

TESTIMONY

BY

EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

DYNISHAL GROSS

NYC

DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES

BEFORE

THE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

OF THE

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2024

Good morning, **Chair Avilés**, **Chair Feliz**, and members of the Committees on Immigration and Small Business. My name is **Dynishal Gross**, and I am the Executive Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Small Business Services (“SBS”). I am joined by **Lorena Lucero** from the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (“MOIA”) and **Masha Gindler** and **Grace Riddick** from the Mayor’s Office of Asylum Seeker Operations (“OASO”).

I am also joined by SBS Deputy Commissioner **Yurij Pawluk**. We are pleased to be here today to discuss how asylum seekers access and benefit from our Workforce1 Career Center system. SBS’s mission is to create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting them to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building thriving neighborhoods.

We are proud to have played a critical role in New York City’s historic economic recovery, from reforming over 100 city regulations to facilitating over \$265M in grants and loans to businesses. Just two weeks ago, we capped off NYC Small Business Month by announcing that New York City has reached the record-breaking number of 183,000 small businesses, exceeding pre-pandemic levels.

As a result of New York’s successful economic resurgence, we recovered the nearly one million jobs lost during the pandemic and reached a record-breaking 4.7M total jobs across the five boroughs. More jobs mean more opportunities for New Yorkers of all backgrounds, including asylum-seekers and other new arrivals. Our SBS teams work hard every-day to ensure these jobs are accessible to all jobseekers.

Serving NYC Businesses and Jobseekers

As part of that effort, SBS provides free hiring help to businesses through our Workforce1 Career Center System, a network of 18 centers across all five boroughs. We work to understand business recruitment needs across diverse industries and identify New Yorkers with the skills and experience to fill those roles.

Workforce1 is part of the American Job Center system, a federally-funded national network, and operates in close partnership with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) which runs 95 Career Centers statewide, four of which are co-located with SBS Workforce1 Centers.

In Fiscal Year 2023, Workforce1 served over 87,000 people and referred 54,000 to employers. More than 16,000 of the jobseekers we served in that year are foreign-born, and close to two-thirds of those served are Black or Hispanic.

Our jobseeker services include workshops and one-on-one career coaching, help with resumes and preparing for interviews, identification of jobs that match jobseeker experiences and interests, and referrals to employers and partners who provide occupational training. Through our business engagement, we connect New Yorkers to job opportunities in high-growth sectors, including work in hospitality, building services, healthcare, construction, and manufacturing.

Our physical centers, with many locations near transit hub, include computer labs and classrooms. In addition to attracting more than 230,000 walk-ins annually, we bring workforce resources deep into neighborhoods across the city through virtual programs and “Mobie,” our mobile outreach unit.

We also work with a network of some 300 community partners who can provide a range of supportive and wraparound services. Together with the efforts of a dozen agencies that comprise the city’s workforce system, New York City has a robust workforce development network that creates a critical pipeline of talent and keeps the city’s economy resilient and thriving.

Serving Immigrant New Yorkers

New York City is a city of immigrants. Our five boroughs are home to the most diverse immigrant population of any major city in the world. SBS has and will continue to serve jobseekers with roots from countries around the world.

In 2016, we launched a specialized workforce center in Washington Heights focused on helping immigrants succeed in our local workforce. In addition to our immigrant-focused Workforce1 Center, we provide tailored services to veterans, people with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, and out-of-school, out-of-work youth (aged 18-24).

We are proud that across the entire Workforce1 system, we are able to directly provide services in 19 languages. One-third of specialists in Workforce1 centers speak a language other than English, and we support an additional 200+ languages through interpretation services.

Access for New New Yorkers

Over the last year, New York City has seen an influx of new arrivals – many of whom have not been able to legally work, due to restrictive Federal government policies. While my colleagues at the Mayor’s Office are able to share more context on those trends, at SBS, we expect the percentage of foreign-born Workforce1 clients to increase to 25% in FY24 from 20% in the prior year.

In response to the rising number of migrants seeking the right to work, City, State, and Federal government agencies are coordinating to ensure access to workforce programming for new arrivals as they become legally eligible to work, in alignment with restrictions that accompany our system’s federal funding.

For example, OASO shares a database of asylum-seekers applying for work permits through the Asylum Application Help Centers with the New York State Department of Labor. NYSDOL phonebanks to these individuals, and then provides Workforce1 with a list of potential jobseekers in anticipation of their work authorization. Collaboration between NYSDOL and Workforce1 is fundamentally important to our system. NYSDOL and Workforce1 Centers are not only often co-located, but also co-host events.

Similarly, OASO coordinates with shelter agencies to promote city and state employment supports, in addition to other services, and is building a pipeline of cross-agency referrals by shelter-based case managers.

In March, the Federal U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services started to send text alerts to new arrivals receiving work authorization, alerting them of centers like those operated by NYSDOL and Workforce1. As a result of these efforts, as well as referrals from immigrant-focused community partners, in the last eight months, SBS reached out to 8,848 new New Yorkers.

Asylum Seekers in the Workforce1 System

As this Council knows, SBS believes outreach is crucial. This has been a personal focus of our Commissioner – it's why you've seen our SBS Mobile Unit in your districts and why our Commissioner has personally visited shelters to meet with new New Yorkers and share guide them towards Workforce1's services.

While there are challenges with serving this population, we can share early signs of promise. Since October, Workforce1 has served 5,500 new New Yorkers, including over 3,700 who self-report having received work authorization. We referred more than 2,000 individuals to employers. On the whole, we have provided 33,000 total Workforce1 services to new New Yorkers. These numbers are a result of all the efforts I have outlined in my testimony, as well as a series of borough-based job fairs, our dedicated "American Dream Works" intake form, email blasts to 120,000 business contacts, and engagement with groups like the Educational Alliance, the public library system, and the Hospitality Alliance.

We know that other migrants are receiving support through our partners in government, like NYSDOL, and the vast network of non-profits operating in New York City. Just last month, I personally visited a migrant resource fair organized by CM Hudson where SBS and NYSDOL tabled and offered workforce development services. We reached over 200 migrants at that event alone.

In recent days, some of the new New Yorkers we have supported have reached out to share their success stories.

Our Downtown Brooklyn Workforce1 Center supported a Venezuelan new New Yorker who arrived in New York City in June 2023. When we first made contact, he was living at a city shelter as awaited work authorization. Following our connection, he was able to enroll in on-the-job training with an airline food service employer. Having now received his work authorization, he is now making \$28.50 per hour and has moved out of the shelter system.

Our Bronx Workforce1 center connected a new New Yorker from Guinea to a job with a parking company, after working with him to create a resume and prepare for the interview.

Our Workforce1 Center in Jamaica, Queens, helped a Haitian new New Yorker enroll in Careers through the Culinary Arts Program (C-CAP). They were able to compete the training, which

includes rigorous essential kitchen skills and safety protocols, in March, and has applied to work in New York City Public Schools.

Continued Partnership

Mayor Adams has been clear, asylum-seekers want to be on a path of independence and want the right to work. Expediting work authorization for asylum seekers would enable the city's workforce development system, to support more migrants in securing family-sustaining jobs.

We know that that our services can help many take a step closer to their American Dream and we hope to work with your Committees to help more people that Workforce1 is a system they can rely on to achieve their career goals.

Many of your offices are working on the frontlines to engage and support new New Yorkers in your districts. We ask each of you to encourage asylum-seekers with work authorization to contact SBS's Workforce1 network to find employment. If you know employers in any industry that are interested in hiring asylum-seekers, please direct them to nyc.gov/AmericanDreamWorks.

Thank you. We look forward to your questions.

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Testimony of NYC Department of Social Services on Intro 216

Before the New York City Council Committee on Immigration Oversight Hearing: Asylum Seekers and Migrants in the Workforce

June 11, 2024

Intro 216 would require the Department of Social Services (DSS), in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, to implement changes to the IDNYC application process. These changes include: (1) develop a bi-annual training program for IDNYC workers on the application process; (2) provide for adequate in-person application appointments to match demand for IDNYC cards; (3) permit same day and walk-in appointments at IDNYC service enrollment centers; and (4) provide an appeals system for applicants who have been denied an IDNYC identification card.

DSS believes the steps we are taking in managing IDNYC appropriately meet the needs this legislation attempts to pursue. With respect to training, the IDNYC program has a robust training program that includes 4-5 weeks of initial training alongside further on-site, elbow training for an additional 2-3 weeks – including shadowing of an enrollment supervisor. That initial proficiency training is supplemented by refresher training to support staff, regardless of their tenure with the program; this refresher training is designed to keep staff updated on policies and eligibility requirements. Moreover, ad-hoc training is available for staff seeking clarification on new or existing policies or procedures.

With respect to the system for appointments and permitting same-day and walk-in appointments at IDNYC service enrollment centers, DSS believes we have an efficient system for managing the flow of clients that results in the best use of staff time and reducing wait times for clients. IDNYC shifted to an appointments-only model earlier this year (in late January) and this approach has worked very well. The appointment-only model releases a large number of appointments weekly to meet the demand efficiently and effectively, offering applicants a timely schedule without long waiting lines. IDNYC leadership constantly reviews application and operational trends to determine if any programmatic adjustments are necessary to best serve New Yorkers. DSS continues to assess need and capacity to maximize the number of individuals served on a weekly basis which has increased our weekly appointment capacity by the hundreds. Transitioning to the appointment-only model has led to significant efficiencies within the program and allowed us to expand appointment capacity to meet increased demand and has significantly reduced the pre-opening lines IDNYC enrollment sites had experienced before the change. DSS continues to

explore ways to further increase appointment capacity (that includes partnering with elected officials and community based organizations to ensure prospective applicants have the information and documentation they need to successfully apply).

Regarding providing an on-site and online appeals system for applicants who have been denied – IDNYC has an appeals process designed to ensure that the program does not become the repository of client documentation, at the same time, maintaining the robust review of documents necessary to ensure IDNYC retains its integrity. DSS does not believe an online appeals process could meet all those criteria while offering clients the fair, impartial appeal they deserve; online appeals raise significant concerns around client privacy, cybersecurity, and robust document review.

The appeals process for IDNYC works as follows:

1. Applicants must request a secondary review within 30 days of denial by calling 311 and stating their request.
2. IDNYC Customer Service schedules secondary review appointments within two weeks of the request.
3. Secondary reviews are conducted at any IDNYC Enrollment location but we generally encourage the review to take place at a different enrollment site from where the original application was processed to ensure an impartial review by a new supervisor.
4. During the review process, the Enrollment Supervisor will review the reapplication and documents. If eligible (based on the review by the supervisor), the application is sent to an Enrollment Specialist for processing. If not eligible, the applicant is advised on reapplying with appropriate documents.
5. Enrollment Supervisors review the final reapplication and confirm processing with IDNYC Customer Service.
6. Decision letters are sent to the applicant within 30 days of secondary review and reapplication but at no point is an applicant guaranteed approval of enrollment/application as secondary integrity verifications must also be approved.

Altogether, DSS believes existing IDNYC systems meet the goals this legislation aims to achieve while better balancing the important requirements of meeting client demand, efficient use of staff time, preserving the integrity of the ID, keeping clients' documents in their hands, and avoiding the IDNYC program serving as the custodian or repository of clients' documentation. This legislation would not preserve the carefully selected pathway IDNYC has advanced in its existing, rigorous training regime, focusing on an appointments-only model, and in-person appeals.

NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Oversight Hearing: Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce Before the New York City Council's Committees on Immigration and Small Business

**Testimony of
MOIA Chief Policy Advisor
Lorena Lucero**

June 11, 2024

Thank you, Chairs Aviles and Feliz and the Committees on Immigration and on Small Business for holding this hearing on this important topic. From the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, I am joined by Tom Tortorici, Executive Director of Legal and Support Initiatives.

The primary mission of MOIA is to promote the well-being of immigrant communities, fostering an inclusive environment that supports their safety, stability, and enhances their quality of life, regardless of their immigration status. Ensuring that asylum seekers and migrants have access to the workforce is a crucial part of upholding that mission.

New Arrivals need and want to work. Our country has been facing a labor shortage ever since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, and gaps remain in several major economic sectors. These gaps include ones in the food industry, construction, and home health care agencies. As many of you might know, before joining MOIA Commissioner Castro was the Executive Director of a community-based workforce development organization called New Immigrant Community Empowerment. He also understands what it takes to prepare our newest New

Yorkers for the workforce, and both our office and the city as a whole benefit immensely from his leadership.

While MOIA does not work directly in workforce development, we do collaborate closely with our sister agencies and community-based organizations who are directly involved in this space. I will lay out some of MOIA's policy and programming initiatives in this field in the following areas: federal advocacy, community-based programming, and workers' rights.

Federal Advocacy

One of the most powerful tools to expand access to work authorization is temporary protected status (TPS). With the stroke of a pen, President Biden can expand this protection to cover additional countries in need. We all saw the impact of the redesignation of Venezuelan TPS in 2023, and through our coalition of over 200 cities called Cities for Action, our office is pushing for the designation and redesignation of countries such as Ecuador, Mauritania, and Mali. These countries – and many others that we are elevating – are facing political turmoil and violence, and families seeking safety and security often end up in our city. By ensuring that individuals with TPS status have access to work opportunities in the formal economy, we can go a long way in promoting their integration into our larger society.

Starting in February 2023, Mayor Adams in partnership with Cities for Action co-chair Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson leads a bipartisan group of mayors and county executives participating in the Here to Work campaign, which calls on President Biden to take executive actions to increase access to employment authorization for immigrants already in the United States, including spouses of U.S. citizens, DREAMERS who missed the DACA cutoff criteria, and longstanding immigrants.

There are also some other federal victories that might have gone under the radar. For example, through our advocacy alongside Mayor Adams and 42 other mayors and county executives, we pushed USCIS to issue a temporary final rule to automatically extend expiring employment authorizations for 540 days. This rule

will ensure our new arrivals don't lose the jobs that they've worked so hard for, due to processing delays at the federal level.

Community-Based Programming

In addition to our federal advocacy, MOIA also funds more than 50 organizations throughout the five boroughs that provide a multitude of services to our local immigrant community. Our longstanding legal services programs such as the newly rebranded MOIA Legal Support Centers and the Asylum Seeker Legal Assistance Network are helping to expand the capacity of legal service providers to meet the needs of all immigrant New Yorkers. These City-funded providers work to increase access to new federal pathways to status, such as the Deferred Action for Labor Exploitation status, which provides work authorization and protection from deportation to immigrants who have been exploited by their employers. These providers also operationalize referral systems and collaboration across partners to ensure that immigrants receive support for whatever form of relief for which they are eligible. The AskMOIA and the MOIA Legal Support hotlines both provide immigrants with workers' rights and workforce development opportunities.

Since the beginning of the asylum seeker humanitarian crisis, MOIA has provided almost 1 million dollars to organizations that provide OSHA and SST training, both of which are needed to work on construction sites in New York City. These opportunities, available to our newest arrivals, have provided access to this high-demand economic sector to thousands of new immigrants, including an increasing number of women, as detailed in recent reporting by The City.

It is important to note that OSHA and SST trainings are only available in English and Spanish, both among nonprofit providers and in the private market in New York City. A very limited number of trainers nationwide offer services beyond these two languages. That said, workforce training systems and offerings are catching up with demographic changes, and MOIA and OASO are exploring how to build capacity in additional languages.

With philanthropic funding, MOIA has also established the innovative Immigrant Navigation Network. In this network, nine immigrant-serving community-based organizations identified and chose 500 recently arrived participants to receive assistance from longtime immigrant mentors. We are currently reviewing the data to evaluate the program, but initial trends show that beyond fulfilling basic needs, providing referrals, and connecting asylum seekers to job opportunities, this program has also helped foster warm, welcoming, inclusive, and safe spaces where our newest arrivals can thrive.

MOIA allocated over one million of city funding to non-profit orgs and public library branches to launch 85 English Learning and Support Centers for immigrant New Yorkers across the city. MOIA English Learning and Support Centers are located across the city to support long time and recently arrived immigrant New Yorkers learn English and get connected to city resources. This program helps non-native English speakers gain the tools they need to thrive in their workplace, at school, and elsewhere around the city. The centers use We Speak NYC, an award-winning curriculum developed by the city of New York as a tool to teach English and educate New Yorkers on city resources and services. The centers also support immigrant new Yorkers by providing more information on resources introduced in the classes, making referrals to social and legal services, and acting as a hub for English language learning in their communities.

Workers' Rights

Most asylum seekers that have entered the City are not immediately eligible for work authorization and try to find opportunities in the informal economy instead. That's why we are also building awareness of protections that are available to all workers, regardless of their immigration status. We applaud both the Council and Councilmember Hanif for putting together the Immigrant Workers Bill of Rights bill that we are now working to implement, alongside the Department of Consumer and Worker Protections (DCWP).

In collaboration with City Council, MOIA and DCWP updated the existing Worker Bill of Rights to highlight protections and resources available to immigrant workers. The updated Worker Bill of Rights is being disseminated though

LinkNYC Kiosks and social media platforms for both agencies. It has also been distributed to newly arrived migrants at arrival and in HERRC systems in the top ten languages, per Local Law 30, as well as into temporary languages, as designated by Local Law 13.

Finally, last month, on May Day 2024, MOIA and DCWP hosted an ethnic and community media roundtable where we discussed the newly expanded Workers Bill of Rights. This roundtable was part of MOIA's monthly meetings to share information on the City's available resources and services.

Looking Forward

Mayor Adams and Commissioner Castro recognize that much remains to be done. That's why we are looking forward to working closely with City Council to find solutions that prepare our newest New Yorkers for the workforce. New York City will benefit from the resilience, adaptability, and experience that asylum seekers and migrants bring, just like the generations of immigrants before them that built the place we call home.



Shahana Hanif

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 39

Opening Statement of Council Member Shahana Hanif- Join Hearing by the Committees on Immigration and Small Business

Tuesday, June 11, 2024, City Hall- Council Chambers, 10AM

Good morning, thank you to Chair Avilés and Feliz for holding today's important hearing and for including [Intro. 216](#) on today's agenda. I want to also thank Deputy Speaker Ayala and Council Member Brewer for introducing this bill alongside me. I also want to express gratitude to Brooklyn Defender Services for using the experiences of their clients to help inform this legislation.

IDNYC is a valuable resource for all New Yorkers and is especially critical for those who are newly arrived immigrants. However, due to the Administration's failure to properly operationalize the application process, many who need an IDNYC are currently unable to get one.

Right now, walk-in applications are not permitted and it is extremely difficult to make an appointment. Just last night, I went on the website, which is very challenging to operate, and was unable to make an appointment. It is clear that more slots, including walk-ins, need to be made available, and the online interface needs to be made more user-friendly.

Additionally, when people are able to get an appointment, they are often rejected due to unclear and arbitrary implementation of requirements regarding document eligibility and the process for decision appeals.

These barriers to access are leaving people without the proper identification to carry out a number of important tasks, including completing a work permit application or job application, both of which require some form of government ID. As the City looks to decrease the dependence of new arrivals on the shelter system, helping people get to work is of the utmost importance.

There are also massive human costs to lacking the ID needed to navigate basic day-to-day activities in the City, such as a parent being unable to enter a school to pick up their child.

Intro. 216 would address these issues by instituting a set of reforms for the IDNYC application process including requiring the Administration to:

1. Make same day and walk-in appointments available at IDNYC enrollment centers;
2. Provide adequate in person application appointments to match the growing demand for IDNYC cards;
3. Develop a training program for IDNYC workers on the application process; and
4. Provide an appeals system for applicants who have been denied IDNYC cards.

I am sure that the Administration would agree that the establishment of the IDNYC program is one of the City government's greatest successes over the past decade. We've created a



Shahana Hanif

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 39

resource that plugged a gap that has existed for our communities for decades. Now it's time to make sure that those who need this resource can access it.



The Arab American Association of New York

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June 11, 2024

Dear Members of the Committee,

I'm submitting this testimony on behalf of the Arab American Association of New York (AAANY), a multi-service nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting asylees and immigrants. In this testimony, we aim to address the complexities, barriers, and opportunities related to workforce development for immigrants, particularly in light of events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on grant-funded programs like ours.

Since 2001, AAANY has provided essential services to tens of thousands of asylees and migrants, supporting their integration into the workforce and helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency. Our Career Readiness and Employment Development (CRED) program was launched in FY23. Since its launch, we have experienced a substantial increase in demand for economic empowerment services. Over 475 clients have filled out interest forms and joined our online resource group, seeking assistance with employment and career development. Our team has provided one-on-one coaching and resume and job search assistance to 61 clients, helping many achieve significant milestones, including securing employment, receiving promotions or raises, and enrolling in job training programs.

Many of the individuals we serve through the CRED program – and our ESL and Women's Empowerment programs – are asylees facing unique challenges as they navigate the complexities of the U.S. job market. Language barriers, lack of recognized credentials, and limited professional networks are among the obstacles they encounter. Additionally, the emotional and psychological stress associated with migration often exacerbates the challenges they face in securing employment.

To address these barriers, we need stable funding sources for essential workforce development programs and more resources to expand ESL programs. CRED is partially funded by private grants and operating expenses. Our experience in the pandemic highlighted for us the precariousness of these nonprofit funding streams. Emergencies large and small can jeopardize vital programs that serve hundreds of clients due to their reliance on unstable funding sources.

Streamlining the process for recognizing foreign credentials and expediting work authorization processes are also crucial. Comprehensive support services, including mental health and community support, are likewise essential to address the multifaceted needs of asylum seekers and migrants.

Preparing asylum seekers and migrants for the workforce requires a coordinated effort from all stakeholders. Our experience at AAANY has shown that with the right support and resources, individuals can overcome significant barriers and contribute meaningfully to our society and economy. We urge the committee to consider these recommendations and work towards a more inclusive and supportive system for all new arrivals.

Thank you for your time and attention to these crucial issues. We are available for any further questions or discussions.

Respectfully,

Mary Hetteix
Director of Programs
Arab American Association of New York



Asian American Federation

Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Immigration Jointly with the Committee on Small Business *June 11, 2024*

Written Testimony

Thank you, Chair Avilés and the Committee on Immigration and Chair Feliz and the Committee on Small Business for holding this hearing and giving the Asian American Federation the opportunity to provide testimony. I am Andrew Sta. Ana, Deputy Director of Research & Policy at the Asian American Federation, where we proudly represent the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

We are here to discuss the city's **migrant response** and I would like to thank the Council for introducing measures that enhance opportunities for immigrants, including through improving the New York City Identity Card (IDNYC) application process and by creating greater opportunities for immigrants to obtain legal work authorization.

Overwhelmingly, Asian New Yorkers are immigrants, with two out of three in the city being foreign-born. Of those Asian immigrants, 47% arrived in 2010 or after. Although often unnoticed, 13% of AAPI immigrants in NYC are undocumented. Immigrant communities face significant barriers to accessing social services, receiving governmental support, and achieving social integration. In recent years, regressive policies aimed at punishing immigrant communities, along with xenophobic rhetoric and an increase in anti-Asian violent crimes, have left our communities marginalized and unheard. The City Council must implement much-needed changes to support immigrants in New York City and restore immigrants' trust in government. Equally imperative, legislators should recognize that tens of thousands of migrants coming through the southern border in the last two years are of East Asian and South Asian descent. As a sanctuary city, we should welcome all immigrants with the dignity and fairness they deserve.

Int. 216 introduced by Council Member Hanif is crucial for the Asian community as many immigrants rely on the IDNYC program to obtain a valid form of identification. For several months, one of our member organizations from Southern Brooklyn has highlighted a significant increase in the number of requests for IDNYC appointments. However, despite this growing need, many community members have encountered huge backlogs and appointments scheduled two to three months out. Without a valid form of identification, many immigrants find it difficult to obtain jobs, open bank accounts, and access other city benefits available to them.

Furthermore, through the critical work done by the Asian American Federation's Small Business team, we understand the vital role valid identification has in improving the quality of life for small business owners and service industry workers. Providing in-person appointments that meet the ever-increasing demand for IDNYC and allowing same-day and walk-in appointments would especially benefit immigrants who have limited flexibility and predictability in their work schedules. The flexibility to attend in-person appointments is also helpful for older adults and new immigrants who struggle to navigate online portals or have limited internet access. To that end, Int. 216 would improve the IDNYC application process to meet the needs of all immigrants and allow them to reap the many benefits of this program.

Res. 235 introduced by Council Member Brewer, calling on USCIS to quickly clear the backlog of I-765 applications for employment authorization is equally important for helping immigrants build stronger protections and safety nets. Immigrants rely on legal work authorization to support themselves and their families and they play a necessary role in New York’s vibrant economy and workforce. Without work authorization, immigrants must turn to informal “off the books” employment, leaving them susceptible to wage theft and workplace exploitation, with newly-arrived immigrants and undocumented immigrants being the most impacted. With 13% of AAPI immigrants in NYC being undocumented and 15.5% of Asian immigrants living in poverty, clearing the backlog of I-765 applications will create safer economic opportunities for immigrants and help address the high poverty rates among our communities.

Improving access to city-wide benefits, providing valid identification, and increasing employment opportunities are necessary for immigrants in New York to build strong support systems, gain trust in institutions, and participate fully as members of society. Efficient processes for programs aimed to meet the needs of immigrants are the primary way immigrants experience a smoother transition to thriving in our communities. Int. 216, Res. 235, and Res. 230 open the door for more inclusive institutions that allow immigrants to legally work, access social safety networks, and build safer, strong futures.

At the Asian American Federation we thank you for allowing us to testify on this critical subject. We are grateful to see City Council move ahead with policies that protect our immigrant communities. We look forward to continuing this work with all of you.



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BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York City Council

Committees on Immigration and Small Business

Oversight - Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce

June 11, 2024

My name is Dinah Foley. I am a Senior Social Worker in the Immigration Practice at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). BDS is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. I thank the New York City Council Committees on Immigration and Small Business, in particular Chair Avilés and Chair Feliz, for the opportunity to testify about workforce preparedness and expanding access to municipal identification for immigrant New Yorkers.

For over 25 years, BDS has worked, in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. We represent approximately 22,000 people each year who are accused of a crime, facing loss of liberty, their home, their children, or deportation. Our staff consists of specialized attorneys, social workers, investigators, paralegals and administrative staff who are experts in their individual fields. BDS also provides a wide range of additional services for our clients, including civil legal advocacy, assistance with educational needs of our clients or their children, housing and benefits advocacy, as well as immigration advice and representation.

BDS' Immigration Practice protects the rights of immigrant New Yorkers by defending against ICE detention and deportation, minimizing the negative immigration consequences of criminal and family charges for non-citizens, and representing immigrants in applications for immigration benefits. We represent people who are applying for immigration relief before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and in removal proceedings in New York's immigration courts.

DEFEND • ADVOCATE • CHANGE



Meeting Legal Service Needs of Asylum Seekers

The City Council has long been a champion of the rights of immigrants and one of the most profound ways in which the city has demonstrated its commitment has been through the groundbreaking NYIFUP program. Brooklyn Defender Services is proud to have partnered with the City Council on this program with our co-providers, The Legal Aid Society and The Bronx Defenders for almost a decade, during which time we have assured thousands of people obtain full representation for the complicated issues they face in removal proceedings.

The support of the City Council allows us to respond to people's immediate needs—such as detained deportation defense and screening and advisals for immigration relief—and to provide education and resources to the community and other legal providers. We encounter recently arrived immigrants in both our criminal and family defense practices, many of whom are already ensnared in the immigration system. Attorneys must advise clients how to navigate filing a change of address with the immigration court while in the shelter system. Many of these clients have immigration court dates set in other cities, requiring change of venue motions. We also must step in quickly to file asylum applications. Our practice has also seen an increase in requests for assistance with family visa petitions to reunite families where children or other family members have remained in their home country and seek to reunite them (such as I-730s for derivatives of asylum seekers or I-130 visa petitions for spouses, parents, and children abroad).

We continue to expand services to meet our clients' needs and have renewed our focus on enforcing our low wage immigrant worker's rights; both as a remedy in itself and as an essential element of our immigration practice aimed at deferred action for labor-based claims for our clients. We have seen dozens of clients whose employment claims may lead to meaningful immigration relief including deferred action and work authorization, as well as the administrative closing of removal proceedings and the exercise of prosecutorial discretion where it would otherwise not be possible.

The backlog for non-detained immigration court persists; and has created unpredictability in case trajectory, inefficiencies in case management, and prejudicial consequences for the respondents left in limbo who are often separated from their families. Most affirmative immigration applications used to be considered straightforward, based on the evidence submitted with the application. Requests for evidence are now more frequent, invasive and time consuming. Changes such as these resulted in a steep increase in erroneously rejected applications, applications rejected for empty boxes on forms, or simply and most often for failing to read the applications and review the evidence submitted. While these practices frustrate practitioners and delay applications, *pro se* applicants who lack the legal skills or resources to navigate the system are left without recourse and without immigration status.



Prioritizing funding for full representation means ensuring we can continue to provide multidisciplinary services for our immigrant clients and their families. Our expertise lies in the complex legal issues that arise in an immigration case, issues such as contact with the criminal legal system or the Administration for Children’s Services, prior deportation orders, mental health concerns, and the coordination of pursuing multiple forms of immigration relief for any given individual or family are spaces where our unique expertise comes into play.

IDNYC Access and Expansion

New York City’s municipal identification card program, IDNYC, was created by this Council to ensure that more members of our community are able to access identification. The people we serve often face significant & numerous barriers to economic survival—and enhancing access to IDNYC presents an opportunity for our city to remove one of these barriers. ID access is vital for New Yorkers seeking to access city benefits, employment, health care, for immigration applications, to open bank accounts, and the ability to travel the city safely without fear of being penalized by law enforcement for lack of ID.

For asylum seekers, some form of photo ID is a requirement to apply for an Employment Authorization Document. ID is also needed to attend the biometrics appointment required for an EAD. We have seen instances of the ability to work delayed due to issues accessing IDNYC. The consequences of delaying access to work are expansive—deepening food insecurity and housing instability, preventing access to healthcare and basic hygiene items, and making it harder for people to leave relationships that are harmful to them. **BDS strongly supports Int. 216 which would require the City to provide walk-in appointments, additional training for staff, and an appeal of a denial at the time of application.**

Restore Walk-In Appointments

When we last appeared before the Council to discuss IDNYC, DSS was piloting walk-in appointments, but this practice was quickly discontinued as the city was unable to meet the demand for ID appointments. The current process of obtaining an IDNYC appointment through the website is difficult and time consuming. Our staff and clients are often unable to find an appointment through the portal, which is needlessly complicated to use. Appointments difficult to search for in the existing system—one cannot search for the soonest available appointment, but must enter each individual date and time, usually to find that there are no appointments available.

We see the high demand for and interest in IDNYC as an indicator of the program’s success. The program is so important that people are willing to wait in line, sometimes for hours. We urge the City Council to work with MOIA and DSS to develop a walk-in system that meets the needs of the program. Other city and state agencies *are* able to accommodate walk-ins, and have built systems that provide a blueprint for how IDNYC can create an effective and efficient walk-in program.



Expand Appeals of IDNYC Applications

Additionally, the ability to appeal an application or document's denial on site is critical. Too often, the people we represent are wrongfully turned away because the IDNYC staff declines to accept a document listed on the ID calculator. These individuals do not receive a formal denial, so are not able to access the secondary review process. Additionally, those who present with incomplete or missing documents should be provided a follow up appointment to return for another opportunity to apply.

Training for IDNYC Staff

Last year, the City Council passed legislation expanding documents accepted as proof of identity and allowing the administration to continually review and add documents. We recognize that reviewing documents from around the world is challenging, and may lead to improper denial of applications. In addition to establishing an on-site review and appeal process to address potential errors, BDS supports the increase in training for IDNYC workers required by Int. 216. As the bill ages, we respectfully request an amendment of the language to require training twice annually, instead of every two years.

Conclusion

We urge the City Council to prioritize meeting the needs of our newest neighbors. This should include incorporating future funding for full legal representation for immigrant New Yorkers into the city budget, as opposed to funding the programs through discretionary annual funding. We require baseline funding to give providers the stability to build robust programs that can respond to large influxes of people from other countries. Organizations that are stable and well-staffed can step in when a crisis occurs and assist immigrants and address a particular situation as it arises. Unlike other types of legal work that can be fairly stable over time, we have seen that the needs of immigrants in New York City do not follow a pattern. There is always a new situation that needs to be addressed and legal services providers need to be properly funded and staffed with experienced attorneys, paralegals, and other staff to perform critical work on a short timeline. A deep commitment to funding our services over time would allow us to be nimble and provide flexibility for the city to meet the needs of its residents and their families.

We look forward to continued conversations and collaborations on building up systems to meet the needs of our city's immigrant community. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kathleen McKenna, Senior Policy Social Worker, at kmckenna@gmail.com

Testimony of Dorian Block
Senior Editor, Center for an Urban Future
Before the New York City Council Committees on Immigration and Small
Business
on Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce
June 11, 2024

Good morning. I am Dorian Block, senior editor at the Center for an Urban Future, an independent think tank focused on creating a stronger and more inclusive economy in New York. Thank you to Chairs Avilés and Feliz and members of the committees for the opportunity.

Over the past two decades, the Center for an Urban Future has published many reports on the vital role that immigrants play in New York City's economy—and what policymakers can do to help the newest New Yorkers thrive. Most recently, in September 2023, the Center for an Urban Future published a report entitled "Preparing Today's Asylum Seekers to Become Tomorrow's Workforce," which found long waiting lists at most of the city programs offering English classes and workforce training tailored to immigrants.

Even before the recent influx of migrants, New York City was struggling to help many of the city's 2.79 million working-age foreign-born residents—including over 1.4 million with limited English proficiency—with job training, workplace certifications, learning English, and connecting to other services that lead to employment.

Since then, the stream of arrivals has continued, and policymakers have taken some important steps to provide assistance that goes beyond humanitarian aid, including the creation of the City Council's New Arrivals Strategy Team in April 2024.

But a lot more is needed to help build the capacity of the city's immigrant-serving organizations and support more of the newest New Yorkers on the path to economic self-sufficiency.

One of the biggest takeaways from our research is the striking inadequacy of funding for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Our report finds that fewer than 4 percent of all adult New Yorkers who could benefit from literacy education are able to take ESOL classes each year. For instance, Queens Public Library alone has an ESOL waiting list of about 2,000 people.

The City Council should work with the Adams administration to restore and baseline funding for adult literacy programs in the FY 2025 budget and ensure that new RFPs support joint ESOL-job training programs run by CUNY, the city's

public libraries, and nonprofit training and literacy assistance organizations, which absorb the bulk of the demand.

In addition to the need for English classes, contracts and rules are limiting the reach and effectiveness of many workforce training programs. Most workforce training programs are unable to serve immigrants who do not yet have official work authorization due to restrictions on available funding. Likewise, contracts that require in-person instruction limit participation among parents without childcare, people who live far from training sites, and those juggling multiple part-time gigs. And a lack of funding for wraparound services from childcare to transportation prevents existing programs from being more inclusive and effective.

The city can step in by supporting job-specific ESOL and certification programs for migrants who do not yet have work authorization; ensuring that future city contracts and RFPs allow providers greater flexibility, including remote and hybrid options; and allowing city funding to integrate wraparound services into existing programs.

By building the capacity of immigrant-serving organizations to support pathways into employment, this City Council can ensure that the newest New Yorkers become as vital to the city's economic future as the generations that came before them.

Testimony by Daryl Corniel, Educational Director at the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) to the Immigration Committee Oversight Hearing – Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce – 6/11/24

Thank you Chair Avilés and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Daryl Corniel and I serve as the Education Director at the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE), a non-profit adult education and job placement provider and the workforce development arm of the NYC Central Labor Council. As evidenced by the unmet demand for migrant services, we have seen firsthand the urgent need for greater resources for the reputable organizations performing this work.

Preparing migrants to enter the workforce goes beyond mere authorization. We must be able to assess the employability of these workers and provide the skills and services necessary to enter the job market. We must address language access and acquisition, skills possessed and skills needed, and determine available capacity and opportunities for expansion. We have also seen how stability in housing, healthcare, and childcare directly impacts access and retention for these services.

We are greatly encouraged by the Council's passage of Intro 84 and 85, which will equip the city and providers with the necessary information to proactively meet the needs of migrants, keeping in mind that such data must be well guarded against bad actors.

In advance of this testimony I reached out to our partner CIANA, which provides case management, legal, and educational services to 3,000 asylees from over 50 countries. What they told us tracks with what we have heard from providers across the city: that despite their best efforts they lack the resources to meet the demand.

Our services provided in partnership with other CBOs have faced similar constraints, requiring partners to adapt and expand services. Through our work with the ANSOB Center for Refugees and New York Communities for Change we have provided a thousand migrants each year with ESL, digital skills, and job readiness classes. In conjunction with Make the Road we have run Know Your Rights workshops for 1,300 immigrants each year, providing them with the education to assert their rights in the workplace. And through our initiative, the Astoria Worker Project, we have provided Navigating New York classes to migrants in the shelter system in Spanish and French, providing professional skills development and information on pertinent city programs for which immigrants can qualify.

What these services share is a severe deficit of available slots and funds. We greatly appreciate the efforts of this committee in advocating for the resources necessary to meet the needs. Thank you.

Written Testimony from Kathleen Cravero, PhD, MPH
Center for Immigrant, Refugee and Global Health
City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy
New York City Council Oversight Hearing - Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce
Tuesday June 11, 2024

Thank you, Chairpersons Avilés and Feliz, and the members of the Immigration and Small Business Committees for the opportunity to submit this testimony on preparing asylum seekers and migrants for the workforce in New York City. I am Dr. Kathleen Cravero, Director of the Center for Immigrant, Refugee and Global Health (CIRGH) at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy (CUNY SPH). I am also a public health academic focused on violence prevention and the intersection of gender, migration, and access to health care. In 2022, I was selected as a member of the International Council of the Global Society on Migration, Ethnicity, Race and Health. Prior to joining CUNY SPH, I spent 25 years working for the United Nations, serving in multiple African countries with five different United Nations agencies.

The goal of CIRGH is to converge practice and learning across disciplines (e.g., public health policy, economics, demography, history, law, and systems science) to reduce health inequities in migrant communities and increase access to health and social services. Our approach is to conduct community-level research and facilitate dialogue across diverse stakeholders (e.g., government, non-profit, academic institutions, service providers) regarding health-related policies and programs relevant to migrant communities, both locally and globally.

The New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs [reports](#) that more than 175,000 migrant and asylum seekers have passed through New York City (NYC) touchpoints since 2022, with over 67,000 currently living in the shelter system. The Legal Aid Society estimates that over 1,500 new migrants arrive in New York each week, with about 600 asylum seekers passing through the City's Asylum Seeker 24/7 Arrival Center weekly.

The arrival of large numbers of people from diverse countries of origin poses several challenges, including the need to provide essential services (e.g., housing and healthcare) with little advance notice to people at high risk for several health problems. Physical and mental health problems may be due to inadequate healthcare, poor vaccine infrastructure and/or violence they experience in their countries of origin, as well as the disease exposures and other risks they face on the long journey to New York. Assessing the health needs of new immigrants is not only vital to ensuring their health and ability to contribute to the economic growth of the City, but also to mitigate risk of outbreaks of diseases that are common in other countries but not in the US, for which we may not be well prepared. Given our recent research on and experiences with [COVID-19](#) and mPox, ensuring that new immigrants get the healthcare and shelter that they need – as quickly as possible - seems like an obvious priority. The New York City Department of Health has already documented an outbreak of varicella among recently arrived, presumably unvaccinated, children staying in shelters. This risk and others will be exacerbated by the suspension of city and state right-to-shelter provisions in the midst of a pre-existing housing crisis, meaning many new arrivals will become unhoused in the next month.

This recent surge in migrant arrivals also coincides with labor shortages in many employment categories in the city, including [service](#), [municipal](#), and healthcare, such as nurses and home health aides/home maker services, with a growing need for culturally and linguistically relevant service providers. However, there is a statutory prohibition against people being able to work until >180 days after the submission and processing of their asylum application. There are also challenges for people who have been trained and credentialed in a healthcare profession internationally to be cleared to work in their profession when they arrive in the US. Thus, our current policies create

bottlenecks in the work authorization processing system such that we are missing potentially valuable resources to fill staffing shortages in key areas, including healthcare. In addition, accessing the healthcare system in the US is based on the purchase of insurance, which is often paid for by employers. Thus, the inability to work makes ensuring healthcare access for new immigrants difficult, and programs are needed to guide newly arrived people to the services they need and access programs to pay for those services. However, there is little data on the healthcare needs of new immigrants in the City, which is needed to inform the development of appropriate programs linking them to the needed care.

Most new immigrants want to work, but the laws and lack of coordinated guidance to help them find employment suitable to their previous training and experience forces them to rely on government assistance, which may foment resentment among tax paying citizens. While New York City and State officials have explored some options to expand work opportunities for new arrivals, policymakers have yet to find an enduring solution. This may be, in part, due to a lack of data on the education, training, certification, and employment experience of new arrivals, which makes it difficult to form evidence-based policies.

Beginning in Summer 2024, CUNY SPH and CIRGH plan to address these data gaps by collaborating with key local partners and CUNY campuses that serve the migrant communities in New York City. We aim to collect, harmonize and analyze deidentified data on new arrivals to New York City, with the analysis of this data focusing on two areas that are key to informing the development of healthcare access programs and employment policies for new immigrants to help them integrate into and contribute to the economic development of New York City:

1. documenting the health status and healthcare needs of new arrivals to coordinate preventative care, such as vaccinations, and treatment of existing conditions through community partners and Federally Qualified Health Centers; and
2. describing the job skills and work experiences of new arrivals to inform work authorization regulations and linkages to address worker shortages in the city.

We have already proposed partnerships with several New York City and State policymakers including Senator Cordell Cleare, Assembly Members Phara Souffrant Forrest and Harvey Epstein, and Council Member Mercedes Narcisse to collect survey data from their districts. City Council's proposed legislation to improve the IDNYC application process, and advocate for streamlining federal and state work authorization regulations is promising, and CUNY SPH CIRGH stands ready to collaborate with you to identify and implement additional solutions to tackle this crisis.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share this testimony with you.



Kathleen Cravero, PhD
Distinguished Lecturer, CUNY SPH



**Testimony of Educational Alliance
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Small Business
Oswald Feliz, Chair
and
Committee on Immigration
Alexa Avilés, Chair**

**Oversight: Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce
June 11, 2024**

Thank you Chair Feliz and Chair Avilés for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Bird, I am Director of Public Policy at Educational Alliance (EA), a settlement house with community centers located throughout the Lower East Side and East Village that offer individuals and families high-quality, multi-generational programs and services that enhance their well-being and socioeconomic opportunities.

Introduction

Educational Alliance was one of the first settlement houses in New York City, founded 130 years ago in response to Jewish refugees fleeing persecution and hostility in Eastern Europe. At that time, we helped newly arrived individuals and families navigate the City by providing English language classes, early childhood education, and strengthened community connections. From these historic origins, our experience is particularly relevant as we welcome and integrate a new wave of asylum seekers into the City.

Today, I would like to speak about one specific response we have developed to connect asylum seekers to legal work authorization.

Educational Alliance’s pilot work authorization clinic

Like many human service organizations throughout the City, we noticed an uptick of asylum seeking individuals and families throughout our programs beginning in the summer of 2023, especially in our community schools, food pantry and free store, and our Family Resource Center. Through informal interactions, we learned that in addition to the services we were providing at the time, new arrivals were seeking opportunities to work.

In response, in February 2024 we launched a work authorization clinic through a pilot partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Asylum Seeker Operations (OASO). We are grateful for the Administration’s innovative spirit and willingness to collaborate with us on this initiative.

Our intention with the work authorization clinic was to reproduce the successful structures in place at the City’s Asylum Application Help Center (AAHC), albeit on a smaller scale, while still

You belong here.

adding capacity into the system at a time when large numbers of people were becoming newly eligible to apply for work authorization. By leveraging a strong network of volunteers to staff the clinic as application assistants, we were able to design a cost-effective pilot to complete work authorizations. In addition, individuals who come to our clinic have immediate access to some of the wrap-around services we offer as a settlement house, including English classes, food and clothing, and case management.

With the pilot work authorization clinic at EA, we make every effort to replicate the experience of the City's larger Asylum Application Help Center and maintain close fidelity to its model. For example, clients are seen by appointment only, volunteers must complete a thorough OASO-approved training prior to their shifts, and a supervising attorney – provided by OASO – reviews each application before it is submitted to ensure quality assurance.

There are some fundamental differences from the City's AAHC, however. Our clinic operates on a smaller scale, and only works with individuals filing for work authorization on the basis of pending asylum. As you know, the City's AAHC processes a large volume of various government forms related to immigration including asylum claims, TPS applications, and work authorization applications.

In addition, we offer coordinated supports during the work authorization clinic at our site. Representatives from the Department of Small Business Services and Workforce1 are consistently present during each clinic to connect clients with employment workshops, training opportunities, and job listings across the five boroughs. Clients can also sign up for our English classes, shop for clothing or dry goods in our free store, or access case management support that we provide.

Since launching in February, we have held 11 work authorization clinics and helped approximately 200 individuals with their work authorization applications. Through our partnership with SBS/Workforce1, 68 clients signed up for Workforce 1 programming and services during our clinics. This combination of application and workforce placement has worked very well and would be useful to replicate in other settings. We have recruited 87 volunteers as application assistants, language interpreters, and administrative support personnel, with over half returning for multiple shifts. As volunteers become more experienced and efficient, we increase our capacity to serve more individuals.

As a community organization, we've seen an outpouring of interest from people within our network looking for opportunities to help – by offering time, material goods, or financial contributions. Our volunteers who staff the work authorization clinics are reflective of the diverse Lower East Side community we serve and are eager to provide support in a time of need.

As New York City works to meet the enormous need of individuals fleeing unbearable living conditions, local community-based organizations like EA are providing vital supports that help asylum seekers become connected and independent members of our city. A critical step in this

process is completing the work authorization application, and because of our partnership with the City, we have increased the number of individuals who are able to legally work today.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony re: Workforce Development

Submitted to New York City Committee on Immigration

Submitted by Francesca Perrone, Senior Policy Analyst at Hispanic Federation

June 11th, 2024

Thank you, Chair Aviles, and all other committee members, for taking the time to read this testimony presented by Hispanic Federation; a non-profit organization seeking to empower and advance Hispanic communities through programs and legislative advocacy.

Hispanic Federation is presenting this testimony in support of **T2024-2094**, a local law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to creating a job bank for individuals with federal employment authorization.

General Need and Benefits of a Job Bank for Immigrants

Immigrants play a pivotal role in solving New York State's demanding workforce needs and have a higher tendency to fill roles in industries with significant staffing shortages.¹ Immigrants drive economic growth in cities across the nation. They bring valuable skills, qualifications, and experiences, yet face barriers to accessing job opportunities. Research consistently shows that immigrants are crucial in filling staffing gaps in the healthcare sector. Newcomers arrive eager to find employment to support themselves and their families. While newcomers are eager to work and seeking employment, many face barriers. Barriers to accessing job opportunities include language barriers, lacking the technology needed to apply to such opportunities, and lack of awareness of where to find job postings. A dedicated job posting board for individuals with work authorizations would bridge this gap, ensuring that these skilled individuals are not overlooked. By providing a centralized platform, the City can connect immigrants and newcomers with work authorizations directly with employers who are eager to tap into this diverse talent pool.

Studies indicate that economically, the benefits are substantial. By utilizing the skills of immigrants, businesses can address labor shortages, increase productivity, and drive innovation.² Immigrants bring unique perspectives and experiences that can lead to creative solutions and improved business practices. Furthermore, increased employment among

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/immigration-to-address-the-caregiving-shortfall/>

² <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2020-01/55967-CBO-immigration.pdf>



immigrants boosts their purchasing power, stimulating local economies and contributing to overall economic growth.³

T2024-2094 A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to a job bank for individuals with federal employment authorization:

Proposing an amendment to the City Charter to establish a job bank for individuals with federal employment authorizations promises significant advantages for our community. Firstly, it promotes inclusivity by enabling our new neighbors to actively participate in the job market. Secondly, this endeavor will bolster the economy by enriching the pool of resources and skill sets available in the job market. Thirdly, it alleviates obstacles encountered by newcomers during job applications and employment searches. Lastly, it fosters social cohesion and diminishes the isolation often felt by immigrants. A job posting bank for newcomers with a federal work authorization is an essential tool for harnessing the full potential of our community. It promotes inclusivity, strengthens social bonds, and drives economic prosperity, creating wins at every level. However, the efforts cannot stop there. There is a lack of support services for newly arriving immigrants to foster them as a catalyst for economic development. A job bank must be coupled with initiatives to support the community. Ensuring the accessibility and utilization of the job postings bank requires the city to invest in linguistically competent services to support applicants. These services play a crucial role in guiding individuals through the job market, enabling them to leverage their skills for economic contribution and community enrichment. The Hispanic Federation and our member and partner community organizations are bridging this gap by offering comprehensive, culturally sensitive, and linguistically competent job training and placement services. Our programs are tailored to train individuals for various job markets and empower them to confidently apply for positions.

How New York City can partner with HF (Hispanic Federation) and other Community Based Organization to provide culturally relevant and linguistically competent job trainings for jobs posted:

Job Trainings: Hispanic Federation and community-based service providers are uniquely equipped to provide effective job training services to immigrants and new arrivals. Many of the organizations in our network offer an array of critical training and certifications needed to enter specific industries such as: HSE/GED, OSHA/SST, CDL, as well as vital worker rights education and support. Hispanic Federation has developed multiple curricula designed to upskill community members from introductory level to advanced digital skills. We also partner with the nation's leading workforce and labor market data supplier to understand the jobs and skills that are in demand in local communities throughout the state. Additionally, Hispanic Federation has partnerships with technology companies, including Google, to provide job

³ <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2020-01/55967-CBO-immigration.pdf>

seekers with scholarships to earn industry-recognized credentials and certifications that will make our learners competitive in the tech sector job market.

Wrap Around Services: Hispanic Federation and our network of institutions serving communities of color provide services that meet the various needs of New Yorkers. In addition to workforce development training, we provide a variety of other services including food pantry services, financial literacy, entrepreneurship support, and mental and physical health services to ensure that all the needs of the individual and family are met.

Hispanic Federation and its network of organizations have the trust of community, skills, cultural competencies, and linguistic abilities required to successfully implement and continue these critical.

In summary, establishing a job bank that channels resources to newcomers effectively closes the gap between skilled immigrants and employers, promoting economic growth and diversity. This initiative streamlines job placement, expanding opportunities for newcomers while tackling workforce shortages across multiple industries. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to supporting this effort.



NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES ON IMMIGRATION & SMALL BUSINESS Oversight Hearing

Thank you to the City Council, Immigration Chair Aviles, Small Business Chair Feliz, and the Committees on Immigration and Small Business for their advocacy on the issue of expediting work authorization for asylum seekers. I am speaking on behalf of Hot Bread Kitchen, an organization that promotes economic mobility for women and gender-expansive people, immigrants, and people of color through job training and placement, food entrepreneurship programs, and an ecosystem of support in New York City, using our city's vibrant food industry as a catalyst for career growth. This year, we are also focusing our efforts to provide workforce training for New York's asylum seeker population. Thank you to the City Council for your ongoing and steadfast support of our work, our members, and our initiatives.

Over the past 16 years, Hot Bread Kitchen has supported a community of over 1,500 program participants, who we call members, in launching careers in the food industry, starting and growing their small businesses, and accessing the resources they need to succeed at work and in the world. Our community, which includes residents of 50 City Council districts, consists primarily of women of color (93%). Roughly two thirds of members ever engaged across our programs were born outside of the United States; and roughly one third of our members this year are non-native English speakers, and 70% of our program participants this year were unemployed and below the poverty threshold before enrolling in our program. Our members are dedicated, hard-working New Yorkers seeking opportunities for meaningful careers, sustainable income, and long-term wealth generation for their families.

Hot Bread Kitchen offers our members a number of programs in order to reach economic mobility.

1. Workforce Training
 - a. Culinary Training: our signature 100-hour training focuses on culinary fundamentals and professional readiness, case management support, and job placement within our network of high-quality employer partners, and layers on customized retention services.
 - b. Upskilling: In partnership with NYC Department of Small Business Services, in 2023, we launched upskilling programs which enable food workers to gain additional skills leading to higher wages and career advancement.
 - c. Front of House Training: in 2024, we launched training and job placement for customer-facing roles in the food industry, which typically offer higher starting pay rates than back of house roles
2. Job Placement: We place all workforce training graduates into a high-quality job through our 250+ employer partners.

3. Human Services: As part of our support and retention program and our community-building efforts, we ensure that members have access to any assistance they need to start work confidently and safely– we offer wraparound support services in the form of MetroCards, support accessing childcare vouchers and affordable housing, referrals to health services, case management, financial counseling, etc.
4. Quality Jobs Initiative: In partnership with the Good Jobs Institute, we are working with a cohort of small food businesses to create practical frameworks to recruit and retain talent, promoting a systems change approach and better employment practices across the food industry.
5. Small Business Incubation: We have helped incubate nearly 250 food businesses to date, mostly owned by immigrants and women of color. Through our HBK Incubates program, we provide technical assistance, mentorship, access to markets, subsidized commercial kitchen space, and access to capital to food entrepreneurs of color.

This year, among many other initiatives, we have adapted our signature workforce training program into a new offering, **Culinary Career Pathways for New New Yorkers**. As an unprecedented number of migrants and asylum seekers arrive in New York City, Hot Bread Kitchen now offers a bi-lingual program which facilitates access to high-quality employment for migrants who have received work authorization in New York City. This program will train 80 participants over four cohorts this calendar year and consists of five weeks of kitchen and professional readiness training, with additional Food Protection training. Intensive ESOL instruction is also provided, 3 hours per day, and contextualized for the food industry. Our first cohort graduated from the program in late May, and we can say with confidence that there is overwhelming demand for this program: we have received over 600 applications to date to fill just 40 program slots for our first two cohorts. Through this work to date, we have learned many lessons from working directly with migrants on workforce development to date and would be happy to connect with anyone who wants to learn more to share our experience and expertise.

Our work, however, is not yet done. More than two thirds of the members making up our first cohort reside in shelters; equally as many have young children to care for. Dozens of applicants have not been able to advance to the interview stage of our application process due to a lack of work authorization; others are working to receive their authorization and hope to apply to join a future cohort. This program can provide an economic bridge to the next phase in many of these individuals' lives here in New York. And, while Hot Bread Kitchen has received a foundational grant to launch this program, we will need appropriate funding to ensure we can effectively roll out the remainder of our program. In addition to supporting your efforts to address the work authorization backlog, **we are also seeking the Council's support in FY25 specifically for this program**. We believe it is imperative for our organization and our City to welcome this community into the workforce and do our utmost to meet their needs at this critical time in their lives, and we hope the Council can support us in this effort.

On behalf of Hot Bread Kitchen, I thank you for calling for a resolution to the work authorization backlogs at the federal level, and I respectfully urge this Council to support our application for new funding for this new training. Thank you for your attention to this important issue and for your investment in Hot Bread Kitchen's work and community.

Eftihia Thomopoulos, Senior Manager of Strategic Initiatives

TESTIMONY OF:

**Lowell Barton, Vice President, and Organizing Director
Laborers' Local 1010 for Joint Hearing before
The New York City Council Immigration Committee
June 11th, 2024**

Good morning, Chair Alexa Aviles and members of the Council's Committee on Immigration. My name is Lowell Barton, and I am the Vice President of Laborers' Local 1010, the premier Paving and Road Building Union in New York City. We represent over 2500 men and women in the skilled construction industry building the streets, bridges, and highways throughout the five boroughs of NYC. Local 1010 is an affiliate of the NYS Laborers, representing over 40,000 men and women across the state, and is a proud affiliate of the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA). I want to thank Committee Chair, Alexa Aviles for having this important and timely committee hearing.

We strongly support Intro 216-2024, and Resolutions 230 and 235-2024.

Introduction 216-2024 (Hanif), amend the administrative code of the city of New York, would enhancing the IDNYC application process; Resolution 230-2024 (Brewer): calls on the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Secretary of Homeland Security to grant humanitarian parole, of at least two years, to asylum seekers who entered the United States prior to the date this parole is announced; and Resolution 235-2024 (Brewer), calls on United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to quickly clear the backlog of I-765 applications for employment authorization.

Our country was built by immigrants. From the peaks of Nepal to the shores of Brazil, members of Laborers' Local 1010 hail from over 50 countries and share the same American Dream and search for economic security as many of the new migrants who travel to the United States do. Laborers' Local 1010 echoes the need for more funding to support the influx in migrants coming to the United States and further calls on the U.S.

federal government to provide the necessary financial support to New York City for these new families.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the impact federal, Comprehensive immigration reform would be and is essential to this conversation to better support the millions of immigrants who come to this country in search for a better life, including many of our members, some of whom are yet to become full citizens, yet contribute whole to society. Local 1010 will continue to advocate on behalf of immigrants and our members who deserve access to full citizenship and work authorization in this country, which we believe aligns well with the introduction and resolutions being heard today.

Thank you again to Committee Chair, Alexa Aviles for having this important hearing today. We look forward to continuing to work with the Council to create support immigrants and asylum seekers in this country. Thank you.

June 11, 2024

Comments of the NYC Hospitality Alliance to the NYC Council Committee on Immigration and Committee on Small Business, regarding, Oversight - Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce

The NYC Hospitality Alliance is a not-for-profit organization serving and representing thousands of restaurants, bars, and nightclubs across the five boroughs. We submit this testimony to the City Council's Committee on Immigration and Committee on Small Business, regarding, **Oversight** - Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce.

Immigrants have long been the backbone of New York City's restaurant industry - the hospitality sector has for generations provided employment opportunities to people arriving here from around the globe. These opportunities let them support themselves and their families and strengthen our economy and culture. But the diversity of people who have immigrated here has also greatly contributed to the vibrancy and diversity of cuisine served in our restaurants and is a major factor why New York City is often called the Restaurant Capital of the World.

As asylum seekers and migrants arrived in New York more recently, the NYC Hospitality Alliance became a leading voice urging the federal government to expedite work authorization for these folks because we knew they would seek employment in the restaurant industry to provide for themselves and their families, just as countless waves of people from around the world have done for generations. The timing of this wave's arrival coincided with our city's restaurant industry pandemic recovery. At the time there was a massive labor shortage, and many food service jobs were not being filled by work authorized New Yorkers. And while recent arrivals found work in various sectors in the underground economy, we strongly believed there was/is great value for them, for employers, and New York at-large to have an authorized work environment.

Thus, we worked with many immigrant and workforce training non-profits to support and help with restaurant workforce training and job placement initiatives, and government agencies such as the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) that has been and excellent partner. For example, we worked with Hot Bread Kitchen, C-CAP on training grants and job placement, and with the Department of Labor. We recently co-hosted an initial job fair with SBS for 6 restaurant groups and over 150 work authorized jobseekers attended, and we continue work with the agency to connect employers with jobseekers using customized strategies.

Even though the city's restaurant industry pandemic-era worker shortage is not dire as it once was, the city's hospitality industry is always hiring and providing job opportunities for all levels of candidates, with or without sector experience and with language barriers. So, we encourage the City Council to support agencies like SBS, and non-profits that provide workforce training and job placement, ESL courses, and wraparound services for asylum seekers and migrants to help make sure the experience and efforts succeed for all parties.

If you have comments or questions, please contact our Executive Director Andrew Rigie at arigie@thenycalliance.org. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY COUNCIL (RCC)

P.O.Box 578, New York NY 10040 * 646.634.8417 *

* rcc-ara@rcc-amrusrights.org * <https://rcc-amrusrights.org> * www.facebook.com/RCC.org



Testimony

for the New York City Council Immigration Committee and Committee on Small Business hearing on 'Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce'

By Dmitri Daniel Glinski, President & CEO, RCC

June 11, 2024

Thank you, Chair Aviles and Chair Feliz, for the opportunity to support this important legislation. Our Russian-speaking Community Council is the oldest active nonprofit in our New York community of 21-century exiles from ex-Soviet autocracies. We provide newcomers with culturally competent services, including organizing and advocacy. In the past 3 years, over 70,000 Russians went through our southern border seeking refuge from tyranny and war. (This means close to 20% increase in the size of the Russian diaspora in the US.) Granting parole to all those applying for asylum would bring more uniformity and equity to these decisions and to the waiting times for employment authorizations. Clearing the backlog on them is also timely and necessary. And so is the State bill removing immigration-related barriers to licensing and certification.

But these much-needed solutions would not be enough to address the disadvantages and the 'soft' forms of exclusion from certain areas of work the workforce faced by some of our refugee diasporas and subgroups within them. The latest influx of asylum seekers from Russia has brought many of those who worked in public life on the side of human rights and democracy. Some of them had to flee from their country in the middle of their careers because of speaking out against the war of aggression. Their experience in their country's struggles brings value to the US and New York as our own democracy is being threatened, directly and indirectly, by the same or related actors (some of whose collaborators have had significantly more clout and opportunities in our city than those fleeing from them). We at RCC are meeting asylum seekers who in better times worked as community organizers or pro-democracy campaign managers; here after gaining their EADs they are lucky to get entry-level jobs in Staples or Target - great companies but not always the most efficient use for these people's talents and passions. Alas - let me put it bluntly - most of our international nonprofits, research centers, and related agencies, including City-funded like CUNY and others, are yet to acknowledge the activists and professionals in exile from autocracies and the skills and experience they bring (as can be attested by those of us from the previous waves who came here from backgrounds in human rights and democracy movements).

I urge our esteemed City Council to set up or encourage the creation of a fellowship-type incubator for public service professionals fleeing from autocracies, to facilitate their entry into nonprofits, research centers, perhaps even city agencies – so that our city can benefit from their experience and transferable skills gained in fighting against the forces that threaten our own future.

And we encourage the recently created New Arrivals Strategy Team to meet with some of our refugees and asylees and include their CBOs in its cohorts.



New York City Council
Committee on Immigration & Committee on Small Business
Oversight - Preparing Asylum Seekers and Migrants for the Workforce
June 11, 2024

Testimony of Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez
Deputy Director, Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center

Good morning Chair Aviles and Chair Feliz. Committee members. My name is Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez. I am the Deputy Director of the Street Vendor Project, a membership-based organization of over 3,000 street vendor members - thank you for the opportunity to testify. As the primary 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're here today to provide insight to the current landscape of street vending and continue to advocate for the street vendor reform package.

Street vending has long played a vital role in the city's growth, supporting immigrants, people of color, and veterans to successfully operate microbusinesses. It's a way for New Yorkers dealing with our broken immigration system to earn a living and often is much safer than the alternatives available. Yet street vendors have been trapped in a discriminatory licensing regime for far too long, and we urgently need City Council to comprehensively pass the Street Vendor Reform Package, by bringing vendors into the system, ending the unregulated status quo that takes advantage of workers, customers, and fellow small businesses.

There is a striking parallel between the lack of immigration reform and the wait for work permits and the 20,000-name vendor permit license waitlist. Immigrant New Yorkers who have been trying to earn an honest living have been waiting a long time for the system to recognize their humanity. Entrepreneurship should be supported and regulated, rather than rain down punitive enforcement on a broken system that harms both longtime vendors stuck in the system as well as New New Yorkers.

Years of tweaking the current system at the margins has failed to deliver for vendors. It's time to comprehensively reform this system. We need a comprehensive reform of the street vending system, to create stability, order and economic opportunity in communities in need. We need the

City Council to enact the Street Vendor Reform Legislative Package, including Intros 431, 408, 47, and 24. This package of bills will let vendors provide the services New Yorkers want - in a regulated, predictable, enforceable system - and give them a real chance to build wealth in their neighborhoods. By ensuring all vendors operate with licenses and permits; repealing criminal liability for vending; launching a division for this sector within NYC SBS; and creating more legal locations for vending, we will dramatically overhaul a broken system, and give New York's smallest businesses a real chance to thrive in our local economy.



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

**Testimony of Win (Formerly Women in Need, Inc.) for the New York City Council
Committees on Immigration and Small Business Joint Hearing
June 11th, 2024**

Thank you, Chair Aviles, Chair Feliz, and the esteemed members of the Committees on Immigration and Small Business for holding this hearing on preparing migrants and asylum seekers for the workforce and for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My name is Jade Vasquez, and I am the Director of Policy and Research at Win, the largest provider of shelter and services to families with children experiencing homelessness in New York City. We operate 16 shelters and nearly 500 supportive housing units across the five boroughs. Each night, nearly 7,000 people call Win “home,” including 3,600 children.

Win has always welcomed immigrants to our shelters, and we are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive space for all unhoused families in need, regardless of their immigration status. We estimate that a third of our families are immigrants, and more than 300 of these families are recent arrivals, who have come into our shelter system without legal status or access to public benefits.

Win supports the bills and resolutions introduced by City Council that will improve new arrivals’ access to IDNYC cards, work authorization, and employment opportunities, and urge the Council to also support Congress’ bipartisan [Let Asylum Seekers Work Act](#), which would reduce the arbitrary waiting period for asylum applicants to receive work authorization from 180 days to 30 days.

However, without adequate investments in immigration legal assistance, comprehensive case management services, and workforce development programs, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, it will be very challenging for asylum seekers and migrant families to obtain legal status, secure employment, and exit into permanent housing.

Last year, to address to the critical gap in immigration legal services for our shelter residents, Win partnered with the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) to launch our Legal Empowerment for Asylum-Seeking and Displaced Families program, also known as LEAD. Through legal clinics and pro se application assistance, LEAD helps unhoused migrants navigate the United States’ complex immigration system and apply for work authorization. Since launching the program, the LEAD team has screened 371 families in our care and helped 64 individuals apply for asylum and work authorization. Today, 58% of the applicants we served



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

have received work authorization, a crucial step in a migrant family's journey to financial independence.

Immigration legal services are key to helping migrants and asylum seekers begin their new lives in the United States. A Syracuse University analysis of U.S. immigration court records found that, over the past decade, two-thirds of asylum applicants were able to remain in country, citing legal representation as a primary indicator for success. On average, 95% of asylum applicants in court are represented by an attorney. Without an attorney, few asylum seekers are able to apply.¹ In addition to helping new immigrants obtain legal status, legal representation is necessary for reducing the massive court backlog in New York Immigration Courts, which currently has 373,000 pending cases. Expanded legal representation is also critical for opening other legal pathways to newcomers, such as Temporary Protected Status, U-Visas, and more.² Win is proud to support New York State's Access to Representation Act, but in absence of the law, the City must increase funding for immigration legal services. Immigration advocates are calling for \$150 million to meet the high demand.³

In addition to increased investments for legal aid, Win is calling for improved coordination and collaboration between the City and New York's immigration courts. New administrative barriers in the immigration courts have artificially exacerbated delays in the processing of asylum applications. Through recent reports from our migrant clients, Win has learned of asylum applicants having their cases paused by a federal judge if they claimed they did not have a lawyer. Judges have made this decision after our clients submitted their application for Employment Authorization (EAD), which currently has a 180-day waiting period for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to review and determine eligibility. By pausing the EAD clock, federal judges are delaying new arrivals' ability to obtain work authorization beyond 6 months and, consequently, their ability to earn a stable income and exit shelter sooner.

According to a U.S. Chamber of Commerce report on America's labor shortage, New York State has a 13% job vacancy rate, meaning that for every 100 open jobs, there are only 87 available workers.⁴ The Chamber cites a decline in net international migration to the United States as a contributing factor to our nation's labor shortages,⁵ which can largely be attributed to outdated and restrictive federal immigration policies.

Win is confident that NYC's newest arrivals can fill those labor gaps and strengthen our city's economy. Along with supporting the legal needs of our migrant clients, Win's Income Building program has been instrumental in preparing new arrivals and all unhoused residents for the workforce. Our team of specialists helps shelter residents access certification programs for high demand industries, like the home health aide, construction, and childcare sectors; establishes partnerships with local businesses to foster employment opportunities for English Language Learners; offers financial literacy workshops and educational pathways, including high school equivalency or alternative programs in Spanish, ESOL classes in various proficiency levels, and college scholarships. Of the new migrants that LEAD has helped obtain work authorization, one-



Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children

third have already secured employment, thanks to the vital work of our Income Building specialists.

Although Win has received some funding from government contracts to support the enhanced services necessary for migrant families, Win has stepped up, utilizing unrestricted dollars and generous donations to support every family we serve, regardless of their background. Win's innovative programs, like LEAD and Income Building can serve as a model as the city addresses the increased demand for immigration legal services and the City's labor shortages. While we are thankful for your support in providing shelter and humanitarian aid to new arrivals, we believe it is time for our City to develop long-term sustainable solutions that allow migrant families to build a future in New York. Win is eager to work alongside City Hall and City Council to implement these humane and fiscally sound solutions and break the cycle of homelessness for migrants and asylum-seekers.

¹ "Two-Thirds of Court Asylum Applicants Found Legally Entitled to Remain," *Syracuse University: TRAC Immigration*, May 17, 2024, <https://trac.syr.edu/reports/742/>.

² "Immigration Court Backlog," *Syracuse University: TRAC Immigration*, last updated April 2024, <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/backlog/>.

³ "NYS Budget's Immigrant Services Funding Shortfall Jeopardizes Family Protection & Community Stability," *New York Immigration Coalition*, April 20, 2024, <https://www.nyic.org/2024/04/nys-budgets-immigrant-services-funding-shortfall-jeopardizes-family-protection-community-stability/>.

⁴ Lindsay Cates and Stephanie Ferguson, "Understanding America's Labor Shortage: The Most Impacted States," *United States Chamber of Commerce*, May 31, 2024, <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/the-states-suffering-most-from-the-labor-shortage?state=ny>.

⁵ Stephanie Ferguson, "Understanding America's Labor Shortage," *United States Chamber of Commerce*, May 13, 2024, <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-americas-labor-shortage>.

Good morning Members of the City Council,

My name is Sheike Ward-Kidd and I am a nursing home worker and a Member Political Organizer at 1199SEIU. I would first like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

New York has the opportunity to make tremendous change that will positively impact our communities, workforce, and local economies. The influx of migrants is a real opportunity to address the workforce crisis in our healthcare facilities and in other industries while improving the lives of migrants coming to New York City.

Hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and home care have struggling to recruit and retain the workforce necessary to care for the growing aging population in New York. Short staffing has been a concern for years and the experience of the pandemic worsened it, considerably. As an activity's aide at a nursing home, the effects staffing shortages has on the facility, the employees and most importantly the consumers, is something I see every day. These staffing issues strain the ability of providers to meet the needs of consumers.

Nursing home and home care work has long been a first opportunity for immigrants who can begin a career after meeting the training requirements and passing an exam. Most CNA programs are between four and 12 weeks and they are the first step to building a career ladder for continuing their clinical education and pursuing jobs in nursing or other healthcare fields.

I came here from Jamaica a little over a decade ago and I remember the struggle it was for me to find work. For a long time, I had to depend on my husband to survive which was extremely hard for me since I had been independent, working and taking care of myself since I was 18 years old. I was incredibly grateful to have someone I could depend on but unfortunately many people do not have that support that I did, especially those seeking asylum.

Getting into the healthcare industry then later joining a union gave me the opportunity to begin making an income and growing professionally. Many 1199SEIU represented hospitals, nursing homes, and home care workers across the city are staffed by immigrants who had a journey similar to mine. Some even utilizing the union's training program which helped them receive their initial certification, continue their education, and career pathway.

Through the 1199SEIU Training and Employment Funds, tens of thousands frontline healthcare workers a year are supported on their educational journey. The Training and Employment Funds provide support for foundational skills, such

as High School Equivalency and English for Speakers of Other Languages, college preparation, allied health certificate and degree programs in more than fifty occupations, a citizenship program, an employment center through which 10,000 healthcare job vacancies are listed each year, and much more. A full 60% of those workers accessing training benefits and support every year are immigrants.

We are urging the Council to pass this bill and resolutions and call on the federal government to collaborate with the state and city governments to prepare the incoming migrants for the workforce and provide them proper identification documents. We have a chance to improve the workforce crisis across the state, especially the shortages in healthcare, with the arrival of migrants who want and need job opportunities.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dmitri Daniel Gliniski *Signed up online inadv...*

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY 10040

I represent: Russian-speaking Community Council Inc.

Address: P.O. Box 578, NY NY 10040

**THE COUNCIL
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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

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Name: ADANA BA

Address: 2477 Belmont N.Y. NY

I represent: Abike

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CARINA KAUFMAN-GUTERREZ

Address: _____

I represent: Street Vendor Project

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yesenia Mata

Address: _____

I represent: La Colmena

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GREGORY J MORRIS

Address: 121 6th AVE NYC 10013

I represent: New York City Employment Training
Council

Address: 121 6th AVE NYC 10013

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: June 11, 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: Jamaica Ny 11436

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

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Name: Fatoumata Batouly Diallo

Address: _____

I represent: ACT

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jade Vasquez

Address: _____

I represent: Win

Address: 1001 State Street NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 06/11/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DARLY CORNIEI

Address: 305 7th Ave. 3F NY-NY

I represent: Consortium for Worker Education

Address: 305 7th Ave. 3F. NY-NY 10011

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eftihia Thomopoulos, Senior Manager, Hot Bread Kitchen

Address: _____

I represent: Hot Bread Kitchen

Address: ethomopoulos@hotbreadkitchen.org 212-540-9071

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tom Tortorici

Address: 253 Broadway

I represent: NYC Mayor's Office of Imm Affairs

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0216 Res. No. 0230/235

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shenke Ward

Address: [Redacted] Rosedale NY 11422

I represent: 1199SEIU

Address: 498 7th Ave., NY, NY 10018

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: June 11 2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elizabeth Bird,

Address: _____

I represent: Educational Alliance

Address: 197 East Broadway NY NY

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. N/A Res. No. N/A
 in favor in opposition

Date: 6/11/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dynistal Cross

Address: 9 Liberty Plaza, New York, N.Y.

I represent: Small Business Services (SBS)

Address: "

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. N/A Res. No. N/A
 in favor in opposition

Date: 6/11/2024

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Yuriy Pawluk

Address: 9 Liberty Plaza, N.Y., N.Y.

I represent: Small Business Services (SBS)

Address: "

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 06/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DORIAN BLOCK

Address: _____ NY, NY

I represent: The Center for an URBAN FUTURE

Address: 80 8th Avenue, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dinah Foley

Address: _____

I represent: Brooklyn Defender Services

Address: Brooklyn

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dinick Martinez

Address: _____

I represent: Myself LIC NY

Address: _____ 11101

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 214 Res. No. 235/230

in favor in opposition

Date: 4/11/24

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ANDREW SANTA ANA

Address: _____

I represent: ASIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION

Address: 120 WALL ST 9th FL NY NY 10005

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Magdalena Toapanta

Address: _____

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mania Luisa Serrana

Address: _____

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maya Guzman

Address: _____

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ligia Guallon

Address: _____

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lorena Lucero

Address: 253 Broadway

I represent: MOJA

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Corena Lucero

Address: MOJA

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Grace Riddick

Address: _____

I represent: OASU

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Masha G.

Address: OASU

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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