



# State of Our Immigrant City

Annual Report  
March 2018

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

# Message from Mayor Bill de Blasio



Dear Friends:

New York has always been a city of immigrants, and for generations, diverse people from around the globe have come here to make a better life for themselves and their families. Today, more than a third of our residents are immigrants, and it is clear that they are our city's past, present, and future.

Our history has shown time and again that a united city is a strong city, and we will not let outside voices dictate the future of New York or lead us down a path of fear and discrimination. The countless contributions and achievements of immigrant New Yorkers have shaped our identity as an open and welcoming place that values tolerance, equality, and inclusion, and in today's immigration climate, it is essential that we stand strong against the attacks that threaten the character of the five boroughs.

My administration is determined to use every tool at our disposal to protect the freedoms and well-being of all our residents. Through the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, we have reaffirmed our commitment to advocate for immigrant New Yorkers and ensure they know and understand their rights and have access to vital City services. This annual report highlights MOIA's essential role in our efforts to support immigrant communities and its leadership in our mission to develop innovative ways to help immigrants thrive.

Whether we're improving public safety by building trust between our police force and immigrants, providing safe learning environments for all our students, or creating opportunity through our IDNYC program, my team and I remain dedicated to our vision for a fairer tomorrow where every New Yorker can rise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio".

Bill de Blasio  
Mayor

# Message from Commissioner Bitta Mostofi



Dear Fellow New Yorkers:

I am excited to share with you the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs' first-ever Annual Report. In this report you will learn about our diverse and powerful immigrant communities. New York City is proud to be the ultimate city of immigrants: nearly 40 percent of our residents are foreign born, and our city is home to more immigrant residents today than in over a century. We will share how City government works hand-in-hand with immigrant residents, elected officials, community partners, funders and advocates to celebrate our diversity, address challenges, and progress in our aim to be the most inclusive and welcoming city in the world.

For many in our community, 2017 was a year of immense anxiety and threats to immigrant families. From the travel ban on Muslim-majority countries to ongoing uncertainty over the future of Dreamers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients, the federal landscape has shifted rapidly. New Yorkers are rightfully concerned about a dramatic increase in federal immigration enforcement and national rhetoric that disparages our immigrant sisters and brothers. In this report, you will learn how the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has worked alongside sister agencies, cities, external partners, and immigrant New Yorkers to respond to these challenges, while ensuring that New York City's local policies and programs empower and support all of our residents.

Under the direction of Mayor Bill de Blasio, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has focused on three priority areas. First, we are enhancing the economic, civic, and social integration of immigrant New Yorkers through programs like our free municipal identification card, IDNYC, which reached over 1 million cardholders in 2017. Second, we are facilitating access to justice by making investments in immigration legal help through programs like ActionNYC, and sponsoring hundreds of Know Your Rights trainings throughout the five boroughs. Third, we are aggressively advocating for smart, inclusive immigration reform at all levels of government, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with immigrant New Yorkers to fight for policies and programs that allow all of our residents to live in safety and dignity. We will also give a snapshot of where we plan to focus our work in the coming year, to advance these three core priorities and fortify the progress we have made under Mayor de Blasio's leadership.

Finally, we dedicate this first-ever annual report to the immigrant New Yorkers who make our city so rich civically, culturally and economically. Our work at the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is only possible through our close partnerships with immigrant communities and their allies. It is immigrant New Yorkers' resilience, leadership and strength that guides our work and inspires us every day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Mostofi'.

Bitta Mostofi  
Acting Commissioner  
Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	5
Executive Summary	6
Mission of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs	8
Immigrant New Yorkers by the Numbers	9
Barriers faced by Immigrant New Yorkers: A Hostile Federal Landscape	20
MOIA Programs and 2017 Activities	23
Looking Ahead to 2018: Recommendations	37

# Acknowledgments



IDNYC enrollment specialist helps a New Yorker enroll for their IDNYC card at a “Pop-Up” enrollment site.

In a particularly challenging year for immigrant New Yorkers, MOIA’s work, and this report recounting MOIA’s activities during that year, would not be possible without the commitment and staunch support of Mayor Bill de Blasio, former New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, current 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 Office of City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity, Mayoral Photography Office, New York City Department of City

Planning, NYC Office of Management and Budget, and the NYC Human Resources Administration, especially the Office of Civil Justice. Many other City agencies, immigration legal service providers, community-based organizations, and advocates informed the final report and remain integral to MOIA’s work.

# Executive Summary

The New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) promotes the well-being of immigrants through programs and policy recommendations that facilitate the successful integration of immigrant New Yorkers into the City's civic, economic, and cultural life. Utilizing a multi-pronged approach, the Office seeks to break down barriers to opportunity, advance immigrants' rights, promote civic engagement, and facilitate the empowerment of immigrant New Yorkers. Under the leadership of Mayor Bill de Blasio, and with the partnership and support of the City Council, MOIA has led the launch of major Mayoral initiatives such as IDNYC, the City's municipal identification card for all New Yorkers, and ActionNYC, the City's community-based immigration legal services program.

In 2017 – during a time when immigrants have been the target of unremitting xenophobic policies and rhetoric by the Trump Administration – New York City proudly stood strong and reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to diversity and inclusion. In the face of a harsh, anti-immigrant climate at the federal level, the City responded by expanding efforts to safeguard and support the rights and well-being of immigrant New Yorkers. To accomplish this, MOIA worked hand-in-hand with City agencies and community partners to develop and fortify protections for immigrant New Yorkers and to ensure that essential City services remain accessible to all. This work is driven by the recognition that an inclusive approach to government is not only a core aspect of New York City's values as a city of immigrants, but is also essential to the public health and safety of all New Yorkers.

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 first such report, covering calendar year 2017.

The report provides a demographic overview of New York City's immigrant population, and describes barriers faced by immigrant New Yorkers, particularly due to increasingly hostile federal immigration policy developments. It outlines MOIA's programs and activities in 2017, as well as the challenges ahead in 2018. Highlights include:

- New York City is home to 3.1 million immigrants, the largest number in the city's history. The majority of immigrant New Yorkers are naturalized U.S. citizens, but the city is also home to a large lawful permanent resident population, as well as an estimated undocumented population of 560,000. Approximately 1 million New Yorkers live in mixed-status households, where a household member is undocumented.
- Foreign-born New Yorkers contribute significantly to the city's economic health and vitality. Immigrants own 52% of New York City's businesses, and in 2017, immigrants contributed an estimated \$195 billion to the city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or about 22% of the city's total GDP. Immigrant New Yorkers are employed across a range of industries, with a quarter of all foreign-born workers in the education, health, and human services fields.
- In light of New York's tremendous linguistic diversity, the City is committed to providing its residents with a multilingual government. MOIA and the Mayor's Office of Operations continue to work with City agencies to support implementation of Local Law 30 of 2017 on language access, by creating guidance materials, providing one-on-one technical assistance to agencies, sharing best practices, and convening agency language access coordinators. Like its sister agencies, MOIA utilizes interpretation and document translation services to ensure essential information is accessible to the

Office's multilingual audiences. In 2017, MOIA's Language Services provided 433 onsite interpreters at 153 MOIA and Mayoral events, and coordinated the translation of 76 MOIA documents, including outreach material.



Volunteers and staff distribute information during a Day of Action in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

- By creating pathways for civic engagement, New York is deepening the connections between immigrant communities and city government. In mid-2017, MOIA worked with Cuban-born artist Tania Bruguera, the mostly Spanish-speaking mothers and neighborhood activists of *Mujeres en Movimiento*, and the artists of *Kollektiv Migrantas* to develop and distribute picture-based materials about critical MOIA services to nearly 7,000 people in immigrant communities in Queens.
- Under the leadership of the Mayor and City Council, New York has made historic commitments promoting access to justice, including for immigrant New Yorkers whose needs are more acute than ever in a time of increased immigration enforcement and shifting federal policies. ActionNYC, the City's community-based immigration legal services program, provided 8,004 comprehensive legal screenings in 2017, and had a 97% approval rate for cases adjudicated in 2017.
- Smart policies that protect and support immigrants promote the safety and well-being of all New Yorkers. MOIA's collaborations with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ),

and several NYC law enforcement agencies have led to improvements in access to immigration relief via U and T visas for immigrant crime victims. In 2017, 709 law enforcement certifications were issued by City agencies to crime victims applying for these visas.

- New York City has responded forcefully to federal-level developments that negatively impact immigrant New Yorkers. At the local level, MOIA led efforts to coordinate rapid-response initiatives, inform immigrant New Yorkers about their rights and available City resources, and expand immigration legal services. In addition, MOIA worked closely with the City Council, City agencies, and other stakeholders to develop new local laws that protect the rights of immigrants and other vulnerable groups.
- Cities for Action (C4A), the bipartisan coalition of U.S. cities and local governments created by Mayor de Blasio, actively engaged in collective advocacy to support the interests of municipalities that are home to immigrants. In 2017, C4A issued multi-city sign-on letters calling attention to the harms done to cities by Trump Administration policies such as the decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and dozens of C4A member cities signed on to amicus briefs in cases challenging the Trump Administration's anti-immigrant actions.

As is clear from the initiatives and efforts described in this report, the de Blasio Administration remains deeply rooted in its commitment to the diverse immigrant communities that bolster the growth, vibrancy, and strength of New York City. With pride in the important work accomplished in 2017, MOIA looks forward to continuing to engage with partners across government and in the community to fulfill this commitment in 2018 and the years ahead.

# Mission of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



First Lady Chirlane McCray, Deputy Mayor Richard Buery, and Acting Commissioner Bitta Mostofi stand with Dreamers and undocumented youth.

New York City has a long and proud history as the quintessential 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 reforms at all levels of government in order to eliminate 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 for immigrant New Yorkers at all levels of government.



# Immigrant New Yorkers by the Numbers

The following is a demographic snapshot of immigrant New Yorkers.<sup>1</sup> The data shows that the city’s immigrant population is extremely diverse in terms of language and national origin. Immigrants live across the five boroughs and participate in the labor force at high rates. The majority of immigrants are long-time city residents and most New Yorkers live with at least one immigrant family member. Despite these deep ties to the city, immigrant New Yorkers also face disparities, including in access to health insurance and English language proficiency. Understanding this complexity is crucial to MOIA’s ability to provide effective services to immigrant New Yorkers and collaborate with City agencies and community partners to fulfill MOIA’s mission.



In 2017, MOIA worked with artist Tania Bruguera and Mujeres en Movimiento to distribute information to nearly 7,000 New Yorkers through the CycleNews project.

## Overview

New York City is home to 3.1 million immigrants, the largest number in the City’s history.<sup>2</sup> Immigrants comprise nearly 38% of the city population and 45% of its workforce. The foreign-born population resides in all corners of the five boroughs. Certain neighborhoods, especially in Queens and Brooklyn and parts of the Bronx and Manhattan, have particularly high concentrations of immigrant residents.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Unless otherwise noted, all data is based on 2012-2016 5-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS) as augmented by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity. The ACS PUMS is a weighted sample, and weighting variables are used to generate accurate estimates and standard errors.

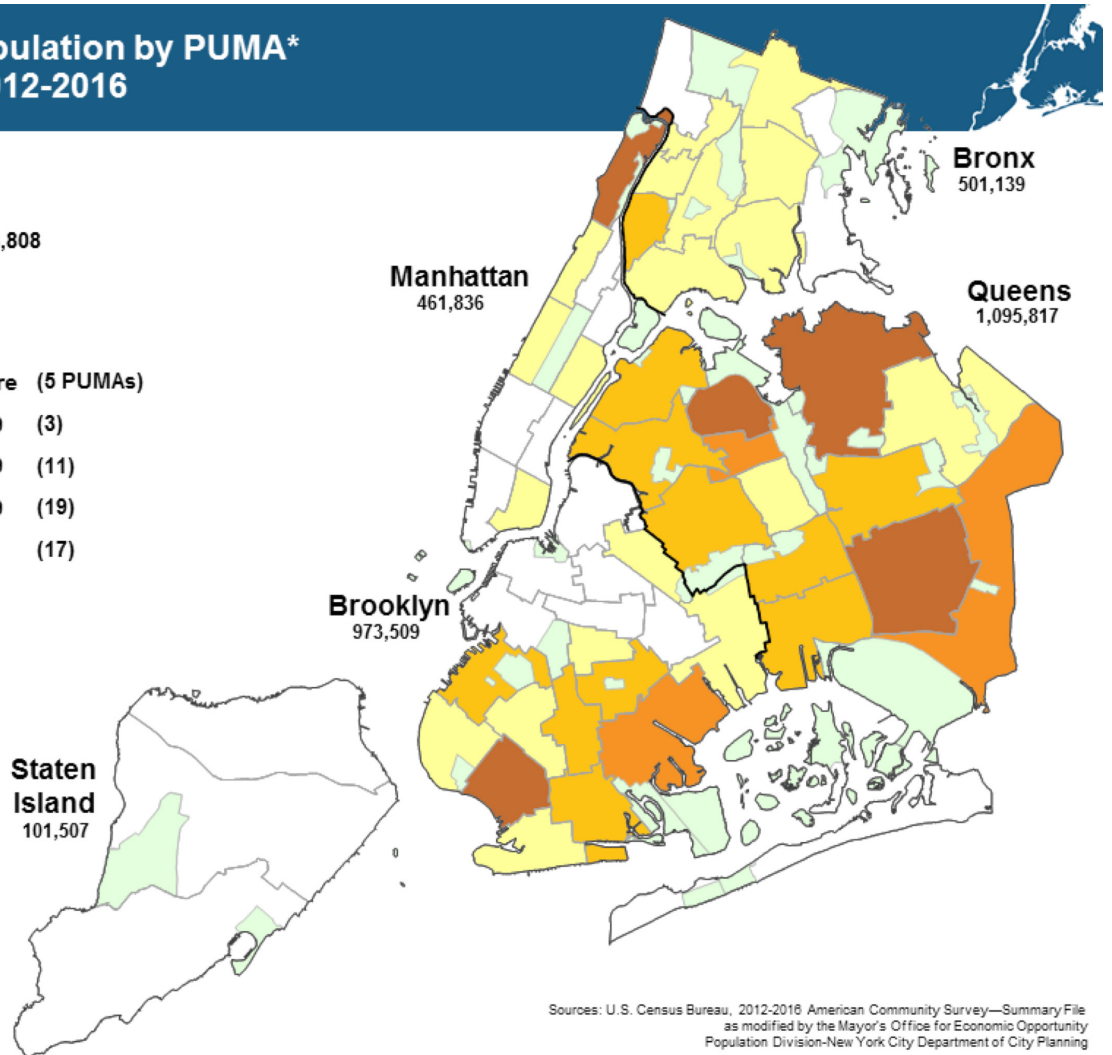
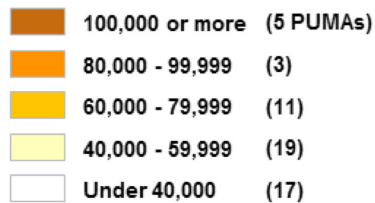
2 Several terms are used throughout this section. “Green card holders & other status” includes individuals with lawful permanent resident status, those with nonimmigrant visas, and those with other forms of status like asylees and refugees. “Undocumented immigrants” includes individuals without valid immigrant or nonimmigrant status, and includes individuals with forms of non-permanent discretionary relief such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS). These classifications and estimates are based on internal analysis by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity.

3 Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey - Population Division, New York City Department of City Planning.

## Foreign-born Population by PUMA\* New York City, 2012-2016

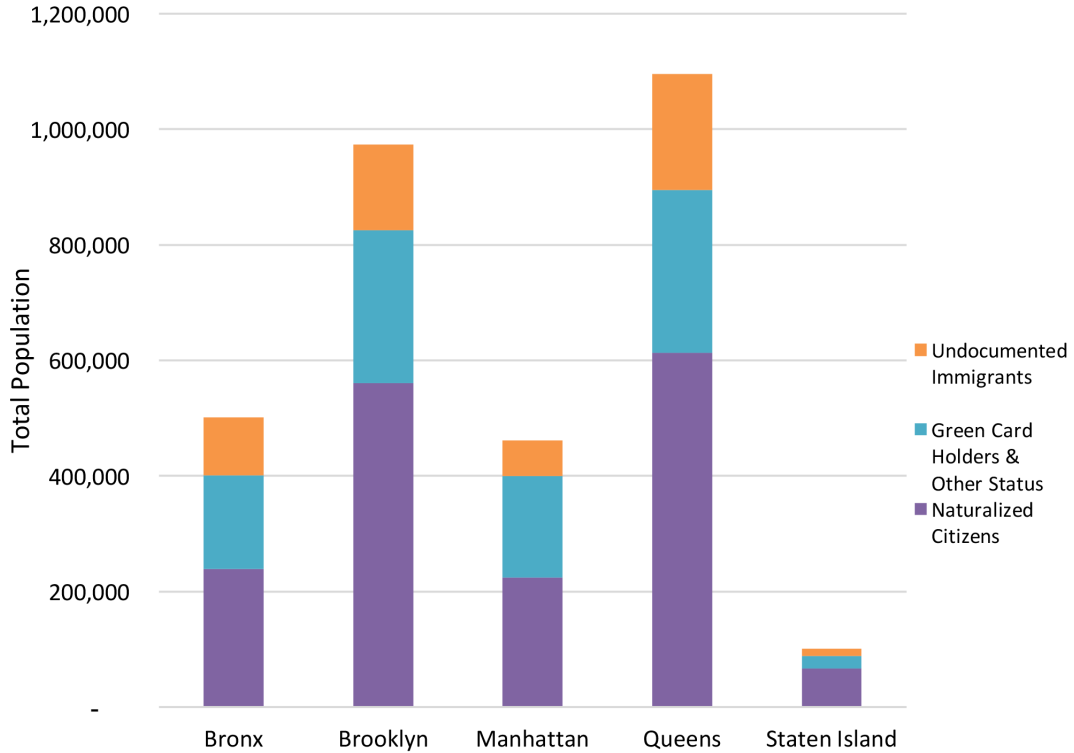
New York City = 3,133,808

### Foreign-born



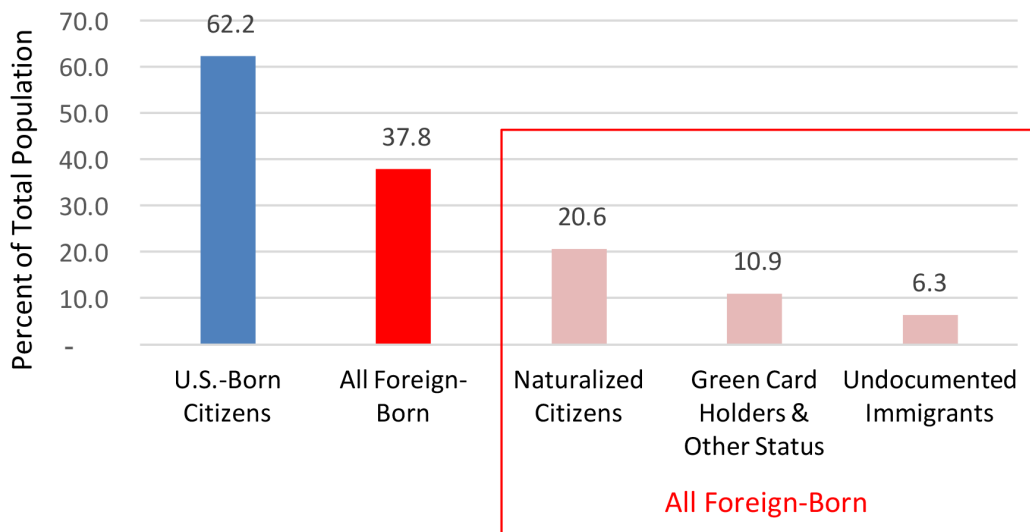
All five boroughs have significant immigrant populations. That pattern holds true for the distribution of undocumented immigrants across the boroughs as well. Note: green indicates uninhabited land, such as parks.

## Immigrant Population by Borough



Approximately 54% 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 currently eligible to naturalize. New York City is also home to approximately 560,000 undocumented immigrants, a decline from an estimated undocumented immigrant population of 618,000 in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

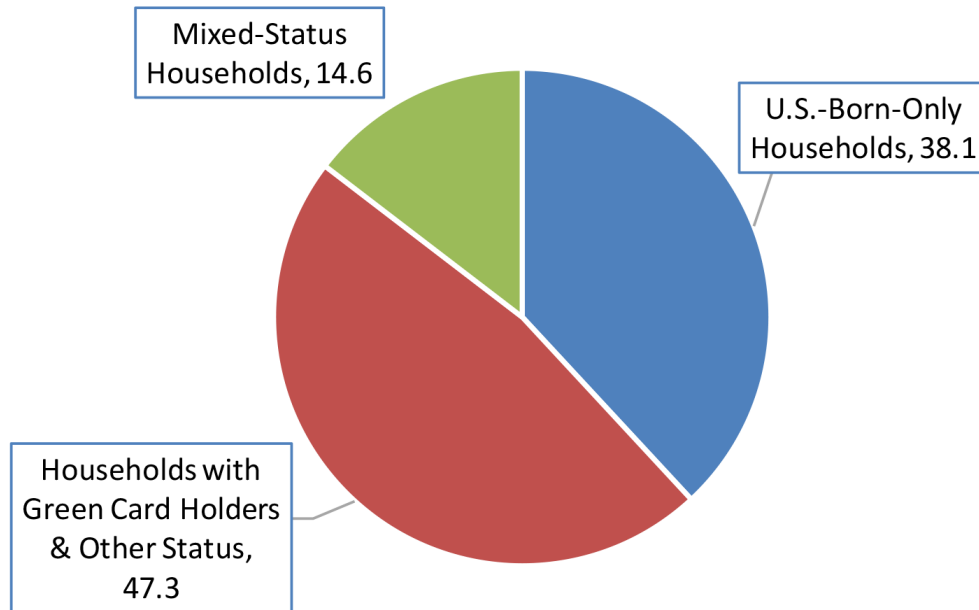
## NYC Population by Immigration Status (%)



4 2008 ACS PUMS as augmented by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity.

Approximately 62% of New Yorkers live in households with at least one immigrant,<sup>5</sup> including approximately one million New Yorkers who live in mixed-status households (where at least one person is undocumented).

## NYC Households by Immigration Status (%)



The top ten countries of origin for foreign-born City residents are:

	Country of origin for NYC immigrants	Number	% of all foreign-born
	<i>Total Foreign-born</i>	3,133,808	-
1	Dominican Republic	422,244	13.5%
2	China	318,581	10.2%
3	Mexico	183,197	5.8%
4	Jamaica	176,718	5.6%
5	Guyana	136,760	4.4%
6	Ecuador	129,693	4.1%
7	Haiti	88,383	2.8%
8	Trinidad & Tobago	83,222	2.7%
9	Bangladesh	80,448	2.6%
10	India	76,424	2.4%

<sup>5</sup> Among Census-defined “family households,” which may include non-relatives.

The city has significant linguistic diversity, with more than 150 languages spoken. The top ten languages of foreign-born New York City residents who speak a language other than English at home are:

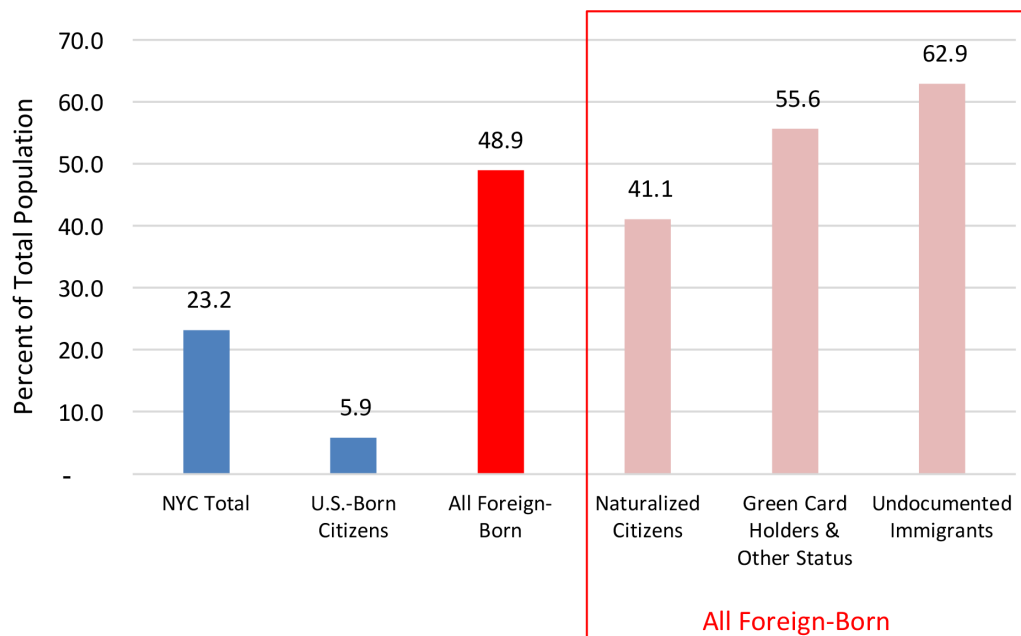
	Language spoken by those who speak a language other than English at home	% of all foreign-born
1	Spanish	40.9%
2	Chinese*	15.0%
3	Russian	7.2%
4	Haitian Creole	3.6%
5	Bengali	3.3%
6	Italian	2.3%
7	Arabic	2.2%
8	Korean	2.0%
9	Polish	1.8%
10	French	1.7%

\*Chinese includes Cantonese and Mandarin.

Speakers of these 10 languages account for more than 80% of foreign-born New York City residents who speak languages other than English at home.

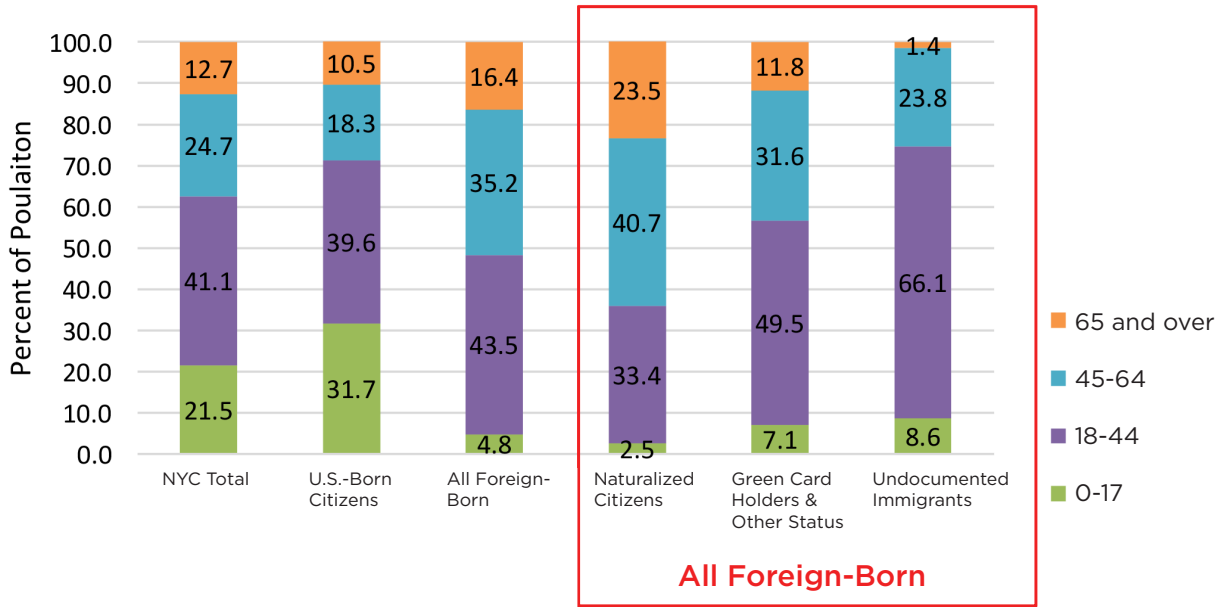
Approximately 49% of immigrants are Limited English Proficient (LEP), meaning that they speak English less than “very well.” Nearly 63% of undocumented immigrants are LEP.

### Limited English Proficient (LEP) (%)



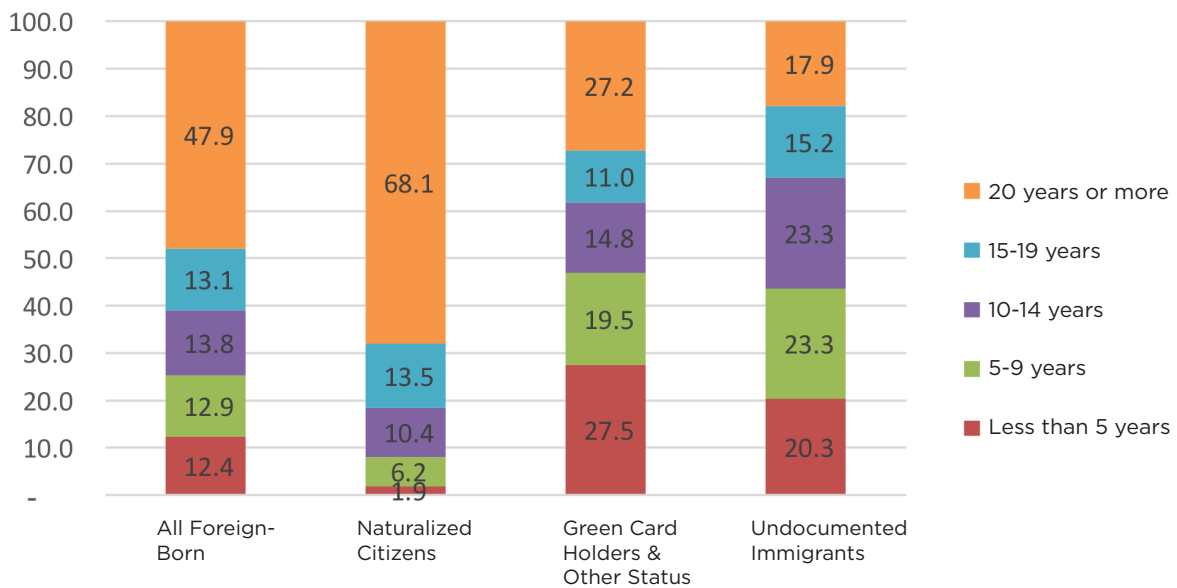
Immigrant New Yorkers are generally a slightly older population than U.S.-born citizens. Within the immigrant population, naturalized citizens are older on average, compared to undocumented immigrants and other noncitizens, who tend to be younger.

### Age by Immigration Status (%)



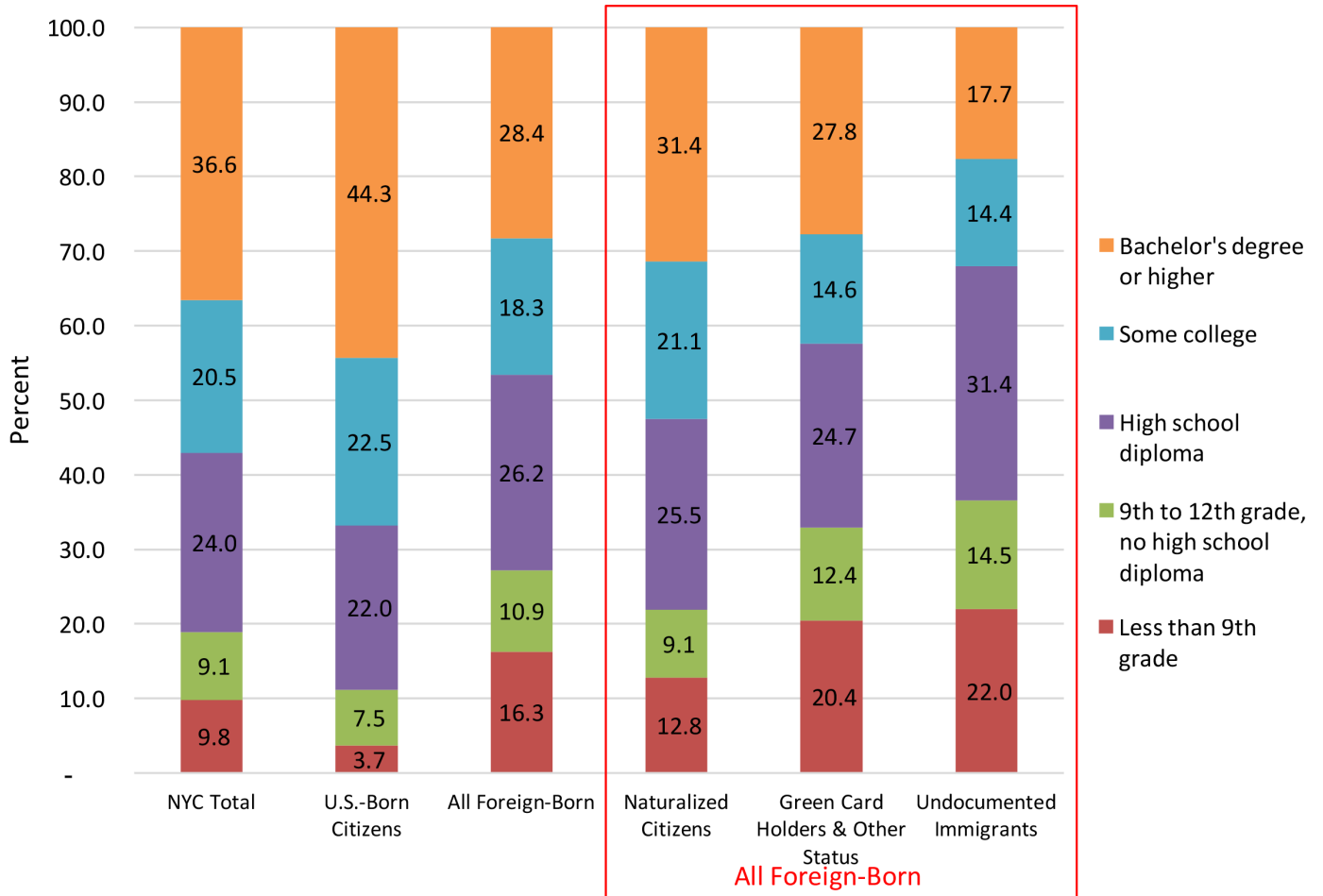
In addition, almost 50% of immigrant New Yorkers have lived in the United States for 20 years or more.

### Years in the U.S. by Immigration Status (%)



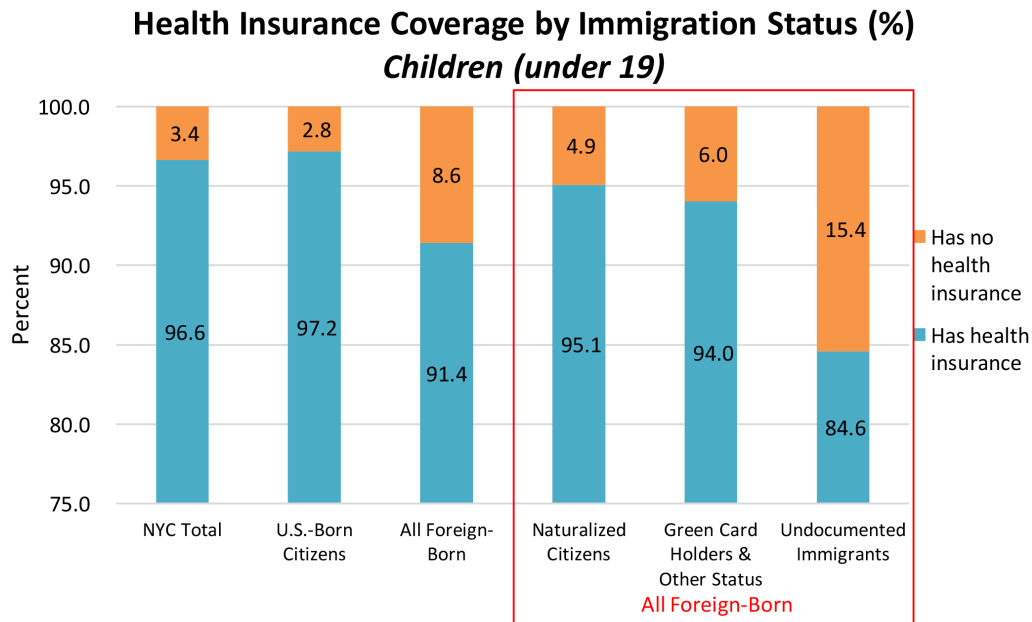
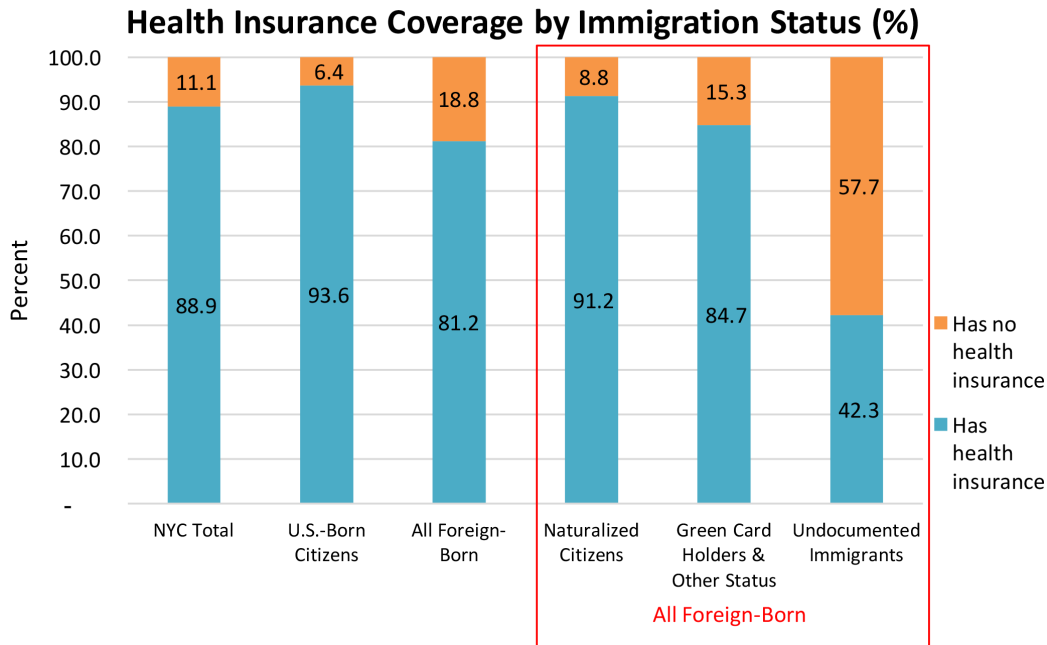
Nearly half of immigrant New Yorkers age 25 years or older have graduated from college or have attended some college. These rates are notably higher for naturalized U.S. citizens. Nearly 37% of undocumented immigrants living in New York City have less than a high school degree, compared to approximately 33% of those with green cards and other status, 22% of naturalized U.S. citizens, and 11% of U.S.-born citizens.

### Educational Attainment by Immigration Status (%)



## Health and Housing

In New York City, there are persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and noncitizens, especially undocumented immigrants. Nearly 94% of U.S.-born New Yorkers have health insurance, compared with just 69% of non-citizen New Yorkers. The disparity is particularly concerning among the undocumented community, where only 42% of undocumented immigrants have health insurance.<sup>6</sup> This gap also persists among children (under age 19) despite the fact that universal coverage is available under state law: 15% of undocumented children are uninsured, compared to 3% of U.S.-born citizen children.



<sup>6</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.



About 22% of immigrant New Yorkers reside in overcrowded households, defined here as more than one person per room. This number includes the approximately 8% 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 noncitizens.

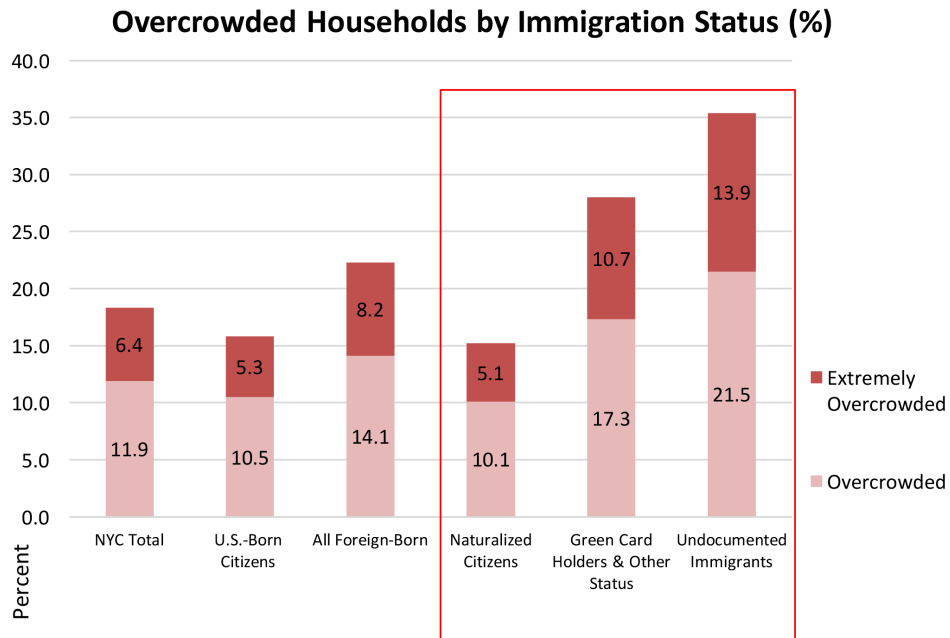


Figure above: Overcrowded households are defined as having more than one person per room. Extremely overcrowded households are defined as having more than 1.5 persons per room.

Over 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.

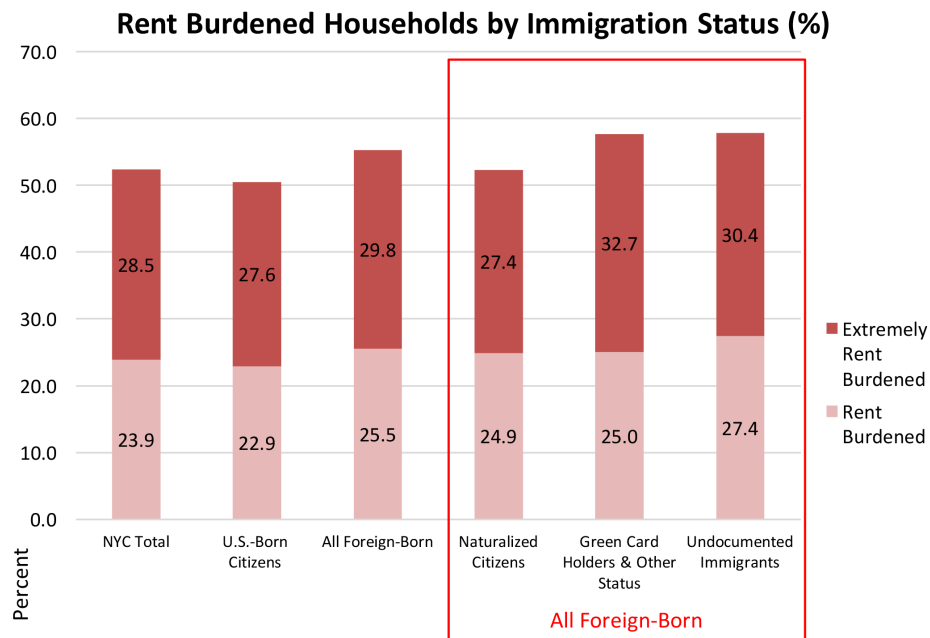
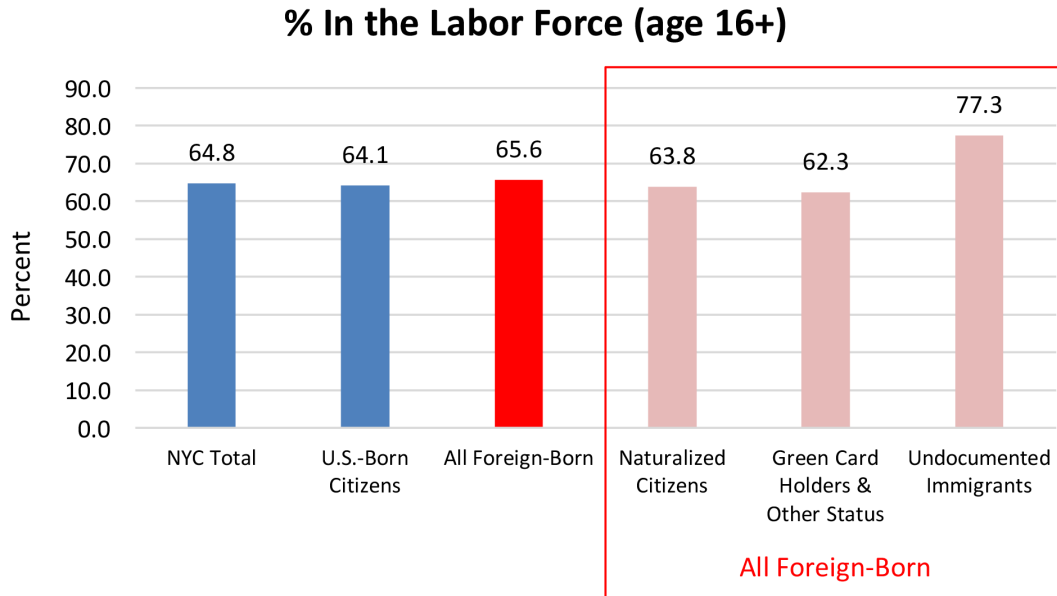


Figure above: Rent-burdened households are defined as paying 30 percent or more of their household income on rent. Extremely rent-burdened are defined as paying more than 50 percent of household income on rent.

In addition, approximately one-third of immigrant New Yorkers are homeowners, live with a homeowner, or live in a household with a mortgage.

## Labor and Earnings

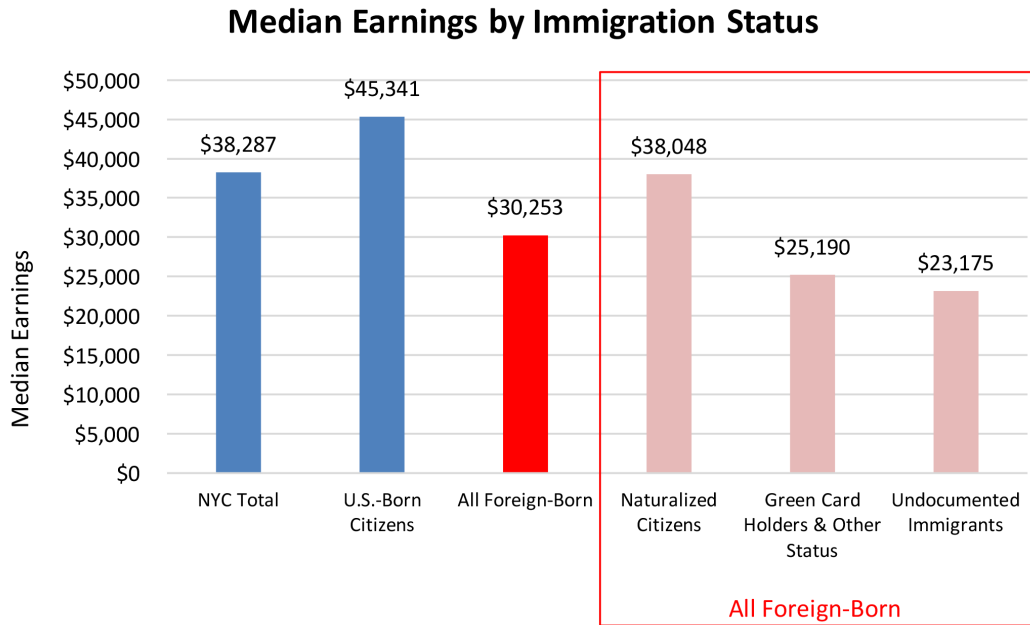
Immigrants have a labor force participation rate similar to that of the general population, though the rate is significantly higher among undocumented immigrants. Foreign-born workers make up 45% of the city's labor force, up from 31% in 1990.



Immigrant New Yorkers are employed in a wide range of industries. About 25% of immigrant New Yorkers work in the education, health, and human services fields. The top ten industries for employment among immigrant New Yorkers are:

	Industry	% of total foreign-born workers employed in this industry
1	Education/Health/Human Services	25%
2	Entertainment Services	12%
3	Professional	10%
4	Retailers	10%
5	Financial	8%
6	Other Services	7%
7	Extraction/Construction	7%
8	Transportation & Utilities	7%
9	Manufacturing	5%
10	International Affairs	3%

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 native-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 and vitality. Immigrants own 52% of New York City's businesses. And in 2017, immigrants contributed \$195 billion to the city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or about 22% of the city's total GDP.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> NYC OMB estimate based on the April 2017 Executive Budget Forecast. City GDP measures the value of the goods and services produced by the New York City economy in a given time period.

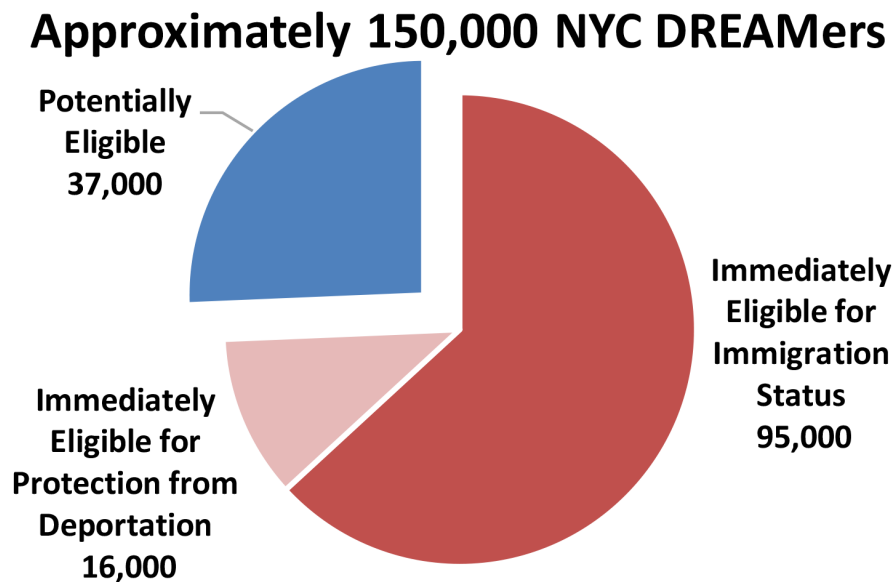
# Barriers Faced by Immigrant New Yorkers: A Hostile Federal Landscape

The Trump Administration has undertaken major changes in federal immigration policy that have negatively impacted immigrant New Yorkers and have also contributed to heightened anti-immigrant rhetoric that was a feature of the presidential campaign. Immigrant New Yorkers and their families were particularly affected by the rescission of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the announcement of the upcoming end of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation for Haiti, ongoing uncertainty around the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, three travel bans primarily targeting immigrants and visitors from Muslim-majority countries, restrictive changes to the U.S. refugee resettlement program, and increased immigration enforcement.

New York City has responded vigorously to these and other federal immigration developments, with MOIA leading efforts to coordinate rapid-response initiatives, inform immigrant New Yorkers about their rights and available City resources, expand immigration legal services, and advocate for just immigration policies and immigrant protections at all levels of government.

## DACA

Tens of thousands of New Yorkers were affected by the end of the DACA program, which provides deportation relief and temporary work authorization to qualifying applicants who were brought to the United States as minors. On September 5, Attorney General Sessions announced DACA's rescission, throwing the city's approximately 30,000 DACA recipients into uncertainty. The end of the program also meant that otherwise-eligible New Yorkers could not apply for first-time DACA status. There are a total of approximately 73,000 DACA recipients and DACA-eligible New Yorkers in the city, including 56,000 who were eligible and 16,000 who would have become eligible if they had met the program's educational requirement.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> As a result of federal court injunctions, DACA renewals remain available as of the writing of this report. However, first-time DACA applications are not available.

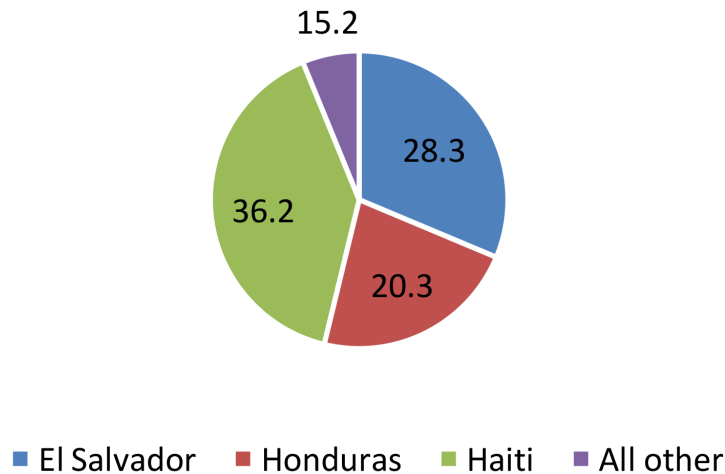
With so many New Yorkers affected, MOIA has advocated not only for DACA’s extension, but for a permanent legislative solution through the DREAM Act or similar legislation. The proposed DREAM Act of 2017<sup>9</sup> would benefit hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Approximately 150,000<sup>10</sup> city residents would be eligible for relief through this legislation, which would grant lawful status to qualifying immigrants who arrived in the United States as children more than four years ago and are either currently enrolled in school or have a high school diploma or equivalent. The total number of prospective beneficiaries includes approximately 110,000 New Yorkers who would be immediately eligible for status under the Act, and approximately 37,000 New Yorkers who would be eligible upon meeting the legislation’s education requirement. Among the immediately eligible population would be 16,000 children in elementary and middle school who would not be old enough to apply for immigration status right away, but would be automatically entitled to protection from deportation.<sup>11</sup> When considering the additional 320,000 New Yorkers who live in households with prospective beneficiaries, including children, parents, siblings, and other family members and non-family household members, the passage of the DREAM Act would help nearly half a million New Yorkers overall.

TPS

Changes to TPS designations by the Trump Administration have also threatened many New Yorkers’ immigration status. TPS provides work authorization and protection from deportation for nationals of designated countries when temporary but extraordinary conditions there, such as war or natural disaster, prevent nationals living in the United States from returning safely. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reviews a country’s TPS designation at intervals of six, 12, or 18 months, depending on its assessment of those country conditions.

In the fall of 2017, DHS announced the end of TPS for Haiti and Nicaragua, which will take effect in 2019, and only a six-month extension of TPS for Honduras. In January 2018, DHS announced the end of TPS for El Salvador, to take effect in fall 2019. Approximately 15,000 New Yorkers have TPS. Most are from Haiti (about 5,400), El Salvador (about 4,300), and Honduras (about 3,100).<sup>12</sup>

**TPS Recipients in NYC (%)**



9 S. 1615, 115th Cong. (2017).

10 Due to rounding, numbers in this section may not add up precisely.

11 Defined as those who would be eligible, are 5 years old and older, and are currently attending school below the 9th grade.

12 Based on 2010-2014 5-Year ACS PUMS as augmented by the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity. The other countries with current TPS designations are Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Among these, the Trump Administration has already announced that the designation for Sudan will end in fall 2018, South Sudan and Syria have been extended into fall 2019, and others are pending decisions in the coming months.

### Travel Bans

In addition to ending protections for immigrants currently within the United States, the Trump Administration undertook efforts to restrict immigration from Muslim-majority countries. On January 27, 2017, President Trump signed Executive Order 13769, the first of three travel bans which sought to curtail immigration from several Muslim-majority countries. Among other negative impacts, the bans caused tremendous uncertainty for immigrants seeking to reunite with family members, triggered widespread protests, and sparked litigation that remains ongoing. The largest groups affected in New York City have been Iranian, Syrian, and Yemeni residents and their families.

### Refugee Restrictions

The Trump Administration also suspended refugee admissions for 120 days and lowered the federal fiscal year 2018 refugee resettlement ceiling to 45,000 people, a dramatic decrease from 110,000 the previous year. As a result of these policies, the number of refugees resettled in New York City has dropped dramatically, from 340 in 2016 to just 164 in 2017. In 2017, these refugees included just 23 from countries included in the travel bans and refugee restrictions, a drop from 81 in 2016.<sup>13</sup>

### Increased Enforcement

In 2017, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) dramatically expanded immigration enforcement, increasing arrests and causing widespread fear in immigrant communities. ICE arrests in New York City and surrounding counties increased from a monthly average of 136 arrests during the portion of federal fiscal year 2017 prior to President Trump's first full month in office (February 2017), to 254 during the months under the Trump Administration—an increase of 46%, adjusted for the difference in durations of the time periods. Most strikingly, arrests of individuals with no criminal convictions rose 421% between the two periods.

In summary, mitigating barriers confronting immigrant New Yorkers is a commitment that cuts across all of MOIA's work, in line with the de Blasio Administration's commitment to promoting a diverse and inclusive city. MOIA has long focused on alleviating barriers that impede immigrant access to City services and resources, such as limited English proficiency and language access, availability of culturally appropriate services, lack of awareness among immigrant communities about available services, federal eligibility rules that limit access due to immigration status, and inaccessibility of some programs due to location or open hours. The policy changes pursued by the Trump Administration, in particular, have raised significant new challenges, and prompted the City to respond vigorously to a range of pressing needs.

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Office of Admissions, Refugee Processing Center, available at [ireports.wrapsnet.org](http://ireports.wrapsnet.org).

# MOIA Programs and 2017 Activities

Under the de Blasio administration, MOIA's work advances 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 2017, these efforts have supported the City's continuing commitment to protecting New York's core values, as a city of immigrants.

## **Priority 1: Enhancing Immigrant New Yorkers' Economic, Civic, and Social Integration**

MOIA provides a range of services and resources that facilitate immigrant New Yorkers' integration into all aspects of city life. It supports New Yorkers' access to government-issued identification through the IDNYC card. MOIA conducts research and monitors developments at all levels of government in order to effectively advise the Mayor, Council, and City agencies on immigrant-serving best practices as well as rapid-response strategies, a crucial need in 2017. MOIA organizes language programs designed to meet the needs of a multilingual city, and cultural programs that celebrate the city's diversity. MOIA operates a variety of outreach programs to ensure that immigrant New Yorkers are connected to City government and services. In 2017, this outreach work and community partnerships were essential to support communities affected by federal policy shifts such as the travel bans, the termination of DACA, and changes to the TPS program.

**IDNYC:** IDNYC, New York's municipal ID card, remains a major Mayoral initiative and a crucial means of fostering inclusion and access for New York City's diverse populations, including immigrants. The program hit a major milestone in 2017, issuing its one millionth card. By year's end, the number of unique IDNYC cardholders reached 1,151,264. IDNYC processed 192,001 applications in 2017. In the last year, IDNYC launched new tools to make applying for the card more accessible to all New Yorkers. The program created an online portal, allowing applicants to start their application at home, check the status of their card, and book appointments. In April 2017, the program launched IDNYC On the Go, IDNYC's mobile command center, to meet New Yorkers in every corner of the city. By year's end, IDNYC On the Go had enrolled 3,876 New Yorkers.



IDNYC on the Go! allows New Yorkers to enroll for their ID card where they work, live, and play.

IDNYC continued to successfully use temporary "pop-up" enrollment centers in 2017. For example, IDNYC partnered with the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to organize pop-ups at four homeless shelters, enrolling 700 clients and staff. IDNYC organized pop-up sites at Department of Education (DOE) high schools, City University of New York (CUNY) campuses, The Cooper Union, and The New School. IDNYC also partnered with approximately 30 local and state elected officials to either host or co-sponsor a popup enrollment site at their offices or within their district. A total of 21,936 New Yorkers enrolled at pop-up sites in 2017.



IDNYC is available to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status.

The IDNYC program continues to expand the utility and access offered by the card. For example, in January, IDNYC partnered with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to enable cardholders to access their vaccine records or those of their children via the Citywide Immunization Registry. By year's end, 1,772 cardholders had accessed vaccine records.

## Guidance to Other Agencies and Elected Officials

### Guidance to the Mayor and City Agencies

Throughout 2017, MOIA advised the Mayor on major federal policy shifts affecting immigrant New Yorkers. These included the President's executive orders on immigration, the travel bans, changes to the U.S. refugee resettlement program, increased immigration enforcement, the end of the DACA program, and termination of TPS designations for certain countries. MOIA alongside its sister agencies conducted legal, qualitative, and quantitative research on these federal developments, as well as on local and state changes. MOIA produced research and fact sheets on DACA, the DREAM Act, and TPS, and conducted briefings for local, state, and federal officials. The Office also monitored and analyzed developments in federal legislation affecting immigrants, such as the tax bill passed by Congress in December.

Drawing upon this research, MOIA developed and implemented rapid-response strategies to inform City agencies about these and other critical federal policy changes that impact New York City's immigrants. MOIA held agency briefings, distributed materials for agencies to disseminate to their staff and the public, and worked with affected agencies to

develop strategies to minimize or mitigate the negative impacts of federal policy changes on their services and programs. In response to increased fears of immigration enforcement on school property, MOIA collaborated with DOE to conduct outreach to immigrant students and families. These outreach efforts included Know Your Rights forums, legal clinics, and distribution of resources about the end of DACA and other issues affecting immigrant families. In addition, to address employers' concerns about immigration enforcement and workers' rights, MOIA alongside the Department of Consumer



MOIA's outreach team engages New Yorkers in all five boroughs with multi-lingual outreach brochures and material.

Affairs' Office of Labor Policy and Standards (OLPS), the City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), Small Business Services (SBS), and DOHMH helped coordinate a small business town hall in July 2017.

MOIA also provided research and guidance to the Mayor on immigrant-specific concerns relevant to a variety of core Administration efforts, including voting access for naturalized New Yorkers, tenant harassment on the basis of immigration status or perceived status, promoting construction safety among the immigrant workforce, and access to public benefits for immigrants and mixed-status families. Additionally, MOIA provided guidance on particular challenges faced by LEP immigrants, including participation in the 2020 Census, literacy, adult education, access to public benefits, and access to legal services.



## Guidance on City Legislation

In 2017, MOIA worked closely with the City Council, City agencies, and other stakeholders on the development of several local laws affecting immigrant New Yorkers and expanding protections for them and other vulnerable groups, including those described below.

- **Local Law 30** requires City agencies that provide public services to translate commonly-used documents in the city's top 10 languages, as determined by Census and NYC DOE data.<sup>14</sup> Under this law, certain City agencies must provide telephonic interpretation in at least 100 languages and develop and implement a language access implementation plan. The law built on Executive Order 120, which required language services to be available in six languages. As a result, documents will be available in the languages of 86% (up from 81%) of LEP New Yorkers. MOIA and the Mayor's Office of Operations (OPS) continue to work with City agencies to support the law's implementation by creating guidance materials, providing one-on-one technical assistance to agencies, sharing best practices, and convening agency language access coordinators.
- **Local Law 185** codified MOIA's expanded role under the de Blasio Administration, ensuring that MOIA will effectively serve future generations of immigrant New Yorkers. MOIA's responsibilities under the law include advising the Mayor and City Council on barriers to immigrants accessing City services, assisting other agencies as they implement laws affecting immigrants, providing advice on immigrants' legal services needs, working with other agencies to protect confidential information, and advising law enforcement agencies about U and T visa certifications. The law also requires MOIA to produce this public annual report.
- **Local Law 186** established a MOIA-led, interagency immigrant affairs task force. The task force is charged with reviewing and making recommendations on the implementation of laws affecting immigrants, identifying barriers faced by immigrants

in accessing City services, and studying vulnerable immigrant populations' needs.

- **Local Law 226** prohibits the Department of Probation (DOP) from holding a person pursuant to a civil immigration detainer unless federal immigration authorities present a judicial warrant and the person has been convicted of a violent or serious crime or is a possible match in the terrorist database.
- **Local Law 227** requires DOE to provide students with information about their rights on a variety of topics, including immigration enforcement. It also mandates that DOE notify parents before disclosing certain information about their child, except in extremely limited circumstances. These protections include notifying parents about any request by non-local law enforcement to gain access to a student or their records, unless prohibited by law.
- **Local Law 228** restricts the use of City resources and staff for immigration enforcement. This law also prohibits City agencies from entering into cooperative "287(g)" agreements with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security or otherwise subjecting City employees to federal immigration authorities' direction.

## Interagency Engagement and Support

In addition to its rapid-response work, MOIA supports interagency engagement on a range of issues affecting immigrant communities. Some of MOIA's 2017 interagency partnerships included:

- **Health.** In December 2016, MOIA and NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H) issued a joint Open Letter to Immigrant Patients to reassure immigrant communities that the City's public health care facilities are safe places to receive quality health care for all, regardless of immigration status. Throughout 2017, MOIA and H+H and other agencies publicized that message through signage, ethnic media advertising, infocards, and community forums. In 2017, the City also concluded the one-year ActionHealthNYC pilot project, which has already contributed to systematic changes in care management for

<sup>14</sup> According to the methodology described in the law, the 10 designated languages are Spanish, Chinese, Russian, French Creole, Bengali, Korean, Arabic, Urdu, French, and Polish.

uninsured patients and will inform ongoing planning by MOIA and other agencies to improve care for immigrant patients across the city. In response to concerns about the deleterious mental health effects of immigration enforcement, MOIA partnered with ThriveNYC to help connect immigrants and LEP residents to mental health resources and services.



Performers approach the stage at MOIA's International Mother Language Day Celebration.

- **Emergency management.** MOIA supported the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) efforts to provide accessible services at Disaster Assistance Service Centers to LEP residents affected by an April 11 apartment building fire in Elmhurst, Queens and Puerto Ricans displaced by Hurricane Maria.
- **Housing.** In summer 2017, MOIA collaborated on anti-housing discrimination and harassment work with the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and CCHR in response to instances of tenant harassment in Queens, working together with those agencies developing a one-page flyer on tenants' rights and distributing it throughout the City. MOIA also worked with HPD to secure wider and more diverse immigrant participation in a housing vacancy survey. To further ensure the safety of vulnerable immigrants facing homelessness, MOIA worked with DSS and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to improve how DHS processes shelter requests from asylum applicants and victims of human trafficking.
- **Economic empowerment.** MOIA provided guidance on the Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan and workforce development working group with Department of City Planning

(DCP), the NYC Office of Workforce Development (WKDEV), SBS, and DOHMH.

- **Worker's rights.** MOIA participated in a labor and human rights working group with CCHR and the City's Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), and also joined a workers' rights public hearing hosted by DCA's OLPS in April 2017. Throughout 2017, MOIA also participated in paid care worker (home health aide) outreach in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan with OLPS and CCHR, including panels, trainings, and breakout sessions addressing workers' rights and experiences on the job.

## Language Programs and Services

### We Are New York (WANY)

English language proficiency is an important factor impacting the ability to access education and employment, as well as health and social services. Recognizing this, MOIA runs We Are New York (WANY), an English Language Learning (ELL) program that helps immigrant New Yorkers learn English through content-based, civic-focused instruction, videos, and educational materials. WANY'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.

WANY's unique program model supports English language learning while connecting immigrant New Yorkers to City services and promoting community empowerment. WANY students share their experiences with others in their community as they work together to discuss common challenges and develop solutions. WANY also provides an opportunity for volunteer facilitators to grow as community leaders: WANY's community classes are led by trained volunteers who use WANY videos and materials to facilitate ten-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 2017, WANY organized 182 classes, engaged 3,500 ELL students, and trained 249 new volunteer facilitators.



New Yorkers take the oath during a naturalization ceremony

The first set of ten WANY videos highlighted issues such as education, health, emergency preparedness, and domestic violence. In 2017, MOIA worked with vendors to develop seven new videos addressing topics such as mental health, workers' rights, social services, workforce development, and early childhood education. These new videos, WANY's second season, will be re-branded and released in 2018 alongside an interactive website to expand the program's reach outside the classroom, as well as new educational materials including workbooks, readers, comic books, civic maps, and audio profiles of language learners.

### Access to Translation and Interpretation Services

MOIA's Language Services arranges onsite interpretation at MOIA and Mayoral events and coordinates translation of MOIA's outreach materials and other MOIA-created documents to ensure that limited English proficient New Yorkers are able to access City services and resources in their language. In 2017, Language Services also provided 433 interpreters for simultaneous interpretation at 153 events. MOIA coordinated the translation of 76 documents and 385 translations.

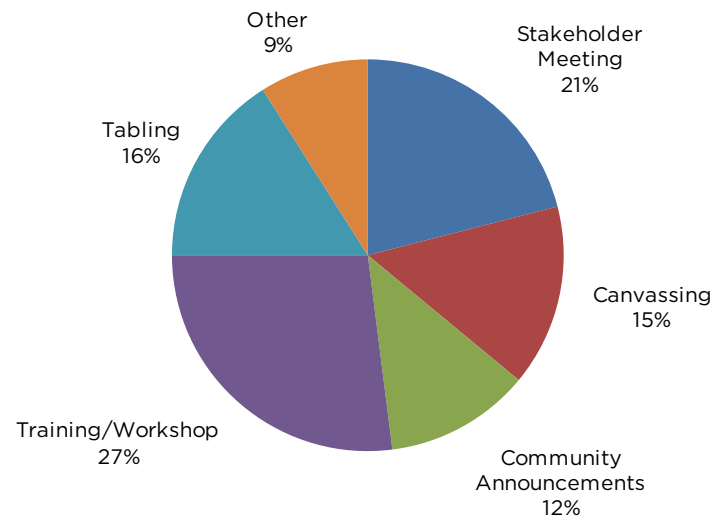
### Poll Site Interpreter Expansion

MOIA piloted a groundbreaking project to place Russian and Haitian Creole interpreters at 20 poll sites in Brooklyn to help LEP voters for the November 2017 general election. More than 50 interpreters provided services to nearly 500 LEP New Yorkers.

## Community Services & Outreach Programs

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 immigrants in New York, and other resources. In 2017, changing federal immigration policies and increased enforcement prompted additional outreach efforts and the development of targeted campaigns, as well as an expansion of outreach work to engage immigrant New Yorkers regarding their legal rights. In the Trump era, these expanded efforts enabled the City to communicate critical, timely information and disseminate resources to keep communities informed and connected to City resources.

### Outreach Engagements in 2017



Overall, MOIA's Community Services and Outreach Teams participated in approximately 1,400 events throughout 2017. These included providing trainings, participating in community discussions, tabling at partner organizations' events, and canvassing targeted neighborhoods and public transportation with urgent information such as updates on the travel bans and DACA. In addition, MOIA responded to 697 calls to the Office's constituent services hotline and provided 898 referrals to constituents. MOIA also received 406 emails and provided 355 referrals via email.

## Travel Ban Campaign

On January 27, approximately 3,000 New Yorkers rallied at JFK airport to protest President Trump's first travel ban. MOIA and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU) mobilized at the airport, where MOIA supported volunteer lawyers, worked with members of the City Council and New York's Congressional delegation to liaise among U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials, families, and attorneys, and took to social media to create public awareness. Throughout 2017, MOIA coordinated 37 visits to 20 mosques in all five boroughs and provided critical and time-sensitive guidance about resources for New Yorkers affected by the three travel bans issued over the course of the year.

## DACA/DREAM Act Campaign

On September 5, the Trump Administration announced the termination of the DACA program. For the rest of the year, MOIA undertook a range of outreach, media, and advocacy initiatives to provide the public with up-to-date information, connect DACA recipients to City legal services, and demonstrate the City's support for DACA recipients. MOIA organized numerous DACA-themed Know Your Rights (KYR) forums and press conferences with local leaders and community organizations. Bolstered by valuable support from volunteers, MOIA also mobilized to coordinate four DACA Days of Action to inform the public about the Trump Administration's decision to end DACA and the urgency of eligible DACA recipients renewing their status. As part of these Days of Action, MOIA staff and volunteers distributed flyers to the public and answered questions, directly reaching over 36,000 people with this important and time-sensitive information. In addition, MOIA organized a September 13 tele-town hall, a public town hall conducted via telephone, that was joined by more than 9,000 people.

MOIA also organized several events to raise awareness about the DREAM Act and reaffirm the City's support for its Dreamers. On September 5, MOIA's Acting Commissioner Bitta Mostofi joined First Lady Chirlane McCray and then-Deputy Mayor Richard Buery to host a dinner and discussion for Dreamers and undocumented youth at Gracie Mansion. On

November 19, MOIA hosted a second Dreamer Dinner with the Hispanic Federation and the Center for Faith and Community Partnerships (CFCP). At these events, local Dreamers shared their powerful stories, and MOIA highlighted City resources.

## Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Coalition

In response to the Trump Administration's decision to end TPS for Haiti, and the uncertain fate of TPS for other nationalities with large numbers of TPS recipients, MOIA formed a TPS Coalition, consisting of more than 20 organizations and stakeholders, including local, state, and federal legislators, labor unions, advocacy groups, CBOs, and faith leaders. The coalition met eight times beginning in May 2017 to plan advocacy strategies and outreach events to keep the public informed about the latest TPS developments. In addition, MOIA co-organized three TPS Town Halls in Brooklyn at Linden Public Library, Medgar Evers College, and the Flatbush YMCA, and also participated in seven additional TPS Town Halls, seven TPS press conferences, and two TPS rallies.

MOIA provided New Yorkers with updated information about changes to the TPS program through KYR forums, flyers, and social media. To further combat fear and confusion in affected communities about these changes, MOIA organized an October 26 Day of Action in which 20 volunteers helped MOIA staff reach 17,000 New Yorkers, as well as a November 21 Day of Action, through which MOIA staff and 25 volunteers reached 12,115 people. MOIA also organized three Faith Weekends of Action on TPS.

## Know Your Rights (KYR) Forums

MOIA has long coordinated KYR forums with a range of community partners to bring information about City services to communities in all five boroughs. In 2017, recognizing how the climate for immigrants had become more fearful and uncertain, MOIA also worked with legal service providers to incorporate information about legal issues into these forums. MOIA worked with City agencies, community organizations, and schools to coordinate a total of 740 KYR forums to inform immigrant communities about their legal rights and how to access City resources, such as IDNYC and

ActionNYC, as well as get information about affordable housing, fraud prevention, and anti-discrimination programs. Legal service providers participated in 185 of these forums. Over 13,000 New Yorkers attended these events.

In addition, MOIA launched a citywide KYR initiative through a new partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York, the Robin Hood Foundation, and 10 immigrant-serving CBOs. Through this collaboration, an additional 205 forums were organized. These events addressed recent changes in federal immigration policies, interacting with federal immigration officers, and avoiding immigration services fraud. MOIA also provided referrals to legal assistance, connecting 451 New Yorkers to immigration legal help.

### MOIA Volunteers

Thanks to dedicated outreach and recruitment, as well as the groundswell of civic engagement and support for immigrants in response to the Trump Administration's vitriolic and unjust attacks on immigrant communities, MOIA's volunteer base grew exponentially, from 50 volunteers trained in 2016 to 640 trained by the end of 2017. MOIA held 79 volunteer trainings, including two trainings for Spanish-speakers and one for Bengali-speakers. MOIA volunteers serve as presenters, interpreters, and assistants at community and advocacy events across the five boroughs.

### Immigrant Heritage Week (IHW)

MOIA hosted Immigrant Heritage Week (IHW), New York City's annual, week-long celebration of the city's immigrant heritage, from April 17 to 23. The theme was "Immigrants are NY: Upholding our Values." IHW 2017 featured 65 events, some organized by MOIA and many by a range of community partners, including libraries, museums, theaters, and cultural centers in all five boroughs. MOIA-organized events included an IDNYC On the Go pop-up at Diversity Plaza in Jackson Heights, a MOIA volunteer appreciation event, WANY and Language Line programs organized with NYC Service at Hunter School of Social Work in East Harlem, an International Mother Language Day celebration in Jackson Heights honoring the City's linguistic diversity, an award presentation recognizing the advocacy work of the Yemeni

American Merchant's Association and the International Refugee Assistance Project, and a panel discussion with New York Theatre Workshop on the importance of celebrating immigrant heritage and the use of theater to convey diverse immigrant experiences.

### CycleNews

In May, MOIA launched CycleNews, a project using art to build trust between communities and the City, share information about City services, and empower immigrant residents to take leadership roles in their communities. The project, funded in part by the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, was a partnership with a Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) public artist-in-residence, Cuban-born artist Tania Bruguera. Mujeres en Movimiento, a collective of mostly Spanish-speaking mothers and neighborhood activists, collaborated with Bruguera and the art collective Kollektiv Migrantas to develop picture-based materials that outline critical MOIA services, including IDNYC and ActionNYC. The fifteen members of Mujeres en Movimiento distributed the materials on bicycles to immigrant communities in Corona, Queens.

Between May and August, CycleNews reached 6,980 people through one-on-one interactions and distributed 18,598 pieces of literature. CycleNews also conducted a public survey about living in NYC and accessing City services that was answered by 2,224 individuals. At the end of the project, CycleNews hosted a Spanish-language community forum and resource fair at Corona Library. Several City agencies identified in the survey, including DCA, the Department for the Aging (DFTA), DOHMH, HPD, CCHR, and DOE, attended the forum and provided information about their programs and services.

### Iftar in the City

For the second year in a row, New York City organized an Iftar to celebrate Ramadan and the city's Muslim communities. MOIA partnered with CAU, CCHR, and the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Muslim Officers' Society to host a public, outdoor Iftar at Brooklyn Borough Hall. Held on June 16, the Iftar was attended by more than 500 community members of all faiths.

## Afghan Town Hall

On December 14, MOIA partnered with CAU and Women for Afghan Women to host the first Dari/Pashto-language community town hall for Afghan New Yorkers living in Queens. More than 200 community members attended to learn about City services and speak directly with MOIA staff.

Throughout 2017, MOIA remained committed to enhancing immigrant New Yorkers' economic, civic, and social integration into the city, despite continued threats and upheaval from the federal government. MOIA built on the successes of programs like IDNYC and WANY and deepened existing community partnerships through its outreach work. It expanded its capacity to research and analyze issues affecting immigrant New Yorkers and regularly provided timely guidance to the Mayor, City Council, and City agencies. With its partners across government and in the community, MOIA developed a number of rapid-response initiatives and campaigns to support immigrant New Yorkers throughout a tumultuous year and ensure that its core programs and partnerships remain strong going into 2018.

## **Priority 2:** **Facilitating Access to Justice**

The increase in federal immigration enforcement and policy changes at the federal level have created acute needs for immigrant New Yorkers already navigating a complex and broken immigration system. Under the leadership of the Mayor and the City Council, including the prior Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City has made historic commitments promoting access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers. This support has enabled MOIA to lead collaborations with other City agencies, legal services providers, and community partners to address the legal services needs of immigrants in New York City. Through ActionNYC, NYCitizenship, and interagency work with HRA's Office of Civil Justice, MOIA and its partners facilitate the provision of high-quality immigration legal services and help trusted providers build their capacity to assist immigrant communities. MOIA works closely with OCDV, MOCJ, and

agency partners to support public safety by promoting access to immigration relief via U and T visas for victims of qualifying crimes. Additionally, in a climate of increased enforcement and expanded efforts to restrict immigration, MOIA has supported the Mayor in advocating for individual New Yorkers with respect to immigration issues.

## ActionNYC<sup>15</sup>

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. Immigrant New Yorkers receive free, safe, and high-quality immigration legal services in their community and in their language. 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. Launched in 2016, the program is operated jointly by MOIA, the Human Resources Administration (HRA), and CUNY and implemented in collaboration with over 30 CBOs and legal services providers.

ActionNYC has introduced innovative approaches to create scale, utilizing a community navigation model. In this model, a community navigation team, comprised of an attorney and community navigators, conducts comprehensive immigration legal screenings. ActionNYC navigators are hired from the community, are culturally competent, and undergo rigorous and ongoing training in immigration law. The team provides full legal representation in straightforward immigration matters, including 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 legal cases outside the team's scope of services or capacity, ActionNYC connects clients to other City-funded programs such as the Mayoral Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI).

Recognizing that immigrant New Yorkers already interact with the City in a variety of settings, MOIA launched ActionNYC in

<sup>15</sup> All data pertaining to ActionNYC, NYCitizenship, and citywide legal services is based on calendar year 2017, in compliance with Local Law 185.

Schools in 2016 and ActionNYC in H+H in 2017. ActionNYC in Schools is a clinic-based initiative providing legal screenings and representation to students and families at immigrant-serving schools across the five boroughs. ActionNYC in H+H facilitates access to immigration legal services and links patients to health insurance enrollment to address disparities in immigrants' enrollment in health insurance. ActionNYC in H+H works across nine H+H facilities and includes services for long-term care and post-acute care patients.

In 2017, ActionNYC provided services at eight CBOs, held 53 clinics in 34 DOE schools, established permanent navigation sites at three NYC H+H facilities, 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 15,199 calls from individuals seeking immigration legal help. On average, the hotline received approximately 1,200 calls per month and received upwards of 1,700 calls during peak months. 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 8,000 comprehensive immigration legal screenings and opened approximately 5,000 new cases. Of cases where immigration authorities rendered decisions in 2017, 97% were approved.



New Yorkers volunteered at many "Days of Action" in 2017 to help inform their neighbors about essential city services like IDNYC.

In 2017, ActionNYC in CBOs screened 6,167 people and opened 4,151 new cases with the top forms of relief being naturalization, green card renewals, family petitions, DACA renewals and adjustment of status. ActionNYC in Schools screened 761 people and opened 136

cases including SIJS, asylum, U visa, and medical deferred action for particularly vulnerable populations. Also in 2017, ActionNYC began serving patients and community members at NYC H+H/Gouverneur, NYC H+H/Elmhurst, and NYC H+H/Lincoln. The expansion of services into hospitals has proved another effective way to reach particularly vulnerable populations. The program has provided comprehensive immigration legal screenings to 956 people and opened 552 new cases ranging from naturalization to asylum, VAWA petitions, and medical deferred action. The ActionNYC in H+H Long Term Care program, consisting of one attorney and one navigator team that rotates across 7 H+H facilities, conducted 120 comprehensive immigration legal screenings in 2017, taking on 88 cases - all those who qualified for relief - on for full legal representation.

Comprehensive Immigration Legal Screenings Conducted by ActionNYC (CY 2017)	
ActionNYC in Community-Based Organizations	6,167
ActionNYC in Schools*	761
ActionNYC in H+H (Navigation Sites)**	956
ActionNYC in H+H (Long-Term Care Facilities)	120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,004</b>

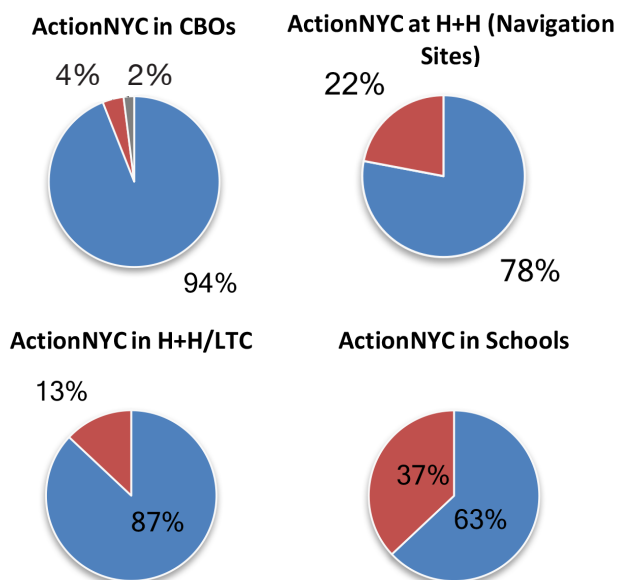
\*The ActionNYC in Schools team grew from one legal/navigation team for most of 2017 to two legal/navigation teams by the end of 2017.

\*\*ActionNYC's work at the H+H navigation sites began in May 2017 and was fully operational in July 2017.

ActionNYC referred 1,033 cases to other legal services providers in 2017. Of these, 931 were referred from ActionNYC in CBOs, 85 from ActionNYC sites in H+H, and 17 from ActionNYC in Schools. Reasons for referrals included that the individual was not a New York City resident, the site did not have sufficient capacity, or the case was outside of the attorney's expertise.

## Overview of Cases Opened by ActionNYC (CY 2017)

■ Straightforward<sup>16</sup> ■ Complex<sup>17</sup> ■ Unreported



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 15 small and medium-sized community organizations to deliver immigration legal services and conduct outreach. Moreover, ActionNYC released a Request for Applications (RFA) to provide immigration legal services to hard-to-reach immigrant communities in 2017, and expects services to start in 2018. In addition, all ActionNYC sites and organizational fellows receive support to obtain and maintain Department of Justice (DOJ) Recognition, meaning the organization has permission

from DOJ to practice immigration law through Accredited Representatives before federal authorities. ActionNYC also helps its community navigators to become DOJ Accredited Representatives, enabling them to represent clients before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).<sup>18</sup>

ActionNYC uses community outreach and partnerships to connect immigrant New Yorkers to City services. ActionNYC organizers undertake tailored outreach in underserved immigrant communities, conducting KYR forums, scheduling appointments, and sharing information about other legal services and City programs. ActionNYC community navigation teams also connect clients to social services, including IDNYC, educational programs, and health insurance enrollment.

### NYCitizenship

NYCitizenship provides free citizenship application assistance, including screenings and full legal representation, as well as financial empowerment services to immigrant New Yorkers. The program was launched in April 2016 and significantly expanded throughout 2017. MOIA operates NYCitizenship in partnership with the Brooklyn, Queens, and New York Public Libraries, HRA/DSS, New York Legal Assistance Group, and the Mayor's Fund. The program is supported by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity alongside private funders including the Carnegie Corporation, Citi Community Development, the Charles H. Revson Foundation, and the Robin Hood Foundation.

Through NYCitizenship, individuals receive comprehensive immigration legal screenings to determine their eligibility for citizenship, as well as full legal representation in completing the naturalization application. If eligible, individuals also receive assistance with

<sup>16</sup> Straightforward cases include the following types of applications and petitions: Application for Naturalization (N-400); Application for Certificate of Citizenship (N-600); Petition for Alien Relative (I-130); Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (I-485); Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card (I-90); Petition to Remove Conditions on Residence (I-751); Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals ("DACA") (I-821D); Application for Temporary Protected Status (I-821); Application for Employment Authorization (I-765); Application for Replacement/Initial Nonimmigrant Arrival-Departure Document (I-102); Extension of Authorized Stay (for humanitarian purposes only) (I-539); Application for Travel Document (I-131); Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA")/Privacy Act Request (G-639); and other FOIA or background checks.

<sup>17</sup> Complex cases generally include the following types of cases: Removal Defense, Asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, U Nonimmigrant Status (U visas), T Nonimmigrant Status (T visas), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) relief, Waivers of Inadmissibility, Motions to Re-open, and any type of case that may become complex if it involves extensive criminal history, a complicated immigration history, or similar factors.

<sup>18</sup> Through ActionNYC's legal technical assistance, seven organizations and 21 community navigators obtained and/or maintained DOJ Recognition and Accreditation in 2016. In 2017, ActionNYC's legal technical assistance providers worked with organizations to ensure completion of applications and maintenance of status per accreditation standards.



fee waiver and disability waiver applications. Additionally, clients are connected to free and confidential financial counseling. In 2017, NYCitizenship provided services at 12 public library branches across the five boroughs. Through a partnership with HRA/DSS, the program also offered services to vulnerable populations, including seniors and those facing health barriers. In 2017, NYCitizenship reached over 7,200 individuals and filed over 850 citizenship applications.



In 2017, IDNYC hit a major milestone: enrolling 1 million unique cardholders!

### Citywide Legal Services

MOIA plays a leading role in advising City agencies about immigrant New Yorkers' legal services needs. Regular communication with legal services providers enables MOIA to quickly and effectively assess needs on the ground. MOIA works closely with HRA's Office of Civil Justice (OCJ) to evaluate the City's spectrum of legal services needs based on their work with providers and analysis of federal, state, and local policy changes affecting immigrant communities.

In 2017, MOIA and its partners responded to the shifting federal immigration landscape, particularly the termination of the DACA program and the end of TPS designations for several countries, by collaborating on citywide legal responses to these changes. As part of these efforts, ActionNYC sites prioritized DACA renewals and TPS re-registration. With OCJ, ActionNYC, legal services providers in the Administration's IOI legal assistance program, and other legal services organizations, MOIA held two DACA renewal clinics in September 2017. MOIA also worked with partners to highlight how federal changes impact current and future immigration legal services funding,

with the Mayor making historic commitments to increase funding to promote access to justice. Together with OCJ, MOIA engaged legal services providers to understand providers' capacity to absorb additional funding focused on complex cases and on defense for non-detained individuals facing removal. MOIA also supported the de Blasio Administration in advocating that individual New Yorkers facing extraordinary hardships be treated fairly and humanely by federal immigration authorities. For example, MOIA worked with partners across the de Blasio Administration and in legal services to advocate on behalf of the families of victims of a deadly fire in the Bronx in December 2017. The fire killed 13 people, including Private First Class Emmanuel Mensah, a member of the Army National Guard who heroically entered the burning building on multiple occasions to save the lives of his neighbors. The fire also took the lives of the Donkor family - Hannah (17), William (12), and their father Solomon. Together with CAU, OCJ, and the Mayor's Office of International Affairs, MOIA worked with the Legal Aid Society and successfully 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' funeral services.

### U and T Visa Certifications

Federal immigration law provides that victims of certain serious crimes, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, may apply for special forms of immigration status designed to encourage immigrant victims to come forward and seek help from law enforcement. The U visa (for immigrant victims of serious crimes) and T visa (for victims of human trafficking) encourage vulnerable immigrants to cooperate with law enforcement regardless of their immigration status, which helps to make the entire city safer for all. In order to apply to USCIS 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 T visa applications, a T visa declaration (similar to a certification) can be an important piece of evidence for an applicant's case.

MOIA works with City agencies to support the effective provision of U and T visa certifications to immigrant victims of qualifying crimes. Under the de Blasio Administration, MOIA has worked with agency partners to reduce red tape for immigrant crime victims, expand public awareness about the availability of these forms of immigration relief, and improve the City’s U and T visa certification processes. Since 2014, MOIA has partnered with MOCJ and OCDV to convene a working group of City certifying agencies – the NYPD, Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), CCHR, and the Law Department – as well as the City’s five District Attorney offices. Through this partnership, the City has strengthened and increased the transparency of the processes for requesting certifications for immigrant crime victims and their advocates.

City certifying agencies continued to build on recent efforts in 2017. Following the 2016 issuance of its U visa rule, the NYPD promulgated a T visa rule, which created processing guidelines for T visa declaration requests and established an appeals process. In addition, the NYPD revised its publicly-available information regarding its U and T visa certification program, publishing a description of the program and application process on its website in May 2017.

The NYPD processed all U and T visa certification requests within 45 days and reviewed all appeals of U visa certification denials within 90 days. In response to a steady increase in certification requests, ACS identified the need to allocate additional resources to promote timely processing and communications with requestors. As a result of a concentrated effort that began in fall 2017, ACS cleared its backlog of outstanding requests and drastically reduced processing times from an average of nine weeks to an average of one business day. CCHR processed its certification requests in approximately three months on average throughout 2017, and the Law Department processed requests in under 60 days where there were no circumstances that caused delay (such as a need to unseal case files).

The following charts present annual statistics on U and T visa certifications by City agencies in 2017.

U and T Visa Certifications by City Agencies (CY 2017)					
	ACS	NYPD*	Law	CCHR	TOTAL
Total certification requests received	148	1002	21	11	1182
U requests	144	1001	21	10	
T requests	4	1	0	1	
Total requests completed**	168	886	21	4	1079
Certifications issued	165	522	18	4	709
U requests	161	521	18	3	
T requests	4	1	0	1	
Requests denied	3	160	3	0	166
U requests	3	160	3	0	
T requests	0	0	0	0	

\* NYPD referred 204 certification requests to other agencies.

\*\* Some requests completed in 2017 were received prior to 2017. Similarly, some requests received in 2017 were not completed by the end of the calendar year.

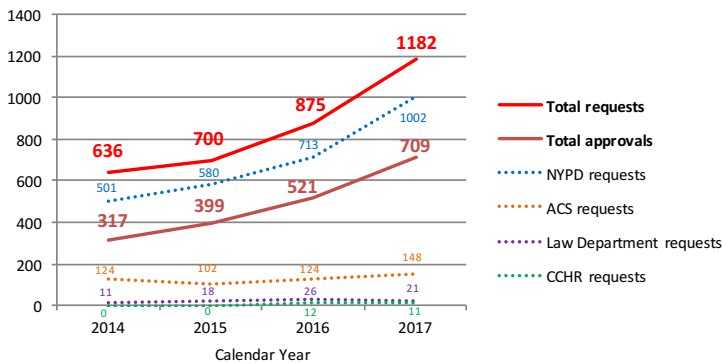
U and T Visa Certification Denials & Rationale (CY 2017)					
	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	TOTAL
Total requests denied	3	160	3	0	166
Public safety concern	0	36	0	0	36
Non-qualifying crime	0	96	0	0	96
Lack of helpfulness / cooperation	2	22	2	0	26
Indirect victim/ witness	0	1	0	0	1
Unfounded complaint (NYPD) / lack of qualifying investigation (ACS)	1	5	0	0	6
Case could not be unsealed	0	0	1	0	1

NYPD Certification Denials Appealed (CY 2017)*	
Total appeals filed	109
Certification granted upon appeal	36
Denial upheld	60
Case referred to another agency	13

\* Appeals were not received by City certifiers other than NYPD in 2017.

Due to increased awareness among victims about these types of visas as well as MOIA and partner agencies' efforts to increase access to certifications and make the process more transparent, the number of certification request has climbed significantly in recent years. This inter-agency collaboration helps immigrant crime victims obtain legal protections and contributes to public safety by protecting vulnerable immigrant who support law enforcement investigations.

**U and T Visa Certification Requests and Approvals**



\* The Commission on Human Rights began accepting U visa certification and T visa declaration requests in February 2016, becoming the first local anti-discrimination agency in a major U.S. city to perform this function.

### Priority 3: Advocating for Immigration Reform

MOIA monitors immigration-related developments and advocates on the local, state, federal, and international levels to support pro-immigrant policies and protect immigrant New Yorkers' rights. In this national climate, this work is essential: more than half of all New Yorkers are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and tens of thousands of New Yorkers have been affected by federal policy changes that have separated families and exacerbated fear and uncertainty for immigrants.

#### Cities for Action

In 2014, Mayor de Blasio established Cities for Action (C4A), 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 2017, C4A has grown to include more than 175 U.S. cities and counties. In March 2017, 20 member cities met in San Francisco for a national convening to determine the coalition's advocacy objectives and strategies.

C4A members have advocated on a range of issues, including DACA, TPS, the travel bans, and DOJ efforts to target so-called "sanctuary cities." C4A issued five multi-city sign-on letters calling for the continuation of DACA and the extension of TPS for affected populations and voicing opposition to a bill intended to punish "sanctuary cities." Dozens of C4A member cities signed on to amicus briefs in two cases challenging the Trump Administration's travel bans and in the "sanctuary city" case Philadelphia vs. Sessions.

C4A also coordinated public DACA advocacy by coalition mayors and high-level city officials. In May 2017, C4A organized meetings in Washington, D.C., with DHS officials and Members of Congress to discuss city policies and legislation that would impact city residents. Between September and November, C4A coordinated 11 press calls with the coalition's mayors and local stakeholders in support of legislation to protect Dreamers. On the December 6 National Day of Action on DACA, C4A supported two mayors in meeting with Members of Congress and set up press availability events on Capitol Hill. C4A organized

a December 7 multi-city tele-town hall to inform city residents about the latest developments regarding federal legislation and ways to support Dreamers. Nearly 50,000 people joined the call. The tele-town hall featured Bitta Mostofi, MOIA's Acting Commissioner, Seemi Choudry, Director of the Chicago Mayor's Office of New Americans, and Dr. Linda Lopez, Chief of the Los Angeles Office of Immigrant Affairs.

### 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 citizenship, also known as 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. In 2017, through C4C, MOIA participated in webinars and roundtable discussions to share information about NYCitizenship, MOIA's flagship citizenship legal services program. In addition, MOIA worked on behalf of NYC with the other C4C co-chairs to release a 2017-2018 Naturalization Policy and Program Menu, describing recommendations for policy, funding, programming, and capacity building.<sup>19</sup> MOIA also highlighted the agency's work in citizenship and immigration legal services more broadly at the annual C4C Municipal Gathering held in Phoenix, Arizona in December 2017.

### International Partnerships

In 2017, MOIA began collaborating with international municipal partners. These cities support one another's pro-immigrant work in often hostile national climates and share best practices for creating inclusive cities. On September 18 and 19, New York City hosted the Global Mayors Summit on Migration and Refugee Policy and Practice. The Summit was made up of a series of events coordinated in partnership with the Mayor's Office of International Affairs, the Open Society Foundations, Concordia, Columbia University's Global Policy Initiative,

the International Peace Institute, and the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility at the New School. Representatives from 34 cities across six continents attended. The Summit provided a wide range of stakeholders with a forum to discuss city-level immigration policy and related policy innovations, while developing and strengthening city-to-city partnerships. The Summit also placed city expertise and perspectives in a global context. Mayor de Blasio gave the keynote address, and global mayors participated in a hearing with the co-facilitators of the United Nations' Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees and other executive-level UN leadership. In 2018, MOIA and New York's international city partners will continue to advocate for the needs of immigrant residents through the UN global compact processes and other global forums.

<sup>19</sup> Cities for Citizenship. Naturalization Policy & Program Menu 2017-2018. <http://citiesforcitizenship.com/c4c/wp-content/uploads/C4C-Naturalization-Policy-and-Program-Menu-.pdf>.

# Looking Ahead to 2018: Recommendations

Though the current political climate is uncertain and tumultuous, MOIA remains rooted in the de Blasio Administration's commitment to upholding the values of New York City as a city of immigrants and protecting the rights and safety of all city residents, including immigrant communities. MOIA will continue working with partners across City government and with immigrant communities to enhance immigrant New Yorkers' integration into all aspects of city life, support immigrants' access to justice, and advocate for reforms at all levels of government to protect immigrant communities and their rights.

## **Recommendation One: Bolster Strong, Inclusive Government Policies and Practices**

At the local level, MOIA will continue working to strengthen the inclusiveness of City government and deepen its connections to immigrant communities. As the City's policies demonstrate, a city that prioritizes equity for all is a safer, healthier city. In 2018, MOIA will continue working with agency partners to meaningfully and robustly implement the new local laws that safeguard immigrant access to services and promote public safety. In accordance with Local Law 186, MOIA will convene a new Immigrant Interagency Task Force, through which key City agencies' initiatives and practices related to serving immigrant communities will be further highlighted, supported, and strengthened.

## **Recommendation Two: Deepen Civic Engagement and Community Connections to City Government**

To further ensure that these efforts make a real, positive impact in communities, MOIA will continue to deepen relationships with and access for underserved communities through its outreach and community services work, including through the engagement of volunteers. Creating opportunities for limited English proficient volunteers continues to be a priority, and in 2018 MOIA will develop

volunteer trainings in Mandarin, Haitian Creole, French, and Russian. MOIA will also continue to work with community partners on KYR forums, a critical means of disseminating information about City services and legal issues in schools, community organizations, houses of worship, and other locations throughout the city.

## **Recommendation Three: Utilize Evaluation to Further Strengthen Progressive Policies and Initiatives**

Evaluation is a crucial tool to strengthen government programs and policies, and can be particularly valuable for building on the groundbreaking programs launched under the de Blasio Administration. For example, a 2016 evaluation of the IDNYC program provided valuable insight and feedback to shape the program's growth. In addition, an evaluation of the 2016-2017 ActionHealthNYC demonstration project showed that its interventions increased uninsured immigrants' utilization of primary and specialty care, preventive screenings for common health conditions, and new diagnoses of mental health conditions. These findings have already contributed to the development of a new NYC H+H care management initiative, announced in early 2018, and will continue to inform the City's efforts to identify ways to improve care for all.

## **Recommendation Four: Monitor and Respond to Emerging Immigration Legal Needs**

In 2017, the City saw a cascade of federal immigration policy shifts and increases in enforcement as well as a historic investment in civil legal services. In 2018 and beyond, MOIA anticipates additional federal developments that will significantly impact immigrant New Yorkers, such as the end of TPS for El Salvador (announced on January 8, 2018, to take effect on September 9, 2019) and the decision on Honduras's TPS designation (expected on or before May 6). The City's commitment to ensuring immigrants' access to justice is essential to protecting city residents' rights

and the safety of our city in this climate. MOIA will work toward the realization of the City's groundbreaking investment in immigration legal services by continuing to monitor community needs in the face of federal developments, and coordinating with OCJ to quickly and effectively respond to those needs.

**Recommendation Five:  
Advocate for New York City's Interests at the National Level**

Lastly, MOIA will continue to support the City's leadership in advocacy efforts to protect localities from harmful federal policies targeting cities with welcoming, inclusive policies. Through Cities for Action (C4A), the City will continue to collaborate with national partners to promote these values. In 2018, the City will lead a C4A convening with partner cities and set a shared agenda on critical national issues with significant local impacts, including pushing for a fair solution for Dreamers, ensuring that all communities are properly counted in the 2020 Census, ongoing litigation around the DACA program, federal travel bans, and federal efforts to defund jurisdictions which limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. C4A will remain a resource for NYC and other cities to share best practices that strengthen equity, safety, and health for all.

**CONCLUSION**

MOIA's work would not be possible without ongoing partnerships and support from all levels of government, community organizations, and most especially immigrant New Yorkers who continually bring vibrancy, inspiration, strength, and leadership to New York City. In 2018 and the years to come, MOIA will strive to fulfill the City's commitment to be the world's most welcoming and inclusive city.





**Mayor's Office of  
Immigrant Affairs**

Web: [nyc.gov/immigrants](http://nyc.gov/immigrants)  
Phone: (212) 788-7654  
Twitter: @NYCImmigrants