

Immigration Justice
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NYSCOC Immigration Working Group

With the recent election, our congregations are very alarmed about the mass deportation orders of our neighbors. We look to the state of New York to do everything in its power to resist deportation while supporting programs which make it easier for our immigrant New Yorkers to use their gifts and graces to contribute to our communities and to stabilize their families. The Governor needs to be as forthright as possible to counter threats of mass deportation and work tirelessly to protect the rights of immigrants and those who employ them. She needs to emphasize at every turn that offering a bold welcome to immigrants is not only the right moral thing to do but is good for their livelihood and our economy as a whole.

We urge the Governor to prioritize a more equitable allocation of resources for immigrant resettlement in the FY 2025-2026 budget. Rural and suburban areas received only \$25 million through the MRAP program last year to assist with housing and other services to asylum seeker leaving them underfunded compared to New York City.

These upstate regions need increased support to build sustainable infrastructure for housing, legal assistance, and social services. Additionally, the Office for New Americans (ONA) requires \$150 million in funding to expand access to essential legal services, which are critical for immigrants navigating complex legal processes.

We also for the Governor's leadership in passing the following bills:

New York for All Act: Protects immigrants from being funneled to ICE by prohibiting all state and local agencies from conspiring with ICE and CBP or participating in their cruelty

Dignity Not Detention: Ends ICE's contracts with local jails, reuniting people with their families and communities while also enabling them to more capably fight deportation.

Access to Representation: Enacts the first right to counsel for immigrants and help stabilize immigrants' lives

Clemency Justice Act: Creates transparency around the clemency process in New York State.

Making all immigrants eligible for Medicaid is essential to public health and upholds our state's values. We also support the Bridge Unemployment program for people, including immigrants, who cannot access state unemployment benefits. In addition, we support \$100 million to enable businesses to hire asylum seekers with work permits while offering other supports but only as part of a comprehensive approach to immigrant assistance which includes non-cooperation with ICE, legal services, and medical, housing and language support.

As Leviticus 19:34 reminds us, “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself.” Welcoming immigrants is not only a moral responsibility but also an economic opportunity, strengthening communities and driving growth.

By addressing these needs, New York can lead the nation in fostering inclusion, justice, and prosperity for all its residents.