

**Testimony of Haris Khan
New York City Department of Small Business Services**

**Before the Committees on Immigration and Small Business
Oversight: Economic Impact of Federal Immigration Policy**

May 6, 2026

Introduction

Good morning, Chair Thomas-Henry, Chair Encarnación, and members of the City Council's Committees on Small Business and on Immigration. My name is Haris Khan, and I serve as Chief of Staff at the New York City Department of Small Business Services ("SBS"). I am pleased to join today's hearing with Deputy Commissioner Lorena Lucero from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs ("MOIA").

At SBS, we aim to deliver economic security for all New Yorkers, including immigrant New Yorkers, by connecting them to good jobs, supporting small businesses, and investing in our neighborhoods. More than half of NYC's 180,000 small businesses are owned by immigrants, including 56% of all storefront businesses.

We recognize that heightened federal immigration enforcement has increased fear and anxiety across communities. In response, SBS has continued to prioritize our outreach in immigrant communities and circulate MOIA's Know Your Right collateral, which includes guidance regarding ICE interactions and MOIA's free legal assistance hotline number.

Intentional Outreach in Immigrant Communities

Notably, 49% of New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home and 23% are LEP. To ensure our services are reaching all corners of New York, SBS's dedicated outreach team canvasses small businesses across commercial corridors. Our staff are fluent in eight languages, and SBS provides translated materials, often in 20+ languages, promoting relevant business service offerings and workforce opportunities. Our outreach is further supported by 600+ community partners, many of whom have deep ties to immigrant communities. Since launch, our citywide outreach team has engaged more than 70,000 New Yorkers through over 1,000 outreach events in all five boroughs and in dozens of ethnic enclaves. From door-to-door support in Chinatown to emergency response in Little Pakistan, SBS's outreach model meets small businesses where they are.

Our support also extends to street vendors, the smallest of small businesses. SBS is proud to build the first-ever Office of Street Vendor Services to provide street vendors with education resources and the city's support. We welcomed Executive Director Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez earlier this week to advance the work. This year alone, we've already reached over 500+ street vendors and we are excited to double-down in the coming months as new licenses are issued.

Continuing to Deliver Accessible Programs

Federal immigration policy changes have not just impacted immigrant New Yorkers through enforcement actions. The U.S. Small Business Administration recently made changes to exclude all but U.S. citizens and nationals from applying to SBA-backed loans, leaving behind a

major gap in financing for small businesses. Despite this shift, SBS remains committed to delivering our most in-demand services and facilitating access to capital through our 7 Business Solutions Centers, NYC Funds Finder, and city-led loan products.

Under the leadership of Mayor Mamdani, SBS revamped our NYC Future Fund to expand access to affordable financing for seasonal and growing small businesses, by reducing interest rates, minimum loan size, and monthly repayment rates. Small businesses can learn about the Future Fund and more at the city's largest resource fair for small businesses: SBS' NYC Small Business Month Expo, happening on May 28th. This event will have language interpretation and will culminate a month of small business resource programming. We greatly appreciate the support of all member offices in promoting Small Business Month programming by visiting nyc.gov/smallbizmonth.

Additionally, the FIFA World Cup will drive incredible foot traffic for the city's most diverse communities. SBS has been closely coordinating with the Mayor's World Cup team and NYC Tourism to promote small business engagement opportunities through our FIFA World Cup Mobile Unit (Mobie) Outreach Tour, email newsletters, and social media promotion of the [NYC World Cup 2026 Business Tool Kit](#), and [Hosting Playbook](#).

SBS' Mobie Outreach Tour event dates will happen across the five boroughs with upcoming dates happening on: May 13 in Jackson Heights, Queens, May 15 in 161st, the Bronx, May 19 in Little Haiti, Brooklyn, May 22 in Port Richmond, Staten Island, and May 26 in Koreatown, Manhattan.

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to talk about SBS's work supporting immigrant entrepreneurs during this time. I look forward to our continued partnership to protect and empower our immigrant communities and the businesses that keep NYC running. I welcome any questions you may have.



Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal to the New York City Council Committees on Small Business and on Immigration regarding Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Policy Changes

May 6, 2026

Good afternoon, Chairs Shanel Thomas-Henry and Elsie Encarnación and members of the committees. Thank you for convening this hearing. I'm Brad Hoylman-Sigal, and I have the honor of serving 1.6 million New Yorkers, including nearly half a million immigrants, as Manhattan Borough President.

Manhattan has a long and storied history as a borough of immigrants. Our economy, in particular, was built by immigrants and runs on their entrepreneurship, their labor, and their tax contributions. Across New York City, [immigrants own nearly half of our city's 220,000 small businesses](#). They make up the [overwhelming majority of workers](#) in home care, food service, hospitality, transportation, and major parts of our construction workforce. These contributions to our economy cannot be understated. In 2019, immigrants accounted for [\\$244 billion](#) (23%) of the City's GDP. Nearly [90% of foreign-born New Yorkers](#) have called the United States home for at least five years, with over 55% staying for over twenty years. Immigrants come here with the same dreams to work, build a community and raise a family that every New Yorker has. Long term residents and new arrivals alike are all New Yorkers.

And yet, as you well know, the federal government is dismantling the freedoms and infrastructure that lets immigrant New Yorkers live here, work here, raise families here, and contribute here. The cost will be borne by every New Yorker.

We have all seen the harms of ICE operations on our streets. Less visible, but no less consequential, is the restructuring of federal agencies far outside DHS--housing, food assistance, employment authorization, tax administration, public records--into instruments of immigration enforcement. Each of those shifts transfers cost to New York City.

Nowhere is that more clear than in housing.

In April, my office submitted [formal comments opposing HUD's proposed rule](#), Docket No. FR-6524-P-01, that would effectively force mixed-status families out of federally

assisted housing. If implemented, this rule could displace roughly 11,000 New Yorkers, including approximately 5,000 children. In Manhattan alone, hundreds of families and more than a thousand children could be affected.

Families who have spent years complying with federal rules would face an impossible set of choices: family separation, displacement, or homelessness. Manhattan's average rent has now reached approximately [\\$5,324 a month](#). The Section 8 waitlist is closed. Public housing waitlists have been functionally closed for years. For these families, there is nowhere else to go.

HUD claims this rule would free up resources for other households. [Its own analysis](#) shows the opposite. Mixed-status households often generate higher effective rents because ineligible family members pay market-adjacent rates. HUD itself projects that removing those households would cost New York housing authorities between \$48 and \$57 million in annual revenue at the exact moment NYCHA faces a nearly \$80 billion capital deficit and a nearly \$800 million operating gap. This is almost certainly an undercount of the potential direct and downstream costs related to this rule.

Families forced from federally assisted housing will enter shelter systems, hospitals will absorb housing-related health crises, and NYCHA staff will be pulled away from mold remediation, lead abatement, elevator repair, and heat restoration to carry out immigration verification and reporting requirements. Shelter costs alone could impose between \$330 million and \$1.27 billion in new annual costs on New York City, with no federal reimbursement.

The same pattern is emerging in food security.

More than [1.8 million New Yorkers rely on SNAP](#), including roughly 500,000 children. As of April 1, in response to changes in federal law, [New York State has begun removing SNAP eligibility](#) from entire categories of legally present noncitizens, including refugees, people granted asylum, survivors of human trafficking, and survivors of domestic violence. These are people the federal government itself granted humanitarian protection. They are now being stripped of food assistance.

Beyond those direct cuts, [mixed-status households who remain eligible are disenrolling](#) out of fear that participation will expose family members to enforcement. Food pantries are reporting surging demand. Community providers are being forced to backfill what was once a federal entitlement. Bodegas, grocery stores, and small food businesses lose consumer spending when federal nutrition dollars disappear from local circulation.

The chilling effects extend beyond housing and food: Workers are hesitating to report wage theft. Families are delaying medical care. Parents are avoiding benefits enrollment for U.S.-citizen children. Eligible residents are declining to file taxes or interact with

public systems because they no longer trust that the information they provide will remain within the agencies that collect it.

Local government cannot fully offset the assault from the federal government. But we can, and we must, do everything in our power to mitigate the damage and protect the immigrant New Yorkers upon whom our economic infrastructure so directly depends. I urge the Council and Administration to:

1. Conduct a full audit of the direct and downstream impacts of these policies to New York City;
2. Coordinate multilingual outreach making clear that benefit participation by eligible household members does not, under City policy, expose family members to immigration enforcement;
3. Expand City investment in immigrant legal services; and
4. Build protections against data transfer between City agencies and federal immigration enforcement.

I'm also pleased to share that my office is opening an Immigrant Welcome Center at our Northern Manhattan office. The Center will be a single trusted intake point for any Manhattanite, providing walk-in legal referrals, multilingual benefits navigation, Know Your Rights materials, tenant protections, and more.

Our City's economy was built by immigrants. It is currently being dismantled by federal policy. We have a moral and fiscal obligation to build a local firewall that protects the workers, entrepreneurs, and families who keep New York running.

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

**Testimony Before the New York City Council – Committee on Small Business and
Committee on Immigration**

Good morning. My name is Mark Caserta, and I serve as Vice President of Small Business Support at the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the economic impacts of recent federal immigration policy changes.

Since October 2020, the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the four other borough chambers, has conducted extensive, door-to-door outreach to small businesses through the NYC Small Business Resource Network (SBRN). Through this initiative, SBRN staff have visited more than 58,000 small businesses and provided individualized, no-cost assistance to over 18,000 businesses citywide. This work has given our teams a direct, on-the-ground perspective of the challenges facing small business owners across New York City.

Drawing from this firsthand experience, I would like to share key observations from our work along Brooklyn's commercial corridors. Since 2020, small business owners have faced a succession of significant challenges. Initially, they struggled to remain open during COVID-19 shutdowns—difficulties that, for some, persist even today. As restrictions lifted, many businesses encountered severe staffing shortages. This was followed by rapidly rising costs driven by inflation. Most recently, business owners are contending with increased expenses resulting from federal tariffs.

Earlier this year, our SBRN team conducted a door-to-door survey of Brooklyn small businesses. Among respondents, 65% reported being affected by tariffs, and 56% indicated they had raised prices as a direct result of these increased costs.

In addition to tariffs, we asked business owners whether immigration enforcement—or the fear of such enforcement—had impacted their operations. Across Brooklyn, approximately 30% of respondents reported experiencing negative effects related to immigration enforcement or fear thereof. However, this figure varies significantly by neighborhood. In Sunset Park, 79% of surveyed businesses reported being affected, while in Bay Ridge the figure was 45%. In Bay Ridge, this percentage reflects a mix of Arab-owned and non-Arab-owned businesses; notably, nearly all Arab-owned businesses we spoke with reported significant tariff increases and expressed that they could not pass these costs on to customers, who are themselves facing financial strain.

Beyond survey data, our team has gathered anecdotal evidence during our outreach. Business owners have reported difficulty retaining immigrant employees or ensuring consistent attendance, as some workers are reluctant to come to work due to fears of immigration enforcement. Additionally, many businesses have experienced declines in foot traffic and sales, as immigrant customers are increasingly hesitant to be out in public. In several instances early in the current administration, our staff visited

immigrant-owned businesses and, upon asking for the owner, observed employees retreating and hiding out of fear that we were immigration enforcement officials.

And none of this is happening in a vacuum. Business owners are already navigating an exceptionally challenging economic environment. According to a recent Q4 2025 report by the New York City Economic Development Corporation, approximately 3,500 new businesses opened in New York City in the second quarter of 2025—the lowest level of new business formation in five years—while an estimated 8,400 businesses closed during the same period. This resulted in a net loss of approximately 4,900 businesses, also the weakest quarter in five years. Consistent with these findings, our SBRN team has observed a growing number of vacant storefronts across Brooklyn and has begun systematically documenting these vacancies.

It is clear that small businesses cannot afford additional disruptions at this time. The loss of employees and customers—whether due to immigration enforcement or the fear it creates—poses a significant risk to their stability and long-term viability. And inflation and tariffs make matters even worse! What can the city do to support small businesses at this time? Reduce the cost of doing business and ease employer mandates, prioritizing education over heavy-handed enforcement. And absolutely repeal Local Law 75, which would force thousands of small businesses, many owned by immigrants, to spend tens of thousands of dollars to replace their opaque roll gates with see through roll gates by July 1st of this year. This is a real ticking timebomb for our small business community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.



New York City Council | Fiscal Year 2027

OVERSIGHT HEARING

**Committee on Immigration & Committee on Small Businesses
Testimony of the New York Immigration Coalition**

May 6th, 2026

Hola, buenas tardes. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, Deputy Whip Encarnacion, Chair Thomas-Henry, and members of the Immigration Committee and the Committee on Small Business, for convening this important hearing.

My name is Vladimir Tlali, and I am an immigrant from México. I am also the Senior Policy Strategist at the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), an umbrella organization representing over 200 immigrant-serving members and partner organizations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the economic impacts of federal immigration policy changes.

Immigration is not an unfamiliar topic for our city: 36% of all New Yorkers are immigrants. Immigrants make up nearly half (44.3%) of New York City's workforce and contribute nearly 37% to the city's total income. Since early 2025, the federal government's mass immigration operations have involved street arrests, raids in immigrant neighborhoods, and detentions in our courtrooms. These actions have had a chilling effect on the economy, resulting in decreased foot traffic in immigrant commercial corridors. Business owners, workers, delivery personnel, street vendors, daily laborers, parents, and essential workers, such as those in grocery, healthcare, and childcare industries, are living in fear of enforcement actions.

As immigrant communities face unprecedented attacks from the federal government, New York City can do more. We urge the City Council to take urgent legislative and budgetary action to shield all of New York's workers, entrepreneurs, and communities from the economic debacle being caused by the reckless economic and immigration policy of the federal administration.

The importance of immigrants in the New York City Economy

New York's 1.8 million noncitizens are an economic force. Immigrants are active in the labor force and active contributors to the economy, both as consumers and as taxpayers. Immigrants contribute billions, with \$160.5 billion in spending power and contributing \$74.8 billion in taxes in



2023. These dollars help fund our schools, maintain our infrastructure, and provide vital public resources that all New Yorkers depend on.¹

Apart from vital tax contributions, noncitizens have greatly contributed to closing labor shortages in key sectors. Overall, immigrant workers account for 27% of the New York workforce, with undocumented New Yorkers accounting for 15% of the total immigrant workforce.² During the COVID pandemic, immigrants comprised 31% of workers in New York’s essential businesses, and 70% of the undocumented labor force consisted of essential workers.³ Asylum seekers bolster New York City’s economy by filling critical labor shortages, contributing to consumer spending, and paying taxes.⁴ New York State raised \$3.1 billion in taxes on undocumented immigrants living in NY. According to an ITEP, July 2024 report.⁵

Trump's Deportation Agenda Impact on New York's Economy and Workforce

The Trump Administration’s mass deportation agenda is projected to reduce U.S. gross domestic product by more than 7 percent over the next three years—nearly double the economic damage inflicted during the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009.⁶

Just since January 2025, the labor force has already shrunk by more than 1.2 million immigrant workers.⁷ In industries heavily dependent on immigrant labor—construction, food service, agriculture, child care, health care—the effects are particularly acute. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that by the end of President Trump’s second term, his mass deportation goals will result in 2.6 million fewer employed U.S.-born workers and wage decreases for all American workers, immigrant and native-born alike.⁸ A very recent study on the national

¹ FWD.us. (2026, January 31). *People seeking asylum are contributing to the workforce.*
<https://www.fwd.us/news/people-seeking-asylum-are-contributing-to-the-workforce>

² Center for Migration Studies. (2024, July 15). *High-growth occupations reliant on undocumented immigrant workers in New York State.*
<https://cmsny.org/high-growth-occupations-reliant-undocumented-immigrant-workers-nys>

³ Center for Migration Studies. (2020, April 23). *Immigrants comprise 31 percent of workers in New York State essential businesses and 70 percent of the state’s undocumented labor force works in essential businesses.*
<https://cmsny.org/publications/new-york-essential-workers/>

⁴ Office of the New York City Comptroller. (2024, January 4). *Facts, not fear: How welcoming immigrants benefits New York City.*
<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/facts-not-fear-how-welcoming-immigrants-benefits-new-york-city>

⁵ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. (2024, July 30). *Undocumented immigrants’ state and local tax contributions.* <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-taxes-2024/>

⁶ Krieger, S. (2025, October 3). *The price of cruelty: How Trump’s mass deportation agenda endangers us all.* National Immigration Law Center.
<https://www.nilc.org/articles/the-price-of-cruelty-how-trumps-mass-deportation-agendaendangers-us-all/>

⁷ Ibidem

⁸ Costa, D., & Shierholz, H. (2024, February 20). *Immigrants are not hurting U.S.-born workers: Six facts to set the record straight.* Economic Policy Institute.
<https://www.epi.org/blog/immigrants-are-not-hurting-u-s-born-workers-six-facts-to-set-the-record-straight/>



employment effects of the Trump immigration regime shows negative economic impacts as well.⁹

Further, the Trump administration is making it much harder to obtain work authorization, asylum, and other forms of humanitarian relief. Employers and coworkers across the country rely on asylum seekers as part of the workforce. Today, more than 2.3 million asylum seekers are employed in essential sectors, including industries such as construction and transportation that face persistent labor shortages.¹⁰

The impact is harder in critical industries. Studies estimate that New York could lose up to 14% of its workforce as a result of the federal government's mass deportation programs. Once people are deported, there is no backfilling.¹¹ In New York State, 20% of all construction workers are non-citizens and at risk of deportation. In the agriculture sector, this percentage rises to approximately 40-50%. In transportation, it is around 20%, and in manufacturing, about 15%. However, the most significant impact is seen in direct care services, including support for seniors, children, and individuals receiving human services in hospitals and similar facilities.

The Importance of Immigrants in the Small Business and the Economy

America's 36.2 million small businesses generate trillions of dollars in economic activity and employ more than 62 million individuals—nearly half of all U.S. workers. Immigrants are a critical part of this ecosystem. They play a key role in American entrepreneurship: immigrants account for roughly one-quarter of U.S. entrepreneurs and start businesses at more than twice the monthly rate of native-born workers.

Trump's Deportation Agenda Impact on Small Businesses

Immigrant entrepreneurs have built New York alongside native-born Americans. They have opened their businesses, hired their neighbors, paid their taxes, and contributed to the communities that New Yorkers share.

When immigrant business owners are arrested or deported, their businesses lose leadership overnight. This can mean that businesses close permanently. When workers are afraid to report to work, industries that are already facing labor shortages are even more severely impacted. When customers are too frightened to leave their homes, sales revenue and subsequent tax revenue are impacted.

⁹ Elizabeth Cox and Chloe N. East, "Labor Market Impacts of ICE Activity in Trump 2.0," NBER Working Paper 35129 (2026), <https://doi.org/10.3386/w35129>.

¹⁰ FWD.us. (2026, January 31). *People seeking asylum are contributing to the workforce.* <https://www.fwd.us/news/people-seeking-asylum-are-contributing-to-the-workforce/>

¹¹ WAMC Northeast Public Radio. (2026, April 10). *Mass deportations: New York workforce impact report.* <https://www.wamc.org/news/2026-04-10/mass-deportations-new-york-workforce-impact-report>



These effects do not remain confined to immigrant communities; they impact all of New York - affecting suppliers, landlords, and the broader commercial landscape.

New York City's Response: A Smart Investment in the Economy

New York City has several tools to protect immigrant workers and small businesses from the overreach of the Federal Administration. These protective measures are essential not only for supporting immigrant families, but also for bolstering the City's overall economy. By implementing these initiatives, New York City recognizes the invaluable contributions of immigrant workers and business owners, who play a critical role in critical industries from hospitality to healthcare. Ensuring they are protected fosters an equitable job market where all workers can thrive, not just survive. Furthermore, small businesses will be able to flourish, serving as critical drivers for economic growth, job creation, and community economic development.

The New York Immigration Coalition urges the City Council to take immediate action in the following areas:

Invest in Advancing Economic Justice for Immigrant New Yorkers - \$119 million

- **Allocate \$50 million to expand ACS's Promise NYC program** to provide childcare to children otherwise ineligible.
- **Invest \$4 million in a new Childcare Immigrant Family Outreach Initiative** to ensure that immigrant families can navigate the complexities of the childcare system and obtain the services they need.
- **Invest \$50 in Adult Literacy and Workforce Development Programs**, given federal budget cuts that will reduce eligibility:
 - Allocate \$20 million to the new [Education for Integration and Equity program](#).
 - Maintain \$12 million for DYCD Adult Literacy RFP contracts, and
 - Raise total funding for adult literacy from \$14.5 million to \$18 million, consolidated under the Adult Literacy Forward Initiative.
- **Allocate \$15 million to establish a citywide Immigrant Workers Task Force** to train and certify employers through Know Your Rights programs, uphold workplace and Fourth Amendment protections, provide rapid legal response during immigration raids, and connect immigrant workers and families with essential services.



Invest in Protecting All New Yorkers from Federal Overreach - \$269 million.

- **Invest \$85M in funding for immigration legal services** to ensure continuity of services and to help defend immigrants against ongoing aggressive, anti-immigrant policies and the Trump administration's federal attacks on immigrants across the city.
- **Baseline \$3M in funding for the Rapid Response Legal Collaborative**, and **\$40M for the Immigrant Opportunity Initiative (IOI)** to meet the intensifying need of immigrant communities as NYC's population of immigrants who have been arrested, detained, or are imminently facing deportation rapidly increases.
- **Allocate \$40M in funding for the NY Immigrant Family Unity Program (NYIFUP)** to sustain and support the representation of detained individuals.
- **Establish a \$65M Citywide Family and Loved Ones Fund** to provide travel stipends and other emergency, non-legal support for individuals and families impacted by immigrant detention.
- **Baseline funding at \$121 for the Unaccompanied Minor and Families Initiative** to ensure the continuity of critical legal services for immigrant children and asylum-seeking families.
- **Invest \$15M to create and expand restorative justice programs** in immigrant communities, ensuring immigrant New Yorkers have access to culturally competent, non-carceral solutions that prioritize healing and harm reduction.

These necessary investments in our communities must also be supplemented by meaningful policy solutions, including:

- **Prohibit any transfers and communication between ICE and NYPD [Int. 395](#), and the Department of Correction, [Int. 396](#):** Unless a person is convicted of a violent or serious crime, or a federal judge signs a judicial warrant.
- **Pass the NYC Trust Act [Int. 209](#):** Hold both local agencies and law enforcement accountable and empower New Yorkers who were harmed by these violations to seek justice and not hide.
- **Strengthen sanctuary policies:** Close loopholes to explicitly bar any collaboration between city agencies and federal immigration enforcement entities, including ICE, Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO), and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), in immigration enforcement.
- **Abolish the NYPD Gang database:** Pass [Int. 798](#) to ensure that the city ends the use of this discriminatory dragnet tool, and prohibits the creation of future tools that disproportionately target Black and Latino youth in New York City.



Sound investments coupled with bold and effective policy solutions are the best response to the hateful rhetoric from the federal government. NYC is at a crossroads, and we must do more to protect our neighbors and communities. Leadership in the city has a historic chance to do the right thing for all residents regardless of their immigration status.

We invite the Council to stand with us and create the bold, smart, and innovative solutions that only New York City can deliver. We are ready to work with you in creating an inclusive, affordable, and democratic New York City for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Submitted by:

Vladimir Tlali
Senior Policy Strategist
New York Immigration Coalition

By Emily Eisner, Acting Executive Director and Chief Economist
May 6, 2026

FPI Testimony on the Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Policy Changes

Testimony submitted to the Committees on Small Business and Immigration

Thank you to the Council and members of the Committees on Small Businesses and Immigration and for inviting me to speak about the economic impacts of federal immigration policy. My name is Emily Eisner, and I am the Chief Economist and Acting Executive Director at the Fiscal Policy Institute. FPI is a nonpartisan, non-profit policy research organization committed to sound and equitable fiscal policy that strengthens the state economy for all New Yorkers.

On January 23, 2025, the Fiscal Policy Institute and the Immigration Research Initiative released a [joint report](#) on the potential economic impacts of proposed new federal immigration policies (note that I have included this report as an addendum to this testimony). At the time of release, the Trump administration had only just taken office and we did not yet know to what extent the new administration would implement the draconian policies President Trump had laid out on the campaign trail. We warned that implementing the proposed deportation policy would have severe impacts on New York's economic and fiscal health, in addition to catastrophic humanitarian costs to New York's immigrant families. Now, over a year into this presidential administration, we see that federal policy has in many ways exceeded our worst fears—posing real threat not only to immigrant families, documented and undocumented, but also to the New York economy. Under the current federal immigration regime, New York faces the very real possibility of economic stagnation and decline.

There are about 4.5 million immigrants in New York State, including 1.8 million who are non-citizens, and among those an estimated 670,000 who are undocumented. In 2022, people who are undocumented paid an estimated \$3.1 billion in state and local taxes. New York's economy depends on immigrants, including those without documentation. Immigrant workers—especially those who are undocumented and vulnerable—are concentrated in construction, food production and services, and care industries including childcare and home health. The Trump administration's efforts to remove a significant portion of these workforces will make it harder for New York to produce food, build new homes, and care for our sick and elderly, pushing up prices and straining employers in these sectors.

Further, federal immigration policy has dramatically slowed the flow of new immigrants into the economy. While New York's population typically grows each year due to high international immigration, in 2025 the state population was flat. A huge decline in international immigration to New York is the clear driver of this stalled population growth. If this trend continues, New York's labor market and economic growth will be at great risk. Slowed population growth is likely already dampening economic activity and undercutting economic growth in the state. New York City will take the brunt of this economic damage, as it is the primary driver of the state economy.

Economists and policy analysts from across the political spectrum have raised serious concerns regarding the detrimental impact of current federal immigration policy on the economic and fiscal health of the country and its local governments. Legislators in New York must take action to prevent deportations and re-establish the state as a safe place for immigrant families to live and work.

The Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Mass Deportation: What's at Risk in New York

By Emily Eisner (FPI), David Dyssegaard Kallick (IRI), and Andrew Perry (FPI)

Key Findings

- There are 4.5 million immigrants in New York State, including 1.8 million who are non-citizens, and among those an estimated 670,000 who are undocumented.¹
- In 2022, people who are undocumented paid an estimated \$3.1 billion in state and local taxes.²
- New York's economy depends on immigrants, including those without documentation. Deportation of these workers would dramatically decrease affordability and availability of food, homes, and care—all basic needs for New Yorkers.
 - Among people who are undocumented, some of the most vulnerable to deportation and detention, there are an estimated 7,000 chefs, 17,000 cooks, 9,100 food prep workers, and 9,200 waiters in New York State.¹¹
 - There are an estimated 20,900 maids and housekeepers, 16,800 home health aides, 7,000 child care workers, and 6,500 personal care aides who are undocumented in New York.¹²
 - There are an estimated 29,500 construction laborers, 12,800 carpenters, and 6,200 painters who are undocumented in New York.¹³
 - Over half of all crop workers in the United States are immigrants, and the vast majority of these immigrants are either undocumented or seasonal H-2A workers.¹⁶
- Stopping the flow of new refugees to upstate cities will have a direct impact on population rebound in upstate cities, as well as a strong negative impact on the refugee resettlement agencies that are important anchor institutions in these cities.

The Trump Administration is promising an unprecedented intensity of enforcement actions aimed at removing immigrants from their communities, their workplace, and often from their families. In many cases this may result in deportations, in many others it may mean indefinite incarceration in detention centers. The new administration is also promising to radically reduce the number of new immigrants allowed into the country, and to strip some immigrants of status they currently hold.

The immigrants most vulnerable are those who are undocumented. But the impact does not end there. People who have temporary visas may see them terminated or unrenewed. People with temporary protected status, asylum seekers, DACA recipients, and many others are also in a precarious position.

There are far-reaching social and humanitarian implications of this type of enforcement regime. But there is also an economic risk that can be quantified.

Immigrants are a vital part of the New York State economy.

- There are 4.5 million immigrants in New York State, including 1.8 million who are non-citizens, and among those an estimated 670,000 who are undocumented.¹
- Non-citizens include green card holders, as well as a number of people who are at risk of deportation or removal of immigration status, including those who are undocumented, people eligible for Temporary Protected Status, DACA recipients, H1-B and H2-A visa holders, asylum seekers, and others.

Deporting immigrants will come at a significant fiscal cost to New York State and local governments.

- In 2022, people who are undocumented paid an estimated \$3.1 billion in state and local taxes in New York.²
- Deporting over 600,000 people from New York State poses enormous logistical challenges, not to mention opposition based on legal and human rights issues. If, however, just one out of ten people who are undocumented were deported or put into detention camps, that would result in a loss of \$310 million in state and local tax revenue. This is approximately the cost of extending free school meals to all children in New York public schools.
- These projected impacts underestimate the actual loss, since they do not include calculation of the disruption to businesses and communities of conducting raids and other actions, the impacts to family members who lose a breadwinner, or the costs to the foster care system for children who wind up without parents in the United States.
- There may be some offsetting savings in state and local expenditures, but these are likely to be small since recent immigrants and people who are undocumented are

excluded from many public benefits. At the same time, there will be new costs to state and local governments associated with deportation and detention.

- A better approach would be to make it possible for people who are undocumented to gain legal status. That approach would *increase* New York state and local tax revenues by \$900 million.³

Rescinding status and restricting immigration will further hurt the New York economy.

New York also stands to lose a lot if the Trump Administration follows through on threats to remove the temporary status of immigrants who have it today, to radically change the treatment of asylum seekers, and to shut down refugee resettlement.

At risk include an estimated 68,000 people in New York with Temporary Protected Status,⁴ 21,000 active DACA recipients,⁵ and 62,000 asylum seekers currently in New York City-funded shelters and 215,000 who have passed through the New York City processing system since the spring of 2022 (a number of whom have since left New York City, including to other parts of New York State).⁶

Also at risk are the renewal or new visas for temporary “guest worker” visas such as H-1B, intended for highly skilled workers, and H-2A visas for seasonal agricultural workers. These are programs that are ripe for improvement, since they can be exploitative to workers and, unlike other immigration categories, have been shown to have adverse impacts on other workers.⁷ Simply eliminating these workers, however, without creating better options will be a significant challenge for employers.

Additionally, the refugee resettlement program is a longstanding point of pride in New York State, with a strong network of refugee resettlement agencies that welcomed 4,190 refugees in the last year alone (2023 fiscal year).⁸

This list is not comprehensive, and threats from the incoming administration to other categories of immigrants seem to multiply quickly. At the same time, even the most radical deportation and restriction regime will face political and social resistance, as well as significant logistical and legal challenges. This brief is not a prediction of what is to come, but an assessment of where New York State’s economic and fiscal outlook are vulnerable.

Where the New York Economy is Most at Risk

A regime of mass deportation and restriction poses widespread and unpredictable threats of the New York State economy.

- **A loss of large numbers of workers from the New York State labor force would mean an increase in the cost of living** for New Yorkers who will pay more for restaurants, child care, home health aides, construction, farm goods, and more. Costs will go up not only because immigrants are often underpaid, but more fundamentally because there will be an under-supply of workers.
- **A labor supply shortage will force businesses to shrink.** As much as they can, businesses would adjust by hiring new workers. But, the labor force is already constrained. The unemployment rate was 4.4 percent in November 2024, near a historic low.⁹ Employers are already straining to find employees; eliminating large numbers of workers from the labor force will not help.
- **Deporting the 470,000 undocumented workers would result in a predictable decline of about 40,000 jobs for U.S.-born workers**, according to a leading journal article on the subject.¹⁰ Contrary to popular belief, deporting immigrants reduces the number of jobs for other workers. Reasons include: declining purchasing power for immigrants that reduces local demand; decline in the number of complementary workers—fewer cooks and dishwashers means fewer waiters, fewer construction laborers means fewer construction managers; and declining care workers means lower labor force participation for young parents.

Some areas of the New York State economy that are particularly at risk include:

Restaurants. Immigrants play a big role in New York’s vibrant restaurant industry: in the “front of the house” jobs serving diners, in the “back of the house” jobs in the kitchen, and in so many cases as restaurant owners. Among people who are undocumented, some of the most vulnerable to deportation and detention, there are an estimated 7,000 chefs, 17,000 cooks, 9,100 food prep workers, and 9,200 waiters in New York State.¹¹ Undocumented workers make up about 12 percent of these four occupations combined. While some other workers could step into these jobs, there are not enough workers who are currently unemployed to meet this demand, and the predictable result of an outflow of workers is shrinkage of other jobs that rely on these workers.

Care workers. There are 20,900 maids and housekeepers, 16,800 home health aides, 7,000 child care workers, and 6,500 personal care aides who are undocumented in New York.¹² Undocumented workers make up about 10 percent of these occupations combined. The disappearance of these undocumented workers would create an immediate challenge for families across the state. Child care and home health aides may be particularly sensitive: without them, family members would likely be required to pick up a significant amount of the responsibility for care of children, elderly family members, and others who currently get support from child care and home health aides.

This added responsibility, which falls highly disproportionately on women, would likely also lead to some of the caretakers dropping out of the paid labor force.

Construction. There are 29,500 construction laborers, 12,800 carpenters, and 6,200 painters who are undocumented in New York.¹³ Undocumented workers make up roughly a quarter of construction laborers. Removing thousands of workers from the labor force, many of them also union members, would increase the cost of construction, limiting the total construction feasible during a historical housing shortage.

Upstate cities. A radical federal cutback in refugee resettlement would have a major impact on Upstate New York. A central challenge to the economies of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, and Albany has been the longstanding decline in population and labor force. The city of Buffalo, for example, is currently less than half the size it was in 1950, but population loss is beginning to stabilize, with immigrants playing a central role. Over the past 20 years (2000 to 2022) the U.S.-born population of Buffalo shrank by 31,000, offset by an increase in the immigrant population of 15,000, a large portion of them refugees, leading to a net loss that is half what it would have been.¹⁴ As a recent report showed, “In Buffalo, immigrants and refugees are bringing renewed energy to Grant Street, Hertel Avenue, Tonawanda Street, and Broadway-Fillmore. In Utica, Oneida Square, Bleecker Street and Mohawk Street are dotted by small ethnic businesses, from a Vietnamese market to Bosnian coffee shops and a wide range of restaurants—Thai, Cambodian, Lebanese, Dominican, Burmese and more. Related patterns can be seen in Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany.”¹⁵ Stopping the new flow of refugees will have a direct impact on population rebound in Upstate cities, as well as a strong negative impact on the refugee resettlement agencies that are important anchor institutions in these cities.

Farming. Over half of all crop workers in the United States are immigrants, and the vast majority of the immigrants are either undocumented or seasonal H-2A workers,¹⁶ both categories of immigrants that have been threatened by the incoming administration. Pay and working conditions are in dire need of improvement for farm workers. But the likely result of deporting current immigrants and restricting new immigration is not an improvement of working conditions, but a decline in farming. Farms in New York are a source of fresh milk, top-quality apples, and vegetables and other produce enjoyed around the state and sold for export. Farms are also important to the economic and social vitality of rural communities, enhance the local landscape, and are part of a growing agritourism industry. Eliminating immigrants from farm work would be nearly unimaginable, and reducing the number of immigrant workers by even five or ten percent would have dramatic negative consequences.

¹Number of immigrants and non-citizen immigrants are an FPI/IRI analysis of the 2023 ACS. Number of immigrants who are undocumented is the most recent estimate from the [Center for Migration Studies, based on the 2022 ACS](#).

Number of immigrants and non-citizen immigrants are from the 2023 American Community Survey. Immigrants make up 23 percent of the state population, non-citizens 9 percent, and people who are undocumented about 3 percent.

² Davis, et al. “Tax Payments by Undocumented Immigrants,” Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, July 30, 2024. <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-taxes-2024/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wilson, Jill. “Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure,” Congressional Research Service, September 23, 2024. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/RS20844.pdf>

⁵ “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools,” Migration Policy Institute.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles>

⁶ “Accounting for Asylum Seeker Services: Asylum Seeker Census,” New York City Comptroller.

<https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/accounting-for-asylum-seeker-services/asylum-seeker-census/>

⁷ On H-2A visas, see for example: Costa, Daniel. “Testimony prepared for the U.S. House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections for a hearing on ‘Second-class workers – Assessing H-2 visa programs’ impact on workers,” July 20, 2022.

<https://www.epi.org/publication/second-class-workers-assessing-h2-visa-programs-impact-on-workers/>; On H-1B visas, see for example: Bound, et al. “Understanding the Economic Impact of the H1-B Program on the U.S.” February, 2017.

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w23153/w23153.pdf.

⁸ Fiscal year 2023 data from the New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/bria/documents/population-report.pdf>

⁹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment Rate in New York [NYUR], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/NYUR>, January 22, 2025.

¹⁰ East, et al. “The Labor Market Effects of Immigration Enforcement,” Journal of Labor Economics, vol 41, number 4.

This work is summarized in an accessible fashion by Chloe N. East in “[The Labor Market Impact of Deportations](#),” The Hamilton Project, Sept. 18, 2024. The study finds that for every 500,000 people deported, 44,000 U.S.-born people lose their jobs. We estimate down slightly to about 40,000 based on the slightly lower number of undocumented workers in New York State, 470,000, and round from 41,360 to 40,000. [Check that 500,000 to 44,000 isn’t already rounded]

¹¹ Lisiecki, Matthew. “High-Growth Occupations Reliant on Undocumented Immigrant Workers in New York State,” Center for Migration Studies, July 15, 2024. <https://cmsny.org/high-growth-occupations-reliant-undocumented-immigrant-workers-nys/>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid. “Painters” here includes both painters and paperhangers.

¹⁴ Kallick, David Dyssegaard. “[Immigrants in Buffalo: Plenty of Room for Growth](#),” Immigration Research Initiative, September 10, 2024.

¹⁵ Kallick, David Dyssegaard. “[New York Needs and Upstate Strategy for Immigrant Inclusion](#),” Immigration Research Initiative, 2022.

¹⁶ Gutiérrez-Li, Alejandro. “Feeding America: How Immigrants Sustain US Agriculture,” Baker Institute for Public Policy, July 19, 2024. <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/research/feeding-america-how-immigrants-sustain-us-agriculture>



I would like to extend my deep thanks to the Committee on Immigration and the Committee on Small Business for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Rachel Jordan, and I am the Managing Attorney for Partnerships and Advocacy at Safe Passage Project, a non-profit legal services organization that provides free representation to immigrant children and youth facing deportation. We currently serve over 1,600 children and youth who live in the five boroughs of New York City and on Long Island. Safe Passage Project works closely with partner organizations through the ICARE Coalition, with the goal of providing high quality legal representation to as many unaccompanied children and youth as possible.

I write today to offer some background on how one of the current federal administration’s policy changes has stripped employment authorization from thousands of young immigrant New Yorkers seeking humanitarian relief in the form of Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS).

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status is a pathway to lawful permanent residence for young people under 21 who have been subjected to parental abandonment, abuse or neglect, and whom a state court has determined cannot safely return to their home country. Individuals who have been granted SIJS by the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS) are in a state of legal limbo – they must wait several years until they have a “visa” available to them to enable them to apply for a green card, at which point they can also apply for a work permit. The number of visas made available to SIJS beneficiaries each year is capped at a relatively low number, which has caused the backlog of available visas to grow considerably over the last decade. During this long wait, young people remain in legal and economic limbo. Recognizing the problems created by this lengthening backlog, in 2022 the federal government began a SIJS deferred action program. This program permitted SIJS beneficiaries to be granted “deferred action” while stuck in the visa backlog. Deferred action is a temporary protection from deportation that also allows a young



person to receive employment authorization and a Social Security Number during the years they are forced to wait for their green cards.

In the roughly three years that this program remained in place, our SIJS clients benefited from it enormously, as did the people of New York City. Thousands of SIJS beneficiaries in NYC were able to obtain employment authorization, and they found employment across all five boroughs. Our clients worked for bodegas, flower shops, restaurants, toy stores, theater groups, roofing companies, home health aide services, landscaping businesses, hardware stores, churches and synagogues. For many of these clients, their employment authorization obtained through SIJS deferred action enabled them to pay local, state, and federal taxes for the first time, and through their labor and their income they contributed substantially to the economy and vibrancy of our City and our State. At the same time, they were able to support themselves financially and contribute to the livelihoods of their families, including providing financial support for younger siblings and, in some cases, their own young children.

In April 2025, USCIS quietly terminated the program that provided deferred action and corresponding access to employment authorization for Special Immigrant Juveniles. Last summer, Safe Passage Project supported plaintiffs suing USCIS to restore access to deferred action for SIJS beneficiaries, and in November 2025, a federal court in New York ordered the federal government to reinstate the policy. Despite the court's direction, the federal government has only granted deferred action to a handful of SIJS beneficiaries following the order. On April 10, 2026 in a move most likely intended to insulate the termination from further court challenges, USCIS issued a new policy formally terminating SIJS deferred action and accompanying access to employment authorization.

The federal government's changes to the SIJS deferred action program have left this already highly vulnerable population even more at risk of financial instability, food insecurity, and homelessness, while causing large numbers of New York-based small businesses to lose



hard-working and dedicated employees. While this administration’s cruel policies have had a nationwide impact, the local impact of this particular policy has been especially devastating, as New York has the highest concentration of SIJS petitioners and SIJS beneficiaries in the country.

At Safe Passage Project, most of our clients with approved SIJS who are stuck in the visa backlog now have no access to work permits or Social Security Numbers. Some clients who were previously lawfully employed have been let go by their employers. Many of our clients were already living in shelters and coping with regular food insecurity; we fear that those numbers will grow, as more clients lose their sources of income. We also fear that our young clients will become more susceptible to exploitation and labor trafficking, as they seek any available means to support themselves and their families in lieu of the lawful employment that has been denied them.

Safe Passage Project believes that immigrants are a foundational part of New York City’s history, economy, and unique identity. Immigrants ARE New York City, and immigrant children and youth are our City’s future. Our attorneys will continue to fight tooth and nail for the rights of our young clients in the face of the relentlessly dehumanizing policies of the federal government. And our social workers will continue to devote themselves to connecting our young clients with shelter and food now that so many of them have lost access to the financial stability they were able to achieve with work authorization. We ask for the Council’s continued support in financing our work, so that we can continue to ensure that young immigrants have the opportunity to thrive in the City they call home.

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Testimony to the New York City Council City Council Committee on Immigration and Small Business

May 6, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Sally Weathers and I'm the Lead Organizer of the Street Vendor Project. I would like to thank Chair Encarnacion and Chair Thomas-Henry and the Committee members for the opportunity to testify today.

As the only organization that exclusively serves street vendors in New York City, SVP is the centralized hub for this underserved population, providing critical small business and legal services to vendors since 2001.

We respectfully request support from New York City Council to sustain and expand our essential **Know Your Rights Education for Immigrant Street Vendors (2241659)**.

A growing workforce of more than 23,000 entrepreneurs makes a living from the streets and sidewalks of New York City. According to a 2024 report by Immigration Research Initiative in collaboration with SVP, 96% of street vendors are immigrants, 81% vend as their main source of income, and 65% live in a household with one or more children.

Vendors are at increased risk in the current political environment because they work in public spaces, many lack access to licenses and permits, and are in urgent need of outreach and advocacy to make sure they know their rights – but in languages they know, and from people they trust. This dramatically increases the need for SVP's services as the organization provides accessible, multilingual outreach and education to vendors. From July 1, 2025, to March 1, 2026 just from support from this council initiative alone, SVP has engaged 392 individual vendors, provided KYR trainings attended by 161 immigrant vendors, and trained 184 volunteers to support with outreach. We are a small team, only 6 outreach staff, but collectively we speak 7 languages on staff to ensure we meet street vendor needs.

With the Council's support, we have created vendor-specific immigration Know Your Rights materials in 7 languages (Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Bangla, Wolof, French, and English). Our multilingual team distributes these resources to immigrant vendors through weekly street outreach to vendor carts and trucks, commissary garages, to places where vendors work directly -

- to equip vendors with the tools they need to protect themselves while vending in public space should they have an interaction with with immigration enforcement, while also connecting them to with legal resources and emergency family planning kits. We distribute whistles so vendors can warn each other when ICE is in the area, and we add vendors to our language-based text chats, so they can share and receive on-the-ground updates.

Our outreach model prioritizes one-on-one conversations with vendors, empowering vendors to become community ambassadors who share knowledge with their customers as they have deep connections in their neighborhoods. Additionally, because we are membership based, when we engage with vendors, we're engaging them in our community, collecting emergency contact information should a situation arise.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for considering our applications.

Sally Weathers

Lead Organizer

Street Vendor Project

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON
IMMIGRATION AND COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS**

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF FEDERAL IMMIGRATION POLICY CHANGES

Presented on May 6, 2026

Good afternoon. My name is Hasan Shafiqullah, and I am the Immigration Supervising Attorney in the Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society (LAS), and a former Attorney-in-Charge of the LAS Immigration Law Unit. Thank you to the New York City Council's Committee on Immigration and Committee on Small Business for this opportunity to testify today regarding the economic impacts of federal immigration policy changes.

A. BACKGROUND

LAS is built on one simple but powerful belief: that no New Yorker should be denied the right to equal justice. We want to remain a beacon of hope for New Yorkers who feel neglected, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or how they identify. From our start nearly 150 years ago, our growth has mirrored that of the city we serve. Today, we are proud to be one of the largest and most influential social justice law firms in New York City and nation-wide. Our staff deliver justice in every borough.

In the past year, LAS served over 480,000 individuals and their families who benefitted from our holistic direct services through our Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights Practices. Our work across these Practices together provides us with unique insights into the challenges facing marginalized communities in New York City and an unparalleled ability to effect change on a greater scale.

For almost 40 years, LAS has maintained a citywide Immigration Law Unit (ILU) within the Civil Practice. ILU, now comprised of nearly 100 staff, is a recognized leader in the delivery of free, comprehensive, and high caliber immigration legal services to low-income immigrants in New York City and surrounding counties. Staff represent immigrants before U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services (USCIS), in Immigration Court removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), on appeals to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), and in federal court on habeas corpus petitions and petitions for review.

As federal legal policy changes have begun to impact our clients and community locally, The Legal Aid Society remains a vital check on the devastating effects of poverty and inequality. Immigrants face a new threat from Washington now, too, as the administration implements its promise of mass deportations, unleashing over 692 Executive Orders or policy changes related to immigration since January 20, 2025.¹ Our Immigration Law Unit (ILU) has been responding to the ever-changing immigration legal landscape by developing new *Know Your Rights* resources, training for advocates, and limited-scope legal clinics to help with the most emergent needs, acting in real time to ensure New Yorkers have access to critical information. Our [Get Help Hub](#) centralizes more than 100 *Know Your Rights* resources into one easy-to-navigate digital platform on our public website (visit - legalaidnyc.org/get-help/).

Over the most recent fiscal year, ILU assisted in nearly 8,600 individual legal matters benefiting over 22,000 New Yorkers citywide. In addition to providing direct legal services, ILU staff provide regular training to immigrant-serving advocates from community-based organizations, State and local agencies, and judicial and legislative staff. Partnerships with other non-profit organizations and coordination of a successful pro bono program with 53 participating law firms enable the ILU to maximize resources to meet the increasing demand for representation.

B. ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF FEDERAL POLICY CHANGES

Immigrants are deeply woven into the fabric of New York City and serve as a bellwether for its broader economic stability. More than three million immigrant New Yorkers make up 37% of this city's population and comprise nearly half of all business owners across all five boroughs. Immigrant New Yorkers play an outsized role in the sectors that keep this city functioning every day, including healthcare, constructions, restaurants, and small business commerce. These industries are foundational to the housing we build, the children and seniors we care for, and the

¹ These immigration changes are summarized in the New York City Bar Association's report *The Trump Administration's 2025-26 Changes to Immigration Law (Updated 1/26/26)*, <https://www.nycbar.org/reports/the-trump-administrations-early-2025-changes-to-immigration-law/>, of which I am the principal drafter.

vitality of local commercial corridors. The stability and economic participation of immigrant communities closely track New York City's overall economic performance: when immigrants are able to work, build businesses, and support their families, the city's workforce, tax base, and neighborhood economies remain strong.

These vital economic contributions are directly threatened by immigration policy changes advanced by this federal administration. The immigration policies detailed below, together with aggressive immigration enforcement and mass deportation strategies, have shrunk and will continue to shrink the city's labor force, disrupt essential industries, and reduce tax revenue across New York City. They will also produce destabilizing rippling effects on New York City families and communities, especially when the household breadwinner loses their ability to support their family, triggering economic insecurity that reverberates far beyond that individual or their household.

The remainder of this testimony will focus on a handful of recent immigration policies, each of which illustrates the series economic consequences at stake for New Yorkers and New York City.

1. Employment Authorization Documents

Most noncitizens other than lawful permanent residents require an Employment Authorization Document (EAD, or work permit) in order to work lawfully within the U.S. The Trump Administration has moved aggressively to limit or eliminate EAD eligibility for a variety of noncitizens.

One of the most far-reaching actions the Administration has taken is to terminate the designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for one country after another:

- Venezuela 2023 on February 5, 2025, effective April 7, 2025;²

² *Termination of the October 3, 2023 Designation of Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 9040, February 3, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/02/05/2025-02294/termination-of-the-october-3-2023-designation-of-venezuela-for-temporary-protected-status>.

- Venezuela 2021 on September 8, 2025, effective November 7, 2025;³
- Haiti on July 1, 2025, effective September 2, 2025⁴ and November 28, 2025, effective February 3, 2026;⁵
- Afghanistan on May 13, 2025, effective July 14, 2025;⁶
- Cameroon on June 4, 2025, effective August 4, 2025;⁷
- Nepal on June 6, 2025, effective August 5, 2025;⁸
- Honduras on July 8, 2025, effective September 8, 2025;⁹
- Nicaragua on July 8, 2025, effective September 8, 2025;¹⁰
- Syria on September 22, 2025, effective November 21, 2025;¹¹
- South Sudan on November 6, 2025, effective January 5, 2026;¹²
- Burma/Myanmar on November 25, 2025, effective January 26, 2026;¹³

³ *Termination of the 2021 Designation of Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 43225, September 8, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/09/08/2025-17087/termination-of-the-2021-designation-of-venezuela-for-temporary-protected-status>.

⁴ *Termination of the Designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR. 28760, July 1, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/01/2025-12224/termination-of-the-designation-of-haiti-for-temporary-protected-status>.

⁵ *Termination of the Designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 54733, November 28, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/28/2025-21379/termination-of-the-designation-of-haiti-for-temporary-protected-status>.

⁶ *Termination of the Designation of Afghanistan for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 20309, May 13, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/05/13/2025-08201/termination-of-the-designation-of-afghanistan-for-temporary-protected-status>.

⁷ *Termination of the Designation of Cameroon for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 23697, June 4, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/06/04/2025-10236/termination-of-the-designation-of-cameroon-for-temporary-protected-status>

⁸ *Termination of the Designation of Nepal for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 24151, June 6, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/06/06/2025-10363/termination-of-the-designation-of-nepal-for-temporary-protected-status>

⁹ *Termination of the Designation of Honduras for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 30089, July 8, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/08/2025-12621/termination-of-the-designation-of-honduras-for-temporary-protected-status>

¹⁰ *Termination of the Designation of Nicaragua for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 Fed. Reg. 30086, July 8, 2025,, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/08/2025-12688/termination-of-the-designation-of-nicaragua-for-temporary-protected-status>

¹¹ *Termination of the Designation of Syria for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 45398, September 22, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/09/22/2025-18322/termination-of-the-designation-of-syria-for-temporary-protected-status>

¹² *Termination of the Designation of South Sudan for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 50484, November 6, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/06/2025-19800/termination-of-the-designation-of-south-sudan-for-temporary-protected-status>.

¹³ *Termination of the Designation of Burma/Myanmar for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 53378, November 25, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/25/2025-21069/termination-of-the-designation-of-burma-myanmar-for-temporary-protected-status>.

- Ethiopia on December 15, 2025, effective February 13, 2026;¹⁴
- Somalia on January 14, 2026, effective March 17, 2026;¹⁵ and
- Yemen on March 3, 2026, effective May 4, 2026.¹⁶

Together, these TPS designations had protected hundreds of thousands of noncitizens, who have now lost employment authorization, unless their terminations have been enjoined through litigation.¹⁷

On February 14, 2025, USCIS issued a memorandum titled “Administrative Hold on All USCIS Benefit Requests filed by Parolees Under the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) Process, Processes for Haitians, Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV) Process, or Family Reunification Parole (FRP) Process,” authorizing an immediate hold on all pending immigration benefit requests filed by noncitizens who are or were paroled into the U.S. under U4U, CHNV, or FRP processing, pending the completion of additional vetting to identify any fraud, public safety, or national security concerns.¹⁸

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) then formally terminated the CHNV parole process on March 25, 2025.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Termination of the Designation of Ethiopia for Temporary Protected Status*, 90 FR 58028, December 15, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/12/15/2025-22746/termination-of-the-designation-of-ethiopia-for-temporary-protected-status>.

¹⁵ *Termination of the Designation of Somalia for Temporary Protected Status*, 91 FR 1547, January 14, 2026, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/14/2026-00596/termination-of-the-designation-of-somalia-for-temporary-protected-status>.

¹⁶ *Termination of the Designation of Yemen for Temporary Protected Status*, 91 FR 10402, March 3, 2026, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/03/03/2026-04179/termination-of-the-designation-of-yemen-for-temporary-protected-status>.

¹⁷ For a summary of the various lawsuits challenging TPS terminations, see New York City Bar Association’s report *The Trump Administration’s 2025-26 Changes to Immigration Law (Updated 1/26/26)*, supra note 1.

¹⁸ USCIS memorandum, *Administrative Hold on All USCIS Benefit Requests filed by Parolees Under the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) Process, Processes for Haitians, Cubans, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV) Process, or Family Reunification Parole (FRP) Process*, February 14, 2025, <https://ukrainetaskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/USCIS-Parolee-Benefits-Pause-Memo-February-14-2025.pdf>.

¹⁹ *Termination of Parole Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans*, 90 FR 13611, March 25, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/25/2025-05128/termination-of-parole-processes-for-cubans-haitians-nicaraguans-and-venezuelans>.

On December 15, 2025, DHS terminated the Family Reunification Process (FRP) for Colombians, Cubans, Ecuadorians, Guatemalans, Haitians, Hondurans, and Salvadorans.²⁰

These programs together also covered hundreds of thousands of noncitizens.

For individuals who do have EADs, the Administration has been moving to limit the validity periods of the work permits.

On December 4, 2025, USCIS decreased maximum validity period from five years to 18 months for initial and renewal Form I-766, Employment Authorization Documents, (EADs) for the following categories:

- Refugees (A03);
- Asylees (A05);
- Recipients of withholding of removal (A10);
- Applicants for asylum or withholding of removal (C08);
- Applicants for adjustment of status under INA 245 (C09); and
- Applicants for suspension of deportation, cancellation of removal, or relief under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (C10).²¹

This validity period change applies to any application for employment authorization pending or filed on or after December 5, 2025, and does not affect any EADs for the above categories already issued with a five-year validity period.

H.R.1, Pub. L. 119-21, changed how long initial and renewal parole and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) EADs are valid, and these changes were implemented in a Federal Register

²⁰ *Termination of Family Reunification Parole Processes for Colombians, Cubans, Ecuadorians, Guatemalans, Haitians, Hondurans, and Salvadorans*, 90 FR 58032, December 15, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/12/15/2025-22744/termination-of-family-reunification-parole-processes-for-colombians-cubans-ecuadorians-guatemalans>.

²¹ USCIS Policy Alert PA-2025-27, *Updating Certain Employment Authorization Document Validity Periods*, December 4, 2025, <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/policy-manual-updates/20251204-EmploymentAuthorizationValidity.pdf>.

notice.²² Parole and TPS EADs are now valid for the shorter of one year or the end date of authorized parole period or duration of TPS. Affected EAD categories include:

- Paroled as refugees (A04);
- Granted TPS (A12);
- Granted parole (C11);
- Pending TPS application (C19); and
- Spouse of entrepreneur parole (C34).²³

These parole and TPS changes apply to any application for employment authorization pending or filed on or after July 22, 2025.

On October 30, 2025, the Administration published a regulation promulgating 8 CFR 274a.13(e), which eliminated the automatic 540-day extension of certain work permits upon the filing of an application for renewal.²⁴ Given delays in the adjudication of work permit renewals, more people will lose employment authorization while they wait for their work permits to be renewed. Given employer sanctions for employing individuals without employment authorization, this means more people will needlessly lose their jobs.

2. Civil Immigration Fines

The Trump Administration has been assessing punishing civil immigration fines against noncitizens, consistent with President Trump's Proclamation *Establishing Project Homecoming*,²⁵ which weaponizes civil monetary penalties:

Sec. 3. Penalties for Aliens Who Fail to Depart. (a) The Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the heads of other relevant agencies, shall conduct a nationwide communications campaign to notify illegal aliens of the availability of cost-free travel to other countries; the exit bonus; and the sweeping consequences for those who choose to remain illegally present, including removal,

²² USCIS Immigration Fees Required by HR-1 Reconciliation Bill, 90 FR 34511, July 22, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/22/2025-13738/uscis-immigration-fees-required-by-hr-1-reconciliation-bill>.

²³ USCIS Policy Alert PA-2025-27, supra note ____.

²⁴ Removal of the Automatic Extension of Employment Authorization Documents, 90 FR 48799, October 30, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/10/30/2025-19702/removal-of-the-automatic-extension-of-employment-authorization-documents>.

²⁵ Presidential Proclamation, *Establishing Project Homecoming*, May 9, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/establishing-project-homecoming/>.

prosecution, incarceration, and **finances as consistent with applicable law for immigration-related crimes; the garnishment of wages; and the confiscation of savings and personal property, including homes and vehicles.**

(Emphasis added.)

Civil monetary penalties can be assessed against individuals under any one of four statutory provisions:

- INA § 240B(d), voluntary failure to depart after a voluntary departure order, with a fine of between \$1,000 and \$5,000, typically \$3,000;
- INA § 274D(a)(1), willful failure to depart after a final order of removal, with a fine of \$998/day for up to five years, with a maximum of \$1.82 million;
- INA § 275(b), entry or attempted entry at a time or place other than as designated by immigration officers, with a fine of \$250; and
- 8 U.S.C. § 1815, unauthorized entry between ports of entry, with a fine of \$5,130.

These fines can pose a significant financial hardship on our low-income clients. This is particularly true of the INA § 274D fine of \$1.82 million.

Once DHS deems the debt final and collectible, the administration has a few different options to seek payment through the Cross-Servicing program, which is for non-tax debts. These options include:

- sending demand letters,
- calling debtors,
- negotiating payment agreements,
- referring debts to the Department of Justice for litigation,
- reporting debts to credit bureaus,
- administratively garnishing wages,
- referring debts to private collection agencies,
- offsetting federal and state payments through the Treasury Offset Program, and
- assisting with the resolution of disputes about the amount or existence of the debt.

The Department of Treasury's Collections Receivable Service may send the debt to private debt collectors, which will send private collection notices demanding payment of the debt with additional "administrative fees" which can be extremely high.

Under 31 U.S.C. § 3720D and 31 C.F.R. § 285.1, the federal government may garnish the individual's wages through an administrative wage garnishment, without the need to first obtain a judgment in a federal collections suit. DOJ may also file federal collections suits, with the goal of obtaining a civil judgment that would allow them to garnish wages and/or seize property. To date, we are aware of 45 such suits nationally related to CMPs.

Under the Treasury Offset Program (TOP), the federal government can seize federal funds, typically a federal tax refund, to offset a federal debt, including CMPs. We are aware of individuals who never received a fine notice and first learned of the fine when their federal tax refund was seized through the TOP.

LAS, together with Public Justice, NYU Immigrant Rights Clinic, Free Migration Project, and Center for Constitutional Rights, developed practice advisories and model opposition briefs, which we have made available through the website www.noimmigrationfines.org. Through that website, we also field multiple requests for technical assistance each day, from attorneys, advocates, and affected individuals from around the country.

Also, LAS, together with Public Justice, NYU Immigrant Rights Clinic, Free Migration Project, RAICES, and Covington & Burling LLP, filed *Maria L. v. Noem*, 1:25-cv-13471 (D.Mass.), a class action lawsuit challenging civil immigration fines under INA §§ 240B and 274D. The litigation is ongoing.

3. H1B Fees

Effective September 21, 2025, based on a Presidential Proclamation, H-1B nonimmigrant visas for skilled workers abroad incur an additional fee of \$100,000, unless DHS determines that the visa is for a specialty occupation worker whose hiring is in the national interest and does not pose a threat to the security or welfare of the U.S.²⁶

²⁶ Presidential Proclamation, *Restriction on Entry of Certain Nonimmigrant Workers*, September 19, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/09/restriction-on-entry-of-certain-nonimmigrant-workers/>.

The proclamation is wrong about the H-1B program. Employers who comply with the wage and working condition requirements for hiring workers in H-1B status could not depress the wages of, or foreclose job opportunities for, similarly-situated U.S. workers. If an employer has abused the H-1B program, then the administration should be using enforcement tools already available. Instead, the administration is penalizing employers who correctly utilize the H-1B program to hire noncitizens with the skill sets they need.

A large, very profitable employer may be able to absorb a \$100,000 fee with little impact to its bottom line. But the same is not true with start-ups, small businesses, or employers in sectors such as hospitals or public school systems. If a start-up has identified a noncitizen with the latest knowledge of AI, that start-up may be delayed or precluded from pursuing new product development because it cannot afford the \$100,000 fee. Or a public school may have to increase class size rather than expand the number of classes in a grade because it cannot afford a \$100,000 fee for an H-1B worker.

4. OBBBA Fees

H.R.1, the One Big Beautiful *[sic]* Bill Act (OBBBA),²⁷ enacted on July 4, 2025, creates a new fee regime for matters before United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). Asylum applications, which have never had a filing fee, now have a \$100 fee which must be filed with the initial filing and annually on the anniversary of the filing. Failure to pay the annual fee will result in the dismissal of the application. Initial work permits for asylum seekers have always been free, but are now \$550, and are valid for only one year at a time. These asylum-based work permits must be renewed each year. The renewal fee is \$470 if filed online or \$520 if filed on paper. The OBBBA added a \$275 additional fee, so the online fee is \$745 and the paper fee is \$795. We note that asylum seekers are some of the most vulnerable and low-income of noncitizens. These asylum application and asylum work permit fees are particularly outrageous.

²⁷ Pub. L. No. 119-21, 139 Stat. 121 (2025).

For Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, for young people who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by one or both parents, there has never been a filing fee. Under the OBBBA, there is now a fee of \$250.

For waivers of grounds of inadmissibility, the OBBBA adds a \$1,050 fee on top of the base fee, which is already high.

There are myriad other exorbitant fees, summarized in a helpful chart from the National Immigration Project: <https://nipnl.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/Final-Fee-Increases-HR1.pdf>.

5. Small Business Association Loan Forms

On March 31, 2025, the Small Business Administration (SBA) proposed revisions to SBA Form 1919, Borrow Information Form, which small businesses may use to apply for a government loan under § 7(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. § 636(a)(1)(B)).²⁸ The SBA proposes revising the “Applicant Ownership (Mandatory) and Demographic Information” section of SBA Form 1919, requiring disclosure of the applicant’s and any beneficial owners’ citizenship status and the alien registration numbers of applicants or beneficiaries who are lawful permanent residents.²⁹ The SBA also proposes adding a certification that “100% of the Beneficial Ownership in the Applicant and Operating Company is held by citizens of the United States, U.S. Nationals, or individuals who are Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs).”³⁰

The immigration-based restriction of federal loans to small business owners or operators will prejudice business owners and operators who may have immigration statuses other than U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or LPR. These statuses include, without limitation, refugees, asylees, U nonimmigrants, T nonimmigrants, individuals granted deferred action or Temporary Protected Status. This is particularly true in New York, where immigrants are “more than twice as likely as

²⁸ *Data Collection Available for Public Comments*, 90 FR 14315, March 31, 2025, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/03/31/2025-05441/data-collection-available-for-public-comments>.

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

native-born residents to start their own business, and they comprise almost half of the City’s more than 220,000 small businesses.”³¹

6. ICE Warrantless Arrests and Suspicionless Stops

Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) policy and practice of conducting suspicionless stops of New Yorkers based solely on their perceived race and ethnicity and warrantless immigration arrests without probable cause.

Since January 2025, thousands of Black and Brown New Yorkers – the vast majority of whom are Latino or Hispanic – have been unlawfully stopped and detained by agents from DHS’s component agencies, U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), in an effort to meet the Trump Administration’s sky-high immigration arrest quotas. ICE and CBP agents regularly violate laws that require reasonable suspicion of an immigration violation before agents can detain someone and routinely ignore constitutional and statutory limits on their arrest authority. Federal law also requires agents to have probable cause of both an immigration violation and a likelihood of escape before making a warrantless arrest.

For over a year, ICE has been targeting low-income and immigrant communities instead of the wealthier and whiter areas of New York City. ICE established checkpoints in Queens neighborhoods such as Corona, Jackson Heights, and Flushing, where agents hid in unmarked cars near commercial thoroughfares and at busy intersections, jumping out to stop and arrest Latinos as they walked by while permitting non-Latinos to pass undisturbed.³² Now, agents, generally wearing face coverings, eschew fixed checkpoints and instead prowl these neighborhoods in unmarked cars and jump out to surround unsuspecting New Yorkers—overwhelmingly Latinos—as they walk down the street, particularly during commuting hours.³³ In Staten Island’s Port Richmond neighborhood, where nearly half of the population is Latino, ICE has targeted Latino residents returning home from work and has conducted enforcement outside a church’s food pantry,

³¹ NYC Department of Small Business Services. *Unlocking Potential: Empowering New York City’s Immigrant Entrepreneurs*. 2017. Available at: https://www.nyc.gov/assets/sbs/downloads/pdf/about/reports/ibi_report.pdf.

³² Gwynne Hogan, *Sidewalk Arrests Seize New Yorkers in ICE’s Latest Surge*, The City (Nov. 26, 2025), <https://perma.cc/5TRA-XUDQ>.

³³ E.g., *Weekend of ICE Detentions Shakes Sunset Park*, The Sunset Post, <https://perma.cc/X9MKKTVL> (last visited Apr. 8, 2026).

which has led many to forgo looking for work or seeking assistance.³⁴

ICE has also targeted other racial and ethnic groups in specific neighborhoods, such as West Africans on Canal Street in lower Manhattan.³⁵ According to one witness: “These men, they are just grabbing people, putting them in cuffs . . . Nobody’s identifying themselves, explaining. There’s no due process going on. It’s just straight to the back of a van if you’re African on Canal.”³⁶ ICE agents reportedly surrounded, pushed to the ground, and handcuffed an individual from Senegal, and only afterwards asked if he was legally present in the country.³⁷ After he explained that he was from Senegal and had lived in the United States for 20 years and presented identification, ICE checked his status and let him go.³⁸ According to U.S. Congressman Dan Goldman, ICE arrested four U.S. citizens during its unlawful sweep before finally releasing them without charges.³⁹ The Congressman characterized ICE’s actions as “lawless terror.”⁴⁰ When questioned at a habeas hearing for one West African immigrant delivery worker arrested in the vicinity of Canal Street during the raid, the Government’s attorney was unable to justify the arrest; despite repeated requests from the court, the attorney could not explain why the arrest was predicated on anything more than mere “happenstance.”⁴¹ ICE’s pervasive presence has upended vibrant communities throughout the State and created an atmosphere of fear. Neighborhoods have been paralyzed, with restaurants sitting empty and sidewalks cleared of street vendors.⁴² Barbershops, delis, and laundromats across the State struggle to stay open. Churches have reported fewer congregants and people receiving social services out of fear of encountering ICE when they leave their homes.⁴³ Students have stayed home from school after ICE conducted raids. People

³⁴ Chad Small, *In Staten Island’s ‘Little Mexico,’ ICE Presence Rattles a Community*, Documented (Mar. 23, 2026), <https://perma.cc/XZW4-2R5C>; Jillian Delaney, *ICE Presence Near Staten Island Food Pantries: What Community Leaders Are Doing*, SI Live (Dec. 2, 2025), <https://perma.cc/E38E-66CT>.

³⁵ E.g., Arya Sundaram, *Judges Free Canal Street Vendors Arrested by ICE, Question Legality of Raids*, Gothamist (Feb. 19, 2026), <https://perma.cc/CEJ8-JYTL>.

³⁶ Luis Ferre-Sadurni, *Federal Agents Stage Raid on Canal Street in New York City, Arresting 9*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 21, 2025), <https://perma.cc/NN6F-RT3Q>.

³⁷ See *id.*

³⁸ See *id.*

³⁹ Luke Barr & Megan Forrester, *4 US Citizens Arrested During ICE Crackdown on NYC’s Canal Street, Congressman Says*, ABC News (Oct. 22, 2025), <https://perma.cc/5K2T-R3PN>.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Ndoye v. Joyce*, 2026 WL 306387, at *8 (S.D.N.Y. Feb. 5, 2026); Arya Sundaram, *Judges Free Canal Street Vendors Arrested by ICE, Question Legality of Raids*, Gothamist (Feb. 19, 2026), <https://perma.cc/CEJ8-JYTL>.

⁴² Luis Ferre-Sadurni, *An Immigrant Neighborhood Where Trump Made Inroads Now Fears ICE Raids*, N.Y. Times (Mar. 2, 2025), <https://perma.cc/HXL8-3EP7>.

⁴³ E.g., CBS New York, *ICE Activity across Long Island Impacting Local Businesses, Agencies That Help Immigrants* (YouTube, Jun. 11, 2025), <https://perma.cc/2YLV-L6SQ>.

staying home and otherwise curtailing their activities include U.S. citizens and those with lawful immigration status.

An April 2026 report by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that areas in the U.S. that experienced particularly large increases in the number of immigration enforcement arrests also experienced a decrease in work among likely undocumented immigrants who remain in the U.S., compared to areas with smaller increases in arrests. Moreover, it found no evidence of positive effects of the labor market outcomes of U.S.-born workers in immigrant-heavy industries.⁴⁴ If anything these U.S.-born workers are harmed as a result, likely due to complementarities in production between the different jobs undocumented immigrants and U.S.-born workers typically take.⁴⁵

On April 8, 2026, LAS, together with the New York Civil Liberties Union, Make the Road New York, and Covington & Burling LLP, filed a class action lawsuit, *Benitez v. DHS*, 2:26-cv-02082 (E.D.N.Y.), seeking to end ICE and CBP's egregious and illegal tactics of discriminatory surveillance, detention, and family separation.

C. CONCLUSION

The federal administration's recent immigration policy changes pose a profound threat to the economic stability and social fabric of New York City. By restricting work authorizations, imposing crushing civil fines, enacting punitive fee regimes, and deploying unconstitutional, discriminatory enforcement tactics, these policies actively destabilize immigrant communities and undermine essential industries.

Immigrants make up a significant portion of New York City's population and business ecosystem, and their participation is directly tied to the City's overall prosperity and workforce strength. When policies prevent immigrants from working, obtaining vital small business loans, or moving freely without fear of warrantless arrests, the result is a diminished labor pool, reduced tax

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Cox and Chloe N. East, *Labor Market Impacts of ICE Activity in Trump 2.0*, National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2026, https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w35129/w35129.pdf?utm_campaign=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&%3Butm_medium=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&%3Butm_source=PANTHEON_STRIPPED

⁴⁵ *Id.*

revenue, and severe harm to local commerce.

The Legal Aid Society urges the New York City Council to recognize the severe economic and human toll of these federal policies and to take action to protect the rights, dignity, and economic contributions of all New Yorkers. We must remain committed to equal justice and support the diverse communities that keep our city functioning every day.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hasan Shafiqullah".

Hasan Shafiqullah
Immigration Supervising Attorney, Law Reform Unit
The Legal Aid Society



Asian American Federation

Testimony for the New York City Council

Committee on Immigration and Small Business

RE: Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Policy Changes

May 6, 2026

Thank you, Chair Encarnacion and Chair Thomas-Henry, and members of both Committees, for this opportunity to submit a testimony. My name is Ahyoung Kim, and I serve as the Director of Programs at the Asian American Federation, a citywide leadership organization serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers. We work in partnership with 70 member organizations to raise the influence and well-being of the pan-Asian American community through research, policy advocacy, public awareness, and nonprofit support.

We appreciate the Committees' attention to the intersection of immigration policy and small business conditions. For Asian immigrant communities, immigration policy and small business stability are not separate policy areas; they are part of the same neighborhood stability concern. Enforcement anxiety, misinformation, limited access to trusted legal guidance, and language barriers are affecting not only immigrant families but also the workers, business owners, and commercial corridors that sustain New York City's neighborhood economies.

Asian immigrants make up nearly 30% of New York City's non-citizen population, yet Asian-serving organizations remain severely under-resourced relative to the scale and complexity of community needs. The current enforcement environment has intensified these gaps. Between 2024 and 2025, arrests of Chinese immigrants rose by 1,044%, and arrests of Bangladeshi immigrants increased by 1,000%. These figures are showing up in the daily decisions of workers, families, consumers, and business owners: whether to go to work, seek help, use benefits, or participate in public life.

For Asian immigrant-owned small businesses, the consequences are increasingly visible. Last year, AAF and our partners heard significant concern from immigrant small business owners regarding I-9 audits. In many cases, the issue was not intentional noncompliance, but a

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lack of clear, accessible information about employer obligations. Some industry groups, such as the Korean Cleaners Association, organized seminars to help members understand how to properly complete I-9 forms. Other business owners reached out to AAF for guidance, and we connected them to legal advice and trusted resources.

While concern around I-9 audits has moderated compared to last year, the underlying vulnerability remains. Immigrant small businesses continue to lack proactive, in-language support to understand compliance requirements before confusion turns into fear, and fear turns into operational disruption. The negative impact on the workforce is equally serious. Business owners report long-time skilled workers left the workforce or self-deported last year. For small businesses operating with limited administrative and financial capacity, replacing experienced workers and training new staff is a major operational burden. Even among workers who remain, concerns about ICE raids, checkpoints, and enforcement activity continue to affect attendance, reliability, and willingness to work in certain locations or at certain hours.

The problem is compounded by a lack of reliable information. Business owners have expressed the need for accurate, real-time information on immigration enforcement activity. In East Queens, for example, some owners have shared anxiety over whether they are hearing less about ICE activity because there is actually less activity, or simply because public attention has shifted to other issues. In an environment shaped by rumor, fear, and uneven information, uncertainty itself becomes a destabilizing force. These dynamics extend beyond individual businesses and affect entire commercial corridors. Across immigrant neighborhoods, declining foot traffic is weakening daily revenue. When families are afraid to leave home, access public benefits, visit food pantries, or seek services because they are worried about immigration consequences, local businesses experience the impact through empty sidewalks, reduced spending, and weakened corridor vitality.

Our member organizations are seeing this broader withdrawal from public life. CBOs on the ground have reported that fear is driving community members away from food pantries,

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SNAP benefits, and other critical services. Families with mixed immigration status are dropping out of public benefits programs due to fear and misinformation, while also struggling to understand changing work requirements. For instance, the Council of Peoples Organization (COPO) reported that its food pantry line dropped by 30% because people were afraid to come outside. Community members also reported concern that accessing benefits could negatively affect their immigration cases.

This is not only a human services concern. It is also an economic stability concern. When immigrant families withdraw from public life, the impact is felt by neighborhood businesses that rely on local customers, workers, and community activity. These pressures are occurring at the same time that many immigrant-owned microbusinesses are facing broader financial strain. Renaissance Economic Development Corporation has shared that delinquency rates for small business loans have risen back to levels seen during the COVID pandemic period. Those who are seeking new loans are not looking to expand their operations but are trying to fill a gap in their cash flow, making payroll or paying late rent. That warning sign should be taken seriously. Many businesses remain open, but they are operating with limited reserves, reduced revenue, and very little room to absorb additional shocks. With the new federal policy that bars CDFIs from serving non-citizens, immigrant small businesses will face even greater challenges in the coming days.

What our communities are experiencing is not simply fear. It is the predictable result of limited language access, fragmented legal services, lack of reliable information, and chronic underinvestment in Asian-serving community infrastructure. The appropriate City response is not simply more information; it is investment in the trusted, multilingual community infrastructure that can translate information into action, reassurance, and protection.

That infrastructure already exists through the Rapid Immigrant Support and Empowerment (RISE) network. RISE is New York City's first coordinated immigration legal services network specifically designed for Asian New Yorkers during a period of intensified enforcement and heightened fear. Through Asian-led and Asian-serving community-based

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organizations, RISE provides immigration legal referrals, Know Your Rights education, case management, and rapid response coordination. Services are delivered in over 12 Asian languages, using trusted messengers who can reach communities that often face barriers to mainstream providers.

RISE has already demonstrated what happens when the City invests in trusted Asian-led infrastructure. In the first three quarters of FY26, 10 of 14 City RISE partners served 2,214 clients, putting the network on pace to exceed its annual target of 2,393 clients before year-end. Partners are providing support with citizenship applications, green card applications, green card extensions, immigration hearing accompaniment, and other urgent immigration-related needs, while also identifying significant language access needs across these service areas.

AAF's survey of RISE network members found that, with additional funding, members are prepared to expand legal assistance and representation, case management, community education, and referrals. At the same time, the capacity to take on additional immigration law-related cases from other CBOs remains limited. For these reasons, AAF requests the City Council to fund the RISE Network at \$3.5 million in FY27 by increasing its budget for the AAPI Legal Services Initiative. This is a targeted, practical, and proportionate investment in the infrastructure that Asian immigrant communities need now: trusted legal referrals, accurate in-language information, rapid-response coordination, case management, and community education.

Immigrant small businesses cannot be stabilized through capital access or commercial corridor programming alone. At this moment, small business stability also requires immigration legal infrastructure. Supporting RISE is an investment in Asian immigrant families, workers, entrepreneurs, and neighborhood corridors that help keep New York City's economy strong. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. For any questions, I can be reached at ahyoung.kim@aafederation.org.

Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.
Testimony Before the New York City Council Committee on Immigration and
Jointly with the Committee on Small Business
Council Member Elsie Encarnacion, Chair
Council Member Thomas- Henry, Chair
May 6th, 2026

Thank you Chair Encarnacion, Chair Thomas-Henry, and members of the City Council for the opportunity to testify today. The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community-based organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded since our founding to include five key program areas: Early Childhood Education, School-Age Child Care, Education & Career Services, Senior Services, and Community Services.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 80,000 people per year through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites across Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. To that end, we are grateful to testify about issues that impact the individuals and families we serve, and we are grateful to the Council for their leadership on these issues.

Arrests of immigrants from Asian countries, including China, Bangladesh, Nepal, and India, have increased significantly compared to last year. According to a new report released by Stop AAPI Hate, Asian immigrants in New York have faced a sevenfold increase in arrests by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) since Donald Trump took office last January.¹ In New York State, 24% of unauthorized immigrants are from Asia.² These immigrants will now face a mandatory \$5,000 fee for failure to appear at court hearings. Asians are also the largest group of new green card holders in the last decade and now face high fees of \$1,500 to adjust their green card status and \$1,050 waivers of inadmissibility fees.

The demand for legal services has increased tremendously and we have seen firsthand and on the ground the confusion and fear that changes in immigration protocol and policies have had on the community. In addition, we are hearing overwhelming fears over losing essential public benefits under HR1.

These sharp increases in arrests, rising legal fees, and heightened enforcement pressures are not only humanitarian concerns, they also carry significant economic consequences for New York. Asian immigrants make up a substantial share of the state's undocumented population and are deeply embedded in the labor force, small business ecosystem, and local consumer base. Escalating enforcement actions and financial penalties can push families into economic precarity, reduce workforce participation, and disrupt industries that rely on immigrant labor. At

¹ Khafagy, A. (2026, April 30). *New York ICE arrests surge, target Asian immigrants*. Documented. <https://documentedny.com/2026/04/30/new-york-ice-arrests-surge-target-asian-immigrants/>

² Asian American Federation. (2025). *H.R. 1 info sheet*. <https://www.aafederation.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Asian-American-Federation-H.R.-1-Info-Sheet.pdf>

the same time, the surge in demand for legal services reflects a broader reallocation of resources, as families divert income toward legal defense rather than local spending, while community organizations strain to meet urgent needs. Without strategic public investment, these policy shifts risk weakening neighborhood economies and exacerbating inequality across New York's immigrant communities.

Cultural barriers and the political climate are making it both increasingly important, and increasingly difficult to access affordable and linguistically accessible legal services. Many of CPC's community members have a deep sense of fear around issues of immigration, housing, and employment, but struggle to find a lawyer that speaks their language or can provide culturally competent services. We consistently have community members coming to seek legal services, yet there are very few Asian American legal services available.

At CPC, we have worked tirelessly with the goal of keeping our immigrant communities and families safe and together. In the last year, we have been able to support nearly 2,000 community members with our KYR training, legal clinics, and other legal resource events. We have been able to facilitate "train-the-trainer" sessions on family safety planning as part of our legal clinic. We have been able to assist community members in drafting letters to USCIS, and supported families in preparing important legal documents like powers of attorney and standby guardianship. We have been able to offer deportation defense and limited scope representation. Lastly, we have been able to support over 1,000 families with our immigration navigation programs and helped 800 adults build skills and confidence to participate in public institutions through adult literacy classes, all in just this past year. We have maintained a robust legal referral network with partners such as NYLAG, LAS, NYLPI, AABANY, and others. We collaborate with national organizations like the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) through its Client Resources Committee to help develop educational materials for immigrants across the country.

As part of the RISE Coalition led by the Asian American Federation and comprising nearly 20 Asian-led and Asian-serving organizations that provide immigration case management and legal services, **we urge the City to allocate \$3.5 million in the FY27 budget to support the RISE Network.** At a time of heightened vulnerability for immigrant communities, the City must make intentional and meaningful investments that expand access to legal services, wraparound support, language access, and resource navigation.

Additionally, CPC supports the NYC Trans and Queer Coalitions budget and legislative asks, which includes **\$15M for a NEW LGBTQIA+ Immigrant Fund.** LGBTQIA+ immigrants in New York face compounded barriers—from legal insecurity to housing instability and lack of access to affirming services—yet there is currently no dedicated funding stream to support their unique needs. No one should be left behind—regardless of immigration status or identity.

The \$15M fund will: provide legal services, Know Your Rights trainings, and immigration support; fund community-based organizations serving LGBTQIA+ immigrant communities; expand access to safe housing, healthcare, and social services; ensure culturally competent, language-accessible, and affirming care.

It is especially critical to invest in trusted, community-based organizations, which are best positioned to deliver these services effectively and ensure that support reaches those who need it most. Thank you so much for your time and if there are any questions, please reach out to Ashley Chen, Policy & Research Manager at achen9@cpc-nyc.org.

New York City Council Committee on Immigration, jointly with the Committee on Small Business

**Oversight-Executive Budget Hearings-
Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Policy Changes**

**Samantha Guo
Social Worker, RISE Program
Hamilton-Madison House
May 6, 2025**

Good morning, my name is Samantha Guo. I am a social worker leading case management for the RISE Program at Hamilton-Madison House (HMH), a nonprofit settlement house on the Lower East Side. HMH is also the largest outpatient behavioral health provider specialized in serving Asian Americans on the East Coast, serving more than 650 clients annually. We operate five mental health clinics, a Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) program, a substance recovery program, and a supportive housing program for individuals with severe mental health issues in Queens. We also operate one of the largest older adult centers in NYC as well as low- or no-cost childcare programs, including Head Start, 3-K and Pre-K for all.

Since December 2025, we have been piloting the RISE program, providing critical wraparound services and referrals to immigration legal services. Our staff are bilingual, and we provide services in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and many other languages.

Today, in line with the City Council's priorities for the Fiscal Year 2027 budget, I am here to underscore how shifts in federal immigration enforcement create immediate, local economic and community impacts, and why the City's investment in trusted, culturally responsive services is essential. When residents are detained, face urgent legal deadlines, or are afraid to leave home, the ripple effects include missed work, family destabilization, housing instability, and interruptions in care. City-funded legal and case management support helps prevent these crises and stabilizes households and communities.

1) Fund the RISE program beyond June 30, 2026

First, we urge the Council to fund the RISE program beyond its current end date of June 30, 2026.

RISE supports long-standing New Yorkers who suddenly face heightened enforcement scrutiny and urgent legal needs. The program provides:

- **Immigration legal support**, including help covering costs to pursue visas, green cards, and citizenship; attend hearings; and take swift action in detention-related situations; and
- **Case management**, which helps clients gather documents, understand and complete required steps on strict timelines, apply for eligible benefits, and access wraparound services that strengthen family stability.

In practice, RISE fills a critical gap between knowing you may have rights or options—and having the language access, documentation support, and affordable, reliable legal counsel needed to act quickly and effectively.

This is especially important for Asian American communities, where trust is built over time through language access, cultural understanding, word-of-mouth, and long-standing relationships. In moments of fear and confusion, HMH and our partners meet residents where they are, connect them to accurate information, and deliver services that help keep families intact.

RISE programs across NYC are currently slated to terminate by June 30, 2026. HMH wants to build on the program’s early successes, and we ask the City Council and NYC Immigrant Services to sustain this impactful initiative.

Since receiving notice of funding in December 2025, HMH has presented to over 30 partners and 80 community members about these services and provided case management to another 30 members. Of these, we have referred and worked with legal counsel on more than 13 individual cases. Clients engaged through RISE have also received housing guidance, eligibility enrollment support, mental health services, language classes, and other wraparound referrals.

HMH is partnering with immigration law firms and legal aid providers to help clients resolve immigration issues and keep families together. We identified the most common case types, negotiated reduced and flat-rate arrangements, and coordinate closely so that clients who cannot afford legal services can still pursue lawful relief.

This represents significant cost savings for community members—and it also improves outcomes. With vetted counsel and bilingual case management support, clients better understand their options, make informed decisions under time pressure, and have a stronger chance of successfully advancing their cases. That stability has a ripple effect on families, workplaces, and neighborhoods.

2) Expand legal services and case management capacity to meet hidden and rising demand

Second, we urge the Council to expand legal services, access, and capacity to meet hidden and rising demand.

Because these services were activated midway through the fiscal year, we have seen how quickly needs can surface once residents learn there is trusted help available. Within two months, HMMH has nearly reached its goals of 180 community members and 20 referrals. With sustained funding and expanded capacity, we can reach more residents, deepen trust in outcomes, and meet the community where they are.

Over the last decade, Asian Americans have continued to be one of the fastest-growing populations in the New York metropolitan area. At the same time, recent news reporting indicates increased enforcement activity affecting New Yorkers, including individuals with limited English proficiency and many with no criminal backgrounds.

With adequate funding over time, residents can assert their rights, access eligible services, and pursue lawful immigration options before situations escalate into job loss, housing crises, or family separation. HMMH's model uses public dollars efficiently by pairing bilingual case managers, who can handle intake, document preparation, benefits navigation, and client coordination, with lawyers who focus their time on legal strategy, filings, and representation. Continued funding also gives us time to overcome hesitation and fear of seeking help during a stressful, uncertain moment.

We need continued support for these legal and case management services to deepen trust, increase access, and strengthen our community fabric.

Concluding Statement

To summarize, we ask the Council to:

- **Commit to continuous funding for the RISE program past June 2026**, so New Yorkers can access trusted case management and affordable legal support when federal enforcement shifts create urgent needs.
- **Provide for expansion of legal and case management services to meet rising demand**, as participation quickly grows once communities learn support is available.
- **Invest in culturally responsive, linguistically proficient wraparound service providers like HMMH**, so residents can access help early—before crises escalate into job loss, housing instability, and family harm.

Thank you for your time, your attention, and your thoughtful consideration of this testimony. If you have any follow-up questions or comments, please reach out to me at samanthaguo@hmonline.org

Thank you.

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I represent: Dept of Small Business Services

Address: 1 Liberty Plaza NY NY

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I represent: Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Address: _____

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Name: Lorena Lucero

Address: 253 Broadway, 12th Floor

I represent: Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

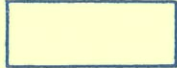
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Name: Brad Hoylman - Sigal

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I represent: Manhattan Borough President

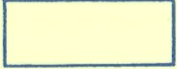
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Address: _____

I represent: Street Vendor Project

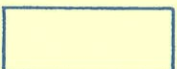
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I represent: STREET VENDOR PROJECT

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Name: AHYOUNG KIM (PLEASE PRINT)

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Name: Carlyn Cowen (PLEASE PRINT)

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I represent: Chinese American Planning Council

Address: 45 Suffolk Street

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Name: Van Xelo (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [Redacted] Brooklyn, NY 11220

I represent: Mixteca

Address: 245 23rd ST. Brooklyn, NY 11215

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Address: Brooklyn NY 11232

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Arlette Cepeda (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: Albion Place

I represent: La Colmena

Address: Staten Island

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Name: Ben Guttmann (PLEASE PRINT)

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I represent: Queens Economic Development Corporation

Address: _____

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Name: Martha Herrera,

Address: [REDACTED] 50th St

I represent: Las Donas

Address: _____

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Name: Jackie Harrington

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Digital Deep Dive Corporation

Address: 2605 West Estes Way

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Name: HASAN SHAFIQULLAH

Address: [REDACTED] NYC 10002

I represent: THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Address: 49 THOMAS ST 5TH FL NYC 10013

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ysabel Rosario

Address: _____

I represent: Street Vendor Project

Address: 40 Bechor Street

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Name: Christopher Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: Self

Address: _____

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