



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF
IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS
2021 REPORT



NYC[®]
Mayor's Office of
Immigrant Affairs

Message from the Mayor



We live in the most diverse place on earth, and that is what makes New York City the greatest city in the world. It does not matter where you're born because, when you make this city your home, you are a New Yorker.

As our city recovers from COVID-19, it is important to remember that this crisis has disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable among us, many that happen to be immigrants. Immigrant New Yorkers were on the frontlines, keeping our city running throughout the darkest days of the pandemic.

It is critical that immigrant communities understand all the recovery resources available to them and have access to the support needed to fully recover and live with dignity and justice. And there is still work to be done to dismantle the systems that marginalize and exclude immigrant communities. One crucial step our city must take towards true equity is language justice. Under my administration, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will double down on its efforts to ensure that every New Yorker can thrive, regardless of the language they speak.

The Statue of Liberty in our harbor is a constant reminder of what we value as a city. We will continue to be a place that upholds acceptance, inclusion, and understanding towards all New Yorkers who call this city home. We know our city can only flourish when all of its residents have the support they need, and we're going to ensure that happens.



Eric Adams
Mayor of the City of New York

Message from Commissioner Manuel Castro



I am proud to present our newly designed report on New York City's immigrant population and the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) activities in 2021.

With 60 percent of New Yorkers being immigrants or the children of immigrants, the wellbeing of our city depends on the willingness of immigrant New Yorkers to engage with municipal government services. This makes our work with immigrant communities ever so important.

In 2021, the City confronted its second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many immigrant New Yorkers continued to face devastating health and economic consequences. In response, MOIA united with community groups, elected officials, and others to roll out recovery programs and lead the nation in vaccination efforts. This report highlights the work done by MOIA in calendar year 2021 to respond to the challenges that many immigrant New Yorkers faced during this acute phase of the crisis. It reviews the critical role MOIA played in the City's successful vaccination campaign and in continuing to empower immigrant New Yorkers by connecting them to legal and social services. I saw this firsthand when leading an immigrant community-based organization that worked closely with MOIA in ensuring immigrant communities had access to City resources and services.

I want to thank Mayor Eric Adams for appointing me as Commissioner of MOIA. As an immigrant New Yorker who crossed the Mexico-U.S. border with my mother at the age of 5 and lived in NYC's immigrant neighborhoods, I could not be more honored to serve the City and my community in this capacity. Under my leadership, MOIA will continue to respond to the unique and emerging needs of the City's immigrant communities while working to close the access gap of government services for immigrant New Yorkers.

In the coming years, MOIA will answer the call from Mayor Adams to lift immigrants as high as Lady Liberty lifts her torch in our harbor, and will ensure New York City is a place where immigrant New Yorkers can thrive with dignity and justice.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manuel Castro'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Manuel Castro
Commissioner

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Acronyms

Official and Non-Official Acronym	Full Name
ACS	American Community Survey
NYC ACS	NYC Administration for Children's Services
BORTAC	U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol Tactical Unit
C4A	Cities for Action
C4C	Cities for Citizenship
CAU	NYC Mayor's Community Affairs Unit
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CCHR	NYC Commission on Human Rights
CEC	NYC Civic Engagement Commission
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CUNY	The City University of New York
CY	Calendar Year
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DCWP	NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
District Court	U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
DOE DML	NYC Department of Education's Division of Multilingual Learners
DOF	NYC Department of Finance
DOHMH	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DSS	NYC Department of Social Services
DVS	NYC Department of Veterans' Services
EIDL	Economic Injury Disaster Loan
ELL	English Language Learner

Official and Non-Official Acronym	Full Name
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ENDGBV	NYC Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence
EOIR	U.S. Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FFCRA	Families First Coronavirus Response Act
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
H+H	NYC Health + Hospitals
HEAP	Home Energy Assistance Program
HEROES Act	Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HPD	NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
HRA	NYC Human Resources Administration
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IERF	NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund
IHW	Immigrant Heritage Week
KYR	Know Your Rights
LAC	Literacy Assistance Center
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LL30	Local Law 30 of 2017
LRIF	Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness
LST	MOIA’s Language Services Team
LWWI	Low Wage Worker Initiative
MCC	IDNYC Mobile Command
MOCJ	NYC Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice
MOCTO	NYC Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer

Official and Non-Official Acronym	Full Name
MOIA	NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs
MOPT	NYC Mayor’s Office to Protect Tenants
MWBE	Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises
NWNY	New Women New Yorkers
NYC Law	NYC Law Department
NYC Opportunity	NYC Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity
NYCHA	NYC Housing Authority
NYLAG	New York Legal Assistance Group
NYPD	NYC Police Department
NYS DREAM Act	New York State DREAM Act
OCME	NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
OPHC	NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RFP	Requests for Proposals
RRLC	Rapid Response Legal Collaborative
SBS	NYC Department of Small Business Services
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
T2	NYC Test and Trace Corps
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act
WSNYC	We Speak NYC

Acknowledgements

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 fifth such report, covering calendar year 2021.

In loving memory of our colleague Danny Jared Mendoza. He dedicated himself to the many communities he served across NYC and impacted countless lives. We will miss him dearly.

Cover photo credit: Michael Appleton/Mayoral Photography Office

Executive Summary

The New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) supports and empowers over 3 million immigrant New Yorkers who speak over 200 languages. Recognizing that immigrant New Yorkers make up almost 40 percent of the City’s total population, and that 60 percent of New Yorkers are immigrants or children of immigrants, MOIA works to close the access gap between immigrant communities and government services. This report presents a snapshot of the City’s work in this area but does not cover the totality of work that other New York City agencies do to serve immigrants.

In 2021, the city entered its second year of the COVID-19 pandemic and focused its efforts on recovery programs and the key to NYC: vaccinations. MOIA continued to ensure that immigrants were included in these efforts through advocacy, outreach, information-sharing, and community empowerment. This includes working with the new federal administration to push for immigration reform, combatting the inequities and impacts of COVID-19 and other disasters, and preparing for the transition and institutionalization of legal and language services. Some of these efforts included: spearheading virtual and in-person outreach to share information on vaccines, ranked-choice voting, citizenship eligibility, and immigration policy changes; participating in emergency response efforts for the Afghan + Haitian refugee crises, and advising other city agencies on the development and implementation of policies related to immigrant New Yorkers.

MOIA recognizes that it cannot be the only office that seeks to serve our immigrant communities. All City agencies must think about the needs of immigrants when engaging in their work. Under the new leadership of Mayor Eric Adams and with the coordination and support of New York City Council and our community partners, MOIA will continue to affirm the City’s unwavering commitment to protecting, serving, and safeguarding the rights and well-being of all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status.

Mission of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

MOIA's work recognizes that immigrant New Yorkers and their children make up a significant proportion of the City's population.

Our charter-mandated responsibilities include advising and assisting the mayor, council, and other agencies on programs and policies related to and designed for immigrant New Yorkers; tracking state and federal policy and law that will impact immigrant New Yorkers; increasing access to city programs, benefits, and services by conducting outreach; and helping advise on the legal service needs of immigrants. MOIA is also required to consult with the community and other stakeholders and coordinate an interagency task force on immigrant affairs.

MOIA is also tasked to work with the relevant city agencies to address the needs of immigrant crime victims and witnesses, including by working with agencies on the issuance of U visa certifications and T visa declarations. In addition, MOIA is tasked with producing this annual report.

Immigrant New Yorkers and Their Families—Barriers and Contributions

2020 American Community Survey (ACS)

The U.S. Census Bureau’s annual American Community Survey (ACS) is a national survey that the U.S. Census Bureau administers every year to 3.5 million households (compared to the decennial census survey, which goes to every household/address in the U.S.). The ACS is designed to produce reliable estimates on small areas and smaller population groups covering over 35 topics such as citizenship, employment, health insurance coverage, English proficiency, and place of birth, among others. The ACS makes this data available at the individual response level through the ACS Public Use Microdata Sample, which are the anonymized individualized responses to the survey questionnaire. It is this microdata that serves as the foundation for the demographic data in our annual report.

Due to significant data collection disruptions¹ arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the U.S. Census did not release its standard 2020 ACS data this year. The Census Bureau released a

statement explaining that the data gathered from this year’s survey did not meet the Census Bureau’s Statistical Data Quality Standards² designed to ensure the utility, objectivity and integrity of the statistical information.³ Further, the disruptions led to high nonresponse rates from persons with lower income, lower educational attainment, and who were less likely to own their home. Based on historical and other existing datasets, as well as barriers to accessing services, we know that foreign-born New Yorkers disproportionately fall into these categories of high nonresponse.

As a result, this year’s annual report will not feature its standard demographic overview of the NYC population by immigration status since we cannot attest to the underlying data’s reliability or accuracy.

Instead, this report will feature some high-level data points based on the 2020 ACS dataset that uses experimental weights. The data will not go below the NYC level as the Census Bureau has asked users to exercise caution when using data; the experimental weights are designed at the state and national levels.⁴ MOIA will

1 <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2021/05/adapting-the-acs-amid-covid-19.html>.

2 <https://www.census.gov/about/policies/quality/standards.html>.

3 <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/statement-differences-between-2020-census-and-acs-1-year.html>.

4 <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/user-notes/2021-02.html>.

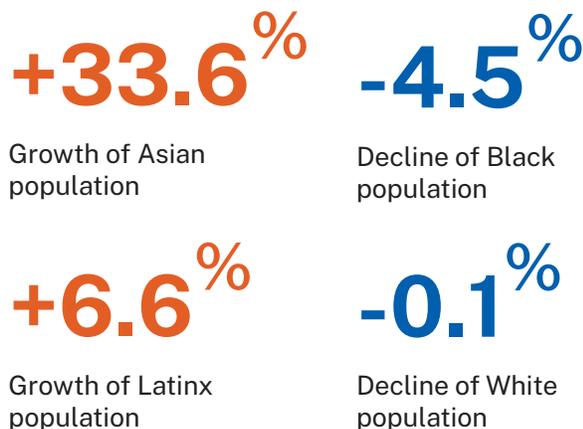
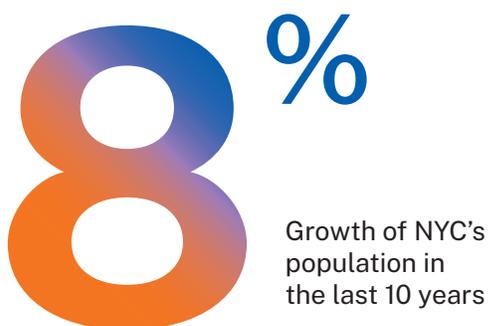
continue to assess the pandemic impact to the ACS data and hope to release its standard demographic profile of the city's vibrant immigrant community in next year's report.

Difference between the 2020 ACS and the 2020 Decennial Census Count

Unlike the ACS, the 2020 decennial Census was able to postpone their Nonresponse Followup to a time when they could carry out the full operation, limiting the impact of the pandemic on data quality in ways the ACS could not.⁵ Additionally, MOIA's Outreach and Organizing (O+O) team adapted its strategies to ensure that all New Yorkers would still get counted in the 2020 decennial Census. Our team hosted virtual and in-person events with community leaders and elected officials, conducted phone-banking, and diligently

shared information in over 12 languages. Through these efforts, New York City (NYC) was able to reach a historic self-response rate of 61.8 percent for the Census and ensure federal funding and representation for our communities for years to come.

Based on this 2020 count, NYC's population grew eight percent in the last 10 years – a faster pace of growth than that of New York State and the country. In fact, NYC's population reached a record high of 8.8 million people. Among the four major race groups, the Asian population grew at the fastest rate (33.6 percent), and the Latinx population grew by 6.6 percent, while the number of Black residents declined by 4.5 percent and the White population fell marginally, by 0.1 percent. For more 2020 decennial estimates, please refer to reports from NYC's Department of City Planning.⁶



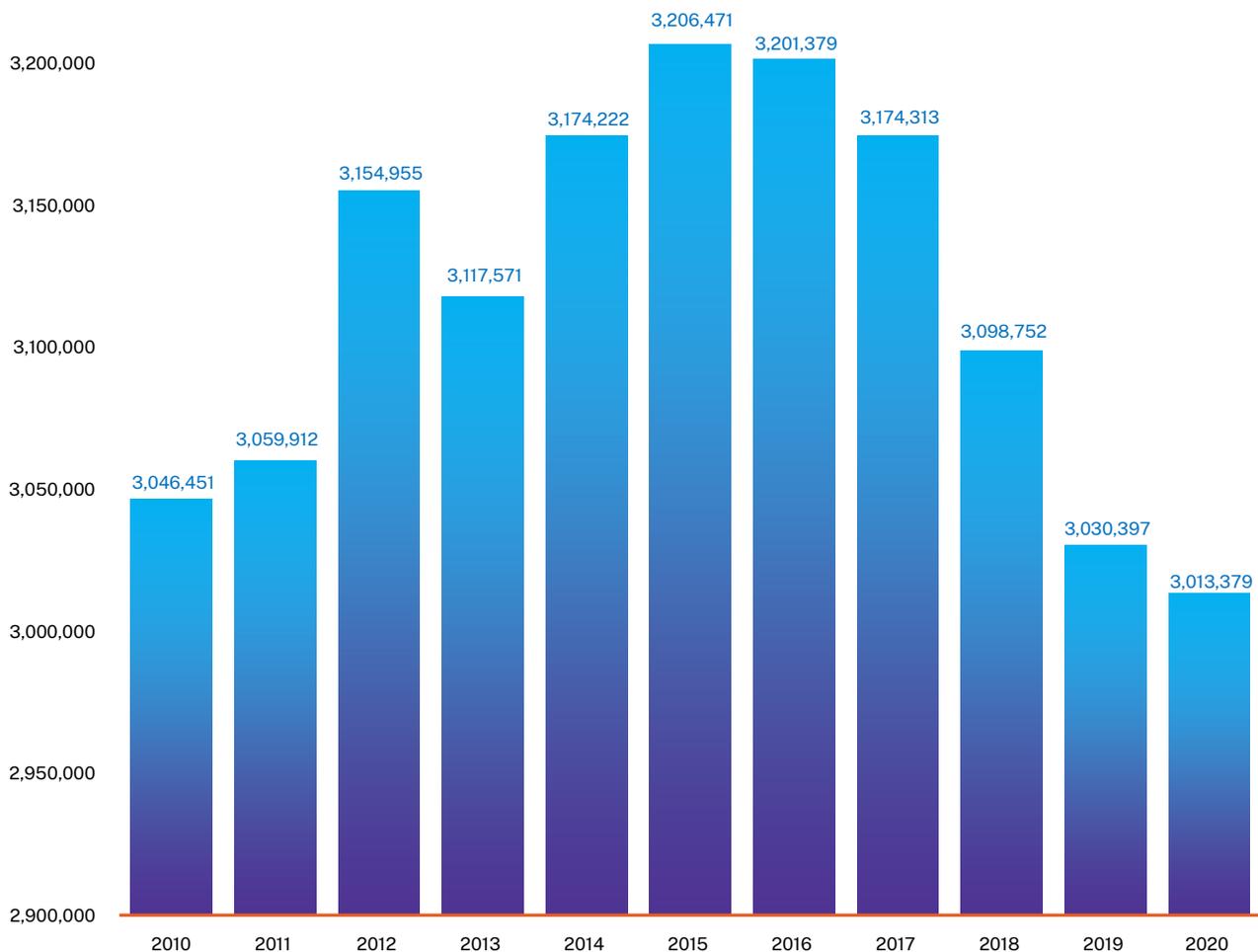
⁵ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2021/statement-differences-between-2020-census-and-acr-1-year.html>

⁶ https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/planning-level/nyc-population/census2020/dcp_2020-census-briefing-booklet-1.pdf?r=3

Overview

ACS 1-year demographic trends tend to change very slightly from year to year. As such, we can assume that many of the estimates based on 2019 data are still true today. Nevertheless, the following section takes a closer look at a few data points from the 2020 ACS. The 2020 data shows that the total number of immigrants in New York City has held steady in 2020 following a decline from its peak of 3.2 million in 2015. Below is a look at NYC's foreign-born population over the last ten years:

Total Foreign-Born Population in NYC



Despite this shift in the overall number of immigrants, the city’s immigrant population remains extremely diverse in terms of immigration status, languages spoken, and country of birth. Likewise, immigrants continue to contribute substantially to the city’s economy. During the COVID-19 pandemic, immigrants kept the City going during this challenging time, representing half of the approximately one million essential workers serving on the frontlines. Despite the critical role that immigrant New Yorkers play in the city, they continue to face impediments to full inclusion and well-being, such as access to health insurance and over-crowding, making it difficult for these communities to practice social distancing.⁷

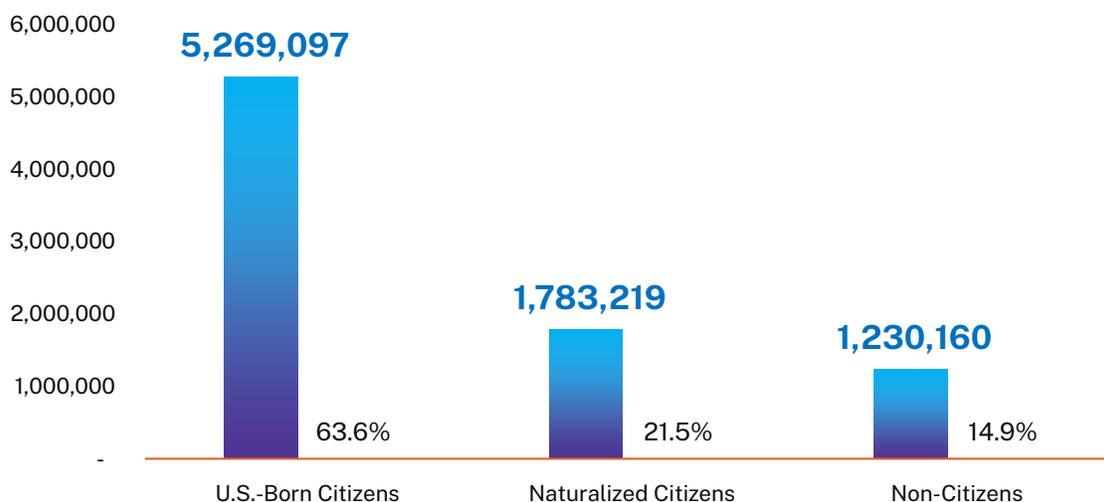
While COVID-19 case and mortality data are not available by immigration status, we have seen firsthand how the virus has

disproportionately impacted communities who already experience the adverse impacts of persistent, structural, and institutional racism. A recent analysis of the City’s COVID-19 data found that as of September 2021, Latinx New Yorkers have died from COVID-19 at 1.8 times the rate of White New Yorkers (754.5 compared to 406.2 per 100,000 people) and Black New Yorkers have died at nearly 1.7 times the rate (680.3 compared to 406.2 per 100,000).⁸

2020 Profile⁹

New York City is home to three million immigrants who comprise about 36 percent of the city’s population (8.3 million) and 43 percent of its workforce. This data point is unchanged from the previous year. Approximately 59 percent of immigrant New Yorkers are naturalized U.S. citizens.

NYC Population by Citizenship Status



7 <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/MOIA-Annual-Report-for-2020.pdf>.

8 Administrative data from DOHMH as of September 11, 2021. See <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data.page> accessed December 27 2021.

9 All data in this report, unless otherwise noted, is based on the 2020 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS).

Diversity of NYC Immigrants¹⁰

Immigrants from the Dominican Republic remain the largest group of the foreign-born population, followed closely by China. Immigrants from Bangladesh increased the most rapidly between 2010 and 2020 (63 percent). The foreign-born populations with the fastest rates of growth since 2010 are:

- Bangladesh (+63 percent),
- the Dominican Republic (+12 percent),
- China and India (+7 percent each)

The number of immigrants from Mexico has declined substantially over the decade (-28 percent). Immigrants from Haiti have also dropped a fair share since 2010 (-17 percent).

Top 10 countries of Birth for Foreign-Born New York City Residents in 2020

	Country of Birth for NYC Immigrants	Population in 2020	% of all Foreign-born	Population in 2010	% Change
1	Dominican Republic	421,920	14.0	375,397	12.4
2	China	320,900	10.6	299,047	7.3
3	Jamaica	165,260	5.5	168,798	-2.1
4	Guyana	136,180	4.5	137,105	-0.7
5	Mexico	134,350	4.5	186,081	-27.8
6	Ecuador	126,800	4.2	137,604	-7.8
7	Bangladesh	91,980	3.1	56,454	62.9
8	Trinidad and Tobago	84,680	2.8	83,673	1.2
9	Haiti	78,250	2.6	94,686	-17.4
10	India	77,530	2.6	72,185	7.4

¹⁰ Based on the 2020 and 2010 1-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS).

Language Access

Language access continues to be a significant barrier among the foreign-born population. The City has significant linguistic diversity with more than 200 languages spoken by residents across the five boroughs.

Top 12 Languages Spoken by Foreign-Born New York City Residents

	Language Spoken by the Foreign-Born (aged 5+)	% of all Foreign-Born (5+) ¹¹
1	Spanish	39.4
2	Chinese, including Cantonese and Mandarin	16.1
3	Russian	6.9
4	Bengali	4.1
5	Haitian	3.1
6	French	2.6
7	Arabic	2.4
8	Korean	1.9
9	Polish	1.8
10	Italian	1.5
11	Urdu	1.5
12	Tagalog	1.1

As noted, MOIA continues to assess the pandemic impact to the ACS data and hopes to release its standard demographic profile of the city's vibrant immigration community in next year's report.

Since data trends do not typically shift substantially from year to year, we recommend that community partners continue to use MOIA's 2020 annual report for data on other indicators shown by immigration status, such as housing, health, poverty, age, educational attainment, industries and occupations and more. [The 2020 report is available on MOIA's website and linked here.](#)

¹¹ These languages differ from the City's ten designated Local Law 30 (LL30) languages. This report looks at foreign-born with LEP, whereas LL30 considers LEP data for New York City regardless of immigration status. For more information about the LL30 methodology, refer to the statute available here: https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/Local_Law_30.pdf.

State and Federal Developments

State Developments

As New York continued to battle the pandemic, the State passed and implemented several programs that helped ease the extreme economic distress faced by many immigrant New Yorkers.

COVID-19 Related Developments

In August, the Excluded Workers Fund (EWF) opened applications after being created through the budget process. That \$2.1 billion fund was meant to help immigrant New Yorkers who were otherwise ineligible for federal unemployment relief programs and had two tiers of benefits. Those who could meet certain documentation requirements received \$15,600 while all other excluded workers who did not meet the higher standards of proof received \$3,200. Immigrants across New York State quickly applied, and by October the fund ceased taking applications because it had either allocated or disbursed all funding. The fund approved 130,145 claims, with 99.87 percent of those claims approved for the highest tier of funding (\$15,600). A large majority,

105,981, of those claims were based in New York City.¹²

The state also worked to secure federal funding for rental assistance and implement an emergency rental assistance program (ERAP). ERAP was created with more than \$2 billion in funding, with most of that money coming from federal funding allocated through the Consolidated Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan Act.¹³ ERAP was designed to provide direct payments to landlords for rental arrears (late rent), late utility bills, and future rent.¹⁴ Applying for ERAP also provided protection from certain types of eviction and rent increases.¹⁵

Despite the desperate needs of renters across the state, ERAP's rollout was delayed, with only a fraction of the funding initially promised by the state distributed on promised the timeline.¹⁶ After direct intervention from the new Governor Hochul, disbursement of the fund accelerated and by mid-November ERAP was no longer accepting new applications due to

12 N.Y. State Dep't of Labor, *Excluded Workers Fund Data*, <https://dol.ny.gov/excluded-workers-fund-data> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

13 N.Y. State Governor, *Governor Cuomo Announces \$3.5 Billion in Assistance for Renters and Small Businesses* (May 25, 2021), <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-35-billion-assistance-renters-and-small-businesses>; U.S. Dep't of Treasury, *Emergency Rental Assistance Program*, <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/emergency-rental-assistance-program> (last visited Feb. 16, 2022).

14 Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, *Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)* <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/#header> (last visited Feb. 16, 2022).

15 Access NYC, *Assistance to Pay Late Rent and Utilities Owed Due to COVID-19*, <https://access.nyc.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance-program/> (last visited Feb. 16, 2022).

16 Mihir Zaveri, *N.Y. Has \$2.7 Billion for Rent Relief. Many Have Yet to Receive Aid*, N.Y. Times (July 25, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/25/nyregion/new-york-city-rent-relief.html> (updated Nov. 12, 2021).

insufficient funds.¹⁷ About \$1.2 billion of the \$2 billion disbursed went to New York City.¹⁸

In addition to these relief programs, New York State also passed two laws related to protecting tenants from eviction at the end of 2020 that were effective through much of 2021.¹⁹ However, after landlords sued the state, the Supreme Court eventually struck down part of this eviction moratorium scheme in August. Specifically, the Supreme Court struck down the provision of the eviction moratorium that allowed tenants to sign a hardship declaration and automatically put eviction proceedings on hold.²⁰

The New York State legislature and Governor responded by passing a new eviction moratorium that was effective until January 15, 2022.²¹ The new eviction moratorium allowed tenants to sign a hardship declaration, which normally paused eviction proceedings. However, under the new law, landlords were allowed to challenge the hardship declaration if they believed the tenant was not actually experiencing a hardship.²²

Other State Developments

After years of attempts at legalization, the state legislature and then-Governor Cuomo finally reached an agreement on marijuana legalization and regulation at the end of March.²³ With the passage of the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), New York State joined 17 other states as well as Washington, D.C., and Guam in legalizing recreational marijuana.²⁴ In addition to outlining the structure of legal production and sale of marijuana in New York, the MRTA included important criminal legal reforms that benefited all New Yorkers, including immigrant New Yorkers. New Yorkers convicted of most marijuana possession and some sale offenses had their convictions automatically sealed and set aside by the NYS court system. This acted as an extension of previous reforms to remove the criminal histories of individuals with minor marijuana offenses.²⁵ Additionally, New Yorkers can affirmatively have the courts set aside their convictions under certain circumstances.²⁶ This is important in the context of immigration law, where marijuana use and convictions can have negative repercussions.²⁷

17 N.Y. State Governor, *Governor Hochul Announces Major Progress in Providing Pandemic Relief to New Yorkers* (Sept. 14, 2021), <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-major-progress-providing-pandemic-relief-new-yorkers>; Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, *ERAP Frequently Asked Questions*, <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/faq.asp> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

18 N.Y. State Off. of Temp. and Disability Assistance, *New York State Emergency Rental Assistance Program Reports*, <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/emergency-rental-assistance/program-reports.asp> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

19 N.Y. State Governor, *Governor Cuomo Signs the COVID-19 Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2020* (Dec. 28, 2020), <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-covid-19-emergency-eviction-and-foreclosure-prevention-act-2020>; Tenant Safe Harbor Act (TSHA), 2020 N.Y. SB192B.

20 *Pantelis Chrysafis, et. al. v. Lawrence K. Marks*, 594 U.S. _ (2021) (“This order enjoins the enforcement of only Part A of the COVID Emergency Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Act (CEEPPA)”), https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/20pdf/21a8_3fb4.pdf.

21 N.Y. State Governor, *Governor Hochul Signs New Moratorium in COVID-related Residential and Commercial Evictions into Law, Effective Through Jan. 15, 2022* (Sept. 2, 2021), <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-signs-new-moratorium-covid-related-residential-and-commercial-evictions-law>.

22 *Id.*

23 Brian Mann, *N.Y. Gov. Cuomo Signs Marijuana Legalization*, NPR (March 31, 2021), <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/30/982742060/ny-lawmakers-legalize-marijuana-hoping-to-avoid-racial-pitfalls-of-decriminaliza>.

24 Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), 2021 N.Y. SB 854A; Claire Hansen, Horus Alas & Elliot Davis Jr., *Where is Marijuana Legal? A Guide to Marijuana Legalization*, U.S. News (Jan. 6, 2022), <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/where-is-marijuana-legal-a-guide-to-marijuana-legalization>.

25 See 2021 N.Y. SB 854A.

26 *Id.*

27 Immigrant Defense Project, *The Impact of Marijuana Legalization on Immigrants*, <https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/marijuana/> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

Also related to the criminal legal system, the state legislature passed a bill that extends the ability of survivors of trafficking to vacate their convictions. The governor signed that bill into law in November.²⁸ Previously, survivors of trafficking could vacate a limited set of convictions if they could show that those convictions were a result of being trafficked. The new law expands this so that survivors of trafficking can vacate any conviction, if they can show that their participation in the offense was a result of being trafficked.²⁹ This change is beneficial for immigrant survivors of trafficking, who often face a double threat of criminal penalties and immigration consequences when they are forced to commit crimes by their trafficker.³⁰

Finally, the state legislature also passed the Gender Recognition Act, which was signed into law in June.³¹ That law removes certain barriers in New York State law that failed to recognize the experiences of transgender and non-binary New Yorkers. Specifically, the law allows New Yorkers to use “X” to designate their sex on New York State driver’s licenses, provides a process for changing sex designation on official New York State documents, and allows the use of “parent” on birth certificates.³² Of particular note to immigrants, the bill also removes the requirement to public name changes in

a newspaper and explicitly prohibits civil court judges from requiring immigrants changing their name to notify federal immigration agencies.³³

Federal Developments

The year began with the inauguration of the Biden Administration and promises to reverse some of the most restrictive and inhumane immigration policies put in place under the previous administration. While many Trump-era policies were reversed in 2021, critical issues persist, and much more is needed to bring immigrant New Yorkers the justice and fairness they deserve.

Changes to our Immigration System

As one of his first actions, President Biden issued a proclamation rescinding the racist and discriminatory “Muslim” and “African” travel bans.³⁴ The administration also took action to reinstate and preserve the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and established the Family Reunification Taskforce to help reunite children and parents wrongly separated under the prior administration’s “zero tolerance policy.”³⁵

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also rescinded several Trump-era policies to make immigration benefits fairer

28 Survivors of Trafficking Attaining Relief Together (START), 2021 N.Y. SBS674

29 *Id.*

30 Sanctuary for Families, *Pass the Survivors of Trafficking Attaining Relief Together Act*, <https://sanctuaryforfamilies.org/our-approach/advocacy/start-act/> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

31 Gender Recognition Act, 2021 N.Y. A5465D.

32 *Id.*

33 *Id.*; ACLU of New York, *Changing Your Name of Gender Marker Under the Gender Recognition Act*, <https://www.nyclu.org/en/know-your-rights/changing-your-name-or-gender-marker-under-gender-recognition-act> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

34 Proclamation No. 10141, 86 Fed. Reg. 7005 (Jan. 20, 2021), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-01-25/pdf/2021-01749.pdf>.

35 Memorandum on *Preserving and Fortifying Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)*, 86 Fed. Reg. 7053 (Jan. 20, 2021), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01769/preserving-and-fortifying-deferred-action-for-childhood-arrivals-daca>; Exec. Order No. 14011, 86 Fed. Reg. 8273 (Feb. 2, 2021), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/02/05/2021-02562/establishment-of-interagency-task-force-on-the-reunification-of-families>.

and more accessible. Most notably, DHS took action to undo the 2019 Public Charge rule. In March, DHS published a final rule rescinding the 2019 Public Charge rule after a court vacated the rule.³⁶ The Public Charge rule created widespread fear and confusion among immigrant communities and was subject to widespread litigation, including a lawsuit on behalf of multiple states led by the New York State Attorney General and the City of New York. The rule had been placed on hold by several federal courts and DHS justified the rescission of this rule as necessary under court order.

Since President Biden took office in January 2021, DHS designated two new countries, Myanmar and Venezuela, for Temporary Protected Status (TPS). In 2020, the Trump administration attempted to terminate TPS designations for six countries but were ultimately blocked by courts. The Biden administration has since extended TPS designations for those countries. In 2021, DHS extended TPS designations for El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.³⁷ Additionally, the Biden administration re-designated TPS for immigrants from Haiti based on recent turmoil.³⁸

Federal Legislation

As the country continued to battle the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crises, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act.³⁹ Unlike previous COVID relief bills passed through Congress, mixed status families were eligible for stimulus checks under the American Rescue Plan. However, noncitizens, especially those who are undocumented, have been largely shut out of federal pandemic relief efforts due to immigration status restrictions.

In 2021, several bills were introduced in Congress to bring much needed reforms to our immigration system. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Dream and Promise Act, which would provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and TPS holders.⁴⁰ Several other bills were introduced to bring about important reforms, including the New Way Forward Act and the New Deal for New Americans Act.⁴¹ Additionally, President Biden proposed the U.S. Citizenship Act, which includes a pathway to citizenship for certain undocumented immigrants, a prohibition on discriminatory immigration bans, immigration system reforms that keep families together, as well as increased militarization of the Southern border.⁴² None of these bills were passed into law in 2021.

36 Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds; Implementation of Vacatur, 86 Fed. Reg. 14221 (Dep't of Homeland Security Mar. 9, 2021), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/03/15/2021-05357/inadmissibility-on-public-charge-grounds-implementation-of-vacatur>.

37 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Temporary Protected Status*, <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

38 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Temporary Protected Status Designated Country: Haiti*, <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status/temporary-protected-status-designated-country-haiti> (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

39 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Pub. L. No. 117-2, 135 Stat. 4, <https://www.congress.gov/117/plaws/publ2/PLAW-117publ2.pdf>.

40 American Dream and Promise Act of 2021, H.R. 6, 117th Cong. (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/6>.

41 New Way Forward Act, H.R. 536, 117th Cong. (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/536/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22new+way+forward%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=6>; New Deal for New Americans Act of 2021, S.433, 117th Cong. (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/433?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22new+deal+for+new+americans%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=1>.

42 U.S. Citizenship Act, H.R. 1177, 117th Cong. (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1177/text>.

During budget negotiations in 2021, members of Congress sought to include within President Biden’s Build Back Better budget proposal a pathway to citizenship for TPS holders, Dreamers, and essential workers.⁴³ Unfortunately, the Senate Parliamentarian ruled that such a provision could not be included in a budget proposal.

ICE Enforcement

Aiming to fulfill one of President Biden’s campaign promises, DHS also issued a memorandum imposing a 100-day pause on certain removals.⁴⁴ However, the order was blocked by a court and the Biden administration has since agreed not to reinstate the order.⁴⁵

To curtail ICE’s blanket enforcement policies under the Trump administration, DHS issued new enforcement policies. DHS announced new guidance to ICE around “enforcement priorities” and “sensitive locations”, requiring enforcement activities to focus on threats to “national security” or “public safety” and prohibiting ICE from making arrests at certain locations, such as hospitals, schools, and places of worship.⁴⁶

The Biden administration also reversed course on lawsuits around “sanctuary cities”. In 2020, the Trump administration

had sought to penalize jurisdictions that limit their cooperation with ICE, such as through conditioning federal grant money. Several states and cities, including the City of New York, sued and the case was pending before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2021. The Biden administration asked the U.S. Supreme Court to dismiss pending appeals on the lawsuits and the cases were dismissed.⁴⁷

Afghanistan

In August of 2021, the Biden Administration completed the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.⁴⁸ However, the withdrawal of troops did not end the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which faced severe drought, natural disasters,⁴⁹ the COVID-19 pandemic, and the destructive impact of Taliban rule.⁵⁰ For more information about MOIA’s response to the Afghanistan withdrawal, see page 53.

Southern Border

The Biden administration made attempts to restore our asylum system at the border and roll back some of the prior administration’s most egregious policies. Construction of a southern “border wall” was halted. The Biden administration sought to end the Migration Protection Protocols

43 Build Back Better Act, H.R. 5376, 117th Cong. (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5376/text>.

44 U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security, Memorandum on *Review of and Interim Revision to Civil Immigration Enforcement and Removal Policies and Priorities* (Jan. 20, 2021), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21_0120_enforcement-memo_signed.pdf.

45 U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security, *DHS Statement on the Expiration of 100-day Removal Pause* (May 6, 2021), <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2021/05/06/dhs-statement-expiration-100-day-removal-pause>.

46 U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security, Memorandum on *Guidelines for the Enforcement of Civil Immigration Law* (Sept. 30, 2021), <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/news/guidelines-civilimmigrationlaw.pdf>; U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security, Memorandum on *Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas* (Oct. 27, 2021) https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21_1027_opa_guidelines-enforcement-actions-in-near-protected-areas.pdf.

47 *City of N.Y. v. Dep’t of Justice*, 19-267 (2d Cir. 2020), *dismissed*, No 20-796 (U.S. Mar. 4, 2021), <https://www.supremecourt.gov/search.aspx?filename=/docket/docketfiles/html/public/20-796.html>; *City of N.Y. v. Dep’t of Justice*, 19-275 (2d Cir. 2020), *dismissed*, No 20-795 (U.S. Mar. 4, 2021), <https://www.supremecourt.gov/search.aspx?filename=/docket/docketfiles/html/public/20-795.html>; *Wilkinson v. City and County of San Francisco, CA*, 18-17308 (9th Cir. 2020), *dismissed*, No 20-666 (U.S. Mar. 4, 2021), <https://www.supremecourt.gov/search.aspx?filename=/docket/docketfiles/html/public/20-666.html>.

48 <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/bidens-chaotic-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-is-complete>.

49 <https://www.unhcr.org/afghanistan-emergency.html>

50 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan/overview#1>

(MPP), known also as “remain in Mexico”, which forced tens of thousands of people to live in makeshift camps in Mexico while they await their asylum proceedings. However, the Biden administration was required to reinstate MPP by a court order.⁵¹

The Biden administration largely has kept in place “Title 42”, a controversial order issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) under the Trump Administration which effectively shut down the asylum at the border citing public health.⁵² While the administration amended the order to create exceptions for children and certain vulnerable groups⁵³, the policy has resulted in the vast majority of asylum seekers at the border being expelled without a chance to have their cases heard, and has largely impacted Black and Indigenous asylum seekers. Hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers, including thousands of Haitians fleeing political turmoil and violence, have been expelled under this policy.⁵⁴

The policies that remain in place have created dangerous and inhumane conditions along the Southern border and have harmed vulnerable people who came to the U.S. border seeking safety. In October 2021, disturbing photos emerged of Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents on horses

carrying whips corralling Black migrants and pushing them into the Río Grande and onto Mexico. DHS launched an investigation into the event, but CBP officers have not yet faced any consequences.⁵⁵

It is estimated that over 1.8 million people have been removed, deported, or expelled since President Biden took office.⁵⁶ At the end of December 2021, approximately 20,000 people were in ICE detention and over 1.5 million active removal cases were pending before Immigration Courts, a record high backlog of cases.⁵⁷

51 U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security, *Court Ordered Reimplementation of the Migrant Protection Protocols*, <https://www.dhs.gov/migrant-protection-protocols> (last updated Jan. 20, 2022).

52 Notice on Order Suspending the Right to Introduce Certain Persons From Countries Where a Quarantinable Communicable Disease Exists, 85 Fed. Reg. 65806 (Ctr. for Disease Control and Prevention Oct. 13, 2020), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/10/16/2020-22978/order-suspending-the-right-to-introduce-certain-persons-from-countries-where-a-quarantinable>.

53 See, e.g., Ctr. for Disease Control and Prevention, *Title 42 Order Reassessment and Exception for Unaccompanied Noncitizen Children* (July 16, 2021), <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s0716-title-42-order.html>.

54 U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Nationwide Enforcement Encounters: Title 8 Enforcement Actions and Title 42 Expulsions* 2022, <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-enforcement-statistics/title-8-and-title-42-statistics> (last updated Jan. 24, 2022).

55 Dep’t of Homeland Security, *DHS Update Regarding the Investigation of Horse Patrol Activity in Del Rio, TX on Sept. 19, 2021* (Nov. 16, 2021), <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2021/11/16/dhs-update-regarding-investigation-horse-patrol-activity-del-rio-texas-september-19>.

56 United We Dream, *Number of Confirmed Deportation and Expulsions Under Biden*, <https://unitedwedream.org/protect-immigrants-now/biden-stop-deportations-now/> (last updated Nov. 31, 2021).

57 TRAC Reports, *ICE Detainees*, TRAC Immigration, https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/detentionstats/pop_agen_table.html (last visited Feb. 15, 2022); TRAC Reports, *Immigration Court Backlog Tool*, TRAC Immigration, https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court_backlog/ (last visited Feb. 15, 2022).

Aspirations Revisited

In our annual report for 2019, MOIA proposed a set of five recommendations to address barriers to immigrant New Yorkers and their families. We reviewed our progress on those metrics in the last annual report and include an update below for calendar year 2021. These remain critical areas of work for MOIA, and we look forward to continuing to review MOIA's progress in 2022.

Lower barriers to access

MOIA recognizes that the City can only thrive when all New Yorkers have access to the benefits and services they are eligible for. This has been made especially apparent throughout the pandemic, where existing disparities in access revealed themselves in disparate health outcomes. In our efforts to address these barriers in 2021, MOIA:

- Conducted vigorous outreach about the COVID-19 vaccine to immigrant communities (page 26) and implemented an outreach program to educate undocumented immigrants about COVID-19 vaccination (page 61);
- Provided additional funding for casework through our NYC Care outreach partners (page 60); and

- Built on our language access (page 37), outreach (page 74), Know Your Rights (KYR) (page 62), and community services initiatives (page 66) to connect New Yorkers to the services they need during the pandemic.

Build with and empower communities

Empowering our immigrant communities to exercise their rights and engage in the civic and cultural life of the City is a key part of MOIA's mission. Through this work, MOIA can ensure that immigrant New Yorkers reach their full potential, including through naturalization. In 2021, MOIA worked to:

- Provide legal services to help immigrants stabilize their immigration status, including by becoming citizens (page 47);
- Address the needs of recently arrived immigrants, including Haitian and Afghan populations (page 52-53); and
- Highlight the contributions of immigrants and immigrant communities (page 68).

Further economic justice

As highlighted in previous MOIA annual reports, there are persistent economic disparities between immigrant and citizen New Yorkers, with undocumented immigrants more likely to face poverty. Fighting poverty is the duty of city government, and in 2021, MOIA worked to do this by:

- Continuing and expanding our work to provide direct relief to undocumented immigrants ineligible for other forms of state and federal relief (page 24);
- Supporting the needs of immigrant workers through advocacy and programming (page 24);
- Supporting outreach for crucial services related to pandemic recovery, including COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and state and federal programming (page 26); and
- Shareing critical information with communities about fraud targeting immigrant New Yorkers (page 60).

Fight for pro-immigrant federal policies

The Biden Administration has begun the long work of dismantling the anti-immigrant policies of the previous administration. However, more needs to be done in reversing some of the most harmful policies implemented by former-President Trump. MOIA's advocacy on these issues continued in 2021, with MOIA acting to:

- Coordinate multi-city and multiagency advocacy (page 79);

- Submit comments on federal regulations relevant to MOIA and immigrant New Yorkers (page 79); and
- Provide legal services to immigrants who may be eligible for relief (page 52).

Advocacy at the state and federal level

In 2021, MOIA engaged with the state government in order to ensure that state programs included immigrant New Yorkers and further build a relationship of inter-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination. In addition, MOIA continued its work to assist in the implementation of state programs. In particular, MOIA:

- Secured baselined funding for its program for NYS DREAM Act application assistance (page 66);
- Supported in the creation of a joint City/State effort to serve immigrant survivors of Hurricane Ida (page 76); and
- Advocated with the state legislature on bills that affected immigrant New Yorkers (page 79).

MOIA Programs and 2021 Activities

MOIA supports and empowers over three million immigrant New Yorkers, speaking over 200 languages. We ensure that immigrant New Yorkers can thrive by developing innovative programming and policies, connecting them to crucial resources, and engaging with and assisting City agencies in serving the nearly 40 percent of New Yorkers who are immigrants.

This section begins with an overview of MOIA's work to address the ongoing global pandemic.

Response to COVID-19: Resources for Immigrant New Yorkers

Programs & Activities

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to devastate New York City for a second year, MOIA adapted its programs and policies to switch from emergency response to COVID recovery. Our team implemented lessons learned from 2020 to address the numerous needs our immigrant communities continued to face during this time, particularly as they continued to bear the brunt of the pandemic.

This section outlines the resiliency of our staff, programs, and advocacy as we navigated the second year in this global health pandemic.

Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund

Throughout 2021, immigrant workers continued to play a critical role in the recovery of our city. Yet, the pandemic persistently highlighted the issues immigrant workers continued to face. One issue being the exclusion of undocumented workers from the federal stimulus package provided by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. As new and pre-existing issues were exacerbated by COVID-19, there was a lack of an adequate safety net and other critical resources for this population in emergency situations.

To address this exclusion, MOIA partnered with the Research Foundation of City University of New York and Mayor's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) to establish and oversee the third round of NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund (IERF).

The City provided \$726,000 in direct monetary support to immigrant workers and their families who were not eligible for most federal and state wage security and social safety programs and COVID-19-specific federal direct relief.

MOIA worked with four NYC community-based organizations (CBOs) with ties to the undocumented community to identify potential recipients and connect immigrant

workers and their families to other resources and benefits for which they were eligible, including EWF.

Through this program, MOIA connected approximately 2,100 immigrant workers and their families to cash assistance with 74 percent of families having at least 1 child. These workers were economically vulnerable as they had limited to no savings, earned low income, and faced significant job loss due to COVID-19. Approximately 72 percent of recipients experienced job loss, and about 80 percent of fund recipients had a household income between \$0 and \$19,999 in the last year. Most fund recipients also had difficulty paying for food and groceries, rent, and utilities.

The impact and demonstrated need of the Relief Program has helped MOIA advocate for additional funding to reach more immigrant New Yorkers left out of federal and state relief programs. Due to the success of this program, MOIA secured over \$900,000 in additional philanthropic funding for an extension of the program. The funding allowed the continuation of cash distribution for immigrant New Yorkers who experienced financial hardship due to the death of their loved one from COVID-19. The funding also went to immigrant workers who did not receive Tier 1 of the EWF or who qualified but did not receive any funding due to the exhaustion of available funds.

Burial Assistance

MOIA partnered with The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City to create the Mayor's Fund COVID-19 Immigrant Burial Assistance Program.

This program addressed the exclusion of undocumented immigrant New Yorkers from state and federal burial assistance programs by providing approximately \$559,000 in direct financial relief to immigrant New Yorkers responsible for the burial costs of family and household members who passed away from COVID-19.

MOIA is worked with four CBOs to identify eligible individuals and connect them to funds.

State-Funded Programs

As the state rolled out programs like EWF, ERAP, and the NYS Homeowners Assistance Programs (NYSHAP), MOIA provided critical connections to funded community-based organizations who assisted individuals in applying for assistance and gathering the necessary documentation. Our team also screened individuals who were ineligible for certain types of benefits due to immigration status and connected them to privately funded supports through Funds and Services for Tenants Experiencing Need (FASTEN). This program helped vulnerable tenants stay in their homes in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic by connecting individuals to services and financial resources, including rental arrears support.

MOIA also closely collaborated with the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) as they designed the EWF. Based on recommendations from IDNYC, the DOL accepted IDNYCs that expired during the pandemic as a proof of identity document. IDNYC also set up a Bronx pop-up site

to connect EWF eligible individuals who needed identification to IDNYC. As a result of this effort and additional outreach, IDNYC informed over one million IDNYC cardholders of EWF.

Of the 41 New York City-based CBOs that were state funded, 20 were IERF funded partners or IERF referral partners. These organizations had the infrastructure and network to provide cash assistance to this vulnerable and hard to reach population. These organizations included the Academy of Medical & Public Health Services, Bronxworks, CCCS, Carroll Gardens Association, Center for Family Life, CMP, Chinese American Planning Center, Damayan, Diaspora Community Services, Emerald Isle Immigration Center, Haitian Americans United for Progress, Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island, Korean American Family Service Center, Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY, Make the Road New York, Mixteca, New Immigrant Community Empowerment, Northern Manhattan Improvement Coalition, Project Hospitality, Sunnyside Community Services, Inc., Street Vendor Project, and the Urban Justice Center.

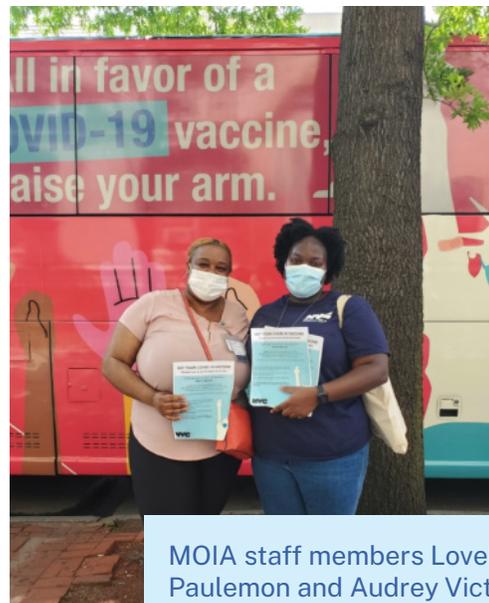
Throughout 2021, MOIA continued to advocate for immigrant inclusive policies at all levels of government. This included advocacy on immigrant-inclusive federal stimulus by sharing data, anecdotes, and policy talking points with the City's legislative affairs team and Cities for Action (C4A) (more information about C4A can be found on page 81). Our efforts were critical in informing Congressional representatives on the lived experience of immigrant workers and families during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the urgent need

for federal support. MOIA also maintained close contact with private funders to advocate for funding due to the exclusion of undocumented immigrants from state and federal programs.

For more information about state-funded programs, see page 16.

COVID-19 Vaccine

As part of a mayoral effort, MOIA worked closely with the Vaccine Command Center (VCC), an interagency initiative created to conduct vaccine outreach and coordinate vaccine distribution in the city, and other agency partners to ensure NYC's immigrants were included in this effort.



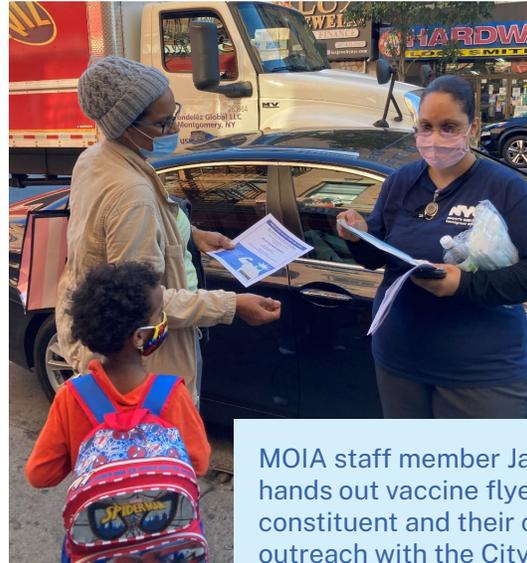
MOIA staff members Lovely Paulemon and Audrey Victor conduct outreach with the City's Vaccine Bus and distribute the MOIA one pager in Brooklyn.

Language Access

During the City's emergency response efforts, MOIA's language access team advised the responding agencies to ensure language access was not a barrier to information or services. For example, during the vaccine roll-out in early 2021, MOIA

worked with the VCC to ensure that City-run vaccine sites were providing language access by: developing contract language that included language access provisions for contracted vendors, and advising the VCC on possible language services vendors. MOIA also provided multilingual tools to help New Yorkers with Limited English proficiency (LEP) communicate with the VCC staff. MOIA advised the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to expand their translation of materials to 26 languages and worked with the Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications (DOITT) to add more multilingual prompts, improving the accessibility of the vaccine hotline.

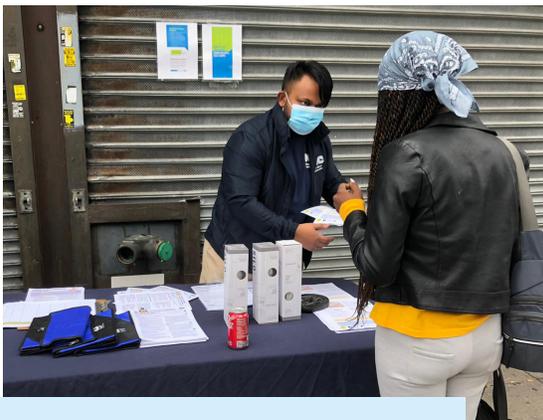
MOIA's Language Service Team (LST) continued to provide critical translation and interpretation support as the City expanded its COVID-19 recovery efforts. The LST shared key lessons from assisting in the launch of new multilingual campaigns, improving digital language access, and collaborating effectively with vendors, with partners across the City through our technical assistance efforts.



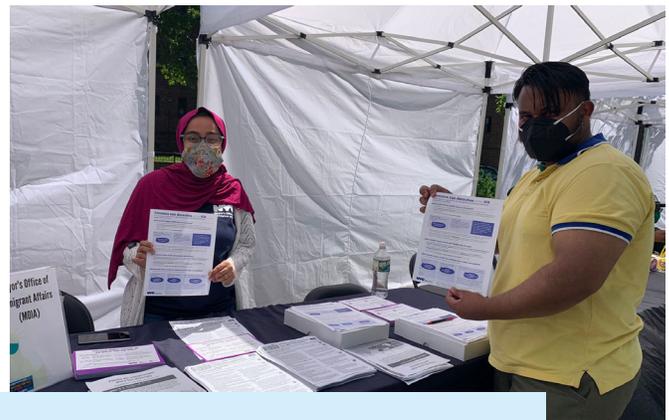
MOIA staff member Jannet Ramirez hands out vaccine flyers to a constituent and their child during outreach with the City's Vaccine Bus in East Tremont, in the Bronx

COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach

The rollout and effective outreach for the COVID-19 vaccines were a major focus of MOIA's O+O team in 2021. The team played a critical role both on the ground and behind the scenes, informing the City's vaccine outreach strategy. In addition to the topics covered below, the team did extensive outreach to support immigrant New Yorkers to secure emergency food, PPE, at-home COVID-19 testing kits, information on ranked choice voting, and many more topics.



MOIA staff member Ajeyo Yusuf shares a flyer with a community member during a tabling event with the Brownsville Safety Alliance in Brownsville, Brooklyn.



The MOIA Outreach team participated in Youth Vax Week, bringing music, food, and resources to help spread the word about the COVID-19 vaccines.



Neighborhood Organizer Ahmed Kargbo speaks at Masjid Rahmatilla in Staten Island after JummaH prayer about COVID-19 resources.

Access to Appointments

Before vaccine appointments were widely available to the public and there were multilingual options for making appointments, the Outreach and Organizing team partnered with DOHMH to fill stand-by appointments at multiple vaccine sites.

Tapping the team's vast network of community members, MOIA connected over 2,000 non-English speaking seniors and essential workers to vaccine appointments.

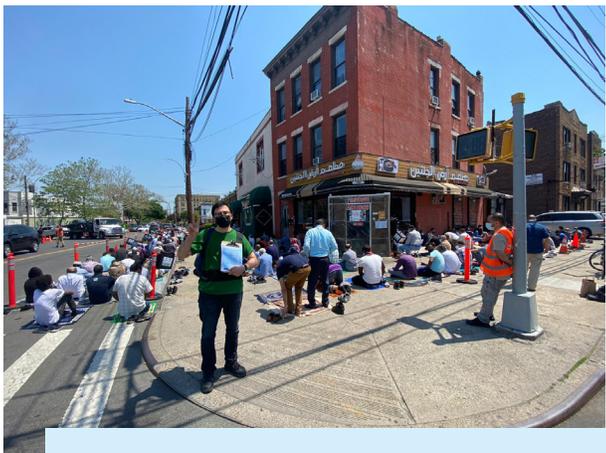


MOIA's Outreach and Organizing team organized 135 days of action to engage communities across NYC about the COVID-19 vaccine. Pictured here, Violeta Gomez Uribe, Deputy Director for Outreach and Organizing speaks to community members in Corona, Queens.

During this time, the team connected multiple CBOs to the Authorized Enroller program, so that the community they served received vaccine appointments. MOIA also supported the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit (PEU) with multilingual staff to help connect hundreds of immigrant New Yorkers who required at-home vaccination appointments.

Vaccine Town Halls and Virtual Events

To address vaccine misinformation and deliver timely, accurate updates to non-English speaking New Yorkers, MOIA partnered with the VCC and DOHMH to host in-language virtual town halls. These town halls included medical professionals and were held in-language with bilingual staff and trusted community-based organizations. During these town halls, CBOs raised questions from their community members, that were submitted on multiple platforms including Zoom, WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook, and more. MOIA conducted these town halls in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, English, French, Haitian Creole, Korean,



MOIA Deputy Director for Outreach and Organizing Hanif Yazdi helped to spread the word about the City's Vaccine Bus in Little Yemen in the Bronx.

Mandarin, Nepali, Russian, Spanish, Tibetan, and West African Creole. These town halls were held with CBOs including Adhikaar, African Communities Together, Arab Association of New York, BACDYS, India Home, Korean Community Services of Metro New York, La Colmena, Mixteca, NICE, NYCOSH, Shorefront Y, Workers Justice Project, and many more.

Throughout 2021, MOIA also promoted DOHMH-led town halls, including innovative community conversations in indigenous and African Languages, organized in partnership with Colective de Intérpretes Indígenas, the Endangered Language Alliance, and Red de Pueblos Transnacionales.

Our team also created multilingual videos celebrating holidays such as Lunar New Year and Ramadan to encourage community members to get vaccinated and stay safe as they celebrated. These videos were made in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, English, Fujianese, Korean, Mandarin, Nepali, Tibetan, Urdu, and other languages spoken by MOIA staff. In addition to being shared on MOIA’s social media channels, these videos were also shared widely over messenger applications such as WeChat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Kakao Talk, and others.

NYC Vaccine Buses

MOIA’s O+O team played a critical role in supporting the VCC in launching the NYC Vaccine Mobile Clinic program. Leveraging its many years of experience in coordinating and conducting outreach for the IDNYC Mobile Command Center, the team recommended locations for vaccine buses in neighborhoods with low vaccination rates and noted the nuances and needs of each neighborhood. To ensure that immigrant CBOs were part of this outreach, MOIA advised on and managed the collaborations with CBOs and faith-based organizations. MOIA also advised on the languages needed for interpreters and flyers. The buses were extremely effective in reaching vulnerable community members, especially immigrant workers. During these events MOIA’s Neighborhood Organizers and other outreach staff with deep community connections were present to conduct outreach and answer questions from residents.



Six multilingual posters promote a virtual COVID-19 vaccines town hall. Clockwise from top left: Korean, Arabic, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Russian.

Between 4/1/2021 and 9/1/2021, MOIA held 135 in-person Days of Action along with vaccine buses in all five boroughs.

This effort resulted in over 30,000 conversations about the vaccine and over 210,000 doses administered at vaccine buses.

This outreach supplemented the NYC Test and Trace Corps as well as contracted CBOs (more details on page 61) who worked directly on this effort.

By conducting on the ground outreach, MOIA modeled best practices for other agencies and provided synthesized community experiences and feedback for recommendations to the VCC, DOHMH, and the Test and Trace Corps. These recommendations included removing barriers to access, such as identification, proof of address, and the opening and closing times of vaccine sites. Other recommendations were related to outreach practices, language access, and the availability of testing in neighborhoods with lower vaccination rates.



Nick Gulotta, Angela Sherpa, Lydia Li, and Sandro Navarro, from MOIA's Outreach and Organizing team, helped to spread the word about the City's Vaccine bus.



MOIA staff member Javier Collazo Justiniano hands out a flyer during outreach in Fordham Heights in the Bronx with the City's Vaccine Bus.

Agency Work and Collaboration

In 2021, MOIA continued to serve as an advisor on immigration-specific issues, working collaboratively with city agencies to address the specific barriers and needs that immigrants face, provide guidance on immigration policy, and enact immigrant-specific programs and services. Additionally, MOIA staff members served on interagency taskforce groups, including those aimed at addressing the City's COVID-19 response.

Interagency Immigrant Taskforce

MOIA continued to convene the Interagency Immigrant Taskforce, which has served as a forum to brief agencies on federal policy changes that have impacts on immigrant New Yorkers. During these meetings, MOIA also shares updates on agency programs and initiatives that serve immigrant New Yorkers and resources to assist agencies in better serving their immigrant clients. In 2021, the Taskforce met three times throughout March, June, and December. MOIA provided policy updates on federal immigration reform, ICE enforcement, DACA, and TPS. MOIA also shared the agency's most recent demographic data on immigrant New Yorkers and socioeconomic indicators across immigration status. In 2021, the City switched gears from responding to pandemic to ensuring an equitable recovery. MOIA partnered with NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) to seek input from

Taskforce members on how NYC's recovery efforts can be inclusive of immigrants. MOIA also amplified messaging around the need to integrate language access into recovery planning and shared updates on the City's emergency response work impacting immigrant communities pertaining to COVID and Hurricane Ida.

Agency Initiatives

In order to reduce disparities and execute their mission, every agency must ensure they serve all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, place of birth, or English proficiency. Below are a few examples of how city agencies work to accomplish this mission.

Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP)

Research and Advocacy

DCWP is a member of the Queens Borough President's Immigration Task Force, Protecting Immigrant New Yorkers (PINY) Task Force, the MOIA Interagency Task Force, and the Small Business Services (SBS) Asian American Small Business Task Force. Members of DCWP attended these task force meetings on a regular basis, shared agency updates, and highlighted resources available in multiple languages.

In 2021, DCWP released a research brief detailing the demographic information and

updated number of unbanked households in NYC. , Along with this information, the brief highlighted systemic barriers in accessing banking. The research findings show that NYC’s unbanked households are highly concentrated in financially vulnerable neighborhoods. Residents of these neighborhoods are have higher rates of poverty, have higher rate of unemployment, are predominantly Black and/or Latinx, and have a lower median household income compared to the city as a whole.

Educating New Yorkers

Between March and September 2021, DCWP conducted nearly 30 educational walks in popular vending corridors. During these events, multilingual staff disseminated inspection checklists (translated in the City’s designated languages) to hundreds of vendors to promote compliance. DCWP also hosted workshops for street vendors in partnership with advocates to promote knowledge and compliance with laws and rules.

From July to November 2021, DCWP conducted over 55 outreach events amplifying the Child Tax Credit (CTC) with over 1,900 attendees. DCWP conducted a series of canvassing events in collaboration with local food pantries and community partners, and shared multilingual resources across the City. The changes made to CTC under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) were targeted to help those with low and moderate incomes with a goal in lifting millions out of poverty.

Protecting New Yorkers

Beginning in January 2021, DCWP implemented Just Cause Job protections for fast-food workers in New York City. These

new laws expanded protections for fast-food workers from being fired without “just cause” or for a bona fide economic reason, among other changes. DCWP conducted 21 Fair Workweek corridor walks and visited over 350 businesses to educate fast-food workers on these protections. Multilingual staff provided resources in different languages to fast-food workers, many of whom are immigrants and women of color.

In November 2021, DCWP and the NYS Attorney General’s office announced a settlement agreement with home health care companies. The settlements resolved violations of the NYC Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law as well as wage and hour requirements under New York Labor Laws. Home health agencies were required to pay up to \$18.8 million in restitution and adopt extensive compliance measures. The majority of paid care workers in NYC consist of immigrants and women of color.

In December 2021, DCWP announced an amendment to the NYC Paid Safe and Sick Leave law that provided eligible private-sector employees with an additional four hours of paid leave to take their child (under 18) to get vaccinated (per vaccination shot). The time could be used to take their child to get vaccinated or to care for their child if they experienced any side effects. The leave was retroactive to November 2, when the CDC approved vaccines for children 5-11 years old. For more information about DCWP initiatives, visit nyc.gov/DCWP.

Taxi Limousine Commission (TLC)

TLC is committed to providing quality customer service to all TLC licensees and the members of the public, including those that have limited English Proficiency (LEP).

TLC licensees represent the diversity of New York City, with immigrants representing over half of all drivers and speaking over 100 languages.

To ensure that licensees are well-informed and receive important updates about the agency's services and initiatives, TLC's External Affairs Division conducted outreach by sending emails to TLC Licensees throughout the year. These informative emails were translated into the City's 10 designated languages as required by Local Law 30, in addition to Hindi and Punjabi, to accommodate the needs of our diverse Licensee population.

The following are some of the policies and initiatives that TLC implemented throughout 2021.

Commission Hearing Interpretation:

To ensure that licensees with LEP can understand and communicate with TLC at public Commission hearings, consecutive interpretation was available upon request. Spanish was the most requested language for interpretation.

Driver Safety Initiative: The Office of Inclusion launched the Driver Safety Initiative in 2020 to assist licensees who are victims of a crime while on the job. As part of that initiative, TLC emailed all licensees about processes the agency has established to help any licensee who is a victim of a crime. The emails were translated into the City's top 10 languages, in addition to Hindi and Punjabi, to ensure that all licensees stay informed and are aware of what to do in case of an incident.

Seatbelt Decals Creation: To comply with New York State law that requires seatbelt messaging in all TLC licensed vehicles in English, Spanish, and Chinese, TLC created seatbelt decals that were available free of charge at its Long Island City and Woodside facilities. The decals were also made available on TLC's website to download and print, free of charge.

Secondary Vendor for Interpretation: TLC secured a second vendor to conduct high quality rush translations for documents containing information that were time-sensitive and needed a quick turnaround.

For more information about TLC's initiatives, visit [nyc.gov/TLC](https://www.nyc.gov/TLC).

Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

Established in 1978, HPD promotes the quality and affordability of the city's housing and the strength and diversity of its many neighborhoods.

Housing remains a barrier for immigrant New Yorkers. Last year's annual report noted that one in five immigrant New Yorkers reside in overcrowded households, with about eight percent of immigrants living in extremely overcrowded housing.⁵⁸ HPD's work is crucial in addressing this barrier.

In addition to the work MOIA and HPD has done to connect individuals to FASTEN (described more on page 62), HPD has Housing Ambassadors, who are community-based service providers who help people prepare and apply for Housing Connect affordable housing lotteries. HPD has 49 Ambassadors that speak over 20 languages.

58 MOIA Annual Report 2020 28, <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/MOIA-Annual-Report-for-2020.pdf>.

In June 2021, HPD launched a social media campaign with MOIA to cross-promote IDNYC and Housing Connect. Through the campaign, New Yorkers were informed about the ability to use IDNYC to apply for affordable housing through NYC Housing Connect, regardless of immigration status.

For more information about HPD initiatives, visit nyc.gov/hpd.

Equity and Justice

MOIA's mission reflects the aspiration of a City that helps all of its residents thrive. In 2021, MOIA sought to ensure that critical City programs and services were available to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status. To do this, MOIA connected immigrant New Yorkers to the services they need, in the languages they speak, and in the communities where they live.

IDNYC

In 2021, IDNYC celebrated its sixth anniversary of the launch of the program. As New York City's official ID program, IDNYC has maintained its goal of assisting the most vulnerable communities by providing access to free municipal identification, regardless of immigration status. To do this, IDNYC, focused on expanding access to the card and continued to grow its many benefits for all New Yorkers.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, IDNYC closed its enrollment centers, but ensured that all cardholders and applicants had access to services and benefits. In 2021 IDNYC reopened enrollment sites in all five boroughs, including the site at the Queens Public Library in Jamaica and the Bronx Library Center. Additionally, IDNYC responded to public demand by increasing capacity overall throughout its enrollment sites and increased workstations at the Bronx Department of Finance, Brooklyn Public Library, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in East Harlem, and Manhattan CBIC.



In February 2021, an enrollment specialist goes through the enrollment process with an enrollee at the Cathedral Library IDNYC Pop-up in Midtown, Manhattan.

Expanding access to IDNYC

On December 15, 2021, IDNYC and the New York City Department of Corrections (DOC) introduced a partnership to increase access to IDNYC cards for those who have been recently incarcerated. With this partnership, the City expanded the list of acceptable documents to include identity information and photos already maintained by the DOC as part of the detention process, thereby making it easier for formerly incarcerated individuals to apply for and receive an IDNYC card.

In partnership with the New York State Department of Labor, IDNYC also worked to ensure that IDNYC was included as an accepted identity document for those applying for EWF.

Applications

By the end of 2021, over 1.4 million cardholders have been able to enjoy the meaningful benefits of the IDNYC program.

Since the inception of IDNYC, the program has received over 1.8 million applications, with the highest number of applications from Queens and Brooklyn.

Pop-up enrollment sites



MOIA Organizer Ahmed Kargbo hands out IDNYC promotional materials with community members in Staten Island to encourage New Yorkers to renew and enroll in the program.

IDNYC has continued its collaboration with elected officials and CBOs to host IDNYC pop-ups, participate in resource fairs, and tabling at events across the city. Key events include Immigrant Heritage Week in April and Immigrant Heritage Month in June. Other pop-up sites were held at a variety of locations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2348, Brownsville Community Justice Center, the Staten Island HRA office, Henry Street Settlement, Boston Road Learning Center, the Queens Borough President’s Office, Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, and the Bloomingdale Library.

The Mobile Command Center (MCC) was also successfully deployed for enrollments in several neighborhoods throughout 2021. Events were held with the MCC at 13 locations, including libraries, CBO locations, health centers, elected officials’ offices, and more.

Benefits Updates and Outreach

During 2021, IDNYC cardholders continued to take advantage of the cultural, educational, and health-related benefits the card offered.

Most notably, IDNYC announced Blink Fitness as a benefit partner, providing cardholders with discounted membership at all 48 locations throughout the city. Additionally, the Whitney Museum of American Art continued to welcome IDNYC cardholders to enjoy free admission. More than 30 other cultural organizations continued to provide free membership to all IDNYC cardholder, including the American Museum of Natural History, Bronx Museum of Art, El Museo del Barrio, Flushing Town Hall, Staten Island Museum, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

IDNYC continued to create awareness around the program and its benefits by coordinating appointments, renewals, and assisting constituents with basic card changes, which can now be done through IDNYC’s online portal.

Benefit Savings Highlights

In 2021, Big Apple Rx continued to be an IDNYC partner, providing prescription drug discounts at more than 2,000 pharmacies citywide. This service alone has saved IDNYC cardholders over \$1.2 million on their

prescription purchases since the program's launch.

Since January 2015, IDNYC cardholders have saved over \$4.1 million dollars in discounted grocery purchases at Food Bazaar stores in Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

IDNYC's partnership with Health + Hospitals (H+H) allowed cardholders to link their IDNYC cards to their H+H accounts, thereby optimizing the check-in process for subsequent appointments. Since the beginning of this partnership in May 2016, over 10,000 cardholders have linked their IDNYC cards to their H+H accounts.

Since January 2017, parents, guardians, and other individuals have been able to use their IDNYC number online, at My Vaccine Record, to access their own and their children's official immunization records. Parents could also check which remaining vaccinations their child required and print out a vaccination history to complete medical forms for childcare, school registration, college admission, camp enrollment, and more. To date, over 7,000 cardholders have accessed vaccine records using an IDNYC number.

Since IDNYC launched the Veteran Designation in July 2015, over 12,000 U.S. Veterans have chosen to have this special marker on their IDNYC cards, indicating service in the U.S. Armed Services. The designation entitles veterans to exclusive benefits, better connects veterans to available services and discounts, and is an expression of the City's gratitude and respect for those who have served our country.

Language Access

Language access is essential to advancing equity and is central to MOIA's work. Beyond the critical multilingual communication and outreach work MOIA does to reach immigrant communities, our team also advances language access. MOIA does this by:

- Building the capacity of City agencies to effectively communicate with New Yorkers with LEP;
- Advising and providing City agencies with technical assistance; and
- Providing translation and interpretation services to MOIA, City Hall and other Mayoral Offices through MOIA's Language Services Team (LST).

Another critical component of MOIA's work is strengthening the City's capacity to provide language services by providing guidance and technical assistance to city agencies. In 2021, MOIA worked to do this by:

- Advising the Office of Food Policy on ensuring that emergency food support remained accessible, as certain functions transitioned to an online platform;
- Supporting HPD's expansion and implementation of the multilingual Housing Vacancy Survey;
- Assisting the Campaign Finance Board on expanding resources for language accessibility of elections and election materials;
- Guiding the Department of Finance and other agencies to plan and deliver multilingual outreach, materials, and events, expanding the reach of COVID-

plans, what information should be included, and how best to leverage LACs to advance language access. MOIA reviewed and provided feedback on agency plans. The plans were then published on the agencies' respective websites and included in MOIA's public LL30 Report submitted to Council in June 2021.

MOIA's Language Services Team (LST)

As the City expanded its COVID-19 recovery efforts, MOIA's LST continued to provide critical translation and interpretation support. The number of materials MOIA translated increased by 37 percent over the last year and encompassed a range of complex content to translate, including multilingual copy and graphics for social media campaigns, subtitles and voiceovers, and digital content for the MOIA website in the 10 LL30 languages. More information on LST's work for COVID-19 response efforts can be found on page 26.

LST worked with more than 30 Mayoral Offices and agencies in 2021 to support communications for various critical initiatives. These ranged from materials on prevention of hate crimes (OPHC), resources for mental health and for caregivers during the pandemic (OCMH), promotion of health insurance resources through Get Covered NYC, information on Ranked Choice Voting and elections (Democracy NYC), and emergency rental assistance and eviction protections (MOPT, PEU).

LST also translated KYR presentation materials into 11 languages, an Immigrant Health Services FAQ into 25 languages, and more.

The VCC requested the highest number of translations in 2021 to support print and social media promotion for their community vaccination efforts, and MOIA delivered over a thousand translations into 22 languages.

LST continued to bolster its internal linguistic capacity and now translates 90 percent of all Spanish requests in-house, which has improved accuracy and delivery times. Building on this success, the team began piloting similar processes to deliver Simplified and Traditional Chinese translations.

LST continued to maintain MOIA's human-translated website in the 10 LL30 languages and augmented its multilingual digital content by translating the COVID-19 Resource and FAQ websites along with pages on public charge, TPS, and DACA. In response to the crisis in Afghanistan, MOIA also created the Afghanistan Evacuation and Resettlement Resources website that was translated into Dari and Pashto and has received over 1,500 visits.

MOIA's LST also provided technical assistance and consultation on language services, industry best practices, procurement, and improved digital language access to MOIA staff and Mayoral Offices. The team conducted multiple trainings for colleagues and partners at other Mayoral Offices. During these trainings, staff were about the importance of language access, their language access obligations, and how to access available translation and interpretation resources.

LST guided other offices on procuring language services for large-scale projects, and working with tech and language vendors to deliver multilingual websites.

In 2021, MOIA teamed up for another consecutive year with the Mayor’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer (MOCTO) on a 12-week “sprint” project to bridge language access gaps in government. As part of a Census Bureau-sponsored

initiative called “The Opportunity Project,” MOIA served as a “user advocate” and guided tech teams (Google, SmartCat and Wordly) in developing language solutions that are useful to government stakeholders. With MOIA’s help, the tech teams delivered a white paper on language industry best practices (SmartCat), a beta version of a project management system (Google), and a product for live captioning of events (Wordly).



Jackson Heights COVID-19 Vaccine Flyer - Nepali

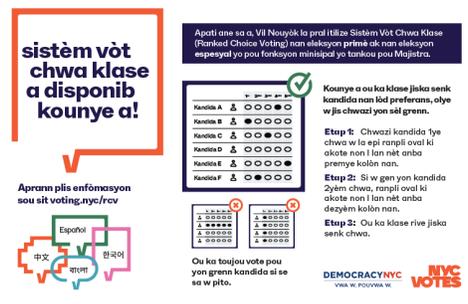


We Have Options, Mental Health Resource Poster – Bangla (October 2021)



Essential to NYC Campaign – Spanish (December 2021)

The number of source documents MOIA translated increased by **37%** over the last year.



Ranked Choice Voting Post Card – Haitian Creole



Vaccine Graphic – Wolof (March 2021)

Language Services Key Performance Indicators:

Translation

	CY20	CY21	% Incr./Decr.
Delivered Translations	3800	2850	-25%
Source Documents	696	937	+37%
Languages	45	47	+4%

+37%

More source documents translated

+4%

More languages translated

Telephonic Interpretation

	CY20	CY21	% Incr./Decr.
Total calls	11,455	4,108	-64%
Hours of interpretation	2,783	1,105.16	-60%
Languages	55	52	-5%

+8%

More languages interpreted in-person

Interpretation

	CY20	CY21	% Incr./Decr.
Total Events	90	89	-1%
Interpreters	210	197	-6%
Languages	13	14	+8%

-64%

Fewer telephone calls interpreted

We Speak NYC

In 2021, MOIA continued to develop and administer We Speak NYC (WSNYC), the city’s free English-language learning program. Recognizing that English language proficiency remains a critical factor in the ability to access education, employment, health, and social services, WSNYC provides civic-focused instruction through videos and educational materials. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, WSNYC transitioned from in-person courses to an online format, supporting accessible and safe language learning and practice. An in-person model of WSNYC will return when it is safe to do so, and will adhere with the latest public health guidance.

WSNYC helps immigrant New Yorkers practice their English conversation skills through narrative-based, civic-focused instructional videos and education materials, created in partnership with the City University of New York (CUNY) for the field of Adult Education. WSNYC materials are made specifically for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. Through the program’s [website](#), learners and educators can access all supplemental resources, expanding WSNYC’s reach to immigrant New Yorkers beyond the traditional classroom. In 2021, WSNYC’s virtual model continued to bring learners and educators together to promote self-studying, communal learning through online conversation classes, and focuses on topics such as city resources and COVID-19 relief services.

Through WSNYC’s online community courses, English language learners (ELLs) build issue-focused vocabulary.

The courses are led by trained volunteers who use WSNYC’s Emmy-winning videos and materials to facilitate seven to ten-week classes. WSNYC works with CBOs, faith-based organizations, schools, and libraries to support spaces where ELLs can practice their English, increase awareness about their rights and are empowered to better advocate for themselves and their communities.

Centered on Paulo Freire’s popular education model, WSNYC aims to elevate

Learn English with We Speak NYC.

- Practice speaking English for free
- Get to know your community
- Build confidence
- Learn about City services and resources

Get started at nyc.gov/WeSpeakNYC

we speak NYC

Volunteer with We Speak NYC.

- Facilitate and lead an English class
- Get free training in ESL pedagogy
- Learn about City government
- Make an impact by empowering learners

Get started at nyc.gov/WeSpeakNYC

we speak NYC

Host a class with We Speak NYC.

- Help your community learn English
- Access free materials
- Build community relationships
- Connect learners to City services and resources

Get started at nyc.gov/WeSpeakNYC

we speak NYC

Three We Speak NYC graphics promoting the different ways to interact with the program.



A still from *Shola's Voice*, a new *We Speak NYC* episode made in collaboration with Democracy NYC and CUNY.

participants' voices with conversations that bring their stories and experiences to the forefront of the class. Participants play a large role in how the program operates. WSNYC utilizes thorough evaluation methodologies, which allows the program to obtain substantive cyclic feedback from learners and facilitators. This gives WSNYC an opportunity to implement changes that will directly benefit our participants. Through such feedback, WSNYC has been able to:

- Implement additional activities in their online conversation courses;
- Provide more teaching support to facilitators and educators; and
- Better understand the positive impacts that accessing city services have had on the lives of LEP learners.

While the pandemic has greatly enhanced distance learning strategies for many educational institutions and programs, many ELLs have been left behind because of the digital divide. WSNYC experienced similar effects with the shift from in-person to online learning. For example, in 2019 there was a high demand for ESOL support, and WSNYC conducted 277 courses,

reached 5,540 learners, and trained 240 volunteers. Comparatively, in 2020, while WSNYC transitioned to remote service delivery, the program conducted 49 online courses, reached 2,576 learners, and trained 154 volunteers online.

In 2021, WSNYC saw an uptick in reach with ELLs, conducting 74 courses, reaching 3,407 learners, and training 150 volunteers online.

In 2021, WSNYC reached major accomplishments by launching two PSAs and a new episode, *Shola's Voice*, in collaboration with Democracy NYC and CUNY. These new productions emphasized the importance of voting among NYC's diverse immigrant communities and communicated the steps to participate in the city's new Ranked Choice Voting process, which was administered during NYC primary elections. *Shola's Voice* also addressed the importance of immigrant communities engaging in the democratic process and explored how an individual's voice is heard by voting.

We Speak, We LEAD

In 2021, We Speak NYC continued to collaborate with New Women New Yorkers (NWNKY) and CUNY to build out its intensive workforce development and ESOL program, We Speak We LEAD (WSWL). WSWL includes lesson plans that focus on the fundamentals of interviewing, resume building, and professional development skills - all themes featured in various WSNYC episodes. WSWL had two cohorts of 15-20 immigrant women who were able to successfully attain meaningful employment in a field of their interest. With thoughtfully designed curriculum, WSWL has successfully empowered and created a sense of community, cultural awareness, and self-advocacy with each cohort.

WSWL found that 55 percent of responding participants from the first cohort were unemployed prior to completing the program. In the one year survey post-completion of the program, responding participants were able to secure employment, start their own business, or identified as being a student. None identified as being unemployed.

We Speak We LEAD hopes to continue programming in 2022 and beyond, considering the benefits that embedding socio-cultural awareness and confidence building plays with formal learning.

Department of Education's Division of Multilingual Learners

In 2020, WSNYC expanded its outreach to

connect immigrant parents to resources through the Division of Multilingual Learners (DML) at the Department of Education (DOE). Together, with the DOE's DML team, WSNYC was able to disseminate over 300,000 WSNYC resources to schools in multiple languages, along with digital information and materials to principals, educators, parent coordinators, and counselors. This strategic partnership supported educators who serve 80 percent of ELLs with English as a New Language (ENL) classes.

In 2021, WSNYC continued to work with DML to host a special WSNYC cycle with CBOs that serve Black, brown, Latinx, and API communities, amongst parents with children enrolled in NYC public schools. These special cycles offered case management support with helping parents with LEP to learn more about and access City services like SNAP, workforce development programs, and higher education.

Digital Literacy

Since the pandemic, WSNYC has also partnered with the Literacy Assistance Center (LAC), to deliver a series of webinars and digital presentations on best practices for engaging with distance learning and WSNYC multimedia tools. WSNYC also presented on its tools in state-wide and national conferences such as the NYS TESOL Conference, SXSW EDU, the NIIC, and International TESOL. In 2021, WSNYC conducted various webinars which have been instrumental to educators in need of ELL-specific digital resources, and that could be easily adapted in their lesson plans.

We Speak NYC Conversation Classes: Key Performance Indicators

	FY20		FY21		FY 22					TOTAL Since Start of Pandemic	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	CALENDAR YEAR 2020	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	Cycle 7	Cycle 8	CALENDAR YEAR 2021	All Cycles YTD
Dates	April 1 st – May 19 th	May 20 th – July 7 th	August 16 th – October 24 th	November 1 st – December 19 th	April 1 st 2020 – December 19 th 2020	January 31 st – April 10 th	May 2 nd – June 19 th	July 25 th – September 11 th	October 3 rd – November 20 th	January 31 st – November 20 th	April 1 st 2020 – December 2021
# Of Courses listed on website	9	12	13	15	49	20	14	17	23	74	123
# Of Individual Classes (Total # of conducted classes carried out in all courses)	63	81	118	98	360	197	95	117	147	556	916
# Of Students Registered	195	397	482	3107	4,181	3,364	1,928	2,190	1,969	9,451	13,632
Unique Participants	217	500	860	999	2,576	1,152	727	783	745	3,407	5,983
Average attendance per class	10	17	17	26	18	21	19	18	14	18	18

We Speak NYC Facilitator Metrics

Facilitators (staff and non-staff)	FY20		FY21						TOTAL Since Start of Pandemic
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Cycle 5	Cycle 6	Cycle 7	Cycle 8	All Cycles YTD
<i>Trained</i>	24	9	64	57	83	48	14	5	304
<i>Placed</i>	19	25	35	35	47	27	32	46	266
<i>Hours of Community Service</i>	665	875	1225	1225	1645	945	1120	1610	9310

Since the start of the pandemic, We Speak NYC facilitators have held over 900 classes and performed over 9,000 hours of community service.

Worker's Rights

In 2021, MOIA continued to work closely with its partners across the administration to address the barriers faced by immigrant workers. MOIA engaged and worked with delivery workers, street vendors, and paid care workers to address specific concerns of those groups and connect them with the appropriate City agencies. Specifically, MOIA:

- Liaised between advocates and City government to address delivery worker safety issues and labor concerns, and advocated for the enactment of a set of City laws, passed in September, that improved working conditions and protected delivery workers;
- Advocated for a city law change to increase vending permits by 4,000 over 10 years and participated in the Street Vending Interagency Working Group led by DCWP;
- Liaised with advocates and the City to communicate vendor's experience, needs and enforcement concerns;

- Participated in the Paid Care Industry Working Group led by DCWP and made up of City agencies, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders who engage in policy advocacy, outreach, and worker education;
- Collaborated with agencies and external partners to launch a campaign to educate domestic employers on their responsibilities and workers on their rights; and
- Supported state law changes to make amendments to the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights to clarify that domestic workers who work at least 20 hours per week and are employed on each of at least 30 days in any calendar year are covered under the Paid Family Leave and Temporary Disability Insurance programs.

MOIA also engaged in an intra-agency working group to advocate that immigrant workers are hired for City-funded pandemic operations and contracts. As part of this work, MOIA advised on the Community Hiring Plan that connected low-income New Yorkers to City contracted jobs.

MOIA also worked with the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development to fund five worker centers to hire over 200 immigrant workers for City Clean-up Corps efforts.

Immigration Legal Services

ActionNYC

ActionNYC is a citywide, community-based program that provides access to immigration legal services. Through ActionNYC's "Community Navigator" model, immigrant New Yorkers have access to free, high-quality immigration legal services in their language at safe locations in their community. The program is operated jointly by MOIA, DSS/HRA, and CUNY, and implemented in collaboration with over 30 CBOs and legal services providers.

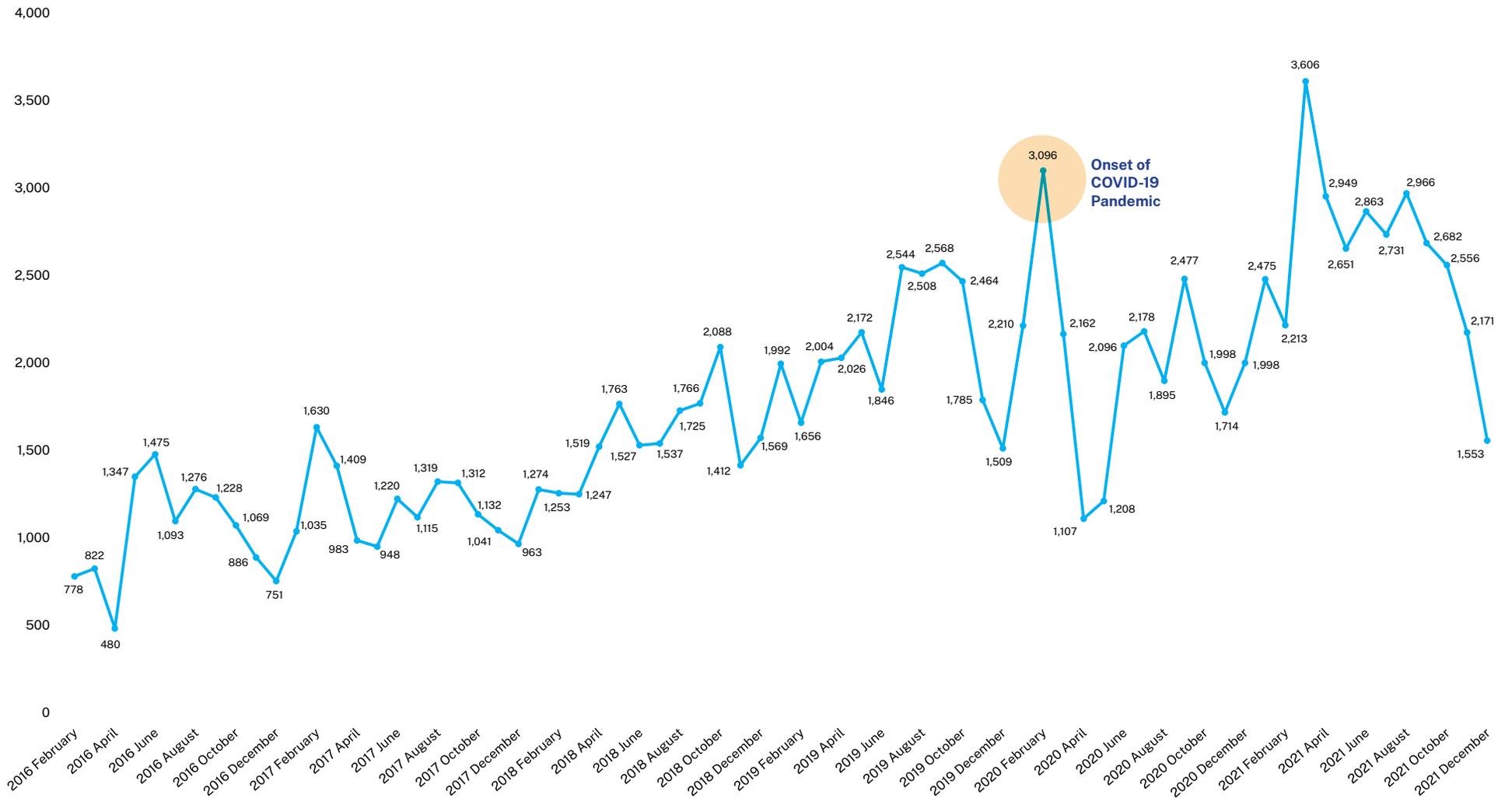
Together, non-attorney community navigators and immigration attorneys provide comprehensive immigration legal screenings and full legal representation in straightforward immigration matters. This includes, but is not limited to, citizenship applications, green card renewals, and TPS renewals. Certain ActionNYC providers also provide full representation in complex cases such as Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, U-Visa applications, and Asylum. For complex legal cases outside the team's scope of services or capacity, ActionNYC connects clients to other City-funded legal services programs administered by DSS/HRA's Office of Civil Justice, such as the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative and Community Services Block Grant-funded programs.

ActionNYC navigators also connect clients to other City services as needed, including IDNYC and health insurance enrollment. All ActionNYC sites and community navigators receive support to obtain and maintain U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recognition. This means that the organization has permission from DOJ to practice immigration law through accredited representatives before federal authorities and can represent clients before USCIS.

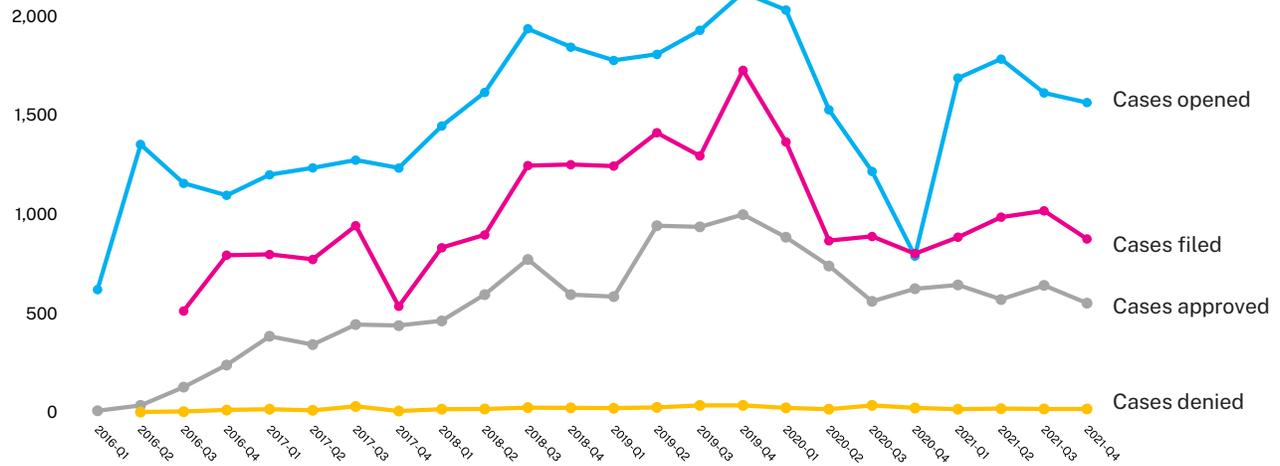
In 2021, the demand for ActionNYC services continued to grow, with 30,696 total calls received by the City-funded ActionNYC Hotline.

This represents a 20 percent increase in call volume from 2020 and is the highest number of calls fielded by the ActionNYC Hotline in a single year. Annual hotline call volume has nearly tripled since the program's launch in 2016, and MOIA has continued to invest in its growth, allocating an additional \$140,000 to support hotline operations in 2021. Demand for ActionNYC legal services consistently exceeds capacity, and it is common for community members seeking comprehensive immigration legal screenings through ActionNYC to be turned away for lack of appointment availability.

Monthly Hotline Call Volume



ActionNYC Applications by Status

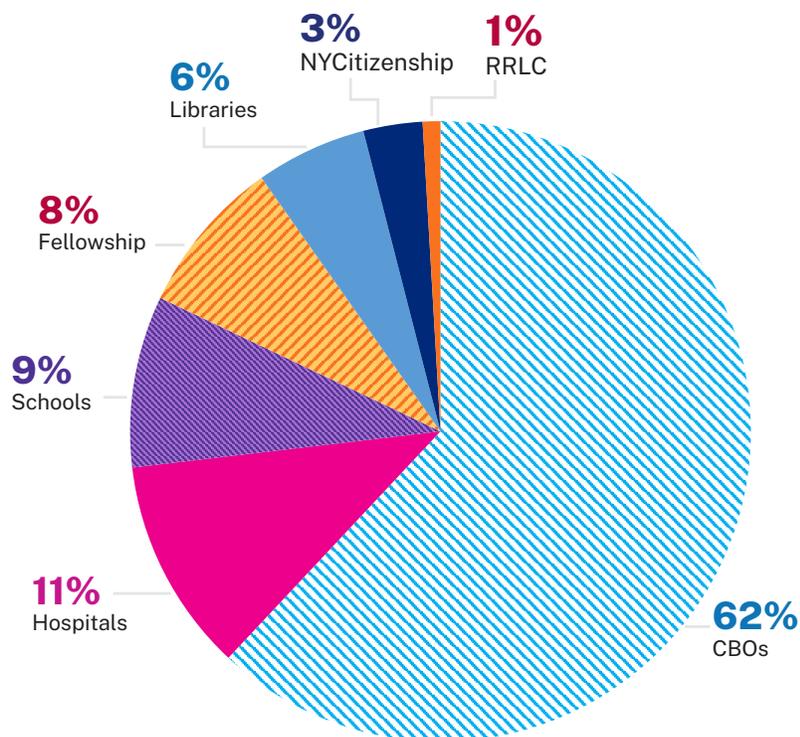


Prior to the onset of COVID-19, ActionNYC provided in-person services across all five boroughs at 19 CBOs, dozens of DOE schools, three H+H sites, and to long-term and post-acute care H+H patients on a rotating basis. In March 2020, ActionNYC pivoted to fully remote service due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, most appointments continued to be held remotely, with some in-person interaction related to document collection and signing. MOIA has continued to maintain regular and transparent communication with ActionNYC partners and convened them to discuss challenges and best practices regarding remote immigration legal service provision. Additionally, MOIA has continued to work with other City agencies such as HRA and NYPD to ensure accessibility to administrative documents such as Medicaid proof letters to support USCIS fee waivers, and NYPD good conduct certificates, especially for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) applicants.

In 2021, ActionNYC providers conducted over 11,467 comprehensive immigration legal screenings, an increase of about 31 percent compared to 2020, and opened over 6,106 new cases, an increase of about 22 percent compared to 2020.

Of cases in which immigration authorities rendered decisions in 2021, 97 percent were approved. In 2021, ActionNYC initiatives referred 1,958 cases to other legal services providers. Of these, 1,203 were referred from ActionNYC in CBOs, 500 were referred from ActionNYC sites in H+H, 75 from ActionNYC in Schools, and 42 from ActionNYC in Libraries.

CY21 Screenings by Program



Cases Filed by Program

Programs	Cases Filed
CBOs	2579
Fellowship	353
Hospitals	491
Libraries	58
NYCitizenship	132
Schools	280
Grand Total	3893

Screenings, Disaggregated by Service Type

Programs	Annual Screenings
CBOs	8011
Fellowship	1053
Hospitals	1443
Libraries	747
NYCitizenship	398
RRLC	119
Schools	1156
Grand Total	12927

Case Outcome by Program

Programs	Case Approved	Case Denied	Approval Rate
CBOs	1847	55	97%
Fellowship	127	2	98%
Hospitals	253	8	97%
Libraries	19	0	100%
NYCitizenship	205	36	85%
Schools	159	4	98%
Grand Total	2610	105	96%

Since ActionNYC’s launch in 2015, the program has demonstrated success and an ever-increasing demand for free, high-quality immigration legal services throughout the city. To meet this demand, MOIA and DSS/HRA partnered to embed the ActionNYC programs into the City’s civil legal services infrastructure. Throughout 2019 and 2020, MOIA and DSS/HRA engaged in a formal RFP and procurement process and issued awards totaling over \$16 million to 21 immigration legal service providers across the five boroughs. Contracts commenced on January 1, 2021, and will continue through June 30, 2023, with an optional three-year extension. MOIA worked closely with awardees to prepare for the January 1 launches of ActionNYC under these new contracts, holding multiple small- and large-group onboarding sessions, and creating space for knowledge sharing around challenges and best practices.

In 2021, ActionNYC also launched in public libraries. In partnership with Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library, and Queens Public Library, ActionNYC services are offered in two branch locations per library system. This model is particularly effective because of the cross-programming possibilities. Libraries are well-established and trusted community centers offering a wide array of services to immigrants, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, Citizenship exam preparation assistance, and connections to City services such as IDNYC, through which ActionNYC may be promoted to the local community. Appointments for ActionNYC comprehensive immigration legal screenings can be made through the ActionNYC Hotline or directly through the libraries.

ActionNYC Capacity-Building Fellowship Program

The City continues to prioritize legal service delivery in hard-to-reach areas with a growing immigrant population, by building the capacity of CBOs. Launched in 2017, the ActionNYC Capacity-Building Fellowship Program serves as an incubator that provides comprehensive training and technical assistance to CBOs with small, nascent, or limited immigration legal services programs. Fellows are located within and primarily serve hard-to-reach immigrant communities.

In 2021, six legal fellows conducted 1,053 comprehensive immigration legal screenings and provided full legal representation in more than 473 straightforward immigration matters.

As a result of the fellowship, partner organizations have become full partner providers in citywide immigration legal services. Three fellows — the Caribbean Women’s Health Association, the Riis Neighborhood Settlement, and the MinKwon Center for Community Action — successfully launched legal services operations on January 1, 2021, under the new ActionNYC contracts. The success of these programs can also be seen in the increase in immigrant clients from populations that have been traditionally harder to reach for ActionNYC providers. As an example, in 2021 MOIA experienced an increase in clients from South Korea and China, due in large part to the efforts of the providers participating in the Capacity-Building Fellowship. As an example, MOIA has seen increases in the number of clients from South Korea and

China, due in large part to the efforts of the providers participating in the Capacity-Building Fellowship.

Rapid Response Legal Collaborative

In 2021, MOIA secured the baselining and institutionalization of the Rapid Response Legal Collaborative (RRLC), an initial \$1 million investment launched September 2019 in partnership between MOIA and the New York State's Office of New Americans (ONA). This investment also includes expanded capacity for the ActionNYC hotline operated by Catholic Charities Community Services. The work is carried out by a coalition of immigration legal service providers including Make the Road New York, UnLocal, and the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG), who provide legal assistance to those detained or at imminent risk of detention and deportation, and who may not have the right to see an

immigration judge or are otherwise facing a fast-track to removal. RRLC's work fills a gap in existing immigration legal services offerings for detained immigrant New Yorkers and enables our City to continue serving individuals in complex and high-stakes immigration legal situations. RRLC also plays a key role in monitoring attempted or actual raids and ICE enforcement actions throughout New York City and engages in community education and capacity building for legal service providers around complex legal issues. RRLC also includes an innovative social work component for participating immigrant New Yorkers and their family members, including: client-centered support, crisis intervention, case management assistance, facilitated referrals for community-based services, letters of support and, psychosocial evaluations, and/or supportive counseling.

Welcoming and supporting newly arrived immigrants

In 2021 MOIA continued to prioritize direct engagement with NYC's immigrant communities as well as monitor and analyze federal policy developments. As a result, MOIA learned of urgent community needs as they arose, and guided the City in implementing timely, impactful responses. In 2021, MOIA undertook efforts to welcome and support several newly arrived immigrant groups, particularly when their needs were not fully met by existing federal supports.

Haitian Response Initiative

In 2021, significant numbers of Haitians entered the country through the Southwestern U.S. border from Central and South America, seeking refuge from recent natural disasters and political upheaval in Haiti. Due to changes in federal policy, a number of Haitians seeking protection were allowed to enter and reside in the U.S., asserting their humanitarian and other claims in immigration court. Many from this group chose to settle in New York City, to live with or nearby to family in the vibrant Haitian communities in Brooklyn and Queens. MOIA became aware of the critical social and legal needs of this arriving population through its relationships with

Haitian community leaders and CBOs. In response, MOIA designed and launched the Haitian Response Initiative.

Announced in December 2021, the initiative directed \$1.5 million in new funding to community-based partners providing linguistically and culturally responsive case management and immigration legal services to newly arrived Haitian New Yorkers. Case managers worked with newly arrived Haitians to determine eligibility for benefits and connect them to resources and services. Legal services include assistance in accessing TPS and other humanitarian forms of relief, removal and deportation defense, and capacity building for immigration legal services among local CBOs and pro bono attorneys. The initiative also allocated funding for an anti-fraud and information messaging campaign across community and ethnic media.

Partners in the initiative included Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, Caribbean Women’s Health Association, Diaspora Community Services, Flanbwayan Literacy Project, Haitian Americans United for Progress, Haitian American Community Coalition, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, and Life of Hope (LOH). MOIA partnered with the Haitian Studies Institute at CUNY Brooklyn College and all involved to ensure services and public messages were delivered in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner.

Unaccompanied children and their families

In June 2021, in coordination with citywide events to support youth access to COVID-19 vaccines, MOIA worked with DOHMH, DOE, and Catholic Charities Community Services to hold a virtual panel on City resources for sponsors of unaccompanied minors in NYC. Panelists presented in Spanish and K’iche. Interpretation was also provided in K’iche. To complement the panel, MOIA worked with the VCC and DOHMH to put on a family vaccination event at the American Museum of Natural History.

In addition, MOIA presented on NYC’s best practices for welcoming unaccompanied children at two events in May 2021: a multi-stakeholder convening for non-profits, schools, local officials, and philanthropic organizations, and a dedicated special topic call for C4A members.

Afghanistan evacuees

In the late summer of 2021, Afghanistan experienced rapid changes related to the withdrawal of U.S. military presence and takeover by the Taliban. In response, MOIA created a digital platform to provide accurate information and resources on Afghanistan evacuation and resettlement. The web page is available in Dari, Pashto, and English.⁶⁰ MOIA continues to monitor the needs of arriving Afghans by engaging with resettlement providers and Afghan-serving CBOs, and support Afghan constituents with referrals to City services.

60 Afghanistan Evacuation and Resettlement Resources web page in Dari (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/help/legal-services/afghanistan-resources-dari.page>), Pashto (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/help/legal-services/afghanistan-resources-pashto.page>), and English (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/help/legal-services/afghanistan-resources.page>).

Advocacy for Arriving Migrants

In addition to the work described above, the City advocated for federal government to protect arriving migrants. In September 2021, MOIA issued a statement condemning mistreatment and mass deportations of Haitian migrants at the southern border and called for due process and accountability to ensure the protection of human rights.⁶¹ In December 2021, the City joined C4A

members in asking the Biden Administration to expand humanitarian parole for Haitian and Afghan migrants, fully restore the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program, provide localities and communities with federal resources to support their resettlement work and legal services capacity, and address barriers to adequate housing.⁶²

Haitian Temporary Protected Status (TPS) Clinic

TPS is a life-saving immigration benefit that allows individuals from approved countries to remain in the United States if there is a humanitarian emergency in their home country and it is unsafe for them to return. For example, the federal government may designate a country for TPS if there is an armed conflict (e.g., civil war) or a natural disaster (e.g., earthquake). TPS enables recipients to work in the United States lawfully and protects them from deportation so long as the TPS designation is in effect. Language and cost are often barriers to TPS applications.

The Trump administration attempted to end TPS protections for nearly all beneficiaries but was blocked from doing so by a series of lawsuits. In September 2021, when Haitians regained the opportunity to apply for TPS, MOIA developed the Haitian TPS Clinic in collaboration with LOH, the Office of Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, CUNY Law's Community Legal Resource Network, and CUNY Brooklyn College's Haitian Studies

Institute. The initiative was launched with a town hall event, which delivered an informational presentation on TPS and provided answers to community members' TPS-related questions in Haitian Creole. For three months following the town hall event, an immigration attorney held weekly in-person office hours at LOH, providing brief advice, TPS application assistance, and referrals to other legal and non-legal services for those who needed them.

NYCitizenship

In 2021, NYCitizenship continued to provide access to safe, quality, and linguistically responsive citizenship services for all immigrant New Yorkers. NYCitizenship provides free citizenship application assistance, including screenings and both pro se and full legal representation. Through MOIA's partnership with DSS/HRA and its unique direct mail outreach model, the program primarily offered services to vulnerable populations, including seniors and those facing health issues and other disabilities.

61 MOIA Statement on Mistreatment and Deportations of Haitian Migrants (Sept. 23, 2021), <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/about/press-releases/statement-from-commissioner-raquel-batista-09-23-21.page>.

62 Press release for Cities for Action letter to Biden Administration (Dec. 14, 2021), https://www.citiesforaction.us/cities_for_action_protectionsforafghanandhaitianmigrants.

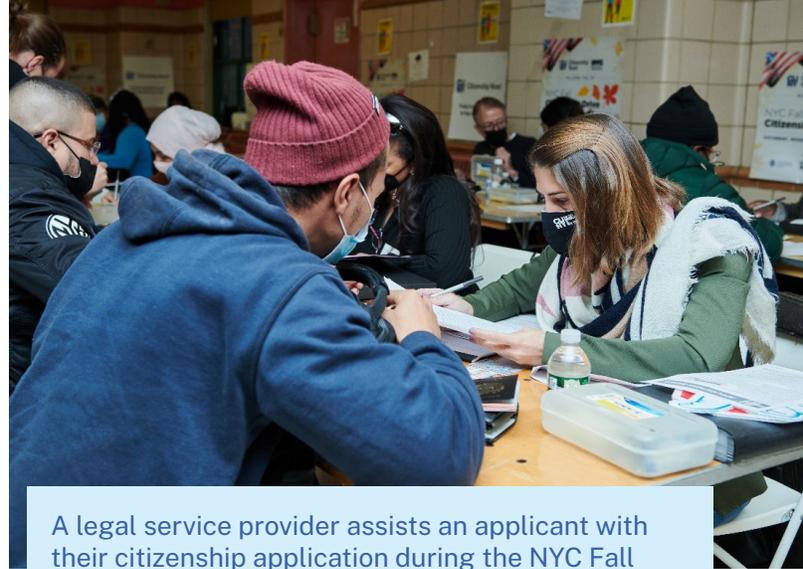
In 2021, NYCitizenship focused on advancing the large backlog of cases that had been stalled due to COVID-19 related interview cancellations and USCIS closures due to COVID-19. The program screened 398 clients and filed 106 citizenship applications, along with over 78 fee waivers. Of the applications that were adjudicated in 2021, 85 percent were approved. If eligible, individuals also received assistance with fee waiver and disability waiver applications.

Fall Citizenship Drive

In 2021, MOIA launched the Fall Citizenship Drive to provide naturalization eligibility screenings and free citizenship application assistance to immigrant New Yorkers.⁶³ This concentrated, three-month push was done through a series of events hosted by MOIA, CUNY Citizenship Now!, and selected CBOs.

The drive was set to feature two large-scale application assistance clinics run by CUNY Citizenship Now!. In November, CUNY Citizenship Now!'s launched its first large scale in-person clinic since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, at M.S. 2 in Prospect Lefferts Gardens. The clinic successfully reached 442 individuals and provided full citizenship application assistance to 164 people. The second large-scale application assistance event, which was scheduled to be held at CUNY Hostos Community College in the Bronx, was unfortunately canceled due to a surge in the omicron variant COVID-19 cases.

The initiative additionally consisted of community outreach, naturalization screenings, and citizenship application assistance to immigrant New Yorkers across



A legal service provider assists an applicant with their citizenship application during the NYC Fall Citizenship Drive, hosted by MOIA and CUNY Citizenship Now! in November.

all five boroughs from October through December 2021, provided by Arab American Association of New York (Brooklyn), Haitian American United for Progress (Brooklyn & Queens), Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth and Families (Brooklyn & The Bronx), Dominicanos USA (The Bronx & Upper Manhattan), and Sauti Yetu (The Bronx & Staten Island).

In total, these organizations reached 1,102 people with citizenship-related information and provided 877 people with citizenship application assistance.

Low Wage Workers Initiative

Through the advocacy of community members and advocates, and with the support of MOIA and HRA's Office of Civil Justice, the City also continued to fund the Low Wage Workers Initiative (LWWI). This initiative provides legal assistance on a range of employment-based legal matters for vulnerable immigrant workers.

⁶³ An estimated 589,000 immigrant New Yorkers, who are lawful permanent residents (i.e., green card holders) and were currently eligible to naturalize. Of those, approximately 169,000 were low-income and have LEP.

In FY2022, the Administration and City Council allocated a combined \$2.1 million for legal services, outreach, and education. By maintaining funding, LWVI will continue to provide critically needed services to new workers and unemployed New Yorkers.

Administered through the Office of Civil Justice's Immigrant Opportunity Initiative program, the LWVI is expected to provide legal assistance in 1,500 to 2,000 cases in FY22. This includes legal advice and consultations as well as full representation in advocacy with employers and government agencies and in litigation.

U&T visas

U and T visas are forms of immigration relief that promote public safety by protecting immigrant crime victims and victims of trafficking and encouraging them to come forward and seek justice. For undocumented victims and survivors, these visas offer stability, work authorization, and a potential pathway to lawful permanent residency.

To apply for a U visa, an applicant must submit a certification from a law enforcement agency attesting that a qualifying crime has taken place and the victim was helpful to the agency in the detection, investigation, and/or prosecution of the crime. For a T visa, a law enforcement declaration, similar to a certification, can be an important (though not required) piece of evidence for an applicant's case.

Pursuant to NYC Charter §18(d)(7), MOIA is responsible for advising law enforcement

agencies about U visa certifications and T visa declarations to address the unique needs of immigrant survivors. In partnership with the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), MOIA coordinates a working group of City Agency certifiers. Through this working group, MOIA provides technical assistance, communicates relevant policy updates, and elevates questions and issues from legal services providers who work with immigrant survivors. The city certifiers include the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), NYC Law Department (NYC Law), NYPD, CCHR, and DCWP, as well as the City's five District Attorney's Offices.

Importantly, MOIA, ENDGBV, and MOCJ also collaborate with advocates and legal services providers to ensure awareness of City certification policies. In February 2021, MOIA and the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) co-hosted a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) event on the legal requirements for U and T visas and the processes for obtaining a certification or declaration from ACS, NYC Law, NYPD, CCHR, and DCWP.⁶⁴

The following charts present annual statistics on U and T visa certifications by City agencies in the calendar year 2021. Numbers have risen since 2020, however, City agencies continue to receive virtually no requests for T Visa declarations. The District Attorney's Offices do not publish data on U and T Visa certifications and declarations issued.

64 CLE on U Visa Certifications, T Visa Declarations and NYC Agencies: An Introduction to NYC Certifiers (Feb. 2021), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/help/legal-services/crime-victims.page>.

U and T Visa Certifications in CY 2021

	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCWP	TOTAL
Requests received total	62	808	9	3	11	893
U requests	61	808	9	3	11	892
T requests	1	0	0	0	0	1
Requests processed total	67	799	10	1	25	902
Certifications issued	66	550	10	1	14	641
U requests	65	550	10	0	14	639
T requests	1	0	0	0	0	1
Requests denied	1	146	0	0	11	158
U requests	1	146	0	0	11	158
T requests	0	0	0	0	0	0
Requests referred to other agencies	0	103	0	0	0	103
U requests	0	103	0	0	0	103
T requests	0	0	0	0	0	0

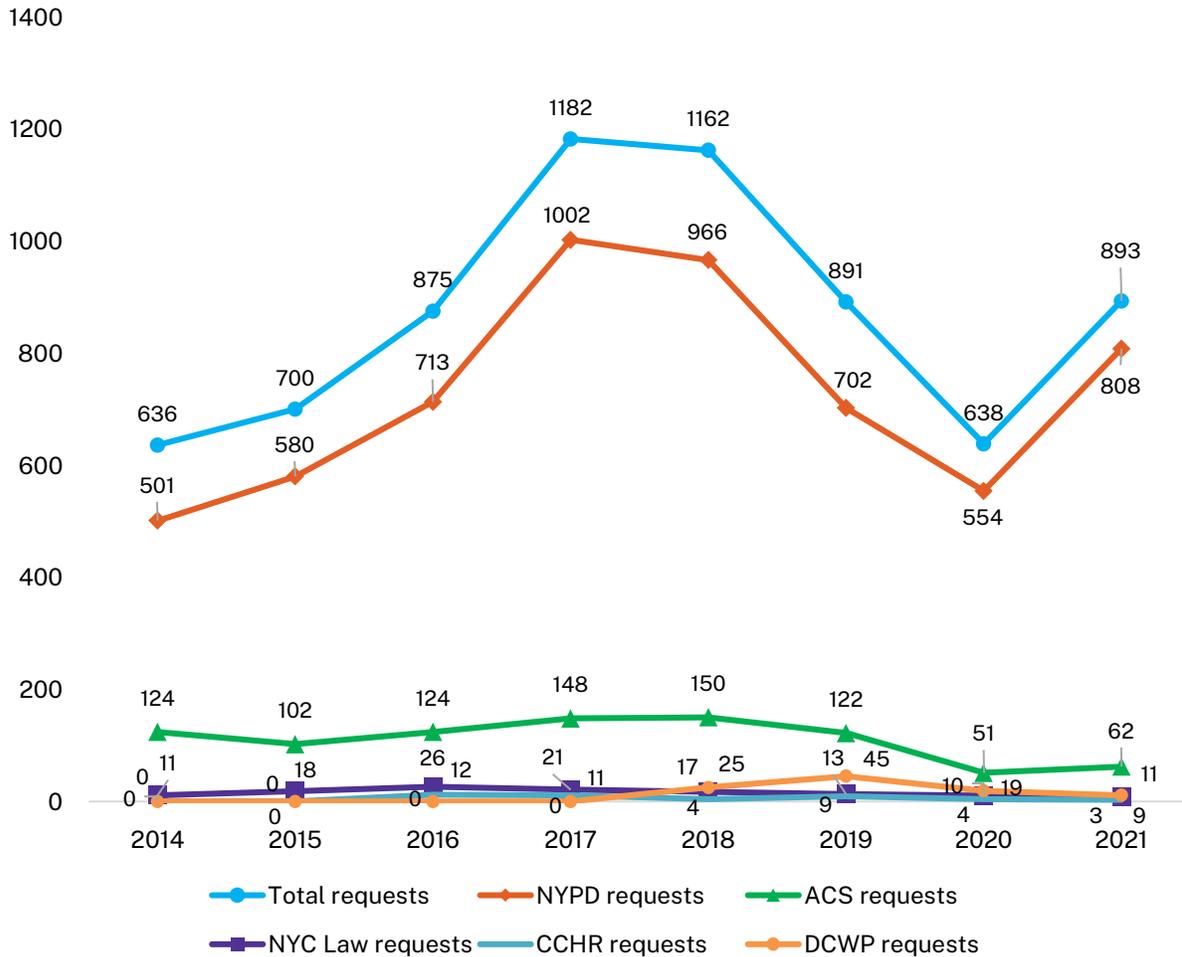
Reasons for Request Denials in CY 2021

Reasons for denials	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCWP	TOTAL
Public safety concern	0	4	0	0	0	4
Non-qualifying crime	1	127	0	0	2	130
Lack of helpfulness/cooperation (the victim has not assisted the Police Department in the investigation)	0	8	0	0	0	8
Indirect victim/witness (the individual named is not the direct or indirect victim)		0	0		0	0
Lack of qualifying investigation	0	0	0	0	1	1
Case could not be unsealed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insufficient documentation	0	7	0	0	8	15
Applicant is subject of active investigation/Respondent in Art. 10 case (must reapply after investigation/case is closed)	0	0	0	0		0
Certifications denied total	1	146	0	0	11	158

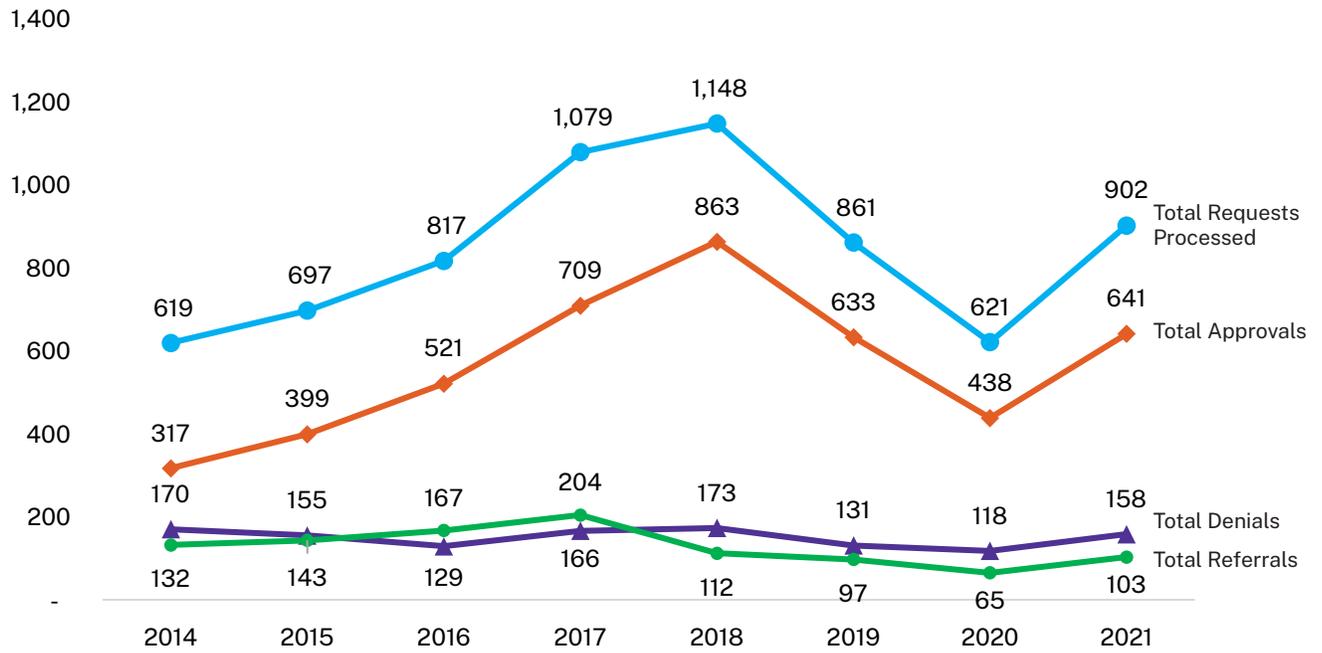
Certification Denials Appealed in CY 2021

Appeal Status	NYPD	ACS
Appeals Filed	22	0
Pending	0	0
Appellant Certified	9	0
Decision Upheld	11	0
Referred to Other Agency	2	0

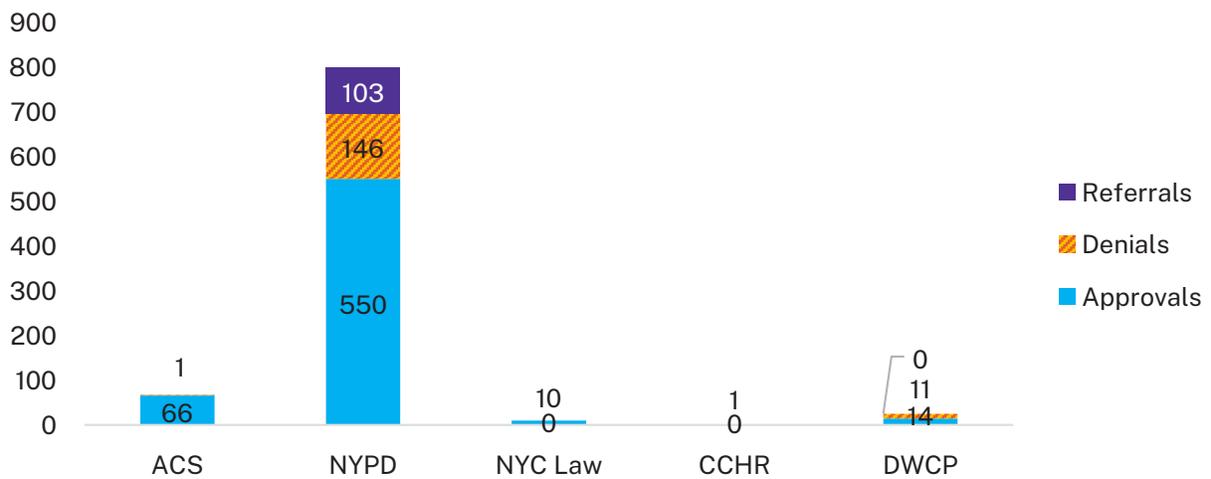
U & T Visa Requests



U & T Visa Certification Requests Processed



CY 2021 U & T Visa Requests Processed



Anti-fraud work

During 2021, MOIA worked with DCWP, the ActionNYC Hotline, and other partners to stay up to date on fraud trends and coordinate community outreach on best practices to avoid fraud and seek trustworthy assistance. Most notably, ActionNYC saw a need to provide timely and accurate public information following news on the proposed and actual measures taken by the Biden Administration to redress anti-immigrant policies of the previous administration, and the potential for new pathways to status. During this time, the ActionNYC Hotline experienced increased call volume and provided information to preempt and prevent immigration service provider (ISP) fraud against vulnerable immigrants.

To do this work and more, MOIA allocated \$35,000 to increase ActionNYC Hotline staff capacity and fund a public anti-fraud informational campaign through social media boosts and educational advertising placements in community and ethnic media. MOIA continues to monitor the prevalence of ISP and immigration fraud, especially during periods of increased news reporting on

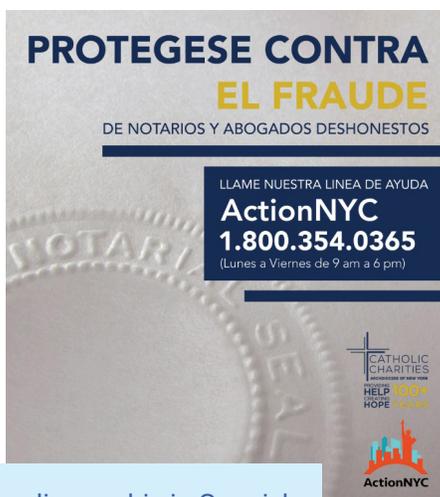
immigration reform, as newly-arrived migrants who are particularly susceptible to fraud settle into communities within New York City.

In addition, MOIA continued to include content on avoiding fraud in KYR events. For more information on KYR and other community events held by MOIA's O+O and Community Services teams, see page 64. For KYR events supported by MOIA and led by community partners, see page 63.

NYC Care Outreach

There are over half a million uninsured individuals in New York City, with persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizen New Yorkers, including undocumented immigrants, who have the lowest rates of insurance. In August 2019, NYC Care launched as a key part of the largest and most comprehensive plan in the nation to ensure that uninsured New Yorkers have access to quality and affordable health care, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. NYC Care guarantees low- and no-cost health care services to New Yorkers who do not qualify for or cannot afford health insurance. The program provides New Yorkers with affordable access to a primary care provider, specialty care, prescriptions, and a 24-hour customer service helpline through H+H. Given the barriers to healthcare access that exist for immigrant New Yorkers, MOIA partnered with H+H to enlist the support of 22 trusted CBOs in community outreach.

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on immigrants and communities of color. The data reinforces the importance of the program's goal to close the gaps that prevent historically underserved



Social media graphic in Spanish for anti-fraud campaign.

communities from accessing quality and affordable healthcare. In the first year of the pandemic, the program worked to support these communities by expediting the rollout of the program to ensure all eligible New Yorkers had access to the program. As the pandemic continued into 2021, the program adjusted again to respond to the growing CBO and community need for support by issuing a new RFP with the following programmatic changes:

- Increasing contract timelines from 6 months to 1 year to allow CBOs more time to build out their strategy in reaching the most vulnerable community members;
- Allocating additional funding to support direct enrollment by CBOs so community members could enroll in the program with the organizations they are most comfortable with; and
- Allocating additional funding for casework support to make sure each person is followed up with and guided through the process as needed.

In 2021, NYC Care Outreach CBO partners reached approximately 285,000 New Yorkers, who speak more than 40 languages other than English, across the five boroughs.

Among the languages reached, the top 10 are Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, French, Haitian Creole, Polish, Korean, Mandarin, Urdu, and Punjabi. Of those enrolled in the program, 23 percent live in the Bronx, 28 percent in Brooklyn, 8 percent in Manhattan, 41 percent in Queens, 2 percent in Staten Island, and 80 percent live in TRIE zip codes.

Vaccine Outreach for Undocumented New Yorkers

COVID-19 was particularly devastating for the approximately 476,000 undocumented New Yorkers who are ineligible for most relief programs and health insurance. As the COVID-19 vaccines were rolled out, undocumented New Yorkers faced further barriers such as insufficient language access support; fear of the impact that vaccination would have on their immigration status; lack of access to required eligibility documents related to residency, identification, and employment; and rampant misinformation. While there were other City vaccine outreach programs, there remained a gap in outreach and assistance to this specific community. To address these barriers, MOIA partnered with the VCC, H+H, and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City to develop an outreach program geared toward the undocumented community.

Beginning in October 2021, the Vaccine Outreach for Undocumented New Yorkers program partnered with 15 trusted CBOs, reaching a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups, to combat vaccine misinformation in undocumented communities and provide direct assistance in accessing COVID-19 vaccines. As of December 31, 2021, the program educated 28,035 New Yorkers on vaccine efficacy and safety and directly assisted 3,136 people to receive at least one dose of the available vaccines across the 5 boroughs.

In addition to this work, MOIA's O+O team also engaged in outreach around the vaccine, as described further on page 26.

Empowerment

MOIA strives to empower the City's immigrant communities to exercise their rights and access the benefits that are available to them. This work takes many forms, and can include targeted KYR presentations, outreach to key community stakeholders, engagement with constituents, and more. Additionally, MOIA uses its position to uplift the many contributions of immigrant New Yorkers through celebrations, cultural events, and direct engagement with communities.

Know Your Rights

KYR Forums are an integral part of MOIA's work to ensure that all immigrant New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, understand their rights and protections under the law, and are empowered to fully participate in civic life, despite changes in the federal landscape. Through the various types of MOIA-led and funded KYR forums, MOIA provides accurate information to immigrant New Yorkers about their rights and effectively addresses their concerns. In 2021, as the city moved into COVID-19 recovery, both in-person and virtual KYR Forums were instrumental in connecting immigrant communities with up-to-date information and resources to address their critical needs, including but not limited to COVID-19 vaccines and testing, EWF, ERAP, and FASTEN.

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs nyc.gov/ExcludedWorkersFund

Excluded Workers Fund



How it Works

- This is a one-time payment for help with income that was lost between March 27, 2020 – April 1, 2021
- Application forms will not include questions about citizenship or immigration status
- You must currently live in New York State and must have lived here before March 27, 2020
- There are 2 Tiers of compensation based on the documents that you can provide
 - Tier 1 can provide up to \$15,600 in benefits (minus taxes)
 - Tier 2 can provide up to \$3,200 in benefits (minus taxes)
- Benefits will be paid by direct deposit, cash card, check, or another payment method

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

access.nyc.gov/es
nyc.gov/ExcludedWorkersFund

Fondo de trabajadores excluidos

Pago para trabajadores con bajos ingresos excluidos de otros beneficios



NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

access.nyc.gov/ht
nyc.gov/ExcludedWorkersFund

Fon pou travayè yo ekskli



Kijan li mache

- Se yon sèl peman pou èd pou revni ki te pèdi ant 27 Mas 2020 jiska 1 Avril 2021.
- Fòm aplikasyon an p ap genyen ladan l kesyon konsènan sitwayènte oswa estati imigrasyon
- Ou dwe ap viv aktyèlman nan Eta New York epi ou dwe abite la anvan 27 Mas 2020.
- Gen 2 nivo konpansasyon ki baze sou dokiman ou kapab bay
 - Nivo 1 a kapab bay jiska \$15,600 nan avantaj yo (mwens taks)
 - Nivo 2 a kapab bay jiska \$3,200 nan avantaj yo (mwens taks)
- Yo pral peye avantaj yo ak depo dirèk, kat peman, chèk, oswa yon lòt metòd peman

EWF Flyers produced by MOIA in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

In 2021, KYR events were conducted for various communities in over 27 languages other than English, including: Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, Cantonese, French, Fujianese, Haitian Creole, Igbo, Japanese, K'iche, Korean, Mandarin, Mandingo, Nepali, Punjabi, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Tibetan, Turkish, Twi, Urdu, West African Creole, and Yoruba. In 2021, MOIA conducted 609 forums, directly engaging with 17,153 participants and over 40,544 livestream viewers. These forums included partnership with various City agencies, CBOs, faith leaders, schools, and elected officials. Topics included COVID-19 related resources and services, City services, new state policies, local workers' rights, proposed federal government changes to various immigration laws, and immigration legal services.

MOIA has four teams that provide a variety of KYR forums: the KYR Program, the Community Services team, the ActionNYC team, and the O+O team. A description of the differences in these KYR forums follows below.

Events	Attendees	Live Views
Know Your Rights Program	242	8,567
Community Services	51	924
Outreach and Organizing	198	5,422
ActionNYC	118	2,240
TOTAL*	609	17,153

Know Your Rights (KYR) Program

The KYR Program partners with trusted CBOs to provide relevant and timely information directly to immigrant communities through comprehensive, educational presentations. CBO partners host KYR forums on general rights of all New Yorkers in hard-to-reach communities. The core of these KYR presentations focus on federal immigration law and enforcement priorities, best practices for identifying and interacting with federal immigration officers, available free and safe immigration legal services, and tips on avoiding legal services fraud. Partners also have the ability to tailor KYR presentations to fit the unique needs of each audience by adding additional content on topics from the following four categories – recent executive orders and changes to federal immigration policy; state policies and programs; available city services and resources; and workers' rights and worksite



Salma from the Arab American Family Support Center in Brooklyn conducts a KYR on interacting with ICE.

enforcement actions. Through this model, MOIA strives to ensure community partners have the necessary tools to assist, educate, and inform immigrant New Yorkers on their rights and available government services. Building on 5 years of success, the KYR Program was baselined in 2021 and now serves as a dependable, permanent resource for immigrant New Yorkers for the foreseeable future.

Starting in the second half of the year with FY22, the KYR team worked to address previously identified gaps in reaching traditionally underserved communities and meeting the diverse needs of immigrant New Yorkers. In order to expand the program's reach, MOIA's KYR team worked to ensure the latest RFP clearly expressed the program's goals of a diverse reach. To do this, the team structured the RFP questions to be more accessible to smaller CBOs, increased the number of partners from 6 to 10 CBOs, and translated the KYR presentation in two new languages - Korean and Nepali. Based on community feedback and partner input, additional content was added to the KYR presentation to address the various challenges and concerns faced by immigrant New Yorkers in the second year of the pandemic. The new content included how to report a hate crime and/or bias incident, COVID-19 vaccines, EWF, FEMA COVID-19 burial assistance, ERAP, and changes to immigration policy under the Biden administration. The KYR team, in collaboration with MOIA's Policy team, provides regular updates to the presentation content to ensure immigrant New Yorkers have the most current information as policies and services change.

In 2021, the KYR Program partnered with 16 CBOs across two projects, completing 242 KYR forums and reaching 8,567 New Yorkers. The KYR presentations were facilitated in Arabic, Bengali, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Nepali, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Traditional Chinese, and Urdu and were interpreted in additional languages including Mandingo, Twi, and Yoruba. Additionally, partners continued to conduct presentations in-person and on a variety of remote platforms to account for the varying level of digital literacy and access to technology of immigrant New Yorkers.

Community Services KYRs

The Community Services team works directly with elected officials, consulates, and art and culture organizations to schedule KYR forums. KYR forums presented by the Community Services team focus on the City's local laws, general information on City resources accessible by all regardless of immigration status, and updated information on available COVID-19 related resources. Overall, the Community Services team held 51 KYRs, which reached 924 New Yorkers, and presented KYRs in five languages other than English: Spanish, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Arabic, and Bengali.

Outreach and Organizing (O+O) KYRs

KYRs conducted by MOIA's O+O team are delivered directly by O+O staff to community organizations, faith leaders, and schools. The O+O team delivers KYRs to these stakeholders both in-person and virtually. To create new partnerships and raise awareness of city services, the O+O

team also offers these presentations to many organizations who have never worked with the City. The team has a special emphasis on reaching vulnerable New Yorkers impacted by federal immigration policies and those with LEP.

In 2021, in-person and virtual KYR events were conducted in about 25 languages. These languages included English, Arabic,

Bengali, Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Mandarin, Mandingo, Polish, Persian (Farsi/Dari), Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tibetan, and Urdu, West African Creole, among others. In total, MOIA's O+O team conducted 198 KYR forums — 58 in-person and 140 virtually, which reached 5,422 people and were also viewed by approximately 40,544 people.



Angela Sherpa, from MOIA's Outreach and Organizing team, supports with tabling to share critical COVID-19 vaccine information and KYR flyers at a resource fair in Woodside, Queens.

ActionNYC KYRs

The ActionNYC in Schools program conducted outreach and KYRs virtually in 2021 due to COVID-19, before resuming in-person activities in DOE schools in October. Throughout the year, program partners conducted KYR forums tailored to school needs, reaching 2,240 students and their family members across 118 schools. KYRs were conducted in a variety of languages and provided timely information about City resources, changes in federal immigration policies, workers' rights, and how to access free, safe immigration legal services and social services. In 2021, the ActionNYC in Schools team encountered higher numbers of recently-arrived school-aged youth and their families, with an acute need for guidance, information, and resources, and for whom ActionNYC in Schools services are especially important.

NYS DREAM Act Application Assistance Program

In February 2020, MOIA launched the New York State Dream Act Application Assistance Program (NYSDAAAP) to support students in navigating the application process for NYS financial aid programs. Following the enactment of the Senator José Peralta New York State Dream Act into law,⁶⁵ these programs became newly available to an estimated 46,000 immigrant students. NYSDAAAP specifically focuses on aiding undocumented students who face a unique set of barriers to college, including difficulty accessing academic, financial, social, and mental health support. In 2021, MOIA continued to partner with

UnLocal to assist immigrant students in NYC throughout various stages of the application process to ensure they had access to vital state resources in pursuit of higher education. Two years after the NYS DREAM Act passed, there was still a lack of awareness about the program with students. To address this, UnLocal disseminated information about the NYS Dream Act, conducted workshops to educate students, school staff, and parents about the application process, and created videos to share on various social media platforms. In 2021, 297 immigrant students in NYC received assistance and the NYS DREAM Act Application Assistance Program was granted baseline funding.

Community Services

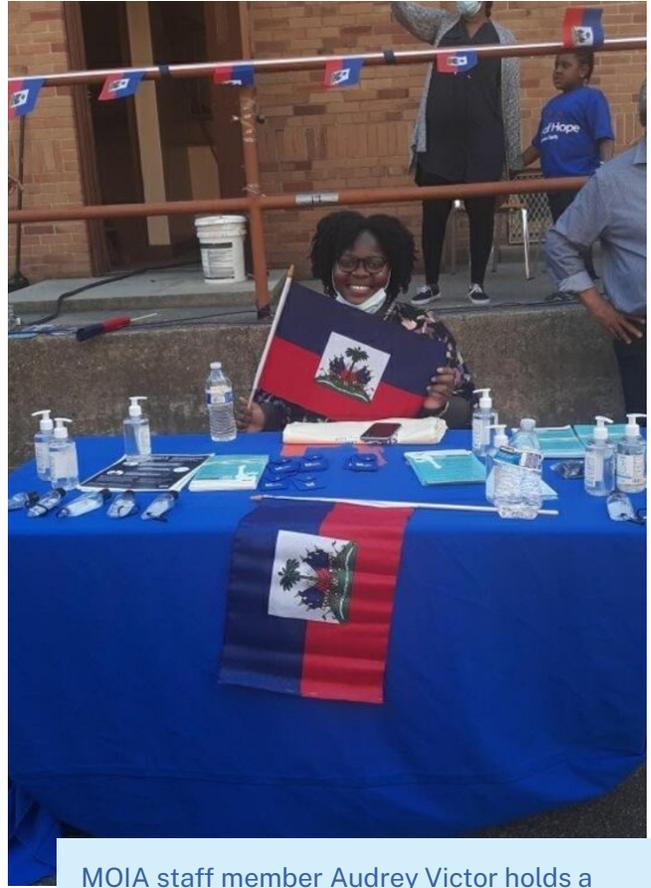
As a key touchpoint for immigrant communities in all five boroughs, the Community Services team offers a real time support system. To accomplish this, the team connects individuals to programs and services through in-person, public-facing events, convenes with key stakeholders to discuss and address emerging issues, conducts both in person and virtual KYR presentations, and monitors the AskMOIA Hotline.

In 2021, the AskMOIA Hotline shifted to in-depth case management and follow-up to ensure that New Yorkers are accessing the services they are entitled to. MOIA saw an increase of individuals reaching out to the hotline with low- or no technical literacy and/or access, as well as an increase in calls from people with LEP and illiteracy in 2021. The Community Services team worked to pay

⁶⁵ NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Fact Sheet: The Impact of the New York State Dream Act in New York* (2019), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/NYS-Dream-Act-Fact-Sheet-2019.pdf>.



MOIA staff member Angel Gotlieb sits at a table handing out MOIA and city resources for city immigrants in Harlem.



MOIA staff member Audrey Victor holds a Haitian Flag while tabling at Life of Hope's back-to-school event in Brooklyn.



MOIA staff members Danny Mendoza and Javier Collazo Justiano table at Saint Peter's Church, sharing MOIA resource one pager with Father Fabian.

special attention to these callers and connect them to the services that fit their individual circumstances.

As the state implemented new programming like the EWF, ERAP, and NYSHAP, the Community Services team made referrals to funded CBOs that assisted individuals in gathering the necessary documents and applying for assistance. The team also screened individuals who were not eligible for certain types of benefits due to immigration status and connected them to FASTEN.

ARE YOU A NEW YORKER WHO NEEDS HELP STAYING IN YOUR HOME?

FUNDS AND SERVICES FOR TENANTS EXPERIENCING NEED (FASTEN)

FASTEN is a program offered, through the Project Parachute Initiative, to help vulnerable tenants stay in their homes in the wake of the Covid crisis. FASTEN connects individuals to services and financial resources, including rental arrears assistance.

EVICTON PREVENTION | FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE | COVID RELIEF | OTHER RESOURCES

SERVICES OFFERED THROUGH FASTEN INCLUDE:

- Rental arrears assistance
- Information about and assistance with applications for Covid relief-related resources
- Informal landlord mediation counseling
- Financial counseling
- Career support, job search assistance and referrals to workforce providers
- One-time or short-term financial assistance
- Education on tenants' rights under housing law
- Legal assistance
- Referral to benefits programs (e.g. unemployment, etc.)
- Transportation costs
- Job search related costs
- Immediate need grants (utilities, food, prescriptions, etc.)

REACH OUT DIRECTLY TO YOUR HOMEBASE PROVIDER AS OUTLINED ON THE BACK, CALLING 311, OR VISITING THE HOMEBASE LOCATOR WEBSITE HERE.

CAMBA | RiseBoro | S:US | HELP USA | Bronxworks | ANTIPOVERTY IN NEW YORK

Project Parachute Flyer (FASTEN)

The ASKMOIA Hotline and email inbox responded to 4,288 calls and 162 emails, making 960 referrals, including 45 legal service referrals through IOI, in 12 languages.

Referrals ranged from public assistance (SNAP and One-Shot Deals) to rental assistance, immigration legal help, and IDNYC. The hotline received 281 inquiries in 8 languages for the EWF and 52 inquiries for ERAP. Community Service staff also made 252 referrals to FASTEN across the 5 boroughs.

MOIA Volunteer Program

As part of MOIA's volunteer program, MOIA-trained volunteers go out into the community with staff to educate and share information on various topics throughout the five boroughs. MOIA's volunteer program relies on the support of 572 volunteers. In 2021, to reach the community despite COVID-19 restrictions, MOIA hosted over 20 volunteer events with 33 volunteers, resulting in 167 hours of combined volunteer hours, and reaching 318 individuals. This included virtual volunteer opportunities, assisting immigrant New Yorkers with citizenship applications, and much more.

Immigrant Heritage Week

Immigrant New Yorkers represent a substantial and essential part of the workforce that has helped the City combat this pandemic, putting them at greater risk of experiencing significant health and economic harms. During the 17th Annual Immigrant Heritage Week (IHW), which took place from April 12 – 18, the City paid tribute to everyday immigrant New Yorkers who continue to help the city recover. The theme for 2021 was *Immigrants Are Essential*, with illustrations provided by Brooklyn-based artist Jason Raish, born in South Korea.

The week showcased in-person and virtual events celebrating immigrant culture and the arts. MOIA also hosted a virtual celebration with local community partners LOH, the Bangladesh Institute of Performing Arts and COOP Danza, featuring a moment of silence for those we lost due to COVID-19. The event also included musical and dance performances by Haitian jazz roots band Alegba and Friends, a South Asian folk dance, and snippets of the International Indigenous Festival PIKAJIRAA SUMA (Wayuu Resilience).

Virtual content throughout the week also highlighted videos of real immigrant New Yorkers who have made important contributions to our communities throughout the pandemic:

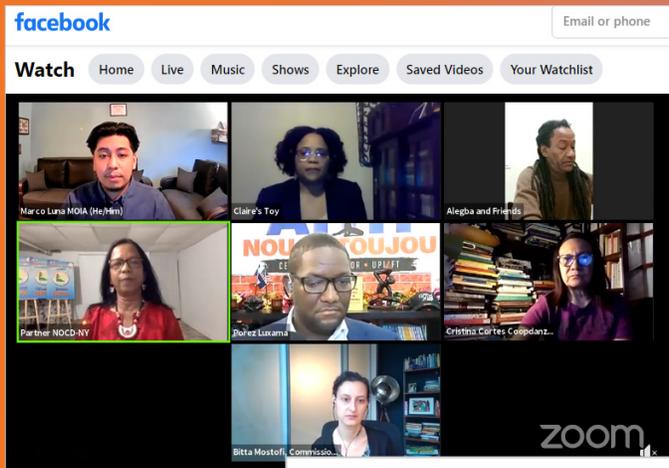
- **Man Hong-Wan**, the only human contact for many of his elderly patients;
- **Claudia Verdiner**, who worked to find new ways to make critical information more accessible to Creole speakers; and
- **Carlos Espinoza**, a local bakery owner who kept his bakery open during the pandemic to make sure no one in need went without food.

Digital content also included IHW mini profiles speaking to the individual contributions and achievements featuring community-based leaders Lorena Kourousias of Mixteca Organization, Adama Bah, an immigrant rights advocate; Urgen Sherpa of United Sherpa Association; immigrant health care workers at NYC Health + Hospitals Dr. Noella Boma, Ademola Ladapo and Marly Caraballo; and artist Tijay Mohammed.



Immigrants are Essential graphic illustrated by South Korean Brooklyn-based artist Jason Raish

Immigrant Heritage Week 2021



IHW Goes Digital 2021 screenshot, featuring MOIA staff members and our partners from Life of Hope, BIPA, COOPDanza, and Alegba and Friends.



Immigrant Heritage Week Virtual Celebration 2021

Musical Performance by Alegba and Friends



Dance Performance by BIPA - Kolshi Dance

Musical Performance by Dance Theater of Colombia - Piel de Sol

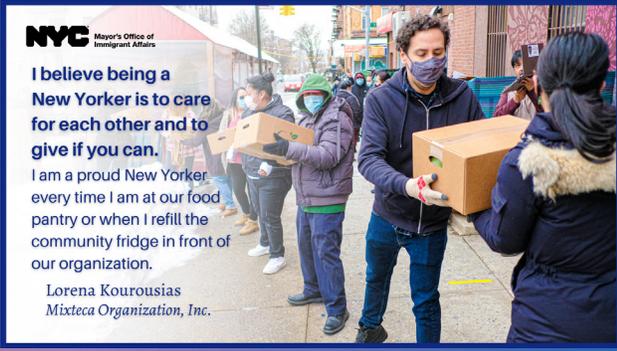


NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

I believe being a New Yorker is to care for each other and to give if you can.

I am a proud New Yorker every time I am at our food pantry or when I refill the community fridge in front of our organization.

Lorena Kourousias
Mixteca Organization, Inc.



You have rights, undocumented or not. Don't let anyone tell you differently.

Adama Bah
Immigrant Rights Advocate

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



Having a unique language, culture and heritage among many others makes me feel like a New Yorker.

The respect I'm receiving for my culture and heritage makes me proud to be a New Yorker.

Urgen Sherpa
United Sherpa Association

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



I aim at creating art that strategically **provokes, educates, and encourages** public dialogue in addressing social issues, while creating **sanctuary spaces** for my audience whom I see as collaborators.

Tijay Mohammed
Artist

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



Helping fellow humans at their most vulnerable with humility has always been a passion of mine.

Dr. Noella Boma
NYC Health + Hospitals

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



Everyone is entitled to have mental health services, irrespective of their situation.

Ademola Ladapo
NYC Health + Hospitals

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



I love caring for others.

Marly Caraballo
NYC Health + Hospitals

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



Community Profiles of Immigrant New Yorkers from the NYC Health System, Small Business Owners, Community Leaders and an Artist.

During the 17th Annual Immigrant Heritage Week (IHW), which took place from April 12–18, the City paid tribute to 'everyday' immigrant New Yorkers who continue to help the city recover.

#BHEARD Amplified: Immigrant Voices

In partnership with BRIC Arts Media, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, The Arab American Association of New York, the Yemeni American Merchants Association and the National Endowment for the Arts Fund, MOIA and BRIC developed #Bheard Amplified: Immigrant Voices, a 12 week online podcasting class that elevated the collective power of the Arab-American immigrant community in Bay Ridge. The project developed six podcasts covering topics like the Yemeni bodega strike, Yemeni-Americans' pursuit of education, the bullying of Arab women and the importance of self-empowerment, and reflections of one's homeland. The final podcasts were distributed on BRIC Radio.

The project culminated in an outdoor celebratory event in Bay Ridge, which brought together community organizations, business owners, and residents.

Project participants who completed the program became certified BRIC community producers with access to BRIC equipment and Brooklyn Free Speech TV/Radio. They also received free access to media education course offered at BRIC.

#BHEARD Amplified: Immigrant Voices project recruitment flyer in Arabic.

Selected pages from the #BHEARD Amplified: Immigrant Voices project podcasting workshop toolkit in Arabic.



Project Culmination Block Party Mayoral Certificate Presentation to project participants from Arab American Association of NY and Yemeni American Merchants Association.



Project Culmination Block Party Dinner distribution.

Outreach and Organizing

The rollout and effective outreach for the COVID-19 vaccines were a major focus of MOIA's O+O team in 2021, as described on page 26. The team played a critical role both on the ground and behind the scenes, informing the City's vaccine outreach strategy. The team also conducted extensive outreach to support immigrant New Yorkers in securing emergency food, PPE, at-home COVID-19 testing kits, information on ranked choice voting, and many more topics.

In 2021, O+O held 299 in-person events including resource fairs, tabling, KYR presentations, and canvassing, reaching 83,492 community members across the five boroughs. Through 257 virtual events, the O+O team reached an additional 36,075 community members.



MOIA Neighborhood Organizer Danny Mendoza worked passionately to inform NYC's immigrant communities about city services and their rights. Here, he joined the Arab-American Family Support Center in Brooklyn to share information about IDNYC and Action NYC in August 2021.

Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness (LRIF) Campaign



Community leaders and representatives from African Communities Together (ACT), Staten Island Liberian Community Association (SILCA), Legal Services NY-Staten Island (LSNY), and other organizations worked with MOIA to get the word out about LRIF. Event held at Christ Assembly Lutheran Church on Staten Island on 12/12.

In December 2020, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, extending the deadline for certain Liberian immigrants to apply for lawful permanent residence under Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness (LRIF). Following this development, MOIA continued its campaign to spread the word to Liberian New Yorkers in Staten Island's "Little Liberia," which is home to the largest concentration of Liberians outside Liberia itself. Neighborhood Organizer Ahmed Kargbo led the campaign for MOIA's O+O team, holding dozens of presentations at churches, mosques, and community canvasses in coordination with the Staten Island Liberian Community Association (SILCA), African Communities Together (ACT), and other community partners. The team continued presentations and outreach events until the last weekend before the December 2021 deadline. Dozens of community members who benefited from the program shared that LRIF not only changed their lives but also impacted the trajectory of their entire community and families back home.

Stop Asian Hate Outreach

Due to the tragic rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, MOIA collaborated closely with the NYC Commission on Human Rights and the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes to support various days of visibility, rallies, and multi-agency resource fairs. At these events, resources were shared with community members on how to report hate crimes and other bias incidents. In May 2021, MOIA collaborated with multiple agencies to host a large-scale block party in partnership with the Thrive Collective, focused on bringing mental health and other resources to the community in Manhattan's Chinatown. MOIA's Neighborhood Organizer, Lydia Li, who led the agency's participation in this outreach campaign, served as a community resource throughout the year, connecting individuals who experienced incidents of hate to the appropriate agencies.



Staff from MOIA and other City agencies joined the Asian American Federation's Stop Asian Hate rally in Union Square on March 19, 2021. Staff held art from Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya's "I Still Believe in Our City" campaign created in conjunction with the NYC Commission on Human Rights.



Staff from MOIA and other City agencies joined the CCHR day of action in Rego Park, Queens.



Staff from MOIA and other City agencies joined the Stop Asian Hate Mural Unveiling and Community Celebration Block Party in the Lower East Side on May 22, 2021.

Disaster Relief

MOIA's teams played a critical role in supporting the City's response to disasters that emerged during the year.

Hurricane Ida

On August 26, 2021, Hurricane Ida ripped through New York City and many New Yorkers witnessed deadly flash floods. The youngest victim, two-year-old Lobsang Ang and his family passed away in their basement apartment in Woodside, Queens.

After this tragedy, MOIA staff connected the families of victims to the appropriate city agencies. In addition, the O+O team joined walk-throughs of impacted residents and represented MOIA at the FEMA Service Centers to provide assistance in Nepali, Chinese, Bengali, Spanish, and other languages. The team shared information about City and Federal services with hundreds of New Yorkers and helped dozens of community members submit claims with the appropriate agencies.

MOIA also helped to secure funding to serve immigrant New Yorkers who could not access federal support. In collaboration with the Department of the State, the City launched a \$27 million Ida relief fund to provide relief to undocumented New Yorkers ineligible for FEMA support. MOIA helped to develop and implement the program in September and continues to liaise with the State and providers.

Jackson Heights Fire

After a tragic 8-alarm fire impacted a 133-unit apartment building on 89th street in Jackson Heights, Queens, MOIA's team immediately supported the interagency effort to support fire victims. MOIA helped connect residents who lost identification to IDNYC and to their consulates for them to receive replacement documents. MOIA also connected victims of the fire to City agencies and community organizations to help with tenants' issues. MOIA provided interpretation and facilitated dialogue between affected tenants and HPD.



MOIA's Organizing and Outreach team was on-the-ground in Jackson Heights, Queens to assist tenants after the tragic 8-alarm fire on 89th Street in April 2021.

Community Celebrations and Building Power

In 2021, the O+O team coordinated multiple virtual celebrations and events for various communities. In previous years, MOIA partnered with communities who have had limited engagement with government and worked collaboratively to organize events such as town halls and celebrations that uplift community needs and build power. Through the process of organizing these events, community members highlighted specific challenges and developed relationships with city decision-makers.

Previous examples included the Himalayan Town Hall in 2016, the Garifuna Town Hall in 2018, the Andean Summit in 2019, and many interagency community celebrations such as Vaisaki and Diwali. While large-scale in-person events like these were not feasible in 2021, the following are a few examples that demonstrate MOIA's work to celebrate, uplift, and build power with New York City's diverse immigrant communities.

African Heritage Month Celebration

In 2021, MOIA observed African Heritage Month by honoring and celebrating African culture (through music, food, and performances) and African New Yorkers' contributions to the City. A Mayoral Proclamation and Citations were given to specific African leaders, including the Africa Center's CEO Uzodinma Iweala and others, who have worked tirelessly to support community members. The event included a resource fair and connected community members to MOIA services, free immigration consultations, and COVID-19 vaccines and testing.



MOIA's Losar event was joined by Congress Member Grace Meng and Assembly Member Jessica González-Rojas.

Losar 2021

Losar, the Tibetan new year festival, is celebrated by Tibetans in Tibet and other Himalayan Buddhist communities in Nepal, Bhutan, and Northern India. Losar, as well as other local variations of the holiday, is celebrated for 15 days, with the main celebrations occurring on the first three days. The first day of Losar in 2021 was on Friday, February 12th and celebrated the year of the "Iron Ox." While MOIA staff have attended community Losar events in previous years, 2021 was the first year that the City of New York officially held a celebration, albeit virtually. Led by Neighborhood Organizer Angela Sherpa, MOIA partnered with the Tibetan Community of New York and New Jersey, the United Sherpa Association, Adhikaar, and other community organizations.

Iftar in the City Food Distribution

Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, MOIA, the NYC Commission on Human Rights, and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, organized two large-scale food distributions for community members who needed

groceries during Ramadan, as well as the wider community. One was held at the Albanian Islamic Center while the other was held at Masjid Rahmatillah. At both food distributions, thousands of community members of different faiths received fresh grocery bags and high-quality food.

Annual Interagency Diwali Celebration

MOIA worked with Sadhana, then-Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, NYC Commission on Human Rights, and diverse community partners for our annual Interfaith Diwali Celebration. The theme of this year's event was Atithi Devo Bhava: Be One for Whom the "Other" is God. The event focused on the importance of opening our hearts, nations, and doors to refugees, immigrants, and all who may be strangers to us.

Advocacy

Problem-solving the issues that immigrant New Yorkers face requires engagement with all levels of government. In 2021, MOIA worked to coordinate local, state, and national advocacy on behalf of immigrant New Yorkers, including by partnering with local elected leaders across the nation to push for federal change.

State Advocacy

In 2021, MOIA engaged with the state on a variety of issues related to the COVID-19 recovery and other issues of interest for immigrant New Yorkers. This included advocating with the state on EWF and acceptance of IDNYC, engaging on the creation of a fund to support survivors of Hurricane Ida, and communicating the need for ERAP and other programs.

MOIA also worked with our City partners to support a bill that expanded the availability of vacatur for survivors of trafficking. The collateral consequences of convictions for survivors of trafficking who were forced to commit crimes are severe and can prevent them from accessing employment or crucial services. In the case of immigrant survivors, such convictions can even lead to immigration consequences. In late 2021, the Governor signed this vacatur bill into law.

In 2022, MOIA continues to coordinate with our partners within the City and with advocates to push for changes to state law that will benefit immigrant New Yorkers.

Federal Advocacy

After President Biden's inauguration, the administration began rolling back some of the many anti-immigrant policies implemented and proposed by the previous administration. Despite this drastic change, the City's advocacy on the federal level continued.

At the beginning of the year, the C4A coalition, led in part by New York City, issued a set of immigration priorities for the new federal administration, as described on page 81. These priorities set out a joint vision for what meaningful federal change in the field of immigration would look like.

In early 2021, the City celebrated the end of the Trump Administration's public charge rule. The rule was struck down by a federal court decision that went into effect on March 9, 2021. After this date, the federal government stopped applying the rule and returned to previous policies. In October 2021, MOIA worked with H + H, DSS, DOHMH, HPD, the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and other partners across city government to submit public comments to the Biden Administration's Advance Notice of Public Rulemaking on the Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility. This was part of ongoing advocacy for a clearer, fairer public charge rule. The City's comments provided information about the costs and burdens of public charge rules that generate fear and confusion and deter immigrants from seeking benefits and

services for which they are eligible. The comment also recommended that receipt of public benefits be removed from the public charge analysis. In 2021, MOIA and DOHMH also continued the “Support, Not Fear” public awareness campaign, to inform New Yorkers of their rights to receive City services regardless of immigration status.

In April 2021, MOIA, H+H, and DOHMH submitted a comment opposing a DHS and DOJ proposed rule entitled “Security Bars and Processing.” The proposed rule sought to explode the definition of the “danger to the security of the United States” bars to eligibility for asylum and withholding of removal under the guise of public health. The rule would have categorically excluded anyone who recently came from or traveled through a country where any contagious or infectious disease (i.e., COVID-19) is prevalent or exhibits any symptom from seeking asylum or withholding of removal. During a global pandemic, COVID-19 would be considered “prevalent” in virtually every country in the world thus the rule would have essentially shut down the entire U.S. asylum system. MOIA, H+H, and DOHMH submitted a comment voicing strong opposition to the proposed rule, which bore no genuine connection to public health and would unlawfully deny the right to asylum. MOIA’s comment also highlighted the absurdity of the “public health” pretext as DHS and DOJ’s proposed rule failed to consider alternative policies to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19, such as limiting the use of detention and allowing asylum seekers to safely self-quarantine. The rule never went into effect.

In May 2021, MOIA also worked with DSS and DOHMH to submit a comment to USCIS,

highlighting how USCIS can reduce barriers for immigrant New Yorkers accessing immigration services and benefits. That comment highlighted how USCIS barriers diluted the many investments of the City for immigration legal services. In addition, the comment highlighted specific examples of barriers that USCIS had implemented, which hindered immigrant New Yorkers from receiving immigration benefits including the inaccessibility of USCIS for those without counsel, numerous logistical and bureaucratic barriers to accessing information, and the need for additional field offices.

In September 2021, the federal government published a proposed rule to “preserve and fortify” the DACA program. While the proposed rule included language adopting the program’s eligibility criteria as they currently exist, it failed to meaningfully expand those criteria and included provisions that would legally separate the provision of deferred action and work authorization — a proposal that advocates and MOIA feared signaled the possibility of the separation of those two elements. In late November, MOIA worked with DSS, H+H, and DOHMH to submit a comment pushing for expanded eligibility criteria. The comment also raised concerns that separating the forbearance aspects of DACA from the grant of work authorization would have devastating effects on immigrant New Yorkers and would eliminate the program’s well-known benefits.

MOIA also engaged directly with federal immigration agencies to address issues raised by members of our communities. As one example, in November 2021, MOIA heard reports of ICE launching a new

program called “Operation Horizon,” which was meant to send Notices to Appear and related documents to tens of thousands of recently-arrived immigrants throughout the United States. Hearing concerns from legal service providers about what this would mean, MOIA reached out to ICE and was able to obtain more information about the numbers of individuals targeted and examples of the documents that would be sent out. MOIA then shared that information with our legal service provider partners.

Cities for Action (C4A)

C4A is a bipartisan coalition of U.S. cities and local governments that collectively advocate for pro-immigrant federal policies and exchange best practices on local policies and programs that advance inclusion of immigrant residents. C4A was founded in 2014 by former Mayor de Blasio and since then the coalition has grown to over 170

cities and counties. The U.S. mayors and county executives that make up our coalition recognize the pivotal role that immigrants play in strengthening communities.

On January 19th, 2021 C4A released a letter to the Biden-Harris Administration and the 117th U.S. Congress titled “[A Vision for Immigration Action: Local Leaders’ Recommendations for Building Inclusive, Equitable, and Resilient Communities for All,](#)” published in advance of the inauguration. This document calls on the new Administration and Congress to partner with local leaders to:

- Support the successful economic, social, and civic integration of immigrant families;
- Address immigration barriers that marginalize immigrant residents, separate families, and limit our communities’ capacity to thrive;

There are

13.2 million

immigrant essential workers in the U.S., including 280,000 undocumented healthcare workers.



CITIES for ACTION

Source: New American Economy

In 2021, C4A launched its Immigration Reform campaign to provide members with curated talking points, messaging, and social media graphics to uplift support for immigration reform at the federal level. The campaign underscores the invaluable contributions of immigrant populations including essential workers, many of whom are undocumented healthcare workers who have saved countless lives during the pandemic. Source: C4A/NAE immigration reform campaign

Nearly half

of the almost 1.2 million DACA-eligible population are essential workers.



CITIES for ACTION

Source: New American Economy

In 2021, C4A launched its Immigration Reform campaign to provide members with curated talking points, messaging, and social media graphics in order to uplift support for immigration reform at the federal level. The campaign highlights ways in which the DACA program has allowed recipients to reach their full potential and make invaluable contributions to the U.S. Source: C4A/NAE immigration reform campaign

- Respect local decision-making and expertise on public safety and public health;
- Recognize the role of local governments in upholding our nation's values and in addressing global challenges; and
- Mount a coordinated strategy for immigrant inclusion for an equitable response and recovery to the pandemic.

At the start of 2021, with a new administration in the White House and the principles set forth in the vision for immigration mentioned above, C4A took a proactive stance on rallying support and awareness for several Congressional bills that would have created pathways to citizenship for millions of immigrants across the country, some of whom include DACA recipients, TPS holders, and essential workers and farm workers. C4A released public statements in support of proposed legislation and created two citizenship-focused toolkits: the Citizenship for Essential Workers Toolkit and the TPS Advocacy toolkit. C4A released several iterations of these toolkits (updated bi-monthly) to provide members with updates on state of play, talking points for congressional advocacy, and ready-to-post social media messaging and graphics.

As COVID-19 continued to disproportionately impact immigrant communities in 2021, C4A's Seattle-based COVID-19 Emergency Response Coordinator played a key role in providing C4A members the information they needed to keep their communities safe. This staffer led the drafting and dissemination of nine separate written resources highlighting the

following topics: local immigrant-inclusive initiatives in response to pandemic, immigrant-inclusive housing assistance programs, immigrant-inclusive emergency cash assistance programs, small business assistance programs, immigrant- and refugee-specific provisions in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, supporting immigrant workers, immigrant inclusion in future emergency response, and immigrant-inclusive initiatives to continue in COVID-19 recovery and beyond.

In addition to providing clear explanations of local and federal programming, these resources highlighted local initiatives with the intention of promoting best practices among C4A members. In 2021, C4A also held regular special topic calls for members to present their local COVID-19 response work. A few of these calls focused on equitable vaccine distribution, immigrant inclusion in the American Rescue Plan Act, language access and COVID-19, and immigrant-inclusive emergency management.

A rise in xenophobia throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in attacks against our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. While anti-AAPI attacks in the U.S. are not new, cities and counties identified a need for consolidated advocacy during this time. In April 2021, C4A issued a statement in support of AAPI communities and condemning hate. C4A also created a resource guide that provides ideas for local government actions and programs, as well as third-party resources meant to inspire local initiatives and further understanding of anti-AAPI violence and racism.

C4A also began a conversation series in 2021 called “Building Solidarity Among Local Communities.” These regular discussions were planned and facilitated by the C4A team in partnership with our members in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Louisville. Each discussion focused on engaging members on effective ways for local governments to understand their roles in building solidarity amongst different groups and ways to foster safe spaces for community members to come together and work to undo implicit bias and prejudice.

In July 2021, C4A announced its transition to a co-chair leadership model. Mayor Lori Lightfoot of Chicago and Mayor Todd Gloria of San Diego joined former NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio as co-leaders of the coalition. NYC MOIA works closely with its partners at the San Diego Office of Global Affairs and the Chicago Office of New Americans to lead the coalition in realizing its mission, priorities, and core activities through innovative advocacy and strategic growth. C4A co-chairs strengthen the coalition’s operational bandwidth and regional perspective, making the coalition more effective in influencing change at the federal level.

In 2021 C4A sent four multi-city sign-on letters to the Biden Administration to highlight where federal action was needed in response to immigration issues:

- In May 2021, C4A and the National Partnership for New Americans released a joint letter including twenty-two mayor and county executive signatures voicing support for the [U.S. Citizenship Act](#). The letter urged the federal government to follow the lead of local leaders who have

been empowering their communities through the successful implementation of immigrant-inclusive programs and policies.

- In July 2021, twenty-two C4A leaders from across the country sent a letter to DHS Secretary Mayorkas calling for an end to Secure Communities — a DHS program that mandates that the FBI automatically share fingerprints it captures with ICE, creating an involuntary entanglement between local government and civil immigration enforcement. The letter states unequivocally that Secure Communities makes our cities and counties less safe, violates principles of due process, and exacerbates long-standing inequities in our criminal legal system that disproportionately affect immigrants of color.
- In August 2021, thirty C4A leaders signed on to a letter calling for the designation or re-designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for immigrants from 15 countries. The letter explains how designation and re-designation of TPS for these countries could offer protection from deportation as well as employment authorization for approximately 2 million immigrants currently residing in the U.S. The letter emphasizes how TPS is a valuable tool that would protect many long-standing community members from being returned to dangerous country conditions and offer them critical employment authorization in the U.S., while also working towards advancing racial justice in local communities and facilitating COVID-19 recovery efforts.

- In December 2021, twenty-six C4A mayors from across the country sent a letter to the Biden Administration calling for expanded parole protections for Afghan and Haitian migrants and federal funding to assist localities in addressing housing challenges and legal service needs for both populations.

In Fall 2021, C4A launched its immigration reform campaign. As part of the campaign, C4A developed a messaging & advocacy toolkit to help localities elevate messaging in support of immigration reform. The toolkit includes key data on immigrant contributions, talking points for stakeholders, ready-to-post social media messaging & graphics and more. C4A will continue this campaign into 2022 by launching testimonial videos of DACA recipients who underscore the importance of keeping the program intact.

In partnership with the city of Denver, C4A hosted its seventh annual convening in December 2021, held virtually, to support continued collective advocacy and best practice sharing between cities and counties. 40 localities and 22 states were represented at the convening demonstrating C4A's national reach and the depth of local perspective involved in its advocacy. The convening provided members with briefings on the national immigration landscape and offered space to brainstorm local approaches to national policy developments. Denver Mayor Hancock, Chicago Mayor Lightfoot and San Diego Mayor Gloria all provided remarks during the convening directly addressing C4A and commending its unwavering commitment to protecting the safety of all its immigrant and refugee constituents.

C4A's three strategic priorities as informed by convening discussion are as follows:

- Support the immigrant workforce which is instrumental in local communities' economic recovery;
- Partner with local leaders to support the needs of asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented immigrants, and other vulnerable populations; and
- Immigration Enforcement Reform.

Strategic Research

In 2021, MOIA continued to produce original research that helped to inform the debate and advocacy around the inclusion of immigrant communities in pandemic relief, as well as research that highlights the demographic and economic characteristics of NYC's Asian and Pacific Islander (API) and Latinx communities.

This year, MOIA published its "NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Program (IERP)" fact sheet which highlighted demographic and socioeconomic data on the 26,000 IERP recipients as well as their spending. It found that the program was extremely successful in reaching undocumented workers left out of relief in a short period of time, overcoming traditional challenges of conducting outreach to this population. The fact sheet is also important to inform future programs and outreach to undocumented populations as well as for continued advocacy for permanent and ultimately inclusive recovery programs at the government level.

Additionally, MOIA's research unit launched a new series of fact sheets that each highlight the diversity, growth, settlement patterns, immigration status among others of the city's AAPI and Latinx communities. These fact sheets helped city agencies and other stakeholders better understand the unique challenges and characteristics of immigrant communities so that the City could better respond to their needs.

Conclusion

The wellbeing of our city depends on the wellbeing of immigrant New Yorkers. That is why the city of New York will continue to be the most welcoming city for immigrants. Under the new Adams administration, MOIA remains committed to ensuring that immigrant communities are centered in City recovery programs and can access City services. Working alongside our fellow government agencies, community partners, elected officials, and other stakeholders, we will continue to rebuild a city where immigrant New Yorkers can live with dignity and justice.

