deeply shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding fiscal crisis across New York State. For much of the legislative session, the state focused on providing guidance and services for those in need during the pandemic, and included implementation of services that were partially or fully funded by the federal government. In part because of statutory restrictions on that funding, many of these services, including access to unemployment benefits, were inaccessible

to undocumented immigrants.<sup>29</sup> Several more inclusive programs were introduced in the state legislature but were not included in the final version of the state budget, which was restrained by the fiscal situation of the State.

Nevertheless, the 2020 session saw some legislative victories for immigrant communities. Advocates have pushed for several years for the "Protect Our Courts Act," a bill designed to address the chilling effect of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrests at and around courthouses. MOIA has shared the concerns of advocates and other elected officials who have noted that ICE arrests in and around courthouses have caused some immigrants,

<sup>29</sup> Denis Slattery, *Denied COVID economic relief, N.Y.-based immigrant and excluded workers plan hunger strike*, N.Y. DAILY NEWS, Mar. 15, 2021, <https://www.nydailynews.com/coronavirus/ny-covid-relief-denied-immigrants-excluded-workers-hunger-strike-20210315-wqev2ouiszccxjmy4supzfcnpu-story.html>.

who would otherwise participate in the legal system, to stay away from the courts. The legislature passed the bill in the summer and the bill was signed into law by the Governor in December 2020.

The legislature also worked to repeal the offense of Loitering for the Purposes of Engaging in Prostitution, New York Penal Law § 240.37, which criminalized a broad range of behaviors. Advocates have argued for years that the extreme vagueness of that law made it a tool for harassment and over-policing, especially for trans women of color.<sup>30</sup> Due to the continued efforts of trans, non-binary, and intersex advocates and community members, a long-pending bill which repeals that vague law passed the legislature and was signed into law by the Governor in early 2021.

## Federal Developments

In 2020, the Trump administration continued its xenophobic federal attacks on immigrants amid a pandemic that disproportionately has devastated immigrant communities. The administration expanded enforcement policy and threats in particular toward cities with pro-immigrant policies, continued to detain non-citizens during a time of heightened vulnerability, and forged ahead with a deluge of proposed rules targeting vulnerable populations and stripping away due process and access to justice.

At the start of the year, the federal government targeted certain cities, including New York, for their immigrant inclusive policies that restrict local law enforcement's cooperation with ICE. Specifically, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced they would deploy their Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) to New York and other cities to conduct further enforcement. The Trump administration alleged that New York's policies threatened public safety, even though the City continues to be the safest big city in the country.

ICE's continued efforts to expand expedited removal<sup>31</sup> further exacerbated fears and anxiety among immigrant New Yorkers. Prior to 2020, the administration had already sought to widen their enforcement strategy in the interior of the country. The expansion of expedited removal beyond the nation's borders, however, had been prevented by court order in 2019.<sup>32</sup> In 2020, the court order was lifted and ICE prepared to ramp up its expansion efforts.<sup>33</sup> While the overall numbers of ICE arrests and deportations decreased in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>34</sup> ICE's attempts to expand its enforcement tools amplified the threat and served to further alienate immigrant communities across the country.

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30 Jaclyn Diaz, New York Repeals 'Walking While Trans' Law, NPR, Feb. 3, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/03/963513022/new-york-repeals-walking-while-trans-law>.

31 Expedited removal is a procedure that allows immigration enforcement officials to rapidly deport certain non-citizens without a hearing before an immigration judge and requires immigrants, regardless of status, to bear the burden of proving how long they have been in the country at a moment's notice.

32 *Make the Rd. N.Y. v. McAleenan*, Case 1:19-cv-02369 (D.D.C. 2019).

33 *Make the Rd. N.Y. v. Wolf*, 962 F.3d 612 (D.C. Cir. 2020); María Inés Zamudio, *New Policy Allows Immigrants To Be Deported Without Appearing In Immigration Court*, WBEZ Chicago, Oct. 24, 2020, <https://www.wbez.org/stories/new-policy-allows-immigrants-to-be-deported-without-appearing-in-immigration-court/1b4544bc-a242-4f20-be1e-d1c4560ff498>.

34 NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Fact Sheet: ICE Enforcement in New York City*, available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/enforcement-factsheet-2020-01-22.pdf>.

The Trump administration proposed rules and policy changes at an alarming rate to tighten entry requirements, reduce or eliminate all immigration, and strengthen and expedite removal authority by curbing due process. These efforts included effectively eliminating humanitarian relief such as by issuing regulations that impeded survivors of gender-based violence and LGBTIQ+ migrants from seeking asylum.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the Administration sought to take away asylum-seekers' right to work while applications were pending so that already vulnerable individuals would be forced to choose between supporting themselves and their families and jeopardizing the success of their applications.<sup>36</sup>

The Administration also tried to institute a de facto wealth test on immigration benefits like citizenship and green cards by drastically increasing application fees and taking away fee waivers.<sup>37</sup> Through a series of agency policy memos, USCIS officers were instructed to exercise discretion in ways that favor denials.<sup>38</sup> At almost

every step of the immigration process — from the initial screening interviews at the border<sup>39</sup> to the appeals of wrongly decided immigration court cases<sup>40</sup> — the Trump Administration eroded due process protections for immigrants.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread, it disrupted almost every aspect of the U.S. immigration system both domestically and abroad. In the United States, the U.S. Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) which oversees the immigration courts postponed most non-detained hearings<sup>41</sup> and USCIS suspended in-person services.<sup>42</sup> Outside of the U.S., the Department of State suspended most visa services at U.S. embassies and consulates, which resulted in delayed reunification of family members applying for family-based visas, as well as disruption in job security and income for employment-based applicants.

Adding to the disruption, through executive orders banning the issuance of certain

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35 See Procedures for Asylum and Withholding of Removal; Credible Fear and Reasonable Fear Review, 85 Fed. Reg. 80274 (Dec. 11, 2020).

36 See Asylum Application, Interview, and Employment Authorization for Applicants, 85 Fed. Reg. 38532 (Jun. 26, 2020).

37 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Fee Schedule and Changes to Certain Other Immigration Benefit Request Requirements, 85 Fed. Reg. 46788 (Aug. 3, 2020).

38 See, e.g., USCIS Policy Alert, Applying Discretion in USCIS Adjudications, PA-2020-10 (Jul. 15, 2020), available at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-manual-updates/20200715-Discretion.pdf>; USCIS Policy Alert, Use of Discretion for Adjustment of Status, PA-2020-22 (Nov. 17, 2020), available at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-manual-updates/20201117-AOSDiscretion.pdf>.

39 Procedures for Asylum and Withholding of Removal; Credible Fear and Reasonable Fear Review, 85 Fed. Reg. 80274 (Dec. 11, 2020).

40 Appellate Procedure and Decisional Finality in Immigration Proceedings; Administrative Closure, 85 Fed. Reg. 81,588 (Dec. 16, 2020).

41 EOIR, EOIR Operational Status, <https://www.justice.gov/eoir-operational-status#:~:text=As%20previously%20announced%2C%20certain%20immigration,incl%20February%2019%2C%202021>.

42 USCIS, USCIS Suspending In-Person Services Jan. 19 and 20, <https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-suspending-in-person-services-jan-19-and-20#:~:text=19%20and%2020,-Release%20Date&text=U.S.%20Citizenship%20and%20Immigration%20Services,employees%20and%20individuals%20with%20appointments>.

immigrant and non-immigrant visas,<sup>43</sup> the Administration upended the lives of families seeking to reunite with their loved ones and left employers in limbo during an already economically strenuous time. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a border policy that resulted in expelling tens of thousands of asylum seekers, including unaccompanied children.<sup>44</sup>

As the pandemic brought immigration processing and adjudications to a halt, ICE likewise limited new enforcement actions throughout the United States, stating they would temporarily adjust their focus to target enforcement on public-safety risks and individuals subject to mandatory detention based on criminal grounds.<sup>45</sup>

While new ICE arrests decreased, the threat to those already detained by ICE increased significantly, in facilities where social distancing and abiding by health and safety protocol is all but impossible. As of September 2020, at least 6,000 people tested positive in ICE detention since the start of the pandemic and at least eight people lost their lives.<sup>46</sup>

## Updates and Successes

Despite the continued anti-immigrant agenda of the federal administration, 2020 also saw some important victories. In June 2020 the Supreme Court ruled that the Trump administration's efforts to end DACA violated federal law and barred the

**DACA Tele-Town Hall**

**September 17, 2020**  
**3pm PST / 4pm MST / 6pm EST**

**1-800-759-3997**

**bit.ly/c4a-daca**

**Bitta Mostofi, NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**  
**Atim Oti, Denver Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs**  
**Nora A. Preciado, LA Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**

To help keep Dreamers informed about the status of the DACA program and resources available to assist with their DACA renewals and application fees, Cities for Action hosted a multi-city DACA tele-town hall, livestreamed on Facebook, with leaders in Denver, Los Angeles, and New York City.

43 Proclamation No. 10014, 85 Fed. Reg. 23441 (2020); Proclamation 10052, 85 Fed. Reg. 38263 (2020).

44 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Order Suspending the Right to Introduce Certain Persons from Countries Where A Quarantinable Communicable Disease Exists, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/downloads/10.13.2020-CDC-Order-Prohibiting-Introduction-of-Persons-FINAL-ALL-CLEAR-encrypted.pdf>.

45 ICE, ICE Guidance on COVID-19, <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus>.

46 American Immigration Council, The Impact of COVID-19 on Noncitizens and Across the U.S. Immigration System: March-September 2020, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/impact-covid-19-us-immigration-system>.



administration from terminating the program because it had not given an adequate reason for ending it.<sup>47</sup> While the DHS attempted to thwart this victory by only reinstating a limited DACA program, advocates challenged these new efforts in court and won. In December 2020, a federal district court ordered DHS to fully reinstate the DACA program by: resuming acceptance of first-time applications; accepting applications for advance parole; and granting renewal requests for two-year periods.<sup>48</sup>

TPS litigation continued in 2020 and in December 2020, DHS automatically extended TPS protections for El Salvador,

Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras and Nepal for another nine months, through October 2021.<sup>49</sup> Also in December 2020, Congress extended the deadline for Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness (LRIF), which allows certain Liberian nationals residing in the United States to apply for lawful permanent residence, to December 20, 2021 through the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act. This extension was only granted following organized advocacy by community groups and immigrant inclusive cities and jurisdictions across the country, who rallied around the need to extend the deadline given the pandemic’s many challenges.

**What's Important to Know About LRIF**

**LIBERIAN REFUGEE IMMIGRATION FAIRNESS**

**Liberian immigrants who qualify may:**

- Apply for a green card
- Be eligible for work authorization
- Be eligible even if you don't have Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED)
- Be able to apply for green cards for their spouse and children

**by December 20, 2021**

**There is no public charge test.**

**Questions about LRIF and free legal help:  
Call Staten Island Legal Services at 718-233-6480**

**For other questions & City-funded immigration legal help:  
Call ActionNYC at 1-800-354-0365**

**LEARN MORE AT NYC.GOV/DED-LRIF**

**NYC**  
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

**A Message for Liberian Immigrants in Staten Island**

You may be able to apply for lawful permanent resident status—also known as a green card—if you qualify under Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness (LRIF).

**DEADLINE TO APPLY IS DECEMBER 20, 2021.**

**Questions about LRIF and free legal help:  
Call Staten Island Legal Services at 718-233-6480**

**For other questions & City-funded immigration legal help:  
Call ActionNYC at 1-800-354-0365**

**LEARN MORE AT NYC.GOV/DED-LRIF**

**NYC**  
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Graphics and related flyers were sent to Liberian community members and community-based organizations serving Liberian populations to inform them about the Trump Administration’s LRIF deadline in late 2020 and to direct them to MOIA’s ActionNYC and partner Staten Island Legal Services’ hotlines.

47 DHS v. Regents of Univ. of California, 591 U.S. \_\_\_ (June 18, 2020)  
 48 Vidal v. Wolf, Nos. 1:16-cv-04756 & 1:17-cv-05228 (E.D.N.Y. Dec. 4, 2020)  
 49 Continuation of Documentation for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protected Status Designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras, and Nepal, 85 Fed. Reg. 79208 (Dec. 9, 2020).

# Reviewing MOIA's Progress



MOIA's Outreach and Organizing team joined with volunteers and representatives from the Census Bureau to engage worshipers at Al Amin Jame Masjid in Astoria, Queens. Staff highlighted the safety and confidentiality of the census form and the importance of participation.

## Recommendations Revisited

In our annual report for 2019, MOIA proposed a set of five recommendations to address barriers to immigrant New Yorkers and their families as highlighted on page 20. We reviewed our progress on those metrics in the last annual report and include an update below for calendar year 2020. These remain critical areas of work for MOIA, and we look forward to continuing to review MOIA's progress in 2021.

### Lower barriers to access

Barriers to accessing urgently needed public benefits and services have exacerbated the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant New Yorkers. This is in addition to the existing barriers created by the Trump administration's public charge rule. In our efforts to address these barriers in 2020, MOIA:

- Fought to blunt the impact of the public charge rule, as explained on page 64;
- Expanded NYC Care citywide (page 81);

- Expanded funding for rapid response legal services (page 75);
- Provided focused outreach on access to benefits and services to immigrants during the COVID-19 crisis (page 50);
- Worked to provide burial assistance for all immigrant communities (page 48); and
- Built on our language access (page 61), outreach (page 91), Know Your Rights (page 84), and community services initiatives (page 88) to connect New Yorkers to the services they need during the pandemic.

### Build with and empower communities

Recognizing the invaluable contribution of our immigrant families and communities, and their right to fully participate in civic life in NYC, MOIA worked in 2020 to empower those communities to reach their full potential, including through citizenship. To work toward this goal, MOIA:

- Provided legal services to help New

- Yorkers become U.S. citizens (page 76);
- Helped with the transition of our poll site interpretation project (page 64);
- Worked to ensure that vulnerable communities had the information they needed to be confident engaging with and empowered to participate in the 2020 Census (page 98); and
- Highlighted the contributions of immigrants and immigrant communities (page 96).

### **Further economic justice**

There are persistent economic disparities between immigrant and citizen New Yorkers, with undocumented immigrants more likely to face poverty. These disparities must be eliminated for New York City to be a truly inclusive city. In 2020, MOIA worked to:

- Secure through a direct relief program and swiftly deliver private funding in an efficient manner to undocumented workers ineligible for stimulus checks to address urgent economic needs (page 45);
- Secure funding for low-wage worker legal services (page 76);
- Support outreach for COVID-19 testing, emergency food assistance, and rental assistance to connect immigrants to these critical resources (page 50);
- Share information about small business support, worker rights, and unemployment benefits (page 49);
- Administer an immigration application and DACA fee fund (page 75); and

- Share critical information with communities about fraud targeting immigrant New Yorkers (page 77).

### **Fight anti-immigrant federal policies**

Though the Trump administration has ended, the effects of its anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric remains. While MOIA continues working to help dismantle those policies and advocate for truly inclusive and welcoming federal changes, in 2020 MOIA's worked to:

- Coordinate multi-city and multi-agency advocacy (page 104);
- Support litigation against the Trump administration's attacks on immigrants (page 102); and
- Provide legal services to immigrants who may be eligible for relief and fight back against detention and deportation (page 70).

### **Advocacy at the state level**

In 2020, MOIA engaged with the state government on behalf of immigrant New Yorkers, many of whom were excluded from the state and federal response to COVID-19. In addition, MOIA continued its work to assist in the implementation of state programs. In particular, MOIA:

- Secured funding for the second year of a pilot program for NYS DREAM Act application assistance (page 84); and
- Advocated with the state legislature on bills that affected immigrant New Yorkers (page 102).

## MOIA Programs and 2020 Activities



Commissioner Mostofi and MOIA staff took to the streets in Elmhurst, Queens to share information about NYC Care, the 2020 Census, COVID-19 testing, and other City services available to all New Yorkers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operating from within the Mayor’s Office, MOIA has coordinated and developed innovative programs and policies that help address the many needs that our immigrant communities face. This flexibility and innovation was tested in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic devastated New York City.

This section begins with an overview of MOIA’s work to help counter the crushing effects of the global public health crisis, which disproportionately ravaged the communities we serve.

### Response to COVID-19: Resources for Immigrant New Yorkers

The pandemic has highlighted how vital immigrant workers are to keeping the City functioning and safe. Comprising over 500,000 essential workers on the frontlines, they have taken care of sick patients, stocked grocery shelves, kept public transportation running, and delivered critical supplies.

Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic also had a disproportionate impact on immigrant New Yorkers, especially undocumented New Yorkers. Due to their immigration status, low

wages and job insecurity, undocumented immigrants have had diminished prospects to earn a living, to take off work to seek medical attention, and to get financial help as their resources wore thin during the pandemic.

Moreover, undocumented immigrants and their families, including mixed status families, were excluded from the first round of Economic Impact Payments, also known as stimulus checks, and other federal relief efforts. MOIA estimates that about 97,000 NYC residents file taxes as either primary or spouse with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number and as a result are not eligible for the Economic Impact Payments.<sup>50</sup>

Unemployment insurance programs, including temporary federal subsidies for unemployment insurance benefits established by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, are limited to those who are work-authorized. Undocumented immigrants are also largely excluded from many means-tested public benefits programs due to immigration restrictions. MOIA estimates that up to 230,000 undocumented workers in the City may have already lost their job or are at risk of losing their job due to the pandemic yet are ineligible for unemployment insurance or other benefits.<sup>51</sup>

Grants and loans for small businesses that were included in the series of federal stimulus bills so far have either excluded

many immigrants from eligibility or made it challenging for them to get the assistance, due to the fact that they were mainly distributed through large banks and required extensive paperwork without accompanying language and digital access support.

This has led to heightened levels of housing, food, and financial insecurity for immigrants as many struggle to survive.

### **NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund**

To address economic barriers and deep gaps in the inclusion of immigrants in COVID-19 relief and crisis response efforts, MOIA partnered with the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC to create the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund (IERF). Through a \$20 million donation by Open Society Foundations (OSF), the program provided direct monetary support for immigrant workers and their families who were ineligible for federal direct relief through the CARES bill or unemployment insurance.

Working with a diverse network of 34 community-based organizations (CBOs)<sup>52</sup> with deep ties to immigrant communities in New York City, many other community-based organizations, and MOIA's hotline which received thousands of calls from immigrants who were left out of the federal government's COVID-19 stimulus package, MOIA was able to identify eligible community members in need and connect with hard-to-reach populations to swiftly deliver the private funding from OSF in

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50 NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Health and Economic Impacts on Immigrant Communities* (2020), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/covid-immigrant-fact-sheet-20200731.pdf>.

51 *Id.*

52 More information about the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund partners is available at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/fund/initiatives/covid-19-immigrant-emergency-relief-fund.page>

an efficient manner. The program helped more than 76,000 New Yorkers impacted by COVID-19, over a third of whom are children. Of the 24,000 immigrant workers screened, most received payments of between \$400 and \$1,000 to support themselves and the additional 52,000 people in their households.

The positive impact of the IERF has helped MOIA demonstrate the continued need among immigrant communities for support and advocate for additional funding to reach more immigrant New Yorkers left out of federal and state relief programs. As a result, MOIA secured \$1.5 million in additional philanthropic funding provided by Robin Hood Foundation, which was distributed to more than 1,000 recipients, and more than 2,000 additional people in their households.

## **Rental Assistance**

MOIA worked with the NYC Human Resources Administration's Homebase program and Enterprise Community Partners on Project Parachute to provide rental assistance to undocumented immigrants who do not qualify for traditional rental arrears help. MOIA's advocacy, based on the data we generated from the IERF, helped the City secure the private funding for the initiative. As a result, MOIA's CBO partners have been able to refer people from their waitlists to this rental assistance initiative for help with their rental arrears and other housing issues.

The Funds and Services for Tenants Experiencing Need (FASTEN) program, funded by Project Parachute, has helped vulnerable and underserved New York residents stay in their homes during COVID-19 by providing them with rental arrears assistance, landlord mediation

and legal assistance, financial counseling, and job search assistance as well as referrals to resources like food relief, affordable health services, utility arrears assistance, and other services. Through the outreach efforts and inquiries received by the AskMOIA Hotline, MOIA has been able to successfully refer individuals to FASTEN providers including BronxWorks, CAMBA, Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services, Help USA, Services for the Underserved, Riseboro and Catholic Charities Community Services. MOIA's IERF partners have also been able to refer many of their community members to FASTEN providers. These referrals have connected immigrant New Yorkers to services and financial resources, including rental arrears assistance. Referrals to FASTEN providers are ongoing in 2021.

Additional efforts to connect immigrant New Yorkers with critical resources available to support their housing needs included promotion of and supporting New York City's Tenant Protection Hotline, which provides free advice and legal counsel to tenants; information about applying to the New York State Housing and Community Renewal Rent Relief Program, which provided eligible tenants who lost income during the COVID-19 crisis a one-time rental subsidy sent directly to the household's landlord; and HPD's NYC Housing Connect affordable housing application portal and citywide Housing Resource portal.



At Breukelen Houses, a NYC Housing Authorities apartment complex in Canarsie, Brooklyn, MOIA organizers including Egor Shakhnovskiy and the NYC Test & Trace Corps shared PPE and information about City resources and safety guidance for COVID-19.

## COVID-19 Testing & PPE

When the City launched the NYC Test and Trace Corps (T2), MOIA played a central role in supporting the citywide outreach effort by bringing multilingual staff to distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hand sanitizer, and information about testing to the communities hit hardest by the pandemic. Between July and December 2020, MOIA staff participated in over 40 events including “15 Days of Action,” and worked with the T2 team to identify CBO partners whose offices could serve as pop-up testing sites. MOIA staff also regularly partnered with food pantries and CBOs to distribute critical information and PPE to New Yorkers.

## NYC Test & Trace Corps’ Take Care Hotels

MOIA worked with NYC Health + Hospitals and the City’s Take Care Hotels Program to ensure that the eligibility and application process were accessible for immigrant communities and culturally competent. This work recognized that many immigrants living in overcrowded housing may need the city’s support to be able to socially distance themselves to keep other household members safe, such as making the Hotel Program accessible to immigrant New Yorkers was an important part of our response efforts. MOIA worked with the program to address concerns raised by immigrants on a variety of issues such as privacy, childcare, and transportation and to ensure information about the program, including eligibility and available services, was made available in multiple languages. MOIA promoted the program through various digital and in person outreach, and

worked with the Take Care Hotels program on new, creative ways to more clearly explain the program to immigrant communities, such as creating videos showing a virtual tour of the hotel and how the application process worked, and graphic-oriented marketing materials.

## Food Assistance

In response to acute food security concerns in citywide immigrant communities, MOIA worked closely with GetFood NYC to ensure the program was accessible to those who needed it most. Outreach staff directly enrolled members of the public in the program, elevated community feedback to improve quality control and facilitated participation of vendors and nonprofits across the city as partners in the program. In order to support the emergency food delivery program, all of MOIA's outreach team staff were trained as certified enrollers so they could directly help enroll community members with language and digital barriers.



MOIA staff including Organizer Angela Sherpa participated in numerous Get Tested Days of Action to distribute critical information about COVID-19 testing, PPE, and other free services available to all New Yorkers including free meals through the city's Get Food NYC program.

Additionally, MOIA identified multiple trusted CBOs to become authorized enrollers for Get Food NYC themselves and ensured over 100 organizations participated in RFI's, information sessions and workshops to expand the reach and effectiveness of the city's food security efforts. Through promotion of the NYC Department of Education Meal Hubs, the Get Food NYC delivery services, job opportunities for drivers, and request for proposals and information sessions for nonprofits, MOIA gathered and provided community feedback on nutrition and the cultural competence of food menus and other concerns raised so the program could adequately meet the diverse needs of immigrant New Yorkers.

## Burial Assistance

MOIA has supported the Mayor's Fund and Human Resources Administration (HRA) to secure private funding to help New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, receive assistance to pay for the funeral expenses for loved ones. Established with \$1.5 million in funding from Amalgamated Bank, SOMOS Community Care, Robin Hood, and Trinity Wall Street, the Immigrant COVID-19 Burial Assistance Program helped address the exclusion of some immigrant families from the State and City's existing burial assistance program. In addition to MOIA outreach staff, many IDNYC staff members helped with the program intake, utilizing their knowledge and skills from their extensive experience working with immigrant communities to assist with questions about their burial assistance applications.



## **Small Businesses Support, Worker Protection, and Workforce Development**

Immigrant-owned and operated small businesses and immigrant workers were deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. MOIA supported efforts by the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) to ensure business owners received information in the languages they speak and assistance through the Business Restart Hotline. This work included co-organizing dozens of in-language virtual forms with SBS and promoting them to immigrant communities. MOIA Neighborhood Organizers connected small business owners with the resources needed to safely re-open, provide outdoor services, ensure workers' safety and rights, and navigate eligibility and applications for grants and loans including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL).

Among MOIA's ongoing Know Your Rights (KYR) programming for immigrant workers, MOIA supported work by the NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) to connect immigrant workers to information about their rights including access to PPE from their employers, get Paid Sick Leave, and access financial and legal resources with assistance provided through the Worker Protection Hotline.

To promote immigrant access to workforce development opportunities, MOIA also supported the dissemination of Working NYC information from the NYC Office of Workforce Development and Office for Economic Opportunity to help job seekers to prepare for and get a job.

## **Education**

At the start of the pandemic when all schools closed, MOIA's outreach staff supported the work of the NYC Department of Education (DOE) to ensure that families attending NYC public schools completed requests for remote learning devices and were connected to the latest updates on and resources for remote learning. Through this work and ethnic media engagement, and as schools re-opened with options for all in person and hybrid remote learning, MOIA connected immigrant families with resources including printed copies of the translated MOIA COVID-19 Resources for Immigrant Communities Guide and virtual forums with city agency leaders.

## **Combatting COVID-19 Hate and Discrimination**

From the onset of the global public health crisis, the de Blasio administration has stood alongside the communities impacted by COVID-19 and immediately began rolling out efforts to combat hate and bias against the Asian community. City agencies and offices, including the NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC), NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), New York City Police Department (NYPD), Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU), MOIA, DOE, Office of the First Lady and others connected communities with resources — including mental health services and public town halls — and launched initiatives — such as bystander intervention trainings and public awareness campaigns — to support and empower impacted New Yorkers and community members.



Organizer Ahmed Kargbo attempts to distribute a mask to a Staten Island resident. MOIA focused on combating misinformation about COVID-19 and distributing essential supplies and information in neighborhoods with high positivity rates for the virus.

## Advocacy

While MOIA and the City successfully implemented numerous emergency response efforts to address the needs that we saw in New York City, our efforts did not stop there. Recognizing that federal and state support were needed to fully address this crisis, MOIA elevated its federal and state advocacy efforts, as described further on page 102. In collaboration with our partners, MOIA has been advocating that Congress ensure COVID-19 measures are inclusive of immigrants regardless of their immigration status. In May 2020, because of the City's and many others' tireless advocacy, the House passed the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, which included many of these policies. The bill did not move in the Senate. The City's advocacy for inclusive stimulus funding has continued under the Biden administration.

## Response to COVID-19: Community Outreach and Engagement Tools

In 2020, MOIA adjusted operation of its numerous programs, initiatives, and community engagement efforts to address challenges of COVID-19 and ensure that immigrants could continue to access City services while keeping our staff and constituents safe. MOIA also ramped up the City's language access support and innovative approaches through outreach and communications to ensure clear updates about shifting COVID-19 guidelines and available resources were made available to immigrants in the languages they speak. More information about how MOIA's programs and strategies to reach immigrant New Yorkers adapted in response to the pandemic can be found in the next few sections.

## Resource Guide for Immigrant Communities during COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the beginning of the pandemic, MOIA has made concerted efforts to get the message out to NYC residents that many City services are open to all, regardless of immigration status. Among MOIA's strategies to achieve this goal, MOIA prepared a resource guide for immigrant communities during COVID-19, which is available both online and in a downloadable PDF format and is translated into 25 different languages. The guide includes concise description of benefits, eligibility for immigrants, and the website, hotline, email, or other ways in which users can contact responsible agencies to obtain more information. The hard copy version was distributed for pick up at the City's 500+ Meal Hubs and shared with the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund partners who utilized it to inform the fund applicants about existing city resources and make referrals when needed.

MOIA also developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that is available online to address commonly asked questions about COVID-19 guidance and resources, as a way to supplement the resource guide. The FAQ was specifically tailored to address immigrants' concerns, such as whether certain benefit use would affect their immigration application or what labor rights are available to all workers regardless of their immigration status. The resource guide and FAQ are periodically updated to reflect the latest information on city resources and policies.

## Virtual Community Events

In 2020, MOIA's External Affairs staff organized a total of 329 online community town halls, Know Your Rights presentations, stakeholder meetings, community and ethnic media roundtables, and other virtual events. These virtual events were organized in partnership with sister agencies, community-based organizations, houses of worship, consulates, and other trusted messengers. Key topics included immigration policy issues, MOIA programs, and city resources including COVID-19 testing and the Take Care Program, NYC Care, NYC Well, Get Food NYC, City and state housing and rental assistance programs, small business support services, burial assistance, and IDNYC renewals and program updates, among others.

The presentations were translated into six languages (Arabic, simplified and



Partnering with community organizations to reach immigrant New Yorkers through virtual town halls and Know Your Rights presentations was a key tactic during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here a community member watches a virtual event held in Tibetan-language with the Tibetan Community of New York and New Jersey.

traditional Chinese, Bangla, Haitian Creole, Russian, and Spanish), and also included interpretation and speakers in other languages including Portuguese, Tibetan, Urdu, Nepali, Persian, West African Krio, and three major dialects of Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, and Fujianese). Many of these events included a phone-in option for individuals without an internet connection or with less digital literacy, and were livestreamed on Facebook. They also included opportunities for community members to get answers to their questions from health experts, city officials, and community partners.

These virtual events were viewed by approximately 160,000 New Yorkers within the first 24 hours after they were streamed or held on web platforms. Information about these events and the resources they promoted were amplified through available translated digital materials on social media, through e-blasts, and through messenger applications widely used by immigrant communities.

## **Community and Ethnic Media Engagement**

Starting in April 2020, MOIA expanded the City's efforts to support and engage community and ethnic media by convening and hosting a series of virtual roundtable discussions. These conversations, led by city officials and including CBO partners, recognized the important role that community and ethnic media play as trusted messengers for reaching New York City's immigrant communities and provided opportunities to clarify and drive reporting of COVID-19 guidance and resources. They also served as a platform to hear and

respond to questions from local reporters addressing the diverse concerns and needs among immigrant communities.

In 2020, MOIA hosted 15 community and ethnic media roundtables attended by an average of 20 reporters representing a range of hyperlocal and community-specific newspapers, news websites, radio stations, and television stations. The discussions were also livestreamed to MOIA's Facebook page and promoted to community members to tune in and ask questions. Remarks from panelists often included in language soundbites for ethnic media press. Topics for the roundtable discussions ranged from COVID-19 testing and vaccination and reopening guidelines to civic engagement and racial inclusion and equity.

In response to the overwhelming number of updates and information shared at the start of the COVID-19 crisis in New York City, MOIA increased its regular communication with community and ethnic media by developing and disseminating streamlined roundups of key updates shared by the Mayor's Office and sister agencies. These roundups included programmatic updates and policy changes, health guidance, upcoming deadlines to apply for resources and assistance, and information about virtual community events, training sessions, and the latest multilingual resources available.

Throughout 2020, MOIA worked with agency partners to produce, translate, and provide to community and ethnic media outlets columns written by Commissioner Bitta Mostofi that provide summaries, clarifications on misperceptions, and answer commonly asked questions about key COVID-19 resources and guidance.

## Digital Outreach and Language Access

As virtual events quickly became a strong key tool for MOIA's outreach to immigrant communities, MOIA's leadership on advancing language access at large was a focus point of the agency's work to address tremendous challenges in City's ability to quickly disseminate multilingual information to New Yorkers who do not speak English and in ensuring that information is accurate and accessible. Despite progress on language access during recent years, COVID-19 revealed gaps in the work that remains. MOIA addressed — and continues to address — these challenges in various ways.

At the start of the pandemic, MOIA and the NYC Emergency Management activated the Language Access Taskforce to identify and

respond to language access challenges and to coordinate resources. The taskforce advised DOHMH, the lead agency for health-related emergencies, on expanding translation of key, COVID-related materials into 26 languages and coordinated pro bono translation resources. MOIA also worked with DOHMH to ensure the City's translation vendors had access to DOHMH's glossary with technical terminology, to improve the consistency and quality of translations.

MOIA's Language Services Team (LST) also managed a historic surge of demand for rapid response translations during the height of COVID-19 and ensured that materials developed by mayoral offices were quickly and accurately translated in up to 26 languages. Support provided included translating key messages from communications and press updates from




In April, MOIA joined a virtual Town Hall with the Yemeni American Merchants Association to inform communities about resources, such as financial and immigration legal help, available to business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# OUTREACH GRAPHICS

As New York City adapted to a stay-at-home order to stop the spread of COVID-19 in March 2020, MOIA shifted its community engagement efforts at large to digital outreach and virtual events. This included the creation of graphics about resources available to all New Yorkers in up to 30 languages, rapid translations of key updates, and in-language videos and audio messages recorded by staff. Working with local artists and designers, these digital tools addressed concerns facing community members, such as the (new defunct) public charge rule, food insecurity, housing concerns, and guidance for social distancing. These graphics were critical to providing support and information during the pandemic and instilling confidence among immigrant communities in accessing City resources such as COVID-19 testing, health and mental health services, legal help, small business support, and information on workers' rights, among others.

**NYC**

**ZRÓB TEST NA COVID-19**

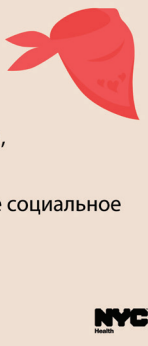


W CAŁYM MIEŚCIE NOWY JORK SĄ PUNKTY BEZPŁATNEGO TESTOWANIA NA COVID-19.

ZNAJDŹ PUNKT W OKOLICY:  
**NYC.GOV/COVIDTEST.**

**Советы по использованию  
лицевых масок:**

- Лицевая маска — это хорошо закрепленная бумага или ткань, закрывающая нос и рот.
- Не выходите из дома без лицевой маски.
- Для лица можно использовать пылевые маски, банданы и шарфы.
- НЕ используйте маски медработников.
- Старайтесь не выходить из дома и соблюдайте социальное дистанцирование.



**NYC**

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Mayor's Office of  
Immigrant Affairs



**Resous pou  
Kominote Imigran yo  
Pandam COVID-19**

[bit.ly/moia-covid-hc](http://bit.ly/moia-covid-hc)

**TA DISTANCIATION SOCIALE  
SAUVE DES VIES**

JOUE TON RÔLE, NYC




**NYC**

**COVID-19 ને કેલાતા રોકો!**  
ધરે પોતાની અને બીજાની સંભાળ કેવી રીતે લેવી તે શીખો.


**COVID-19 ના લક્ષણો કયા છે?**

- તાવ, ઉધરસ, ગળામાં દુખાવો અને શ્વાસ લેવામાં તકલીફ સૌથી સામાન્ય લક્ષણો છે. અન્ય લક્ષણોમાં શરીરનો દુખાવો, સ્નાયુ કે ગેંધાની ક્ષમતા નુકાવવી, માથાનો દુખાવો અને ઝડપ શામેલ છે.
- કોરોનાવાયરસ રોગ 2019 (COVID-19) થી પીડાતા મોટાભાગના લોકોમાં ફાળવા અથવા મધ્યમ લક્ષણો હોય છે અને તે જાતે ઠીક થઈ જાય છે.



**ગંભીર રોગ થવાનું સૌથી વધુ જોખમ કોણે છે?**

- 50 કે તેથી વધુ વયના લોકોને (65 વર્ષ કે તેથી વધુ વયના લોકોને સૌથી વધુ જોખમ હોય છે)
- લોકો કે જેમને આરોગ્ય સંબંધિત અન્ય સમસ્યાઓ છે, જેમ કે:
  - કેન્સરના બીમારો
  - અસ્થમા
  - કદમ રોગ
  - જોડાણ
  - ડાયાબિટીસ
  - કિડનીનો રોગ
  - ચક્રવર્તી રોગ
  - હૃદયરોગ
  - હેમરોઇડ
  - નાભીની રોગપ્રતિકારક શક્તિ



**જો કે COVID-19 ના લક્ષણોથી બીમાર હોવ તો મારે શું કરવું જોઈએ?**

જો તમે COVID-19 ના લક્ષણોથી બીમાર છો, તો માની લો કે તમને તે છે. જ્યારે તે બીમાર હોય:

- જો તમને શ્વાસ લેવામાં તકલીફ થાય, તમારી છાતીમાં દુખાવો અથવા અન્ય અસાધ્ય લક્ષણો થાય, મુઝવણમાં હોવ અથવા જાગી ન શકો, અથવા હોઠ કે ધરેરો નુકાવ થાય તો તરત જ 911 પર કોલ કરો.
- જો તમે 50 કે તેથી વધુ વયના હો અથવા તમારા આરોગ્યની સ્થિતિને લીધે તમને જોખમ વધારે હોય, અથવા જો તમને ત્રણ દિવસ પછી પણ સાફ ન લાગે તો ડોક્ટરને કોલ કરો.
- જો તમને COVID-19 ના ગંભીર લક્ષણો અથવા કોઈ ગંભીર આરોગ્ય સમસ્યા હોય તો ઉમેરના ડોક્ટરનો સંપર્ક કરો અથવા હોસ્પિટલમાં જાઓ.
- અવરજવ નવીની સંભાળ અથવા આવરશક કોરોના અથવા પુરવઠા મેલવાના સિવાય ધરમથી બહાર નીકળવો નહીં (જો કોઈ તમારા માટે તે ન લાગી શકે).
- જો તમે ધરમથી બહાર નીકળો તો:
  - બીડનાવા સ્થળોને જવાનું ઠાળો
  - અન્યથી ઓછામાં ઓછા 6 ફુટ દૂર રહો.
  - તમારા નાક અને મોં ને રૂમાલ, સ્કાર્ફ અથવા અન્ય ચહેરાના કાવચથી ઢાંકી દો.
  - વહર જવા પહેલાં તમારા હાથ ધોઈ તે અને બહાર જવા ત્યારે આંતરેલ અધિધારિત હેન્ડ સેનિટાઇઝરનો ઉપયોગ કરો.
- ધરના સચોટ આચરણક કામ અને જરૂરીયાતો માટે બહાર જઈ શકે છે પરંતુ તેમના આરોગ્યની ધ્યાનપૂર્ક દેખરેખ રાખવી જોઈએ.

**બીમાર પછી કે મારા ધરમથી બહાર કનેચારે નીકળી શકું?**

- જો તમે બીમાર હોવ તો તમારે:
  - જ્યાં સુધી તમને રાઇટનોલ અથવા અન્ય અલ્ટ્રા લીધા વિના ત્રણ દિવસ સુધી તાવ ન આવે અને
  - તમારા લક્ષણો શરૂ થયાના ઓછામાં ઓછા સાત દિવસ થઈ ન ગયા હોય અને
  - તમારા લક્ષણોમાં સુધારો ન થયો હોય, ત્યાં સુધી ધરે રહેવું જોઈએ
- રીમાઇનર: ત્યુ યોર્ક શીટી ગવુ છે. આનો અર્થ એ છે કે જો તમે બીમાર હોવ, તો ત્રણ તમારે અન્ય લોકો સાથે ઓછામાં ઓછા 6 ફુટનો અંતર રાખીને જરૂરી કામ અથવા કસરત કરવા માટે જ ધરમથી બહાર નીકળવું જોઈએ.

**સહાયની જરૂર છે?**

- જો તમને COVID-19 ની સ્થિતિ હોય, તો 911 પર કોલ કરો.
- જો તમારી પાસે ડોક્ટર નથી પરંતુ તમારે તેની જરૂર છે, તો 844-692-4692 પર કોલ કરો. ત્યુ યોર્ક શીટી કમ્યુનિટી સેન્ટરની સ્થિતિ, વીડીઓ સ્થિતિ અથવા યુવવર્તી કરવાની ક્ષમતાને ધ્યાનમાં લીધા વિના સહાય પૂરી પાડે છે.
- વધુ માહિતી માટે, 311 પર કોલ કરો અથવા [nyc.gov/coronavirus](http://nyc.gov/coronavirus) ની મુલાકાત લો.

NYC આરોગ્ય વિભાગ પરિશિષ્ટિમાં ફેરફાર સાથે લાભમાળી બદલી શકે છે. 4/20/20

**NYC**

**Hay disponible ayuda legal para  
inmigrantes segura y gratuita para  
todos los neoyorquinos. Su estado  
de inmigración no tiene importancia.**

Si tiene preguntas o dudas sobre su estado de inmigración, incluso sobre cierres de tribunales u oficinas, llame a la **línea directa ActionNYC** al: **800-354-0365** • De lunes a viernes • 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.



**NYC**  
Immigrant Affairs

**所有人免費  
領取餐飲!**

[schools.nyc.gov/freemeals](http://schools.nyc.gov/freemeals)

**NYC** Department of Education

[/nycschools](https://www.facebook.com/nycschools)

**집에서 자신과 가족을 돌보십시오**  
귀하나 집에 있는 누군가가ป่วย이 다른 경우:

**물리적 거리를 유지하십시오.**


- 방문객을 줄이지 마십시오.
- 사람이 2미터(6피트) 간격을 유지하십시오.
- 다른 사람과 침대를 같이 쓰는 경우 머리와 발을 서로 반대편 하여 거거나 소파에서 따로 자십시오.
- 다른 사람과 침방에 크게 취약한 사람을 서로 분리하십시오.

**가리십시오.**

- 다른 사람과 2미터(6피트) 이내에 놓일 경우 얼굴 마스크를 꼭 착용하십시오.
- 기침이나 재채기 시 마스크를 꼭 착용하십시오.

**항렬을 유지하십시오.**

- 티슈는 사용 후 휴지통에 바로 버리십시오.
- 손을 자주 씻고 특히 기침이나 재채기 후에 씻으십시오.
- 표면을 자주 닦으십시오.
- 수건, 깔개류, 의류를 취급주의 사항을 고려하여 가능한 뜨거운 물과 세제로 세탁하고 완전히 건조하십시오.
- 시거류를 다른 사람과 같이 쓰지 말고 매 사용 후 세척하십시오.



COVID-19 확산을 늦추는 방법에 대한 정보는 [nyc.gov/coronavirus](http://nyc.gov/coronavirus) 방문에 주십시오.

**NYC**

**مازلنا نقدم خدماتنا من أجلك.**  
نواصل العمل لخدمة الكثير من مجتمعات المهاجرين لدينا.

إذا كنت لديك أسئلة بشأن الهجرة أو كيفية الحصول على خدمات "العديشة" في ظل أزمة انتشار مرض COVID-19، يرجى الاتصال بالخط الساخن على الرقم 212-788-7654 من 9 صباحاً حتى 5 مساءً، من الإثنين إلى الجمعة، أو أرسل بردياً الإلكترونيًا إلى [AskMOIA@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:AskMOIA@cityhall.nyc.gov)



**NYC**

City Hall in the form of square-sized graphics and social media copy, which became an integral tool for quickly disseminating new guidance and resources through MOIA's digital outreach channels. This time sensitive content ranged from decisions on New York on PAUSE to citywide initiatives including social distancing and addressing stigma and discrimination. See the Language Access section on page 61 for more information on how MOIA responded to the demand for language services during the pandemic.

MOIA also provided extensive support to agencies on language access through designated Language Access Coordinators and other agency staff to address new challenges, such as adapting multilingual engagement in a virtual environment and integrating language access into recovery planning. MOIA worked one-on-one with and provided guidance to agencies including SBS, the NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), and the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants (MOPT) on how to make their websites and digital resources more accessible, use interpretation on virtual meeting platforms, and deliver language-accessible online applications. During sessions with the Language Access Coordinators, MOIA highlighted the strong language access improvements of specific agencies such as the Department of Transportation's cross-team collaboration to deliver language-accessible online applications for its licenses, permits, and registrations.

Confronting the City's reliance on technology for virtual engagement during COVID-19, MOIA launched a pilot project to use a multilingual content management system and functional interface for

linguists to see the translations in context through technology vendor, Smartling, to deliver translations of MOIA's website in the ten LL30 languages using human translation instead of standard machine translation. This feature for MOIA's website at [nyc.gov/immigrants](https://nyc.gov/immigrants) went live in March 2020 and had a significant impact, especially by offering quality translations of MOIA's Resource Guide for Immigrant Communities during COVID-19 Pandemic. From April to July 2020, the translated website comprised 25 percent of all web traffic. MOIA also collaborated with the Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO) on several projects, including integrating multilingual navigation into a project using tablets to support and connect seniors living in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residences and isolated by COVID-19.

## Interagency Coordination

Every City agency bears the responsibility to serve all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, place of birth, or English proficiency. Whether helping with language access, housing, and access to health care, or small businesses support, City agencies work to ensure that all New Yorkers get the help they need. In addition to the Language Access Taskforce, by way of MOIA staff members' roles serving on a number of additional interagency taskforce groups convened to address various aspects of the City's COVID-19 response, MOIA advised partner agencies on the specific barriers and needs that immigrants face, provided guidance on how to address those needs, and worked with partners to enact immigrant-specific programs and services.

## Interagency Immigrant Taskforce

MOIA's Interagency Immigrant Taskforce, launched in 2018, was one of the many ways MOIA worked with agencies to advance language access during the pandemic, improve access to services for immigrants, and respond to federal policy changes. The taskforce served as a forum to brief agencies on the effects of these changes on immigrant New Yorkers, provide updates on agency programs and initiatives that impact immigrant New Yorkers, and to share resources and best practices to assist agencies in better serving their immigrant clients.

MOIA convened the task force in February, May, and October 2020 to discuss COVID-19 response efforts, present on the pandemic's impact on immigrant communities, and share resources, such as translated materials including MOIA's COVID-19

Resource Guide available in 26 languages. MOIA used the task force to highlight language access challenges and how to address language access needs during the pandemic. MOIA used recommendations from the Interagency Immigrant Taskforce to advise the City's Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity on how to address the needs of undocumented immigrant workers.

## Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the fatal consequences of racial disparities in America. With an aim to spur a recovery that confronts deep inequities and rebuild a fairer New York, in April 2020, the City established the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity (TRIE) comprised of officials from across the Administration to engage the communities hardest-hit by COVID-19 infection, monitor response and



MOIA Organizers including Ateea Kazi and members of the Test & Trace Corps shared information about COVID-19 testing and resources available to all New Yorkers with small businesses and community members in Diversity Plaza, Queens.



recovery efforts in those neighborhoods, and work with City officials and agencies to narrow long-standing racial and economic disparities. MOIA Commissioner Bitta Mostofi co-chaired the subcommittee on undocumented immigrant workers.

The taskforce has created new food access programs in neighborhoods that have suffered disproportionately during the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerated broadband deployment plans to support communities hardest hit by the pandemic, and introduced a new equitable ownership requirement to strengthen the role of Minority-and-Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBES) and non-profits on affordable housing projects developed on City-owned sites. MOIA also focused on the needs of low-wage workers, immigrants at imminent risk of deportation, and the increased fear of immigrants because of anti-immigrant policies at the federal level. This focus resulted in additional funding for programming aimed at these populations, as discussed on pages 65, 75, and 76.

The taskforce continues to play a critical role in 2021, with a new subcommittee focused on vaccine distribution in the city's hardest-hit neighborhoods, and to engage their robust network of over 200 community organizations to ensure effective outreach. MOIA has played a critical role in elevating issues that create barriers for immigrants in accessing vaccines, such as language and digital barriers as well as documentation requirements.

## Equity and Justice

Ensuring that City programs and services are accessible to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, has always been a key part of MOIA's mission. As such, in 2020 MOIA worked to dismantle barriers for our immigrant communities and continued our work towards a more inclusive City. This work was done both within MOIA and in collaboration with our agency partners.

### IDNYC

At the start of 2020, IDNYC — New York City's municipal ID program — focused on encouraging cardholders to keep their IDNYC current by renewing their card through IDNYC's Online Portal, continuing to grow the many benefits of the card for all New Yorkers, and expanding access to the card.

### Renewals

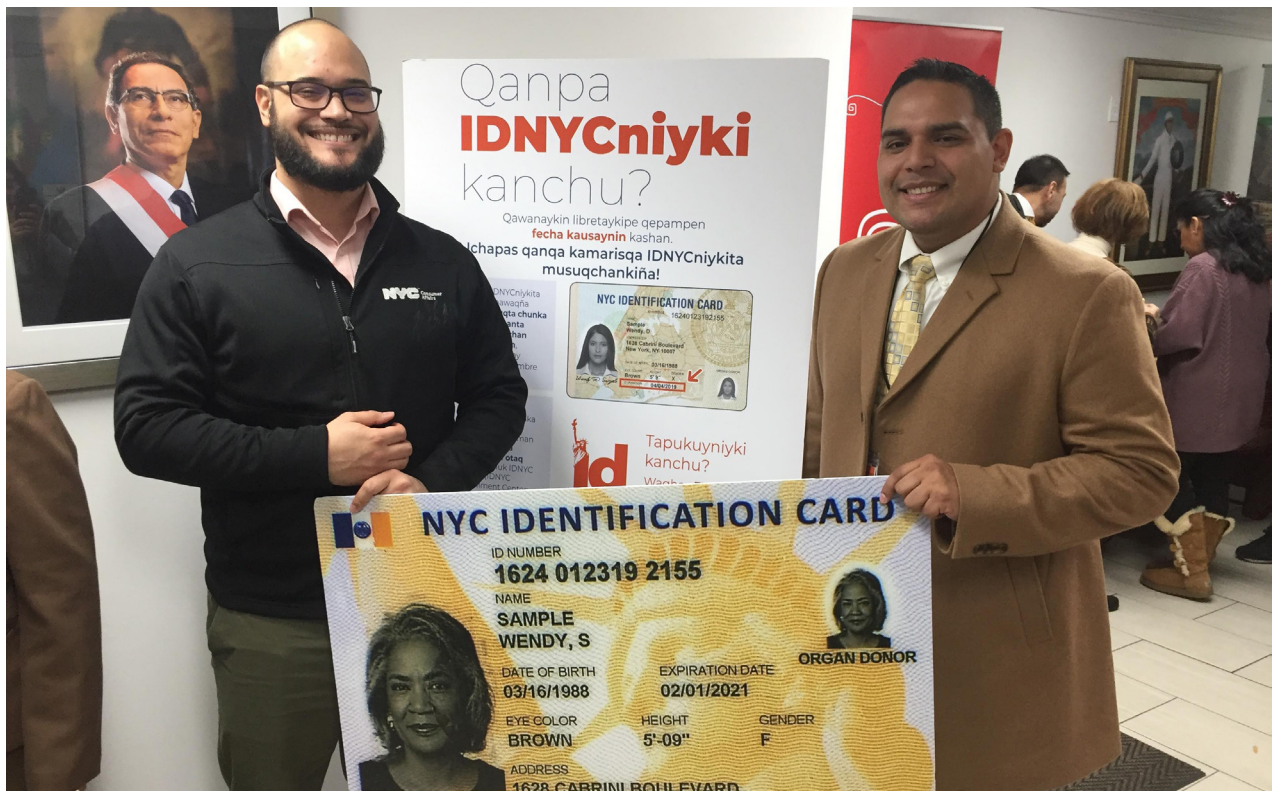
IDNYC cards expire after five years, and with the celebration of IDNYC's fifth anniversary in January 2020, the program launched a new online renewal platform to make it easier for cardholders who enrolled in 2015 to renew their cards in 2020 and beyond. Due to reduced capacities at IDNYC Enrollment Centers during COVID-19, IDNYC limited in-person services and extended the renewal period for all cardholders whose cards expired in 2020 to December 31, 2021. For cards that expire in 2021, cardholders can renew their cards within one year from their card's expiration date.

Before the onset of COVID-19, MOIA outreach staff promoted IDNYC enrollment and online renewals in person, delivering in language presentations and providing

materials available in 26 languages through 175 unique engagements. Staff also distributed flyers about IDNYC in local communities across the city, visiting more than 24 locations.

Additionally, in cooperation with the Brooklyn, Queens, and New York Public Libraries, MOIA hosted events to promote IDNYC renewals and enrollment at libraries located in zip codes with the highest numbers of IDNYC cardholders set to become eligible to renew their cards in 2020. Through these events and renewal activations sponsored and hosted by elected officials at their offices across the city, MOIA helped several hundred cardholders renew their IDNYC and facilitated appointments for those seeking to enroll in the program for the first time.

These grassroots efforts were accompanied by the program’s citywide, multilingual advertising and targeted community outreach campaign focused on cardholder renewals and the benefits of the card that had kicked off in November 2019 with ad placements in community and ethnic media, with broadcast and digital outlets, transportation platforms, and in small businesses, among others. When New York on PAUSE went into effect in March 2020, and IDNYC Enrollment Centers temporarily ceased operations, the campaign was also paused.



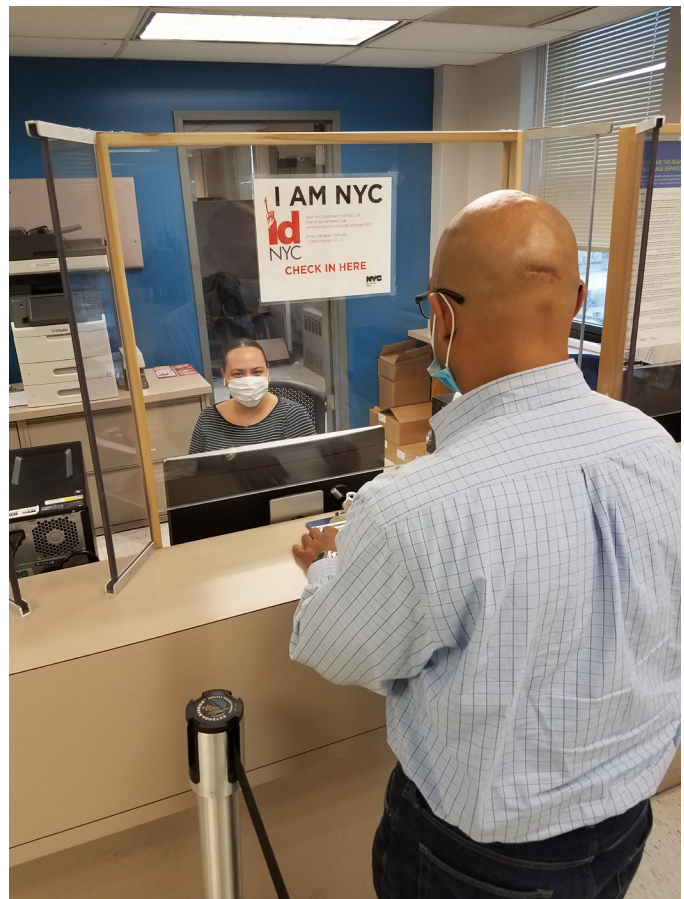
Neighborhood Organizer Sandro Navarro shared information about IDNYC and other City resources alongside the NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection at the Peruvian Consulate of NY in January 2020. The event was hosted in Quechua as part of the City’s commitment to provide more accessibility and visibility to indigenous populations in NYC.

### ***Impact of the pandemic***

On March 20, 2020, all permanent IDNYC enrollment sites closed temporarily and all Mobile Command Center (MCC) enrollments, and the enrollment of public-school students in partnership with the NYC Department of Education, were suspended. IDNYC worked with its partner agencies and organizations to communicate with and accommodate cardholders and applicants who could no longer come into physical locations.

On October 13, 2020, IDNYC resumed in-person enrollment operations with limited capacity at select NYC Department of Finance (DOF) locations in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island. Since October 2020, IDNYC has partnered with several elected officials to deploy the MCC and hosted temporary enrollment at sites across the city, including at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2348 in Astoria, Queens.

Since IDNYC launched the Veteran Designation in July 2015, 11,246 veterans have chosen to have this special marker on their IDNYC cards to indicate service in the U.S. Armed Services. The designation better connects veterans to services, benefits, and discounts and is an expression of the City's gratitude and respect for those who have served our country. Additionally, IDNYC received a request from the NYC Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) for the contact information of IDNYC cardholders with the veteran indicator on their card for the purpose of reaching out to the cardholders during the COVID-19 emergency to inform them of and connect them with available resources. IDNYC granted the request pursuant to NYC Administrative Code Section 3-115(e)(4)(3),



After New York on PAUSE, IDNYC resumed in-person enrollment operations with limited capacity to ensure the safety of new applicants, cardholders, and staff.

which authorizes the program to provide IDNYC applicant information to a requesting agency for the purpose of determining or facilitating the IDNYC cardholder's eligibility for benefits, and the two agencies entered into a memorandum of agreement concerning the anticipated disclosure.

### ***New Applications***

At the end of 2020, a total of 1,394,203 cardholders have been able to enjoy the meaningful benefits of the IDNYC program. Since the launch of the IDNYC program, IDNYC has received 1,713,758 applications, with the highest number of applications from Queens and Brooklyn.

### ***Pop-up enrollment sites***

At the beginning of 2020, IDNYC — in close partnership with the NYC Department of Education — hosted a series of Middle School pop-up enrollment sites in Brooklyn at P.S./I.S. 41 Francis White in Brownsville, I.S. 136 Charles O. Dewey in Sunset Park, and M.S. 839 in Kensington, and in Manhattan at Community Math and Science Prep in Washington Heights. In addition, the MCC was successfully deployed at nine pop-up locations before the March PAUSE period began.

### ***New benefits and COVID-19***

In January 2020, IDNYC was thrilled to announce new partnerships with Costco, Atlantic Theater Company, The Juilliard School, Signature Theatre, and the South Street Seaport Museum, as well as the return of Queens Botanical Garden as a benefit partner.

IDNYC was also excited to announce its first regional partnership outside New York City's five boroughs, with the Sullivan Catskills Visitors Association, in Sullivan County's Catskill Mountains. At the time, cardholders were able to receive discounts with partnering businesses in the Catskills ranging from resorts and performance venues to gift shops.

During 2020, IDNYC cardholders continued to use their cards to access city services and take advantage of discounts and the cultural, educational, and health-related opportunities that the card offers. While many benefit partners' locations remained closed for most of the year due to the pandemic and IDNYC was unable to conduct in-person enrollment and outreach

to individuals, the program continued to promote virtual events and offerings through IDNYC social media platforms and Know Your Rights presentations. MOIA's Community Services team hosted virtual Know Your Rights presentations with more than 25 organizations across New York City in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Haitian Creole.

In July 2020, a select number of art and cultural partners re-opened for in person visitors, primarily low-risk outdoor spaces like botanical gardens and zoos with capacity restrictions. At the end of August 2020, remaining cultural institutions were permitted to reopen at 25 percent capacity. Notably, the Whitney Museum of American Art welcomed IDNYC cardholders to enjoy free admission to the museum on designated "IDNYC Cardholders Days." Additionally, several partners have adjusted their membership policies to accommodate IDNYC memberships, such as extending current memberships for an additional six months to one year of free membership.

### ***Benefit savings highlights***

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, IDNYC has continued to provide access to discounts and information that keep New Yorkers healthy.

The City's official prescription drug discount plan, Big Apple Rx, integrated into the IDNYC program to provide prescription drug discounts at more than 2,000 pharmacies citywide, has saved IDNYC cardholders over \$1.17 million on their prescription purchases since the program's launch.

At Food Bazaar stores in Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, IDNYC cardholders

have saved over \$3.6 million dollars in discounted grocery purchases since January 2015.

IDNYC's partnership with NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) allows cardholders to link their IDNYC cards to their H+H accounts to expedite the check-in process for appointments. Since this partnership began in May 2016, 9,725 cardholders have linked their IDNYC cards to their H+H accounts.

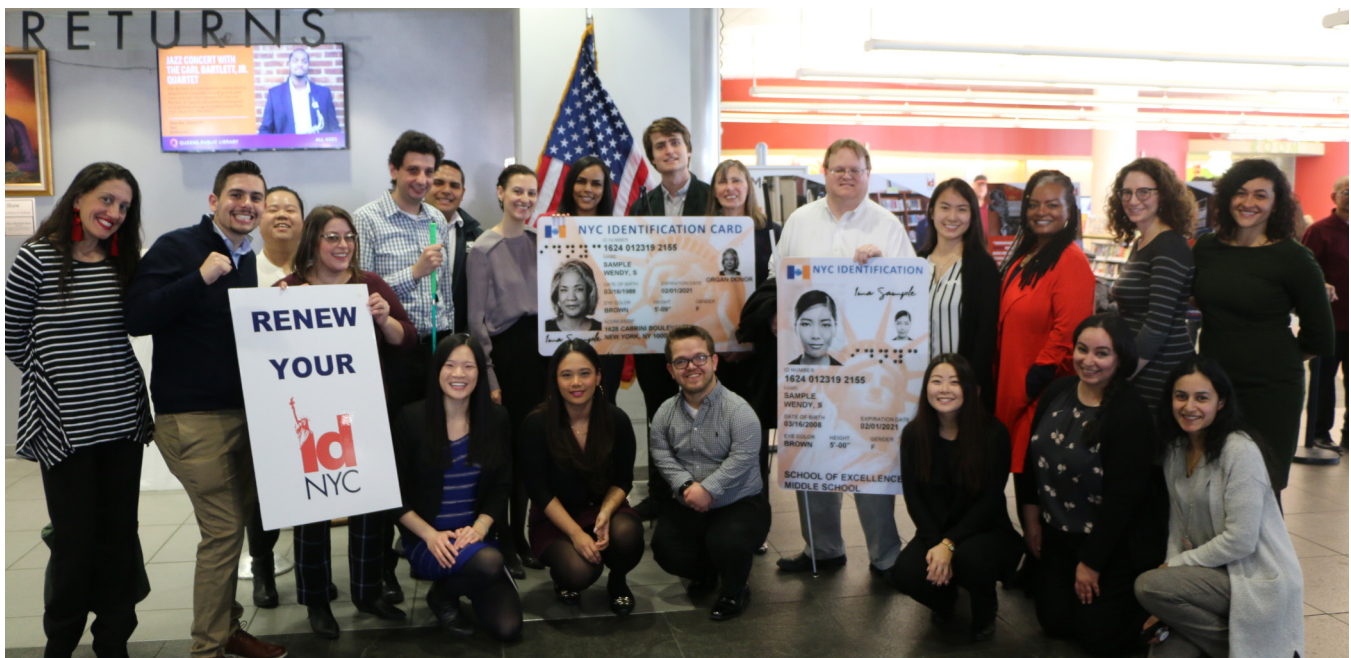
Since January 2017, parents, guardians, and other individuals have been able to use their IDNYC to access their own or their children's official immunization records from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Citywide Immunization Registry. Through My Vaccine Record, cardholders can print out their vaccination history to complete medical forms, school registration, college admission, and more. To date, 4,612 cardholders have accessed vaccine records using an IDNYC number.

## Expanding access to IDNYC

As part of the program's fifth anniversary celebration, IDNYC also announced the introduction of braille embossing to the card beginning in January 2020. All new cards are embossed with "idnyc" to help IDNYC cardholders who are blind or have low vision and read braille to identify and utilize the card. Cards without "idnyc" embossed in braille may be replaced with a new card at no cost by scheduling an appointment to visit an Enrollment Center and requesting a replacement card.

## Language Access

The ongoing drive to create a more equitable City must directly address the language barriers that render many New Yorkers unheard and unseen. More than 200 languages are spoken by residents across the five boroughs. Approximately half of immigrants and 23 percent of all New



In January 2020, the NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities joined Commissioner Mostofi, MOIA staff, and community partners at Flushing Library to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the IDNYC program and announce the addition of braille to IDNYC cards, making it the first locally-issued ID in the nation with braille and making services more accessible for New Yorkers who are blind or have low vision.

Yorkers — regardless of status — have limited English proficiency. Nearly 61 percent of undocumented immigrants have LEP.

Under its mandate to improve the well-being of immigrant New Yorkers, MOIA works with a broad spectrum of City agencies to expand inclusion and to reduce communications barriers for those New Yorkers who have LEP. MOIA serves in a monitoring and oversight role for the ongoing citywide implementation of Local Law 30 of 2017 (LL30). Since the start of LL30, MOIA has offered guidance and technical support to agencies to methodically integrate language access across their operations and supported language access for citywide Mayor’s Office initiatives.

In 2020, and with heightened demand for translation and interpretation services due to the pandemic, MOIA continued to strengthen the City’s infrastructure needed to deliver multilingual services during the COVID-19 crisis by advising agencies on additional language services resources; how to secure and implement them; and by consulting with agencies on how to integrate language access into their programs, services, and events. MOIA also collaborated with more Mayoral offices on language access —

from the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability and Citywide Event Coordination and Management to the Mayor’s Office to Protect Tenants — MOIA released a coordinated language access implementation plan for the Mayor’s Office. Additionally, MOIA developed and submitted its [annual report](#) on LL30 implementation to City Council

To handle the surge in demand for language services during the pandemic and ensure that critical information about COVID-19 was made available to New Yorkers with LEP in a timely manner, the LST worked with its Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) vendor to ensure rapid completion of translations, that translation service was available in the top 26 languages, and that translation services were provided on weekends and evenings.

Through new pilot projects and collaborations, the LST responded to the myriad multilingual challenges and demands during the COVID-19 pandemic and improved quality of translations and turnaround times, in addition to the creation of an in-house Spanish translation unit that now completes 75 percent of all Spanish translation requests received by MOIA.



MOIA’s Neighborhood Organizer Ayyad Algabyali participated in Arabic-language interview with U.S. Arab Radio to share city resources and services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lastly, there was a dramatic increase in telephonic interpretation, which was used to provide language assistance to a broad range of initiatives, such as Get Food NYC, Get Cool NYC, the AskMOIA Hotline, and ActionNYC. In addition, while in-person interpretation requests ceased during the pandemic, MOIA was able to adapt to virtual platforms to ensure that town halls, webinars, Know Your Rights presentations, and forums were still accessible in other

languages via platforms such as Webex and Zoom, which both connect to Facebook Live.

The LST was able to adapt to this challenging year, utilize new technology, and continue providing services at a time when multilingual communication was critical. Through this period, the team expanded its reach and innovated to improve language access.

**Key indicators:**

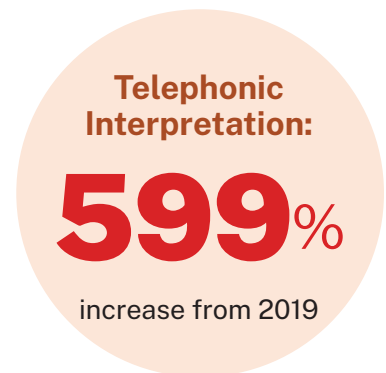
**Translation**

	CY19	CY20	% Increase
<b>Delivered Translations</b>	1430	3800	<b>166%</b>
<b>Source Documents</b>	559	696	<b>25%</b>
<b>Word Counts</b>	903,863	2,053,508	<b>127%</b>
<b>Languages</b>	46	45	<b>-2%</b>



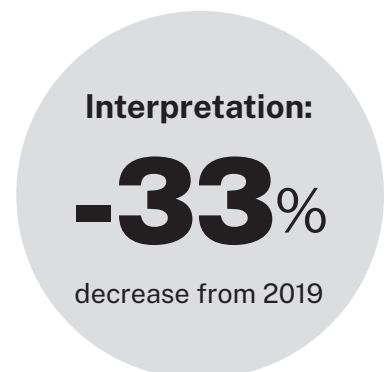
**Telephonic Interpretation**

	CY19	CY20	% Increase
<b>Total calls</b>	1638	11,455	<b>599%</b>
<b>Hours of interpretation</b>	493	2,783	<b>465%</b>
<b>Languages</b>	41	55	<b>34%</b>



**Interpretation**

	CY19	CY20	% Decrease
<b>Total Events</b>	135	90	<b>-33%</b>
<b>Interpreters</b>	371	210	<b>-43%</b>
<b>Languages</b>	21	13	<b>-38%</b>



## Poll Site Interpretation

In 2020 the Poll Site Language Assistance Program, which MOIA launched as a pilot program in 2017 to expand language access at poll sites, successfully transitioned to the NYC Civic Engagement Commission (CEC). MOIA continues to advise on the program. After a public comment process, the CEC published its final methodology — which MOIA advised on — that lists the languages in which the CEC provides interpretation for elections and the way in which the CEC determines the poll sites where interpreters will provide services. The CEC also published a rule, pursuant to the City Charter, that establishes minimum standards for interpreter training and conduct for the City’s Poll Site Language

Assistance Program. As a result of this work, the CEC successfully provided interpretation in 11 languages across 25 early voting sites and 52 Election Day sites for the November 2020 general election.

Before the program transitioned to the CEC for the November 2020 election, MOIA worked with DemocracyNYC and the CEC to expand language access for the June 2020 election (elections scheduled earlier in 2020 were canceled due to COVID-19). MOIA ensured key material such as Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and FAQs on mail-in voting and instructions for how to request and fill in a mail-in ballot were translated into 12 languages.

## Public Charge



In early 2020, MOIA staff worked across the five boroughs to provide up-to-date information about the public charge rule. Here, Neighborhood Organizers Ronnie James and Lydia Li joined City Harvest to canvas at the Salt And Sea Mission food pantry in Gravesend, Brooklyn and connect New Yorkers to free resources and immigration legal help.

## Fighting the rule in court

In late January 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the new USCIS public charge rule to go into effect, temporarily staying the injunction won by the City and other plaintiffs in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (District Court) in October 2019. The rule took effect on February 24, 2020, before the onset of the COVID-19 crisis.

Within weeks, it was clear that the public charge rule would jeopardize government efforts to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, by deterring communities from seeking the care and support they needed. On March 18, 2020, MOIA, DOHMH, H+H, and DSS sent a letter to USCIS urging it to halt implementation of the rule. When the federal government refused to do so, the City and its co-



plaintiffs took the fight to court, submitting emergency motions to both the U.S. Supreme Court and then the District Court seeking for the rule to be blocked during the national emergency.

On July 29, 2020, the District Court ruled in favor of the City, citing compelling evidence submitted in declarations by MOIA Commissioner Bitta Mostofi and Deputy Director of Research Sabrina Fong on the rule's deterrent effect on immigrant communities and the heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19 for immigrant essential workers. The City secured another litigation victory on August 4, 2020, when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld the District Court's October 2019 injunction.

The City also welcomed the Southern District of New York's July 2020 ruling in favor of a coalition of non-profit and individual plaintiffs, blocking the U.S. Department of State's new public charge rules and President Trump's October 2019 Healthcare Proclamation. The City was part of a February 2020 multi-jurisdiction amicus brief describing the harms of these federal policies.

On March 9, 2021, the U.S. Department of Justice withdrew its legal challenges to court orders that had blocked the new public charge rule. This allowed a federal court decision that permanently blocked the rule from going into effect. As a result, USCIS ceased applying the new public charge rule, and returned to using policies in place before the rule.

### ***Fighting fear and confusion in communities***

Access to healthcare and supportive services is critical for all New Yorkers, and for the recovery of the City as a whole. Throughout 2020, MOIA implemented a range of strategies to share clear, accurate, and timely information about public charge and important public services with immigrant communities. This included:

- The *Support. Not Fear.* multilingual marketing campaign, coordinated by MOIA in partnership with DOHMH and with support from H+H and DSS. The advertising campaign, targeting low-income immigrant neighborhoods heavily impacted by the pandemic, including areas with greater populations of non-citizen New Yorkers, assured individuals that all New Yorkers can access health care and social services — including food assistance, COVID-19 testing and care, tenant protection, emergency Medicaid, and free legal help — regardless of immigration status, ability to pay, or employment status. It also encouraged New Yorkers with questions about immigration and use of public benefits to call ActionNYC for City-funded, free, and confidential immigration legal help.
- Information about the public charge rule was also included in virtual and in-person Know Your Rights presentations conducted by MOIA staff and contracted partners.
- MOIA's Outreach and Organizing team also held multiple in-person outreach events at food pantries in neighborhoods with high immigrant populations.

Multilingual staff passed out thousands of flyers and answered questions from community members at these events. These events were held in partnership with City Harvest.

- To support agencies in educating public-facing staff about public charge, MOIA trained approximately 40 frontline H+H Test & Trace Resource Navigators, and approximately 30 staff at the Taxi and Limousine Commission's Driver Resource Center. MOIA also advised agency partners on public charge messaging for their programs.

## We Speak NYC

English language proficiency is an important factor impacting the ability to access education, employment, health, and social services. Recognizing this and the need to support and supplement existing literacy programs and LEP learners, MOIA continued to develop and administer We Speak NYC (WSNYC), a free English language learning program focused on conversation, adapting in person classes to an online virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We Speak NYC helps immigrant New Yorkers practice English conversation skills through content-based, civic-focused instruction, videos, and education materials for Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Education, all made in partnership with The City University of New York (CUNY). All free supplemental resources for learners, educators, program managers and practitioners alike can be accessed online through the program's website, [wespeaknyc.cityofnewyork.us](http://wespeaknyc.cityofnewyork.us), which has expanded WSNYC's reach to immigrant New Yorkers beyond the traditional classroom. This model brought together many learners and educators during COVID-19 by promoting self-study,

knowledge of COVID-19 relief services and how to access City services, and communal learning through online conversation classes and webinars with best practices on distance learning and using WSNYC tools.

The online community classes that help English language learners build issue focused vocabulary were led by trained volunteers who use WSNYC's Emmy-winning videos and materials to facilitate seven to ten-week classes across the five boroughs. WSNYC traditionally works with community and faith-based organizations, schools, and libraries to support spaces where English language learners can learn about their rights and are given tools to better advocate for their families, friends, and themselves.

During 2020, We Speak NYC worked with CUNY's Evaluation team to update their reporting methodologies. This has allowed the program to enhance and obtain more substantive cyclic feedback from learners and facilitators. Through these responses, WSNYC has been able to implement additional activities in their online conversation classes, provide more teaching support to facilitators and in turn, educators, and understand the positive

impacts that accessing city services have had on the lives of LEP learners.

While WSNYC's online format during the pandemic enhanced knowledge of COVID-19 resources that can be accessed by immigrant learners, the shift from in person learning limited the reach of programming to English Language Learners (ELLs). In 2019, WSNYC conducted 277 classes, reached 5,540 learners, and trained 240 volunteers. In comparison, WSNYC conducted 49 classes, reached 2,576 learners, and trained 154 volunteers in 2020.

In 2020, WSNYC also collaborated with the NYC Census 2020 team and CUNY to launch two PSAs driving census awareness and participation amongst NYC's diverse immigrant communities. See page 98 for more information about the PSAs

and MOIA's work to empower immigrant communities to get counted in the 2020 Census.

### ***We Speak, We LEAD***

WSNYC collaborated with the NYC community-based organization, *New Women New Yorkers* (NWNY) and CUNY to build out a workforce development and ESOL program, *We Speak We LEAD*, with lesson plans that focused on the fundamentals of interviewing, resume building, and professional development skills, all themes featured in various WSNYC episodes. *We Speak, We LEAD* had a cohort of 15-20 immigrant women, and supported the cohort in attaining meaningful employment in a field that interests them. Nearly six months after completing the program, 30 percent of participants who were



*We Speak NYC* collaborated with NYC Census 2020 and CUNY to produce two PSAs about the importance of the census for all. In *CensusGirl*, a superhero lands in a NYC library and inspires a spirited conversation about the census with immigrant New Yorkers from all over the world.

unemployed when they started were able to secure employment. In 2021, WSNYC plans to continue and further advance the *We Speak We LEAD* workforce development and ESOL programming to further build and support cultural awareness, self-advocacy, and confidence.

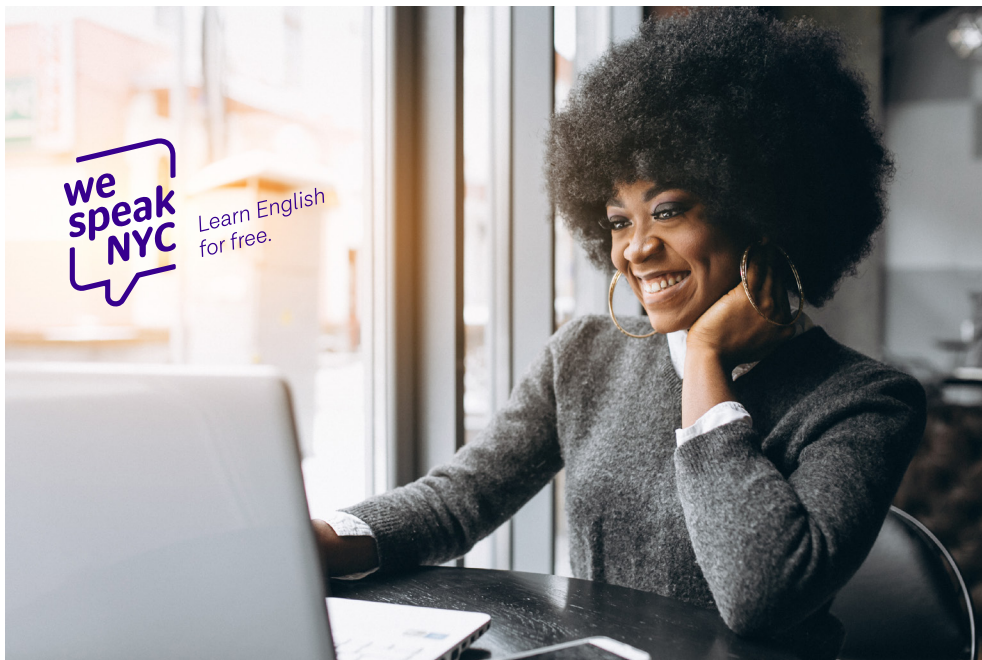
### ***Department of Education's Parent University***

In 2020, WSNYC expanded its outreach to connect immigrant parents to resources through the Division of Multilingual Learners (DML) at the DOE. Together, with the DOE's DML team, WSNYC was able to disseminate over 300,000 WSNYC resources to schools in multiple languages, along with digital information and materials to principals, educators, parent coordinators, and counselors. This strategic partnership supported educators who serve 80 percent of English language learners with English as a New Language (ENL) classes. In 2021, WSNYC will continue to partner with the DML team to host special WSNYC classes on their Parent University platform.

### ***Taking on Digital Literacy***

WSNYC also partnered with the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC) through its Support and Technical Center, to deliver a series of webinars and digital presentations on best practices for engaging with distance learning and multimedia tools, including WSNYC tools. In 2020, WSNYC conducted 11 different webinars reaching a total of 255 participants.

In 2019, WSNYC initiated work with CUNY to create and implement *Plan: Beginner*, a guided curriculum to engage learners who are at a beginner level. In 2020, WSNYC saw an opportunity to build on this curriculum by adding digital literacy resources relevant to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address inequities faced by beginner English language speakers and to help share digital tools and resources that can be accessed online, WSNYC will add an introduction to digital literacy to *Plan: Beginner*, which will help facilitate learners' tech experiences and overall knowledge of technology, once in-person classes reconvene.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, We Speak NYC's free English conversation classes were adapted to an online virtual format and to include information about accessing COVID-19 resources.

## Metrics for Online Conversation classes and Facilitator Engagement:

### We Speak NYC Conversation Classes

Year	FY20		FY21		Total in 2020
Key Performance Metrics (KPIs)	Cycle 1 (7 sessions)	Cycle 2 (7 sessions)	Cycle 3 (10 sessions)	Cycle 4- YTD (7 sessions)	All Cycles in 2020
Dates	April 1 <sup>st</sup> – May 19 <sup>th</sup>	May 20 <sup>th</sup> – July 7 <sup>th</sup>	August 16 <sup>th</sup> – October 24 <sup>th</sup>	November 1 <sup>st</sup> – December 19 <sup>th</sup>	April 1 <sup>st</sup> – December 19 <sup>th</sup>
# of Courses listed on website	9	12	13	15	<b>49</b>
# of Individual Classes	63	81	118	98	<b>360</b>
# of Students Registered	195	397	482	3102	<b>4,176</b>
Unique Participants	217	500	860	999	<b>2,576</b>
Average attendance per class	10	17	17	26	<b>17.5</b>

### Facilitators (including staff and non-staff)

Year	FY20		FY21		Total Since Launch
Cycle	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	All Cycles YTD
<i>Trained</i>	24	9	64	57	<b>154</b>
<i>Placed</i>	19	25	35	35	<b>114</b>
<i>Hours of Community Service</i>	665	875	1225	1225	<b>3990</b>

## Legal Services

ActionNYC is a citywide, community-based program that provides access to immigration legal services and resources to grow the immigration legal services field. Through ActionNYC and its innovative “Community Navigator” model, immigrant New Yorkers have access to free, high quality immigration legal services in their language, at safe locations in their community. The program is operated jointly by MOIA, DSS/HRA, and CUNY, and implemented in collaboration with over 30 CBOs and legal services providers.

Together, non-attorney community navigators and immigration attorneys provide comprehensive legal screenings and full legal representation in straightforward immigration matters, including but not limited to citizenship applications, green card renewals, and TPS renewals. When capacity permits, they also provide full representation in complex cases such as Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and U visas. For complex legal cases outside the team’s scope of services or capacity, ActionNYC connects clients to other City-funded legal services programs administered by DSS/HRA’s Office of Civil Justice, such as the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative and Community Services Block Grant funded programs.

The ActionNYC community navigation team also connects clients to social services as needed, including IDNYC and health insurance enrollment. All ActionNYC sites and community navigators receive support to obtain and maintain U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Recognition, meaning the organization has permission from DOJ to practice immigration law through

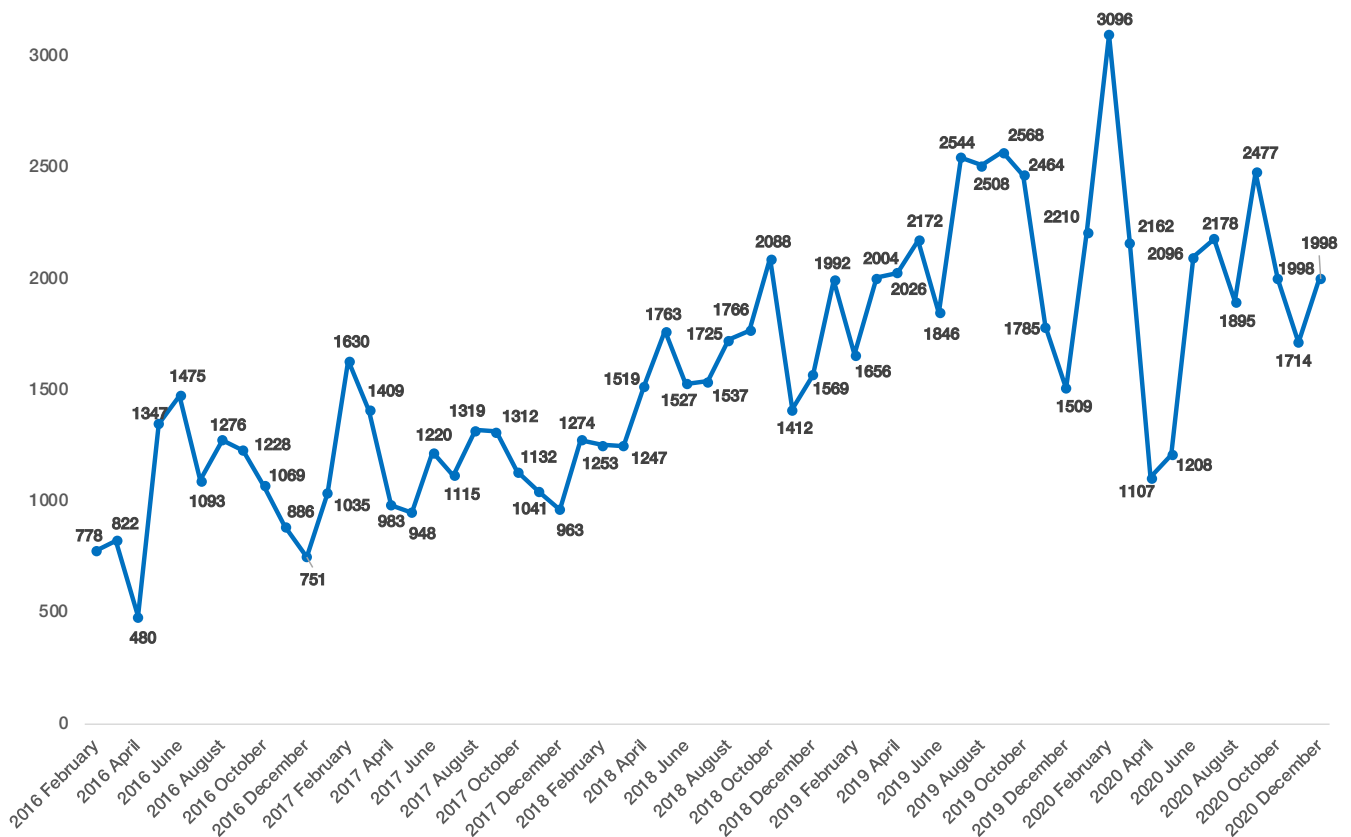
Accredited Representatives before federal authorities and represent clients before USCIS.

Demand for ActionNYC services remained consistently high in 2020 with 25,391 total calls to the city-funded hotline received, down slightly (1.8 percent) from 2019 due to a brief but significant dip in call volume at the onset of COVID-19. Lifetime growth in hotline call volume has more than doubled since the program’s launch in 2016.



The public charge rule created confusion and fear among local communities. In February 2020, MOIA staff including Organizer Lydia Li attended multiple Lunar New Year celebrations, including the New Year Celebration Health Fair in Chinatown, to provide information about ActionNYC, IDNYC, and other services available to all New Yorkers.

## Month-by-Month Hotline



Prior to the onset of COVID-19, ActionNYC provided in-person services across all five boroughs at 19 CBOs, 3 H+H sites, 51 DOE schools, and to long-term and post-acute care H+H patients on a rotating basis. Consistent with DOHMH public health guidance and after conferring with agency partners and each of ActionNYC’s legal service providers to understand their COVID-19 response plans and virtual service capabilities, ActionNYC pivoted to fully remote service delivery in less than one week during mid-March 2020. Many partners initially observed a reduction in the number of calls and requests for immigration legal services, a decrease that was likely due to fear of exposure to COVID-19 and legal services becoming secondary to

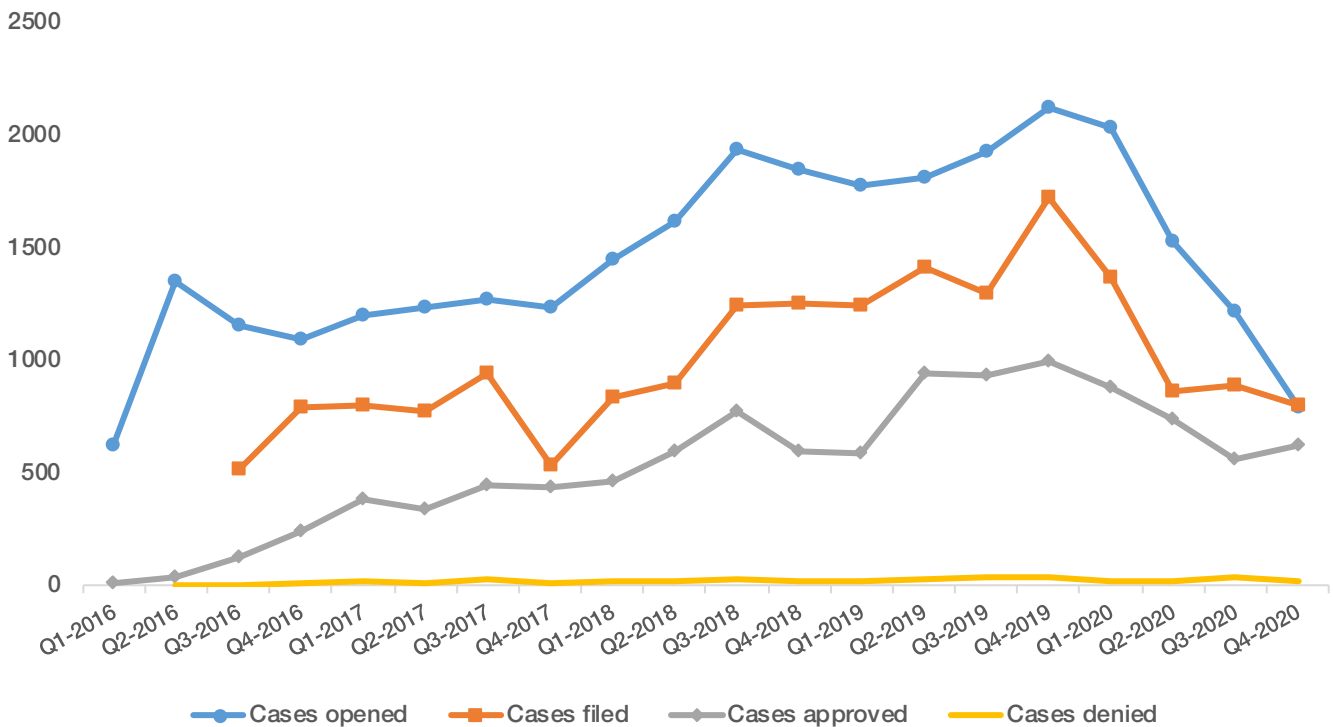
medical and health priorities. With fewer initial consultations to conduct, partners focused on preparing and filing existing cases, many clients were found to also need help answering non-immigration questions related to COVID-19 including testing, unemployment, stimulus payments, food, and burial assistance. In collaboration with MOIA and other City agencies, ActionNYC teams in the field were able to connect clients to much needed resources and services beyond immigration legal services.

Following the shift in service delivery model, MOIA maintained regular and transparent communication with ActionNYC partners, and convened them to discuss challenges and best practices regarding

remote immigration legal service provision. Consistent with guidelines for providers of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), MOIA also provided flexibility in service delivery targets and staffing arrangements, and directed more than \$80,000 toward continuity of service measures such as software and technology, PPE/sanitation supplies for offices, and emergency staff leave. MOIA also worked with other City agencies such as HRA and NYPD to ensure accessibility to administrative documents such as Medicaid proof letters to support USCIS fee waivers, and NYPD good conduct certificates, especially for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) applicants.

In total, ActionNYC providers conducted over 9,695 comprehensive immigration legal screenings, a decrease of about 19 percent compared to 2019, and opened over 5,563 new cases, an increase of about 27 percent compared to 2019. Of cases in which immigration authorities rendered decisions in 2020, 97 percent were approved. ActionNYC initiatives referred 1,157 cases to other legal services providers in 2020. Of these, 657 were referred from ActionNYC in CBOs, 19 from ActionNYC in CBOs Hard-to-Reach, and 27 from ActionNYC in Capacity-Building Fellowship (Fellowship). Additionally, 390 were referred from ActionNYC sites in H+H, and 64 from ActionNYC in Schools.

**ActionNYC Applications by Status**



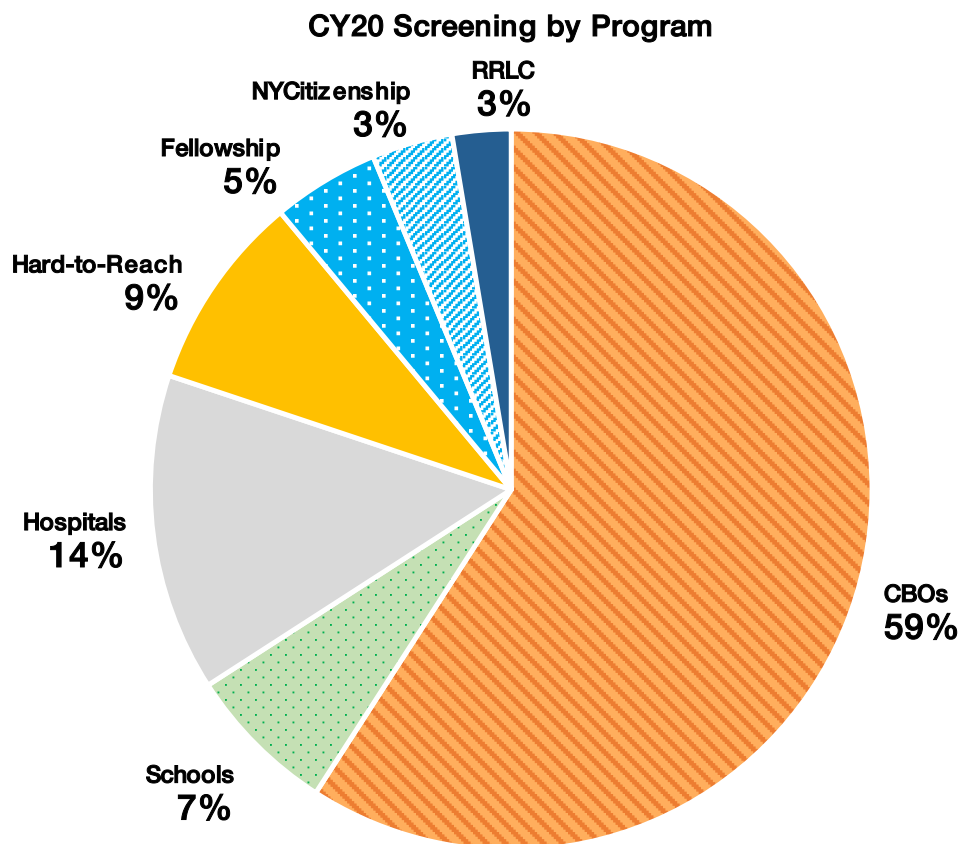


### Screenings, disaggregated by service type

Programs	Annual Screenings
CBOs	5946
Schools	681
Hospitals	1433
Hard-to-Reach	888
Fellowship	482
NYCitizenship	364
RRLC	265
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10059</b>

### Cases Filed by Program

Programs	Case Filed
CBOs	2391
Fellowship	408
Hard-to-Reach	450
Hospitals	402
NYCitizenship	311
Schools	269
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4231</b>



## Case Outcomes by Program

Programs	Case Approved	Case Denied	Approval Rate
CBOs	1572	56	97%
Schools	269	6	98%
Hospitals	268	23	92%
Hard-to-Reach	488	6	99%
Fellowship	210	5	98%
NYCitizenship	199	13	94%
Grand Total	3006	109	97%

Given ActionNYC’s demonstrated success since launch in 2015, and the ever-increasing demand for free, high-quality immigration legal services throughout the city, MOIA and DSS/HRA partnered to embed the ActionNYC programs into the City’s civil legal services infrastructure. In November 2019, MOIA and DSS/HRA issued formal Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from organizations seeking to provide immigration legal services at CBOs, Public Hospitals, Public Libraries, and Public Schools. The RFP was designed to increase equitable access to immigration legal services citywide, and especially hard-to-reach immigrant communities,<sup>53</sup> by engaging a diverse mix of small and large community-based organization providers with the demonstrated legal and navigation expertise.

In June 2020, MOIA and DSS/HRA selected 21 immigration legal service providers across the five-boroughs for awards totaling over \$16 million to provide ActionNYC services under 2.5-year contracts through June 30, 2023, with an optional three-year extension.

This transition is intended to achieve greater administrative efficiency, advance the longevity and sustainability of these programs, and ensure they remain flexible in the face of changing immigration policies and evolving community needs. The list of selected immigration legal service providers can be viewed at [nyc.gov/ActionNYC](http://nyc.gov/ActionNYC).

The ActionNYC RFP was designed to increase equitable access to immigration legal services citywide, and especially among hard-to-reach African, Asian, and Caribbean communities. This was achieved by engaging a diverse mix of small and large CBO providers, with the appropriate linguistic and cultural competencies and demonstrated legal/navigation expertise. As a result, beginning in 2021, a greater proportion — approximately 25 percent — of all ActionNYC consultations are being provided by community-based organizations located immediately within and directly serving New York’s African, Asian, and Caribbean communities.

<sup>53</sup> “Hard-to-reach” communities include but are not limited to African, Asian, and Caribbean immigrant communities.

### ***Legal Initiative Fellowship Program***

The City continues to prioritize legal service delivery in hard-to-reach and growing immigrant populations and build the capacity of CBOs. Of the total ActionNYC screenings in 2020, 1,370 screenings were conducted by ActionNYC in its CBOs Hard-to-Reach and Capacity-Building Fellowship programs. Launched in 2017, the ActionNYC Capacity-Building Fellowship Program has served as an incubator, providing comprehensive training and technical assistance to develop the capacity of CBOs with small, nascent, or limited immigration legal services and community outreach programs. In 2020, eight legal fellows conducted 482 comprehensive immigration legal screenings and provided full legal representation in more than 400 straightforward immigration matters.

As a result of the fellowship, partner organizations have developed, and continue developing, into full partner providers in citywide immigration legal services provision. Three Fellows, the Caribbean Women's Health Association, the Riis Neighborhood Settlement, and the MinKwon Center for Community Action successfully applied for and received awards from a citywide funding opportunity for the provision of immigration legal services to vulnerable immigrant communities under ActionNYC. The success of these programs can also be seen in the increase in immigrant clients from populations that have been traditionally harder to reach for ActionNYC providers. As an example, MOIA has seen increases in the number of clients from South Korea and China, due in large part to the efforts of the providers participating in the Hard-to-Reach and Capacity-Building Fellowship programs.

### ***Rapid Response Legal Collaborative***

In September 2019, MOIA together with New York State's Office of New Americans announced a \$1 million investment in rapid response legal services for immigrants facing imminent detention and deportation. This investment expanded the capacity for the ActionNYC hotline operated by Catholic Charities Community Services, and funded the new Rapid Response Legal Collaborative (RRLC), a coalition of immigration legal service providers — Make the Road New York, UnLocal, and the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) — who provide legal assistance to those detained or at imminent risk of detention and deportation, who may not have the right to see an immigration judge or are otherwise facing a fast-track to removal. This investment complemented available immigration legal services for detained immigrant New Yorkers and enabled our City to respond to the increased and ever-changing enforcement efforts carried out by the Trump administration. In 2020, MOIA secured \$150,000 in additional funding for the RRLC to address heightened need during the pandemic and increased risks to those detained.

### ***DACA & Immigration Fee Fund***

With the financial support of NYC Opportunity and administered by the New York Immigration Coalition, the DACA Renewal Fund was launched in January 2020 to provide financial assistance to NYC Dreamers who were eligible to renew their DACA, but were unable to afford the \$495 renewal application fee. When the initiative was launched, the fate of the DACA program and its beneficiaries were hanging in the balance, as they awaited

the Supreme Court's decision on whether the program would be allowed to continue. During this time of great uncertainty, over 300 Dreamers who were eligible to renew were encouraged and able to do so, in part, thanks to the financial assistance they received from this initiative. However, given the high demand and financial need, the funds for this initiative were quickly depleted by the end of March.

In April of 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, MOIA was able to reallocate funds and replenish the DACA Renewal Fund. Over 300 additional NYC Dreamers applied for and received the financial assistance necessary to renew their DACA; however, by the summer of 2020, as the pandemic continued to disproportionately affect immigrant New Yorkers, it became clear that immigrant New Yorkers were unable to file many other types of applications for immigration benefits due to the financial constraints, including adjustment of status, work authorization, and naturalization. As a result and with the support of NYC Opportunity, the original fund was expanded into the Immigration Application Fee Fund, which launched in May 2020 for the remainder of the fiscal year and opened up use of fees to a diverse range of immigration applications.

Serving low-income immigrant New Yorkers eligible for relief through trusted legal service providers, the DACA and Immigration Application Fee Funds successfully funded, between January 2019 and June 2020:

- Over 375 DACA renewals
- Approximately 20 applications for adjustment of status
- Over 12 applications for naturalization

- Over 160 applications for work authorization
- Approximately 200 applications for other types of relief (including affirmative benefits, defensive applications, appeals, and medical exams required for Special Immigrant Juvenile applicants).

### ***Low Wage Workers Initiative***

Through the advocacy of community members and advocates, and with the support of MOIA and HRA's Office of Civil Justice, the City also continued to fund the Low Wage Workers Initiative, which provides legal assistance on a range of employment-based legal matters for vulnerable immigration workers. In FY2021, the Administration and the City Council allocated a combined \$2.1 million for legal services, outreach, and education. By maintaining funding, LWWI continues to provide critically needed services to new workers and unemployed New Yorkers as the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis continues. Administered through the Office of Civil Justice's IOI program, the LWWI is expected to provide legal assistance in 1,500 to 2,000 cases in FY21. This includes legal advice and consultations as well as full representation in advocacy with employers and government agencies and in litigation.

### ***NYCitizenship***

In 2020, MOIA continued to ensure access to safe, quality and linguistically responsive citizenship services for all immigrant New Yorkers through its flagship program NYCitizenship. NYCitizenship provides free citizenship application assistance, including screenings and full legal representation, as well as financial empowerment services.

Through MOIA's partnership with DSS/HRA, the program offered services to vulnerable populations, including seniors and those facing health and other disabilities.

In 2020, NYCitizenship screened 364 clients and filed over 162 citizenship applications and 15 green card renewal applications, along with over 121 fee waivers. Of the applications that were adjudicated in 2020, 94 percent were approved. If eligible, individuals also received assistance with fee waiver and disability waiver applications. All clients were provided with the opportunity to meet with a financial counselor who provided free and confidential financial counseling.

The NYCitizenship program is currently winding down four years of service provision in libraries by bringing all open naturalization cases, many of which were delayed due to COVID-19-related USCIS office closures, to completion. Immigration legal services will continue to be provided at New York City public library branch locations through ActionNYC in Libraries beginning January 2021. NYCitizenship at DSS has addressed some of the most vulnerable lawful permanent residents' need for access to naturalization through direct outreach to DSS/HRA clients.

## Anti-Fraud

During 2020, MOIA worked with DCWP and other partners to stay up to date on fraud trends, and coordinate community outreach on how to avoid fraud or seek assistance. To support anti-fraud outreach, MOIA created a dedicated Consumer Fraud Protection section in its guide and FAQ on Resources for Immigrant Communities During COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition, MOIA staff

recorded multilingual video presentations about immigrant resources for the Immigrant Affairs Unit of the Richmond County District Attorney's Office, which has used them for community outreach and townhalls.

## Survivors of Violence

At the start of 2020, as the Trump administration framed immigrants as a danger to our country, MOIA and Safe Horizon collaborated on an op-ed calling out how ICE's rhetoric and practices that demonize our immigrant communities does nothing to increase the very trust we depend on to ensure accountability and justice for survivors of violence. Too often, survivors of violence, trafficking, or other serious crimes are afraid to get the help



As part of MOIA's efforts to support NYC Test & Trace Corps' community outreach, MOIA Organizer Danny Mendoza distributes PPE and information about Get Food NYC to community members outside a food pantry in Jackson Heights, Queens.

they need due to stigma. Those fears are compounded for survivors who might also be reluctant to engage with law enforcement or government due to their immigration status.

U and T visas are forms of immigration relief intended to protect immigrant crime victims and victims of trafficking and encourage them to come forward and seek justice. U and T visas provide undocumented victims and survivors with stability, work authorization, and a potential pathway to lawful permanent residency. In order to apply for a U visa, an applicant must submit a certification from a law enforcement agency stating that a qualifying crime has taken place and the victim has been helpful to the agency in the detection, investigation, and/or prosecution of the crime. Though not required for a T visa, a law enforcement declaration, similar to a certification, can be an important piece of evidence for an applicant's case.

MOIA plays an important role in coordinating city agencies who can provide these documents to immigrant survivors seeking U or T visas, a critical component in making our City more resilient and equitable. Pursuant to NYC Charter §18(d) (7), MOIA is responsible for advising law enforcement agencies about U visa certifications and T visa declarations. In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) and the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV), MOIA engages city agency certifiers — including the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), NYC Law Department (NYC Law), NYPD, CCHR, and DCWP — and the City's five District Attorney's Offices to

strengthen the accessibility of the City's U visa certification and T visa declaration processes. Additionally, MOIA, along with ENDGBV and MOCJ, listens to advocates and legal service providers who work with immigrant survivors to better understand and troubleshoot issues in accessing these critical documents.

As agencies pivoted to social distancing and remote work because of the pandemic, their U visa and T visa certification and declaration processes shifted to allow electronic submissions and virtual meetings. MOIA convened city agency certifiers and the five District Attorney's Offices to ensure that updated contact and process information was centralized and available to legal service providers in real time. Due to challenges related to court closures and remote work as well as staffing capacity, the processing times for U visa and T visa certifications and declarations increased for some city agency certifiers in 2020. While NYPD's processing time remained the same at an average of 45 business days in 2020, other agencies experienced some longer processing times due to the pandemic.

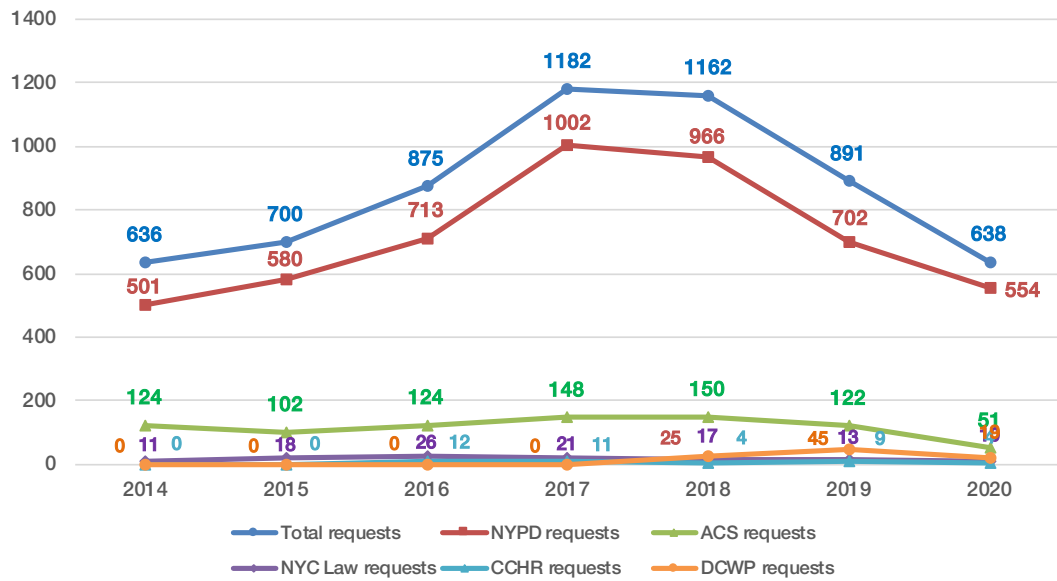
The following charts present annual statistics on U and T visa certifications by City agencies in calendar year 2020. In 2020, the total number of requests received by City agencies declined significantly, due to most likely to the unprecedented circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCWP	TOTAL
<b>Requests received total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>638</b>
U requests	51	552	10	3	19	635
T requests	0	2	0	1	0	3
<b>Requests processed total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>621</b>
<b><i>Certifications issued</i></b>	<b>50</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>438</b>
U requests	50	358	9	2	18	437
T requests	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b><i>Requests denied</i></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>118</b>
U requests	0	115	0	1	2	118
T requests	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b><i>Requests referred to other agencies</i></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>65</b>
U requests	0	64	0	0	0	64
T requests	0	1	0	0	0	1

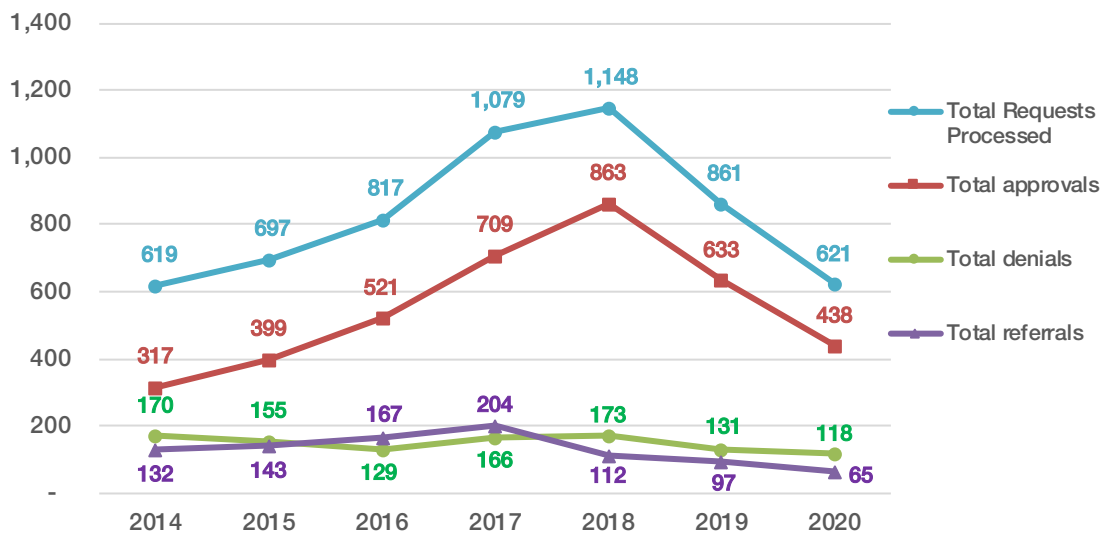
Reasons for denials	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCWP	Total
Public safety concern	0	14	0	0	0	<b>14</b>
Non-qualifying crime	0	85	0	0	2	<b>87</b>
Lack of helpfulness/cooperation (the victim has not assisted the Police Department in the investigation)	0	6	0	0	0	<b>6</b>
Indirect victim/witness (the individual named is not the direct or indirect victim)	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Lack of qualifying investigation	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Case could not be unsealed	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Insufficient documentation	0	9	0	0	0	<b>9</b>
Applicant is subject of active investigation/Respondent in Art. 10 case (must reapply after investigation/case is closed)	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Certifications denied total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>118</b>

Certification Denials Appealed (CY 2019)	NYPD	ACS
Appeals Filed	23	0
Pending	0	0
Appellant Certified	10	0
Decision Upheld	10	0
Referred to Other Agency	5	0

### U & T Visa Requests

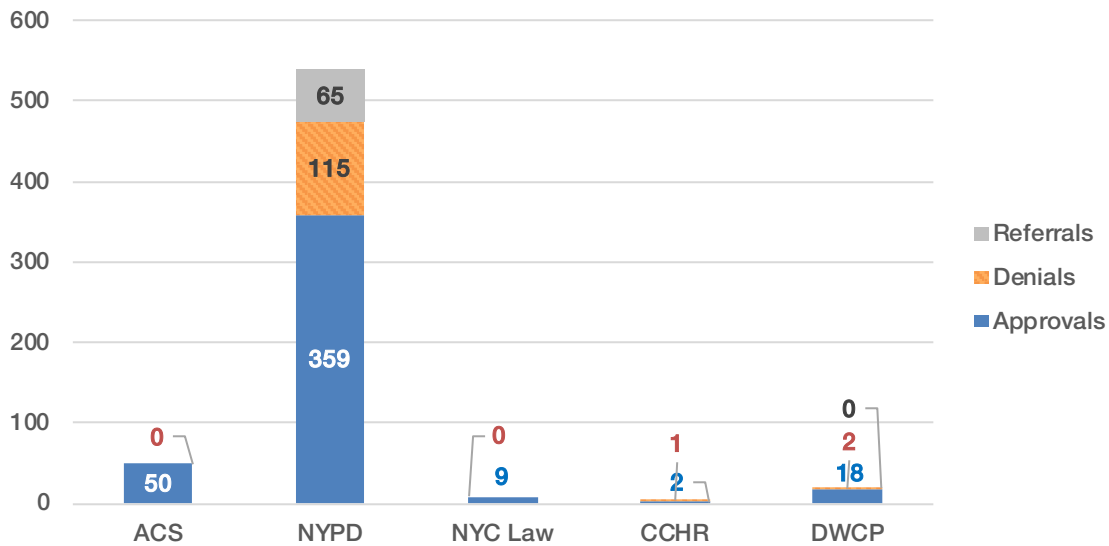


### U and T Visa Certification Requests Processed





### CY 2019 U & T Visa Requests Processed



### NYC Care

There are approximately 569,000 uninsured individuals in New York City, with persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizen New Yorkers, including undocumented immigrants. In August 2019, the health care access program NYC Care launched in the Bronx as a key part of the continued expansion of the City’s Guaranteed Health Care plan to ensure that uninsured New Yorkers have access to quality and affordable health care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. NYC Care guarantees low- and no-cost services to New Yorkers who do not qualify for or cannot afford health insurance through H+H. The program provides New Yorkers with affordable access to a primary care provider, specialty care, prescriptions, and a 24-hour customer service helpline. Given the barriers to healthcare access that exist for immigrant New Yorkers, MOIA has partnered with H+H to enlist the support of 30 trusted CBOs in community outreach.

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on immigrants and communities of color. The data reinforces the importance of the program’s goal to close the gaps that prevent historically underserved communities from accessing quality and affordable healthcare. To address this existing need that was then exacerbated by the pandemic, NYC Care completed its citywide roll out four months ahead of schedule by launching in Manhattan and Queens in August 2020. As of December 31, 2020, NYC Care CBO outreach partners reached more than 173,000 unique community members and the program enrolled approximately 50,000 New Yorkers across all five boroughs as of February 2021. Since the beginning of the pandemic, NYC Care added over 34,000 members. Approximately, 61 percent of current members live in the 33 neighborhoods identified by the NYC Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity as hardest hit by COVID-19.

## Individual Advocacy

MOIA works with partners both within and outside city government to support constituents. The following are just two examples<sup>54</sup> of the kind of work MOIA does to assist our constituents.

### Bring Jean Home – Local Leader Seeks Pardon

Mr. Jean Montrevil, an immigrant rights leader in New York City and father of four U.S. citizen children, was unjustly deported to Haiti three years ago. Mr. Montrevil came to the U.S. as a lawful permanent resident in 1986, but received an order of deportation in 1994 as a result of criminal convictions at the height of the War on Drugs. Eventually given permission to stay in the U.S., Mr. Montrevil spent the next decades of his life in New York City dedicated to his family, church and community — becoming the co-founder of the New Sanctuary Coalition and a longtime member of Judson Memorial Church.

Last year on the second anniversary of Mr. Montrevil's deportation, his community launched the *Bring Jean Home* campaign seeking to bring him back to New York City and to reunite him with his family from which he remains separated. At a press conference announcing the launch, MOIA Commissioner Mostofi spoke out in support of Mr. Montrevil. Commissioner Mostofi further provided letters in support of two applications seeking

pardons for his criminal convictions — both of which remain pending before the Governors of New York and Virginia and have the potential of paving a way forward for Mr. Montrevil to come home. Additional information about Mr. Montrevil's case and ways to support his campaign can be found at [bringjeanhome.org](http://bringjeanhome.org).

### Brooklyn Dreamer Comes Home From Detention

Bryhan Andrade-Rojas is a Brooklyn Dreamer who has been in the United States since he was six years old and works as an artist and electrician in New York City, where he further volunteers teaching English and feeding the homeless.

During a road trip in New Mexico with a friend during which they intended to see the White Sands, Bryan was stopped at an immigration checkpoint and detained by ICE at the Otero County Processing Center. Bryhan's community immediately rallied to support him, reaching out to MOIA for guidance on legal assistance. Commissioner Mostofi provided a letter in support of Bryhan's bond hearing which was submitted to the Immigration Judge to highlight his deep ties to his community and the strength of his request for release. Bond was set and Bryhan came back home to Brooklyn where he continues to fight his case.

Commissioner Mostofi joined the NYU School of Law immigration clinic, community groups, and elected officials to launch #BringJeanHome, a campaign to reunite New Sanctuary Coalition co-founder Jean Montrevil with his four children.



54 These examples are based on our understanding of the information provided to MOIA by individuals' attorneys and family members.

## Empowerment

Key to MOIA's work is expanding knowledge to empower immigrant communities to act on their rights and access the benefits that are available to them. In 2020, the pandemic necessitated a shift in the way MOIA engages with immigrant New Yorkers to ensure that key information is shared with the people who needed it. The expansion of digital outreach, along with other changes to MOIA's programming, were

key strategies in addressing the urgent need for information during this crisis. In addition, notwithstanding the pandemic, MOIA continued its work using our platform to uplift immigrant New Yorkers and their contributions to city life through advocacy, collaborations with immigrant-centered organizations in hosting cultural events, and responding to individual constituent requests.

## Racial Inclusion and Equity

In 2020, as the city grappled with a public health crisis that has disproportionately devastated Black and Brown communities, the city has also faced a long overdue reckoning with police violence and structural racism, particularly anti-black structural racism. In response and to help facilitate a fairer recovery, the de Blasio administration established the Taskforce on Racial Inclusion and Equity. This taskforce is comprised of officials from across the Administration, including MOIA, to engage hardest-hit communities, monitor response and recovery efforts in those neighborhoods, identify unique needs associated with MWBE and community health care providers, and work with City officials and agencies to narrow long-standing racial and economic disparities – including among immigrant communities. Efforts that came out of this taskforce include expansion of the RRLC, which expands representation for immigrants facing harsh detention; the Low Wage Worker Initiative (LWWI); and expanded funding for the *Support. Not Fear.* marketing campaign, which educated and assured

immigrant communities that many health and social services are available to them regardless of immigration status and they should seek City-funded, free and safe immigration legal help from ActionNYC if they have concerns.

Additionally, as an office charged with promoting the well-being of New York's immigrant communities, MOIA recognizes that it has an important responsibility to confront the inequities that have been laid bare in 2020 and to hold ourselves accountable for prioritizing racial justice in our work. As part of this work, several of our programs have undertaken efforts to shift dollars to greater investments in our communities, such as ActionNYC (page 70) and the Know Your Rights Program (page 84), or in areas where disparate impact was apparent, such as the RRLC (page 75) or the LWWI (page 76). MOIA has also worked with the Cities for Action (C4A) coalition to launch a *Cities for Black Lives* campaign, as described on page 105. In addition, (and as detailed on page 45) MOIA helped secure additional funds for the NYC COVID-19

Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund from the Robin Hood Foundation in order to help meet gaps in service to communities that we saw were underserved and to advance greater equity.

Through MOIA's commitment to advancing greater equity in our work, MOIA has also partnered with NYC Opportunity to develop

key equity goals and in 2020 participated in the inaugural cohort of the year-long, interagency NYC Results for Racial and Social Equity Program. As MOIA looks ahead, we are committed to dedicating resources to support similar advocacy for change that centers Black lives, including the lives of Black immigrant New Yorkers.

## **DREAM Act Application Assistance Program**

In February 2020, MOIA launched the New York State DREAM Act Application Assistance Program to support students in navigating the application process for NYS financial aid programs that became newly available to an estimated 46,000 immigrant students, including undocumented students following the enactment of Senator José Peralta New York State DREAM Act into law.<sup>55</sup> MOIA partnered with UnLocal to inform, educate, and assist immigrant students in New York City on the NYS DREAM Act to ensure their access to vital state resources in pursuit of higher education. The project specifically focused on aiding undocumented students who face a unique set of barriers to college, including difficulty accessing academic, financial, social, and mental health support. Through this City-funded project, MOIA set out to coordinate with one CBO partner to provide 150 immigrant students with assistance throughout various stages of the application process. By June 2020, 157 immigrant students in New York City had received assistance, and MOIA was able to extend

funding for this program through the end of this fiscal year.

## **Know Your Rights**

Know Your Rights (KYR) Forums are a crucial part of MOIA's work to ensure that all immigrant New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, understand their rights and protections under the law and are empowered to fully participate in civic life, despite the ever-changing federal landscape. Through the various types of MOIA-led and funded KYR forums, MOIA provides accurate information to immigrant New Yorkers about their rights, and strengthens our work to effectively address their concerns as they navigate confusing changes to federal immigration policy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, KYR forums proved to be an important intervention to help immigrant New Yorkers receive timely information on programs and resources at the federal, state, and city levels, as well as navigate the continuous influx of information about COVID-19 related services to address their critical needs.

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55 NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Fact Sheet: The Impact of the New York State Dream Act in New York* (2019), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/NYS-Dream-Act-Fact-Sheet-2019.pdf>.

In 2020, KYR events were conducted in over 20 languages, and in a variety of communities throughout the year. KYRs were provided in a variety of languages other than English, including: Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Mandarin, Mandingo, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tibetan, and Urdu. In 2020, MOIA conducted 631 forums and directly engaged 12,332 participants across all teams and also engaged over 160,000 livestream viewers. These forums included

participation from various City agencies, CBOs, and elected officials. Topics included COVID-19 related resources and services, City services, new state policies, local workers’ rights, proposed federal government changes to various immigration laws, and immigration legal services.

Multiple teams at MOIA work on KYR forums. The KYR Program, the Community Services team, the ActionNYC team, and the Outreach and Organizing team all provide KYRs. A description of the differences in these KYR forums follows below.

Events		Attendees	Live Views
KYR	179	2,569	N/A
Community Services	134	1,068	N/A
Outreach and Organizing	314	12,322	160,000
ActionNYC	4	23	N/A
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>15,982</b>	<b>160,000</b>

***KYR Program Know Your Rights Forums***

The KYR Program partners with trusted CBOs to deliver relevant and timely information directly to immigrant communities through comprehensive, educational presentations. In 2020, the KYR Program worked closely with 12 CBO partners across two projects to host KYR forums in hard-to-reach communities that covered the general rights of all New Yorkers. The core of these KYR presentations focused on recent changes in federal immigration law and enforcement priorities, City resources available to all New Yorkers, best practices for identifying and interacting with federal immigration officers, and how to access free and safe immigration legal services and avoid legal services fraud.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CBOs transitioned from conducting in-person to virtual KYR forums, using several presentation formats to address varying levels of digital literacy and access to technology among immigrant New Yorkers. Accordingly, the KYR program also added COVID-19 related information to the presentations specifically focused on relief for undocumented community members, unemployment, how to navigate hospitals, and rental, food, and burial assistance. Anticipating the long-term effects of COVID-19, the KYR Program’s fall 2020 forums included new content and outreach strategies to address the gaps in assistance.

In 2020, the KYR Program completed

179 KYR forums and reached 2,569 New Yorkers, including many employers and immigrant small business owners. The KYR presentations were provided in Arabic, Bengali, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Traditional Chinese, and Urdu and were interpreted in additional languages.

The Employer KYR forums, conducted by the KYR Program, focused on immigration enforcement in the workplace highlighting worker protections and how employers can effectively plan and prepare should a worksite enforcement action occur at their place of business. The pandemic exacerbated existing gaps in linguistic and culturally appropriate materials for small immigrant business owners as guidance and resources for businesses and workers consistently changed. As a result, the KYR Program expanded the employer KYR forums to serve as a resource for immigrant small business owners to learn of financial and legal resources available to them. Employer KYR forums also included best practices on operating during the COVID-19 pandemic and updates to State and City reopening and recovery plans. These forums were provided in-person and virtually in partnership with SBS, Brooklyn Community Board 7, various Business Improvement Districts, and consulates.

While the current six partners worked to broaden their reach during the FY20 project, many of them identified communities that they struggled to engage due to geography or limited linguistic capabilities. Using this data, the KYR Team compared the demographics of individuals reached with demographic data about immigrant communities in unreached

neighborhoods from multiple datasets to identify project gaps in service and determine FY 21 targets. The program determined that gaps existed in reaching traditionally underserved communities from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe as well as immigrant communities in Washington Heights, Woodhaven, East New York, Canarsie, Brighton Beach, South Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, Jackson Heights, Corona, Elmhurst, and Jamaica. In response, MOIA will make changes to the program structure to ensure that the KYR CBOs are meeting the diverse needs of immigrant New Yorkers.

### ***Community Services Know Your Rights Forums***

KYR forums presented by the Community Services team focus on the City's local laws and available City services and resources. At the start of pandemic, MOIA quickly shifted from in-person to remote work, allowing the Community Services team to continue to engage immigrant communities and those serving these communities with virtual KYR Forums. These presentations included general information on City available resources accessible by all regardless of immigration status or ability to pay as well as updated information on available COVID-19 related resources. Overall, MOIA's Community Services team conducted 134 virtual Know Your Rights forums in 2020, either in person (pre-pandemic) or virtually, and reached 1,068 constituents. The Community Services KYR presentations were provided in seven languages: Spanish, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Polish, Urdu, and English. Some presentations were conducted in multiple

languages and presentations were offered across the five boroughs.

### ***Outreach and Organizing Know Your Rights Forums***

KYR forums presented by the Outreach and Organizing team focus on information about key City resources, City, State and Federal programs, and fundamental rights afforded by New York City law to immigrants and their families. In 2020, in-person and virtual KYR events were conducted in over 20 languages, and in a variety of communities throughout the year. These languages included English, Arabic, Bengali (Bangla), Burmese, Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Mandarin, Mandingo, Polish, Persian (Farsi/Dari), Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tibetan, and Urdu (among others). Multilingual and in-language outreach

formed a central pillar of the Outreach and Organizing KYR forums among NYC’s diverse immigrant communities before and during the onset of COVID-19. In total, MOIA’s Outreach and Organizing team conducted 314 KYR forums — 94 in-person reaching 4,000 constituents, and 219 virtual which reached 8,322 people and were also viewed by approximately 160,000 people.

### ***ActionNYC Know Your Rights Forums***

Due to COVID-19, the ActionNYC in Schools program was not able to conduct on-site outreach in DOE schools. However, program partners were able to conduct virtual KYR forums tailored to school needs, reaching 23 students and families in 4 Brooklyn schools. KYRs were conducted in English and Spanish, and focused on timely information about city resources,



MOIA Organizer Peterson Napoleon worked tirelessly to inform NYC immigrants about city services and combat misinformation about public charge. Here, he informs a community member about free legal help through ActionNYC at a February 2020 event with City Harvest and Part of the Solution in The Bronx and Part of the Solution (POTS) in the Fordham neighborhood of the Bronx.

changes in federal immigration policies, workers' rights, and how to access free, safe immigration legal services and social services were disseminated to students and families. Similarly, given the onset of the pandemic the ActionNYC in CBOs KYR partner transitioned into conducting KYR forums remotely. The team conducted 10 KYRs, reaching 287 community members in Brooklyn. The KYRs were conducted in English and Arabic and provided much needed information on resources and legal assistance available for New York City's immigrant communities.

## **Community Services**

The Community Services team at MOIA is one of several direct points of contact for immigrant New Yorkers across the city, and remains responsive to the needs of the community, connecting individuals to critical citywide services and resources available. In 2020, the work of the Community Services Team saw its largest number of inquiries, due to many of the challenges that our immigrant communities have experienced throughout COVID-19. The AskMOIA Hotline experienced a significant uptick in call and email volume between April to September 2020, immediately following the announcement of the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund (IERF). Thanks to the support of staff at the NYC Immigrant Information Desk, who were re-allocated after their in person sites were shut down due to COVID-19, we were able to add much needed capacity to Community Services to respond to this increased demand.

Overall, MOIA received 14,227 inquiries: 9,106 phone calls and 5,121 emails during

that period. Most of the 14 languages AskMOIA hotline calls were received in were English or Spanish. Most other calls were from individuals who spoke Haitian Creole, Korean, Chinese, French, Russian, and Bengali. The figures are inclusive of the 3,000 calls received specifically for the Open Society Foundations-funded COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund.

In May 2020, the Community Services team also became authorized food enrollers through the City's Get Food NYC program, allowing us to directly enroll individuals who needed in-home food delivery due to the pandemic, and MOIA was able to make 52 enrollments between the months of May and August.

## ***MOIA Volunteer Program***

MOIA Volunteers serve immigrant communities with their diverse language skills and connections to local community networks. The COVID-19 pandemic limited volunteer activations due to safety and health guidelines. Nevertheless, 45 volunteers supported 29 events, serving 2,400 constituents. These events included Days of Actions for the 2020 Census, NYC Care, public charge education, IDNYC renewal campaign, and more. During these events, volunteers distributed over 2,500 critical pieces of literature in the City's top 10 languages. During the pandemic, MOIA worked to maintain contact with and support for volunteers, while updating individual volunteer profiles to better streamline the types of opportunities offered to volunteers in the future. At the end of 2020, MOIA had 593 active volunteers.



## ***NYC Immigrant Information Desk***

In 2020, the NYC Immigrant Information Desk provided New Yorkers with direct and indirect referrals to a broad number of city and community-based services.

While in person services were halted at the onset of COVID-19 in New York City, the initiative still successfully served 835 individuals across all three locations – Grand Central Public Library, Queens Public Library in Flushing, and the Coney Island SNAP Center. Information Desk navigators made 945 referrals to various programs and services in a two-and-a-half-month period, serving individuals speaking nine languages: Spanish, English, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Urdu, Arabic, Bengali and French. Of these, 377 referrals were given for adult education programs, including We Speak NYC and 110 referrals to immigration legal services. MOIA's busiest and largest location, the Queens Public Library in Flushing, served 420 individuals. To efficiently utilize City resources allocated to the program, Immigrant Information Desk Navigators were transitioned during the COVID-19 crisis to provide needed capacity to the AskMOIA hotline and supported the Community Services team in managing the overwhelming influx of calls and inquiries regarding the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund. Through this additional support, the Community Service team was able to connect 3,459 callers with the relief fund.

Given the closure of information desk locations, MOIA also made adjustments to the legal contract assigned to the information desk through NYLAG, shifting the scope of work to provide high quality immigration legal services and make

eligibility assessments for all eligible individuals who were referred through both the ActionNYC and the AskMOIA hotlines. The expanded scope of work included direct referrals for consultation and advice for high risk DACA recipients; direct referrals for inquiries regarding temporary non-immigrant visas impacted by COVID-19; and pro se assistance or full representation of I-539 or other visa extension applications, including individual screenings for those approaching their one year filing deadlines for asylum. A total of 35 individuals were referred through this expanded scope of work.

## ***Criminal Queerness Festival 2020***

MOIA partnered with the National Queer Theater and Dixon Place to present the second annual *Criminal Queerness Festival*,



MOIA partnered with the National Queer Theater and Dixon Place to present the second annual *Criminal Queerness Festival* featuring live virtual performances.

in June 2020. A recipient of the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs' Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact, the festival was an innovative showcase of queer and trans artists from countries that historically criminalize and/or censor LGBTQ+ voices. Originally curated as a live theater festival, the second annual *Criminal Queerness Festival* was modified in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its virtual format reached LGBTQ+ communities across the five boroughs, nationally, and internationally. The programming centered the work of four international queer artists whose new plays had been scheduled to premiere at Dixon Place: Migguel Anggelo, a Venezuelan-born, Brooklyn-based multidisciplinary artist; Mashuq Mushtaq Deen, a resident playwright at New Dramatists and a 2019 Lambda Literary

Award Winner; Amahl Khouri, a queer transgender Jordanian playwright and theater maker based in Berlin; and Omer Abbas Salem, a Chicago-based actor and playwright originally from Syria and Turkey. The festival reached 12,278 individuals through continued Facebook engagement and included livestreamed play readings, talkbacks, and themed panel discussions, plus interactive master class community workshops, screenings, and virtual live theatrical performances.

### ***Immigrant Heritage Week***

As with most of MOIA's work throughout the pandemic, the annual celebration of Immigrant Heritage Week (IHW) — ***Thank You, Immigrant New York*** — was held virtually from April 13–19, 2020, with special recognition of the City's frontline essential workers as the



Brooklyn-based immigrant artist Feifei Ruan designed the IHW 2020 logo honoring immigrant New Yorkers who kept the city running by serving on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**THANK YOU IMMIGRANT NEW YORK**

IMMIGRANT HERITAGE WEEK 2020

superheroes they have always been. Among the one million essential workers who were on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic — delivery workers, Emergency medical services (EMS) staff, drivers, and more — IHW was dedicated to those 500,000 immigrant New Yorkers who kept the city running. Capturing the essence of the celebration was the IHW 2020 logo created by Brooklyn-based, immigrant artist Feifei Ruan. The logo represented our solidarity during these unprecedented times and the city’s heartfelt gratitude to these essential, immigrant workers.

Virtual content shared throughout the week featured three videos with uplifting stories of immigrant New Yorkers who serve our city: Sarina and Elias, small business owners of Ethiopian coffee shop Buunni Coffee; Christopher Unpezverde Núñez, a queer, partially blind dancer, choreographer, and performance artist who lived as an undocumented immigrant in the United States for four years; and Wu Yi Zhuo, a community leader and musician who uses his gaohu to serenade subway platforms with Cantonese opera music and give back to his musical group, which performs for fellow seniors. IHW digital content also included a photo series with immigrant city staff serving in various roles with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and featuring immigrant agency commissioners.

MOIA also promoted a list of books by immigrant authors, curated by all public library branches, educational videos created in partnership with NYC Census 2020, CUNY, and We Speak NYC. In collaboration with cultural organizations, consulates, and IDNYC cultural benefit partners, including

museums and performance spaces, MOIA promoted over 20 virtual event offerings throughout the week.

## **Outreach and Organizing**

MOIA’s Outreach and Organizing team builds community power and capacity with immigrant communities impacted by federal immigration policies by raising awareness of city services and responding to community needs. The team works with an expansive network of community leaders and organizations to share crucial and timely information about citywide developments, clarify misinformation about immigration policy developments, promote critical resources available to all New Yorkers in the languages they speak, connect individuals with city-funded services and the help they need, elevate community feedback to city agencies and stakeholders, and build partnerships to address the diverse needs of immigrant communities.

Neighborhood Organizers are trusted messengers in immigrant communities who lead and partner on virtual and in-person outreach events, represent MOIA at community forums and information sessions, provide guidance on community-specific needs, and drive MOIA’s efforts to ensure justice, equity, and empowerment for the City’s immigrant communities.

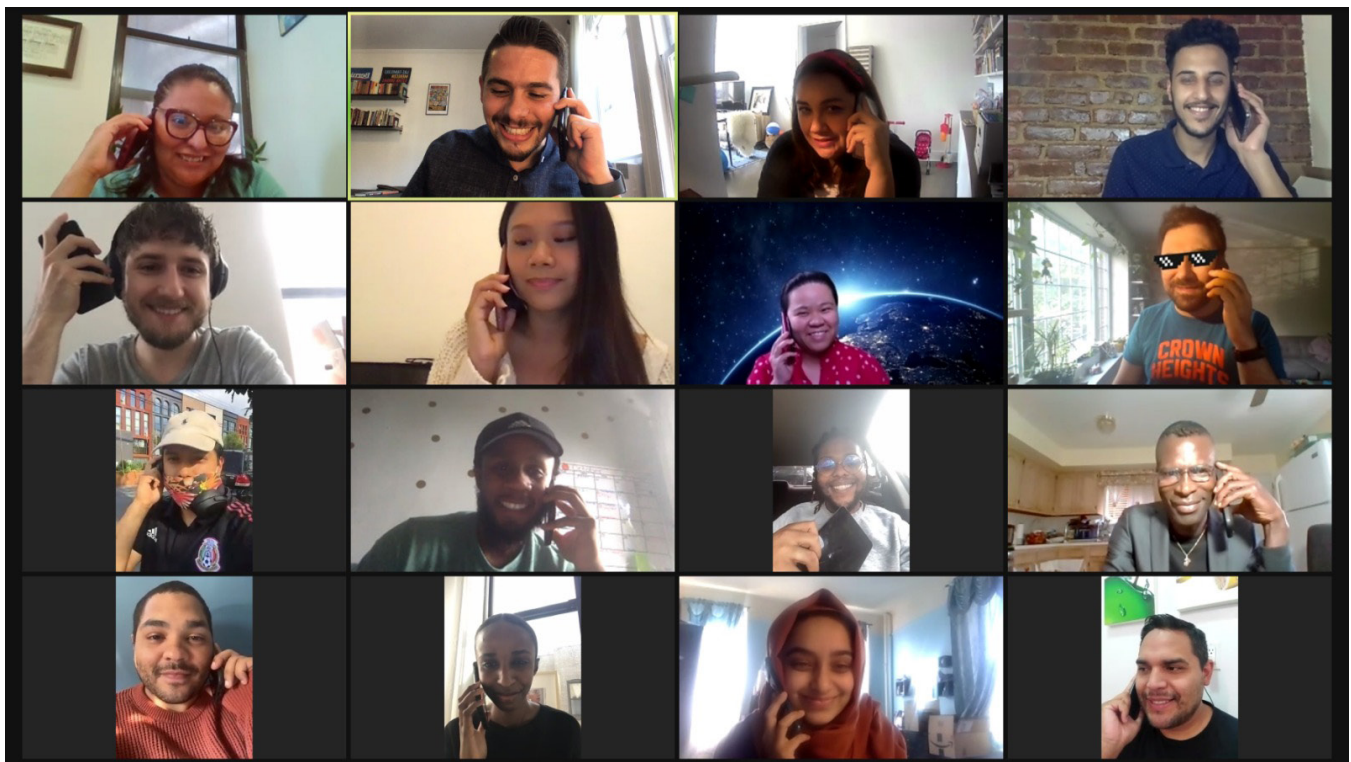
### ***Virtual Outreach and Relational Organizing***

Between January and early March 2020, the Outreach and Organizing team organized 120 in-person events at parades, religious services, packed auditoriums, classrooms, and clinics to share information about vital city services and programs. As the City

began to close at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, MOIA's outreach team took inventory of all the ways it had touch points with immigrant New Yorkers virtually and digitally. The team quickly transitioned its innovative in-person outreach tactics to utilize virtual media, including email, phone calls, social media, and messages, graphics, videos, and audio recordings sent over messenger applications used by immigrant communities.

In addition to using mass virtual tactics such as e-blasts, the Outreach and Organizing team also adopted a relational organizing strategy. In addition to community leaders and CBO staff, the team reached out directly to community members, attendees of past events, neighbors, members of their congregations, store owners in their communities, and even

familial networks to share updates with critical information about COVID-19 and resources in multiple languages. Utilizing these virtual mediums and relational organizing, MOIA created graphics that were easily shared over messenger apps like WeChat, WhatsApp, KakaoTalk, Viber, and other messenger platforms in 26 languages. While regularly-used graphics shared by the outreach team have historically been translated into more than the 10 languages required by Local Law 30, during the COVID-19 pandemic, MOIA expanded that list to include 26 languages. Similarly, video and audio recordings were created and shared daily by the outreach team using messenger apps. In all cases, MOIA's Neighborhood Organizers made the request that recipients share the City resources with their contacts to multiply the effects of this outreach.



Among dozens of digital outreach tactics employed during the COVID-19 pandemic, MOIA's Outreach and Organizing team hosted regular phone-banking and text-banking events to connect immigrant New Yorkers with critical information and resources.

### **“Kitchen Cabinet” Feedback**

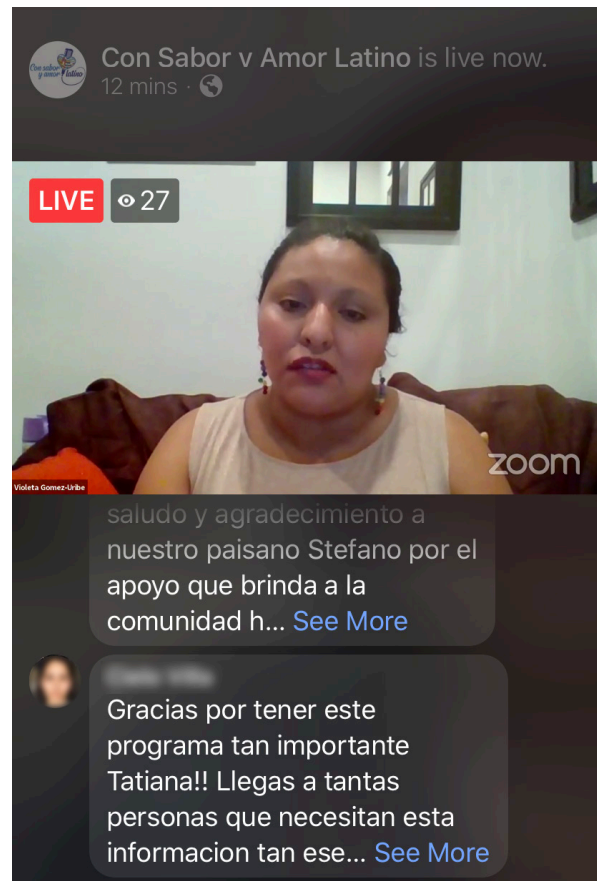
When the Outreach and Organizing team began working from home on March 14, 2020, the team began conducting regular check-ins with community leaders, advocates, and community members who are often referred to as part of a Neighborhood Organizer’s “kitchen cabinet.” Between March 2020 and December 2020, the team elevated 890 reports of community feedback. This feedback was used to inform MOIA’s priorities, programs, outreach needs, and understanding of the on the ground issues that impacted New Yorkers during the pandemic. Language access issues identified by community members were flagged for MOIA’s Language Services team, constituent cases referred to MOIA’s Community Services team, and gaps or concerns about service delivery referred to our sister agencies.

### **COVID-19 Presentations, Town Halls, and Virtual Outreach Events**

Starting in April, MOIA’s Outreach and Organizing team organized over 275 online town halls, Know Your Rights presentations, stakeholder meetings, and other virtual events in 2020. These events were done in partnership with community-based organizations, houses of worship, consulates, and other trusted messengers. The presentations were translated into one of six languages (Arabic, simplified and traditional Chinese, Bangla, Haitian Creole, Russian, and Spanish), and also included interpretation and speakers in other languages including Portuguese, Tibetan, Urdu, Nepali, Persian, West African Krio, and all three major dialects of Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, and Fujianese). Many of these events included a phone-in option for individuals without an internet connection or with less digital

literacy. The virtual events included key information about COVID-19 and programs such as:

- COVID Testing
- NYC Care
- Public benefits and public charge
- IDNYC renewal and program updates
- City and state housing or rental assistance programs



MOIA’s Outreach and Organizing team live-streamed presentations and panel discussions on COVID-19 resources in six languages and included interpretation and speakers of over a dozen languages. The events also extended to Facebook livestreams hosted by community and ethnic media, such as this conversation with Deputy Director for Outreach Violeta Gómez-Urbe with Con Sabor y Amor Latino radio.

- Small business support services
- COVID-19 Hotel Program
- Burial assistance
- The FASTEN program
- Take Care Program
- Get Food NYC
- WeSpeak NYC
- Know Your Rights with ICE
- Action NYC
- NYC Well

In total, these virtual events reached approximately 207,282 New Yorkers on various internet platforms.

### ***In-Person Outreach Resumed***

MOIA's Outreach staff resumed regular in-person outreach in July 2020. While observing COVID safety protocols, staff contributed to outreach on a number of initiatives including NYC Care promotion, PPE and Test and Trace information distribution, Census outreach, Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness (LRIF) deadline outreach, and in-person Know Your Rights forums. In total, in 2020, the Outreach and Organizing team conducted 321 in-person community events that reached 69,766 New Yorkers.

### ***Test and Trace Outreach and Days of Action***

Beginning in May 2020, MOIA began mass deliveries of PPE and hand sanitizers to over 100 immigrant-serving CBOs across the five boroughs. In total, over 200,000 masks were delivered to CBOs. When the City launched the NYC Test and Trace Corps, MOIA played a central role in supporting the outreach effort by bringing multilingual staff to distribute PPE, hand sanitizer, and information about testing to the communities hit hardest by the pandemic. Between July and December, MOIA staff participated in over 40 Test and Trace Outreach events including 15 Days of Action, and worked with the T2 team to identify CBO partners whose offices could serve as pop-up testing sites. MOIA staff also regularly partnered with food pantries and CBOs to distribute critical information and PPE to New Yorkers. At these events, over 100,000 masks were handed to New Yorkers.

### ***Civic Engagement***

MOIA's outreach staff also played a central role in non-partisan voter outreach before the 2020 Presidential Election by participating in and leading 15 multi-staff phone-banks and text-banks reaching thousands of New Yorkers with accurate information about voting. This information included information about early voting, mail-in ballots, poll site know your rights and interpretation information, and more.

In addition to the work the Outreach and Organizing team did for 2020 Census outreach as described on page 98, Neighborhood Organizers also assisted over 600 immigrant New Yorkers with voter

## COVID-19 AND CENSUS OUTREACH

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Outreach & Organizing team adapted its strategies to convey critical, up-to-date information about the virus and safety guidance to immigrant New Yorkers. Organizers worked on the ground across the five boroughs to distribute resources like masks and hand sanitizers, as well as countless flyers and pamphlets detailing City services available to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, from Take Care Hotels and free COVID-19 testing to food assistance and tenant support. To empower all New Yorkers to get counted in the 2020 Census and to know their voting rights, our team hosted virtual and in-person events with community leaders and elected officials, conducted phone-banking, and took to the streets sharing information in 12 languages. Through their efforts, New York City was able to reach a historic self-response rate for the census and ensure federal funding and representation for our communities for years to come.



registration and provided information about voting to thousands more.

### ***ICE Response***

When notified of a possible ICE raid in a community, MOIA staff worked to provide information to those impacted about free immigration legal help available and tried to connect individuals to city resources. Prior to the start of the pandemic in 2020, MOIA staff responded to five reports of ICE enforcement. While there was a drop in reports of ICE enforcement during the pandemic, by October 2020, MOIA responded to an additional eight reports in New York City.

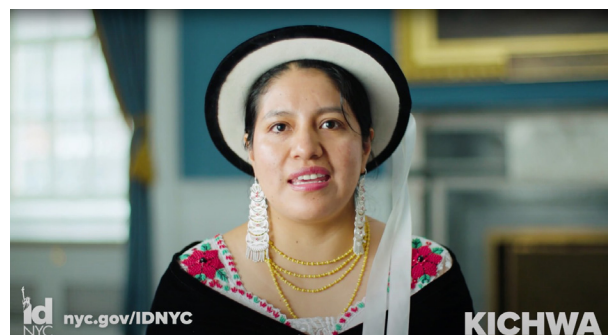
### ***Community Celebrations and Building Power***

In 2020, the Outreach and Organizing team coordinated celebrations and events for our many communities in a new way given the limitations of the COVID-19 crisis. In previous years, MOIA partnered with communities that had limited engagement with city government and worked together to organize events such as town halls and celebrations that uplift community needs and build power. Through the process of organizing these events, community members highlight specific challenges and develop relationships with city decision makers. MOIA staff facilitate this process and work with community members to navigate government. These events both engage community members and educate city government about the community. Previous examples included the Himalayan Town Hall in 2016, the Garifuna Town Hall in 2018, the Andean Summit in 2019, and many interagency community celebrations such as Vaisaki and Diwali. While large

scale events like these were not feasible in 2020, the following are a few examples that demonstrate MOIA's work to celebrate, uplift, and build power with New York City's diverse immigrant communities.

### **International Mother Language Day 2020**

Prior to the pandemic, MOIA and our community partners, including the Endangered Language Alliance and others, hosted a multilingual night of song, poetry, and culture at the Surrogate's Courthouse in February 2020. As part of the event, MOIA unveiled an innovative series of PSAs about the IDNYC program, filmed in fifteen languages: Arabic, Fulani, Garifuna, Indonesian, K'iche, Kichwa, Mande, Mixteco, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Uzbek, Wolof and Yiddish. These videos were filmed in the



To commemorate International Mother Language Day in February 2020, MOIA unveiled a new series of videos about the IDNYC program in over 15 languages, such as Fulani, Kichwa, Garifuna, Mande, and Wolof. New Yorkers can indicate two preferred languages on their IDNYC, which offers a sense of security and pride in language for our immigrant and indigenous communities.



City Hall “Blue Room,” sending a clear message of affirmation and showing that these languages belong in New York City. Each video was used online and at outreach events to promote the program to speakers of each respective language.

### Chinese New Year Parades 2020

In February 2020, MOIA marched in the Flushing, Manhattan, and Brooklyn parades and distributed thousands of hand sanitizer bottles and informational pamphlets in Chinese to thousands of participants in our final large-scale outdoor celebration prior to COVID-19 shutdown and restrictions.

### Virtual Eid ul-Fitr 2020

In May 2020, MOIA and city agency partners, in partnership with Muslim Community Network and community organizations, shifted our annual multi-agency outdoor Iftar in the City to host a post-Eid ul-Fitr virtual celebration and reflection attended by over 250 live viewers.



MOIA marched with New Yorkers in Manhattan and Flushing for the annual Lunar New Year parade in January 2020. Among traditional festivities, we shared information about the IDNYC renewal campaign in Mandarin and supported our communities in combating anti-Asian stigma at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Virtual Diwali 2020

MOIA worked with the Sadhana Coalition for Progressive Hindus, CCHR, and Bhakti Center, among other partners to continue our annual multi-faith, multilingual Diwali celebration with a virtual, livestreamed event.

### Virtual Hispanic Heritage Day 2020

In October 2020, MOIA collaborated with consular offices of more than eight nations to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month through a virtual program featuring music, dance, and information on critical COVID-19 resources for more than 6,000 participants.

### Virtual Juneteenth Celebration and Forum with International Child Foundation 2020

MOIA partnered with the International Child Program to honor the historical legacy of Juneteenth and provide an informational forum on resources, which reached more than several hundred viewers.



In January 2020, MOIA Organizer Asmahan Malow speaks at Masjid al-Aqsa in Harlem, sharing information about the public charge rule and programs like IDNYC with community members.

## 2020 Census

The decennial census is one of the most important civic exercises for our country, and determines how hundreds of billions of dollars — as well as political power from the local to the federal level through redistricting — are distributed to communities across the country. The census affirms that everyone counts. In fact, the Constitution mandates that the census counts “the whole number of persons” in each state throughout the country, meaning all residents must be included in this critical count regardless of immigration status. This is an important policy since census data is used to determine the distribution of resources and to account for the needs of our communities in their totality, from transportation planning to healthcare, emergency response, and much more.

But because the census is such a powerful tool, it also means our communities suffer when we are not fully counted — and marginalized communities have been historically undercounted — and thereby denied the full money and power to which they are entitled. With the 2020 Census, the Trump administration attempted to depress participation among black, brown, and immigrant communities so that their money and power would flow disproportionately to whiter and wealthier communities. Through the failed attempt to add a “citizenship question” and a now-rescinded presidential memorandum to exclude undocumented immigrants from the apportionment count, the Trump administration sought to produce a “chilling effect” among people of color and immigrant communities that would reduce their participation in the once-in-a-decade count, and thereby inaccurately



During community elections, MOIA outreach staff Angela Sherpa and Nick Gulotta brought census outreach to the Tibetan Community Center in Woodside, Queens with our partners at Adhikaar to help promote participation in the 2020 Census.

shift the representation of our communities and our country.

Given these threats to the 2020 Census, MOIA joined the fight for a complete count with broad and tailored community outreach and education in the many languages New Yorkers speak to help communities understand the importance of the census, affirm that everyone counts regardless of your immigration or housing status, and highlight the robust privacy protections under federal law, which ensures that personally identifiable information can never be shared with anyone — not ICE, the police, or landlords.

Throughout the City’s coordination around the 2020 Census effort, MOIA’s virtual outreach channels and social media platforms served as a main driver of disseminating multilingual digital content

produced by the NYC Census 2020 team and amplifying the on the ground efforts of MOIA staff, city agencies partners, and community partners across the five boroughs to get all New Yorkers counted in the census.

MOIA conducted direct virtual and in-person outreach — in collaboration with community partners and in multiple languages — to raise response rates in immigrant communities. MOIA staff directly helped New Yorkers complete the census online at pop-up sites in neighborhoods such as Sunset Park, Bay Ridge, Mott Haven, Jackson Heights, Corona, Flushing, Jamaica, and Richmond Hill. At these events, staff used tablets and laptops to help community members overcome the digital divide. Using both relational organizing and traditional mass outreach tactics, MOIA’s Outreach team also organized text banks, phone banks, and regularly shared in-language content tailored for messenger apps and other virtual platforms. Staff also included census messaging in town hall and Know

Your Rights presentations. And through amplification of other digital resources like e-blasts, digital graphics, videos, and audio messages, MOIA reached hundreds of thousands of people in over 30 languages.

Outreach staff also engaged communities in-person at pedestrian plazas, religious services, community centers, parks, food pantries, and more. Staff organized multiple events to conduct outreach to hard-to-reach populations such as street vendors, day laborers, domestic workers, delivery workers, and those with limited English proficiency. Between August 15 and October 15, 2020 alone, MOIA supported outreach efforts through:

- 85 virtual outreach events, reaching 172,300 New Yorkers in 12 languages
- 71 in-person events across all five boroughs, in 12 languages, reaching tens of thousands of New Yorkers and collecting 2,289 direct sign-ups



MOIA outreach staff Violeta Gómez-Uribe and David Sosa, along with NYC Census 2020 volunteers, worked with local street vendors, elected officials, and community members in Sunset Park to encourage immigrant New Yorkers to get counted in the 2020 Census.

On the final day of the 2020 Census, MOIA helped more than 500 households in all five boroughs get counted through direct outreach alone.

In addition, MOIA worked with other City agencies and community partners to distribute multilingual materials with key information about the census to immigrant communities throughout the five boroughs. With video walkthroughs of the census form, infographics, and flyers in up to 26 languages, MOIA worked to help ensure that the communities most at risk of an undercount understood their rights and what was at stake for their communities.

MOIA's multilingual outreach staff, including MOIA Commissioner Bitta Mostofi, created video messages in more than a dozen languages and disseminated them over social media and messenger apps used by immigrant communities.

The videos highlighted key facts about the 2020 Census, combatted misinformation,

and answered frequently asked questions among immigrant communities about privacy concerns and how to get counted.

Commissioner Mostofi also joined partners for public events spreading awareness about the 2020 Census. At multiple town halls hosted by local elected officials focusing on the City's COVID-19 response and immigrant participation in the 2020 Census, Commissioner Mostofi highlighted the critical importance of census participation and reaffirmed the need for immigrant New Yorkers to be counted.

Through We Speak NYC, the City's Emmy award-winning English language learning program, MOIA collaborated with the NYC Census 2020 team and CUNY to produce two educational videos, *CensusGirl* and *Count Us In*. These PSAs outlined the importance of census participation, emphasized accurate facts about the census, corrected common misperceptions about the census process and fears that were prevalent during the Trump



In February 2020, Commissioner Bitta Mostofi joined NYC Census 2020 and community members at the Islamic Circle of North America's New York mosque in Jamaica, Queens to encourage participation, dispel misinformation, and affirm that the census is safe for all

administration, and highlighted census assistance resources to drive awareness and participation amongst NYC's diverse immigrant communities. These videos were featured on NYC Life, Taxi TV, and BronxNet, and included teaching activities that were used through virtual classrooms to highlight facts and promote the importance of taking part in the census.

NYC also fought in court for the right to be counted. NYC joined a coalition of cities and states led by the New York State Attorney General's office to challenge the presidential memo seeking to exclude undocumented community members from the apportionment count. As part of the litigation, Commissioner Mostofi submitted a declaration outlining MOIA's efforts to encourage census participation in immigrant communities and how the presidential memo was having a chilling effect on participation. Such a demonstrated chilling effect on the immigrant communities led to a successful injunction in federal court that prevented the memorandum from affecting the census count until the new administration was able to rescind it to ensure a fair and accurate count.

Prior to the 2020 Census, Census Bureau experts predicted that just 58 percent of New Yorkers would be counted in the operation anticipating hesitancy and lack of participation. Despite all the challenges posed by the Trump administration to undermine efforts and the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic, NYC ultimately

surpassed expectations and matched its 2010 response rate of 61.9 percent thanks to these efforts, ensuring that our City did not lose net ground while successfully raising response rates in historically undercounted neighborhoods.

### **By the numbers**

#### *In-Person Events*

- 71 total events in 5 boroughs
- 50,000+ New Yorkers reached
- 2,289 direct sign-ups
- 12 languages

#### *Virtual Events*

- 85 virtual outreach events
- 172,300 New Yorkers reached
- 12 languages
- Weekly phone banking reaching approximately 2,500 people per week.

#### *Digital Resources*

- 35 e-blasts with translated graphics
- Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers reached
- 22 languages
- 1,300 community stakeholders, faith leaders, art and culture organizations, consulates, and MOIA volunteers emailed with census information
- 150 unique organizations received census communications from MOIA teams

## Advocacy

To more effectively advance our commitment to ensuring the inclusion of our immigrant communities, MOIA recognized the need to advocate for positive solutions at all levels of government. MOIA worked to coordinate local, state, and national advocacy on behalf of immigrant New Yorkers, including by partnering with local elected leaders across the nation to push for federal change.

### State Advocacy

As the state worked to address the COVID-19 pandemic, MOIA and agency partners engaged with the state to push for inclusive state programming and services related to the COVID-19 response. MOIA also worked with other City offices to align the City's position on bills across a range of issues that affected immigrants, including the Protect Our Courts Act, a bill proposed by the City that would impose community hiring requirements, and a bill to authorize the provision of certain public benefits to all, regardless of immigration status. Moreover, as described on page 84, MOIA has reinvested in assistance to help undocumented students access the financial aid made available through the NYS DREAM Act.

In 2021, MOIA continues to coordinate with our partners within the City and with advocates to push for changes to state law that will benefit immigrant New Yorkers.

### Federal Advocacy

During the final year of the Trump administration, MOIA and the City continued to fight back against federal attacks on immigrants.

## Advocacy

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, MOIA worked to ensure the City advocated to DHS and Congress for actions critical to ensuring safe and fair access to justice for immigrants. In March 2020, MOIA together with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, wrote to the U.S. Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review and ICE to request that they take action to stop the further transmission of COVID-19 by calling for complete emergency closure of the courts, due process protections for those in proceedings, and public health and safety protections for those in ICE custody, including increasing the use of parole authority. In April 2020, after learning about the virtually insurmountable challenges faced by those posting bond to secure release from immigration custody, MOIA again urged ICE to grant broader access to the online e-Bonds portal and institute alternate methods of payment that do not necessitate unsafe in-person transactions.

During the pandemic, USCIS suspended in-person services including naturalization oath ceremonies for almost three months, creating a significant backlog nationally of applicants who had completed the process but for their oath ceremony. Through Cities for Citizenship (C4C), a national initiative aimed at increasing citizenship, Mayor de Blasio joined with the Mayors of Chicago and Los Angeles to ask that Congress call on USCIS to use their existing authority to conduct remote oath ceremonies.

In November of 2020, New York City, together with other peer cities, like Philadelphia, issued a letter to join advocates in urging Congress to extend the

LRIF deadline (previously December of 2020). Thankfully, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act which included a provision extending the deadline for LRIF applications until December 20, 2021.

MOIA complemented this national advocacy with a local outreach campaign to inform Liberian immigrants in the city about the program and how to apply before the initial 2020 deadline. This outreach campaign included 2 virtual events



Organizer Ahmed Kargbo informs a community member about the Liberian Refugee Fairness Act (LRIF), which offers many Liberian immigrants a pathway to citizenship. Ahead of the Trump Administration's LRIF deadline in late 2020, MOIA rallied to spread the message to Liberian communities, especially in the Bronx and Staten Island, which has one of the largest Liberian populations in the county.

with African Communities Together, the Liberian Consulate, Staten Island Legal Services, Staten Island Liberian Community Association, and other community organizations; 11 in-person outreach events on Staten Island including flyering with distribution of PPE, canvass days with posters placed in businesses frequented by Liberian New Yorkers, and presentations at church services; and 5 community stakeholder calls with faith leaders, community leaders, and advocates.

Additionally, in 2020, MOIA continued to fight back against the federal administration's regulatory agenda which sought to weaken protections and due process for immigrants, make asylum and related benefits almost impossible to attain, and dismantle the legal immigration system. MOIA collaborated with City agency partners to consistently raise the potentially devastating impact to City interests that would develop because of these rules and filed nine comments in the federal register, which are available on the MOIA website.

### **Litigation**

In 2020, New York City continued to stand up for our immigrant residents in federal courts by leading and joining many local governments' amicus briefs demonstrating how anti-immigrant federal policies threaten the public safety, health, and economic stability of cities and counties. New York City led multi-jurisdiction amicus briefs in cases that resulted in successfully keeping immigration benefits affordable,<sup>56</sup> preventing the gutting of the U.S. asylum system,<sup>57</sup> and allowing state and local governments to decide our own public

56 ILRC, et al. v. Wolf, 3:20-cv-05883

57 Pangea Legal Services, et al. v. DHS, 3:20-cv-09253-JD

safety priorities and build trust with our immigrant communities.<sup>58</sup> The City also joined other cities and counties in a myriad of amicus briefs to protect DACA,<sup>59</sup> refugee resettlement, and the right to work for asylum-seekers; as well as holding the Administration accountable for its actions in using the COVID-19 pandemic to further block legal immigration and marginalize immigrant families.<sup>60</sup>

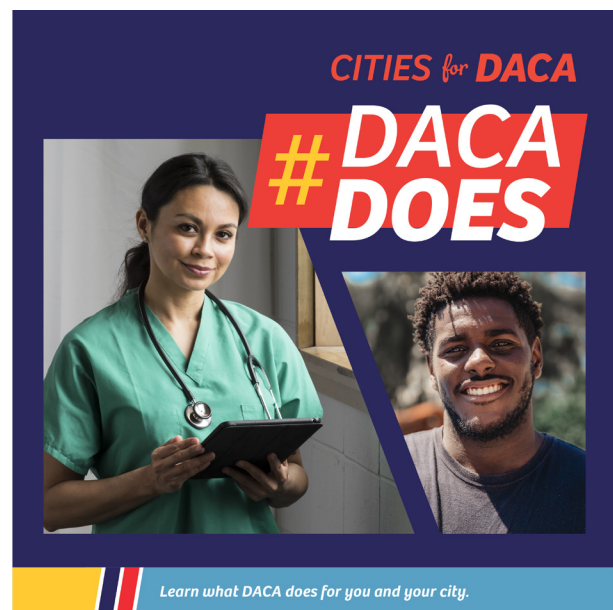
## Coalitions

### *Cities for Action (C4A)*

Cities for Action (C4A) was founded in 2014 by Mayor de Blasio and is a bipartisan coalition of U.S. cities and local governments that collectively advocate for pro-immigrant federal policies and exchange best practices on local policies and programs that advance inclusion of immigrant residents. Since 2014, the coalition has grown to nearly 200 cities and counties. The U.S. mayors and county executives that make up our coalition recognize the pivotal role immigrants play in strengthening communities.

In 2020, C4A continued to fight against the Trump administration's federal immigration policies, provided guidance and best practices on supporting immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic, and launched a national campaign in support of DACA recipients and DACA eligible individuals. In the final months of 2020, C4A developed a document outlining local governments' recommendations on immigration action to the new Biden administration and the

117<sup>th</sup> Congress, with a special focus on an inclusive COVID-19 recovery, as described on page 102.



The Cities for DACA campaign makes clear that DACA recipients strengthen the social and institutional fabric of our cities by highlighting Dreamers' stories and the positive contributions they make to communities across the country.

58 US v. State of NJ, 3:20-cv-01364-FLW-TJB

59 DACA NYS/Batalla Vidal v. Wolf (1:17-cv-05228-NGG-JO); DACA TX case (Texas, et al. v. US, 1:18-cv-00068-ASH)

60 Gomez et al., v. Trump et al., Case No. 1:20-cv-01419-APM; ICE Student Visa ban (Harvard & MIT v. DHS, 1:20-cv-11283-ADB); COVID mixed status families (R.V., et al. v. Mnuchin, 8:20-cv-01148-PWG)



As the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on our communities became clear, C4A brought on a COVID-19 coordinator, who served as an information hub and created opportunities for cities and counties to share how they were adapting to the crisis to best meet the needs of their immigrant residents. Although so many immigrants were serving in essential jobs on the frontlines of the pandemic, many were left out of federal relief and state employment insurance. C4A stepped up by amplifying the invaluable contributions immigrants make to our communities and advocating for immigrant inclusion in federal relief measures. C4A also played a critical role in sharing best practices and guidance on how to develop immigrant inclusive assistance programs. Cities and counties are leading and innovating on how to increase access for and engage with immigrant communities during COVID-19 response and recovery periods.

In spring 2020, C4A launched the *Cities for DACA* campaign to highlight the stories of Dreamers, illustrate the countless contributions Dreamers make to our communities, and raise awareness about the negative consequences ending DACA would have nationwide. This included organizing days of action to amplify support for DACA and to elevate messaging from local leaders on how DACA helps our communities and why protections for DACA recipients are needed. These days of action resulted in targeted statements released by two mayors, over 200 native posts by C4A members using campaign graphics and messages, nearly 3,700 likes of relevant posts, and more than 800 shares of campaign content. C4A also produced 6 op-eds from mayors, county

executives, and city council members from nearly every major U.S. region on the importance of DACA and the need for permanent protections for DACA recipients and their families. Coalition members also disseminated a resource guide created by C4A for DACA recipients and impacted communities.

After the Supreme Court issued a decision to uphold the program in June 2020, C4A celebrated with hundreds of thousands of Dreamers across the country, and called on Congress to provide permanent protections and a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and their families. In July 2020, DHS issued a memo refusing to accept all initial and most advance parole applications and limiting the DACA renewal period to just one year. C4A responded by issuing a statement again urging Congress to provide permanent protections to Dreamers, so many of whom were working on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To help keep Dreamers informed about the status of the program amid a constantly shifting legal landscape, and resources available to assist Dreamers with their DACA renewals and application fees, C4A held a multi-city DACA tele-town hall with leaders in Denver, Los Angeles, and New York City. C4A was able to reach over 22,000 callers during the tele-town hall that was livestreamed and amplified on Facebook, and participants walked away with updates on the DACA program and guidance on how to access local and national resources.

As the country witnessed an outpouring of renewed calls for racial justice and change in 2020, C4A launched the *Cities for Black*

Lives campaign to inform and support cities' and counties' work in centering Black immigrants, building solidarity with the racial justice movement, and furthering anti-racist work at the local level. As the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic in Black communities became clear, local governments had to confront the consequences of longstanding racism in our public health system. C4A worked to develop resources to highlight and share best practices on local efforts to address systematic racism and the intersection of racism and immigration.

In addition to these campaigns, C4A engaged in intensive advocacy on other federal issues such as advocating to halt the USCIS fee increase rule and asking Congress to extend the deadline for green card applications under Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness, among others.

As the year culminated in the general election and the nation began looking forward to a change in presidential administration, C4A brought its members together to brainstorm and publish local governments' policy priorities for the Biden administration and the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. In December 2020, C4A hosted a virtual convening to strategize with local leaders on how local government can advance a vision for immigrant advancement and inclusive cities, counties, and nation. Thirty-eight local leaders from areas across the country attended the convening and developed a bold national strategy for immigrant integration and immigration reform. This strategy, titled "A Vision for Immigration Action: Local Leaders' Recommendations for Building Inclusive, Equitable, and Resilient Communities for All," (view at [citiesforaction.org](https://citiesforaction.org/2020/12/15/a-vision-for-immigration-action)).

us/vision) published in advance of the Biden-Harris inauguration, calls on the new Administration and Congress to partner with local leaders to support the successful economic, social, and civic integration of immigrant families; address immigration barriers that marginalize immigrant residents, separate families, and limit our communities' capacity to thrive; respect local decision-making and expertise on public safety and public health; recognize the role of local governments in upholding our nation's values and in addressing global challenges; and mount a coordinated strategy for immigrant inclusion for an equitable response and recovery to the pandemic.

### ***Cities for Citizenship (C4C)***

Founded in 2014, Cities for Citizenship (C4C) is a major national initiative, with municipal partners in over 90 cities and counties. C4C is designed to increase naturalization among eligible U.S. green card holders and is chaired by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, with support from the Center for Popular Democracy, the National Partnership for New Americans, and the founding corporate partner, Citi Community Development.

In 2020, MOIA worked through the C4C network to create resources and spearhead virtual events aimed at continuing to support citizenship efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, MOIA highlighted the agency's work in reducing financial barriers to citizenship in C4C's "Priced out of Citizenship" report, signed on to a multi-city advocacy letter asking

USCIS to conduct remote oath ceremonies, and led a breakout session during its annual Municipal Gathering held virtually in December 2020 on post-election immigrant integration and inclusion strategies. As a member of C4C’s Executive Committee, MOIA is committed to collaborating with other cities and counties across the country to strengthen and improve access to citizenship.

## Strategic Research

In 2020, MOIA produced original research that helped to inform the debate and advocacy around the inclusion of immigrant communities in pandemic relief, as well as research that helped to track the impacts of significant immigration developments, such as the public charge rule and a New York City analysis of immigration enforcement trends and impacts. This year, MOIA published its “COVID-19 Health and Economic Impacts on Immigrant Communities” fact sheet which highlighted a correlation between neighborhoods with

higher concentrations of foreign-born residents and higher rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths. While there is no COVID-19 data available by immigration status, the fact sheet identified that the higher the make-up of immigrants or non-citizens there are per ZIP code, the higher the COVID-19 case and death rates in that area. In fact, in ZIP codes where immigrants make up over 50 percent of the population, the COVID-19 case rate is over 20 percent higher than the citywide average and the death rate is more than 40 percent higher than the citywide average.<sup>61</sup> The fact sheet also helped to showcase some of the underlying causes for higher rates of COVID-19, including high rates of essential workers who have continued to work throughout the pandemic, higher rates of overcrowding in housing that have made social distancing for this population more difficult, lack of access to care, and/or fear of the public charge rule and use of public benefits. The data that demonstrated how immigrants disproportionately make up



MOIA staff including Stephane Laboisserie supported NYC Test & Trace Corps outreach efforts by distributing PPE and information about COVID-19 resources to community members in East New York, Brooklyn.

61 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/covid-immigrant-fact-sheet-20200731.pdf>.

frontline essential workers during the pandemic was also used in litigation around the public charge rule.

Additionally, MOIA’s research has been critical to our ability to effectively design and manage flagship programs such as the NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund, language access during the pandemic, and programs like ActionNYC

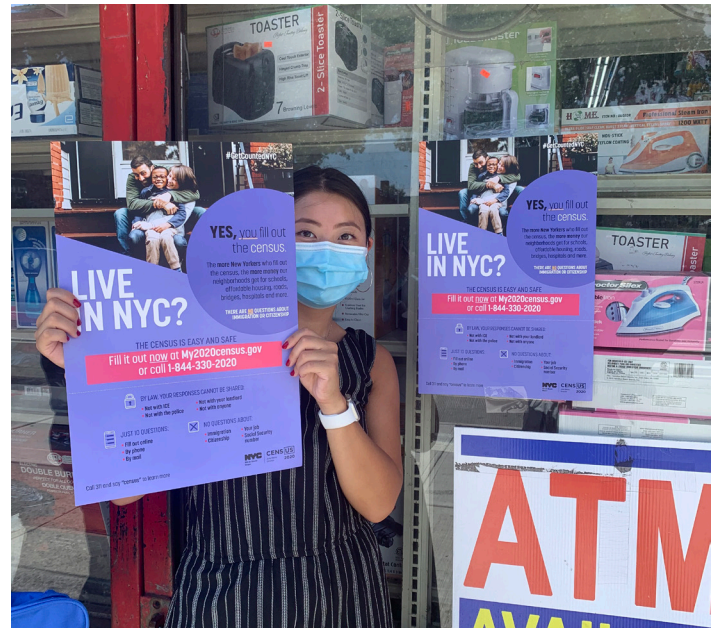
and NYC Care, among others. Analyzing and sharing the latest data about immigrant communities has also helped to inform stakeholder engagements and advocacy on federal, state, and local policy developments affecting immigrant New Yorkers and City interests, and has guided how City agencies support immigrant access and inclusion.



In February, MOIA partnered with the Endangered Language Alliance, NYC Commission on Human Rights, and NYC Department of Consumer Affairs to celebrate the city’s unique linguistic diversity, with the over 200 languages spoken in New York City.



On the last day of the 2020 Census, MOIA Organizer AJ Yusuf and other staff directly assisted over 250 local residents in Jackson Heights, Queens with filling out the census



MOIA staff including Judy Park shared information about the 2020 Census with small business owners in Flatbush, Brooklyn during a Week of Action in August 2020.

## Conclusion

As our city and country heal from the largest public health crisis of our lifetime, the economic and social crisis that has exacerbated underlying structural and institutional inequities and injustice, and the devastating impact of federal, xenophobic policies, MOIA remains committed to ensuring that the immigrant communities we serve are centered in and empowered through COVID recovery to seek the care and support they need and are entitled to.

Working alongside our fellow government agencies, sister cities, elected officials, and community partners, we affirm the critical role immigrants at large play in keeping our city running, realizing economic growth, and reaching our greatest potential. It is in that spirit of hope that we will build a more resilient and inclusive city and nation through an equitable COVID recovery, for the benefit of all.

