

5 Ideas

To Support Immigrant New Yorkers

New York is a city of immigrants, and ensuring access to housing, employment, and education for newly arrived New Yorkers helps them transition, and strengthens the City's social and economic system. Settlement houses have helped immigrants settle in New York City for more than a century, and one way they do so is by offering services that are open and welcoming. Rather than creating dedicated stand-alone programs for immigrants, policymakers can emphasize coordinating city-wide services to streamline their access to existing resources:



1

Ensure that anyone who wants to learn English can

Adult literacy programs serve as entry points for adult learners who are subsequently connected to workforce training support and other wraparound services that strengthen their families' economic and social well-being. Despite the need for community-based adult literacy programs¹ fewer than 3% of English language learners are able to access classes due to inadequate public funding.

- **Expand options for adult literacy** education programs
- **Lift geographic restrictions on programming** so that qualified providers can serve immigrants wherever they are located
- **Explore remote learning opportunities** for adult literacy and education classes, which worked well during the pandemic and are more accessible to adults with caregiving or job responsibilities

2

Give people real, coordinated support as they start a new life in New York City

All New Yorkers benefit when immigrants have the support they need to become financially stable, but there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. Robust supports help people become financially independent.

- **Invest in expanded resettlement programming** including case management, with benefits navigation and housing placement, legal services, and assistance completing legal forms such as work authorizations
- **Support learning and education** by offering English as a second language and literacy classes, providing workforce training/skills building classes, and assisting with identifying and applying for jobs

1. In New York City, an estimated 2 million adults have limited English-language proficiency or lack a high school diploma

3

Restore a right to shelter for immigrants

For decades, New Yorkers with nowhere else to turn have been able to access emergency shelters. Putting time limits on shelter stays for asylum-seeking families threatens their progress towards self-sufficiency by interrupting work, school, and program participation.

- **Eliminate shelter limits** for asylum seekers to maintain the City's right to shelter mandate
- **Ensure families with young children** have uninterrupted housing during the school year, as moving disrupts educational progress, upends child care, and threatens parents' progress towards work authorization and employment

4

Provide a safe learning environment for immigrant children

Immigrant children must have access to year-round educational, social, and language supports. When immigrant children are safe and cared for, immigrant parents can work, learn English, and acclimate to a new environment more rapidly.

- **Baseline and expand childcare options** for immigrants
- **Hire additional school counselors and social workers** to support the unique needs of immigrant families and their children
- **Instruct schools to take steps to protect immigrant students** by refusing to cooperate with non-local law enforcement

5

Uphold New York City's sanctuary laws and policies

New York is a city of immigrants, and our sanctuary city status has enabled everyone to participate in public life together. When our sanctuary city status is questioned, it leads to a chilling effect with many undocumented New Yorkers staying home. No one benefits when immigrants stop participating in adult literacy education, workforce programming, or educational programs.

- **Give clear guidance to city employees and city contractors** on our sanctuary city laws
- **Ensure that New York City Public Schools remain safe for all students** regardless of documentation status