



NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY TASK FORCE ON NEW AMERICANS

2026

Annual Report

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

For generations, New York State has been a place where immigrants could put down roots and build a future. That promise is being tested today. Across the country, we are witnessing an escalation of anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy - both in terms of aggressive federal enforcement actions and in the erosion of due process protections. That reality has left immigrant families living with fear and uncertainty. New York must continue to protect and uplift our immigrant communities.



Where We Stand Today

Despite these challenges, this past budget season showed what is possible when legislators work with purpose to pass policies and fund the programs our communities need. Thanks to the tireless advocacy of immigrant-led organizations and our colleagues in the legislature, this year's enacted budget included significant investments in the priorities our communities have long called for. We invested in legal service providers across the state, ensuring they have the resources necessary to expand their capacity and give our immigrant neighbors a chance at due process regardless of their ability to pay for a lawyer. Moreover, this budget included a historic set of protections for our communities, including the prohibition of ICE contracts with local jails and formal 287(g) collusion agreements between local law enforcement and ICE. While the package stopped short of the full New York for All Act, which would fully prohibit both formal and informal collusion between all state and local agencies and ICE, these measures provide an important layer of protections to immigrant families in their daily lives. We are proud of this progress and look forward to building on it in the coming years.

Why This Work Matters

Immigrant New Yorkers staff our hospitals and care for our aging family members, start small businesses that invigorate main streets from Buffalo to Brooklyn, and contribute billions of dollars in state, local, and federal taxes every year. Beyond their economic contributions, they enrich the culture and identity of our state, bringing traditions, languages, and perspectives that make New York the vibrant place it is. Immigrants are our neighbors and cornerstones of our communities, folks who came here in search of peace and opportunity, just as generations of New Yorkers did before them. Their labor, creativity, and resilience touch every corner of New York's economy and civic life, and our state is stronger, more dynamic, and more prosperous because of them.

Our work in the coming year is critical. New York State can meet the moment by passing bold policy solutions and making the robust investments necessary to support our immigrant communities. Closing federal gaps in healthcare, housing, and public benefits will ensure that immigrant families will not be left behind. We can continue to defend our immigrant communities from federal efforts to weaken the protections New York has fought hard to establish.

New York can fill the gaps in services the federal government has created and continues to exacerbate for our most vulnerable communities. I am grateful to my colleagues on this Task Force, to the advocates and organizations who are our partners in this work, and to our immigrant neighbors who continue to show us what resilience and hope look like.

On a Personal Note

*As the daughter of Haitian immigrants, I understand firsthand what it means for an immigrant family to build a life in New York while navigating unfamiliar institutions and preserving their connection to the culture and community they came from. My experience has made this year's immigration related developments especially hard to watch, and have fueled my passion for state-level legislative policies to support immigrant New Yorkers. In June 2026, the Supreme Court ruled in *Mullin v. Doe* that the federal administration could proceed with terminating Temporary Protected Status for Haitian and Syrian nationals. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians and Syrians nationwide, including many in New York State, have been stripped of legal protections, upending their lives and ripping families and communities apart. This Supreme Court decision is a reminder of how much is at stake for immigrant New Yorkers, and why the resources that we are able to secure at the state level through the work of our Task Force on New Americans are more critical than ever.*



Assemblymember
Phara Souffrant Forrest

THE TASK FORCE ON NEW AMERICANS

MISSION STATEMENT

To advocate for public policies and state budget issues that will help improve the lives of the more than 4.6 million immigrants who call New York State their home while working to build support for systematic and structural changes that will allow for the full integration of immigrants into the social, economic and political systems of our society.

To achieve these goals, the Assembly Task Force on New Americans will:

- Research and evaluate current programs and proposals that affect immigrant communities; and
- Establish a legislative program addressing social and economic issues of concern to immigrant communities which includes their input via community forums and legislative hearings;
- Foster cooperation between legislators, state and municipal officials in efforts to address issues of concern and in seeking ways to improve services to immigrant communities;
- Serve as a conduit of information for immigrant communities on issues before the federal, state, and local governments.



STATISTICS ON IMMIGRANT NEW YORKERS

Immigrants are an essential part of New York State. Immigrants live and work in large numbers both in New York City and across the State. They are overwhelmingly of working age and make outsized contributions to the state's economy, from the taxes they pay to their role as entrepreneurs and as essential workers in fields like healthcare and child care. The statistics that follow are primarily based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Statewide figures primarily reflect 2024 ACS one-year estimates, while regional breakdowns (New York City, Long Island, Hudson Valley, Central New York, and Western New York) are based on 2020–2024 ACS five-year estimates, aggregated from county-level data. NYC figures are supplemented by the NYC Department of City Planning.

4,621,382

IMMIGRANT RESIDENTS
OF NEW YORK STATE

310,393

PENDING IMMIGRATION CASES IN
NEW YORK STATE

23.3%

OF TOTAL NYS
POPULATION

15.4%

FOREIGN-BORN
POVERTY RATE

\$31.3B

STATE & LOCAL TAXES PAID BY
NEW YORK IMMIGRANTS

\$43.5B

FEDERAL TAXES PAID BY
NEW YORK IMMIGRANTS

316,500

IMMIGRANT
ENTREPRENEURS

72.0%

IMMIGRANTS OF
WORKING AGE

23.2%

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF
RECENT HOMEBUYERS

30.6%

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF NURSES

47.4%

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF NYC-AREA
CHILDCARE WORKFORCE

730K

LAWFULLY PRESENT NONCITIZENS POTENTIALLY
LOSING ESSENTIAL PLAN COVERAGE

\$5.7B

MEDICARE
CONTRIBUTIONS

47.0%

FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS
AGE 5+ WITH LIMITED
ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

32.7%

COLLEGE-EDUCATED FOREIGN-
BORN WORKERS IN JOBS NOT
REQUIRING A DEGREE

\$23.9B

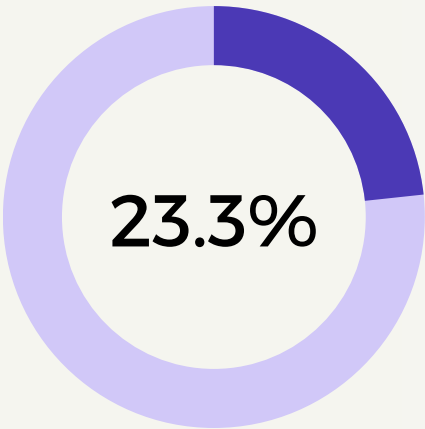
ANNUAL RENT PAID BY
IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS

\$8.6B

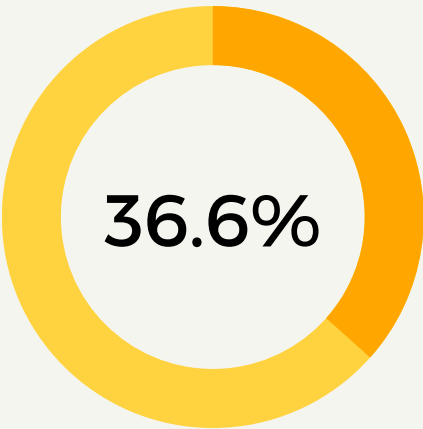
IMMIGRANT-OWNED
BUSINESS INCOME

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF THE POPULATION

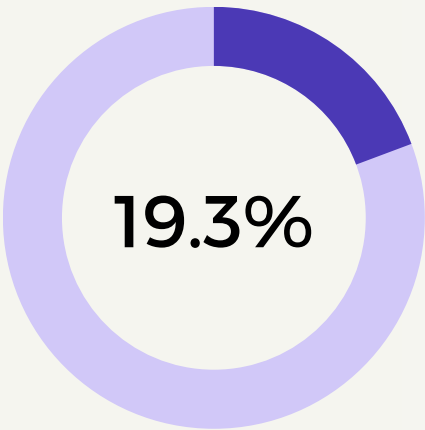
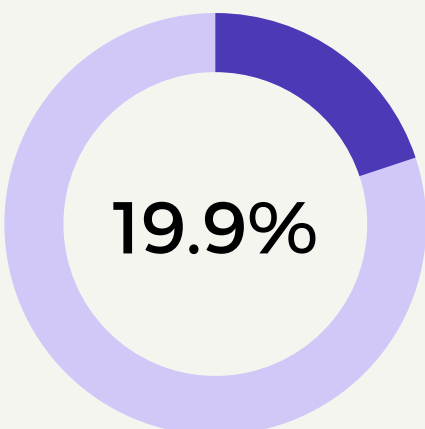
New York State



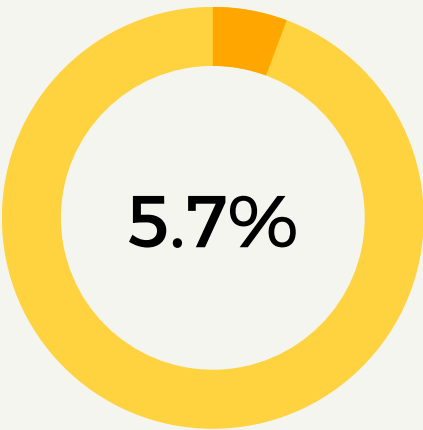
New York City



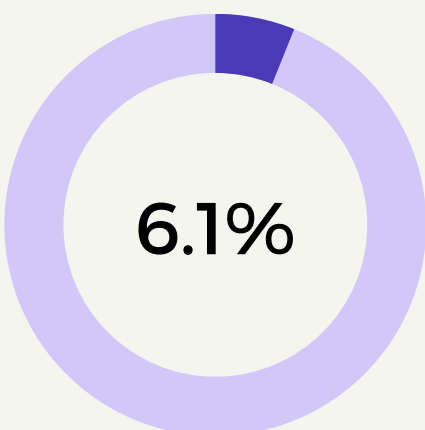
Long Island



Hudson Valley

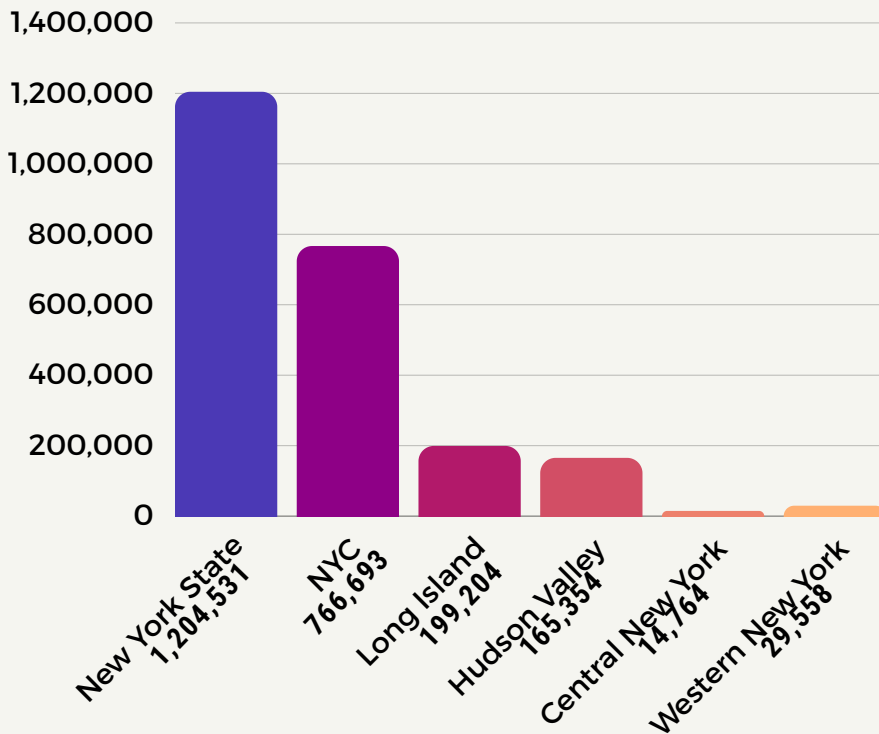


Central New York

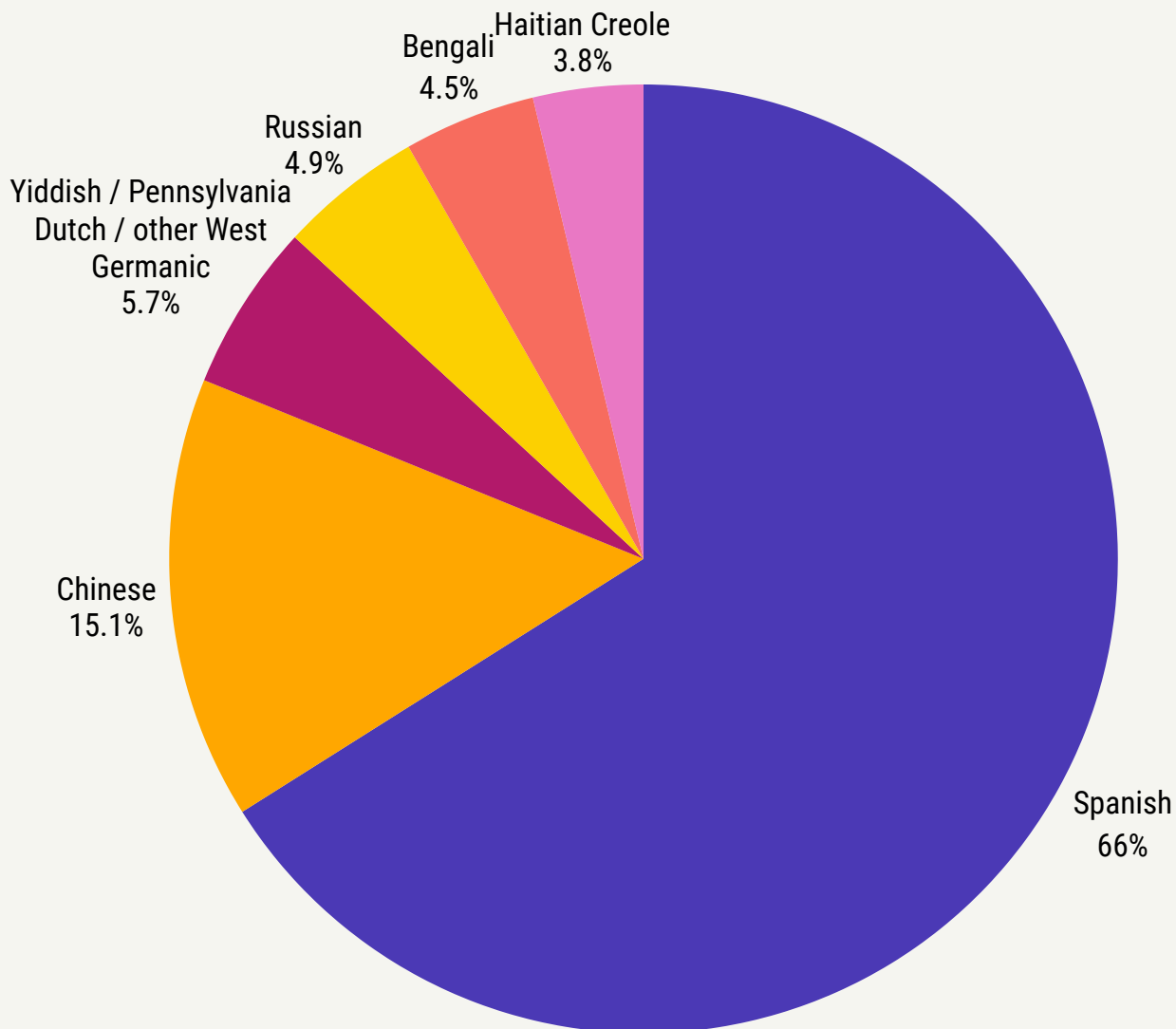


Western New York

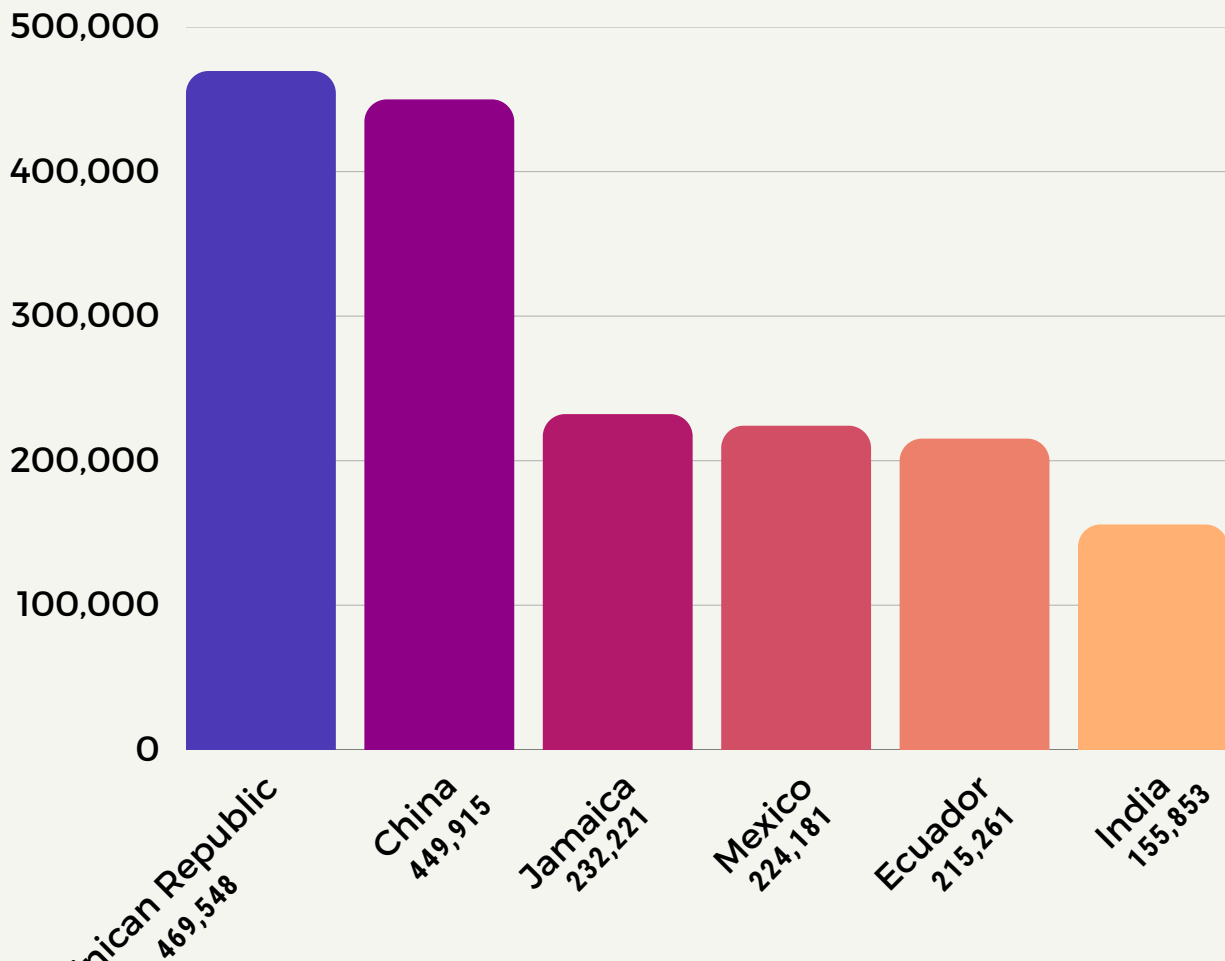
NATIVE BORN CHILDREN WITH AT LEAST ONE IMMIGRANT PARENT



TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME



TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET WINS

LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET WINS

This year's enacted budget delivered several significant wins for immigrant New Yorkers. Funding for immigrant legal services through the Office for New Americans increased by \$10 million, bringing the total to \$74 million. That is a critical investment given the tens of thousands of pending immigration cases across the state and the outsized role legal representation plays in securing fair outcomes. The New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program also saw a \$5 million increase over the Executive proposal, helping resettlement agencies better serve both new arrivals and refugees already established in their communities. Funding was also preserved for the Office of Language Access and for the Immigration Integration Research and Policy Institute, ensuring continued investment in the state's language access infrastructure and its capacity to track and respond to immigration trends.

Importantly, New York also adopted a version of the Local Cops, Local Crimes package. This bill includes Dignity Not Detention, banning local jails from contracting with ICE, bans local police and jails from entering into 287(g) agreements or detention contracts with ICE, and codifies protections for those in sensitive locations. While these wins reflect meaningful progress towards our Task Force's priorities, more remains to be done, particularly on healthcare access to which end the Task Force continues to push for passage of the Safe Access to Care Act, which would require all healthcare facilities in New York to adopt clear, enforceable protections against immigration enforcement, ensuring immigrant New Yorkers can seek medical care without fear.

PROHIBITING COLLUSION BETWEEN LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND ICE

- State and local law enforcement are prohibited from entering into agreements, both formal and informal, to perform immigration enforcement or detainment for civil immigration violations (287g agreements).
- Terminates existing contracts between ICE and local governments.
- **Dignity Not Detention**
 - Prohibits State and local government facilities from paying, reimbursing, subsidizing, or utilizing resources for ICE detention.



UNMASKING ICE AGENTS

- Prohibits ICE agents from wearing face coverings while interacting with the public in the performance of their duties.

PROTECTING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

- This legislation ensures children cannot be denied access to public education due to their citizenship or immigration status.
- In cases where a parent or guardian is detained – leaving a child without care – schools and childcare providers must develop procedures for these situations.
 - Specifically, they must make reasonable efforts to contact all known caretakers who are allowed to retrieve the child before contacting the Statewide Central Register.

OVERSIGHT OF IMMIGRATION ACTIONS

- \$4.5 million to establish the Immigration Trust Office, within the Office of the Attorney General, to enforce and defend the pending immigration legislation.
- Residents will be authorized to take legal action against government officials who may have deprived them of their constitutional rights (retroactive to Jan. 1, 2025).
- State and local governments will appoint a contact to review court orders and warrants and establish training for employees.
- Employees of state and local governments, schools, and higher education institutions are prohibited from providing resources, information, or any collaboration with federal officials for immigration enforcement purposes.

PROTECTING SENSITIVE LOCATIONS

- Federal immigration officials will be denied access to non-public areas of state and local government facilities without a court order or judicial warrant.
- Private, sensitive locations are empowered to create policies to prevent federal immigration access to non-public areas without a court order or judicial warrant.
- Sensitive locations include healthcare facilities, houses of worship, housing accommodations, non-public schools and higher education institutions, childcare facilities, nursery schools, summer camps, senior centers, parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, recreation centers, and polling places.

BUDGET WINS

HOUSING ACCESS VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Housing Access Voucher Program is a flexible, statewide Section 8-like voucher for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including immigrant families.

- Enacted Budget: Included \$50 million to continue providing housing vouchers to families at risk of homelessness, unchanged from FY26.



LANGUAGE ACCESS EXPANSION

To increase access to language services statewide, the Enacted Budget includes \$2.6 million for the NYS Office of Language Access.



FUNDING FOR IMMIGRANT LEGAL SERVICES

Funding for Immigrant Legal Services will support the creation of a permanent right to counsel for anyone in New York facing deportation who cannot afford legal representation, and strengthen the workforce of legal service providers offering such representation. Access to counsel is inexorably linked to access to justice in immigration court. Having legal representation is one of the most important variables in obtaining a successful outcome. This will help ensure that due process is served for vulnerable immigrant New Yorkers and that the principles of fundamental fairness are observed.

- The \$74.2 million in the enacted budget reflects a \$10 million legislative add.



LEGAL SERVICES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Legal Services for Unaccompanied Children will provide funds for the Office for New Americans (ONA) to establish a grant program offering free legal representation and related social services coordination for eligible unaccompanied migrant children and similarly situated youth - supporting counsel for approximately 1,200 unaccompanied children.

- Enacted Budget: Not included.
- On August 12, 2026, Governor Hochul announced \$7.25 million in emergency state funding to provide legal representation for approximately 1,400 unaccompanied immigrant children in New York. This recent development demonstrates both the urgency of this need and the importance of the Task Force's continued efforts and advocacy related to this issue.



NEW YORK STATE ENHANCED SERVICES TO REFUGEES PROGRAM (NYSESRP)

\$7M

The New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program (NYSESRP) provides extended employment preparation and related services that accelerate self-sufficiency and strengthen workforce participation for refugees.

- Enacted Budget: \$7 million, which reflects a legislative increase of \$5 million, and is unchanged from FY26.

IMMIGRATION INTEGRATION RESEARCH & POLICY INSTITUTE

\$433K

This funding will sustain and expand the Institute on Immigrant Integration Research and Policy at the Rockefeller Institute of Government, SUNY, including support for relocating it to the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society at the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy.

- Enacted Budget: \$433,000 restoration.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION PIPELINE PILOT PROGRAM

\$250K

The Bilingual Education Pipeline Pilot Program will fund tuition support for 380 new bilingual educators at Buffalo State University (\$3.2M) and Queens College (\$3.6M) to reach 12,000 multilingual learners statewide.

- Enacted Budget: \$250,000 for Buffalo State University



FUTURE PRIORITIES

This past legislative session, the Task Force advanced a wide-ranging agenda aimed at building a New York where immigration status is not a barrier to safety, opportunity, or dignity. These priorities aimed to ensure that all New Yorkers can access public services and protections regardless of immigration status, closing loopholes that leave immigrants vulnerable to predatory debt collection, and expanding professional licensing so that qualified New Yorkers can put their skills to work.

The Task Force also advocated to address the unique challenges facing unaccompanied immigrant children and to prepare the next generation of educators to serve immigrant-origin students. When it comes to healthcare access, a goal of the Task Force is to continue to push for passage of the Safe Access to Care Act, which would require all healthcare facilities in New York to adopt clear, enforceable protections against immigration enforcement, ensuring immigrant New Yorkers can seek medical care without fear. These bills and budgetary priorities reflect a vision for immigrant inclusion that recognizes immigrant New Yorkers as neighbors, workers, and community members deserving of the same rights and protections as everyone else. The Task Force remains committed to their passage in the upcoming legislative session.

NEW YORK FOR ALL

[A.3506](#) / Reyes

While the full New York for All Act did not pass this session, 287(g) agreements and other formal contracts between local law enforcement and federal immigration officials were banned in this year's Public Protection General Government budget bill. This ban on the most formal collusion between local law enforcement and federal immigration officials is a critical step forward, but throughout New York State, informal cooperation between local and state police and agencies have yet to be addressed through legislation.

ACCESS TO REPRESENTATION ACT & BUILDING UP IMMIGRANT LEGAL DEFENSE ACT

[A.270](#) / Cruz

[A.2689](#) / Cruz

The Access to Representation Act will establish the right to legal counsel in immigration court proceedings.

The Building Up Immigrant Legal Defense Act will provide competitive workforce development and capacity building grants to eligible entities that are seeking to expand access to representation for individuals facing deportation by increasing the workforce and strengthening the legal services infrastructure needed to provide such representation.

EMPIRE STATE TAX CREDIT EXPANSION

A.10126 / Hevesi

1. The Empire State Tax Credit Expansion will phase in a \$1,500 fully refundable child tax credit, indexed to inflation, with advance quarterly payments.
 - a. Child poverty rate in immigrant-parent families - 18.4%
 - b. Children projected to benefit from expanded Empire State Child Credit - 2,750,000
2. While this legislation was not included in the budget this year, we enhanced the Empire State Child Tax Credit in the FY26 Enacted Budget for three years, through Tax Year 2027.

THE SAFE ACCESS TO CARE ACT

A.11537 / Forrest

The Safe Access to Care Act will require certain healthcare facilities to adopt and make public a statement of patient rights and healthcare facility obligations with regards to immigration enforcement.

DEBT CHAMPERTY BILL

A.643 / Gonzalez-Rojas

The New York Champerty Bill aims to outlaw the practice of predatory “vulture funds” that purchase sovereign debt from other countries only to then sue in our courts. That practice leads to destabilizing economies abroad that many immigrant communities once called home.

IMMIGRANT-ORIGIN STUDENT TEACHER TRAINING ACT

A.8033 / Romero

The Immigrant-Origin Student Teacher Training Act will require colleges and universities in the state to have education programs for prospective teachers, administrators, and counselors for teaching immigrant-origin students.

EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS

A.9413 / Hevesi

The Equal Access to Public Benefits Act will ensure that citizenship status alone cannot be used to deny access to public benefits.

SUPPORT AND LEGAL SERVICES FOR UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

A.2582 / Hevesi

This legislation will codify the provision of support and services for unaccompanied minors with no lawful immigration status including legal representation.

DETENTION SUPPORT PROGRAM

A.8855 / Forrest

The Detention Support Program will create a program in the Office for New Americans to provide financial assistance to individuals and families of detained persons.

COMMUNITY ACCOMPANIMENT AND POST-RELEASE SUPPORT PROGRAM

A.8861 / Forrest

The Community Accompaniment and Post-Release Support Program will establish a program in the Office for New Americans to provide grants to community-based organizations that offer services to individuals released from immigration detention.

EMPIRE WORKER PROTECTION ACT

A.4278 / Simon

The EMPIRE Worker Protection Act will allow affected workers, whistleblowers, and labor unions to file NY Labor Law claims on behalf of the state for civil penalties and injunctive/declaratory relief, addressing wage theft and protecting the identities of workers facing retaliation, including from employers calling ICE.

IMMIGRANT IN-HOME CHILD CARE TRAINING PILOT PROGRAM

A.8862 / Forrest

The Immigrant In-Home Child Care Training Pilot Program will create a program in the Office for New Americans to provide training, technical assistance, and other support to immigrants seeking to establish licensed in-home daycare services.

HOUSING ACCESS VOUCHER PROGRAM

A.1704 / Rosenthal

This bill will codify a statewide rental subsidy program for low-income families and individuals who are facing eviction, currently homeless, or otherwise facing loss of housing. HAVP would be available to undocumented New Yorkers, who are currently ineligible for local or federal rental assistance programs.

EMPIRE STATE LICENSE ACT

A.675 / Cruz

The Empire State License Act will require state and local licensing bodies to issue professional, occupational, business, and commercial licenses to qualified New Yorkers regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

ADULT LITERACY EDUCATION

To ensure educational equity, the Task Force supports expanding Adult Literacy Education (ALE) to serve an additional 3,500 students, bringing the total to over 10,000 students.

INTERNATIONALS NETWORK FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Internationals Network for Public Schools will help schools meet the needs of immigrant multilingual learners (MLLs) and expand support and training for educators.

EXPANDING FOOD ASSISTANCE

Expanding Food Assistance will protect access to food for immigrant households, including 41,000 newly excluded refugees, asylees, and humanitarian parolees, and will extend benefits to 65,000 noncitizen households with children.

300,000 households are at risk of losing some or all SNAP benefits.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for WIC will help the 85 local WIC agencies statewide hire and retain staff, modernize operations, and conduct outreach to eligible but unenrolled New Yorkers, promoting food security for our most vulnerable communities.

LANGUAGE ACCESS EXPANSION ACT

A.4875 / De Los Santos

The Language Access Expansion Act will increase access to language services statewide, including through the establishment of a Community Interpreter Fund, the expansion of the NYS Office of Language Access, the development of language service cooperatives and training programs.



CONCLUSION

Immigrant New Yorkers are essential to our state's economy, its workforce, and its communities. They contribute billions in taxes while filling critical roles in healthcare, child care, and small business ownership across every region of New York. But the data presented in this report also points to unmet needs, including limited English proficiency and a growing backlog of pending immigration cases, as well as poverty rates that remain high among foreign-born residents.

This year's budget session showed that progress, while incremental, is achievable. Increased funding for immigrant legal services and refugee resettlement reflects the impact of all of our efforts and persistence. Looking ahead, the Task Force on New Americans will continue to press for the investments and protections immigrant communities need. We will continue advancing the budget and legislative priorities outlined in this report until every New Yorker, regardless of where they were born, can build a stable and secure future here in New York State.



ABOUT THE CHAIR OF THE TASK FORCE ON NEW AMERICANS



Phara Souffrant Forrest represents the 57th Assembly District in Brooklyn, which consists of the neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill as well as parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Crown Heights. She was first elected in 2020.

Phara is the daughter of Haitian immigrants and a lifelong resident of the 57th District. She is a proud product of Brooklyn's public school system, attending Philippa Schuyler Middle School and Benjamin Banneker Academy for Community Development.

She then went on to attend SUNY Geneseo, where she majored in international relations, before obtaining an associate's nursing degree at CUNY City Tech and a BSN at CUNY School of Professional Studies.

She has held a variety of jobs that help her connect with her constituents, working in New York City public schools, as an Uber driver, and doing youth advocacy work at Global Kids. Before being elected to the Assembly, Phara worked as a maternal child field nurse, caring for new mothers after they gave birth.

In addition to her work as a nurse, Phara was president of her building's tenant association before running for office. Tenant organizing, in particular the fight to pass the Housing Stability & Tenant Protection Act of 2019, was a major motivating force in her decision to run for office and stand up for tenants like her across the state.

ABOUT THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS

The New York State Office for New Americans (ONA), founded in 2012, is the nation's first statutorily created immigrant services office. ONA assists all new Americans with accessing and navigating a variety of free services and support through its statewide network of community-based providers. For more information, visit <https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans>.

For any immigrant in need of assistance, regardless of immigration status, and to connect with ONA's programs and receive referrals for trusted partners and resources in your community, call the toll-free New Americans Hotline at 1-800-566-7636. The Hotline operates Monday through Friday, 8am-8pm, and on Saturday and Sunday, 9am-5pm, excluding federal holidays. Assistance is available in 200+ languages. All calls to the Hotline are anonymous.

IMMIGRATION ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE STATE

- *ONA provider list searchable by region: <https://dos.ny.gov/search-ona-providers-region>*
- *ONA provider list searchable by program: <https://dos.ny.gov/search-ona-providers-program-0>*



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Carl Heastie, Speaker of the Assembly
- The Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus
- The Puerto Rican and Hispanic Task Force
- The Asian Pacific American Task Force
- Task Force on Women's Issues
- Task Force on Food, Farm & Nutrition Policy
- Tsveta Dobрева, Executive Director of the Task Force on New Americans
- Saira Amar, Communications Manager for Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest
- Karen Narefsky, Chief of Staff for Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest
- Mirabel Sandler, Legislative Director for Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest
- Miranda Van Ommeren, Deputy Chief of Staff for Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest
- Debra Jenkins, Director of Research and Program Development, Program & Counsel
- Sujaya Balachandran, Program & Counsel Staff
- Makenzie Ramsey, Program & Counsel Staff

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| • George Alvarez | • Emily Gallagher | • Karines Reyes |
| • Khaleel Anderson | • Jessica González-Rojas | • Jonathan Rivera |
| • Sarah Clark | • Andrew Hevesi | • MaryJane Shimsky |
| • Catalina Cruz | • Dana Levenberg | • Sarahana Shrestha |
| • Maritza Davila | • Marcela Mitaynes | • Tony Simone |
| • Manny De Los Santos | • Steven Raga | • Michaelle Solages |
| | | • Latrice Walker |

WE THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF
OF THE TASK FORCE