



2016 New York City Immigrant Opportunity Agenda Policy & Budget Recommendations

1. Advancing Adult Education

- *The NYC Council should invest \$16 million in adult literacy programming.*

This investment in adult literacy education from community-based organizations, CUNY, and the public libraries addresses the crisis of 1.7 million New York City residents who lack English proficiency, a high school diploma, or both. The recommended \$16 million will support 13,300 students in adult literacy programs including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Basic Education in Native Language (BENL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation.

2. Making Health Care Equitable and Accessible for Immigrant Communities

- *The City should create and convene a formalized Community Advisory Board to ensure the new Direct Access pilot reflects the full range of needs and concerns of uninsured immigrants.*
- *The Council should increase funding for Access Health NYC from \$1 million to \$5 million and should administer it through a transparent, accessible request for proposals (RFP) process.*

This level of transparency would be consistent with the inclusive nature of the Mayor's Taskforce on Immigrant Health Access, which leveraged the input of numerous immigrant-serving advocates and service providers. Access Health NYC provides critical resources to increase the capacity of trusted CBOs to educate the communities they serve about health access, coverage, and protections.

3. Legal Services for New Americans

- *Include \$13.3m to Legal Services in the Immigrant Opportunity Initiatives (IOI).*
- *Improve Protections From Immigrant Services Scams.*
- *Improve Contract Management for Legal Service Providers.*
- *Baseline the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project.*

The City Council and the Mayor should include \$13.3 million in the final budget for IOI, which would pay for 150 attorneys or paralegals to provide unrestricted services to immigrants. The cost of each case should be raised to \$1,500 per case, but only be used for complex case representation to complement other funding sources. The City Council should pass legislation to ensure that City law matches State law, and to give the Department of Consumer Affairs new tools when receiving complaints of immigrant services scams. In addition, law enforcement agencies, including District Attorneys and the New York Police Department, should implement systems specifically to assist immigrant victims of fraud. The Mayor should ensure that City contracts with Legal Service Providers are administered and executed in a manner that allows organizations to provide a continuity of service while adhering to ethical rules and principles governing attorneys.

4. Engaging Immigrant New Yorkers

- *Empower all New Yorkers in the Electoral Process with Municipal Resident Voting.*
- *Student Voter Registration Day (SVRD) at \$1MM.*
- *Expand Participatory Budgeting (PB) to every City Council district to engage immigrant communities, and extend PB beyond capital budgets to include expense funding.*
- *Revamp the Board of Elections through a package of reforms to enfranchise immigrant voters.*

The NYC City Council should support the enfranchisement of all New York City residents for city-level elections. By passing legislation for Municipal Resident Voting, the City Council will guarantee the ability of those who live and work in NYC to have a share in important decisions necessary to ensure a better quality of life for themselves and their families. The City Council should increase funding for Student Voter Registration Day which will support the expansion of the program to multiple days and increase the number of high schools who participate. By funding SVRD, high school seniors in all City Council districts will be registered to vote, pledge to be civically engaged, and be given resources on immigration and college support. We plan to work with the New York City Council to increase immigrant participation in "participatory budgeting." The Council should provide \$40,000 per district to help engage communities that have traditionally been excluded from local decision-making because they lack English proficiency or immigration status, or are culturally unfamiliar with civic processes. Reform the Board of Elections to efficiently improve programming and procedures, implementing a cultural competency curriculum and updated training program for election site workers. We also seek resources to provide community based oversight and analysis of poll sites so that community-based organizations can monitor service provision.

5. Education for New Americans

- *Enact a Chancellor's Regulation that establishes clear cultural competency standards for schools.*
- *Integrate cultural competency into the Borough Field Support Center Language Access Coordinator role.*
- *Establish budget allocations to support cultural competency initiatives in schools.*

The Department of Education (DOE) should establish via Chancellor's Regulation a set of cultural competency standards that are informed by partnerships with community based organizations, so that schools can build an institutional attitude of cultural awareness and respect. These standards can be used as a tool to identify challenges and target areas for improvement and to develop teacher/ administrator trainings, more culturally responsive curricula, anti-bullying initiatives, and identity development workshops. The DOE should incorporate cultural competency monitoring of schools into the new Field Language Access Coordinator positions. As language services are a large part of cultural competency, these coordinators will already have the baseline knowledge, skills, and instincts to readily assess other areas of cultural competency. Professional development should be offered for coordinators to continuously build cultural competency skills and remain aware of any demographic changes in schools. The City should provide necessary resources for schools and the DOE to successfully carry out cultural competency initiatives, including partnerships with community-based nonprofits, service providers and partners. Schools who want to improve in this area should be given the support to succeed.

6. Protecting Low-Wage Workers

- *Invest \$2M to Day Laborer Centers.*
- *Pass the Responsible Construction Contractor Licensing Act.*

The City Council and the Mayor should include \$2 million in the final budget to support expansion and development of Day Laborer Centers. The City Council and the Mayor should pass the Responsible Construction Contractor Licensing Act to curb unlicensed contractors and prohibit the licensing of contractors who fail to pay judgments against them for wage theft violations.

7. Inclusive Contracting with Small Community-Based Organizations

- *Promote equity in the RFP and selection process.*
- *Grow capacity by encouraging support structures.*
- *Ensure culturally competent outreach.*
- *Ensure an efficient system of payments to aid financial stability.*

New York City can improve contracting with qualified social service delivery organizations by awarding 10 percent of points in the RFP evaluation process for those that demonstrate their capacity to provide culturally competent and language accessible services. The city can also leverage micro-purchasing to contract with small organizations to provide social services, and facilitate subcontracting for coalitions and networks that unite large and small organizations. The City government should contract with coalitions and federations to provide training, technical assistance, and capacity building grants to nonprofit organizations; along with providing back office support to nonprofit organizations receiving first government contract and enacting an improved customer relationship model (CRM) between the City and nonprofit organizations through HHS Accelerator, NYC can encourage sustainable growth in small organizations' capacity. City agencies should involve culturally competent and linguistically appropriate staff in the development of RFPs, evaluation of grant applications, and outreach to community based organizations in each borough when concept papers and RFPs are released. The City should ensure the financial stability of its contracted organizations by streamlining its own processes and leveraging its relationships with the State and banks, reforming the City's payment system to ensure contracted organizations receive funding within 60 days.

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