



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** December 18, 2018  
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## **CITY AND ROBIN HOOD ANNOUNCE NEW “KNOW YOUR RIGHTS” FORUMS FOR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES & WORKERS**

*Combined, investing \$350,000 to inform immigrant New Yorkers about latest federal immigration policy shifts and how City’s here to help*

*City expects to reach over 5,000 New Yorkers at forums across the five boroughs by Summer 2019, particularly immigrant and domestic workers*

**MANHATTAN**—Today, Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Bitta Mostofi joined City agency and community partners—including Lutheran Social Services of New York—to announce \$350,000 in funding from the City and Robin Hood for “Know Your Rights” (KYR) forums for immigrant New Yorkers.

The City understands that in a political climate increasingly hostile to immigrant communities, the need for accurate information about the latest federal immigration policy changes and what City services are available, for all New Yorkers, is greater than ever. This new funding—approximately \$225,000 from the City and \$125,000 from Robin Hood via the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City—will go to nine trusted community partners who will provide timely information to community members at Know Your Rights forums. These KYRs are designed for immigrant New Yorkers generally, with specific focuses on hard-to-reach communities, workers generally, and domestic workers in particular. The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs developed the curriculum in partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs and the NYC Commission on Human Rights. In addition, immigrant New Yorkers will be directed to free and safe immigration legal resources as well as employment legal assistance.

“This announcement is another demonstration of the City’s strong commitment to immigrant and other vulnerable communities and the groups serving them, especially in the current national anti-immigrant climate,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives Phillip Thompson**. “We are creating forums targeting the communities that need them most with key information and resources that can get them started on life-changing opportunities. I look forward to continue working with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, other City agencies, and community-based organizations involved in this initiative to continue to improve through meaningful information exchange and connections the economic outlook of hard-to-reach communities as well as low-wage immigrant and domestic workers.”

“In response to this federal administration’s anti-immigrant, overboard enforcement, our City must work even more closely with trusted community partners on the ground and in schools to ensure that all New Yorkers know their rights,” said **Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs**.

“Robin Hood is proud to partner with the City on this important initiative supporting immigrant New Yorkers,” said **Veyom Bahl, Robin Hood’s Managing Director for Survival**. “We are committed to helping New Yorkers move out of poverty. This includes ensuring that all workers have the information and support they need to have fair and productive relationships with their employers.”

“The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City is committed to building a safer and more equitable New York City,” said **Toya Williford, Executive Director of the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City**. “With the investments of the City of New York and the Robin Hood Foundation, we are ensuring that our City provides accessible and relevant information about legal rights and the City services available our to most vulnerable immigrant communities.”

“With the federal government’s stance on immigrant sending a chilling wave of fear through our immigrant communities and, at the same time, their rollback of long-standing workplace standards, immigrant workers face exceptional challenges in today’s workplace,” said **Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Lorelei Salas**. “Through innovative legislation and proactive enforcement, our Office of Labor Policy & Standards is stepping in to protect vulnerable workers but those rights are only effective if they can be exercised, which makes education for both workers and employers vital. We thank Immigrant Affairs, Robin Hood and the Know Your Rights partner organizations for recognizing the importance of this work and joining us in helping to ensure immigrant New Yorkers know their rights, that they can come to DCA anonymously, and that we will protect their identities when we investigate complaints.”

“Immigrant New Yorkers are the backbone of our economy and for centuries have contributed to make our great city what it is today,” said **Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks**. “Now more than ever we want them to know that we are here to support them with programs and services to help them reach their full potential.”

“It’s critical that all New Yorkers work together to support our immigrant communities and ensure our city remains a safe haven for all,” said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. “Our immigrant communities make our schools, city and country great, and I stand with my partners in government as we work to protect and empower every member of the New York City community.”

This latest round of Know Your Rights forums builds on the groundwork laid by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and Robin Hood to inform New Yorkers about their legal rights and their ability to access City services. Since the beginning of 2017, the City has conducted over 1,700 KYR forums for immigrant New Yorkers, providing updates on federal immigration policy shifts – including on increased [federal immigration enforcement](#), the [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#) program, [Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\)](#), the [travel ban](#), and the Trump Administration’s [“public charge”](#) proposal.

Funding from the City (administered by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs) and Robin Hood combined will provide for an estimated 220 KYR forums reaching over 5,000 New Yorkers. As federal policies impacting NYC’s immigrant communities continue to shift, the de Blasio Administration will continue to step-up for our city’s residents, regardless of immigration status.

While the KYR programs are broadly similar, funding from the City and Robin Hood will serve distinct purposes. Community-based organizations (CBOs) that receive City funding will split between serving working class immigrant New Yorkers across the five boroughs and those specifically targeting hard-to-reach communities – those who are traditionally underserved or at a higher risk of discrimination due to language, culture, geography, religion and/or other factors. City funding will also establish a team to lead coordination efforts between the City, Robin Hood, and community partners to facilitate meeting program goals. These City-funded KYRs will prioritize providing information that will help immigrant New Yorkers avoid deportation, fraudulent legal services, and discrimination in housing and employment. These CBOs will also assist community members with referrals for immigration legal help—through ActionNYC—and/or Human Resources Administration-funded employment legal assistance. City funding will begin in January 2019 and will run through Summer 2019.

The following CBOs are receiving funding from the City:

- Academy of Medical & Public Health Services
- African Communities Together, Inc.
- Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement
- MASA (also receiving funding from Robin Hood)
- Mixteca Organization, Inc.
- UnLocal, Inc.

The Trump Administration has increased federal interior immigration enforcement throughout the country, including at worksites. Complementing the City-funded KYRs, CBOs receiving Robin Hood funding are equipped with a tailored curriculum to educate and empower low-wage immigrant workers during this time of increased immigration enforcement. Additional educational materials are also being developed with this funding, and one of the funding recipients—Damayan—is hosting KYR forums specifically for domestic workers. Robin Hood funding started last month and will run through Summer 2019.

The following CBOs are receiving funding from Robin Hood:

- Damayan
- Lutheran Social Services of New York
- MASA (also receiving funding from the City)
- SCO Family Services – Center for Family Life

The de Blasio Administration reminds New Yorkers that City-administered services are available to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status – including [IDNYC](#), access to health care, education, anti-discrimination protections, emergency food and shelter, and more. Services that

receive State or Federal funding may have additional eligibility requirements. Any New Yorker with questions or in need should reach out to the City for help. New Yorkers also have access to free and safe immigration legal help. To schedule a free consultation with a trusted immigration legal services provider, New Yorkers can call the “ActionNYC” hotline at 1-800-354-0365 from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., Monday to Friday.

Most recently, the de Blasio Administration has worked to inform city residents about the Trump Administration’s “public charge” proposal, which, if adopted, could harm hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. As of now, this proposed rule is not in effect and no rules regarding who is legally eligible for public benefits have changed. City agencies are continuing to accept applications for benefits from all New Yorkers in need and are continuing to manage cases for all New Yorkers who are eligible for benefits. The City remains committed to sharing any information regarding this proposed rule with all New Yorkers as it becomes available. The Administration also encourages New Yorkers who think they might be potentially impacted by this proposed rule not to make any decisions regarding participation in public benefits programs until they have sought advice from a trusted, appropriate source. For additional assistance, New Yorkers can call the New Americans Hotline, operated by Catholic Charities, at 1-800-566-7636 from 9 A.M. to 8 P.M., Monday to Friday.

The City of New York has long-standing policies in place to protect the privacy of our clients and the confidentiality of client information pursuant to Federal, State and Local Law.

“Whether it’s overreach by ICE or fraudulent and deceptive practices by employers, landlords, and others preying on the vulnerable, it’s become our duty to arm our at-risk neighbors and ourselves with the knowledge we need to fight back against attacks on New York’s immigrant communities,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. “I commend the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs for continuing to secure funding for Know Your Rights trainings and outreach. This work has never been more necessary or more important.”

“New York’s immigrant communities are the lifeblood of our City” said **Council Member Mark Levine**. “We must continue to ensure that New York’s immigrants are able to access the legal assistance they need in the face of a hostile Washington.”

“Knowing that immigrant communities are an integral part of our city, Lutheran Social Services of NY is proud to help empower hardworking immigrant New Yorkers and provide them with access to essential resources,” said Damyn Kelly, CEO and President of Lutheran Social Services of New York. “Through the Know Your Rights forums and Lutheran Social Services of NY’s Immigration Legal Program, we strive to ensure that vulnerable immigrant communities have access to free and safe immigration legal help and that they understand the changes in federal immigration policies along with their rights.”

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have access to free and safe immigration legal help and that they understand the changes in federal immigration policies along with their rights.”

“The Academy of Medical & Public Health Services (AMPHS) is pleased to partner with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to provide Know Your Rights workshops for hard-to-reach immigrant communities in Sunset Park. As our community members continue to be attacked through detrimental policies like the expanded public charge rule and the Census 2020 citizenship question, community members need a platform to learn accurate information about their rights,” said **Mon Yuck Yu, Executive Vice President & Chief of Staff, Academy of Medical & Public Health Services (AMPHS)**. “Working to enhance healthcare access among our underserved communities, we see more and more community members who suffer from the stress and trauma of family separation every day. This funding will enable us to better educate our community members on how to exercise their rights during an ICE raid, how to access city services, and how to prevent fraud and alleviate the stress that comes from living in the shadows. It will allow us to pull our community members out of the shadows and let them know that we – and New York City – are here for them.”

“Filipino trafficking survivors, their families and Damayan undocumented members feel extremely insecure and threatened in the current anti-immigrant and anti-worker environment. Their first line of protection and defense is knowing their rights and so Damayan is deeply thankful of the grant and technical assistance from the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City that help us conduct the Know Your Rights Training for our vulnerable community,” said **Linda Oalican, Executive Director of Damayan**.

### **About MOIA**

The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs promotes the well-being of NYC's immigrant communities by recommending policies and managing programs that help to successfully integrate immigrant New Yorkers into the civic, economic, and cultural life of the city. For more information on all MOIA services, go to [NYC.gov/immigrants](https://nyc.gov/immigrants), call 311, and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

### **About Robin Hood**

Founded in 1988, Robin Hood finds, fuels, and creates the most impactful and scalable solutions lifting families out of poverty in New York City, with models that can work across the country. Robin Hood invests roughly \$120 million annually to provide legal services, housing, meals, workforce development training, education programs, and more to families in poverty in New York City. Robin Hood tracks every program with rigorous metrics. [www.robinhood.org](http://www.robinhood.org)  
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