

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Statue of Liberty in New York City, viewed from a distance across a body of water. The statue is on the left side, and the city skyline is visible in the distance. The lighting suggests it's either early morning or late afternoon.

# STATE OF OUR IMMIGRANT CITY MOIA ANNUAL REPORT

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FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2018

This report was published in March 2019.

This report incorporates accessibility features, including larger font size and alternative text for photos, as well as textured graphs for color blind users.

# Message from the Mayor

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Dear Friends:



As the safest big city in America, with the greatest number of jobs and opportunities in our history, we are well on our way to achieving our goal of becoming the fairest, most equitable, and most inclusive metropolis in the nation. We are also blessed to have the highest percentage of residents who were born outside this country since 1910, about the time my own grandparents came here from Southern Italy. That isn't an accident or a coincidence - New York is the greatest city on earth because we are the ultimate city of immigrants.

This annual report measures how we are doing as a city to ensure that immigrant New Yorkers can succeed. It also highlights the work that the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is doing every day to support New Yorkers from around the world in every borough. That includes expanding healthcare coverage for all, regardless of immigration status; ensuring you can exercise your right to vote, no matter what language you speak; and providing access to the services you and your family need to thrive, both at home, in school, and on the job.

As New Yorkers, we have a special obligation to show the world how to live in harmony. Rest assured, no matter where you came from, when you got here, or what documents you have, the City of New York will be here to support you.

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

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To my fellow New Yorkers:



I am thrilled to share with you the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs’ Annual Report for 2018. In this report you will learn about our over 3 million immigrant New Yorkers, their myriad contributions, and some of the challenges they continue to face. Additionally, we will share with you the work MOIA and our partners, across the five boroughs and across the country, have undertaken to advance our shared goals for a truly inclusive and welcoming city.

While we have seen a tremendous commitment to realizing this vision, for too many in our communities, 2018 was a year of continued anxiety, frustration, and fear. As you will see throughout this report, we worked hard to be responsive to, and proactive about, the hostile federal climate’s impact on immigrant New Yorkers. In response to the family separation crisis at the United States-Mexico border, the de Blasio Administration made a historic \$4.1M allocation of immigration legal services funding for children and their families here in the city. When the Trump Administration announced a proposed rule change about public charge inadmissibility, MOIA led a multi-pronged City response: we provided real time information to communities and key stakeholders, elevated the issue and the opportunity to submit comments to the federal government across local, community and ethnic media, and submitted comments on behalf of New York City and in partnership with cities across the country opposing the proposed rule change.

We are proud to be the ultimate city of immigrants. While this report sets out the incredible work accomplished in one year to advance a more fair and just city for all our immigrant sisters and brothers, we know many challenges remain and have been exacerbated due to the anti-immigrant policies of the federal government. Accordingly, our goals for our immigrant city remain ambitious and forward-looking: increase access to services, empower our communities to exercise their rights, and advocate, in partnership, for a city free of barriers to achievement.

We remain inspired by the resilience of our communities and partners and we recommit ourselves to working towards a New York that is a fairer and more just city for all immigrants who call it home.



Bitta Mostofi  
Commissioner  
Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs

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# Acknowledgments

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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 second such report, covering calendar year 2018.

MOIA's work and this report would not be possible without the commitment and staunch support of Mayor Bill de Blasio, City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and City Council Member and Chair of the Committee on Immigration Carlos Menchaca.

This report and MOIA's work benefited greatly from collaborations and partnerships with colleagues at the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, the NYC Office of Management and Budget, and the NYC Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration, especially the Office of Civil Justice. Many other City agencies, immigration legal service providers, community-based organizations, and advocates informed the work and remain crucial partners in MOIA's work.

MOIA acknowledges the exceptional contributions of Sabrina Fong and Martin Kim in the development of this annual report. MOIA would also like to thank Diane Zhou for the design of this report.

# Executive Summary

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The New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) facilitates the full inclusion of immigrant New Yorkers into the city’s civic, economic, and cultural life; supports access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers; and advocates for immigration reform at all levels of government. To bring the city ever closer to these goals, MOIA supports and leads a range of programs and policies that empower New York City’s immigrants and that mitigate the hardships that these communities face. By working across multiple City agencies to expand access to City services for all New Yorkers – regardless of immigration status – and by acting to provide fast, relevant, and accurate information to stakeholders, MOIA drives the Citywide responses to increasingly harsh federal immigration policies. Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, and with the partnership and support of the City Council, MOIA has helped ensure that we are the safest big city in America while simultaneously ensuring that New York City serves all its residents, regardless of immigration status.

In 2018, the Trump Administration continued its relentless attacks on immigrants, pursuing abhorrent policies and practices such as family separation, a proposed new “public charge” rule, and increased immigration enforcement against residents who pose no public safety threat. In this time of crisis for immigrant New Yorkers, the City demonstrated that its commitment to serving all New Yorkers was unwavering. MOIA led the charge, forging and strengthening interagency partnerships to deliver important City services and critical information to our immigrant communities. The day-to-day work of MOIA and our sister agencies is driven by the reality that the integration of immigrants is directly tied to the well-being of all New Yorkers and that an inclusive city is a thriving city.

The report provides a demographic overview of New York City’s immigrant population and households, and describes barriers faced by these communities, particularly due to increasingly hostile federal immigration policy developments. It outlines MOIA’s programs and activities in 2018, as well as the challenges ahead in 2019. Highlights include:

- **New data findings.** Based on the latest data, we see that as the number of immigrants in New York City continues to grow, the number of undocumented immigrants living in New York City has been on the decline. The data also show that immigration status correlates with other demographic disparities such as poverty rate, English proficiency, housing, and health.
- **MOIA rapid response efforts.** MOIA led the City’s quick actions to address anti-immigrant federal policies, including the cruel family

separation crisis. Beyond acting swiftly to provide crucial information to immigrant New Yorkers about these and other developments, MOIA's coordination enabled City agencies to respond to communities' needs in ways that were informed directly by providers and community leaders. For example, MOIA worked with city agencies and advocates to share accurate and timely information to communities leading up to and upon the formal announcement of the proposed "public charge" rule change, which would attach immigration consequences to the receipt of certain public benefits. MOIA also engaged in a powerful campaign to drive public comments to the Federal Register regarding the proposed rule.

- **Enduring commitment to community outreach.** In response to the multitude of federal immigration policy changes, MOIA, in partnership with community-based organizations, connected immigrant New Yorkers to the information they needed through various Know Your Rights (KYR) events across the five boroughs. In 2018, MOIA conducted 681 KYR forums. Through these KYRs and outreach, MOIA engaged 18,000 individuals – nearly a 40% increase from the previous year.
- **Implementing the City's expanded investments in immigration legal services.** MOIA continued to work with the Human Resource Administration's Office of Civil Justice to expand the City's investments in immigration legal services including removal defense, support for separated families and unaccompanied children, and expanding immigrant legal services in Chinese, Korean, and South Asian immigrant communities.
- **New forms of joint advocacy with other cities.** MOIA worked with our partners across the nation to issue multi-city sign-on letters and statements to push back against the threats posed to cities by Trump Administration immigration policies. These included providing cities' perspective on the Administration's attempts to terminate Temporary Protection Status for El Salvador, Honduras, and Somalia; the implementation of the travel ban; and the proposed "public charge" rule change. Additionally, MOIA coordinated the first-ever Cities Taking Action: Municipal Best Practices Conference, in Boston, MA, at which staff from 40 cities and counties shared technical expertise on local policies and programs that further their immigrant residents' well-being.

With new challenges ahead in 2019, MOIA will build on this work to continue to protect and empower all of our city's residents and families. MOIA is helping to make our city one that is more equitable for all, and providing a model for cities across the country.



# Mission of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

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New York City has a long and proud history as the ultimate city of immigrants. In recognition of this heritage and the important role that immigrants continue to 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. 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. Mayor Michael Bloomberg appointed the Office's first Commissioner in 2002.

Under the Administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio, MOIA has prioritized three goals: 1) enhancing the economic, civic, and social integration of immigrant New Yorkers; 2) facilitating access to justice; and 3) advocating for immigration law and policy reforms at all levels of government in order to combat inequalities that harm New York's immigrant communities. As part of its work advancing these goals and its mission, MOIA conducts research and analysis, provides guidance to other City agencies, develops partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs), and advocates at all levels of government for immigrant New Yorkers.

# Immigrant New Yorkers and Their Families – Barriers and Contributions

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Using the latest available data, the following is a demographic snapshot of immigrant New Yorkers, updated for MOIA’s second annual report, as well as some new analysis on how poverty rates vary by immigration status and characteristics of immigrant households in New York City.

While demographic trends change very slightly from year to year, the data show that the number of immigrants in New York City is at an all-time high while the number of undocumented immigrants living in New York City has been dropping. It is also important to note that last year’s report uses American Community Survey (ACS) data that had been averaged over a five year period (2012-2016). This can sometimes hide trends that are recently emerging. In order to provide the most up-to-date snapshot of the city’s immigrant population, this year’s report uses ACS data from the single year of 2017. Due to the different time periods that we look at, it is not accurate to compare data points from last year’s report to this one.

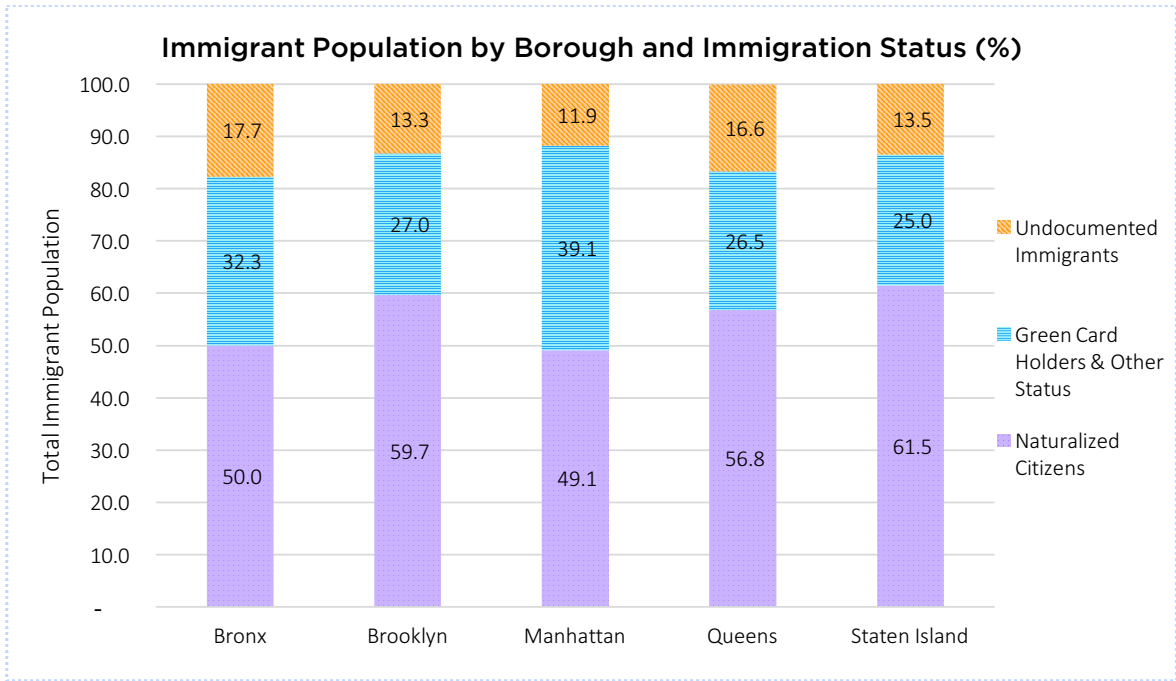
The data continue to show that the city’s immigrant population remains extremely diverse in terms of immigration status, languages spoken at home, and national origin. Immigrants continue to contribute substantially to the city’s thriving economy. And despite being deeply embedded in our city, immigrant New Yorkers continue to face impediments to full inclusion and well-being, such as access to health insurance and English language proficiency. For the first time, this report features data that show how poverty rates vary by immigration status. Understanding and monitoring these disparities over time are critical to MOIA’s ability to provide effective services that are responsive to the needs of immigrant New Yorkers, and collaborate with City agencies and community partners to fulfill MOIA’s mission.

Also, for the first time, this report explores the household unit and provides a snapshot of mixed-status households. The data highlight how deeply connected millions of New Yorkers are to their undocumented fellow residents and how federal policies that would seek to remove immigrant New Yorkers from the city’s communities would impact the city as a whole.

# Overview

New York City is home to 3.2 million immigrants, the largest number in the City’s history.<sup>1</sup> Immigrants comprise nearly 37.1% of the city population and 44% of its workforce. The foreign-born population resides in all corners of the five boroughs. Certain neighborhoods, primarily in Queens and Brooklyn and parts of the Bronx and Manhattan, have particularly high concentrations of immigrant residents.<sup>2</sup>

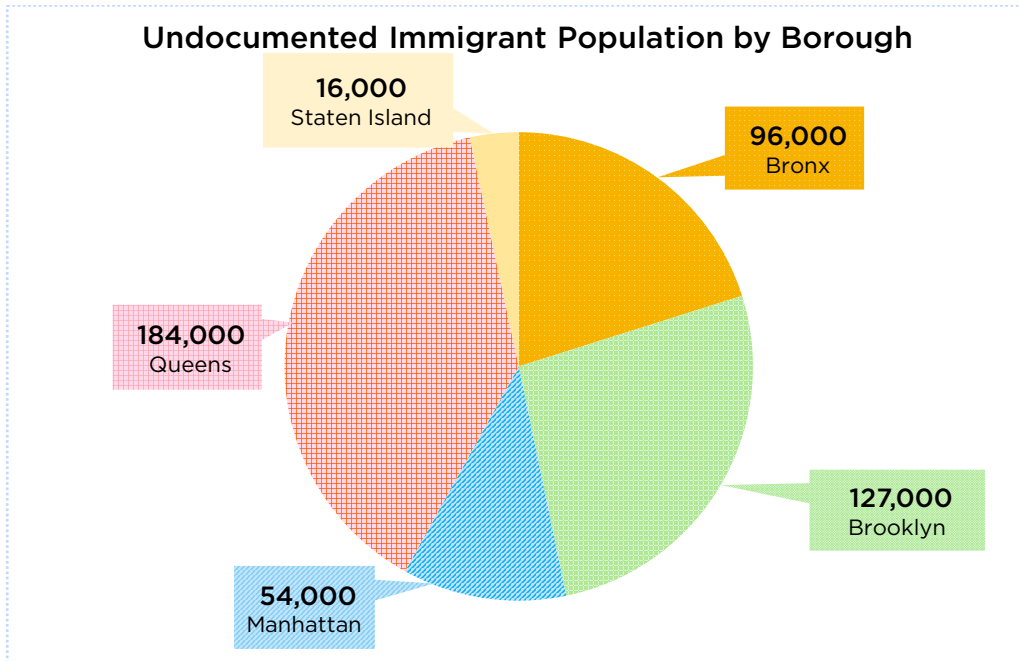
All five boroughs have significant immigrant populations, including undocumented immigrants.<sup>3</sup>



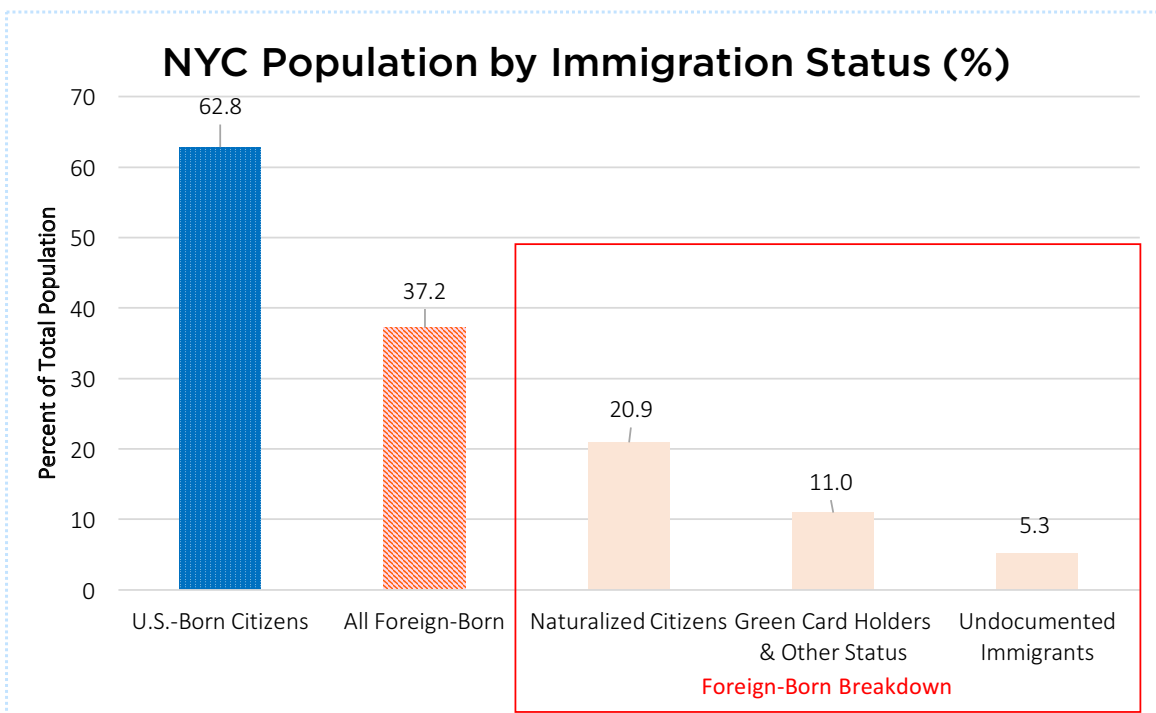
1 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2017 1-year estimates. Retrieved from [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_17\\_1YR\\_CPO2&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_17_1YR_CPO2&prodType=table)

2 Several terms are used throughout this section. “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 asylum applicants, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

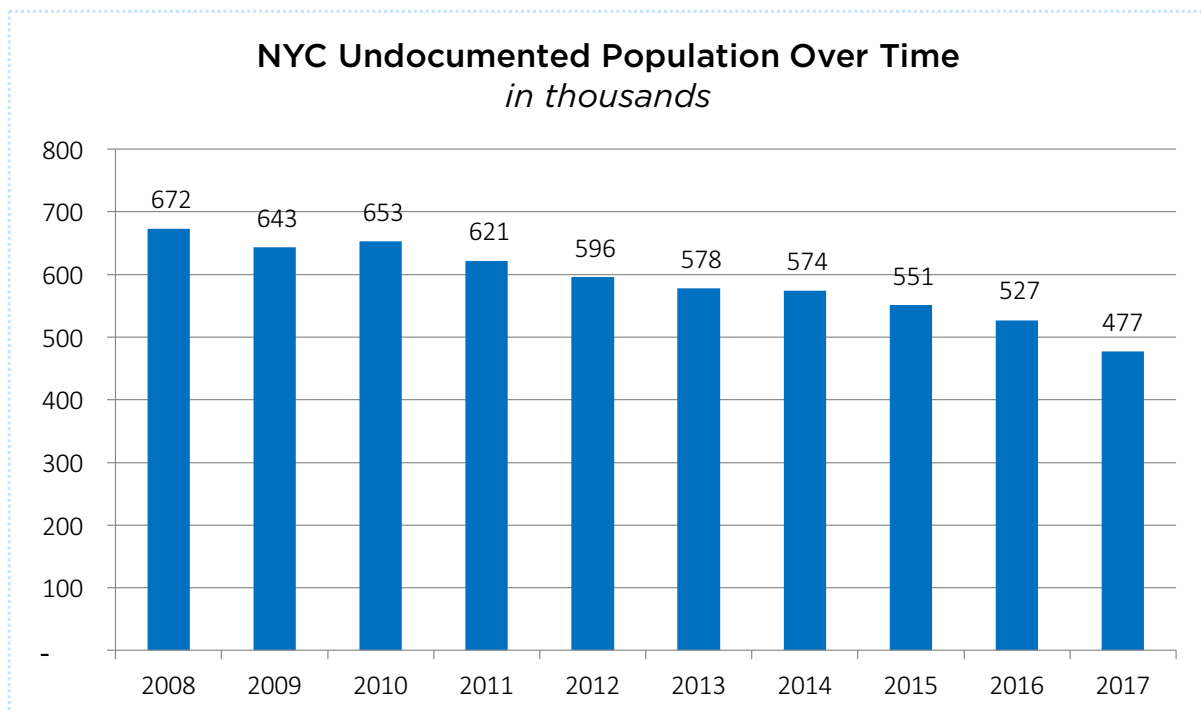
3 Unless otherwise noted, all data are based on 1-year American Community Survey 2017 Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity.



Approximately 56.2% of immigrant New Yorkers are naturalized U.S. citizens. An estimated 660,000 immigrant New Yorkers who are lawful permanent residents (i.e., green card holders) are potentially eligible to naturalize.



New York City is also home to approximately 477,000 undocumented immigrants, a decline from an estimated undocumented immigrant population of 672,000 in 2008.<sup>4</sup> This mirrors national trends where the overall undocumented population has been on the decline since 2008.<sup>5</sup> This can be attributed to a number of reasons including a weak U.S. economy following the 2008 housing market collapse, improved economic conditions in Mexico, as well as heightened enforcement at the border.<sup>6</sup>



4 2008 and 2017 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples as augmented by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity.

5 The estimate of the undocumented population presented in this brief differs from what was published in the 2017 Annual Report from Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) due to differing time periods. The 560,000 estimate published in the 2017 MOIA report uses 2012-2016 ACS data and reflects an average over that 5-year period while the 527,000 estimate in this graph uses 1-year 2016 ACS data. [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/moia\\_annual\\_report\\_2018\\_final.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/moia_annual_report_2018_final.pdf)

6 See Warren, Robert, “US Undocumented Population Continued to Fall from 2016 to 2017, and Visa Overstays Significantly Exceeded Illegal Crossings for the Seventh Consecutive Year,” Center for Migration Status (January 2019), available at <http://cmsny.org/publications/essay-2017-undocumented-and-overstays/> and Passel, Jeffrey S. and Cohn, D’Vera, “U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Total Dips to Lowest Level in a Decade,” Pew Research Center (November 2018), available at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2018/11/27/u-s-unauthorized-immigrant-total-dips-to-lowest-level-in-a-decade/>.

The top ten countries of birth for the 3.2 million foreign-born City residents are:

	<b>Country of Birth for NYC Immigrants</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of All Foreign-born</b>
1	Dominican Republic	449,338	14.3%
2	China	365,885	11.6%
3	Jamaica	169,067	5.4%
4	Mexico	156,212	5.0%
5	Guyana	134,120	4.3%
6	Ecuador	128,000	4.1%
7	Bangladesh	95,566	3.0%
8	Haiti	84,358	2.7%
9	India	78,842	2.5%
10	Trinidad & Tobago	77,192	2.5%

Notably, the number of immigrants from Mexico has been on the decline in New York City while populations from the Dominican Republic and China continue to grow.

The City has significant linguistic diversity: more than 200 languages are spoken by residents across the five boroughs. The top 10 languages of the foreign-born New York City residents who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), meaning that they speak English less than “very well,”<sup>7</sup> are:

	<b>Language Spoken by the Foreign-Born who are Limited English Proficient (LEP)</b>	<b>% of All Foreign-Born LEP</b>
1	Spanish	44.5%
2	Chinese*	21.7%
3	Russian	6.5%
4	Bengali	4.0%
5	Korean	2.5%
6	Haitian	2.2%
7	Arabic	1.7%

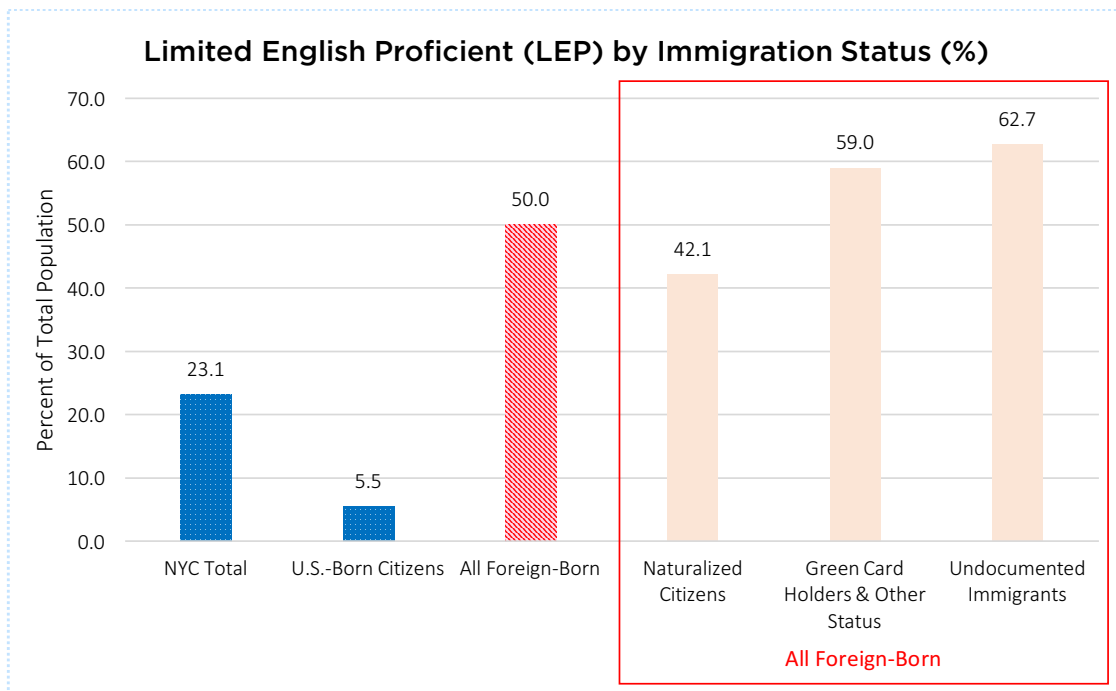
7 Among those aged 5 and older.

	Language Spoken by the Foreign-Born who are Limited English Proficient (LEP)	% of All Foreign-Born LEP
8	French	1.4%
9	Urdu	1.3%
10	Polish	1.2%

*\*Chinese includes Cantonese and Mandarin.*

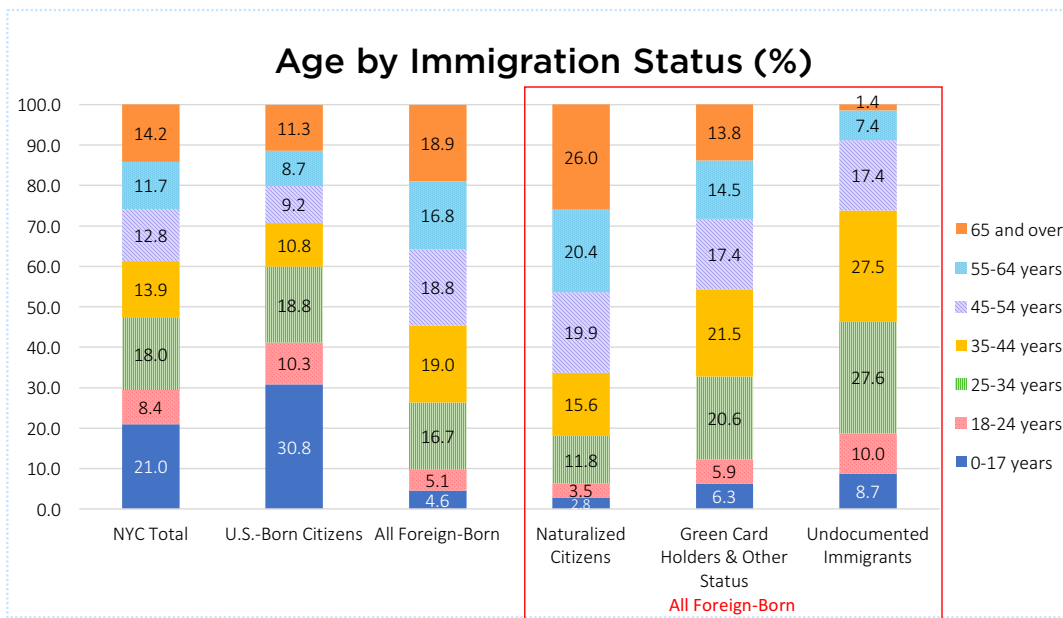
Speakers of these 10 languages account for more than 85% of total LEP foreign-born.

Approximately one-half of immigrants are LEP. Nearly 62.7% of undocumented immigrants are LEP. Overall, 23.1% of all New Yorkers are LEP – regardless of status.

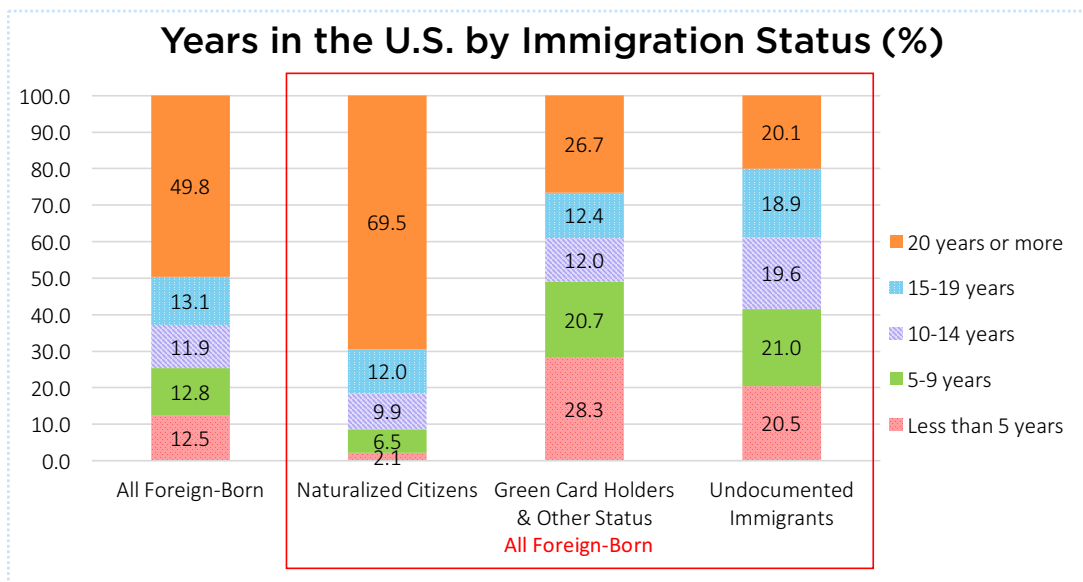


Immigrant New Yorkers are a slightly older population than U.S.-born citizens. Within the immigrant population, naturalized citizens are older on average, compared to undocumented immigrants and other non-citizens, who tend to be younger.

Age by Immigration Status						
	NYC Total	U.S.-Born Citizens	All Foreign-Born	Naturalized Citizens	Green Card Holders & Other Status	Undocumented Immigrants
<b>Median Age</b>	36	29	47	53	42	36

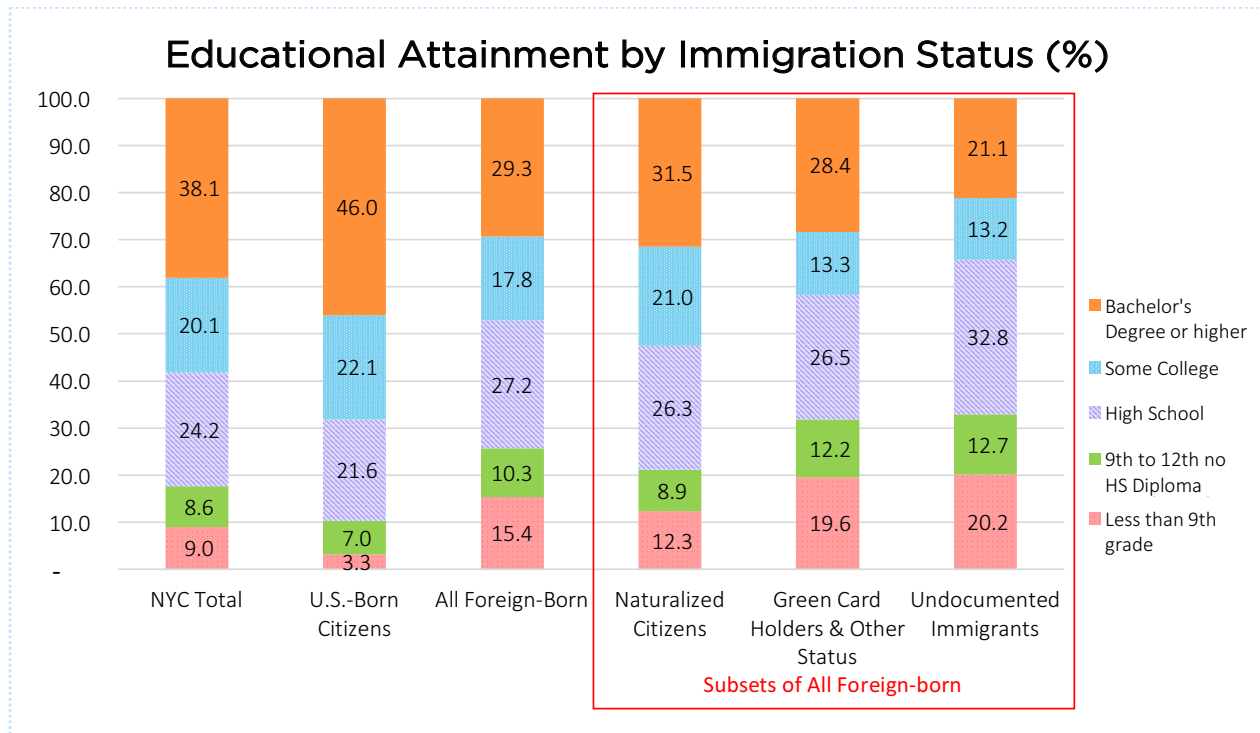


In addition, almost one-half of immigrant New Yorkers have lived in the United States for 20 years or more.





Nearly half of immigrant New Yorkers years age 25 or older have attended some or graduated from college. These rates are notably higher for naturalized U.S. citizens. About 32.9% of undocumented immigrants living in New York City have less than a high school diploma, compared to approximately 31.8% of those with green cards and other status, 21.2% of naturalized U.S. citizens, and 10.3% of U.S.-born citizens.



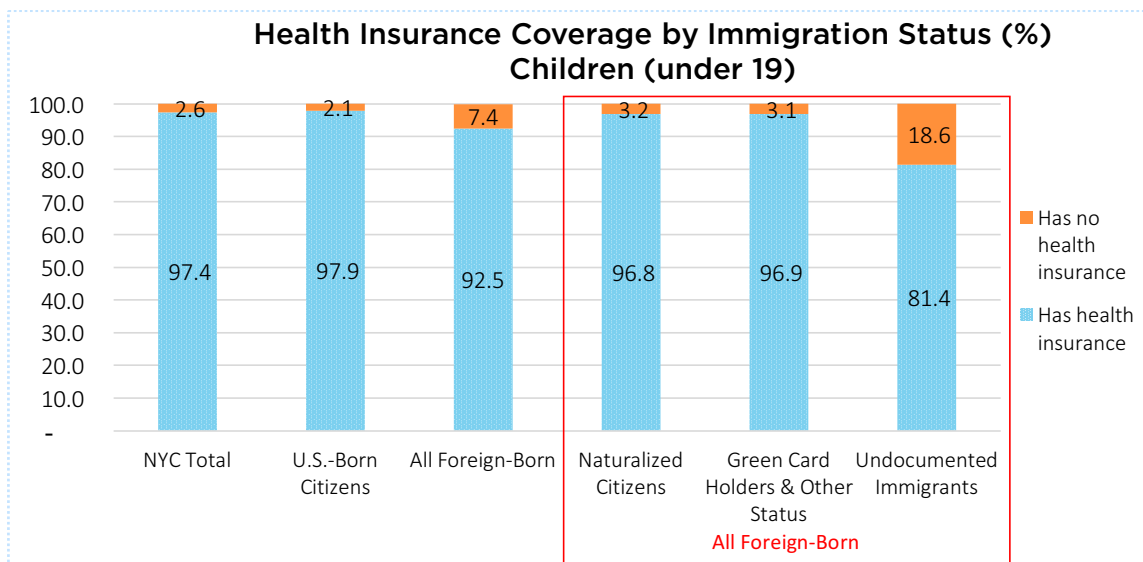
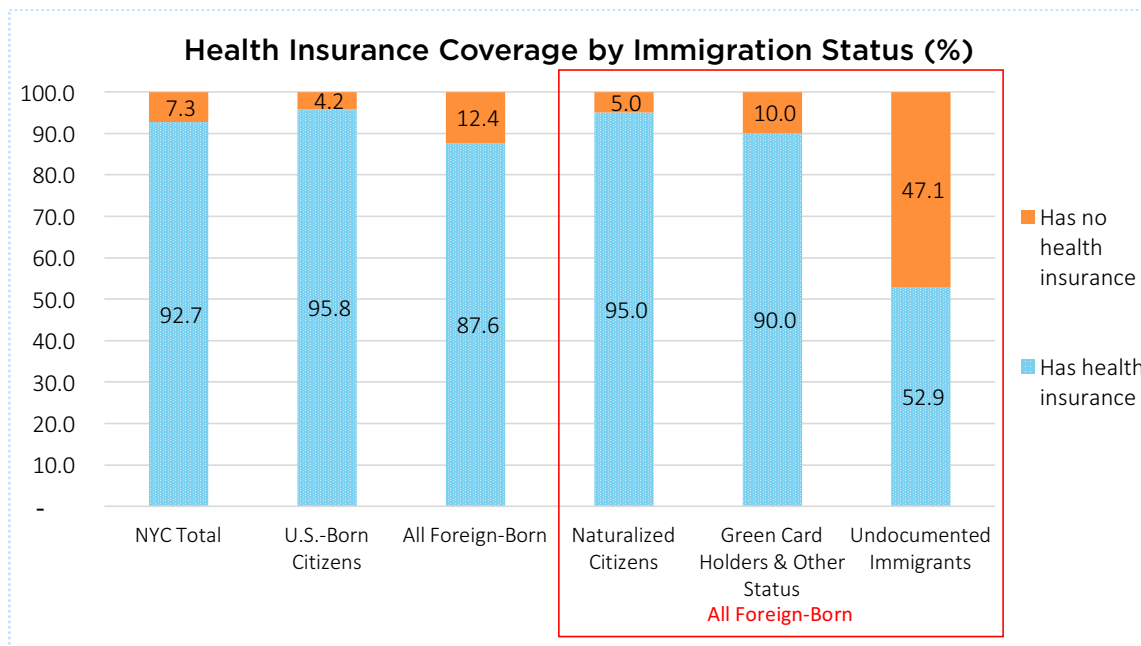
## Health

In New York City, there are persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizens. Nearly 92.7% of U.S.-born New Yorkers have health insurance, compared with just 78.0% of non-citizen New Yorkers.<sup>8</sup> The disparity is starker between citizens and undocumented immigrants—only 52.9% of undocumented immigrants have health insurance.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> MOIA's 2017 annual report showed a greater disparity in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizens (where it showed that only 69% of non-citizens were insured). Note that last year's report was based on data that had been averaged over five years. Thus, the 5-year average data are skewed to show a starker gap in coverage rates since they include 2012-2014 data from before the Affordable Care Act came into full effect in 2014.

<sup>9</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.

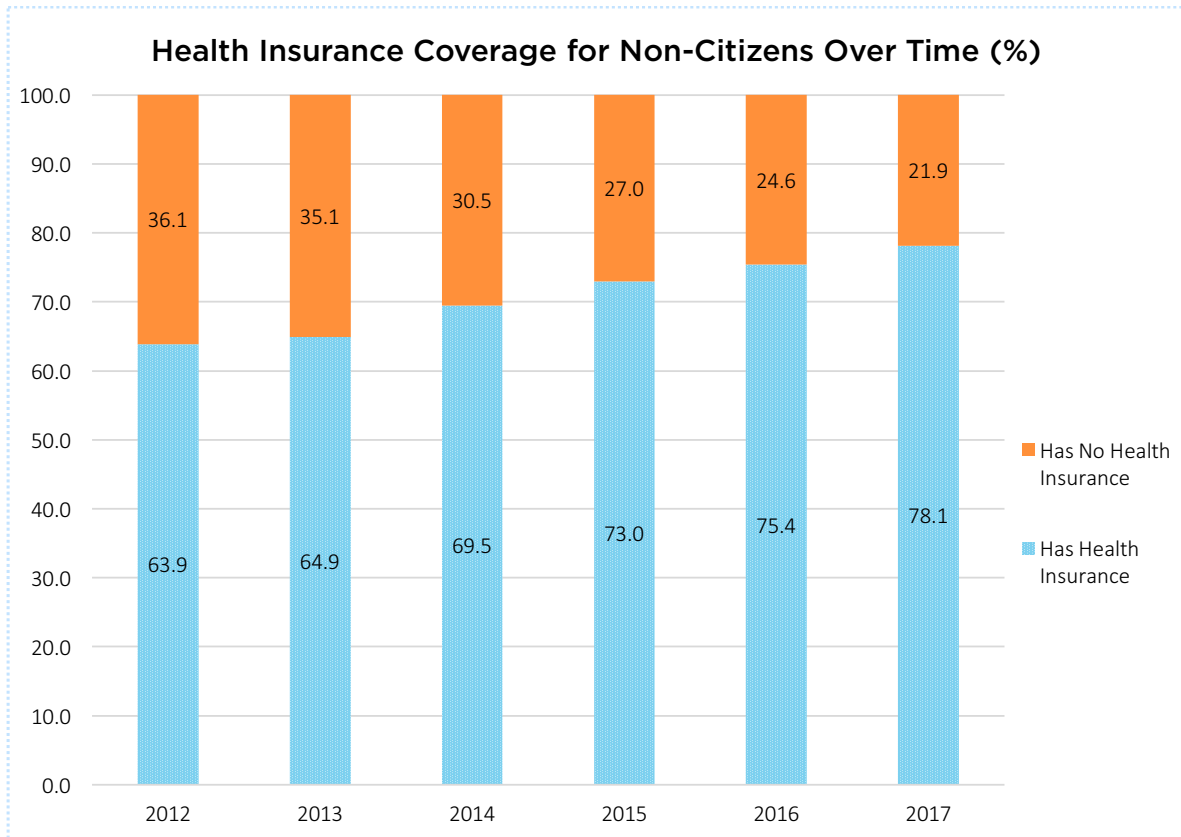
The gap in insurance coverage by immigration status also persists among children (under age 19) despite the fact that universal coverage is available for children under state law: 18.6% of undocumented children are uninsured, compared to 2.1% of U.S.-born citizen children.



Notably, the gap in health insurance coverage between the U.S.-born and the foreign-born has closed considerably in recent years, due to the Affordable Care Act and the City’s GetCoveredNYC effort. In 2017, 21.9% of non-citizens were uninsured—much lower than just five years ago, in 2012, when about 36.1% of non-citizens were uninsured.<sup>10 11</sup>

10 In January 2019, the Mayor announced the NYC Care program, which will guarantee health care for every New Yorker.

11 2012 and 2017 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample data.



## Housing

About 21.6% of immigrant New Yorkers reside in overcrowded households, defined here as more than one person per room. This data point is unchanged from previous years. The number includes the approximately 8.6% 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 and markedly lower among naturalized citizens.

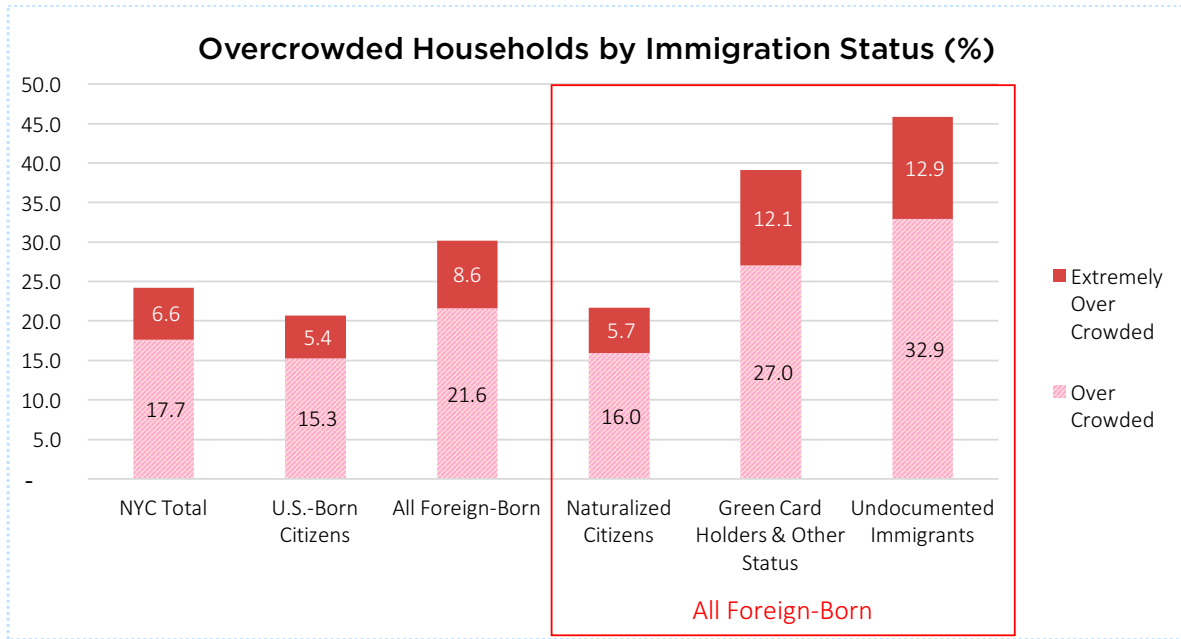


Figure above: Overcrowded households are defined as having greater than 1 but less than 1.5 persons per room. Extremely overcrowded households are defined as having more than 1.5 persons per room.

One-half of all New Yorkers – regardless of immigration status – are rent-burdened, defined by the Census Bureau as spending 30% or more of their household income on rent. This problem is much greater for non-citizens – green card holders and undocumented immigrants alike.

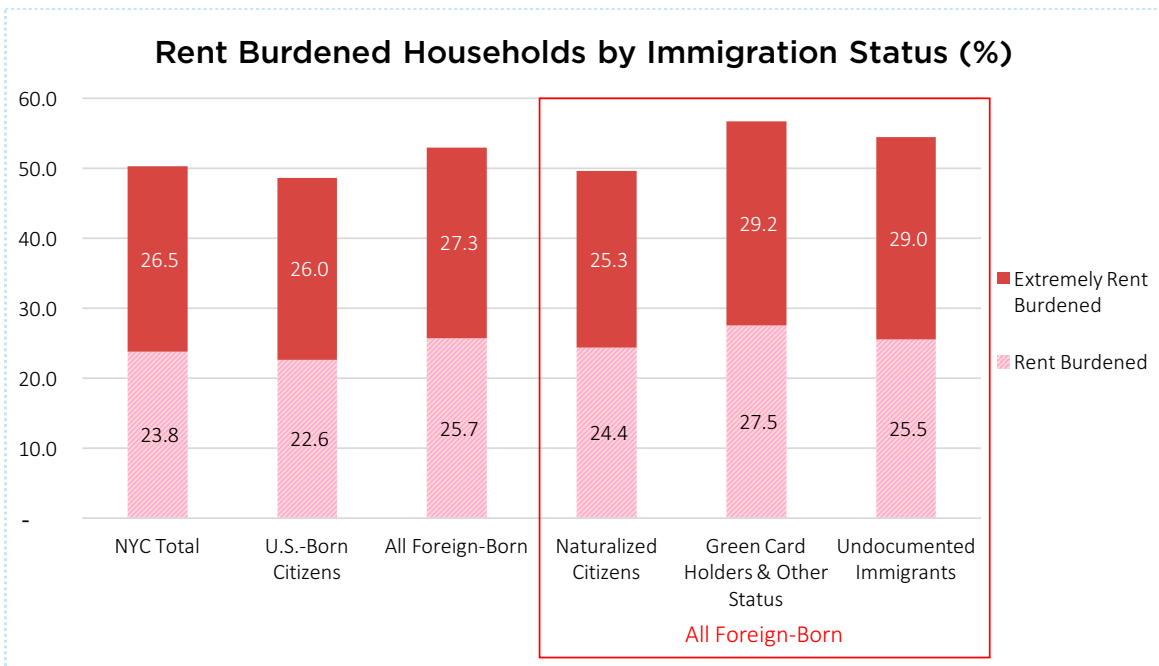
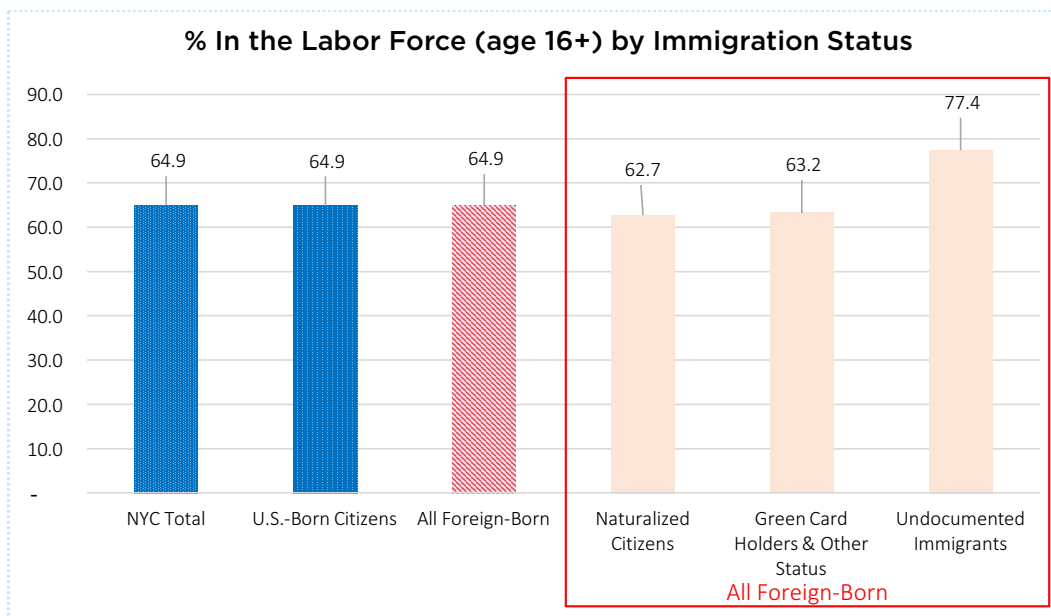


Figure above: Rent-burdened households are defined as paying 30% or more of their household income on rent. Extremely rent-burdened households are defined as paying more than 50% of household income on rent.

Based on this data, we see that immigrants who have naturalized are less likely to be rent-burdened.

## Labor and Earnings

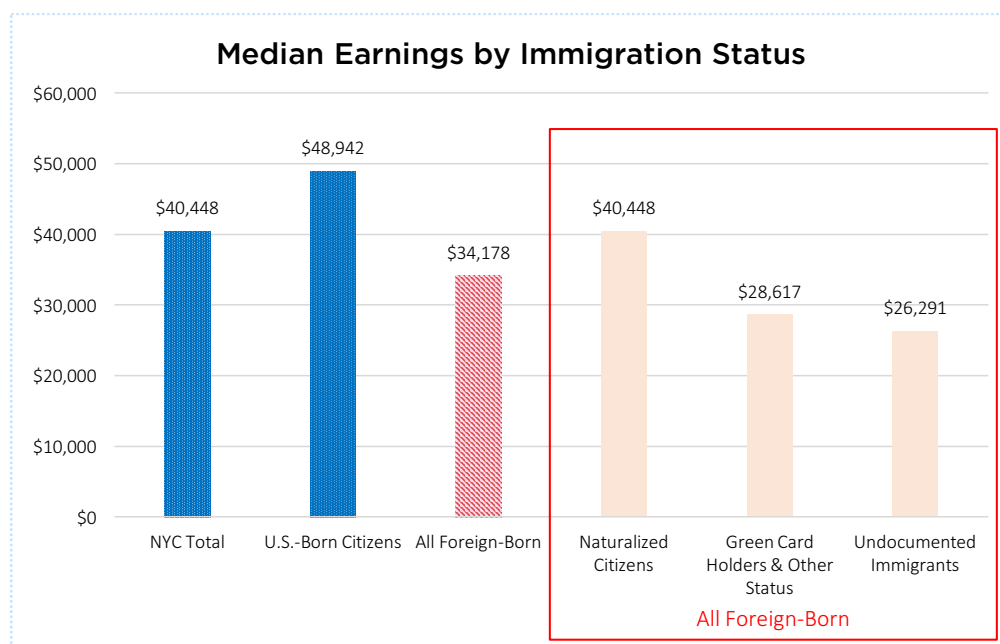
Immigrants have a labor force participation rate similar to that of the general population, though the rate is significantly higher among undocumented immigrants. Over three-quarters of undocumented immigrants are in the labor force compared to 64.9% for the U.S.-born. Notably, the foreign-born proportion of the city’s labor force has grown significantly compared to several decades ago; in 1990, foreign-born workers made up 31% of the city’s labor force.



Immigrant New Yorkers are employed in a wide range of industries. About 26.6% of immigrant New Yorkers work in the education/health/human services fields and make up 44.0% of the total workforce employed in these industries. Industries among immigrant New Yorkers are:

	Industry	All foreign-born who work in this industry	% foreign-born of total industry	Total New Yorkers who work in this industry	% of all foreign-born who work in industry
1	Education/Health/Human Services	574,384	44.0%	1,305,741	26.6%
2	Entertainment Services	256,367	47.6%	538,411	11.9%
3	Professional	226,430	34.4%	658,599	10.5%
4	Retailers	202,792	42.5%	477,269	9.4%
5	Transportation & Utilities	177,244	54.4%	325,538	8.2%
6	Financial	164,533	38.4%	428,453	7.6%
7	Extraction/Construction	160,163	62.5%	256,286	7.4%
8	Other Services	155,303	54.8%	283,483	7.2%
9	Manufacturing	92,370	54.4%	169,665	4.3%
10	International Affairs	58,418	32.8%	178,253	2.7%
11	Information	46,162	26.0%	177,833	2.1%
12	Wholesalers	45,041	44.9%	100,277	2.1%
13	Military	1,458	31.3%	4,656	0.1%

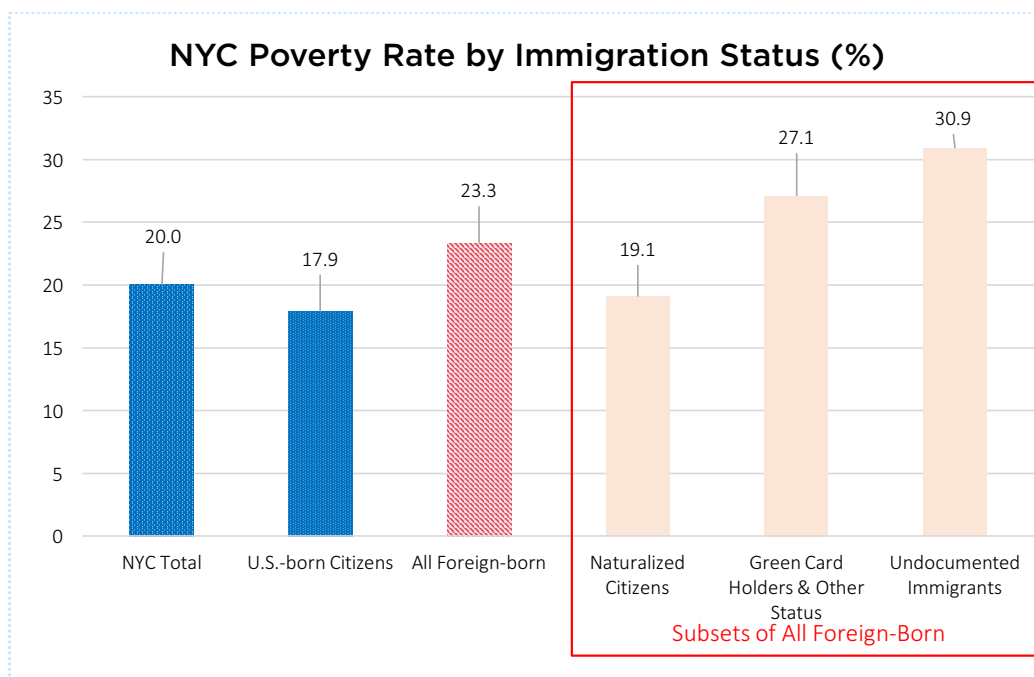
Although foreign-born New Yorkers participate in the labor force at the same or greater rates than U.S.-born New Yorkers, immigrants' median earnings are significantly lower than those of U.S.-born residents. Median earnings also vary significantly by immigration status:



Despite lower median earnings, foreign-born New Yorkers nevertheless contribute significantly to the City’s economic health. Immigrants own one-half of New York City’s businesses.<sup>12</sup> And in 2017, immigrants contributed \$228 billion to the City’s GDP, or about 25.8% of the City’s total GDP.<sup>13</sup>

## Poverty

Immigration status is an important predictor of poverty among New York City residents: immigrant New Yorkers have higher rates of 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 attributed to the fact that median earnings vary so significantly by immigration status. Using the NYC Government Poverty Measure,<sup>14</sup> we find that while the poverty rate for all New Yorkers was 20.0% in 2016 when accounting for immigration status (most recent data available), this rate jumps up to 23.3 % for foreign-born New Yorkers. Notably, the poverty rate for undocumented immigrants is 30.9%, higher than the 27.1 % for green card holders and immigrants with other statuses.



12 Based on 2017 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample data.

13 NYC OMB calculations based on February 2019 Financial Plan Forecast. 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 are based on 2017 1-year ACS Public Use Microdata provided by NYC Opportunity.

14 See New York City Mayor’s Office of Economic Opportunity, An Economic Profile of Immigrants in New York City (March 2019) available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/opportunity/pdf/immigrant-poverty-report-2018.pdf>. Data based on 2016 1-year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample as augmented by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity.

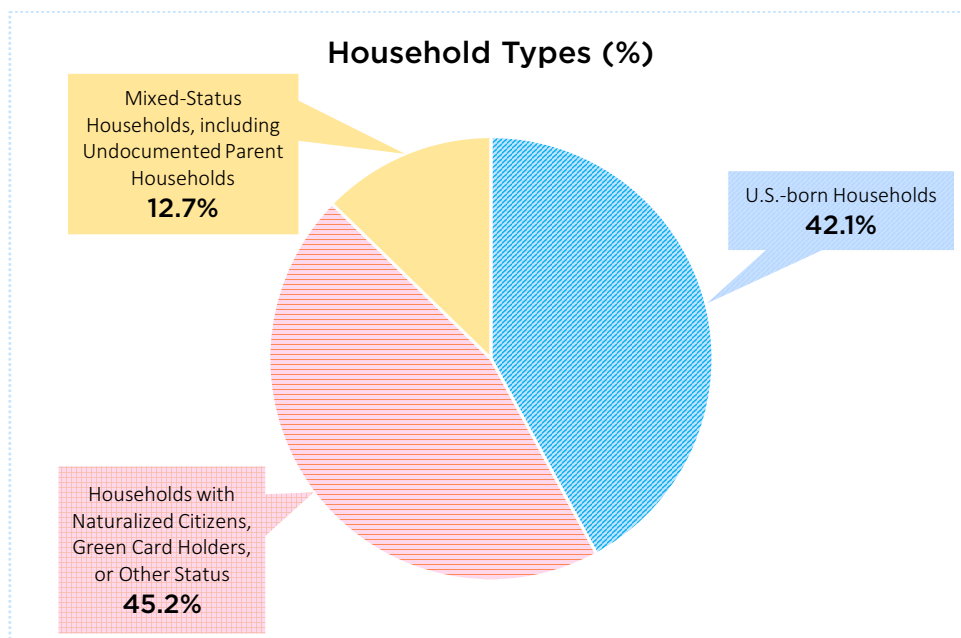
Poverty is an important measure to monitor among the foreign-born, especially among immigrant households, as federal efforts, including the “public charge” proposed rule change, stand to have a significant impact on immigrant families.<sup>15</sup>

## Household and Family Types

This next section examines the impact of immigration status on household outcomes. By examining households, we show more clearly how connected millions of U.S. citizen New Yorkers are to their undocumented fellow residents and how all New Yorkers are impacted by federal policies that separate families. We describe four categories for households:

- 1) U.S.-born-only households:** Every household member is U.S.-born.
- 2) Naturalized citizens, green card holders, or other status households:** The household has one or more members who is a naturalized citizen, green card holder, or other status or U.S.-born citizens.
- 3) Mixed-status household:** At least one household member is undocumented.
- 4) Undocumented parent household:** A subset of mixed-status household, above, in which children are living with at least one undocumented parent.

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



15 New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity, and Department of Social Services, *Expanding Public Charge Inadmissibility: The Impact on Immigrants, Households, and the City of New York* (December 2018), available at [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/research\\_brief\\_2018\\_12\\_01.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/research_brief_2018_12_01.pdf).



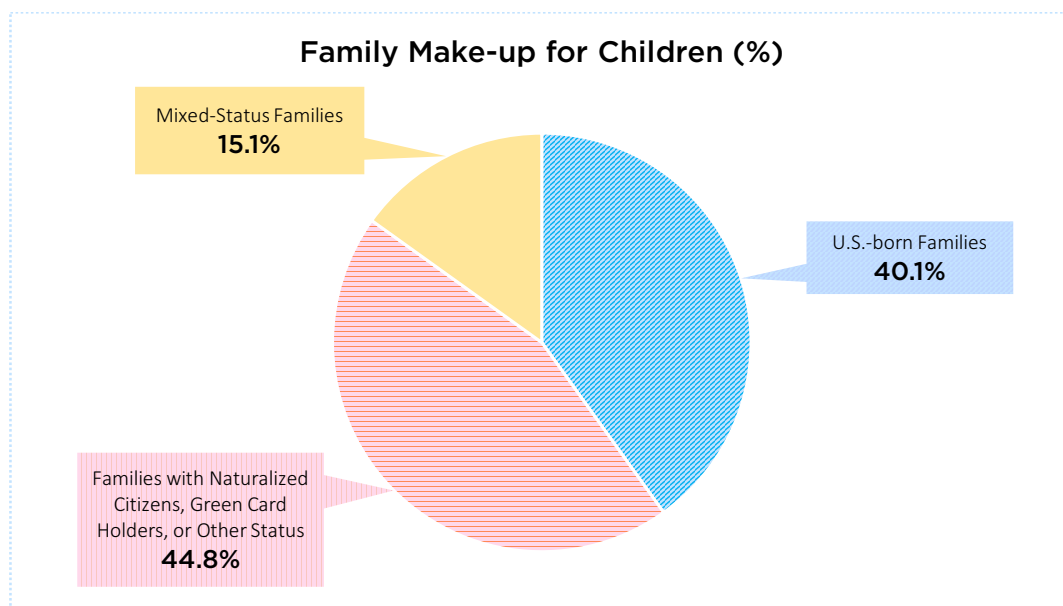
Naturalized citizens and green card holders or other status holders are more likely to live in married couple families (58.7% and 61.4%, respectively) than the city population as a whole (54.4%).

## Mixed-Status Households

Nearly 60% of New Yorkers live in households with at least one immigrant,<sup>16</sup> including over one million New Yorkers who live in mixed-status households (in which at least one person is undocumented). Of the one million New Yorkers who live in mixed-status households, 277,000 or 25.8% are children. A majority of these children (77.8%) are U.S.-born citizens. Other relatives, such as aunts, uncles, or adult children, comprise 26.7% of individuals living in mixed-status households, an indication that these are often large, multi-generational households.

## Children

About 1.8 million children under 18 years of age live in New York City. Over one million, or 59.9%, of those children live in a household with at least one foreign-born family member.



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

- **Linguistic Isolation.** Children living in mixed-status families tend to be less proficient in English than their peers in other household categories. One-quarter of children in mixed-status families are LEP compared to 12.9% born in families with green card holders or other status and

16 Among Census-defined “family households,” which may include non-relatives.

just 3.9% in U.S.-born households only. In addition, 38.2% of children in mixed-status families live in a linguistically isolated household in which all adults in the household (aged 14 and over) speaks a language other than English and none speak English well. This suggests that children in these households may bear a disproportionate level of family responsibility as the only proficient English speaker in the home.

- **Overcrowded Housing.** Over half (54.3%) the children living in mixed-status households in New York City live in an overcrowded household, which is more than double the rate of overcrowding in U.S.-born households (21.8%).
- **Rent-Burdened Households.** Nearly half (48.6%) of all children in mixed-status households live in households where rent is 30% or more of the total family income, as compared to 40.1% of children in U.S.-born-only households.

# State and Federal Developments

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In 2018, there were many changes in policy and law that affected immigrant New Yorkers. The following section provides a brief update on the new challenges and successes at the state and federal levels.

## Federal Challenges

In 2018, the Trump Administration accelerated its attacks on immigrant New Yorkers and families through its anti-immigrant policies, including increases in immigration enforcement. In the New York City area,<sup>17</sup> U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) increased its total arrests by 88% and arrests of individuals with no criminal convictions by 414% in the first full federal fiscal year (FFY) under the Trump Administration compared to the last full federal fiscal year of the Obama Administration.<sup>18</sup> Non-criminal arrests during this period comprised a significantly larger portion of overall arrests, both nationally and in the New York City area. In FFY 2016, only 13% of arrests in the New York City area were non-criminal arrests. In FFY 2018, the proportion of non-criminal arrests rose to 36%.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Trump Administration also increased its arrests of long-term U.S. residents with no criminal convictions. In the New York City area there was a 334% increase in ICE arrests of immigrants with no criminal conviction who have resided in the United States for 10 or more years during the first full year of the Trump Administration (February 2017 to January 2018) compared to the last year of the Obama Administration (February 2016 to January 2017).<sup>20</sup>

The Trump Administration also launched attacks on some of the most vulnerable immigrants, including recently arrived families and children, many of whom are asylum seekers. The Trump Administration's family separation policy and efforts to expand family detention received widespread attention and condemnation, including from various advocates and the public. In 2018, the federal government also attempted to impose restrictions on who could access asylum in the United States, both by limiting when people fleeing persecution by non-state actors could qualify for asylum, and by prohibiting immigrants who cross the border between ports of entry from seeking asylum. While federal courts have blocked those policy changes, the legal challenges to them are ongoing. Moreover, the Trump Administration also made it harder for immigrants to act as sponsors for unaccompanied minors by instituting an information-sharing arrangement between the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and ICE, which led to potential sponsors being arrested by ICE.<sup>21</sup>

Alongside these changes, the Trump Administration imposed barriers to the legal immigration process. In 2018, the Trump Administration increased the risks of filing

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17 The ICE NYC Area of Responsibility comprises the five boroughs of New York City plus Dutchess, Nassau, Putnam, Suffolk, Sullivan, Orange, Rockland, Ulster, and Westchester counties.

18 New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Fact Sheet: ICE Enforcement in New York City* (January 2019), available at [https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/2019\\_01\\_moia\\_ice\\_enforcement\\_nyc\\_aor.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/2019_01_moia_ice_enforcement_nyc_aor.pdf).

19 *Id.*

20 *Id.*

21 The continuing resolution that was signed into law in 2019 included a section prohibiting the use of appropriations for this purpose.

an immigration application by increasing the situations in which USCIS will place immigrants in removal proceedings after denying an application. Similarly, the long citizenship backlog has severely delayed the ability of immigrants to access the benefits of naturalization. The Trump Administration also proposed new changes to longstanding policy, including the proposal to change the 20-year-old “public charge” test, which could have devastating effects on those applying for a green card, and the proposal to change what proof is accepted in fee waiver applications. To date, there has been an over 300% increase in immigrant visas denied based on public charge grounds. While this is due to the amendments that the Trump Administration made to the Foreign Affairs Manual’s public charge inadmissibility procedures, this is a harbinger of the potential impacts that this proposed rule could have for families already in the U.S.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, longstanding and ongoing legal fights over the scope of the President’s immigration powers continued in 2018. On one issue, the Trump Administration’s travel ban, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the President had the power to ban certain people from the U.S. In the legal challenges to the rescission of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and terminations of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), federal courts have, as of this writing, consistently held that the federal government overreached; the Supreme Court has yet to weigh in. Similarly, several federal courts sided with state and local governments that challenged the federal government’s attempts to impose anti-immigrant conditions on federal grants, including in a case brought by New York State, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Washington, Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York City.

## State Developments

In 2018, New York State enacted an expansion to the “standby guardian” state law, which allows parents and caregivers to designate a backup caregiver in certain circumstances, including in cases where they are detained or deported by immigration authorities. This is particularly important for single parent immigrants who serve as the sole caregiver for their immigrant children. Other pro-immigrant proposals like the state DREAM Act<sup>23</sup> and “driver’s licenses for all” languished in the legislature. The Governor took action on his own with respect to protections for DACA recipients. Responding to the fear that DACA recipients would lose their insurance once they lost their DACA status, Governor Cuomo announced that New York DACA recipients would remain eligible for State-funded Medicaid, even if the DACA program was ended and even if their DACA expired. Federal enforcement actions also affected the operations of some state entities. In 2018, as part of its increased immigration enforcement, ICE agents made arrests in and around courthouses in New York City and across the state. ICE’s overbroad enforcement actions in state courts can have damaging effects on immigrants’ access to justice and trust in the judicial system. As advocates, local district attorneys, and various State and City officials noted in 2018, ICE’s presence in courts risks a chilling effect on defendants’ attendance in court, as well as on attendance by victims and witnesses.

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22 Based on Federal Fiscal Year 2017 and Federal Fiscal Year 2018 data from the U.S. Department of State. Available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-statistics.html>

23 The DREAM Act passed the state Senate and Assembly in 2019.

# MOIA Programs and 2018 Activities

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In 2018 MOIA's work focused on advancing three priorities:

1. **Enhancing immigrant New Yorkers' economic, civic, and social integration;**
2. **Facilitating access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers; and**
3. **Advocating for immigration reform.**

To meet these goals, MOIA coordinates programs, conducts research and analysis, provides support and expertise to government partners, and advocates on behalf of NYC's immigrants on the state and national level. Throughout 2018, these efforts have supported the City's enduring commitment to protecting New York's core values, as a city of immigrants.

## Enhancing Immigrant New Yorkers' Economic, Civic, and Social Integration

When immigrants feel empowered and safe engaging with the City, the whole city becomes safer, more inclusive, and successful. For that reason, MOIA is focused on providing connections to a range of services and resources that facilitate immigrant New Yorkers' integration into all aspects of city life. MOIA's programs in this space seek to empower immigrant New Yorkers by giving them the tools they need to thrive. Moreover, the City's programs and services have been shared as models with jurisdictions across the United States.

Through strengthened partnership with a broad array of stakeholders, MOIA has been able to more effectively provide timely and accurate information in times of crisis, in the communities directly affected by these crises. Through our work with other agencies to connect immigrants to the services they need, and through the connections we have forged with the community-based organizations serving our communities, MOIA has become a leader in driving the City's response to hostile, anti-immigrant federal policies.

## Interagency Immigrant Task Force and Interagency Work

In light of the increasingly hostile federal climate for immigrants in 2018, MOIA focused more than ever on developing a formal framework for collaboration with sister agencies. MOIA's interagency work reflects the need for all of City government to respond to and address the needs of immigrants, especially during a time when the federal government is engaged in active attacks against the immigrant population.

In 2018, as part of MOIA's work and as outlined in Local Law 186 of 2017, MOIA convened an interagency taskforce on issues related to immigrants. The purpose of the task force is to review and make recommendations on implementation of laws relevant to immigrants, barriers faced by immigrants in accessing services, and to study the needs of vulnerable populations. Our goals include promoting and embedding strategies for how agencies can address the needs of immigrants in their day-to-day work, operations and services, and sharing policy updates, resources and best practices. In 2018, MOIA hosted two meetings of the inaugural Interagency Immigrant Task Force. The discussions were focused on the purpose of the taskforce, the 2020 Census, barriers LGBTQIA+ immigrants face, and updates on federal and state developments.

Outside the framework of the taskforce, MOIA also works closely with sister agencies on a variety of issues, including fighting the addition of the citizenship question to the 2020 Census, public health, housing, economic empowerment, and workers' rights. By leveraging expertise across sister agencies, MOIA has helped the City ensure that immigrants are supported across sectors. These efforts have led to successful days of action, effective advocacy from cities and counties at the state and federal level, the development of citywide materials, new programs, and implementation of new policies.

For example, MOIA worked with City agencies to ensure compliance with Local Law 228 of 2017, which restricts the use of City resources to support immigration enforcement. As part of that work, MOIA monitored and collected information about requests from non-local law enforcement agencies related to immigration enforcement.

In February, MOIA worked with the Department of Buildings (DOB), the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU), to organize a day of action and other educational efforts to help advocates, workers, and employers understand the requirements for construction safety as laid out in Local Law 196 of 2017. MOIA continues to work closely with SBS and the city's day laborer coalition on the development and implementation of the new training requirements.

In September, MOIA worked with the Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC), ThriveNYC, and the Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA) Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) to develop an informational flyer available in 10 languages to help taxi drivers learn about the City's mental health,

financial empowerment, and immigration legal services available to them. TLC has distributed the flyer at outreach events, at for-hire vehicle bases, and to drivers.

MOIA has also been involved in the preparation for the 2020 Census. MOIA worked with interagency partners, including Deputy Mayor Thompson's 2020 Census team, the Department of City Planning, CAU, and the City's Law Department to fight the addition of the citizenship question to the 2020 Census. The City joined a multi-state, multi-city lawsuit against the citizenship question and supported the lawsuit by describing why the inclusion of the citizenship question is problematic. MOIA also hosted a convening on the 2020 Census with Cities for Action<sup>24</sup> partners, where we shared best messaging practices and information about the City's efforts to encourage Census participation from the community. MOIA also worked to deliver timely and accurate information about the 2020 Census by participating in community and ethnic media roundtables as well as other public events.

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<sup>24</sup> Cities for Action (C4A) is a coalition of city and county leaders. More details about C4A are available on page 49.

## Family Separation

MOIA's work with sister agencies and external partners in response to the family separation crisis exemplifies our collaborative approach. Faced with unresponsiveness from the federal government about the scope of the family separation crisis and the needs of the hundreds of separated children who had been placed in New York City, MOIA led the City's multi-agency response to engage with ORR-contracted providers for information and to determine what supplementary services were needed for separated children and families in the city.

MOIA then coordinated with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), NYC Health + Hospitals, the New York City Police Department (NYPD), the Human Resources Administration (HRA)'s Office of Civil Justice (OCJ), the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), the Department of Parks and Recreation, and others to respond to these identified needs. Through this interagency coordination, the support and services that City agencies provided included additional psychiatric services and other health care, trainings on working with children who have been through severe trauma, deliveries of toys and other supplies, and weekly recreational activity trips to cultural institutions, among other services. Additionally, the Mayor's Fund, as well as individual Council Members, solicited donations of supplies as well as financial support from New Yorkers.



At City Hall, NYC First Lady Chirlane McCray joined MOIA Commissioner Bitta Mostofi and a team of volunteer City lawyers and social workers who traveled to Dilley, TX where the largest ICE family detention center in the U.S. is located.

ORR does not fund providers for full legal representation for children. Seeking to meet these additional needs for legal representation and assistance, MOIA and OCJ also worked to connect children, their parents, and their potential sponsors to free, safe, and confidential City-funded legal services.

We worked together as a City to respond quickly to the family separation crisis, relying on preexisting infrastructure where necessary to offer a range of health, legal, and child welfare services to separated children. Through interagency collaboration, MOIA and our sister agencies were able to swiftly and appropriately provide support to the children and their families. The City also allocated \$4.1 million to a range of local providers so they could provide legal representation for migrant children.

In addition, to address urgent needs for legal assistance at the border, MOIA coordinated a City volunteer group to travel to Dilley, Texas in September to work with the Dilley Pro Bono Project. Sixteen City employees from eight different City agencies, including Commissioner Bitta Mostofi and lawyers and social workers, traveled to the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley and helped screen approximately 300 cases.

## IDNYC

IDNYC, New York City’s municipal ID card, serves as a major access point for immigrants looking to connect with the City. Through IDNYC, all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, can obtain official, government-issued identification that can be used to access City services and City buildings, sign up for free memberships at museums and cultural institutions, and more. In 2018, IDNYC further expanded eligibility for the card and made it easier for New Yorkers to apply.



Staffers at an IDNYC pop-up enrollment site in Queens await clients for their appointments. Photo credit: Jake Adler.

In 2018, IDNYC launched a citywide, multi-lingual, multi-media campaign to promote IDNYC. Working with both English-speaking and Mandarin-speaking focus groups, IDNYC produced advertisements on subways, billboards, the Staten Island ferry, in barber shops and laundromats, on social media, in radio ads, and in newspapers. The advertisements were placed in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Arabic, and Russian.

In August, the program lowered its age eligibility from 14, allowing youth ages 10

to 13 to enroll and take advantage of the card’s many benefits. Outreach teams connected with middle school students in Brooklyn to raise awareness about new age requirements for IDNYC, making the card available to all New Yorkers over 10 years of age. IDNYC teams were also deployed to high schools across the city, including Sunset Park High School, Aviation High School, Clara Barton High School and Newtown High School. To date, 1,458 10 to 13 year olds have enrolled.

Also in August, IDNYC announced its ability to utilize existing records from several City agencies in order to verify residency and identity information for some applicants who otherwise may not have sufficient documentation to apply. This helps simplify IDNYC applications for New Yorkers who are clients of a host of City agencies, namely, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), HRA, the Department of Finance, and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Specifically, applicants who:

1. Currently receive Cash Assistance;
2. Reside in NYCHA housing;
3. Are the primary recipient of a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption;
4. Currently receive services from DHS; or
5. Who were born within the five boroughs of New York City, will be able to request the use of their records for these services to help verify their residency and identity information.

IDNYC also continued its successful use of temporary “pop-up” enrollment centers across the City throughout 2018. The pop-ups helped enroll hard-to-reach New Yorkers. Notable pop-up sites included the offices of elected officials, Department of Education (DOE) high schools, City University of New York (CUNY) campuses, cultural centers, and for the first time a psychiatric hospital on Wards Island. At the Manhattan Psychiatric Center, IDNYC teams



were deployed to an inpatient psychiatric center for the first time to ensure hard-to-reach patients obtained access to municipal identification. In 2018, IDNYC enrolled a total of 9,761 New Yorkers at over 60 pop-up sites.



MOIA Commissioner Mostofi and Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library, at the Brooklyn Library with some of New York City's first 10-13 year olds to apply for their own IDNYCs in August. Photo credit: Gregg Richards, Brooklyn Public Library.

Another example of IDNYC's efforts to connect hard-to-reach New Yorkers is our use of our mobile capabilities. *IDNYC On the Go!*, a mobile enrollment center, was deployed to Diversity Plaza, to Brighton Beach Pride, and to the Avenue C Plaza, serving members of Bengali speaking and LGBTQIA+ communities across Brooklyn and Queens. *IDNYC On the Go!* enrolled a total of 2,223 individuals in 2018.

Thanks to the partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) and cultural institutions, and in particular the Cultural Institutions Group, MOIA has partnered with over 40 organizations to date, collectively issuing 645,587 memberships since the start of the IDNYC program.


## We Speak NYC

English language proficiency is an important factor impacting the ability to access education and employment, as well as health and social services. Recognizing this, and the need to support and supplement existing literacy programs, MOIA runs *We Speak NYC* (WSNYC), formerly known as *We Are New York* (WANY), an English Language Learning (ELL) program that helps immigrant New Yorkers learn English and practice conversation skills through content-based, civic-focused instruction, videos, and education materials.

### We Speak NYC

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs' English Language Learning program.

We Speak NYC features civic-focused learning tools for English language learners and teachers.



#### Learn online

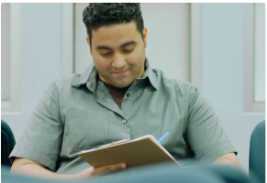
Watch our Emmy Award-winning videos. Use our educational and civic materials online. Download materials for use on the go.

[WATCH NOW](#)

#### Find a class

We offer free weekly English conversation classes for intermediate level learners. We Speak NYC classes take place in community and faith organizations, public schools, and libraries throughout the city.

[FIND A CLASS](#)



*We Speak NYC* launched a new website in 2018. The website has an array of tools for self-study and other interactive features.

*We Speak NYC*'s Emmy Award-winning videos portray everyday stories of immigrant leadership, and accompanying educational materials focus on community problem-solving skills and access to government resources. In 2018, MOIA announced that the City had invested over \$3 million in the launch of a new season and additional learning tools for WSNYC. WSNYC spearheaded a major marketing

and advertising campaign to highlight the program’s rebranded name, new materials, and new website. As part of that advertising campaign, WSNYC showcased ads on different platforms including placements on various digital media outlets, print publications including ethnic media publications, various subway placements, bus placements, and community outdoor media placements.

The first set of 10 WSNYC videos highlights issues such as education, health, emergency preparedness, and domestic violence. In 2018, MOIA worked with vendors to launch a second season featuring seven new episodes that address topics such as mental health, workers’ rights, social services, workforce development, and early childhood education.

Along with these new episodes, MOIA also developed a new website that includes an interactive learning platform to expand *We Speak NYC*’s reach outside the classroom, as well as new educational materials including workbooks, short stories, comic books, civic maps, and audio profiles of diverse language learners. WSNYC’s website has an array of tools for self-study, such as interactive activities, study guides, short stories, quizzes, and teacher resources made in partnership with The City University of New York (CUNY). The interactive website also showcases a new map feature to help New Yorkers access information on where WSNYC drop-in classes are held throughout the city.

*We Speak NYC*’s unique program model supports English language learning while connecting immigrant New Yorkers to City services and promoting community empowerment. WSNYC students share their experiences with others in their community as they work together to discuss common challenges and develop solutions. WSNYC also provides an opportunity for volunteer

facilitators to grow as community leaders: WSNYC’s community classes are led by trained volunteers who use WSNYC videos and materials to facilitate 10-week classes at libraries, public schools, and community organizations across the five boroughs. These community classes help English language learners to build issue-focused vocabulary, practice conversational English, and access City services. In 2018, WSNYC organized 266 classes, engaged 5,320 ELL students, and trained 160 new volunteer facilitators.

WSNYC Metrics		
	2017	2018
<b>Classes organized</b>	182	266
<b>Students engaged</b>	3500	5320
<b>Volunteers trained</b>	249	160

### Language Access

Facilitating language access is not only crucial to ensuring that immigrant New Yorkers can access the services they need, but also for empowering immigrants to engage in the political process.



MOIA Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel Sonia Lin visited interpreters on Election Day.

For that reason, in 2018, MOIA expanded its groundbreaking work to facilitate access to voting for LEP voters through increased interpretation services at poll sites, building on work MOIA had done with the City Council, including Council Speaker Corey Johnson and Council Member Mark Treyger, in 2017.

In 2018, MOIA analyzed Census data to determine the top languages for which the Board of Elections does not provide interpretation and the poll sites with the highest concentrations of voter-eligible LEP New Yorkers that speak these languages. Based on this analysis, we provided interpreters in Russian, Haitian Creole, Yiddish, Polish, Italian, and Arabic, stationed at 101 poll sites in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island, a five-fold increase in sites over 2017. Through this project, interpreters served approximately 2,000 LEP voters.

In November, New York City voters overwhelmingly approved a proposal from the NYC Charter Revision Commission to establish a Civic Engagement Commission whose mission includes institutionalizing this work to expand language access at poll sites.

MOIA also continued its work to conduct oversight and provide technical assistance to agencies regarding the implementation of the City's language access law of 2017, Local Law 30 (LL 30), which further establishes language access to City information and services as essential to ensuring equity for New Yorkers with limited English proficiency. In 2018, MOIA worked with over 30 agencies to develop their language access implementation plans, which outline how agencies will advance language access; held more than 20 one-on-one meetings with agencies to discuss LL 30 implementation; provided regular technical assistance on language access to agencies; coordinated two convenings with agency language access coordinators on LL 30 and the steps agencies can take to improve translations; and collaborated with the Mayor's Office of Operations to submit the first annual report about language access to the City Council.

MOIA also expanded and refined its work to ensure effective communication with the linguistically-diverse communities of immigrant New Yorkers through its provision of translation and interpretation. In 2018, MOIA coordinated a growing number of translation projects providing 1,065 translations of 471 documents into 38 languages—amounting to a 520% increase in documents translated and a 177% increase in total translations compared to 2017. Projects included materials for Know Your Rights forums and videos, NYC Citizenship, and “public charge.” MOIA also introduced computer-assisted translation tools from the language services industry to manage an increasing body of multilingual content. These tools help improve the quality and consistency of translated materials as well as turnaround times.

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

MOIA has consistently worked to provide appropriate referrals and information whenever we interact with immigrant New Yorkers. In 2018, in the face of increased federal attacks on immigrants and escalating crises, MOIA and our partners at the City Council and service providers across the city launched the NYC Immigrant Information Desk, which serves as an “in-person 311” supporting immigrant and LEP families in navigating City services and other needs. The NYC Immigrant Information Desk provides information and direct and indirect referrals for a number of City and community-based services. City Service Navigators work out of three locations: Metropolitan Hospital in East Harlem, the Coney Island SNAP Center, and the Queens Public Library in Flushing. Since launching in January 2018, the three sites have shared information with over 12,000 people, and referred over 3,000 people for services.

Examples of referrals the Info Desk made include the following:

- At our **Coney Island Info Desk**, a family seeking asylum received referrals to both immigration legal services through ActionNYC and case management to help them navigate school enrollment and documentation.
- At our **Metropolitan Hospital Info Desk**, a family with a newborn baby was set to be discharged into homelessness. Our Info Desk City Services Navigator made a referral to Catholic Charities Community Services for comprehensive case management services, and Catholic Charities worked with them to resolve their housing issue.
- At the **Queens Public Library Info Desk**, an immigrant who had successfully applied for a U Visa (a special visa available for victims of certain serious crimes) but had not yet received his work permit was connected to an immigration lawyer who advocated for his permit. An Info Desk City Services Navigator also connected him to a local provider for housing and food assistance.
- Multiple monolingual Chinese speakers visited the **Queens Public Library Info Desk** to learn more about a new affordable housing development in downtown Flushing. Info Desk City Services Navigators gave them information about NYC's Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) application process in their own language; connected them to HPD's local Housing Ambassador organization for application assistance; and referred them to the Office of Financial Empowerment for financial counseling to prepare for the housing lottery application.

## Community Services and Outreach

MOIA's community services and outreach teams engage immigrant communities across the city, with special attention to newly arrived and hard-to-reach communities. Working closely with community partners and City agencies, MOIA utilizes a range of proactive outreach methods to provide a wide variety of information to the public about City services, policies that impact immigrant New Yorkers, and other resources.



In April, MOIA, CCHR, and CAU partnered to host a Vaisakhi celebration event to honor Sikh communities of NYC. Photo credit: Adrienne Nicole Productions.

As a trusted voice in immigrant communities, MOIA worked with community partners to share crucial and timely information through 681 Know Your Rights events and approximately 1,575 events in 2018.

Over the course of the last year, Community Services has seen an uptick in requests for assistance and advocacy on time sensitive immigration cases. We have been able to connect individuals to legal supports where appropriate and have worked closely with the office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand to provide additional advocacy support where needed. Overall we have seen an increase in inquiries related to the family separation crisis as well as requests for legal assistance for those who are detained or under order of deportation, responded to 504 calls through our constituent services hotline as well as 311, and provided 657 referrals. MOIA also received 332 e-mails and provided 165 referrals via e-mail. There

was a significant increase in calls to our hotline around changes in immigration policy, including the updated travel ban announcement in the earlier part of the year, the DACA renewal deadline in March, and the advent of the family separation policy in May at the border.



Two women talking during a celebration of Vaisakhi, the Sikh new year. Photo credit: Adrienne Nicole Productions

### **Know Your Rights (KYR) Forums**

KYR Forums are a deeply important piece of MOIA's rapid response to emerging federal policies. Through our KYR work, MOIA is able to connect with New Yorkers about their rights and provide important and accurate information in the face of confusing and time-sensitive changes to federal immigration policy.

In 2018, MOIA conducted KYRs in 10 languages, with Spanish surpassing English for KYRs conducted by the Community Services team for the first time in MOIA's history. We also greatly increased our presence in Chinese immigrant communities. In 2018, MOIA conducted 681 forums and engaged 18,000 New Yorkers. These forums included participation from various City agencies and emphasized City resources, the federal government's proposed changes to the "public charge" rule, and immigration legal services.

In partnership with the Robin Hood Foundation, MOIA has also been working close-

ly with community-based organizations to deliver relevant information to immigrant New Yorkers. This effort allows MOIA to partner with trusted community-based organizations to deliver important information directly to immigrant communities. From January to June the KYR program completed the second half of the Robin Hood Foundation grant to conduct KYR forums, which ran from September 2017 to June 2018. KYR content included: updates on recent federal immigration policy changes such as DACA, TPS, and the travel ban; best practices for interacting with federal immigration agents in public and private spaces; how to avoid immigration scams and access free legal services; and how to access city resources regardless of immigration status. In 2018, as part of that grant, we completed a total of 325 KYRs, 175 of which were held in schools, reaching 9,430 individuals.

Following the first year of the Robin Hood grant which ended in June 2018, MOIA partnered with Robin Hood again to build a KYR program targeting low-wage immigrant workers. MOIA contracted five partners, starting in November 2018, to inform low-wage workers, such as domestic workers, about their rights as workers in New York City, best practices for interacting with federal immigration agents in the workplace, how to avoid immigration scams and access free worker and immigration legal services, completing 16 KYR events over two months and reaching 177 people. Starting in January 2019, MOIA launched a new series of KYRs with an additional five partners. These KYRs cover general immigrants' rights.

### **Volunteers**

In 2018, MOIA's volunteer program focused on increasing and diversifying the types of opportunities available to our network of volunteers by strengthening

our partnerships with sister agencies and community based organizations. Our volunteer program allows community members, including immigrants and the children of immigrants, to take action and disseminate information to their communities.



In the wake of a vandalism attack on the Union Temple Synagogue in Brooklyn in November, MOIA and CCHR held a Day of Visibility along Eastern Parkway to provide NYers with information about resources for anyone facing, experiencing, or witnessing discrimination.

In 2018, MOIA activated over 300 volunteers to conduct targeted outreach and days of visibility in response to recent changes to federal immigration policy and anti-immigrant incidents. This work was done in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Operations, New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), DCA, ThriveNYC, CAU's Center for Faith and Community Partnerships, the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement (PEU) as well as Sunnyside Community Services. The events included two DREAM Act Now! days of action, DHS' Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE) campaign, a ThriveNYC mental health training, a NYCitizenship Day of Action and legal clinic, outreach on the City Council's Participatory Budgeting initiative, travel ban day of action, participation at "Speak Up and Speak Out" - a public hearing on student loan debt in NYC, days

of visibility and a bystander training in response to anti-Chinese graffiti and anti-Muslim incidents in Brooklyn as well as anti-immigrant signage in Sunnyside and surrounding neighborhoods in Queens. Bystander trainings can help individuals better understand harassment and how to recognize, speak out, and report it. MOIA held 25 volunteer trainings, including our first-ever training in Mandarin.

### **People's Theatre Project**

In January 2018, MOIA announced a partnership with the People's Theatre Project called *Teatro Inmigrante Comunitario*, an effort to build trust between communities and government by amplifying shared experiences and stories through theatre. MOIA and People's Theatre Project recruited Spanish-speaking youth from Washington Heights and Kingsbridge, ages 14 to 23—including those impacted by the termination of DACA—to work with PTP co-founder Mino Lora to create an interactive and bilingual theater performance. These young people were empowered, through artistic practice, to become connectors between MOIA and the communities the City serves, directly reaching and educating people about programs like IDNYC, ActionNYC, and NYCitizenship. The theater troupe performed *Teatro Inmigrante Comunitario* at several venues from April to June 2018, including at City Hall, Tweed Courthouse, FDNY Headquarters, Roy and Diana Vagelos Education Center, and The United Palace. *Teatro Inmigrante Comunitario* was supported by the Mayor's Grant for Cultural Impact from DCLA, an outgrowth of the CreateNYC cultural plan designed to foster collaboration between City agencies and non-profit cultural organizations.

## Travel Ban Response

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In response to the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the travel ban, MOIA immediately began providing resources to our partners and the community.

The day of the decision, MOIA joined City agencies and community-based organizations in a rally at Foley Square. There, MOIA distributed "No Muslim Ban Ever" posters and updated fliers with accurate information about the impact of the decision on communities. MOIA also updated the information on its website, to keep community members up to date on the state of the travel ban.

MOIA reached out to key partners with our resources for distribution among a wider group of stakeholders. These included the International Refugee Assistance Project, Muslim Social Justice Initiative, Council on American-Islamic Relations New York, Arab American Association of New York, New York Immigration Coalition, Yemeni Merchants Association, New York Civil Liberties Union, Iranian Community of the Northeast, African Communities Together, Arab American Family Support Center, and African Services Committee.

In addition, MOIA organizers conducted various community presentations. Our organizers visited mosques during Friday jummah prayer, conducted neighborhood canvassing, and pass-ed out flyers at multiple subway stations. In total, MOIA reached 12 mosques and Muslim centers across the five boroughs, comprised of 3,800 individual congregants, and distributed over 7,000 fliers. In particular, MOIA provided information at the Bronx Muslim Center, which serves the Yemeni community.

In the weeks and months following the Supreme Court decision, MOIA increased its flyering on mental health resources in collaboration with ThriveNYC and CAU. Commissioner Bitta Mostofi served as a keynote speaker at the History of the Future Summit, geared toward creating a shared vision on key issues for Muslim communities across the city. Additionally, MOIA continued distributing fliers during jummah prayer at mosques during the month of Ramadan.

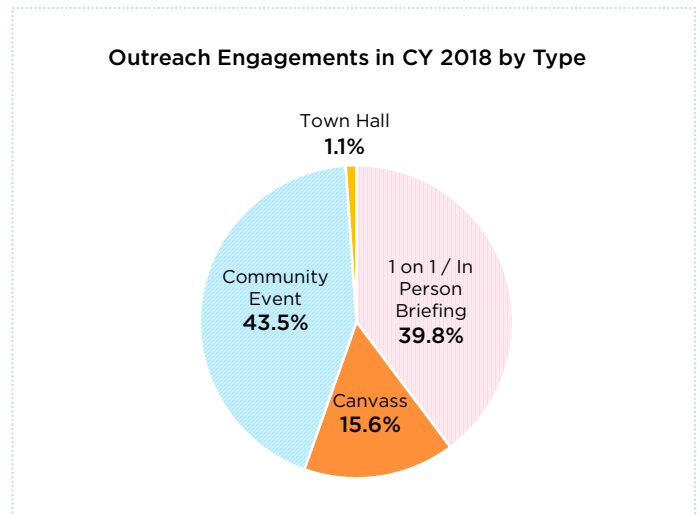
During City Hall In Your Borough Brooklyn at the end of September, Commissioner Bitta Mostofi attended an Immigration Forum at Beit Al-Maqdis Islamic Center to further echo the City's message of support for Muslim communities, in the wake of the Supreme Court's travel ban decision.

## Community Events

In 2018, the Trump Administration’s cruel and xenophobic attacks on our immigrant communities created understandable fear and confusion. Recognizing the need for clear and accurate information, MOIA stepped up to communicate the City’s commitment to protecting and serving our immigrant communities, and to provide clarity on how federal changes might affect New Yorkers.

Overall, MOIA’s Community Services and Outreach Teams participated in approximately 1,575 events throughout 2018. These included the annual celebration of International Mother Language Day in Sunnyside, a variety of events to connect with Russian LGBTQIA+ communities, a celebration of Diwali at Brooklyn Borough Hall, and the third annual *Iftar in the City*, which brought together over 600 members of diverse faith communities from the Jackson Heights area.

Field organizers also staffed more than 400 events, delivering short announcements and tabling to ensure participants received information regarding services available regardless of immigration status. The team also conducted presentations, including know your rights forums, panel discussions and trainings on IDNYC, public charge, public services and immigration issues. Many outreach staff engagements were through more than 570 daily meetings with congregation leaders, education professionals, elected officials and informal community groups.



MOIA partnered with many sister agencies and community-based organizations for these events. Through this array of relationships, MOIA was able to respond to community concerns and questions. By way of example, in April, MOIA worked with CCHR and CAU to host the first of its kind Vaisakhi event, commemorating a sacred day for NYC’s many Sikh communities. Over 300 representatives from citywide gurdwaras and other Sikh as well as non-Sikh congregations attended to celebrate Vaisakhi, learn about resources available to Sikh and Punjabi speaking communities, and hear from elected officials on ways to get more deeply involved in the city’s civic institutions.



## “Public Charge”

In month one, the Trump Administration indicated its intent to limit immigration by low- and middle- income immigrants in a leaked draft Executive Order.



Commissioner Mostofi met with NYC's faith leaders at City Hall in November on the Trump Administration's harmful "public charge" proposal to answer questions and clear up confusion. Photo credit: Jake Adler

MOIA recognized from the first reports of a “public charge” rule change that any such proposed changes would have a devastating impact on the city. In the spring of 2018, in coordination with the Office of Federal Affairs and the Office for Economic Opportunity, MOIA helped engage federal officials at the federal Office of Management and Budget to discuss why a potential expansion of the “public charge” test would have a profound economic impact. Through the Cities for Action coalition, MOIA was able to help other cities prepare for

similar such meetings. After the proposed rule was published in the Federal Register in the fall, MOIA collaborated with sister agencies in the drafting and submission of two public comments, opposing the proposed rule. The first comment addressed the proposed rule on a policy level—what impact it would have on New Yorkers and City services. The second comment addressed the proposed rule's legal shortcomings and was joined by over 30 jurisdictions.

One of the most significant impacts of the proposed rule has been the widespread fear and confusion created among immigrant communities, and the opportunity for harmful misinformation to circulate. As MOIA and our sister agencies prepared and executed on our community engagement strategy, our plan revolved around the timely dissemination of accurate, clear information to affected communities.

This took several forms. First, MOIA worked with our sister agencies to develop an analysis of what the rule would do, who it would affect, and what impact it would have on New York City. Second, MOIA collaborated with public-facing City agencies to ensure that front-line staff had the information they needed to answer or refer questions about the proposed rule. Third, MOIA identified key stakeholders to help share the knowledge about the proposed rule. Fourth, MOIA worked side-by-side with our sister agencies to directly engage impacted or potentially affected immigrants and deliver the message that this was still just a proposal, inform them about the City's intention to fight it, and connect them to individual trustworthy legal advice.

MOIA and our partners were able to successfully engage with communities affected by this proposed rule. The City worked with Catholic Charities, Hispanic Federation, New York Immigration Coalition, Univision, the New York State Office

of New Americans, and *El Diario* to organize a phone bank and Facebook Live event to help provide accurate information to the public. Over 40 volunteers answered about 800 calls and made over 1,200 referrals to services during the phone bank, and we reached more than 14,000 people during the Facebook Live event.



MOIA Commissioner Mostofi and NYC Health + Hospitals CEO and President Dr. Katz of NYC Health + Hospitals speaking before the Public Charge Town Hall with other City leaders at a press conference to describe the harm the proposed Public Charge rule change could inflict on NYC's immigrants. Photo credit: Jake Adler.

MOIA's efforts to connect directly with affected communities was critical. For example, MOIA executed a weekend of faith alongside CAU reaching over 4,000 New Yorkers across 10 institutions of faith including mosques, synagogues, and gurdwaras. MOIA also coordinated KYRs and MOIA Commissioner Listening Tours engagements across the city with key community-based organizations. MOIA also worked with elected officials at the city, state, and federal level, as well as with the Coalition of Latin American Consulates in NY and the Society of African Consulates in New York. As part of that work, MOIA

shared information on “public charge” with Mexican leaders at the Mexican Consulate entirely in Spanish.

MOIA's outreach did not stop at New York City limits: we engaged with our partners and communities in other jurisdictions. MOIA's outreach team hosted a multi-city tele-town hall with PEU for residents of NYC, Philadelphia, and San Francisco. Over 22,000 people dialed in to listen to Commissioner Mostofi and her counterparts from other cities discuss the Trump Administration's proposed public charge rule. These efforts resulted in nearly 1,000 New Yorkers submitting public comments through the NYC website.

MOIA is continuing to organize KYRs across the city and for different communities to circulate accurate information about the scope of the proposed rule and how individuals can get the help they need. We have also provided avenues for immigrants to get information and trusted legal advice about the proposed “public charge” rule change, through 311, ActionNYC, and the New Americans hotline operated by Catholic Charities.

In 2018, MOIA also coordinated Immigrant Heritage Week (IHW). This year, IHW took place from April 16-22, with a theme of “A City of Immigrants: United in Action.” IHW 2018 featured over 40 events with the participation of over 30 partners including consulates, community partners, libraries, museums, theaters, and cultural centers across all five boroughs.

During IHW, MOIA worked with the Chinese Planning Council and local elected officials to host a resource fair at the Queens Community Service Center. Over 300 community members attended, where they interacted with over 15 agency participants and community partners, who shared information about City services and resources available to them.

In keeping with our mission to engage and empower immigrant communities citywide, MOIA also worked closely with a coalition of Garifuna and Central American organizations—including Casa Yurumein, Alianza Americas, Organización Negra Centroamericana, Garifuna Community Services New York, Honduras Soccer League, Inc, Hondurans Against AIDS (Hondureños Contra El Sida), OFRANEH, and others—as well as faith leaders in the South Bronx to implement NYC’s first-ever “Garifuna and Central American Town Hall” on April 21 at Lincoln Hospital. The trilingual Garifuna/English/Spanish-language forum brought over 250 community members together with representatives from city agencies including MOIA, CCHR, CAU, DCA, SBS, and the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). MOIA organizers compiled and documented the concerns of attendees and followed up with the individuals and organizations present in the subsequent weeks.

## Access to Justice

In 2018, the Trump Administration heightened its assault on our immigrant communities, accentuating the need for high-quality, trusted immigration legal services. Despite the fact that access to immigration legal services can be the difference between being deported and becoming a citizen, there is no right to appointed counsel funded by the federal government.

Immigration legal services have always been a tool of empowerment for immigrant New Yorkers and their families. The City’s free, safe legal services combat immigration fraud, and have become a powerful tool in our citywide effort to empower immigrants in the face of attempts to disenfranchise them.

In 2018, the City’s legal services programs deepened their response to the multiple crises created by the Trump Administration’s draconian and anti-American immigration policies. By working together with legal service providers and across different City agencies, the City was able to provide trusted, safe, high-quality immigration legal services in a time when there was great fear and anxiety among immigrant New Yorkers.



In partnership with LinkNYC, MOIA launched a new digital campaign to promote naturalization and civic engagement across immigrant communities.

## ActionNYC

ActionNYC is a citywide, community-based immigration legal services program that provides access to immigration legal services and resources to grow the immigration legal services field. Through its citywide hotline, centralized appointment-making system, and accessible service locations at CBOs, schools, and hospitals, ActionNYC serves as the entry point for New Yorkers seeking immigration legal services. Recognizing that immigrant New Yorkers already interact with the City in a variety of settings, ActionNYC partners with providers in CBOs, NYC Health + Hospitals locations, and schools.

Launched in 2016, the program is operated jointly by MOIA, HRA, and CUNY and implemented in collaboration with over 30 CBOs and legal services providers. ActionNYC provides 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 provide full representation in complex cases such as Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) 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 HRA's OCJ, such as the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) and Community Services Block Grant-funded programs.

ActionNYC uses community outreach and partnerships to connect immigrant New Yorkers to City services. ActionNYC community navigation teams also connect clients to social services, including IDNYC and health insurance enrollment.

In 2018, the City recognized the heightened need for legal services in certain hard-to-reach and growing immigrant populations. In response, ActionNYC expanded to serve even more high-need populations in their neighborhoods and in their language. ActionNYC awarded contracts to six CBOs to provide additional services across the city. Through this effort, ActionNYC:

- Expanded and deepened immigration legal service provisions to Chinese, Korean, and South Asian-serving organizations/communities
- Connected hard-to-reach immigrant communities with free, safe, and high-quality immigration legal services at trusted community sites, in their languages
- Conducted targeted outreach to ensure community members from hard-to-reach immigrant populations were successfully connected to ActionNYC legal services

MOIA also worked with ACS' Office of Immigration Services and Language Affairs team to expand legal services for their "youth in care" clients by referring new clients to MOIA's ActionNYC in Schools program, which provides immigration representation to NYC children.

In 2018, ActionNYC provided services at 21 CBO and three NYC Health + Hospitals sites, held 53 clinics in 31 DOE schools, and provided rotating services to long-term and post-acute care H+H patients. Demand for ActionNYC services was consistently high. The ActionNYC hotline received over 18,000 calls from individuals seeking immigration legal help. On average, the hotline received approximately 1,500 calls per month and received upwards of 1,800 calls during peak months. In response to federal actions, the ActionNYC hotline was able to pivot services to provide urgent support to communities affected by shifting immigration policy. For example, when DACA and TPS recipients were at risk because of terminations and expirations, ActionNYC used the hotline to prioritize those immigrants for appointments with ActionNYC providers. ActionNYC continues to monitor the needs of our clients, and will use the hotline to prioritize cases when there are impending deadlines.

The program was at or near capacity throughout the year, as providers were regularly booked eight weeks in advance. In total, ActionNYC providers conducted over 9,500 comprehensive immigration legal screenings, an increase of about 21% compared to 2017, and opened over 6,200 new cases, an increase of about 28% compared to 2017. Of cases in which immigration authorities rendered decisions in 2018, 97% were approved.

In 2018, ActionNYC in CBOs screened 7,242 people and opened 5,340 new cases including greencard renewals, naturalization,

family petitions, DACA renewals, and adjustment of status. ActionNYC in Schools screened 969 people and opened 223 cases including Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), naturalization, adjustment of status, asylum, and family petitions. The 2017 expansion of services into hospitals has proved another effective way to reach particularly vulnerable populations. The program has provided 1,314 comprehensive immigration legal screenings and opened 643 new cases including naturalization, green card renewals, family petitions, U Visas, and adjustment of status.



A dancing group of performers in traditional garb in Diversity Plaza. MOIA staff attended and conducted outreach for IDNYC. Photo credit: Hanif Yazdi

ActionNYC referred 1,870 cases to other legal services providers in 2018. Of these, 1,435 were referred from ActionNYC in CBOs, 415 from ActionNYC sites in H+H, and 20 from ActionNYC in Schools. Reasons for referrals included that the individual was not a New York City resident, demand surpassed the site's capacity to accept complex cases, or the case was outside of the service provider's expertise.

ActionNYC also increases local providers' capacity to provide high-quality immigration legal services. Launched in 2017, the ActionNYC Capacity Building Fellowship has provided comprehensive training and technical assistance to develop the capacity of 18 small and medium-sized community organizations to deliver immigration legal

services and conduct outreach. After a year of rigorous training as part of the fellowship's legal component, eight CBOs expanded to conducting comprehensive immigration legal screenings and providing full legal representation in straightforward immigration matters. In addition, 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. DOJ Recognition also enables them to represent clients before USCIS.

### **NYCitizenship**

In 2018, MOIA expanded NYCitizenship by adopting the community navigator model, increasing the program's capacity to serve individuals seeking naturalization. Launched in April 2016, NYCitizenship provides free citizenship application assistance, including screenings and full legal representation, as well as financial empowerment services to immigrant New Yorkers. MOIA operates NYCitizenship in partnership with the Brooklyn, Queens, and New York Public Library systems, Department of Social Services (DSS)/HRA, New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), and the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC. The program is supported by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity alongside private funders including the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Citi Community Development, the Charles H. Revson Foundation, and the Robin Hood Foundation.

In 2018, NYCitizenship provided services at 12 public library branches across the five boroughs. Through a partnership with DSS/HRA, the program also offered services to vulnerable populations, including seniors and those facing health barriers such as

disability. In 2018, NYCitizenship reached<sup>25</sup> 10,823 individuals. The program screened 1,906 clients and filed 978 citizenship applications. If eligible, individuals also received assistance with fee waiver and disability waiver applications. Additionally, clients were connected to free and confidential financial counseling.

In September, NYCitizenship partnered with LinkNYC, local artists Shimeah Davis

and Dayo Olopade and the New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) to launch an ad campaign encouraging eligible New Yorkers to utilize NYCitizenship in their journey to becoming citizens. Through this naturalization campaign, LinkNYC kiosks displayed multilingual ads in targeted immigrant-dense communities throughout New York City.

### Individual Advocacy

MOIA works with partners within and outside of City government to support constituents, including those facing unique and urgent hardships. Through this work and in light of the more challenging federal immigration landscape, MOIA has worked with partners to provide strategic support in individual cases, where appropriate.

MOIA worked to support the family of Private First Class Emmanuel Mensah. On December 28, 2017, a deadly fire in the Bronx killed 13 people including Pfc. Mensah, an immigrant from Ghana and member of the National Guard who heroically ran back into the burning building multiple times to save the life of his neighbors. The fire also took the lives of the Donkor family—Hannah, William, and their father Solomon. In a true team effort, MOIA, the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit, the Mayor’s Office of International Affairs, and HRA’s Office of Civil Justice, in coordination with the Legal Aid Society, secured expedited travel documents from the U.S. embassy in Accra, Ghana for relatives and close friends of both families to attend their loved ones’ funerals in early 2018.

MOIA also marshaled support for A., a U.S. citizen father and longtime New York City resident who had filed an immigrant visa petition for his daughter, B., in their home country. The need for his daughter B. to come to the United States was a matter of family reunification. It was also a matter of life and death for her U.S. citizen sister, a teenager suffering from a severe type of sickle cell disease. B. is a perfect bone marrow match for her sister, and transplant surgery has an over 90% chance of curing her illness. But B. was initially denied a visa by the consulate, erroneously on public charge grounds. MOIA worked with partners at the Mayor’s Office of International Affairs, CUNY Citizenship Now, and the New York Legal Assistance’s LegalHealth team, who also brought the case to the attention of Senator Gillibrand’s office. Ultimately, B. was able to secure an immigrant visa and travel to the United States to join her family here. Today, the family is reunited and B.’s sister has a bright outlook on life as she prepares to receive a lifesaving transplant.

25 Reached means a person who received a letter from HRA or called the NYCitizenship hotline.

## Anti-Fraud Work

MOIA has also worked with DCA to provide education to vulnerable communities about fraudulent schemes and ways to access immigration legal help. MOIA provides information about immigration scams, including alerts about the latest schemes, through events and other outreach channels, and reports on these trends to the City Council, as required by Local Law 63 of 2017.

In 2018, MOIA developed an anti-fraud flyer providing general tips to New Yorkers on avoiding immigration fraud. We also continued to engage with stakeholders in New York City and the surrounding areas through our participation in the Protecting Immigrant New Yorkers (PINY) taskforce, founded by the New York Immigration Coalition and consisting of City agencies, prosecutors, federal agencies, and community-based organizations.



Commissioner Mostofi gave remarks in Bensonhurst during a celebration by the local Chinese community in August. Photo credit: Jake Adler.

## U and T Visa Certifications

Victims of certain serious crimes, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, may apply for special forms of immigration status. The U visa (for victims of serious crimes) and T visa (for victims of human trafficking) programs offer temporary immigration protection and help vulnerable

immigrants, regardless of immigration status, cooperate with law enforcement, making the city safer for all New Yorkers. To apply for a U visa, the 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 declaration (similar to a certification) can be an important piece of evidence for an applicant's case.

The City has maintained historic levels of U visa certification requests and issuances, despite heightened fear and anxiety in immigrant communities stemming from federal immigration changes and increased enforcement. The City also continues to increase awareness about City agencies' ability to issue T visa declarations, including through active engagement with legal service providers and advocates. Since the start of Mayor de Blasio's Administration, the number of certification and declaration requests has increased by nearly 83%, while certification and declaration issuances have increased by over 172%.

In accordance with Local Law 185 (2017), which codified MOIA's responsibility to advise law enforcement agencies about U visa certifications and T visa declarations, MOIA continues to work with City agencies to support the effective provision of these law enforcement forms to qualifying victims. Under the de Blasio Administration, MOIA has worked with agency partners to streamline the process for immigrant crime victims, expand public awareness about the availability of these forms of immigration relief, and improve the City's U visa certification and T visa declaration processes. Since 2014, MOIA has partnered with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) and the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) to convene a working

group of City certifying agencies—NYPD, ACS, CCHR, Law Department, and, most recently, DCA—as well as the City’s five District Attorneys’ offices. Through these partnerships, the City has strengthened and increased the transparency of the processes for requesting U and T visa law enforcement forms.

In September 2018, MOIA, in partnership with MOCJ and ENDGBV and with the input of working group members, submitted a public comment to USCIS regarding the U visa application forms. In its comment, the City provided specific recommendations in regards to the certification form issued by law enforcement agencies, including ways to ensure that the appropriate information about the qualifying crime is entered.

The following charts present 2018 statistics on U and T visa certifications by City agencies.



Mayor Bill de Blasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray hosted an African Heritage Reception at Gracie Mansion on Wednesday, September 26, 2018. Photo credit: Michael Appleton/Mayoral Photography Office.

The City continues to build on these efforts. In July 2018, DCA became the City’s newest U visa certifying agency and working group member, providing New Yorkers with greater access to U visa certifications. DCA licenses more than 81,000 businesses in more than 50 industries and enforces key consumer protection, licensing, and workplace laws that apply to countless more. DCA’s ability to issue U visa certifications supports its efforts to protect and enhance the daily economic lives of immigrant New Yorkers, while making the city safer by encouraging undocumented immigrants to report crimes that have often gone unreported due to fear of deportation.



### U and T Visa Certifications by City Agencies (CY 2018)

	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCA	TOTAL
<b>Total requests received</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1,162</b>
U requests	150	965	17	4	25	
T requests	0	1	0	0	0	
<b>Requests complete total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,148</b>
<b>Certifications issued</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>863</b>
U requests	177	654	15	2	14	
T requests	0	1	0	0	0	
<b>Requests denied</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>173</b>
U requests	15	158	0	0	0	
T requests	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Requests referred to other agencies</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>112</b>
U requests	0	112	0	0	0	
T requests	0	0	0	0	0	

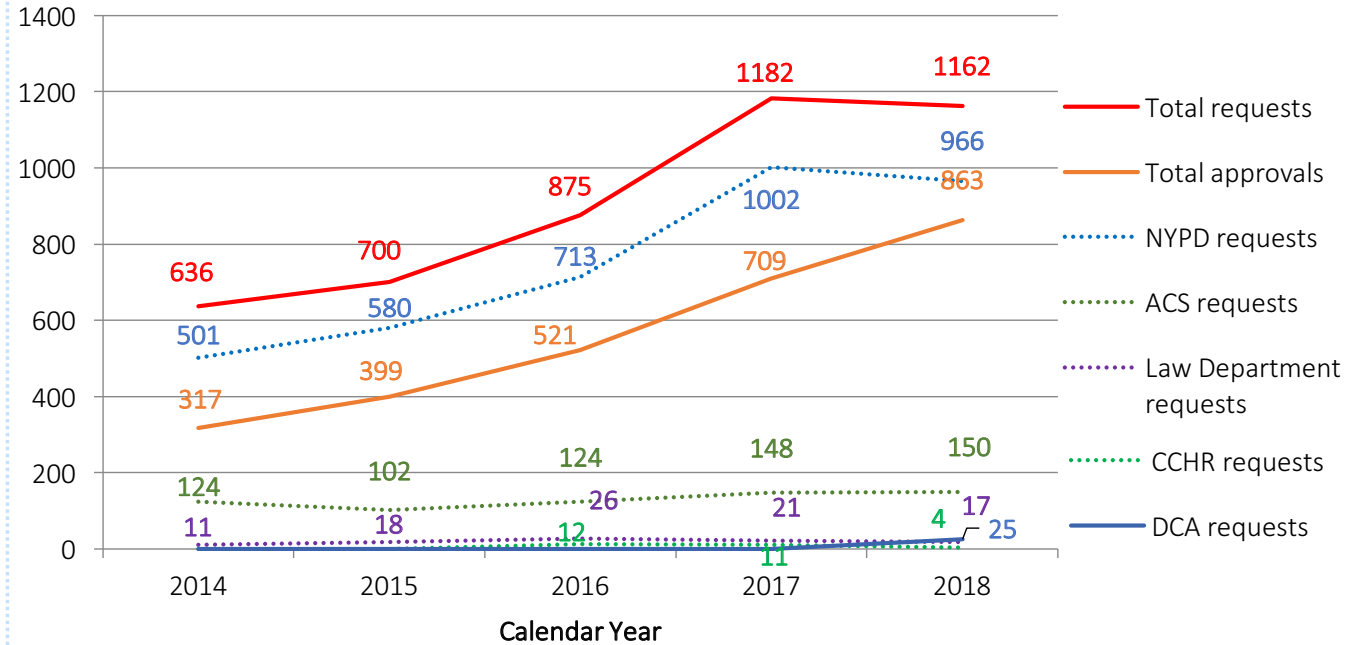
### U and T Visa Certification Denials (CY 2018)

	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCA
<b>Public safety concern</b>	1	36	0	0	0
<b>Non-qualifying crime</b>	3	88	0	0	0
<b>Lack of helpfulness/cooperation (The victim has not assisted in the investigation)</b>	1	13	0	0	0
<b>Indirect victim/witness (The individual named is not the direct or indirect victim)</b>	0	2	0	0	0
<b>Lack of qualifying investigation (ACS)</b>	3	0	0	0	0
<b>Case could not be unsealed</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Insufficient documentation</b>	6	19	0	0	0
<b>Applicant is subject of active investigation/Respondent in Art. 10 case (must reapply after investigation/case is closed)</b>	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total denied</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

### NYPD Certification Denials Appealed\* (CY 2018)

<b>Appeals filed</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Pending</b>	4
<b>Appellant certified</b>	10
<b>Decision upheld</b>	24
<b>Referred to other agency</b>	6

### U and T Visa Certification Requests and Approvals



## Advocacy

A barrage of dramatic changes to federal immigration policy and manufactured crises characterized the 2018 immigration landscape. In response, MOIA has effectively monitored immigration-related developments and conducts advocacy on the local, state, federal, and international levels to support pro-immigrant policies and protect immigrant New Yorkers' rights. Through this work, MOIA has become a trusted source of timely, accurate and reliable information for agencies, CBOs, intergovernmental organizations, other jurisdictions, and the press.

## Federal Advocacy and Litigation

By working together with partners across the city and country, MOIA has maximized its advocacy impact. In 2018, MOIA helped the City advocate for an extension of TPS for countries whose TPS designations were expiring, and an extension of Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Liberia. Through extensive outreach and KYRs, MOIA also helped make sure New Yorkers were aware of relevant re-registration deadlines and Trump Administration decisions, such as the October 2018 federal court decision that forced the Trump Administration to suspend the termination of TPS for El Salvador, Haiti, Sudan, and Nicaragua.

Similarly, MOIA helped provide context on why a legislative solution for Dreamers, namely the passage of the DREAM Act, would be so important to cities. Commissioner Mostofi traveled to Washington, D.C. in January 2018 to meet with Members of Congress to share the impact of the DREAM Act on New York City. Then, when federal court decisions in February forced the federal government to issue DACA renewals, MOIA engaged in intensive outreach and advocacy with the goal of ensuring that no one who was eligible for a DACA renewal was left unaware of the ability to renew their DACA status.

In June 2018, MOIA stood with New Yorkers as the Supreme Court's decision regarding the travel ban was issued. Reversing lower courts' decisions that the Trump Administration's travel ban was unlawful, the Supreme Court upheld the ban. MOIA leapt into action immediately after the Court's decision to convey to New Yorkers the meaning of the decision, and to stand with them and other cities in opposition to it. MOIA has continued to provide information and support to impacted communities.

As described on page 39, MOIA also served to coordinate the City's response to the proposed "public charge" rule. Our advocacy around the proposal included meeting with federal officials to explain why the proposed rule would require additional economic analysis given the scope of its anticipated effect on New York City, supporting other cities and states who were also conducting similar meetings, and coordinating two comments from the City submitted in December 2018. The City wrote a comment opposing the proposed regulation based on the harms it would cause to New Yorkers and the city overall, and also co-led a multi-locality comment with the City of Chicago, opposing the proposed regulation on legal grounds.

As part of our response to the family separation crisis, MOIA led the City's participation in a multi-city comment opposing the proposed regulations amending the *Flores* agreement, under which children accompanied by parents cannot be held in detention for more than 20 days. In 2018, the Trump Administration proposed a rule that would effectively circumvent this requirement and allow for the indefinite detention of children with their families and would also generally make it more difficult for children to be released from custody.

In recognition that the whole city is safer when immigrant residents feel comfortable interacting with the City, the City joined a multi-city, multi-state lawsuit that successfully challenged the Trump Administration's efforts to condition federal grants on collaboration with federal immigration authorities. New York City has joined or supported as amicus in a number of other crucial immigrant rights cases, providing courts with the local government perspective on issues such as how local pro-immigrant policies support efforts to promote the public safety, health, and welfare of all of our residents; why citizenship status should not be included as a question in the 2020 decennial Census; and the local interests impacted due to the family separation crisis; the travel ban; the future of DACA; and determinations to end TPS for different countries.

### **Cities for Action**

In 2018, the Cities for Action (C4A) coalition focused on providing accurate information to other cities and community leaders that included actionable frameworks for advocacy. These rapid responses included mobilizing cities for swift litigation and other legal actions condemning a range of anti-American policies like family separation and the proposed "public charge" rule.

Founded in 2014 by Mayor de Blasio, C4A is a bipartisan coalition of U.S. cities and local governments that collectively advocates on immigration issues and exchanges best practices on city policies and programs that serve immigrant residents. As of 2018, C4A includes nearly 200 U.S. mayors and county executives advocating for pro-immigrant federal policies and launching innovative, inclusive programs and policies at the local level. Throughout 2018, MOIA and C4A engaged in intensive advocacy on multiple issues, including the travel ban, refugee admissions, TPS, DACA, family separation, and “public charge.”

As Congress failed to pass legislation that would have provided permanent status for immigrants who came to the United States as children, C4A led advocacy on DACA and the DREAM Act both by issuing coalition statements advocating for workable legislative solutions, and by distributing messaging guidance for member cities and counties to use.



MOIA Commissioner Mostofi welcomes Journey for Justice and the National TPS Alliance to New York City.

In 2018, C4A also led the response to attacks on TPS nationally. As TPS for multiple countries was threatened or terminated, C4A issued a number of multi-city sign-on letters urging the Administration to extend TPS for El Salvador, Honduras, and Somalia. Each letter explained how the failure to extend TPS designations would lead to the separation of families and cause

irreparable harm to immigrants who call America home.

Amid national outcry against a cruel and inhumane family separation policy, C4A and MOIA acted quickly to condemn the policy and to provide necessary services to separated families. This response served as a model for local responses: in September, C4A and the Lumos Foundation released the report *On the Frontlines of the Family Separation Crisis: City Response and Best Practices for Assisting Families*. With case studies from New York City, the City and County of Los Angeles, and San Antonio, the report showcases how local governments stepped up in the midst of the 2018 U.S. family separation crisis.

In 2018, C4A also worked to coordinate advocacy efforts across the coalition and share best practices across cities and counties. In March, representatives from 20 member cities and counties met in Chicago, Illinois for the second annual C4A national convening to determine the coalition’s advocacy priorities and strategies. Then in May, C4A held its first Cities Taking Action: Municipal Best Practices Conference in Boston, MA, at which staff from 40 member cities and counties shared technical expertise on local policies and programs that further their immigrant residents’ well-being.

Additionally in 2018, C4A established a steering committee to institutionalize shared ownership amongst the most active C4A members, beginning with Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, New York City, Philadelphia, Providence, San Francisco, and Seattle. Their senior immigration officials have shared responsibility for C4A recruitment, information sharing, and strategic planning.

## Cities for Citizenship

Founded in 2014, Cities for Citizenship (C4C) is a major bipartisan national initiative, with municipal partners in 38 cities and counties. C4C is designed to increase naturalization among eligible U.S. green card holders. C4C is chaired by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, 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.



A MOIA Community Organizer provides information about City resources to community members in Queens in September during a Know Your Rights Forum. Photo credit: Jake Adler.

In 2018, through C4C, MOIA participated in webinars and roundtable discussions to share information about NYC Citizenship, MOIA's flagship citizenship legal services program. In addition, MOIA worked on behalf of NYC with the other C4C co-chairs to release the 2018 C4C Annual Report, describing the initiative's efforts around citizenship programming and capacity building. MOIA also highlighted the agency's work in citizenship, language access, and immigration legal services more broadly at the annual C4C Municipal Gathering held in Arlington, Virginia in December 2018.



The West Indian Day Parade took place on Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn on September 3, 2018. Photo credit: Michael Appleton/Mayoral Photography Office.

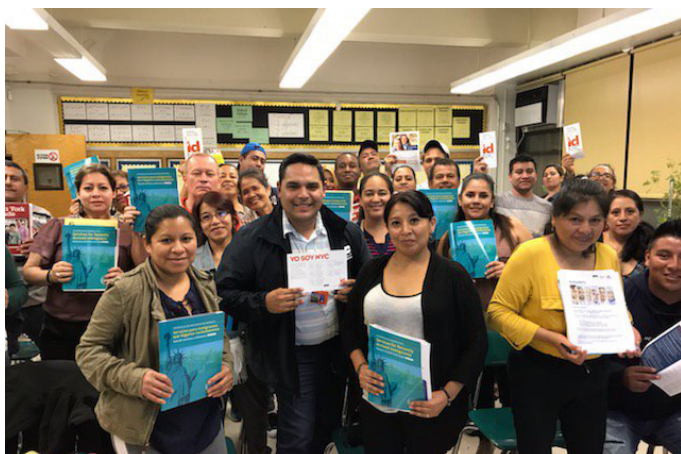
## International Leadership

In 2018, MOIA collaborated with a range of international municipal partners to ensure the collective voice and expertise of cities shaped the internationally negotiated Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees (GCM and GCR). Working closely with cities that had participated in the 2017 Global Mayors Summit on Migration and Refugee Policy and Practice, MOIA closely followed the progress of the GCM negotiations and helped organize cities to provide the perspective of local authorities directly to the GCM. Through these efforts, the final GCM text included reference to the critical role of cities and local governments. New York City was also a signatory to the Marrakech Mayors Declaration "Cities Working Together for Migrants and Refugees," which was presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Mayoral Forum in Marrakech on December 8, and delivered at the Intergovernmental Conference for the adoption of the GCM on December 10. Throughout 2018, MOIA also continued to work with city partners globally to share best practices and ideas for immigrant inclusion work at the municipal level.

## Strategic Research and Evaluation

In 2018, MOIA shared research with stakeholders and community members alike to facilitate advocacy and provide information about the impact of federal policies on immigrant New Yorkers and New York City's interests. Through research products such as the "ICE Enforcement in New York City" fact sheet or the "DACA and DREAM Act" fact sheet, MOIA has taken the lead in informing community leaders and elected officials at all levels of government about the harmful impacts of Trump's policies.

In addition to identifying impact, MOIA's research products also help demonstrate the economic contributions and vital roles that immigrants play in our city. For example, the research brief on the impact of the "public charge" proposed rule showed that any policies aimed at harming our immigrant communities ultimately harm our city overall. Further, through evaluation reports (such as the evaluation of the *We Are New York* Program) and this annual report, MOIA helps identify ongoing needs and the most effective ways to address them.



At the International High School for Health Sciences in Queens, MOIA staff met with parents and spoke with them about their rights and various City programs for immigrant New Yorkers.

# Looking Ahead to 2019

In 2019, MOIA will continue to promote the social and economic well-being and safety of all our city’s residents, regardless of immigration status, through the following recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATION: **Lower Barriers for Immigrants to Access Services**

In 2018, the federal government announced its proposed “public charge” rule, which would threaten to significantly impact many New Yorkers’ access to public benefits and eligibility for immigration benefits if finalized. To date, the proposed rule has already begun to create (as reported about the WIC program nationally<sup>26</sup>), a chilling effect on use of public benefits by immigrant families, and withdrawal of benefits by green card holders or other status and their household members, including U.S. citizens and non-citizens. In 2019, MOIA will double down on connecting immigrants to critically-needed services to mitigate the harms from this and other federal policies. This will include supporting the launch of the Mayor’s new NYC Care program to ensure that every single New Yorker can access health care—regardless of immigration status. Additionally, MOIA will build on its language access services, outreach, Know Your Rights, and Information Desk programs to more efficiently and effectively connect New Yorkers to services they need.



MOIA staff participated in a ThriveNYC Day of Action during the third anniversary of the life-changing mental health initiative.

26 Helena Bottemiller Evich, Immigrants, Fearing Trump Crackdown, Drop Out of Nutrition Programs, Politico (Sept. 3, 2018), available at <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/09/03/immigrants-nutrition-food-trump-crackdown-806292>

## RECOMMENDATION:

### **Build with & Empower Communities to Participate Fully in Civic and Cultural Life**

All New Yorkers—regardless of immigration status—play a critical role in our City’s future. In the year ahead, MOIA will work to expand our democracy so all New Yorkers can fully participate in our civic life. MOIA will accomplish this through increased community town halls and cultural celebrations that provide every New Yorker more opportunities to engage with the City. Additionally, MOIA will continue to expand poll-site interpretation so that every citizen can have full access to vote regardless of language ability. These actions will strengthen our democracy and ensure that the City can be responsive to all New Yorkers.



MOIA and CCHR Commissioner and Chair Carmelyn P. Malalis with RUSA LGBT members during a Know Your Rights Forum with Russian community members in Brooklyn.

## RECOMMENDATION:

### **Further Economic Justice for Immigrant New Yorkers**

Economic disparities between citizens and noncitizens remain, and immigrant workers are often vulnerable to exploitation and fraud. MOIA is committed to working to close this gap. To do this, MOIA will continue to build on its worker protection efforts, including through our anti-fraud campaigns. In February



2019, MOIA worked with Chinese-serving organizations to launch a campaign to combat the Chinese consular phone scam. MOIA is expanding its worker education work in 2019 through increased KYRs focused on immigrant workers as well as through the development of a new video to make this content more accessible.

RECOMMENDATION:

**Fight to Protect Immigrant New Yorkers against Anti-Immigrant Federal Policies**

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In 2019, the City will use all means at its disposal to defend our residents against anti-immigrant policies imposed and proposed by the federal government and advocate for common-sense, pro-immigrant policies at the national level. MOIA's commitment to providing legal services and pathways to citizenship to protect immigrants will help mitigate the harms of increasingly aggressive immigration enforcement. MOIA will also leverage our robust interagency and community partnerships in order to address the concerns raised by the proposed "public charge" changes. Finally, in 2019 MOIA will build on its advocacy for immigrants with longstanding ties to the U.S., including immigrants with TPS and DACA.

RECOMMENDATION:

**Advocate for New York City's Residents at the State Level**

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With the election of a new state legislature, the City has partners to push for policies and legislation that promotes the full integration of immigrant communities. MOIA and the City will advocate for state solutions that would impact New York City residents, including the implementation of the New York State DREAM Act, codifying Medicaid for DACA recipients at risk of losing their status, securing Medicaid for TPS recipients at risk of losing their status, and driver's licenses for all.

## Conclusion

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None of the work we do would be meaningful without the resilience and continued engagement of our many partners across the city. Our sister cities, fellow government agencies, advocates and providers, and above all the immigrant communities we serve, inspire MOIA to do our utmost in coalition with our sisters and brothers. Together, we champion a future where we can achieve our goals in this city regardless of immigration status or place of birth. In the years ahead, we will learn from what we've built in order to realize our vision of New York City as the world's ultimate city of immigrants.



MOIA partnered with City leaders, including CCHR Commissioner and Chair Malalis and Brooklyn Borough President's Office, to host the City's first-ever Brooklyn Diwali celebration.



