

THE ROAD FORWARD:

A BLUEPRINT TO ADDRESS NEW YORK CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE ASYLUM SEEKER CRISIS



NYC

Table of Contents

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR	4
LETTER FROM DEPUTY MAYOR ANNE WILLIAMS-ISOM	5
INTRODUCTION: NYC’S ASYLUM SEEKER CRISIS AND ITS CAUSES	7
Background	
Cities Leading the Way	
SECTION 1: CURRENT MEASURES TO SUPPORT ASYLUM SEEKERS	10
The Navigation Center System	
Shelter, Food and Clothing	
Legal Assistance	
Support for Children/Education	
Public Health and Mental Health	
SECTION 2: PLANS FOR STEADY STATE OPERATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY ...	15
Office of Asylum Seeker Operations	
24/7 Arrival Center	
Steady State Initiatives	
Relocation, Long-Term Housing and Resettlement	
Workforce Development	
Legal Services	
Collective Responsibility	
Interstate & Intercity Coordination	
SECTION 3: MOVING FORWARD AS A NATION	23
What We Need From the Federal Government	
What We Need From New York State	
CONCLUSION	27
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	29
APPENDIX	30
Asylum Seeker Resource Navigation Center flier	



To my fellow New Yorkers;

New York City has always been a destination for people seeking freedom, safety, and the chance of a better future. Immigration is core to our identity as city and our values as a community. And the thousands of asylum seekers who have arrived here over the past year are a new chapter in this timeless story.

I am exceptionally proud of how our city has handled this crisis so far – with energy, resolve, and empathy. Many of the asylum seekers have spoken to me about their positive reception and experience – from connecting with relatives and friends to getting children enrolled in school. But as more asylum seekers continue to arrive in our city, we must plan to ensure they get the help they deserve, without compromising our commitment to all New Yorkers in need.

That's what our new plan, *The Road Forward: A Blueprint to Address New York City's Response to the Asylum Seeker Crisis*, is about. This blueprint is a clear-eyed look at what will be needed in the coming months and years, along with plans to provide shelter, health care, education, legal assistance and more to our brothers and sisters in crisis.

Above all, it is a call for national action in the face of a global humanitarian crisis.

I have spent time with many of the asylum seekers, from greeting them at Port Authority to speaking with them in El Paso. When I visited our southern border, I saw firsthand just how large the scope of this crisis is – and how important it is that we unite as a nation to address it.

While our city may be the face of the asylum seeker crisis, it is not a crisis we can solve on our own. A comprehensive response from all levels of government – especially from our state and federal partners – is needed.

But, as we have so often, cities will lead the way. Our city's practical and compassionate approach to the asylum seeker crisis will set the standard for how we welcome those fleeing violence and hardship. This plan provides a way forward – and will ultimately lead to greater opportunity for progress for the entire country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Adams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Eric Adams



My fellow New Yorkers;

Health and human services work many times includes meeting people where they are to support them on their life's journey and designing custom approaches that work for different people. This means we often encounter people in their most vulnerable moments - when they are in need of medical care, in need of food assistance, in need of a roof over their head, in need of support for their children or older adult family members, or various other instances. We center those points of engagement with care, dignity, respect, and love for every person, child, and family.

The flow of people seeking asylum in New York City brought all this work to bear, as tens of thousands of individuals, children, and families came seeking shelter from a storm in their lives. We recognize the root causes of this issue are complex and cut across jurisdictions. New York City has - and will continue - to support them in every way possible.

The Road Forward: A Blueprint to Address New York City's Response to the Asylum Seeker Crisis lays out how we've addressed the situation to date and charts a path forward to help those seeking asylum in this new chapter of their lives. The plan highlights the enormous collaboration among city government, nonprofit providers, advocates, and experts across emergency management, social services, medicine, and humanitarian relief.

A core part of the plan is creating a new Office of Asylum Seeker Operations. This central office will coordinate the City's response and lead collaborative efforts with nonprofits/community service providers, state and federal partners, and everyday New Yorkers looking to do their part to help through volunteerism. Additionally, the city will focus on long-term relocation and resettlement. We will also work with our partners as they provide guidance on navigating the federal legal process around asylum application and workforce authorization.

We know this humanitarian effort is not yet over. We are committed to meeting the need as this situation continues, and we know this issue is complex, interconnected, and requires deep collaboration across city, state, federal government, and all sectors of society to support our newest neighbors and their families.

I am honored to play a role in managing the city's response to this crisis. Through our work in New York City, we are showing that kindness, care, and love are alive and well in America.

Sincerely,

Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom

Introduction: New York City's Response to the Asylum Seeker Crisis and Its Causes.



INTRODUCTION: New York City's Response to the Asylum Seeker Crisis and Its Causes

Since last year, tens of thousands of asylum seekers — adults as well as families with children — have fled dire conditions in their home countries and crossed the United States' southern border in search of safety and a better life. Unlike previous groups of migrants and asylum seekers, the new arrivals are less likely to have a friend, family, or sponsor to turn to for help. Many are traumatized by their journeys and have been in this country for only a few days before being bused to our city with little more than the clothes on their backs.

New York City has and always will be a city of immigrants, and we are proud of our compassionate response to the sudden influx of newcomers. We quickly mobilized multiple city agencies to provide shelter, food, health care, education, and other critical services — as well as a warm welcome. However, as the surge of asylum seekers has continued, it has strained the city's already over-taxed shelter system, social services, and other resources to the breaking point. To address this humanitarian crisis, Mayor Adams declared a state of emergency in October of 2022.

The crisis has only deepened since then. As of March 2023, there were 79,937 people in shelter placement in New York City (including humanitarian relief centers) — a 77% increase since the start of the Adams administration on January 1st, 2022. This is due in large part to the influx of newcomers. Our shelter system is full, and we are running out of funds, staff, and space. Without additional support, we may not be able to continue supporting recent arrivals along with our pre-existing shelter population. We may also have to cut back on city programs and services. With new asylum seekers continuing to arrive each day, we urgently call on all levels of government and all sectors of society to assist us in creating long-term and sustainable solutions to this crisis.

Background

Although the asylum seeker crisis appears to have occurred “overnight” — or over the course of just a few months — it is important to understand that it is the result of decades of inaction by Congress and previous presidential administrations. While municipalities like New York City, Chicago, El Paso, Houston, and Washington, D.C. have expended substantial resources and stretched themselves to the limit to respond, the problem has not been created by local governments.

Failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform since the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, policy decisions made in the previous presidential administration, global instability, climate change and climate migration, along with overwhelmed immigration courts, and limited paths to legal permanent resident status, have all exacerbated the crisis.

The situation may also continue to worsen as the country braces for an expected increase in arrivals when Title 42 is lifted. This public health rule allows officials to turn away migrants during certain public health emergencies, and it was invoked at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even with Title 42 and other federal border policies in place, New York City has received a record number of asylum seekers, and continues to receive a steady stream into shelter daily. During January, the southern border experienced a 97% decrease in border crossings, yet New York City processed approximately 3,100 asylum seekers in our shelter system in the week of January 3rd to 9th, including 835 individuals in a single day. This was the largest one-day increase of asylum seekers into our care ever. Currently, asylum seekers account for 39% of the total population between our shelter system and our humanitarian relief centers. If current trends continue, by June 2023, we

could see the daily population of individuals in our care increase by 100% from when we came into office.

Municipalities should not have to bear the responsibility for a complex national problem driven by global forces. A robust, swift, and comprehensive response from all levels of government — and especially from the state and federal governments — is required to adequately address what is an international humanitarian crisis.

We urge the state and federal governments to work with us, particularly with respect to allocating emergency financial assistance, taking legislative action, and breaking the bureaucratic impasse — all of which are outside the jurisdiction of municipal governments. A comprehensive federal strategy that allows for safe and legal migration would reduce the strain on municipalities and make the process more humane for everyone involved.

Cities Leading the Way

Cities like New York have firsthand experience of what it takes to help asylum seekers integrate into our communities, find shelter, and navigate the legal system. The lessons we have learned, and the insights we have gained provide a model for other municipalities to follow, and should influence and inform federal asylum-seeker and immigration legislation and policy.

New York City's bold and caring approach to the asylum seeker crisis sets a high bar for how we welcome those who come to our country seeking refuge. The roadmap outlined here provides a way forward — a way to turn a crisis into an opportunity for progress for the entire country.



Section 1: Current Measures to Support Asylum Seekers



Section 1: Current Measures to Support Asylum Seekers

Over the last year, New York City officials have worked tirelessly alongside community and faith-based partners to provide critical services to tens of thousands of asylum seekers, many of whom arrive in our city at all hours from other states. We offer them shelter, food, clothing, and health care, as well as access to legal information and education in culturally appropriate languages.

To date, New York City has spent more than \$650 million on our efforts. We project spending \$1.4 billion this fiscal year and \$4.2 billion through next fiscal year on this crisis.

Our efforts include creating a Navigation Center system and offering an array of essential supports and services.

Navigation Center System

In order to ease access and provide connections to services, the city launched a first-of-its-kind Asylum Seeker Navigation Center operated by Catholic Charities of New York, with 12 additional satellite sites run by Community Based Organizations (CBOs) across the five boroughs. As of February 1st, 2023, this system has served over 14,680 asylum seekers.

The Navigation Center system, which is supported in the current year with \$6.75 million, serves as a central location and referral network for asylum seekers to receive free and confidential assistance in navigating necessary services, including health care, Medicaid enrollment, vaccinations, school enrollment, immigration legal orientation, and [IDNYC enrollment](#).

Shelter, Food, and Clothing

The city continues to meet the sheltering needs of asylum seekers, in some cases opening several sites a day. To date, the [New York City Department of Social Services \(DSS\)](#) and its not-for-profit partners have opened 92 emergency shelter sites, and [NYC Health + Hospitals \(H+H\)](#) has opened 7 Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers to meet our unprecedented need. While the average amount of time to open a shelter is normally two years, in one year the city has opened 99 sites for asylum seekers. Between the emergency shelter sites and humanitarian relief centers, the city is currently providing shelter to 30,900 individuals.

Working with CBO partners and nonprofits, asylum seekers in the city's care are offered food, clothing, medical care, vaccines, relocation services, legal information, access to translation, laundry, and more. Everyday New Yorkers have also stepped up, donating food, clothing, books and toys. And over 60 houses of worship have participated in our Adopt-A-Shelter Program and provided basic necessities and support to asylum seekers.

Legal Assistance

The [Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs \(MOIA\)](#) and its partner agencies have helped asylum seekers navigate the complex federal immigration process in a number of ways.

At the Port Authority bus terminal, the Asylum Seeker Navigation Center and its satellite sites, and at humanitarian relief centers, newly arrived asylum seekers were provided with multilingual legal information. Volunteer attorneys were on hand to help with screenings and legal information.

The city allocated \$5 million, along with \$3 million from the state, to support these efforts. In addition, \$67 million in immigration legal services available to all immigrant New Yorkers will expand citywide access to legal information and assistance through presentations, online resources, training for community members, added capacity for the [Action NYC hotline](#) and pro se (self-help) application assistance clinics.

Support for Children/Education

The [New York City Department of Education \(DOE\)](#) launched ‘Project Open Arms’ to assist over 13,700 students in temporary housing currently enrolled in our schools. At the Navigation Center and humanitarian relief centers, bilingual and multilingual enrollment counselors help parents navigate placement options for new students (including those with special needs). Staff coordinate donations with local CBOs, individual donors, and school communities for items such as backpacks, school supplies, hygiene kits, and clothing.

To support students once they are enrolled, DOE conducts assessments to determine if additional resources are needed (e.g. special education, bilingual programs). School counselors and social workers assist asylum seeker families to ensure that students’ needs, such as language instruction, are being met.

Mayor Adams also announced [PROMISE NYC](#), a program to make child care assistance available to low-income families, including asylum seekers, whose immigration status makes them ineligible for other federally-funded child care.

Public Health and Mental Health

Asylum seekers face unique challenges that impact their health. The health systems in many of their countries of origin are unstable, which results in low levels of vaccination, screening and treatment for communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, and polio. For instance, the [measles and polio vaccination rate in Venezuela](#) — the country of origin for many of the asylum seekers in New York City — is 37% and 50% respectively. Additionally, the arduous journey to the United States — averaging 2,000 to 3,000 miles — poses many risks to individuals’ mental and physical health.

At the Navigation Center and in humanitarian relief centers, the [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene \(DOHMH\)](#) and partners enroll people in insurance programs, and make appointments with health care providers. To address the increased demand for health care services, the city has been working closely with the H+H system and Federally Qualified Health Centers to expand appointment availability for the newly-arrived asylum seekers.

The city is also addressing the vaccination needs of asylum seekers. At humanitarian relief centers and the Navigation Center, H+H has provided more than 7,000 vaccines to children alone. Children have substantial vaccination needs, including MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella), Polio, COVID-19, Hepatitis and Varicella. Students in New York City are required to get certain vaccines in order to attend childcare or school within 30 days of enrollment.

Given the conditions in their countries of origin, the journey to the United States, and assimilation challenges once here, asylum seekers experience high levels of trauma. The Navigation Center offers crisis counseling and psychological first aid. The humanitarian relief centers also have social workers on site. Those who need additional support are referred to NYC Well and matched with mental health providers so that they can receive crisis intervention and referrals.

Section 2: Plans for Steady State Operations in New York City



Section 2: Plans for Steady State Operations in New York City

The asylum seeker crisis has cost the city hundreds of millions of dollars and redirected many city agencies' and CBO staff away from their everyday responsibilities. To give just one example, MOIA, the [Mayor's Public Engagement Unit \(PEU\)](#), [NYC Emergency Management \(NYCEM\)](#), and community-based partners have spent 16-hour days at the Port Authority bus terminal for months in order to welcome asylum seekers.

For the long-term functioning of our city, and for the benefit of these newest New Yorkers, we must put asylum seekers on the path to stability. We must transition from our round-the-clock emergency response to a steady state approach that prioritizes sustainability.

Office of Asylum Seeker Operations (OASO)

New York City's steady state approach will include a new Office of Asylum Seeker Operations (OASO) to oversee our ongoing and future activities, and allow existing city agencies to refocus on their core missions. The OASO will coordinate between agencies, make sure that agencies have the resources they need, and manage our advocacy to the state and federal governments.

The OASO will also ensure that all newly arrived asylum seekers who need temporary shelter have access to a safe place to sleep, food, and other basic necessities. And by coordinating with federal, state, and national partners, it will create a pathway for asylum seekers to connect with opportunities and support throughout the country.

24/7 Arrival Center

A new centralized 24/7 Arrival Center will replace the Port Authority bus terminal as a primary des-



mination for asylum seekers. Here, trusted community based partners with experience in resettlement will provide reticketing services, shelter intake, legal information and medical triage. Currently, these services are bifurcated across multiple sites.

The 24/7 Arrival Center will enable the OASO to obtain a complete picture of asylum-seekers' needs, and focus on resettlement efforts. This will allow newcomers to be assisted appropriately and provide information to help New York City make data-driven decisions. In addition, the Arrival Center will prioritize steps that put asylum seekers on the pathway to work authorization.

Steady State Initiatives

The following five Steady State Initiatives will fall under the purview of OASO, once it is created. In the meantime, existing city agencies will continue to make headway in these key areas:

1. Relocation, Long-Term Housing, and Resettlement

Prior to the current asylum seeker crisis, homelessness was already a major challenge in our city. Tens of thousands of New Yorkers, a majority of whom are children and families, live in the city's shelters. The city remains steadfast on moving both New Yorkers experiencing homelessness and recently arrived asylum seekers out of temporary shelter and into permanent housing. Our goal is to provide safe, affordable, and stable housing options to those in need, regardless of their immigration status.

The city will continue to explore short- and long-term options to house asylum seekers, including ways in which houses of worship can shelter asylum seekers. In doing so, faith based organizations will not only expand the city's shelter capacity but also help integrate migrants into local communities.



The city is also in the early stage of being able to assist asylum seekers in relocating to their preferred city of choice. Ultimately, New York City isn't equipped to meet the complex needs of asylum seekers given their current rapid rate of arrival. The OASO will oversee outreach activities including door knocking and community engagement to ensure that all asylum seekers are aware of relocation opportunities.

For relocation within New York State, the recently released state budget includes \$25 million to assist in the resettlement of certain families. The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) will administer and oversee the program, which will include contracts with nonprofit organizations who have proven experience in successfully resettling refugee populations. New York State will pay for up to one year of the cost of housing for these families, as well as case management and related services.

The city is also looking at other ways to resettle asylum seekers throughout the state. The migrant workforce training pilot, in partnership with The Center for Discovery and SUNY Sullivan, will offer asylum seekers the opportunity to relocate to Sullivan County, attend SUNY Sullivan Community College, live in college residence halls and earn a post-secondary credential or degree. Asylum seekers will also receive workforce training through The Center for Discovery in health care, human services, hospitality, culinary, and agricultural sectors. One of the program's goals is to develop a blueprint so that others around the state can replicate the model.

At the same time, the city is engaging national nonprofits to offer asylum seekers an even wider array of relocation choices. Resettlement options will consist of pre-vetted cities and municipalities that welcome asylum seekers. Ultimately, this program will utilize a warm handoff resettlement approach with ongoing contact after resettlement to ensure the best possible outcomes.

2. Workforce Development

Although an average of more than 82,200 new jobs have been posted every month in New York City in 2022, the federal government requires asylum seekers to wait for years to receive work permits. This exacerbates the challenges that both migrants and the city face. The cost of providing for asylum seekers because of their inability to work legally is becoming increasingly unsustainable for our municipal government.

Allowing asylum seekers to work while their immigration claims are being processed helps fill job vacancies, creates self-sufficiency, and reduces reliance on the city's strained shelter and support system.

In the meantime, New York City will assist asylum seekers as they move through the asylum and workforce authorization process. This will include:

- Partnering with community based organizations and others to identify asylum seekers who are eligible for work permits.
- Providing Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training; and developing appropriate opportunities for job training in targeted, in-demand industries, such as healthcare and food service.
- Funding CBOs to provide adult literacy services at humanitarian relief centers.

- Offering workplace rights and anti-fraud education. Immigrants and low-wage workers are among those most vulnerable to labor law violations by employers. This includes paying below minimum wage, wage theft, and stealing tips.
- Connecting new arrivals with more established immigrants to serve as mentors. These mentors are best positioned to connect asylum seekers with resources and information accessible within existing immigrant networks of support.

3. Legal Services

Providing asylum seekers with access to legal support is one of the most critical services the city can offer. As part of our transition from an emergency state to a steady state, we are creating a new comprehensive framework for legal support, and will offer a centralized system to support asylum seekers as they navigate the long and complicated federal immigration process.

We will also engage the legal community and everyday New Yorkers to help provide legal assistance. This effort will take place under a new umbrella initiative launched in coordination with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, called the Asylum Seeker Legal Assistance Network (ASLAN).

The city and state will collaborate with partners across the immigration, asylum seeker, and refugee policy and services fields to develop a comprehensive plan that puts migrants on the pathway to work authorization and legal status by:

- Expanding a coordinated outreach effort to connect with asylum seekers currently in the city system and ensure they are aware of important dates and deadlines around their application.



- Establishing a centralized legal information entry point to conduct initial screenings and offer legal orientation, referrals to immigration legal service providers, and pro se (self-help) application assistance clinics.
- Using technology to maximize access to information and legal assistance.
- Making an interagency effort to identify and improve city processes that serve as barriers to accessing immigration benefits and relief.
- Continuing to build the legal capacity of small community based organizations and grow the cultural and linguistic capacity across legal service providers.
- Recruiting new volunteers to support the legal needs of asylum seekers through a call to action.
- Convening an advisory board of external immigration legal experts and external partners to engage in longer-term strategy, planning, and ongoing federal advocacy.

4. Collective Responsibility

The asylum seeker crisis has shown that we need all hands on deck in order to respond effectively. As the city moves toward a steady state, we will encourage external partners to join our efforts by holding a series of roundtables so that we can problem solve and hear from key stakeholders. We will also continue to work with our agency partners and the Mayor's Fund to provide ongoing financial and in-kind donations to our faith and community based partners.



Faith Based Organizations have a unique and powerful role to play. These organizations have a long history of providing humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations. They also have the capacity to mobilize large numbers of volunteers and resources.

We will continue to work with our faith based partners to provide housing, basic necessities and a sense of community for our newest New Yorkers. We will encourage our partners to join us in advocating for policy changes and increased resources.

Community Based Organizations, with their deep roots in local communities, linguistic and cultural competency, and expertise in providing social services, also play a critical role. We will keep partnering with CBOs to provide a variety of services, including housing assistance, workforce development, health care, education, job training, resume building, language instruction, and more.

Philanthropic and Corporate Partners make important contributions as well. The [Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City](#), a 501-(c)(3) nonprofit, launched the Asylum Seeker Relief Fund in January 2023, with the goal of raising \$25 million from philanthropic organizations and corporations. This will help us and our community based partners meet asylum seekers' immediate and long-term needs, such as workforce development, health and wellness, and basic necessities.

Everyday New Yorkers have stepped up and assisted our response. From volunteering at Port Authority, to opening their homes to provide temporary shelter, making charitable donations of money, clothing, and other essential items and more, the generosity of New Yorkers has been a shining example of the best of our city.

We will encourage everyday New Yorkers to volunteer by:

- Developing a recruitment strategy that communicates the impact volunteers have, especially around asylum seekers' legal needs.
- Partnering with local organizations and city agencies already working with asylum seekers to leverage existing volunteer networks.
- Providing resources to help navigate the complexities of working with asylum seekers. This will include trainings, toolkits, and more.

We will also explore how everyday New Yorkers can provide temporary housing to asylum seekers.

5. Interstate and Interagency Coordination

New York City is well positioned to lead a multi-city coalition to ensure that the national government delivers a comprehensive response to this crisis. The coalition could serve as a unified voice in calling for federal change, and enable cities and localities to share best practices and resources.

The OASO will specifically work with cities at the southern border to dispel misinformation about what New York City offers and make sure asylum seekers receive accurate information about our city's services. We want asylum seekers to have trusted information about the resources available for them across communities so that they can make informed resettlement decisions.

The OASO will also work with Cities for Action, a program run by MOIA, that includes nearly 200 mayors and local governments across the country who advocate for pro-immigrant federal policies and programs.

Section 3: Moving Forward As a Nation



Section #3: Moving Forward As a Nation

To make the process of integrating asylum seekers simpler, fairer, and more humane, we need urgent fiscal, legislative and regulatory changes at the state and federal level.

We are providing the state and federal governments with a list of ‘asks’ to ensure that New York City and other localities are able to absorb and assist asylum seekers without overextending our strained resources. We also look to our elected officials to continue to stand with us in our ongoing collaborative efforts and advocacy.

The Office of Asylum Seeker Operations, once created, will advocate for the measures outlined below. In the meantime, the city will press the federal and state governments to deliver on these urgently needed interventions.

What We Need from the Federal Government

We thank the New York City congressional delegation, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, and U.S. House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries for their leadership in providing New York and other localities with federal funding to help cover a portion of our expenses. However, we still need more. We are calling for:

- An **expedited right-to-work policy** for asylum seekers who remain compliant with immigration enforcement requirements. Immigrants contribute in meaningful ways to our communities and have been shown to be drivers of economic growth. However, because those arriving now are not yet legally able to work, they are denied the ability to provide for themselves and their families, which increases their need for shelter and services.
- A **decompression strategy** at the border that evaluates asylum claims, establishes a plan for each migrant’s arrival – before their entry into the U.S. – and creates a system to fairly distribute newcomers regionally. This ensures that the entire country faces this humanitarian crisis in a coordinated manner.
- A **revamped immigration system that is safe, orderly, and legal**. The current system is confusing and slow, language access and logistical challenges are rampant, and the dysfunction increases demand for quality low- or no-cost immigration legal services, which far exceeds the capacity of New York City’s nonprofit immigration legal services field. Additionally, bureaucratic delays on the federal level have caused an immense backlog in New York City immigration courts, with over 124,000 cases pending as of December 2022. The federal government must surge immigration lawyers to the border and to New York City to relieve the pressure.
- A **reduction of administrative burdens** and an **increase in the rate of homeless housing placements** to accelerate exits from shelter into affordable housing. The web of rules, laws, and requirements surrounding the city’s affordable housing make the process of accessing public benefits unnecessarily time-consuming and difficult. In the absence of additional reforms, migrants will not be able to access rental assistance or other benefit programs.
- A **designated leader to resolve the national border crisis** and coordinate all relevant agencies and entities, including those in localities where migrants settle.

- **Reimbursement for funds** already spent by localities on asylum seekers, and **adequate funding moving forward**.
- The **declaration of a federal emergency** to unlock additional funds and operational abilities. While New York City has thrived by welcoming newcomers for centuries, the costs of meeting our national asylum seeker crisis should be borne by the federal government.
- The **classification of current asylum seekers as refugees** to unlock additional resources and pathways.
- The **expansion in the variety of vaccines** given at the border to include Varicella and MMR, and the addition of federal funding for other infectious diseases, emergency preparedness, and public health infrastructure. This emergency again highlights the need for investment in our country's core public health functions.
- The **renewal of multi-year mandatory funding for Federal Qualified Health Centers** through reauthorization of the Community Health Centers Fund. New York City leans heavily on safety net providers to offer health care to asylum seekers and the providers will face a federal funding cliff in October 2023 without congressional action.

New York City will continue working closely with our federal partners and other cities to push for increased funding and improved legislative and regulatory changes for asylum seekers. We will also continue to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and all relevant federal agencies to obtain accurate data on arriving asylum seekers so that we can develop a balanced placement strategy across the country.

What We Need from New York State

In addition to the funding that New York State has already provided, we are grateful for the state's deployment of the National Guard to help with sheltering needs, and to the additional funding dedicated to this crisis in Governor Hochul's Fiscal Year 2024 Executive Budget Proposal.

Still, we continue to depend on the state for assistance as asylum seekers arrive in our city.

Our requests of New York State include:

- Providing **additional funding for support and services** by establishing a program with an appropriation specifically for costs incurred by the city for shelter, food, and related services provided to asylum seekers.
- Supporting the creation of a **new portable housing voucher program** designed with the goal of providing stable housing for this new population.
- Providing financial assistance for individuals ineligible for federal support and establishing the **NYS Empire Licensing Act**, which would provide all New Yorkers with access to professional, occupational, commercial, or business licenses, permits, certificates, or related registrations regardless of an applicant's citizenship or immigration status.
- Creating a **more equitable Foundation Aid formula** with a methodology that supports students in temporary housing as well as shifts unspent Title III funding back to supporting

immigrant education. Given the massive influx of asylum seekers who are residing in shelters and enrolling in New York City schools, this would allow the city to provide vital additional support to our newest students.

- Urging **localities throughout the state to welcome migrants** seeking refuge. With additional funding from New York State, community based organizations can help migrants settle outside New York City.
- Locating, running, and operating **sites outside of and in New York City** to provide short and long-term housing and shelter.
- Creating a **joint task force between the state and the city** that would be responsible for creating long-term solutions, developing funding sources and providing advocacy.
- Managing and financially supporting **legal services** as part of a comprehensive asylum seekers strategy.
- Declaring a **state of emergency** and encouraging the federal government to do the same. State and federal emergency declarations will loosen restrictions on use of funds, and allow the city more flexibility in supporting asylum seekers.
- Expanding **state-funded health care coverage for undocumented adults** as many asylum seekers will likely lose their status — and therefore access to health insurance — and will need health care coverage in the future.
- Creating **permanent adult immunization reporting** without adult consent, and **expanding the list of eligible provider types** to serve as vaccinators. For instance, allowing pharmacists to administer vaccines to minors would help in managing current and future outbreaks.
- Restoring the **Article 6 funding match**. New York City is being reimbursed for medical expenses at a rate lower than the rest of the state. Restoring the A6 funding match is critical to our public health infrastructure.

Conclusion

This blueprint outlines what we have accomplished, where we are now, and the steps we must take based on what we have learned through our efforts so far.

The ongoing surge of newcomers seeking refuge has forced us to recognize that migration across national borders is neither a temporary circumstance nor entirely preventable. Whether due to political instability or other factors, cities like New York will continue to receive tens of thousands of migrants and asylum seekers each year. We must work together to overhaul our immigration system, and make it easier for migrants to begin their new lives.

New Yorkers know that the asylum seeker of today is the citizen, leader, and innovator of tomorrow. We look forward to continued collaboration with local partners, other cities, New York State, and the federal government to improve our response and the outcomes for all involved. How we move forward will determine the future we create for our city, society, and nation.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many individuals, offices and agencies who have helped craft this blueprint.

New York City Agencies

Administration for Children’s Services

Department of Design and Construction

Department of Education

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Department of Social Services / Department of Homeless Services / Human Resources Administration

Emergency Management

Health + Hospitals

Housing Preservation & Development

Law Department

Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit

Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City

Mayor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships

Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs

Mayor’s Office of Operations

Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development

Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit

NYC Service

Office of the Chief Housing Officer

Office of the Chief Technology Officer

Office of Management and Budget

Police Department

English

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE NAVIGATION CENTER

LOCATION:

American Red Cross
520 W 49th St, New York, NY 10019
Open 9AM to 5PM, Monday through Friday, and closed on weekends and major holidays.

INFORMATION AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Healthcare services and referrals
- Health insurance enrollment
- Mental health counseling
- School enrollment
- Immigration legal orientation
- IDNYC enrollment

For more information, call the AskMOIA hotline **212-788-7654** or e-mail askmoia@cityhall.nyc.gov

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES AT THE SATELLITE SITES BELOW NO APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED, WALK-INS WELCOMED

BRONX

Coalicion Mexicana

371 E. 150th Street, Bronx, NY 10455
Hours of Operation: Saturday 9AM - 4PM
Service: Information/Referrals & direct assistance
www.coalicionmexicana.org

MANHATTAN

Aid for Aids International

131 Varick Street, Suite 1006, New York, NY 10013
Hours of Operation: M - F 10AM - 4PM
Service: Information/Referrals & direct assistance
www.aidforaids.org

Coalicion Mexicana

St. Elizabeth Church, 268 Wadsworth Ave, NY, 10033
Hours of Operation: M, T, Th, F & Sat 9AM - 5PM
Service: Information/Referrals & direct assistance

Coalicion Mexicana

Columbia Community Partnership
390 Fort Washington Ave, NY, NY 10031
Hours of Operation: M, T, Th, & F 9AM - 5PM
Service: Information/Referrals & direct assistance

African Communities Together

127 West 127th Street New York, NY 10027
Hours of Operation: T, W & Th 11AM - 5PM
Service: Immigrant Rights Workshops
www.africans.us

BROOKLYN

Coalicion Mexicana

480 59th St, Suite 2L, Brooklyn, NY 11220
Hours of Operation: M & T 12PM - 8PM
Th & F 9AM - 6PM and Saturday 9AM - 4PM
Service: Information/Referrals & direct assistance

Mixteca Organization

245 23rd Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11215
Hours of Operations: M - F 10AM - 6PM; Sat 10AM - 3PM
Service: Information/Referrals & direct assistance
www.mixteca.org

Make the Road NY

301 Grove Street, Brooklyn, NY 11237
Hours of Operations: M- Th 8:30AM - 6:00PM
Service:

- **Screenings/referrals** for health & education advocacy and support.
- **Assistance** with **health** insurance enrollment, **food** pantry access and **OSHA** classes.
- **Immigrant Rights Workshops** on 1/27/23, 3/3/23, 4/21/23, & 5/26/23

www.maketheroadny.org

Turn the page over for additional locations



ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE NAVIGATION CENTER

LOCATION:

American Red Cross
520 W 49th St, New York, NY 10019
Open 9AM to 5PM, Monday through Friday, and closed on weekends and major holidays.

INFORMATION AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Healthcare services and referrals
- Health insurance enrollment
- Mental health counseling
- School enrollment
- Immigration legal orientation
- IDNYC enrollment

For more information, call the AskMOIA hotline **212-788-7654** or e-mail askmoia@cityhall.nyc.gov

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES AT THE SATELLITE SITES BELOW NO APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED, WALK-INS WELCOMED

QUEENS

New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)

71-29 Roosevelt Avenue, 2nd FL, Queens, NY 11273
Hours of Operation: Weekdays 9AM - 5PM

Service: Workforce development

www.nynice.squarespace.com

Make the Road NY

92-10 Roosevelt Avenue, Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Hours of Operations: M- Th 8:30AM - 6:00PM

Service:

- **Screenings/referrals** for health & education advocacy and support.
- **Assistance** with **health** insurance enrollment, **food** pantry access and **OSHA** classes.
- **Immigrant Rights Workshops** on 2/9/23, 3/16/23, 5/11/23 & 6/8/23

www.maketheroadny.org

STATEN ISLAND

La Colmena

774 Port Richmond Ave, Staten Island, NY 10302 or 88 Canal Street, Staten Island, NY 10304

Hours of Operation: M - F 9AM - 5PM

Service: Workforce development

www.lacolmenanyc.org

Make the Road NY

161 Port Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10302
Hours of Operations: M- Th 8:30AM - 6:00PM

Service:

- **Screenings/referrals** for health & education advocacy and support.
- **Assistance** with **health** insurance enrollment, **food** pantry access and **OSHA** classes.
- **Immigrant Rights Workshops** on 1/6/23 & 4/7/23

www.maketheroadny.org