



# 2023

## Annual Report on New York City's Immigrant Population and Initiatives of the Office



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**Mayor Eric Adams  
Celebrates  
Lunar New Year**

**2024 - Year of the Dragon**





# MESSAGE FROM MAYOR ERIC ADAMS



To my fellow New Yorkers:

New York is a proud city of immigrants. We have long been a safe harbor for generations around the globe seeking freedom, safety, and the chance of a better future. Today, we are home to people of all backgrounds living together in one place. That is the magic of New York City.

Immigration is core to our identity. And as we assist thousands of asylum seekers who have recently arrived on our shores, we must remember to uphold our values of compassion, acceptance, and inclusion.

Our administration came into office with the aim of keeping the American Dream alive for everyone — including immigrants — by protecting public safety, rebuilding our economy, and making our city more livable for everyday New Yorkers.

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) has been key to that mission. As we continue to build a city of hope, equity, and justice, we are committed to ensuring that our immigrant communities can live with dignity. MOIA works tirelessly to ensure that New Yorkers can thrive, regardless of the language they speak. Whether it is providing access to language assistance, to legal and health services, or discrimination, MOIA is there for you.

I want to thank Commissioner Castro and his team for the exceptional work they do for our immigrant communities across New York City.

We are all New Yorkers, and we are bound together as one. New York City remains, and will always be, a city of immigrants and a beacon for all. Let's work together to continue building a city where everyone can make it, no matter where you are from.







# MESSAGE FROM COMMISSIONER CASTRO



Dear fellow New Yorkers,

I am proud to share the incredible work that our office, sister agencies, community groups and others have accomplished in 2023 supporting immigrant New Yorkers.

Our work is driven by the belief that the well-being of our immigrant communities makes New York City stronger, vibrant, and resilient. Our city has a long and proud history of not only welcoming immigrants but advocating for them. For this reason, our office has been the leading national voice for comprehensive immigration reform and work permits for all. No other city in the nation has responded to this scale.

As someone who immigrated to this country as a child with my mother, and grew up in New York City, I understand the critical work of this office and its importance. The success of our city depends on this. We also recognized the incredible contributions that immigrants make to our city and our nation. We honored their sacrifices, achievements, diversity, culture, and traditions.

As we move forward, we know our mission is clear. We will continue to work tirelessly to support and empower our immigrant communities, fight for their rights, and to build a more inclusive and equitable city for all. Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and partnership in this important work.





*Top: Mayor Eric Adams at a Diwali celebration.*

*Middle left: Mayor Eric Adams walking at the Dominican Day Parade*

*Middle right: Woman participating in a cultural performance at Diwali celebration.*

*Bottom: Mayor Eric Adams shaking the hand of a child.*





# INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the challenges that face immigrant New Yorkers and presents the robust interagency work the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) has done in the past fiscal year to improve the wellbeing of long-term immigrant residents and our newest New Yorkers.

# About the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

According to the 2020 Census, nearly 40 percent of New York City's population are immigrants.<sup>11</sup> However, this estimate may be a severe undercount considering some immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented, often live and work in the shadows. This number also does not include the wave of recently arrived migrants that have settled in their own communities. Therefore, it is imperative that the City Council, Mayoral offices and city agencies continue to work together to bridge the gap between immigrant communities and government.

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**MOIA promotes the well-being of immigrant communities by serving as a bridge between the city's government and its immigrant communities and enhancing, assisting, and advising city offices and agencies in their efforts to serve immigrant populations.**

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Through its various initiatives, MOIA strives to address the unique challenges and needs of immigrant communities, including access to legal and language services, healthcare, education, and more.

This report explores the challenges the office is working to address, and the strategies it uses to do so.

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1 United States Census Bureau, New York City Population available at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/newyorkcitynewyork>



*Left: African Community Gracie*

*Bottom: Immigrant Heritage Plaza*





## Challenges MOIA Is Working to Address

Immigrant communities in New York City face a range of challenges, from language barriers to workplace issues, from limited access to healthcare and education to difficulty navigating the legal system.

Immigrants who are non-citizens, particularly the undocumented population, face a multitude of complex challenges that can significantly impact their quality of life.

Some of the most significant challenges include:



*Top: Indian community member speaking at the Mayor's Indian Community Round Table.*

*Middle: Deputy Commissioner Miosotis Munoz speaking at a Tibetan event.*

*Bottom: International Affairs meeting with foreign delegation.*

- **Legal status:** Immigrants face a host of legal challenges. Undocumented immigrants, for example, may be at risk of deportation and lack access to certain social services and employment opportunities. Asylum seekers face a long and difficult legal process to obtain work permits and ultimately asylum.
- **Language barriers:** For many immigrants, language barriers can be a significant obstacle to accessing critical services such as healthcare, education, and legal assistance. In a city as diverse as New York, there are hundreds of languages and dialects spoken, and greater resources are needed to provide high-quality language services.
- **Housing:** Many immigrants, particularly those with lower incomes, struggle to find affordable and safe housing and often face discrimination. Newly arrived immigrants may not have the necessary income and documentation to rent an apartment or qualify for housing-related government programs or for public housing.
- **Worker rights:** Immigrants, particularly undocumented and informal workers, may be vulnerable to exploitation by employers who pay low wages or subject them to unsafe working conditions. In some cases, immigrants may not be aware of their rights as workers or may be afraid to report abuse for fear of retaliation and threats of deportation.
- **Healthcare:** Immigrants may face barriers to accessing healthcare, including not qualifying for health insurance due to their immigration status, lack of knowledge on how to access city-funded hospitals and healthcare programs, language barriers, and fear of immigration enforcement. Many immigrants rely on emergency rooms for medical care, which may not provide comprehensive or preventive services.
- **Education:** Immigrant children, their parents, and adult learners may face significant challenges adapting to the U.S. education system. Language barriers and social-economic issues can make it difficult for students to succeed in school, and undocumented students may face additional barriers to accessing higher education and career pathways.



## Strategies To Address These Challenges

The challenges described above are complex and interrelated. Addressing them requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach that considers the unique needs and experiences of immigrant communities.

MOIA works to address these challenges through a range of programs and initiatives that aim to enhance the accessibility of services and resources, promote inclusion and empowerment, and support the integration of immigrants into the fabric of New York City.

*Above:  
Newly arrived asylum seekers giving remarks at an immigrant related event.*

MOIA's work is guided by three key principles: inclusion, empowerment, and innovation.

- **Inclusion** means ensuring all immigrant communities can access the services and resources they need to succeed.
- **Empowerment** means supporting immigrants in their efforts to build stable and prosperous lives in New York City.
- **Innovation** means using creative and iterative strategies to address the complex and evolving needs of immigrant communities.

To improve the lives of immigrants in New York City, a collaborative effort is necessary among all city offices and agencies, as well as with its nonprofit partners, and our various immigrant communities. To achieve this, MOIA works to enhance, assist, and advise city offices and agencies on fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities to support the immigrant community.

This includes:

1. **Language access:** MOIA helps city agencies provide high-quality language services to non-English speaking residents. MOIA provides guidance and resources to mayoral offices on how to provide language assistance services, translating key documents into multiple languages, and training government staff to work effectively with Limited English Proficient communities.
2. **Community outreach and engagement:** MOIA engages with immigrant communities to understand their needs, concerns, and experiences. MOIA participates in events, meetings, and forums that provide a platform for community members to voice their opinions and advocate for their rights.
3. **Policy development:** MOIA promotes policies and practices that benefit immigrant communities, such as expanded access to affordable housing, healthcare, education, and legal services. MOIA also collaborates with other government



agencies and advocacy organizations to develop and implement policies that support immigrants.

4. **Immigrant legal services:** MOIA collaborates with legal service providers across the city to enhance access to legal services for immigrants. MOIA created ActionNYC, a program that provides free, confidential legal services to immigrants throughout the city, regardless of their status. MOIA also hosts “Know Your Rights” workshops and legal clinics to educate immigrants on their rights and help them navigate the U.S. legal system.
5. **Addressing Issues that Impact the Quality of Life of Immigrant New Yorkers:** MOIA works with city agencies and community partners to identify and address the issues that impact the quality of life of immigrants in New York City. This includes ensuring access to healthcare, improving educational outcomes for immigrant students, increasing access to affordable housing, supporting workforce development programs, and providing support to victims of crime.

Finally, addressing the issues that immigrant New Yorkers face requires engagement with all levels of government. In 2023, MOIA worked to coordinate the City’s local, state, and national advocacy on behalf of immigrant New Yorkers, by working with local elected leaders across the nation to push for federal change, and by supporting legislation, and connecting with state and federal partners on a variety of topics.



*Top left: Sikh community at an event.*

*Top right: Mexican community member participating in a roundtable discussion.*

*Bottom: Mexican New Yorkers at the first Mexican Mayoral Roundtable in City Hall.*



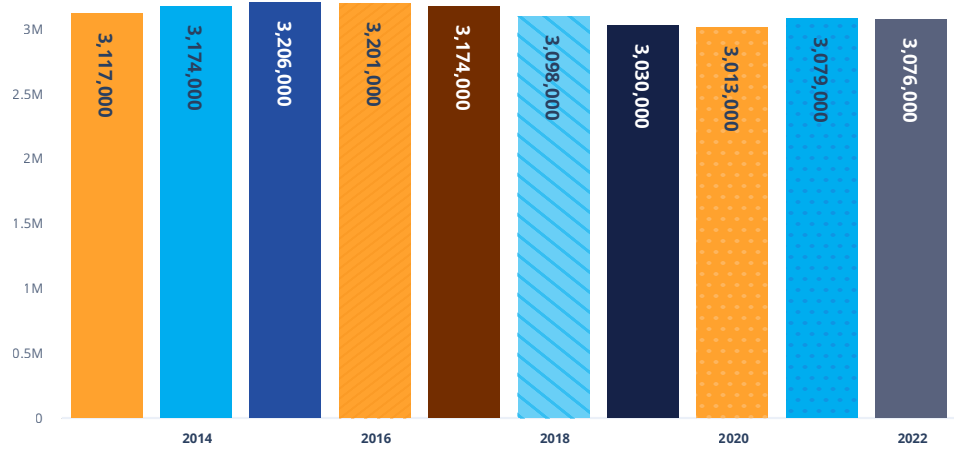
# IMMIGRANT POPULATION SNAPSHOT

Using the latest available data, the following is a demographic snapshot of immigrant New Yorkers in 2022.

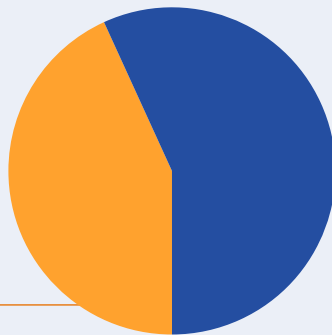
# Overview

New York City is home to about  
**3.1 million** immigrants.

## Total Immigrant Population in NYC

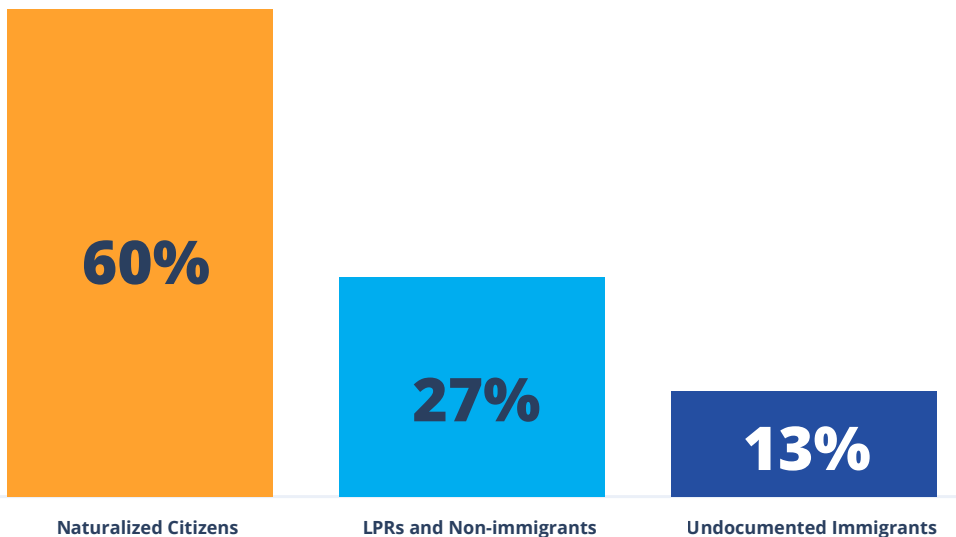


Immigrants  
comprise about  
**38%**



of the city's total  
population.

## Immigration Status (%) of NYC Foreign-Born



Among New York City's foreign-born residents, more than half are naturalized citizens.



## Diversity of NYC Immigrants

As of 2022, the top 10 countries of birth for the nearly 3.1 million foreign-born City residents are the Dominican Republic, China, and Mexico. Jamaicans, who have historically rounded out the top three, have dropped to the fourth most populous immigrant group in New York City.

Country of Origin	Amount
Dominican Republic	412,925
China (including Taiwan and Hong Kong)	390,992
Mexico	166,034
Jamaica	153,484
Guyana	141,956
Ecuador	121,278
Bangladesh	98,290
Haiti	79,541
Colombia	79,170
Trinidad and Tobago	71,993

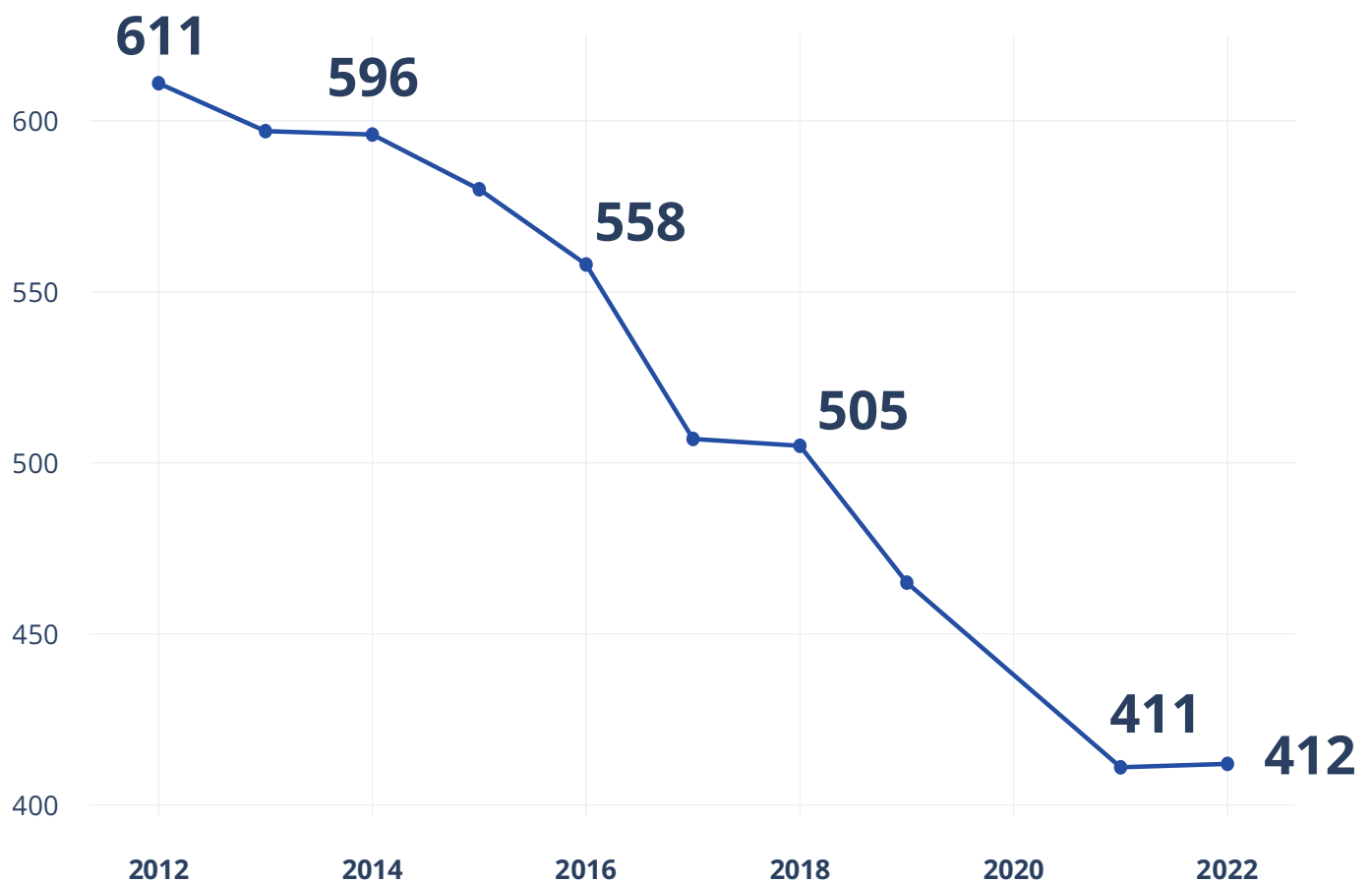
More than 200 languages are spoken by residents across the five boroughs. About 70 percent of foreign-born individuals with limited English proficiency speak Spanish, Chinese, Russian, or Bengali. More information about MOIA's Language Access Initiatives is on page 50.

Language Spoken by the foreign-born with LEP	% of all foreign-born LEP
Spanish	45.71
Chinese*	20.55
Russian	6.41
Bengali	4.0
Haitian	1.98
Arabic	1.95
Korean	1.82
French	1.36
others	16.17

\* Chinese includes dialects such as Mandarin, Cantonese, and Fujianese.

## NYC Undocumented Population Over Time (in thousands)

The only group of immigrants that experienced population decline between 2019 and 2022 were undocumented immigrants. This is consistent with the downward trend in the population of undocumented immigrants over the last decade. While more research is needed to properly attribute this decline, high levels of mortality among undocumented New Yorkers during COVID, economic contraction city- and nationwide, and stringent Title 42 immigration policy at the US Southwest border likely played significant roles. However, the undocumented population increased slightly between 2021 and 2022, the first time with population growth in the last decade.

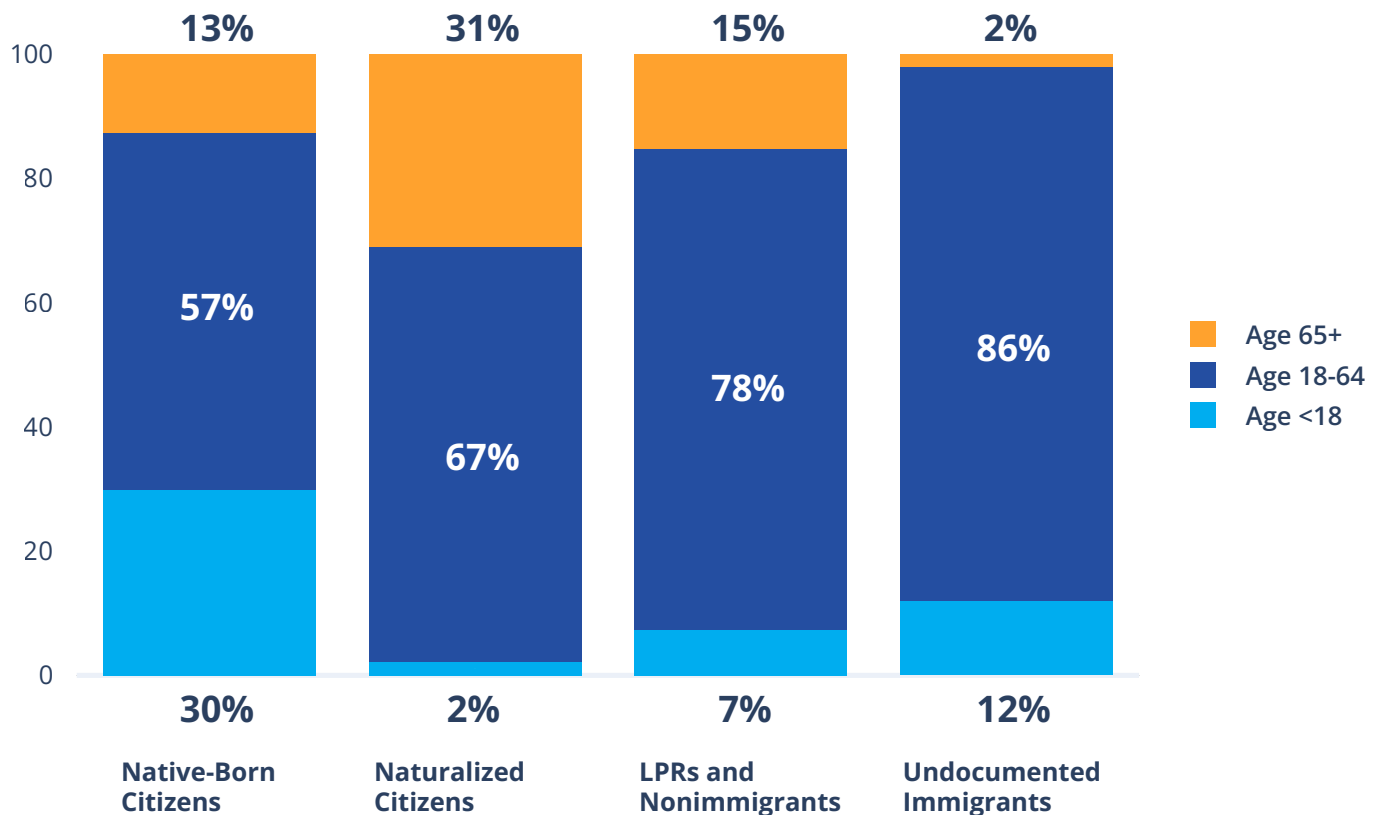




## Age by Immigration Status (%)

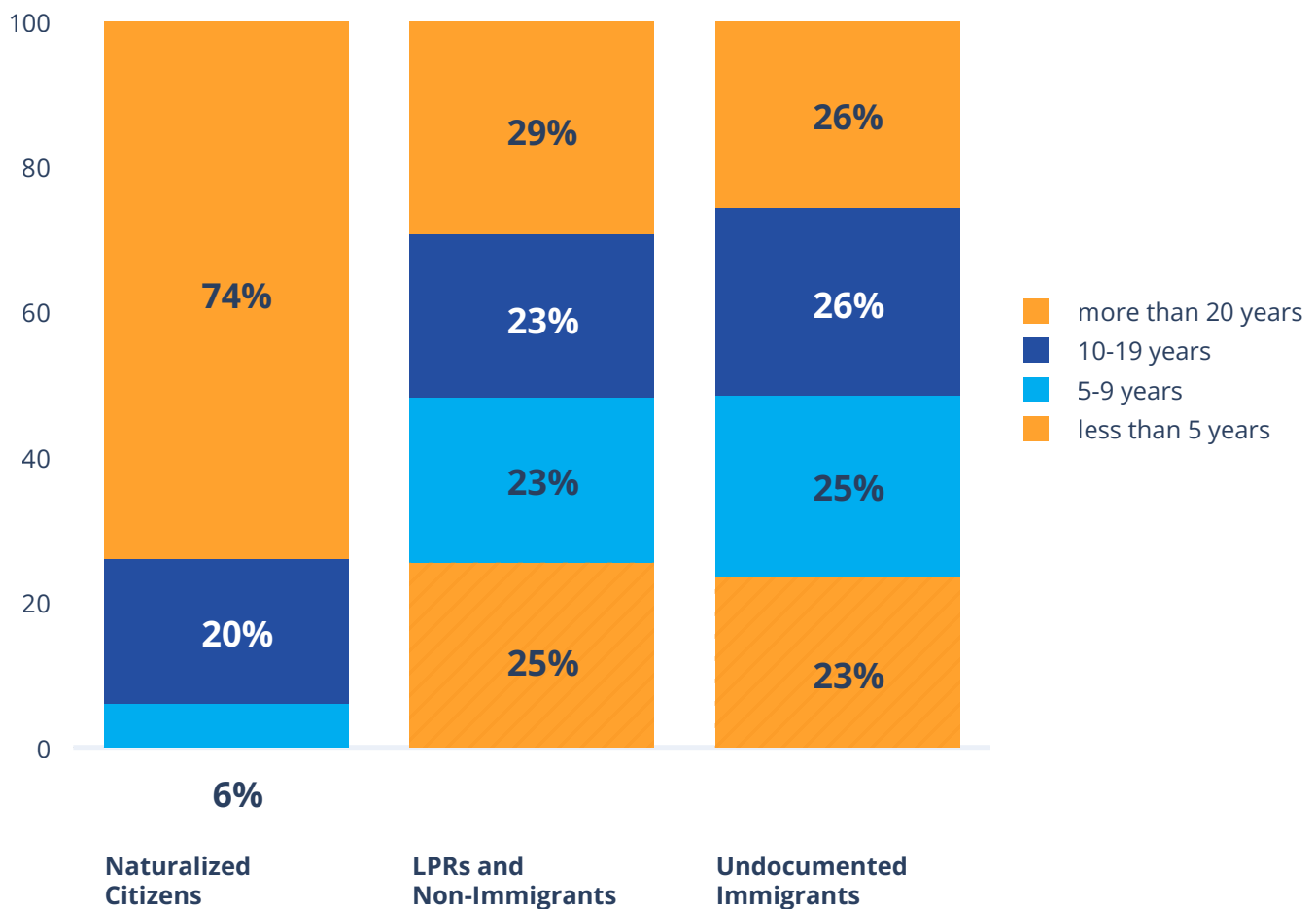
Immigration Status	Median Age
Native-Born Citizens	32
Naturalized Citizens	56
LPRs and Non-immigrants	45
Undocumented Immigrants	37

Immigrant New Yorkers, regardless of status, tend to be older than U.S.-born citizens. Much of this has to do with the fact that all children of New Yorkers, regardless of their parents' status, are native-born American citizens, leading to a younger population on average. Naturalized citizens are the eldest group, with an average age of 56. Meanwhile, the average age of LPRs, nonimmigrants, and undocumented immigrants is younger. For instance, more than 85 percent of undocumented immigrants are between 18 and 64, which are generally considered the prime years of employment.



## Years in the U.S. by Immigration Status (%)

The number of years that immigrants have been in the United States varies substantially. Unsurprisingly, naturalized citizens are the population that have been in the country the longest, with almost 75 percent having been in the United States for more than 20 years. Meanwhile, the split is nearly equal between less than 5 years, 5 to 9 years, 10 to 19 years, and more than 20 years for both LPRs and non-citizens and undocumented immigrants alike.

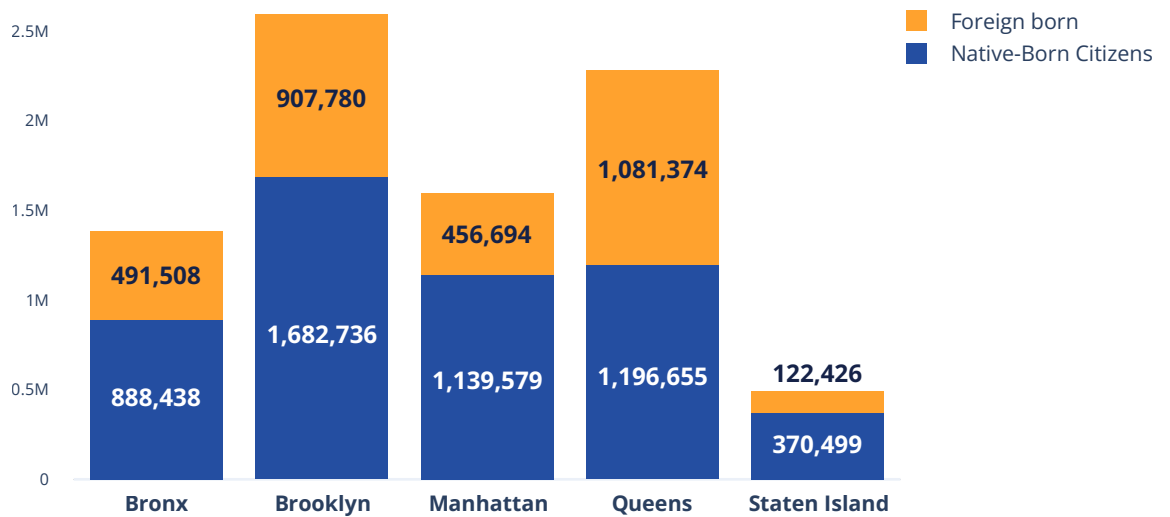




## Immigrant Population by Borough (%)

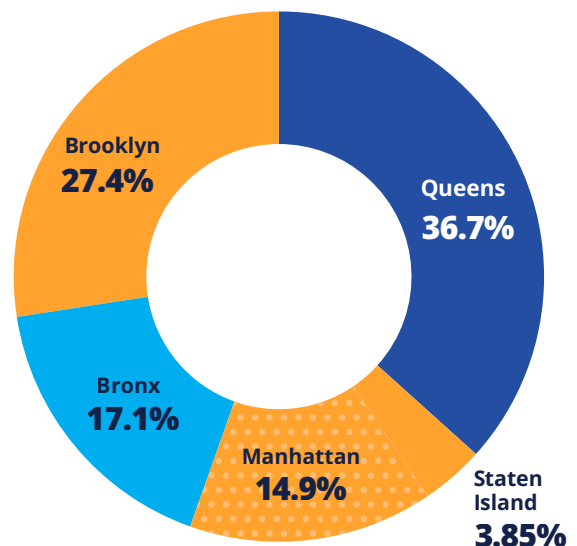
All five boroughs have significant immigrant populations of all statuses. A particularly high concentration of immigrant residents can be found in Queens and Brooklyn. These two boroughs also have the highest portion of the City's undocumented residents, with more than 60 percent of undocumented New Yorkers living in these two boroughs.

### NYC Foreign-born by Borough



Despite being deeply embedded in our city, immigrant New Yorkers continue to face impediments to full inclusion, such as access to health insurance and support for achieving English language proficiency. Understanding and monitoring these disparities over time is critical to providing effective city services for immigrant New Yorkers, along with other government and community partners. [More about MOIA's outreach efforts can be found on page 78.](#)

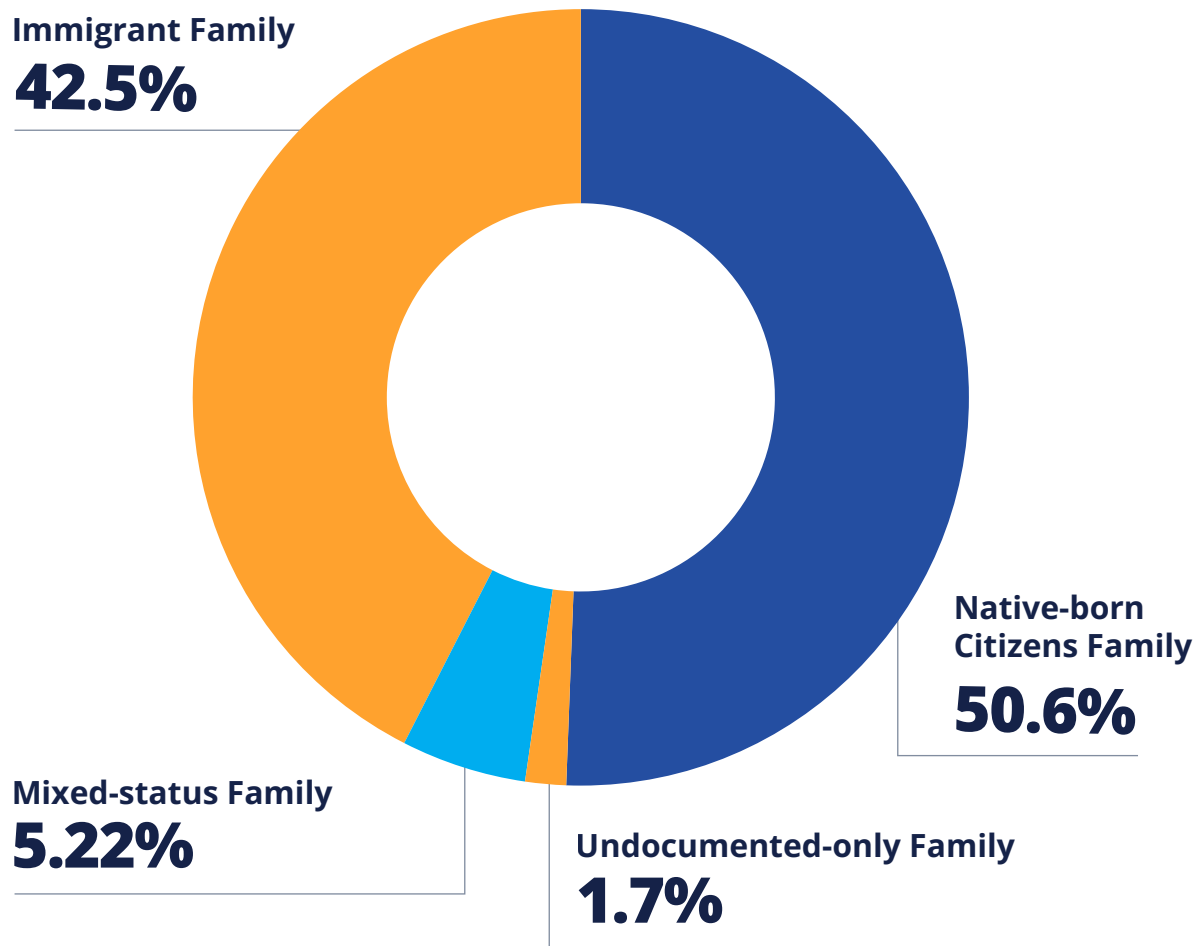
### Undocumented Immigrants by Borough



# Household and Family Types

## Family Household Types by Immigration Status (%)

Almost 50 percent of New Yorkers live in family households with at least one immigrant. Over one million children, equaling 62 percent of all children in New York City, live in a household with at least one foreign-born family member. Of the one million New Yorkers who live in mixed-status households, 265,500 or 27 percent are children. 80 percent of these children are U.S.-born citizens. Mixed status households demonstrate that all New Yorkers are impacted by federal policies that separate families.





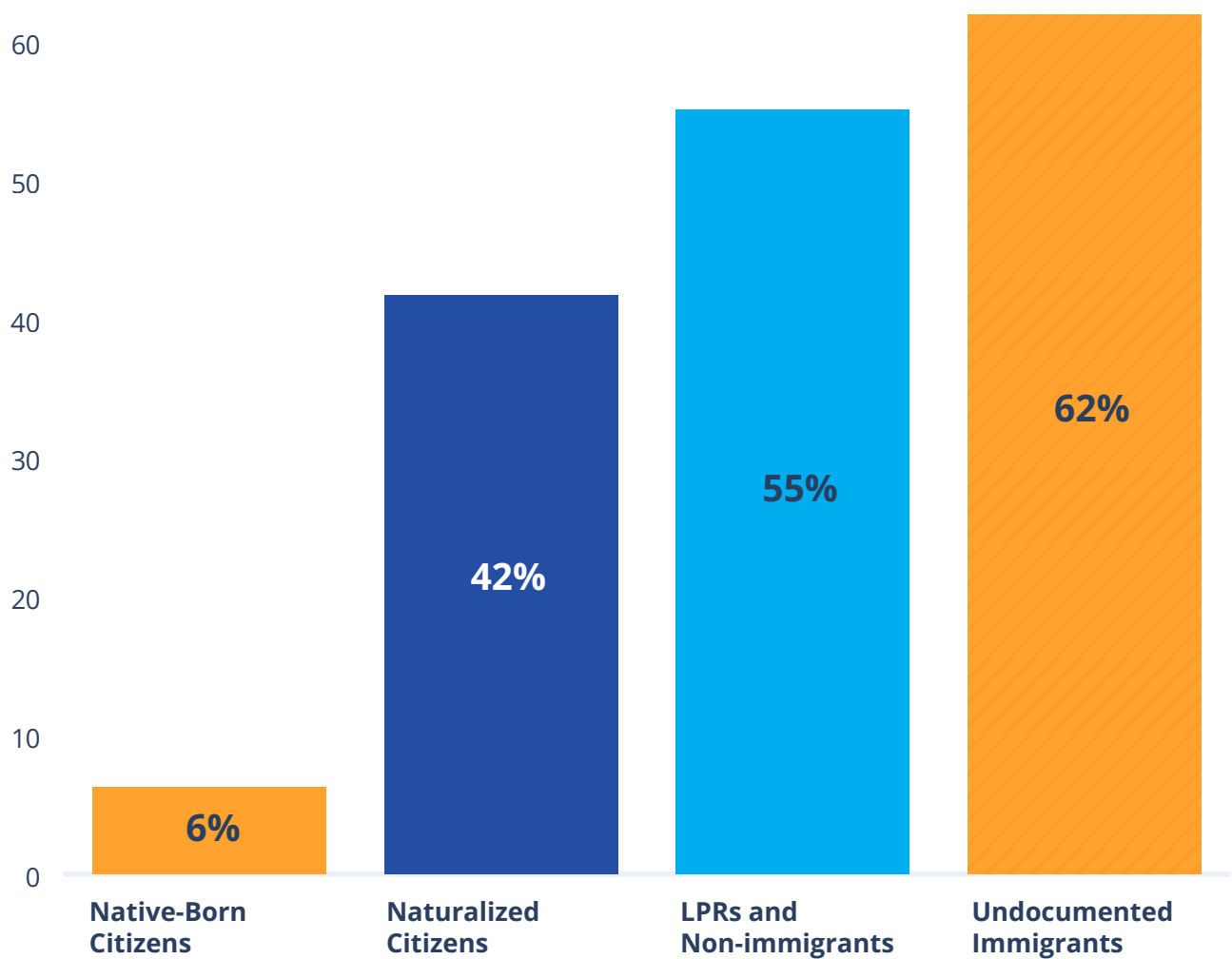
# Language Access

Residents across the five boroughs speak more than 200 languages. Nearly three-quarters, or 75 percent, of immigrant New York City residents speak a language other than English at home. A multilingual city deserves a multilingual government.



## Limited Language Proficiency (LEP) by Immigration Status

Approximately 58 percent of all immigrants are LEP, with nearly 62 percent of undocumented immigrants are LEP. Overall, 30 percent of all New Yorkers are LEP—regardless of status. Language access for those with LEP and the need to identify these communities in detail are more important than ever. More information about MOIA’s language access work is on page 50.



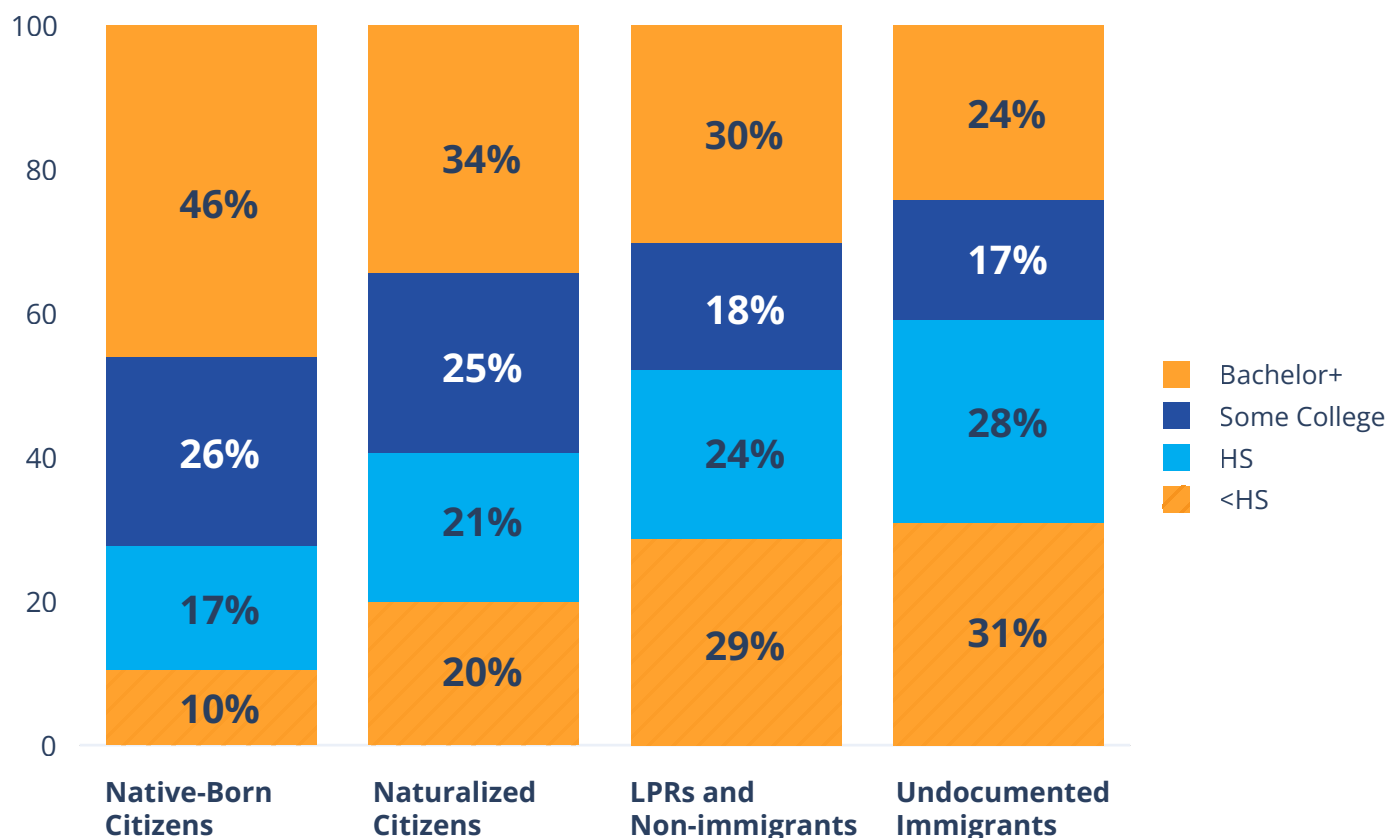
# Education



## Educational Attainment by Immigration Status (%)

The immigrant population has considerable gaps of educational attainment relative to the native-born individuals. Though the education rates for native-born and naturalized citizens with either a bachelor's degree or some continue to be higher than those with LPR or undocumented status, almost half of these immigrant populations have attended some college.

About 31 percent of undocumented immigrants living in New York City have less than a high school diploma, compared to approximately 30 percent of those with green cards or other status, 20 percent of naturalized U.S. citizens, and 10 percent of U.S. born citizens. These disparate educational outcomes limit the career opportunities and financial outcomes of undocumented immigrants.

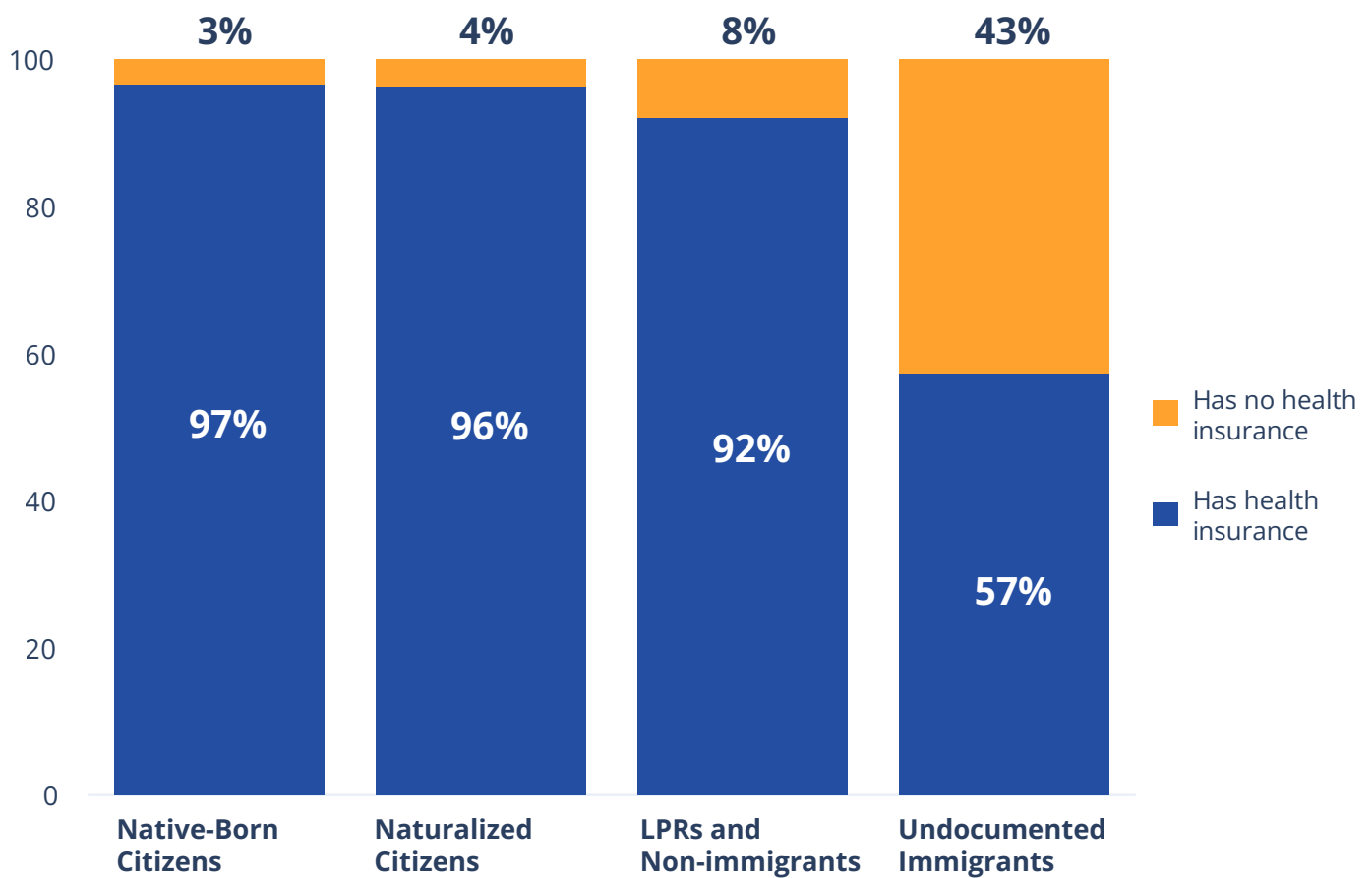






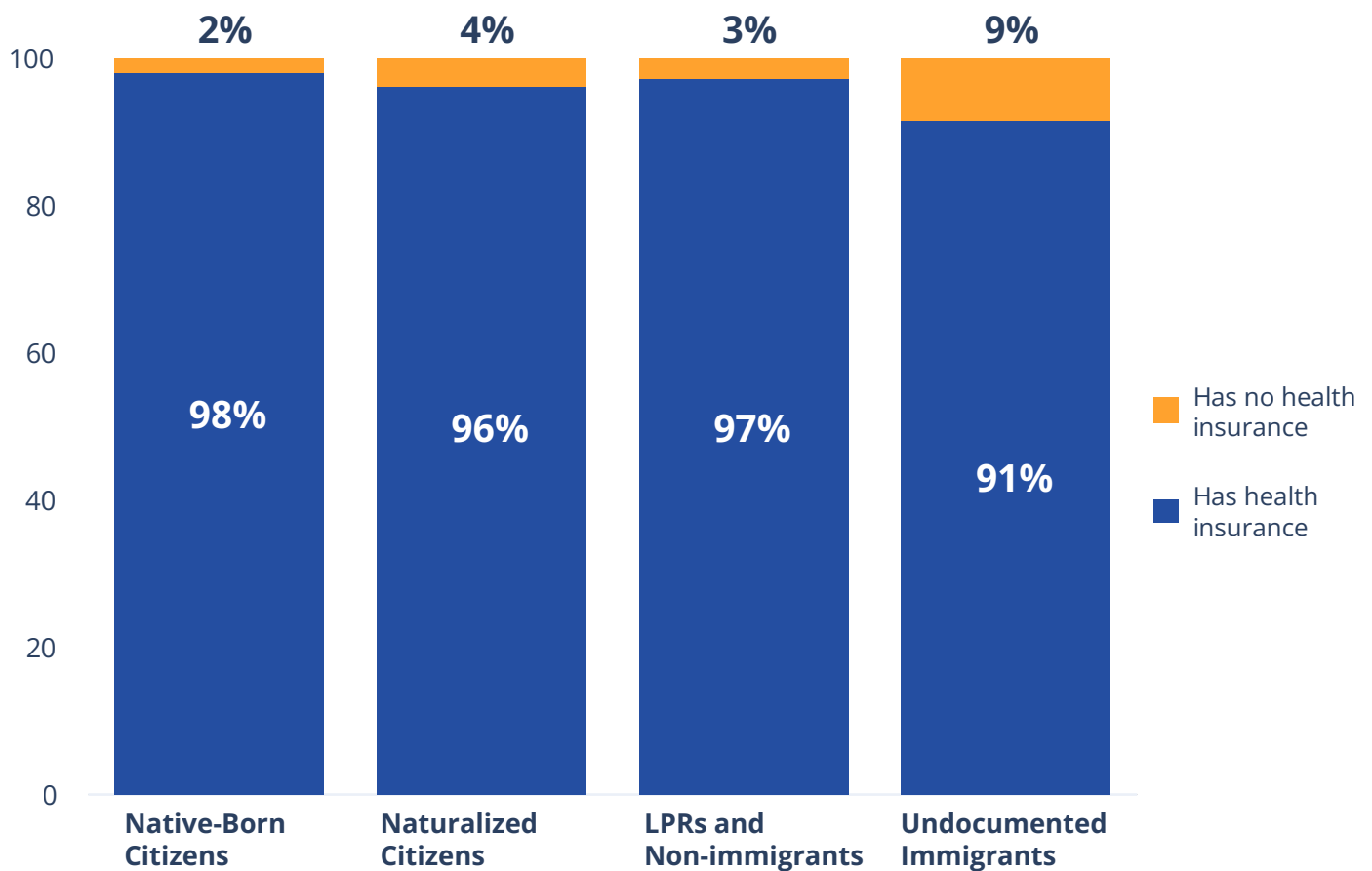
## Health Insurance Coverage by Immigration Status (%)

In New York City, there are persistent disparities in health insurance coverage between citizens and non-citizens. Approximately 97 percent of U.S.-born New Yorkers have health insurance, compared to only 91 percent of LPRs and nonimmigrants and only 57 percent of undocumented immigrants have health insurance.



## Health Insurance Coverage by Immigration Status (%) Children (under 19)

The gap in insurance coverage by immigration status remains among children (under age 19) despite universal coverage being available for children under state law. About 8.5 percent of undocumented children are uninsured, compared to two percent of U.S.-born citizen children.

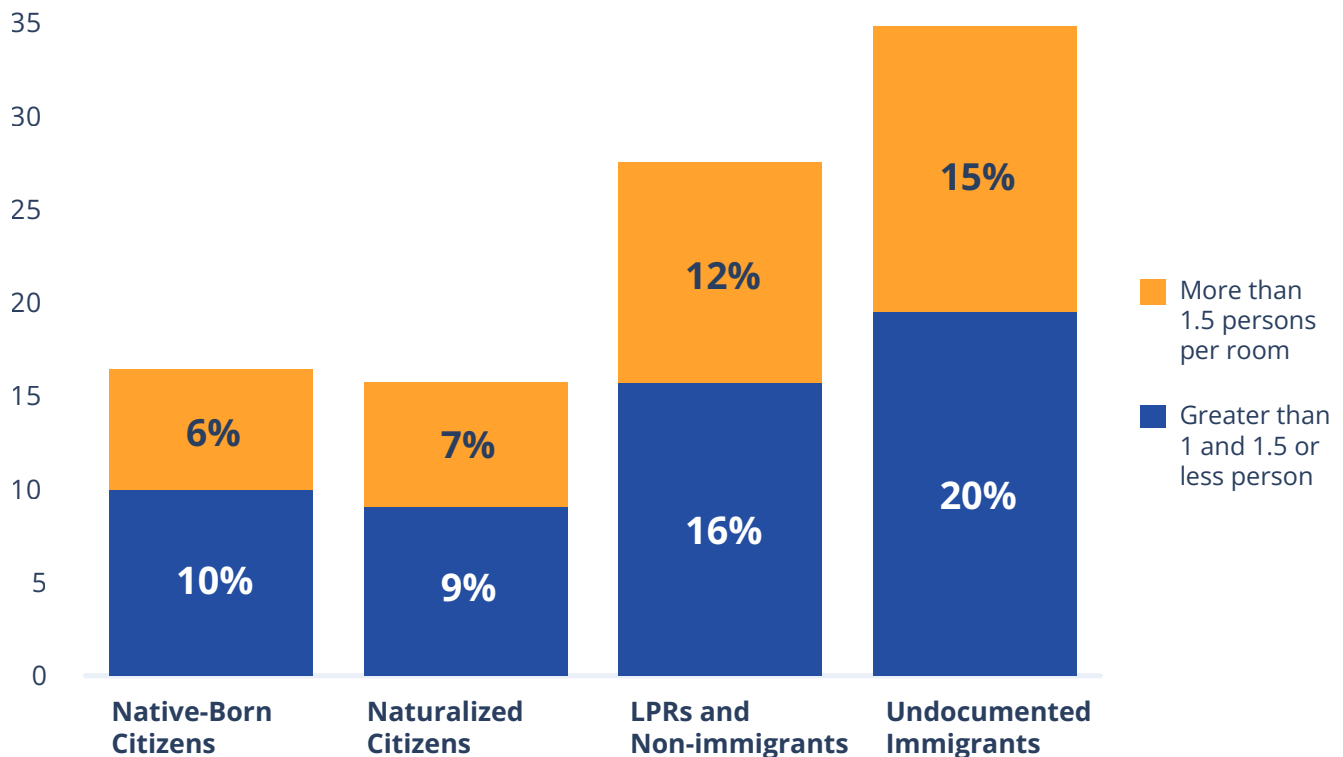


# Housing



## Overcrowded Households by Immigration Status (%)

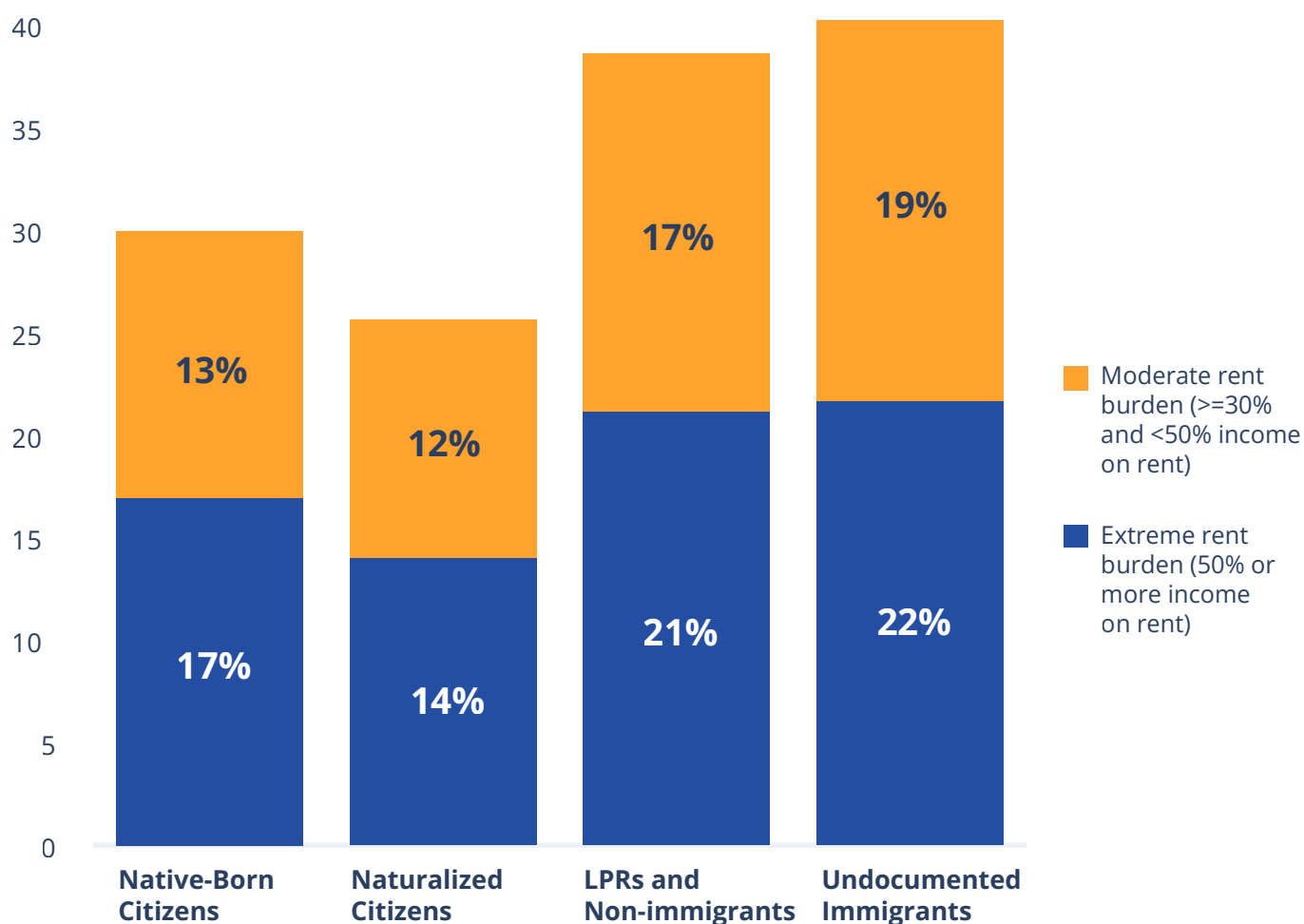
Overcrowding is a challenge that affects the living condition of immigrant families. The Census Bureau classifies any residence with more than 1 person per room as overcrowded and any residence with more than 1.5 person per room as extremely overcrowded. Legal permanent residents, nonimmigrants, and undocumented immigrants experience these challenges at twice the rate as those who are naturalized and native-born. Immigrant New Yorkers who are LPR or undocumented reside in overcrowded households, defined as more than one person per room, at a rate that exceeds those with citizenship. Around 35 percent of undocumented individuals were living in overcrowded housing, which is more than double the rate of overcrowding in U.S.-born households (16 percent). This includes around 12 percent of LPR and nonimmigrants and over 15 percent of undocumented immigrant population living in extremely overcrowded housing, defined here as having more than 1.5 persons per room.



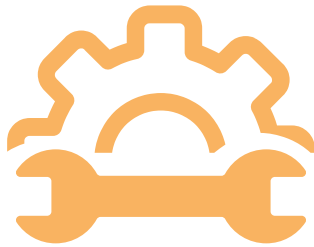


## Rent Burdened Households by Immigration Status (%)

Rent burden is another housing challenge for many New Yorkers, but particularly immigrant communities. Being rent-burdened is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as spending 30 percent or more of their household income on rent. More than 39 percent of all LPR, nonimmigrant, and undocumented immigrants live in households where rent is 30 percent or more of the total family income, in contrast to around 29 percent of individuals in U.S.-born-only and 25 percent of naturalized households. Furthermore, LPR, nonimmigrant, and undocumented immigrants are more likely to spend more than 50 percent of their income on rent only.

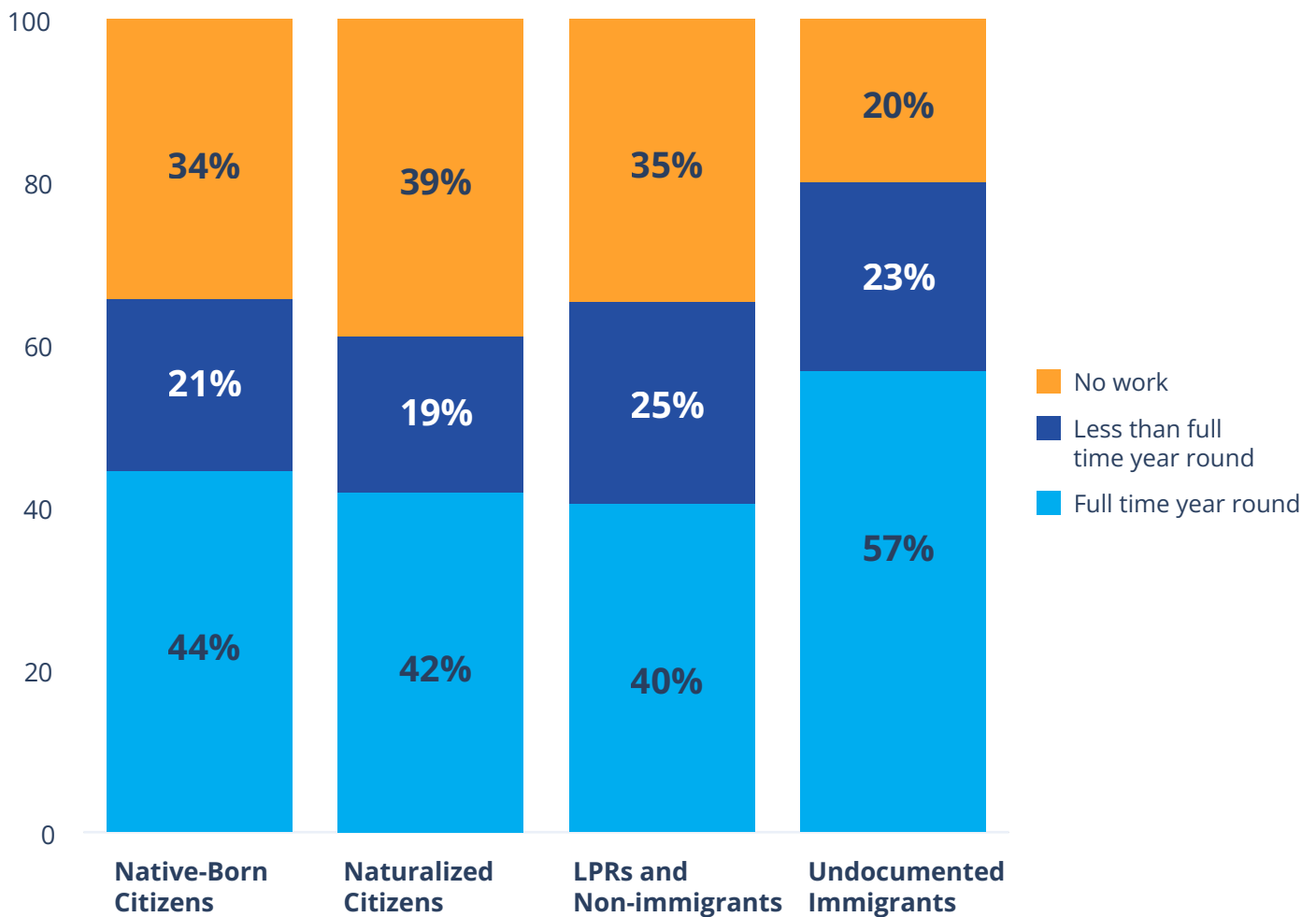


# Labor








## Percent in the Labor Force (age 16+)

Immigrants with status have a similar labor force participation rate to the native-born. Meanwhile, undocumented immigrants have a significantly higher labor participation rate than other immigrant populations and native-born New Yorkers. In 2022, around 80 percent of undocumented immigrants are in the labor force compared to around 65 percent of the U.S.-born population and 60 percent of naturalized citizens, and 65 percent LPR immigrants. Immigrant New Yorkers are also employed in a wide range of industries.



## Top 5 Industries of Foreign-Born Employment











Restaurant and other food services, construction, and home health care services are critical New York City industries with workforces that consist of more than 50 percent of immigrant employees.

Industries		All foreign-born who work in this industry	% foreign-born of total industry	Total New Yorkers who work in this industry
1	 <b>Restaurants and Other Food Services</b>	172,000	59.87%	287,000
2	 <b>Construction</b>	151,000	63.12%	240,000
3	 <b>Home Health Care Services</b>	124,000	71.9%	173,000
4	 <b>General Medical and Surgical Hospitals</b>	109,000	44.82%	243,000
5	 <b>Elementary and Secondary Schools</b>	83,000	28.66%	289,000








## Top 5 Industries of Foreign-Born Employment by Immigration Status

Native-born, naturalized citizens, LPR, and nonimmigrant residents make up more than 10 percent of the workforce of any industry. When immigration status is not a barrier, residents choose whatever industry they are most interested and qualified to work in. Barriers to employment in many sectors force more than a quarter of undocumented residents to work in just two industries: restaurant and other food services and construction.

Native-Born Citizens			Naturalized Citizens		
Industry		% of Total	Industry		% of Total
1	 Elementary and Secondary Schools	5.57	1	 Elementary and Secondary Schools	4.74
2	 General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	3.62	2	 Home Health Care Services	4.14
3	 Restaurants and Other Food Services	3.11	3	 Restaurants and Other Food Services	3.74
4	 Construction	2.39	4	 Elementary and Secondary Schools	3.52
5	 Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools	2.33	5	 Construction	3.2

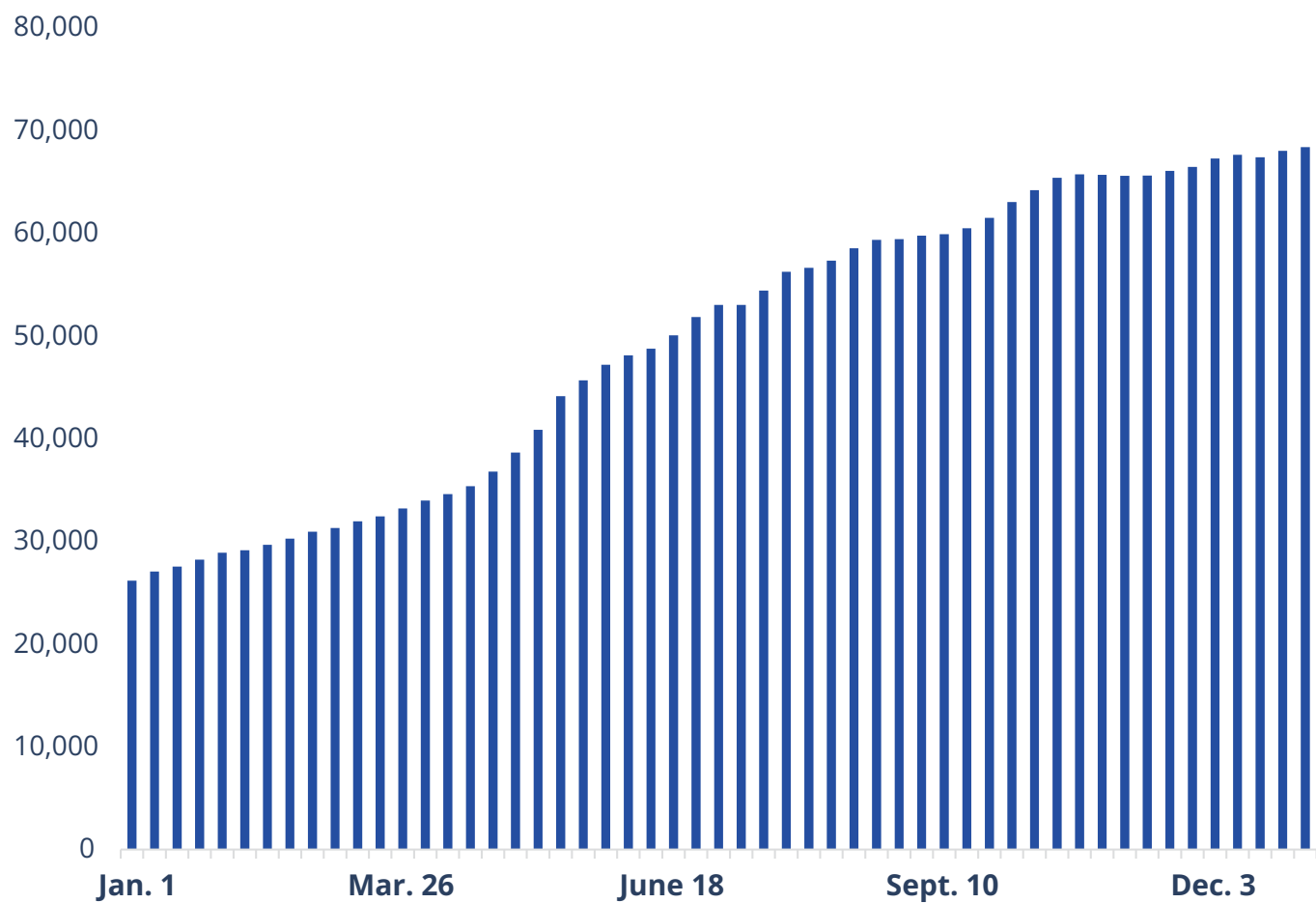
LPRs and Non-immigrants			Undocumented Immigrants		
Industry		% of Total	Industry		% of Total
1	 Restaurants and Other Food Services	7.26	1	Restaurants and Other Food Services	12.84
2	 Construction	5.94	2	Construction	12.8
3	 Home Health Care Services	4.95	3	Services to Buildings and Dwellings	3.29
4	 Individual and Family Services	2.62	4	Private Households	3.02
5	 General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	2.25	5	Home Health Care Services	2.99

# Asylum Seekers



From January 1 to December 31, 2023, over 137,400 people passed through New York City’s intake system. Some reconnected with family or friends soon after arriving, either in New York City or elsewhere across the state and country while others enter the City’s care for a period of time. As of December 31, about 68,300 asylum seekers are currently in the City’s care. As asylum seekers continue to find their footing, many will follow in the footsteps of generations of immigrants and settle into New York City’s diverse and vibrant communities. It is also worth noting that some asylum seekers have connected directly with family and friends in New York City, without the help of the city. MOIA will continue to closely track developments as asylum seekers settle into the fabric of our city, state, and country.

Asylum Seeker Census (2023)



# 2022 American Community Survey

The U.S. Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is a national survey administered every year to 3.5 million households (compared to the decennial census survey, which goes to every household/address in the U.S.) The survey is designed to produce reliable estimates on smaller areas and population groups, covering over 35 topics such as citizenship, employment, health insurance coverage, English proficiency, and place of birth, among other socioeconomic and demographic characteristics.

MOIA works in close partnership with the NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity (NYC Opportunity) to derive a methodology that estimates immigration status in the ACS. Data for the 2022 ACS one-year survey was released by the Census Bureau on September 15, 2023. It is this microdata and data by NYC Opportunity that serves as the foundation for the demographic data in our annual report.







# KEY FEDERAL AND STATE DEVELOPMENTS

MOIA prioritizes direct engagement with NYC's immigrant communities as well as monitors and analyzes federal and state policy developments. This allows MOIA to learn of urgent community needs as they arise, and advise the city in implementing timely, impactful responses that advance community-led work being done on the ground.

# Federal

## Lift of Title 42

Title 42 was a Trump-era policy that allowed the federal government to functionally close the border on public health grounds. The Trump administration used this rule to override existing immigration law and deny entry to thousands of asylum seekers. The use of this rule was coupled with other harmful programs such as the Remain in Mexico program, causing great harm to immigrant communities. In early 2023, the Biden Administration enacted its preparation plan to end Title 42 and ultimately lifted the restriction on May 11, 2023.

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**Since the lift of Title 42, NYC has welcomed thousands of migrants seeking protection and stability. MOIA has been at the front lines to ensure that our city's response meets the needs of all involved.**

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*Corona Community Conversation*



*Work Authorization Rally*

## Public Charge

The Biden administration restored the historic interpretation of the public charge rule governing immigrants' access to public benefits. Proposed changes authorized by the Trump Administration would have expanded the list of public benefit programs that impact an individual's ability to adjust status to include previously excluded health, nutrition, and housing programs.

## DACA and the Dream Act

Since 2015, the DACA program has faced legal challenges. On September 13, 2023, Judge Hanen from the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas issued his decision, stating the Biden Administration's 2022 Final Rule to protect DACA from adverse legal action is unlawful. Judge Hanen's recent court decision was the latest attack on the Biden's Administration's attempt to fortify the DACA program and protect it against legal action. This decision did not impact the ability of existing recipients to renew their DACA status but emphasized the uncertainty of this program's future and all those who have benefited from its implementation.

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**MOIA continues to advocate for legislation like the federal DREAM Act.**

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*Haiti Support Rally City Hall*

**In September 2023, Commissioner Manuel Castro met with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and emphasized the importance of redesignating TPS for Venezuela. The following week, Secretary Mayorkas announced the extension and redesignation of TPS for Venezuela, benefitting over 420,000 Venezuelan nationals across the country.**



*CLACNY meeting*

## Expansion of Legal Pathways

In 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration used many of its authorities to expand legal pathways for migrants in accordance with commitments made as part of the 2022 Los Angeles Declaration on Migration. As part of its agenda, the administration expanded access to two main forms of immigration relief: Deferred Action and Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

## Deferred Action for Immigrant Workers

On January 13, 2023, USCIS announced improvements to the Deferred Action process for workers involved in a labor dispute at their workplace. This program is designed to protect undocumented laborers who fear retaliation for reporting workplace violations. Individuals who participate in this program could receive deferred action for two years and become eligible to apply for a work permit.

## Temporary Protected Status

In early 2023, Secretary Mayorkas expanded access to TPS protections and employment authorization by redesignating TPS for Yemen and Somalia. As part of our advocacy through the Cities for Action coalition, MOIA advocated for TPS designations and redesignations for 11 Countries, including the Venezuela – the country with the highest number of recent arrivals.

In addition to Yemen, Somalia, and Venezuela, Secretary Mayorkas also redesignated TPS for Afghanistan, Cameroon, Sudan, South Sudan, and Ukraine in 2023. [More information about this letter is on page 89.](#)

## Humanitarian Parole

In 2023, the Biden Administration announced a new family reunification parole program for Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Through this new program, individuals who are outside of the United States and are already in the process of receiving a family visa could apply to enter the US while they await the remainder of their visa process. Through the end of December 2023, this program allowed 327,000<sup>1</sup> individuals to enter the U.S. safely. In October 2023, a similar program was announced for Ecuadorian nationals.

# State

## Health Care for Our Neediest Immigrant Population

In 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul expanded Medicaid the undocumented population aged 65 and older. This population previously qualified only for Emergency Medicaid, which does not include primary care benefits.

All undocumented immigrants who have an income and resources within 138% of the Federal Poverty Line now qualify for full Medicaid coverage. Those who are already enrolled Emergency Medicaid will be automatically transitioned into Medicaid. Those who are not insured will have to apply through the Department of Social Service. Documentation of the applicant's identity, resources, and income—if there is any—must be provided, as well as documentation of New York State residency. An estimated 25,000 New Yorkers could qualify for coverage under this expansion.



*Immigrant Media Roundtable SBS*





# INITIATIVES

MOIA's role within the city is to promote opportunities so that immigrant New Yorkers can thrive. We do this through sharing best practices and developing innovative programming and policies, utilizing our role as a Mayor's Office to engage with and assist City agencies in serving the nearly 40 percent of New Yorkers who are immigrants.

# Initiatives for Newly Arrived Immigrants

In 2023, MOIA and its contracted partners continued to take unprecedented efforts to welcome and support newly arrived immigrant groups, particularly when their needs were not fully met by existing federal support.

## Asylum Seeker Humanitarian Crisis

Since 2022, thousands of asylum seekers – adults as well as families with children – began arriving in large numbers to New York City from the Southwest Border. Unlike previous waves of immigration to New York City, the new arrivals are less likely to have a friend, family member, or sponsor to turn to for support in New York. From the beginning, MOIA has played a key role in collaborating with sister agencies and community partners to ensure new arrivals are provided with the information and services they need to ensure their wellbeing and integration. Individuals passed through the City's welcoming operations, initially based at the Port Authority Bus Terminal where most took their first steps in the city and then at the Arrival Center at the Roosevelt Hotel beginning in May 2023.

Congress' failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform has placed barriers on the integration of asylum seekers. Overwhelmed immigration courts, limited paths to legal permanent status, unnecessary restrictions on employment authorization documents, and lack of a federal resettlement strategy has caused dysfunction, inefficiencies, and disorder at the border and in the interior. But New York City has been and always will be a city of immigrants, and MOIA takes pride in the city's compassionate response to the sudden influx of newcomers.



*Commissioner Manuel Castro at an asylum seeker related press conference.*

## Asylum Seeker Resource Navigation Center

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**From January 2023 to June 2023 the Navigation Center served 7,300 asylum seekers, including 2,618 participants in immigration legal orientations sessions hosted by Immigrant Rights Workshop providers, 794 received medical assessments by DocGo, 1,219 enrolled in MetroPlus Health insurance, 3,051 enrolled in IDNYC, and 1,435 received mental health support.**

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In 2023, MOIA and NYC Emergency Management continued to operate the Asylum Seeker Resource Navigation Center. The center was the first in the nation to help newly arrived asylum seekers access important services and resources to integrate in New York City. The center launched in September 2022 at the American Red Cross New York Headquarters and was operated by Catholic Charities of New York through a city contract. By June 2023, the services provided by Navigation Center fully transitioned to the Asylum Seeker Arrival Center, based out of the Roosevelt Hotel.

The lessons learned from the Navigation Center informed subsequent City operations to support asylum seekers – including the Arrival Center and the Asylum Application Help Center (AAHC).

### Asylum Seeker Navigation Sites

In 2023, MOIA continued to fund the Asylum Seeker Navigation Sites, a group of 10 community-based organizations (CBOs) that served recently arrived asylum seekers. The sites launched in November 2022 to model the navigation center across the five boroughs. The sites provided in person support services, including job readiness trainings, comprehensive case management, food distribution, and immigrant rights workshops. The services were available in Spanish, Wolof, Russian, and other languages of limited diffusion.

Wolof, Russian, and other languages of limited diffusion.

The navigation sites were in immigrant dense neighborhoods, to avoid asylum seekers coming into Manhattan to receive services. The following organizations serves as navigation sites:

- Aid for Life
- International Child Program
- Catholic Charities Community Services of New York
- La Colmena
- Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth & Families
- New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)

## Asylum Seeker Legal Assistance Network

ASLAN was launched in response to the absence of a national strategy to support asylum seekers with their legal needs as they are admitted into the country. This investment was in addition to the over 65 million the city invests in legal services to support immigrant New Yorkers -- the most of any municipality in the nation.

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**In 2023, our community partner sites served more than 25,000 asylum seekers.**

**In January 2023, MOIA launched the Asylum Seeker Legal Assistance Network (ASLAN), a \$5 million investment to expand community capacity to provide immigration legal assistance for newly arrived asylum seekers.**

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ASLAN consists of a network of 11 non-profit organizations including:

- African Services Committee
- City University of New York (CUNY) Law
- CUNY Citizenship Now!
- Catholic Charities Community Services
- Lutheran Social Services of New York
- New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) and their subcontracted partners, collectively referred to as PSPP+
- African Communities Together (ACT)
- Catholic Migration Services (CMS)
- Central American Legal Assistance (CALA)
- Masa
- UnLocal

In 2023, ASLAN provided the following citywide services:

- Immigration legal information & advice, application assistance, and post-application assistance to newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers
- Training for frontline workers and community helpers providing immigration legal assistance.
- Videos, printed materials, and other resources that help asylum seekers navigate the immigration court and application process.
- MOIA's Immigration Legal Support Hotline, which provides callers with immigration legal information and tailored referrals to legal help (see more on page 40).

Since its launch, ASLAN has been an instrumental component in the City's effort to help new arrivals apply for asylum and TPS, obtain work authorization, and achieve self-sufficiency.



ASLAN served asylum seekers both in and out of the shelter systems, with over 65 percent of ASLAN clients being shelter residents at the time of service and 35 percent being non-shelter residents. Through its partnerships with the African Services Committee (ASC) and International Child Program (ICP), ASLAN also included dedicated immigration legal capacity to assist newly arrived West African migrants, a historically underserved population.

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**More than  
8,000 people  
participated in  
immigration legal  
orientations and  
information sessions.**

More than 8,000 people participated in immigration legal orientations and information sessions, building frontline workers' capacity to provide basic non-legal assistance and legal referrals to new arrivals, and empower asylum seekers to take the appropriate steps in their own immigration cases. This includes an immigration legal orientation that was delivered to more than 600 frontline NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) case managers. These efforts also helped newly arrived individuals recognize and avoid immigration services fraud and other scams, which have increased over the past two years.

**More than  
4,000  
community members  
received live, 1-on-1  
consultations with ASLAN  
attorneys and paralegals.**

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More than 4,000 community members received live, 1-on-1 consultations with ASLAN attorneys and paralegals, including brief advice and counsel, *pro se* application assistance (asylum, TPS, work authorization), post-application assistance for *pro se* applicants, and referrals to legal services. Post-application assistance was critical to ensuring that *pro se* filers receive the immigration protections and benefits for which they've applied, including but not limited to work permits.

## Capacity Building to the Asylum Seeker Legal Network

In 2023, ASLAN also built professional and community capacity in New York City's immigration legal services field by recruiting, training, and deploying non-attorneys and attorneys to support the City's efforts. MOIA partnered with CUNY *Citizenship Now!* To recruit over 300 volunteers speaking 23 languages to provide immigration application assistance, operational support, and interpretation to newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers. Collectively, volunteers were trained and provided support on 343 occasions. CUNY Law students in the Emerging Needs Clinic provided asylum seekers with immigration legal information, screenings, and application assistance at community-based sites in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens.

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**MOIA partnered with CUNY Citizenship Now! To recruit over 300 volunteers speaking 23 languages to provide immigration application assistance.**

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MOIA and its community partners also coordinated with the NYC Office of Asylum Seeker Operations (OASO) to provide eligible asylum seekers with referrals to asylum, TPS, and work authorization application assistance at AAHC.



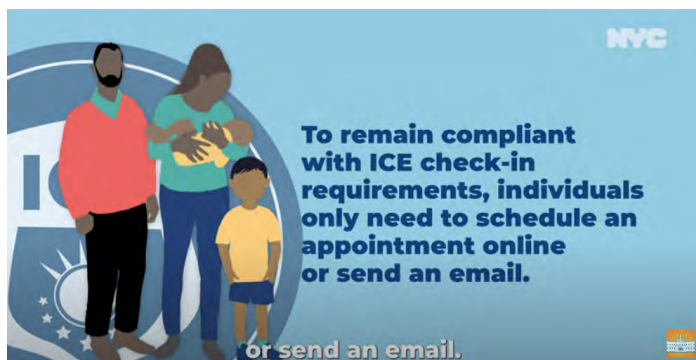
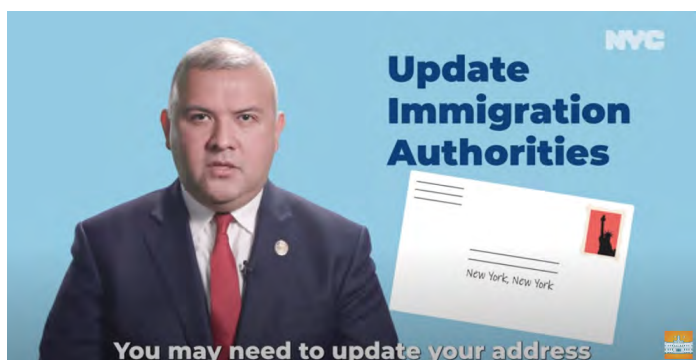
*Mexican Roundtable*

## Accessible Legal Information to Asylum Seekers

In May 2023, MOIA Commissioner Manuel Castro released a series of [18 informational videos](#) in English and Spanish to help newly arrived asylum seekers better understand and navigate the complex U.S. immigration system. The videos covered important topics that asylum seekers need to know as part of their immigration case, including the role of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), how to update an address with federal agencies, understanding immigration documents, and what to expect at ICE and immigration court appointments. The videos were published on the MOIA website and YouTube and were played at city shelters and Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs).



*Screenshots of the Know Your Rights videos MOIA created to help newly arrived asylum seekers navigate federal immigration procedures.*



## Ongoing Engagement with Community Groups Responding to the Asylum Seeker Humanitarian Crisis

MOIA in partnership with NYC Service, hosted monthly meetings with local community-based organizations, mutual aid groups, and volunteer groups to create a regular flow of communications between City agencies and those responding to the needs of newly arrived migrants. Over 250 organizations and several city agencies were represented in these calls. Agencies critical to the response effort such as OASO, the Mayor's Office of Nonprofits (MOCS), and the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement (PEU) were able to relay important agency updates to community groups on the ground, such as advocacy efforts, updates on reticketing sites, and more.

Local organizations were also able to give updates on the emerging needs of asylum seekers. The needs included language access, mental healthcare resources, health insurance, food access, childcare, and education. These convenings created new avenues for city agencies and nonprofits to collaborate and kept MOIA, its sister agencies, and local non-profits up to date on evolving needs of new arrivals as well as areas for improvement, and accomplishments. These calls facilitated trust between government and community groups and actionable engagement between government agencies and community-based organizations and created a space to communicate best practices that improved the response of local organizations and city agencies.

## Asylum Seeker Supports Grant

In 2023, MOIA and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City explored ways to engage the philanthropic sector to help support the asylum seeker humanitarian crisis. The Asylum Seeker Supports Grant program was launched in the Spring of 2023 with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and other generous donors. This grant funded community-based organizations, mutual aid organizations, and volunteer groups across the five boroughs to provide essential services and resources to new arrivals such as clothing, food, shelter, education, transportation, social services, language support, and legal services,

Organizations that received philanthropic funding were:

- Academy of Medical and Public Health Service;
- African Bureau for Immigration and Social Affairs;
- African Communities Together (ACT)
- Aid for Aids International;
- Artists Athletes Activists (AAA);
- El Puente;
- The Gambian Youth Organization (GYO);
- Grannies Respond/Abuelas Responden ;
- Make the Road New York (MRNY)



- Masa-MexEd, Inc. (MASA);
- Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth & Families, Inc. (Mexican Coalition);
- The Renaissance Technical Institute;
- The Skyline Charitable Foundation;

These organizations were chosen for their relationships to their local communities and new arrivals that ultimately allowed them to expand services to meet the critical emerging needs. For example, recognizing that most of the asylum seekers faced a technological need, MRNY supplied cell phones and SIM cards to arrivals. They also provided education on how to use these phones for new arrivals unfamiliar with technology. Recognizing the importance of youth education, MASA prioritized school enrollment and after school programming for asylum seeker youth. By catering their unique strengths to the needs of new arrivals in their care, CBOs fostered welcoming and culturally responsive safe spaces for them. These safe spaces also empowered new arrivals. After receiving services by Mexican Coalition, clients indicated increased self-advocacy and greater awareness of the available city services.

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**In 2023, these organizations served**

**26,118 asylum seekers**

**including 9,928 single adults, 1,663 adult families, and 3,189 families including 5,491 children.**

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MOIA continues to collaborate with community groups on the ground better serve immigrant communities during this humanitarian crisis and beyond.

## **Immigrant Peer Navigator Program**

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**In Fall 2023, MOIA and the Mayor's Fund launched the Immigrant Peer Navigator Program using \$600,000 in philanthropic funding from Rockefeller Foundation and other generous donors.**

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The program is a first of its kind asylum seeker pilot relief project that connects 250 long term immigrant mentors with 250 new arrived asylum seekers.

Long time immigrant New Yorkers with similar immigration experiences serve as mentors to newly arrived asylum seekers, giving them tips on surviving and navigating life in New York City, including finding work, housing, and providing community connections. Over the course of the program, each participant participates in 6 mentorship orientation sessions and receives a \$599 stipend and a MetroCard.

MOIA selected 9 diverse organizations with an extensive reach to immigrant New Yorkers, to identify and select the participants of the programs based

on preset requirements and match them with mentors. Each organization also provided cultural and linguistic services to immigrant New Yorkers.

- African Communities Together
- African Services Committee
- Aid for Life
- Catholic Charities
- Fundavenyc
- La Colmena
- Mexican Coalition
- Mixteca
- New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)

The program was officially announced in 2024 and is ongoing.



*Red de Pueblos*

## Haitian Response Initiative

In 2023, MOIA continued to fund the Haitian Response Initiative (HRI), an initiative launched in 2021 to serve newly arrived Haitian New Yorkers due to the natural disasters, political upheaval, and changes in Federal policy that permitted some seeking protection to enter and reside in the U.S.

Many newly arrived Haitians chose to settle in New York City, to live with or near family in the vibrant Haitian communities in Brooklyn and Queens. Through HRI, MOIA continued to work with community-based partners to provide case management and immigration legal services to newly arrived Haitian New Yorkers. Partners in the initiative include:



*Haitian Cultural Day*

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**In 2023,  
over 2,000  
recently arrived Haitians  
met with HRI case  
workers for an initial  
intake to determine what  
services and resources  
they needed.**

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*Haitian Cultural Day*

- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York
- Caribbean Women's Health Association
- Diaspora Community Services
- Flanbwayan Literacy Project
- Haitian Americans United for Progress (HAUP)
- Haitian American Community Coalition (HCC)
- Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees
- Life of Hope

Case managers assisted people by determining their eligibility for benefits and connecting them to resources and services, including direct cash assistance, food assistance, healthcare, school enrollment, housing, mental health services, legal services, and information cautioning against immigration services fraud and other scams.

HRI case workers referred clients to immigration legal information and services provided by Catholic Charities, who have:

- Screened more than 440 community members for immigration relief eligibility
- Opened more than 340 cases for assistance, and
- Represented community members in dozens of immigration court appearances.

Following the federal government's 2023 re-registration and re-designation of Haitian TPS, Catholic Charities held numerous TPS clinics helping hundreds of Haitian community members access protection and work authorization.

They also planned and executed full days of work permit application assistance clinics in Brooklyn, each of which was joined by MOIA's Community Outreach team and representatives from different

healthcare providers to ensure that community members were able to access various services while on site.

## Ukrainian Response Initiative

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainians fleeing violence and turmoil began arriving to the United States. Many displaced Ukrainians chose to settle in New York City, in part because NYC is home to a large and vibrant Ukrainian diaspora community. Since the onset of the war, it is estimated that more than 40,000 displaced Ukrainians have moved to New York City, with most resettling in the Greater Coney Island area of Brooklyn.

In April 2022, MOIA announced more than \$2.16 million in FY22-23 funding for the Ukrainian Response Initiative (URI) in demonstration of solidarity with the Ukrainian people and to support arriving Ukrainians to integrate into New York City. Through URI, MOIA contracted non-profits organization with longstanding ties in the community to provide services to all New Yorkers impacted by the Russian war on Ukraine. These organizations provided culturally and linguistically responsive immigration legal assistance, translation services, social services, and other resources. Partners in the initiative included:

- New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC)
- CAMBA
- Catholic Charities
- Razom
- Shorefront YM-YWH, and
- New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)

More than 1,500 people were provided with immigration legal assistance, such as individual screenings, pro bono assistance to access TPS and Employment Authorization Documents (EADs, or work permits), and legal representation in other matters, and 35 in-person legal clinics were conducted. Additionally, 650 new arrivals were provided with tuberculosis (TB) testing over 10 public health fairs.

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**Through URI,  
more than  
3,200 individuals  
were screened for and  
provided with social  
services. Additionally,  
20 in-person community  
events served more than  
3,000 people, and 19  
schools partnered with  
the program to reach  
Ukrainian students and  
refer them to services.**

URI's impact extended beyond direct services. New Yorkers that were served through the initiative often became volunteers and even employees of program partners, demonstrating that the program fostered capacity and community building. Program partners also took additional steps to reduce misinformation and community members' susceptibility to fraud and scams through a concerted social media presence on Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, and YouTube. The program continued until June 2023.



# Legal Initiatives

## Access to free, confidential immigration legal services

MOIA Legal Support Centers (formerly ActionNYC) are a citywide, community-based resource that provides access to free, confidential immigration legal services to grow the immigration legal services field. Through the program's "Community Navigator" model, immigrant New Yorkers have access to free, high quality immigration legal services in their preferred language, at safe locations in their community. The program is operated jointly by MOIA, DSS/HRA, and CUNY, and implemented in collaboration with over 25 CBOs and legal services providers including:

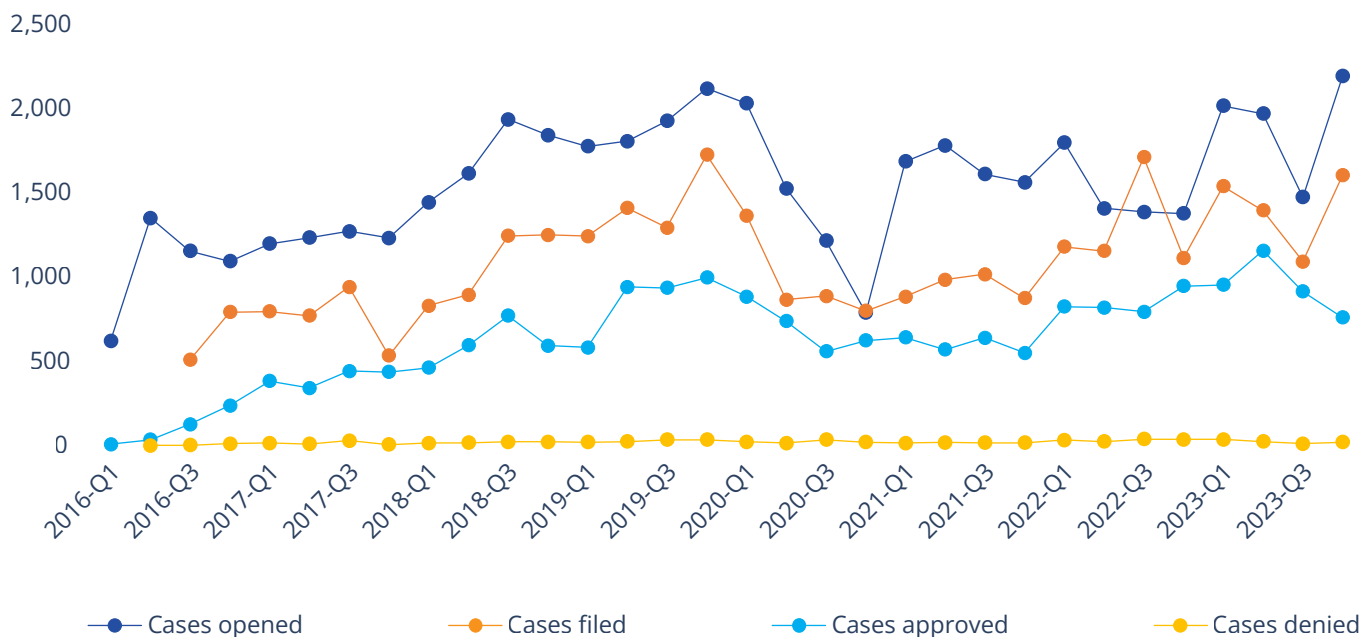
- African Communities Together
- African Services Committee
- Arab American Association of New York
- BronxWorks
- CAMBA
- Caribbean Women's Health Association
- Catholic Charities Community Services
- Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
- Center for Family Life
- Chhaya CCD Richmond Hill
- Chinese American Planning Council Queens
- Haitian Americans United for Progress
- Immigrant Justice Corps
- Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement
- Little Sisters of the Assumption
- Lutheran Social Services of Metropolitan New York
- Make the Road New York
- MinKwon
- New York Immigration Coalition
- New York Legal Assistance Group
- Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation
- The Door
- Sunnyside Community Services

Non-attorney community navigators and immigration attorneys provide comprehensive immigration legal screenings and full legal representation in straightforward

immigration matters, including but not limited to citizenship applications, green card renewals, and TPS applications. Certain MOIA Legal Support Center providers also offer full representation in complex cases such as Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, U and T-Visa applications, and asylum. For complex legal cases outside the legal team's scope of services or capacity, MOIA Legal Support Centers connect clients to other City-funded legal services programs administered by DSS/HRA's Office of Civil Justice, such as the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI) and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funded programs.

MOIA Legal Support Center navigators also connect clients to non-legal services as needed, including IDNYC, health insurance enrollment, and school enrollment. All organizations and community navigators receive support to obtain and maintain U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Recognition and Accreditation, meaning the organization has permission from DOJ to practice immigration law before federal authorities and represent clients before USCIS through Accredited Representatives.

### ActionNYC Applications by Status



**In 2023, MOIA Legal Support Center providers conducted over 14,087 comprehensive immigration legal screenings, outperforming target deliverables and resulting in an increase of 4 percent over 2022.**

MOIA Legal Support Centers filed 5,634 new cases, an increase of more than 9% percent from the previous years. More individuals sought assistance with complex cases, including asylum, which were referred out to other legal service nonprofits. Of cases in which immigration authorities rendered decisions in 2023, 97 percent were approved, a slight increase over 2022.

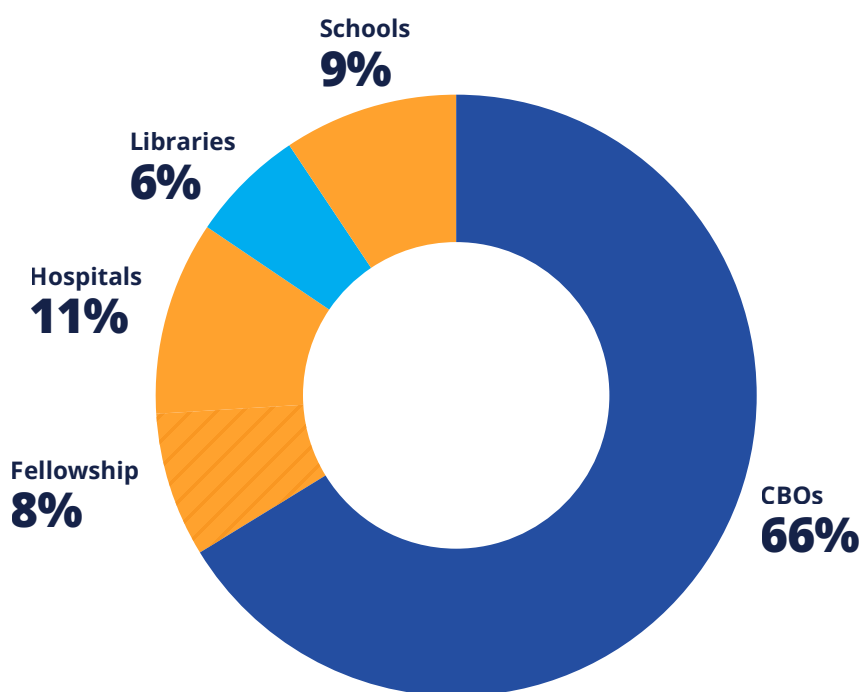
MOIA Legal Support Center initiatives referred 2,825 cases to other legal service providers in 2023. Of these, 1,518 were referred from MOIA Legal Support Centers in CBOs, 559 were referred from MOIA Legal Support Centers in H+H, 257 from MOIA Legal Support Centers in schools, 130 from MOIA Legal Support Centers in libraries, and 361 from the MOIA Legal Support Centers Legal Fellowship. This is a decrease of 15 percent from 2022, due in part to the mid-year wind-down of the MOIA Legal Support Centers' Legal Fellowship program.

In 2023, MOIA Legal Support Center providers served the needs of newly arrived asylum seekers in addition to their work serving all immigrant New Yorkers. Changes in MOIA Legal Support Centers' screening participants' preferred languages reflect this, **with increases of 79 percent Russian, 68 percent Haitian Creole, 65 percent French, and 43 percent Wolof over 2022.** The number of TPS cases screened by the program rose by more than 300 percent.

### 2023 Screenings, Disaggregated by Service Type

Programs	Annual Screenings
CBOs	9,333
Fellowship	1,095
Hospitals	1,469
Libraries	870
Schools	1,320

**Grand Total:**  
**14,087**



## 2023 Cases Filed by Program

Programs	Cases Filed
CBOs	4,418
Fellowship	390
Hospitals	354
Libraries	114
Schools	358
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,634</b>

## Cases Outcome by Program

Programs	Case Approved	Case Denied	Approval Rate
CBOs	2,575	42	98%
Fellowship	245	24	91%
Hospitals	376	6	98%
Libraries	268	12	96%
Schools	325	14	96%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,789</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>97%</b>

Our Legal Support Centers are also designed to increase the professional and operational capacity of community-based organizations to provide immigration legal services. MOIA accomplishes this by providing legal and technical support to our partnered organizations and their staff through contracts with Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) and New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC). In 2023, 25 program staff members attended CLINIC's Comprehensive Overview of Immigration Law (COIL) training<sup>2</sup>. COIL is helpful as initial training to entry-level staff, and to support navigators' applications for DOJ accreditation. In 2023, 14 navigators achieved or renewed their accreditation, allowing them to represent clients in matters before federal immigration authorities.

<sup>2</sup> COIL is a 12-unit course consisting of a live webinar and set of self-directed activities, providing students with an overview of core immigration law concepts and legal skills to enable new practitioners to quickly learn the fundamentals of immigration law.



In 2023, MOIA also announced changes to the MOIA Legal Support Center program that will make it more accessible to a wider range of immigrant communities and those most in need of services. These changes were informed by conversations with community members and frontline community workers, over the course of hundreds of visits with organizations and groups rooted in New York's immigrant communities.

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**A household income cap of 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines was added to program eligibility requirements, ensuring that the program serves immigrant New Yorkers most in need.**

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A rebranding of the program was initiated, changing its name from ActionNYC to MOIA Legal Support Centers so that community members can more easily recognize the program and understand what it offers, especially when translated in languages other than English. Finally, MOIA and HRA published a Concept Paper announcing that the program would be re-procured in 2024, with an updated program model. The new model aims to increase the number and diversity of immigrant communities in which MOIA Legal Support Centers are located, while adding more flexibility to the types of services delivered so that they are more responsive to ever-changing federal immigration policies and community needs. Current MOIA Legal Support Center contracts are scheduled to end on December 31, 2024. The new MOIA Legal Support Center program's procurement process is sched-

uled to take place in 2024, with new multi-year contracts scheduled to commence in January 2025.

## **Immigration Legal Support Hotline**

The MOIA Immigration Legal Support Hotline provides free, confidential immigration information and referrals to nonprofit immigration legal services including MOIA Legal Support Center's appointments.

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**In 2023, demand for immigration legal information and services grew dramatically, and MOIA's Immigration Legal Support Hotline received 62,497 total calls.**

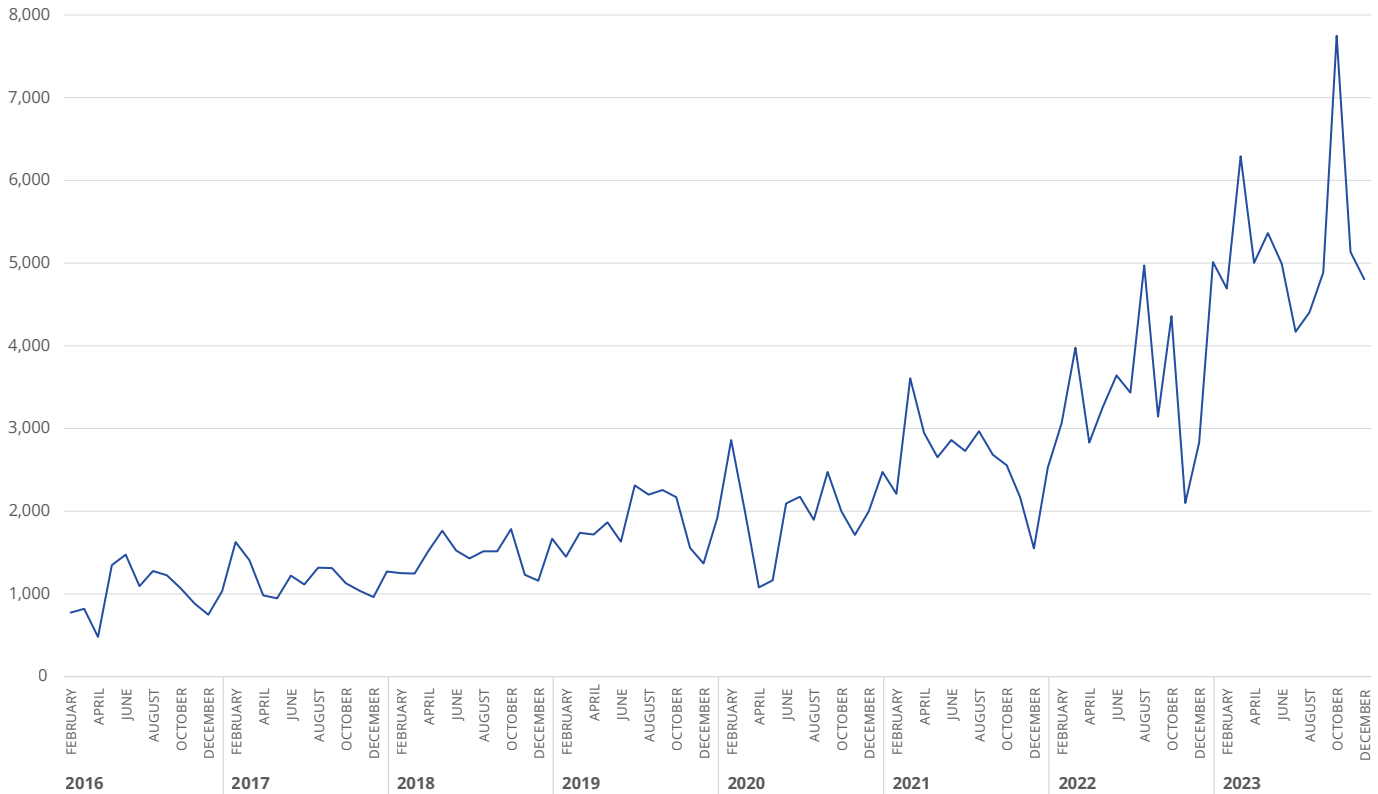
**This is 22,364 more calls than the Hotline received in 2022 and represents a 457 percent increase since the Hotline's launch in 2015.**

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In 2023, the Hotline set new records for the highest number of calls fielded in a single day, week, month, and year. This significant growth in call volume can be attributed to both growing awareness of services among long-residing immigrant New Yorkers, and an influx of newly arrived asylum seekers calling the Hotline for information and immigration legal service appointments.

To accommodate increased call volumes and the increasing diversity and complexity of callers' needs, MOIA allocated additional funding to the Hotline for enhanced and updated call center system technology and additional Hotline operators. In 2023, Hotline operators also provided callers with self-help resources, post-application assistance (including work authorization), referrals to legal help or *pro se* application assistance and direct guidance on basic procedures such as changing one's address with federal immigration agencies.

## ActionNYC Hotline - Historical Call Volume



## Training and Legal Technical Assistance to Nonprofit Organizations

The Capacity-Building Fellowship Program has successfully supported the development of effective and sustainable immigration legal services departments at non-profits serving hard-to-reach immigrant communities throughout NYC.

**Four legal fellows conducted**

**1,095 comprehensive immigration legal screenings and filed**

**390 cases in the first half of 2023.**

CBOs that participated in the fellowship program (fellows) were located within and primarily serve hard-to-reach immigrant communities. Former Fellows have gone on to apply for and receive competitive funding through City-funded and State-funded procurements.

The program resulted in an increase of immigrant clients from populations that had been traditionally harder to reach for MOIA Legal Support Center providers. The number of Asian, African, and Caribbean community members served by the program increased due, in large part, to the efforts of the providers who participated in the Capacity-Building Fellowship.

## Legal Assistance to Individuals Detained by ICE or at Risk of Detention and Deportation

In 2023, the Rapid Response Legal Collaborative (RRLC) continued to be carried out by a coalition of immigration legal service providers including Make the Road New York, UnLocal, and the New York Legal Assistance Group.

The coalition provides legal assistance to individuals detained by ICE or at imminent risk of detention and deportation. Many may not have the right to see an immigration judge or are otherwise facing a fast-track to removal. Through the coalition, immigrant New Yorkers receive client-centered support, crisis intervention, case management assistance, facilitated referrals for community-based services, letters of support and psychosocial evaluations, and supportive counseling as needed. RRLC's efforts enables the City to continue serving immigrant New Yorkers facing urgent, complex, and high-stakes immigration legal challenges.

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**In 2023, RRLC received 492 referrals from nonprofit and City service providers, including many who had received Orders of Removal in Absentia issued by Immigration Judges in New York and other states. This is more than double the number of referrals made to RRLC in 2022.**

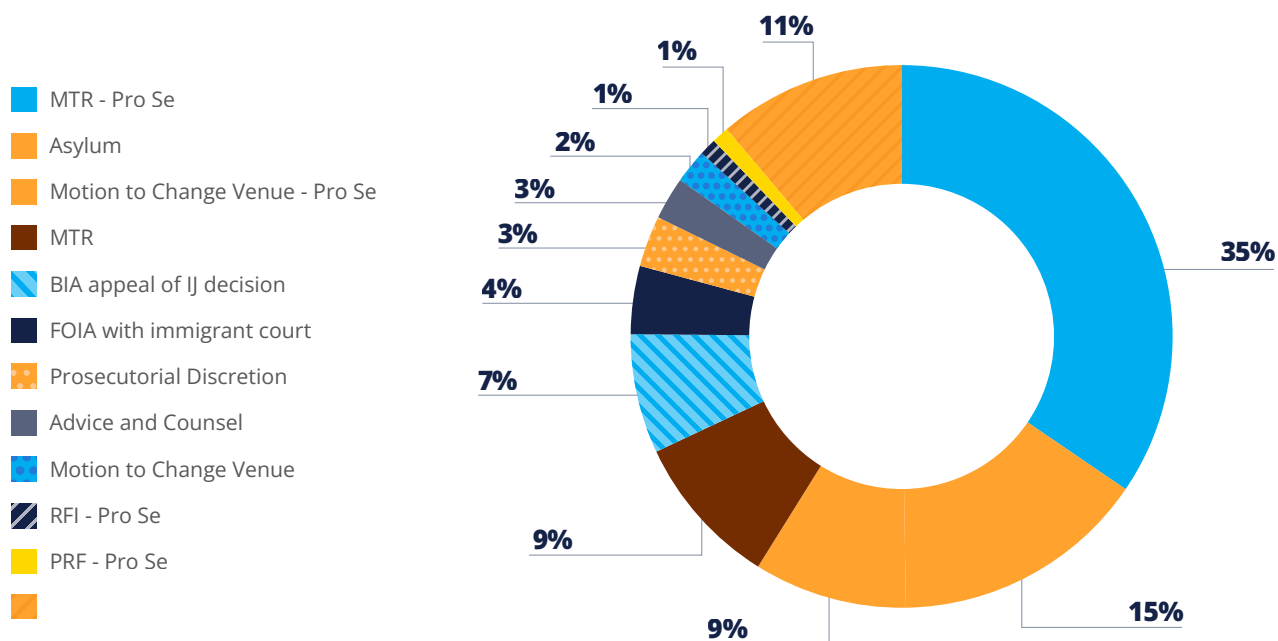
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In 2023, RRLC providers responded to the needs of newly arrived asylum seekers. Many newly arrived asylum seekers missed their immigration court hearing and were issued an Order of Removal *in Absentia* due to improperly issued or lost federal immigration paperwork, lack of familiarity with immigration requirements, or problems attending their immigration court hearing due to overcrowding and entry policies at immigration court buildings. The significant volume of asylum application filings achieved by AAHC resulted in a significant increase in referrals to RRLC, so that asylum seekers could reopen their immigration case prior to applying for asylum.



*CUNY Citizenship NOW! Event*

## CY23 RRLC Breakdown of Types for Matters Represented or Assisted



## Immigrant Rights Workshops Program

MOIA's Immigrant Rights Workshop (IRW) Program works with 18 trusted community groups to provide relevant and timely information directly to immigrant communities through comprehensive, educational presentations. The following community groups conducted IRWs in 2023:

- Arab-American Family Support Center
- Center for Family Life
- Damayan
- DSI International
- Haitian Americans United for Progress (HAUP)
- Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement
- Korean Community Services
- La Colmena
- Laal
- Life of Hope
- Lutheran Social Services of New York (LSSNY)
- Mexican Coalition
- Mixteca
- Muslim Community Network
- New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)



- Project New Yorker
- United Sikhs

Our partners host IRWs focusing on the general rights of all immigrant New Yorkers. The content focuses on federal immigration law and enforcement priorities, best practices for identifying and interacting with federal immigration officers, and available free and safe immigration legal services. Partners can also tailor IRWs to fit the unique needs of each audience by adding additional content on topics from the following four categories:

- Available city services and resources
- State policies and programs
- Changes to federal immigration policy; and
- Workers' rights and worksite enforcement actions

In the first half of 2023, four IRW partners were redeployed to assist newly arrived asylum seekers at the Asylum Seeker Resource Navigation Center. At the Center, they presented to asylum seekers on federal immigration processes and requirements, advised them of the 1-year asylum filing deadline, explained to them how to comply with ICE Alternatives to Detention requirements and change their address with federal authorities, informed them of their rights, and warned them about immigration legal fraud.

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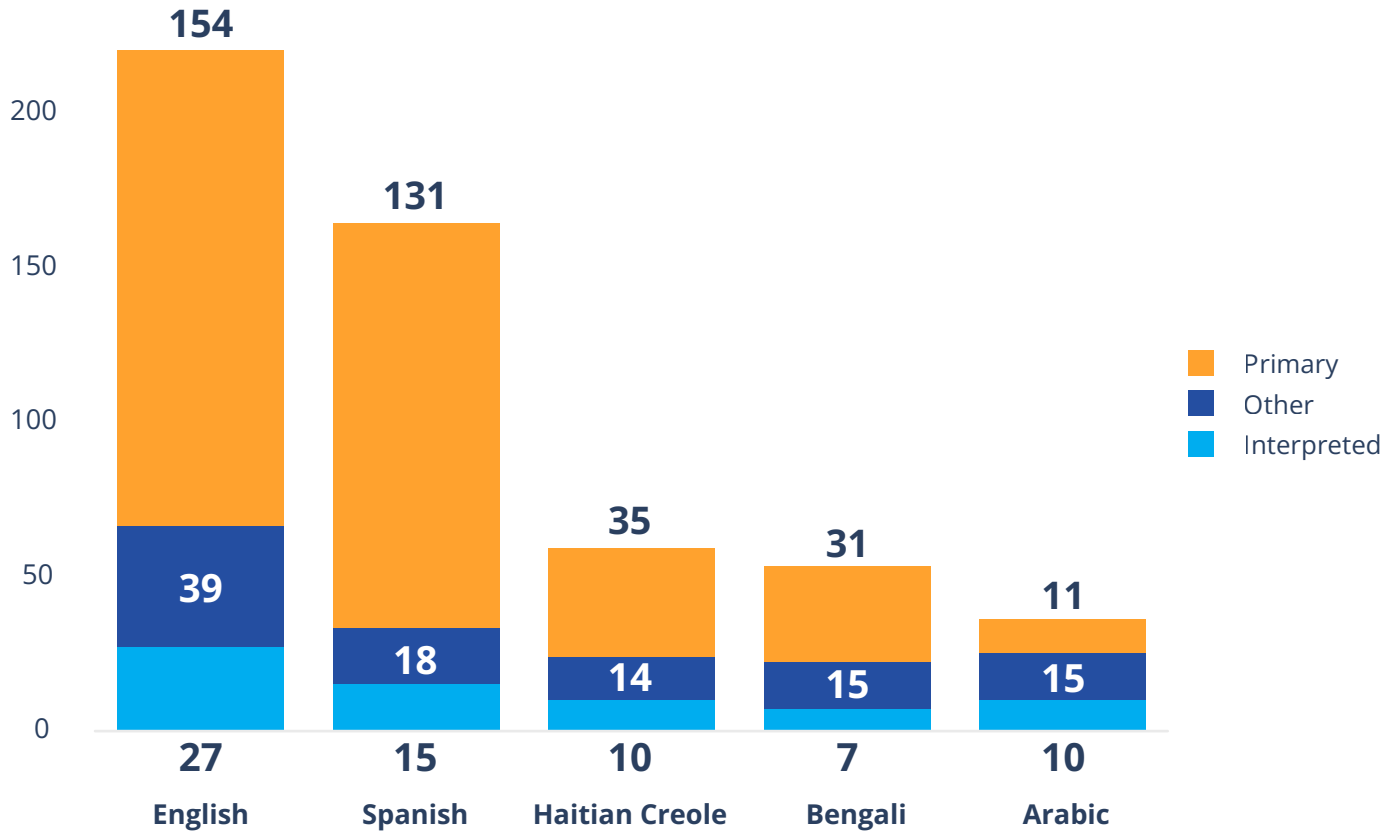
**In 2023, the IRW Program partnered with 18 CBOs across two projects, completing 404 IRW presentations and reaching**

**9,332 New Yorkers.**

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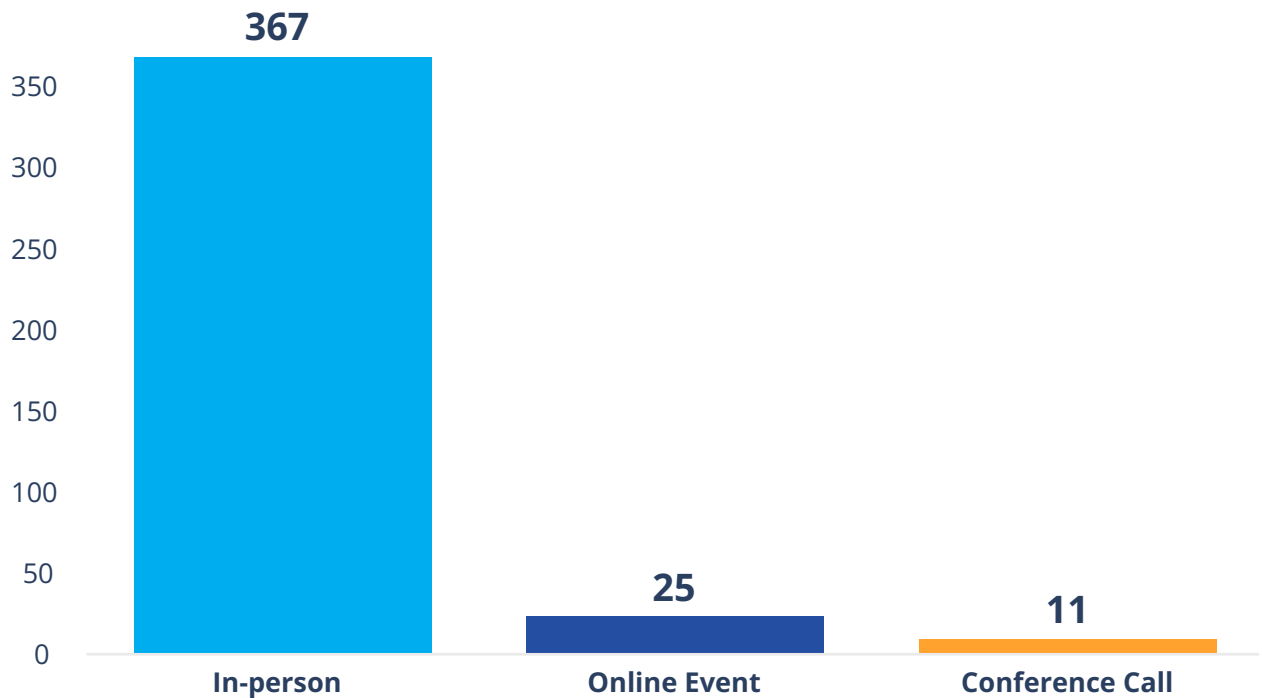
The IRW presentations were facilitated in Arabic, Bengali, English, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog, and Yoruba, and were interpreted in additional languages: Hausa, Quechua/Kichua, and Russian. Participants who attended the IRW presentations also had the option to receive informational materials, ask questions, and request legal services.

### Total Engagements by Top Languages



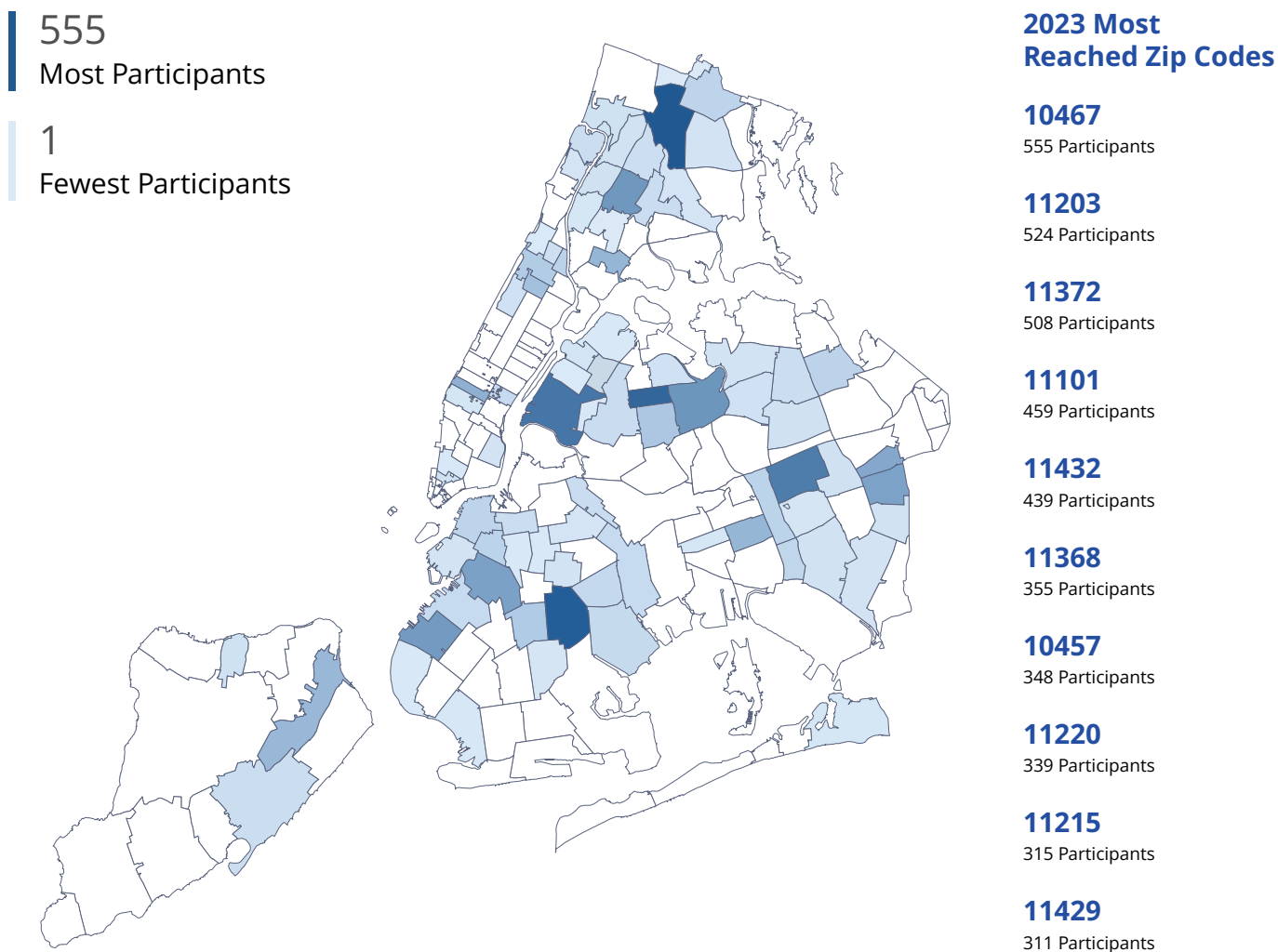
The chart shows the top languages in which IRW presentations were given. The top languages were, in order, English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Bengali, and Arabic.

### Total Engagements by Event Type



The chart shows the breakdown of event types in which IRW presentations were given. The most common presentation was in-person, with 368 instances. The second most common was online, with 25 instances, and the third most common was a conference call, with 11 instances.

## People Reached by Zip Code



The zip code map shows varying shades of blue, with darker shades indicating more individuals reached and lighter indicating fewer. Text on the side shows the top ten most reached zip codes, with the most being 10467 in the Bronx, with 555 participants reached.

## NYS DREAM Act Application Assistance Program

In February 2020, MOIA launched the New York State Dream Act Application Assistance Program (NYSDAAAP) to support students in navigating the application process for NYS financial aid programs. Following the enactment of the Senator José Peralta New York State Dream Act into law, these programs became newly available to immigrant students. NYSDAAAP specifically focuses on aiding undocumented students who face a unique set of barriers to college, including difficulty accessing academic, financial, social, and mental health support.

In 2023, MOIA continued to partner with UnLocal to assist 102 immigrant students in NYC throughout various stages of the application process to ensure they had access to vital state resources in pursuit of higher education.

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**Because there was still a lack of awareness about the program with students, UnLocal also disseminated information about the NYS Dream Act by holding four outreach events in 2023, reaching 246 students.**

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## U & T VISAS

U and T visas promote public safety by offering protection to immigrant survivors of certain crimes or human trafficking (labor and sex trafficking), encouraging them to come forward and seek assistance from law enforcement. These visas, issued by the federal government, can give undocumented immigrant survivors stability, work authorization, and a potential pathway to lawful permanent residency.

An applicant for a U visa must submit a certification from a law enforcement agency. The certification is an official statement detailing that a qualifying crime has taken place, and the victim has been helpful or will be helpful to the agency in the detection, investigation, and/or prosecution of the crime. For a T visa, a law enforcement declaration, similar to a certification, can be important evidence to include in an application, though it is not required.

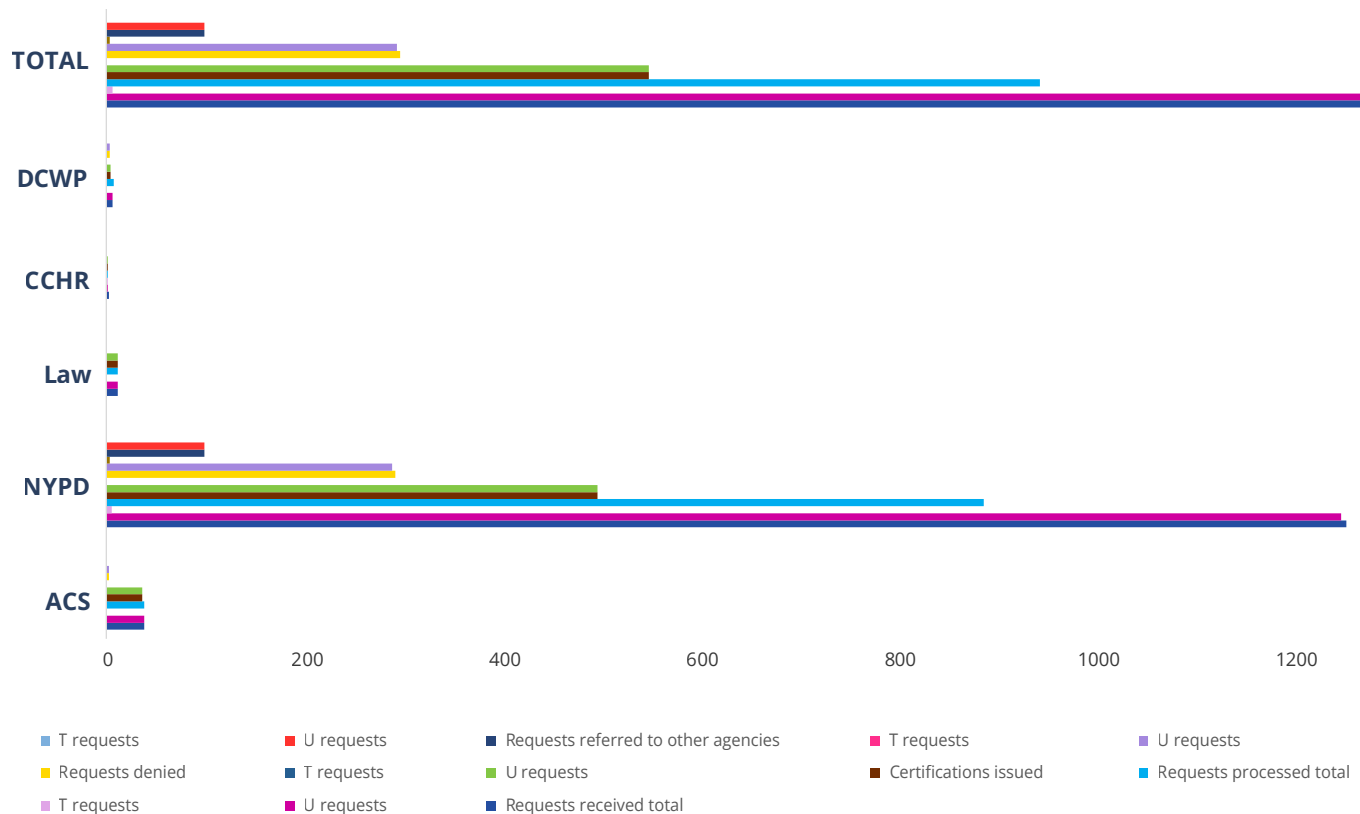
Under NYC Charter Ch. 1 § 18(d)(7), MOIA has a duty to advise City law enforcement agencies about U visa certifications and T visa declarations to address the unique needs of immigrant survivors. With the Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV) and the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), MOIA coordinates a working group of city agency certifiers. This group provides technical assistance and relevant policy updates while also supporting effective working relationships with legal service providers who work with immigrant survivors. The city certifiers include the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), NYC Law Department (NYC Law), New York Police Department (NYPD), NYC Commission of Human Rights (CCHR), and Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP), as well as the City's five District Attorney's Offices. MOIA, ENDGBV, and MOCJ also engage with advocates and legal service providers to ensure awareness of City certification policies.

The following charts present annual statistics on U and T visa certifications by City agencies in calendar year 2023. The District Attorney's Offices do not publish data on U and T Visa certifications and declarations issued. Notably, the total number of requests received across all agencies continues to increase. In 2023, the NYPD surpassed its 2022 record by receiving its highest recorded number of requests this past year.



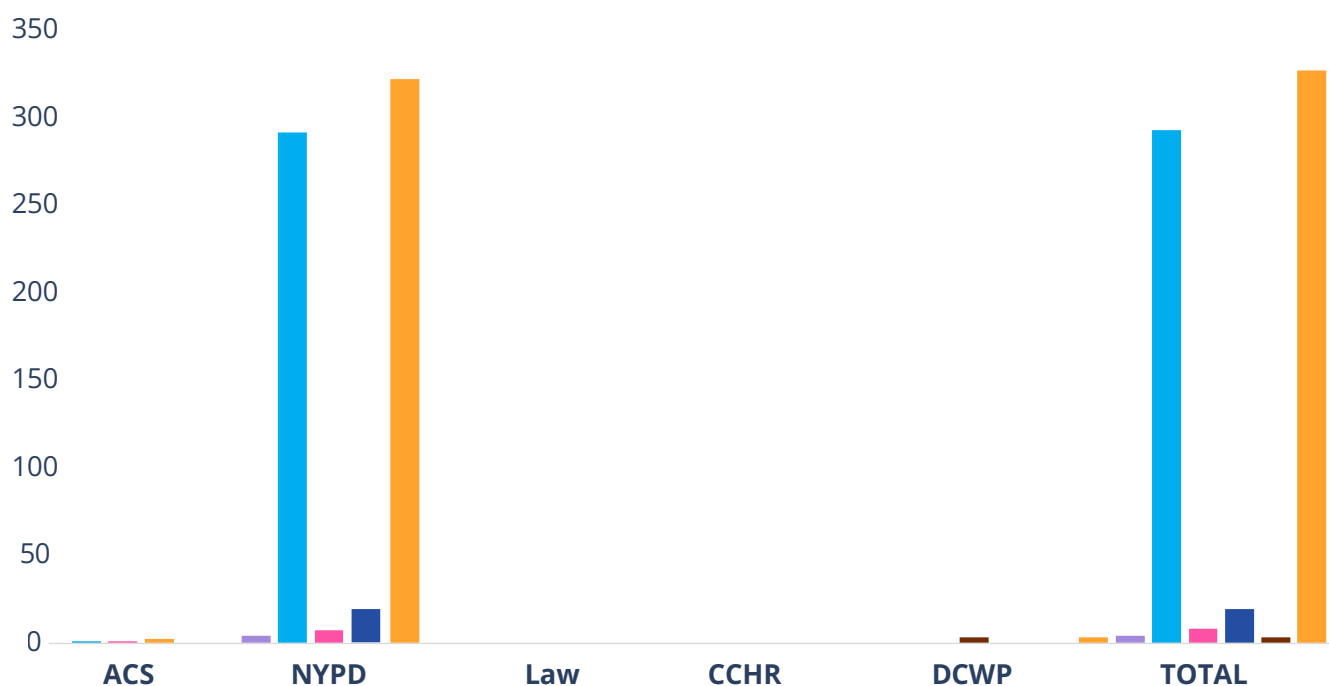
## U and T Visa Certifications in CY 2023

	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCWP	Total
<b>Requests received total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1255</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1312</b>
U requests	38	1250	11	1	6	<b>1306</b>
T requests	0	5	0	1	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Requests processed total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>945</b>
<b>Certifications issued</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>549</b>
U requests	36	497	11	1	4	<b>549</b>
T requests	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Requests denied</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>297</b>
U requests	2	289	0	0	3	<b>294</b>
T requests	0	3	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
<b>Requests referred to other agencies</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>99</b>
U requests	0	99	0	0	0	<b>99</b>
T requests	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>



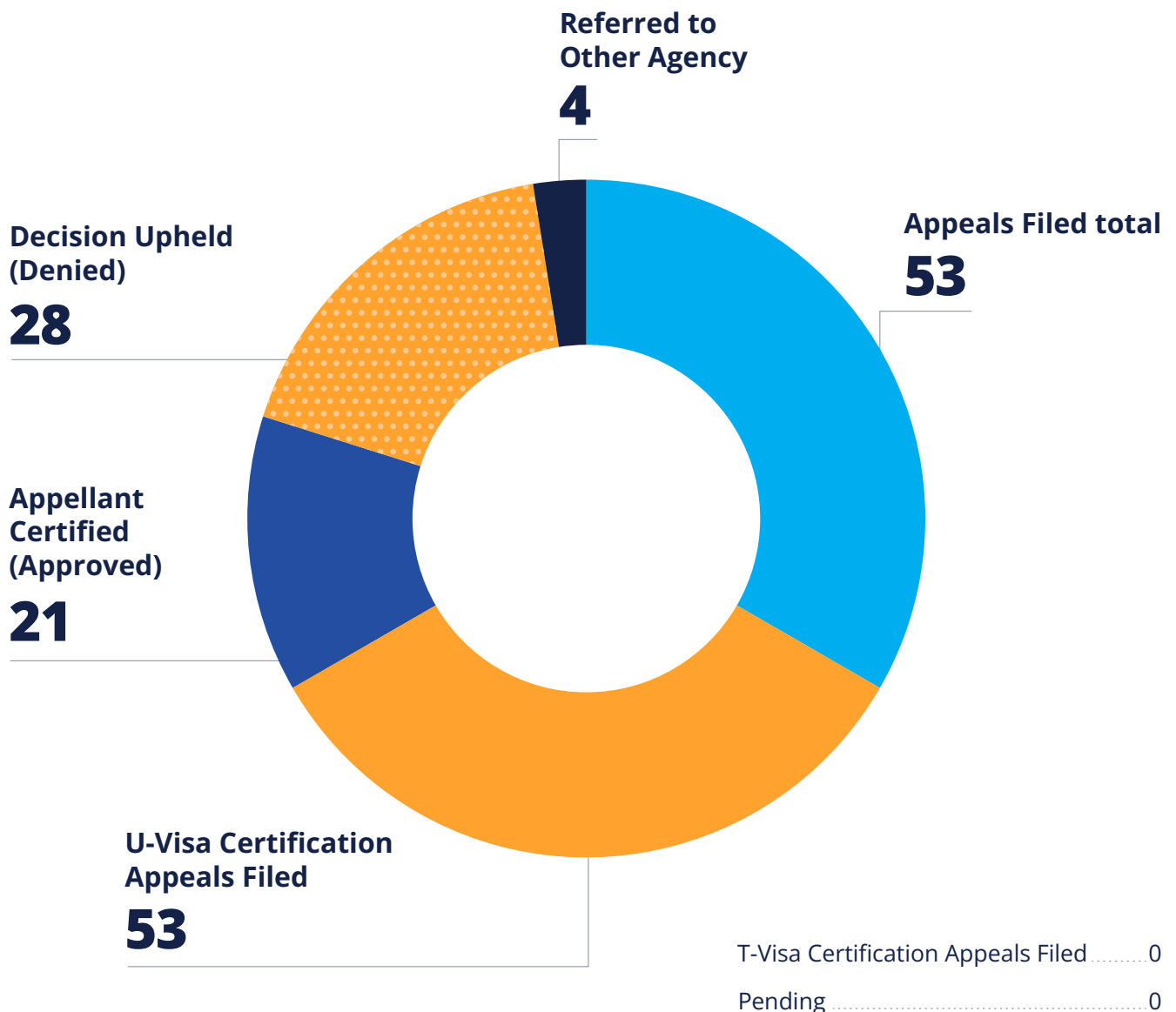
## Reasons for Request Denials (including denials for appeals) in CY 2023

Reasons for denials	ACS	NYPD	Law	CCHR	DCWP	Total
Public safety concern	0	4	0	0	0	4
Non-qualifying crime	1	290	0	0	0	291
Lack of helpfulness/cooperation (the victim has not assisted the Police Department in the investigation)	1	7	0	0	0	8
Indirect victim/witness (the individual named is not the direct or indirect victim)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lack of qualifying investigation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Case could not be unsealed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insufficient documentation	0	19	0	0	0	19
Statute of limitations expired	0	0	0	0	3	3
Applicant is subject of active investigation/ Respondent in Art. 10 case (must reapply after investigation/case is closed)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Certifications denied total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>325</b>



## Certification Denials Appealed in CY 2023

Appeal Status	NYPD
■ Appeals Filed total	53
■ U-Visa Certification Appeals Filed	53
□ T-Visa Certification Appeals Filed	0
□ Pending	0
■ Appellant Certified (Approved)	21
■ Decision Upheld (Denied)	28
■ Referred to Other Agency	4



# Anti-Fraud Work

In 2023, MOIA continued to use two key strategies to combat immigration fraud:

1. Providing free, trusted immigration legal services through ASLAN and the MOIA Legal Support Center.
2. Conducting outreach that gives immigrant communities clear, accurate, and timely information about issues impacting them and services available to them.

MOIA conducts outreach to combat fraud in several ways:

- Immigrant Rights Workshops, which contain information about fraud.
- MOIA web page, “Avoid Becoming the Victim of Immigration Fraud,” with links to a flyer in 18 languages.
- Dedicated funding for combatting fraud in recent Response Initiatives.
- We Speak NYC episode, “Sonam’s Mom,” covering the difference between immigration assistance service providers and lawyers, and warning signs to look out for; and
- Widespread outreach about free, safe, City-funded immigration legal help through ActionNYC.

To help newly arrived asylum seekers avoid immigration fraud, MOIA included flyers on how to avoid immigration fraud as part of welcome packets they receive – in addition to a range of efforts to connect them with clear, accurate legal information and support. MOIA also offers information on the City’s immigration services on our website and social media profiles. For more information on legal support for asylum seekers, see page 30.

MOIA has participated in the Protecting Immigrant New Yorkers (PINY) Taskforce, which is made up of local, state, and federal government officials, private and nonprofit legal practitioners, and community organization representatives since it formed in 2013.

# Language Initiatives

## Language Access

Roughly two million New Yorkers – more than twenty two percent of New Yorkers and nearly fifty percent of the foreign-born population in New York City – have limited English proficiency. New Yorkers with limited English proficiency may face challenges accessing City information and services or navigating misinformation and disinformation. Given this, language access is essential to effective government and to advancing equity. Commissioner Castro and the Adams Administration are committed improving language access across NYC government.

In 2023, MOIA created the Language Access Hub, expanding our office’s language access work and strengthening our capacity to support agencies in providing culturally responsive multilingual communications. The Hub serves as the City’s in-house experts and advisors on language access so that city agencies can more effectively serve New Yorkers who speak languages other than English.



*Mayor Adams and Commissioner Castro walking in the Immigrant Day Parade.*





*Korean Roundtable*

The Hub houses two teams: Language Access Team and Language Services Team. Together, they:

- **Develop and implement strategies and policies to embed language access into city operations** and strengthen the City's "language access infrastructure."
- **Advise agencies and other entities and helps them develop the capacity to advance language access,**

including providing technical assistance and oversight of Local Law 30; and consulting with community groups about glossaries and translations.

- **Provide more timely and culturally responsive translation and interpretation services** to MOIA, Mayoral Offices and City Hall.

### **Bolstering Language Service Capacity**

As part of the Language Access Hub, MOIA's Language Services Team (or LST) provides translation and interpretation for MOIA, other Mayoral Offices, and City Hall to support engagement with New York's diverse communities.

In 2023, the LST onboarded 10 Language Access Specialists (Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, Russian) and 2 project managers to expand the in-house capabilities to provide timely and community-responsive translation and interpretation.

The LST responded to 271 translation requests and handled a volume of 374,369 words in 67 languages, in line with the growing capacity of in-house language specialists. The LST provided 526 interpreters across 287 events, arranging interpretation in 25 languages (+31.6 percent compared to 2022). Telephonic interpretation in 71 languages (+20.3 percent compared to 2022) was offered in 13,959 instances, totaling 5,236 hours of telephonic interpretation.

To provide critical information to both long time and recently arrived immigrant New Yorkers, MOIA translated a range of materials into over 50 languages, including Limited Diffusion Languages such as Wolof, Soninke, Igbo, Quechuan, and more.

The team continues to expand its collaboration with Mayoral Offices and City Hall to increase multilingual communications. These projects include translating 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Toolkits into 16 languages, Tenant Support Unit toolkit into 14 languages, and air quality e-blast into 10 languages.

The LST coordinated multilingual signage and interpretation into Spanish and Mandarin for Mayor Adams' State of the City Address at the Queens Theatre. MOIA also provided interpretation support for the IDNYC campaigns and tabling events across the boroughs (Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, French), virtual and in-person Immigrant Rights Workshops (Spanish, Mandarin, French, Cantonese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Arabic, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Burmese), various mayoral townhalls (Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Russian, Korean), and cultural celebrations and events with community partners, such as the Spring Festival (Cantonese and Mandarin), Vaisakhi (Punjabi), Songkran (Thai), and Arabic Language Forum (Arabic).

To provide critical information to recently arrived immigrants, the team supported asylum-seeker operations by translating a range of materials into 27+ languages. The LST provided translated communications materials, including signage, website resources, translation and interpretation service information, emails, and scripts. These resources positioned the city to provide shelter services, including legal support referrals, shelter protocol updates, and materials to promote humanitarian and emergency response relief. Additionally, language specialists provided on-site language support to newly arrived immigrants at AAHC, federal work authorization clinic, HER-RCs, re-ticketing center, and the Arrival Center, in Arabic, French, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese. The Language Access Specialists provided additional insight into the challenges faced by clients and suggestions to improve the City's response efforts.



*Commissioner Castro and MOIA team member Lorena Lucero at a Tibetan community event.*

## Language Services Key Performance Indicators

### Translation



	CY22	CY23	INCR./DECR.
Requests handled	267	271	<b>+1.4%</b>
Word count	250,142	374,369	<b>+49.6%</b>
Languages	60	67	<b>+11.7%</b>

### Telephonic Interpretation



	CY22	CY23	INCR./DECR.
Total calls	7,106	13,959	<b>+96.4%</b>
Hours of interpretation	1,746.33	5,236.20	<b>+199.8%</b>
Languages	59	71	<b>+20.3%</b>

### Interpretation



	CY22	CY23	INCR./DECR.
Total Events	82	287	<b>+250.0%</b>
Interpreters	125	526	<b>+320.8%</b>
Languages	19	25	<b>+31.6%</b>

## Embedding Language Access into City Operations

As part of the Language Access Hub, MOIA's Language Access Team works to further embed language access into city operations and bolster the City's language access infrastructure to effectively communicate with New Yorkers who speak languages other than English. In 2023, our Language Access Team educated city staff about language access, worked with agency partners to educate them on and improve language services procurement, and implemented new language access legislations.

MOIA educated city staff on Local Law 14 that strengthened language access. This included providing guidance to agencies on the legislation's requirements and providing input to the Mayor's Office of Operation on the report on languages spoken by inspectors. At the end of 2023, MOIA created and surveyed to assess the capacity of community-based organizations to provide language services (Local Law 6 of 2023).

In 2023, our Language Access Team also held several interagency convenings to bolster language access work. This work included:

- **Multiple online and in-person convenings of Language Access Coordinators (LACs).** This was to share information regarding legislation related to language access, developments in the language services industry, including technology, and best practices from across government. The team also brought together first-time Language Access Coordinators to provide additional guidance from MOIA and other experienced agency staff.
- **Working with agency partners to ensure they have the resources in place to provide translation and interpretation.**
- **Two Civic Design Forums (CDF) on language access in collaboration with Service Design Studio (SDS) and OTI.** The first forum engaged 50 City government staff in a discussion on the importance of plain language and practicing plain language techniques. The second forum engaged 46 City government staff on learning and discussing community-centered translation practices.

## Advising and Providing Technical Assistance to Agencies to Support Language Access

MOIA's Language Access Team also provided extensive 1:1 technical assistance to city agencies and other external partners to support them in advancing language access. This included, but is not limited to, consulting with:

- 30+ agencies on how to implement their language access implementation plans, required by Local Law 30.
- Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) about the procurement process for the next generation of citywide contracts for telephonic interpretation and video-remote interpretation.
- ACS, OTI, and others on localization of websites and digital communications to expand language access.



- Small Business Services (SBS) on language service providers certified as M/WBEs
- Newly appointed LACs including OCME, DOP, DOC, DCP, and OTI
- the Digital Equity Working Group (DEWG) to expand inclusion of language access as part of efforts to improve digital access.

In addition, MOIA's Language Access Team engaged with other municipalities and levels of government on language access by:

- Co-facilitating a language access workshop with a colleague from Atlanta on expanding equitable language access programming at the local level at the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Cities for Action national convening.
- Engaging with the Municipal Language Access Network (MLAN) to continue learn from and interact with other municipalities' language access work.
- Consulting with the leadership team from the New York State Office of Language Access, which launched in October 2022, joined an in-person convening of NYC Language Access Coordinators to share the State's approach on expanding language access.



*English Learning Class in Bushwick Brooklyn*



## NYC's English Language Learning Conversation Program

We Speak NYC (WSNYC), is the City's conversational English language learning curriculum used for MOIA's English Language Learning program.

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**In 2023, our program focused on expanding in-person classes, rolling out beginner level curriculum, and improving access to both English language learning and City services for new arrivals.**

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English language proficiency is a critical factor in the ability to access education, employment, health, and social services. MOIA's English Language Learning program provides a free, informal alternative to English language learners (ELLs) who may be waiting to join formal English classes, engage in conversational practice, or learn about the many resources that the city offers. Historically, the program has served as an entry point into English language learning and connects ELLs to other English, community-based level appropriate, HSE-GED, and CUNY Eng. prep courses, as well as professional development and workforce classes.

Our English Language Learning program helps immigrant New Yorkers practice their English conversation skills through narrative-based and civic-focused education materials, created in partnership with the CUNY. Courses are led by trained volunteers who use our Emmy-winning videos and materials to facilitate classes throughout an eight-week course. Our program works with CBOs, faith-based organizations, schools, and libraries to host the classes, and provides support and training for sites, class facilitators, and learners throughout the class course. Our program also hosted online classes, led by the trained volunteers, that were accessed easily via a smart phone or device anywhere throughout the day.

### Beginner Materials

The wave of new arrivals to the City has demonstrated a lower level of English proficiency, compounded in some cases by interrupted or no formal education, lack of native language literacy, and lack of access to existing community networks. These factors made it especially challenging for newly arrived immigrants to integrate into the city and access to its resources.

To assist in supporting the City's efforts to support this new population, MOIA's English Language Learning team began has been working on creating new and adapting existing materials to better serve the needs of these lower-level ELLs. MOIA's curriculum was especially unique as it focused on City resources and provided an opportunity for our newest New Yorkers to learn their rights.

MOIA's Beginner materials have an in-depth focus on critical vocabulary, comprehension checks, and targeted translation, using our award-winning videos. The Beginner materials also incorporate an increase in take-home handouts for learners. These materials include vocabulary lists for each episode, additional translated one-pagers with useful information on directions, prepositions, and clarification language that learners can reference outside the classroom.

With the help of participant feedback, beginner and intermediate-level materials are

now available, and continue to be developed, to serve a range of language learners and learning needs.

## **We Speak We LEAD**

In 2023, MOIA continued to collaborate with the community-based organization New Women New Yorkers, to deliver the fourth year of intensive workforce development and ESOL workshops, known as We Speak We LEAD. This program includes 16 job readiness sessions that focus on the fundamentals of interviewing, resume building, and professional development skills, all themes featured in various WSNYC episodes. It also gives participants space to learn about the job search process and work culture in the United States, and a safe space where they can practice their English conversation skills. In collaboration with New Women New Yorkers, the MOIA held a graduation ceremony for the 2023 cohort, where 19 learners were presented with certificates of course completion and congratulations by Commissioner Castro and Deputy Chief of Staff Jasniya Sanchez.

## **Community Speak**

In collaboration with the Department of Education's (DOE) Division of Multilingual Learners (DML), MOIA embarked on its fourth year of Community Speak, a program designed to connect LEP immigrant parents of DOE students to City resources via the We Speak NYC curriculum. Community Speak is run through CBOs in neighborhoods where DOE schools serve populations of ENL (English as a New Language) students, and offers conversation practice, access to resources, and, most importantly, personalized case management support. This support, provided by CBOs and directed by MOIA and DOE/DML staff, helps LEP parents to learn more about and sign up for City services like SNAP benefits, workforce development programs, tenant rights, and access to higher education.

In a post-cycle survey administered to Community Speak participants:

- 90 percent of respondents reported that classes helped them improve their English.
- 72 percent noted that their knowledge of City services improved, citing new connections to Medicaid, IDNYC, Fair Fares, and access to an interpreter for a parent-teacher conference.
- 59 percent cited a better understanding of their rights as immigrants.

## Learner Testimonials taken from post class surveys:



This experience has been very pleasant for me, I have learned about many topics that I did not know about before and **above all, knowing my rights in this city.**

FALL CYCLE, 2023



I like the **topics because they are real life cases that happen in New York, it is as if oneself were the protagonist of the videos.**

Motivating students to participate.

SPRING CYCLE, 2023



It was an incredible experience, I could become more confident when speaking even being a shy person, **the environment motivated me to face my fear and play in learning** even if I did not pronounce correctly. I certainly want part of other cycles soon. I only have praise and gratitude to the institution for the beautiful work.

SUMMER CYCLE, 2023

## Facilitator Testimonials taken from post class surveys:



Our site coordinator told me that **some of our students who previously never spoke to her in English have started engaging in basic English conversation** when they see her around, which was great to hear.

SUMMER CYCLE, 2023



1) We were told repeatedly that **this was the only English class anyone was taking where they really got to work on their “conversation”** (vs grammar) and how VALUABLE that was. 2) With our help, there was very notable improvements in Pronunciation, Vocabulary and Idioms.

FALL CYCLE, 2023



Instead of using words from the “how am I feeling list” **the students researched words that were not listed and added words such as - capable** and more.

FALL CYCLE, BEGINNER, 2023

# Table of Updated Stats

We Speak NYC Key Performance Indicators of all Conversation Classes in 2023:  
The Year At A Glance

Cycles	Winter 23	Spring 23	Summer 23	Fall 23	Total
<b>Dates</b>	Feb - April	April - Mid-June	July - Mid-September	Mid October - December	
<b>Length of Cycle</b>	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	32
<b>Courses listed on website</b> (can include WSNYC + Partner + Self Facilitated Classes *)	24 17 online 7 in-person	23 17 online 6 in-person	21 15 online 6 in-person	21 10 online 11 in-person	89
<b>Individual Classes</b> (Total # of classes conducted across all course offerings)	182	178	160	160	680
<b>Registered Learners</b>	4124	3985	4490	3710	16309
<b>Unique Participants</b>	988	1076	1112	995	4171
<b>Seats Filled</b> (total number of participants attending in all classes/ courses)	2929	2924	3062	2348	11263
<b>Average attendance</b>	22	23	26	30	25.25
<b>Graduates</b>	216	212	231	222	881



## We Speak NYC Key Performance Indicators of Online Conversation Classes: 2021, 2022, 2023

	2021	2022	2023
<b>Dates</b>	January – November	January – December	February – December
<b>Courses listed on website</b>	74	74	59
<b>Individual Classes</b> (Total # of conducted classes carried out in all courses)	556	548	441
<b>Individual Classes</b> (Total # of classes conducted across all course offerings)	9,451	15,252	15,859
<b>Students Registered</b>	9,451	15,252	15,859
<b>Unique Participants</b>	3,407	4,578	3,907
<b>Average attendance per class</b>	18	19	25
<b>Registered Learners</b>	4124	3985	4490
<b>Unique Participants</b>	988	1076	1112

## We Speak NYC Key Performance Indicators of Volunteer-Facilitator Interaction in 2023

Facilitators	Winter 23	Spring 23	Summer 23	Fall 23	Total
<b>Trained</b>	114	57	70	0	301
<b>Placed</b>	43	48	43	43	177
<b>Hours of Community Service</b>	676	756	664	682	2778



*Left: Commissioner Castro standing next to staff from NICE in front of their storefront. NICE served as an asylum seeker navigation center.  
Top right: Commissioner Castro delivering PPE equipment to Mexican Coalition, a community based organization in the Bronx.  
Bottom right: Commissioner Castro speaking to asylum seekers inside a bus.*

## Well-being Initiatives

### Emergency Response to Immigrant Communities

In 2023, New York City was confronted with an unprecedented climate emergency. New Yorkers experienced significant unhealthy air quality over a three-day period from June 6 to June 8. This was caused by the smoke of more than 400 active Canadian wildfires, which prompted air pollution warnings across the nation. In response, MOIA worked with OASO, NYCEM, DCAS and other city agencies to deliver over 40,000 N-95 and K-95 face masks to immigrant serving CBOs and day laborer centers across the five boroughs. These masks were handed out to essential workers, such as delivery workers, domestic workers, constructions workers and others, who had no choice but to continue to work during the emergency. The following organizations received masks:

- Cabrini Immigrant Services
- Coalicion Mexicana
- El Centro
- La Colmena
- La Jornada
- MASA
- Mixteca
- NMIC
- Northern Manhattan Worker Center
- Worker Justice Project

MOIA also translated updates and resources on the air quality in the top 10 languages.

## Outreach to Immigrant Communities

MOIA's External Affairs Team "boots on the ground" approach offers essential services to current and newly arrived immigrants. The External Affairs is community rooted, offering culturally and linguistically competent support to immigrant communities, with an emphasis on immigrant communities that are traditionally underserved.

Core Services Provided by our External Affairs Team:

- **Providing Know-Your-Rights presentation** on how to navigate city services, language access programs, and the City's confidentiality policy. MOIA is currently working on expanding its virtual presentation program. In 2023, MOIA's External Affairs team conducted 82 KYR presentations, with 14 of them being virtual.
- **Addressing the unique needs of our immigrant community who call or email MOIA daily.** The team provides constituent services to help immigrants on a one-to-one basis. This also keeps MOIA informed of the most pressing issues of the community. In 2023, MOIA's External Affairs team answered 4,694 calls<sup>3</sup> to the Ask MOIA Hotline and responded to 1,183 emails.
- **Engaging with immigrant communities across cultural and linguistic backgrounds.** In 2023, MOIA's External Affairs team hosted 64 tabling events.

Partnership Services Provided by the MOIA External Affairs Team:

- Assisting with the Community Affairs Unit (CAU) to organize town halls and parades.
- Supporting DSS/HRA with outreach and direct support to community members with IDNYC applications and pre-screenings. Over 6,500 constituents completed their IDNYC application with assistance from the External Affairs team.
- Supporting H+H's mental health initiatives
- Assisting DHS with donation distribution and educational forums for asylum seekers living in shelter in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Partnerships.
- Offering IRS/ITIN & Taxpayer advocates programming and business development services.
- Assisting consulates from countries around the world at cultural events, educational forums, community leader conversations, and flag-raising ceremonies.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2022 MOIA Annual Report states that the Community Services team responded to 10,643 calls. This figure is actually the number of calls received, not those responded to.



## External Affairs Volunteer Program

The External Affairs Team volunteer program is responsible for recruiting and training New Yorkers of diverse backgrounds to best meet the needs of our ever-evolving immigrant communities. External Affairs exceeded its recruitment, retention, and engagement targets. During the last quarter of 2023, External Affairs recruited 98 new volunteers speaking 13 different languages. Volunteers contributed a total of 313.5 hours across 65 events last year.



Top left: Commissioner Castro with Accompany Capital staff holding our "We Love Immigrant NYC" poster;

Top right: MOIA External Affairs team member Lydia at an outreach event.

Middle left: MOIA External Affairs team member Jannet handing out a MOIA flyer.

Middle: MOIA External Affairs team member Ledia at an outreach event with community members.

Middle right: MOIA staff at an outreach event with CAIPA.

Bottom left: MOIA External Affairs team member Jannet giving a presentation.

Bottom right: MOIA team members at an outreach event.







## Re-Naming of Immigrant Heritage Plaza at Bowling Green

In January, MOIA and the Parks Department advocated for the city to rename “Public Place” within Bowling Green Park to “Immigrant Heritage Plaza.” The renaming of the space and the commemorative plaque pays homage to immigrants who arrived and built New York City, beginning with Juan Rodriguez, the first historically documented immigrant in the city. In 2023, Immigrant Heritage Plaza was used to host several events dedicated to the immigrant community in NYC.

## Immigrant Heritage Week and Month

In 2023, New York City was proud to honor and celebrate the contributions of immigrant communities – both during Immigrant Heritage Week in April and during National Immigrant Heritage Month in June through the theme of “We Love Immigrant NYC.”

For our 19<sup>th</sup> annual immigrant Heritage Week, MOIA created a poster mapping different immigrant neighborhoods across the five boroughs to celebrate immigrant communities. In April, MOIA and the Parks Department hosted the very first Indigenous Vendors Market at Immigrant Heritage Plaza at Bowling Green. This event was in partnership with Collective Focus and Transnational Villages Network, Inc. Artisan vendors from Red de Pueblos Transnacionales on April 17<sup>th</sup> and from Ti Toro Miko on April 21<sup>st</sup> displayed traditional hand-crafted items, including clothing and shoes, bags, jewelry, and cultural artifacts.

MOIA also partnered with NYC Department of Small Business Services to do an Immigrant Small Business Tour in Staten Island, with Commissioners Castro and Kim, visiting:

- Café con Pan, a family-owned Mexican bakery.
- MMA Variedades, a party decoration, and Mexican snacks store.
- Alex Estilos, a hair salon owned by Alejandra Moran who also founded the Latinx transgender advocacy organization L'Unicorns.
- San Jerónimo, a DREAMer-owned Mexican restaurant.
- Monte Alva, a Mexican supermarket.

*Opposite page:*

*MOIA External Affairs team at various outreach events, giving out information, helping people apply for IDNYC, and more across the five boroughs.*





Clockwise from top left: Illustrations of Little Mexico in Port Richmond, Staten Island; Little Dominican Republic in Washington Heights & Inwood Manhattan, Little Colombia in Jackson Heights Queens, and Little Haiti in Flatbush Brooklyn.



April and June celebrations included a diverse group of events, including:

- Calpulli Mexican Dance Company's Monarcas at Staten Island Children's Museum.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Arts, Crafts and Health Fair, hosted by Dominican Cultural Civic Center in Washington Heights.
- Pomo Arcoíris a Spanish-speaking group dedicated to supporting LGBT+ immigrants, sponsored by the Door in Manhattan.
- Re-encuentro de Soñadores.
- World Refugee Day.
- Iftar in the City.
- Criminal Queerness Festival.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Indigenous Heritage Expo.
- Egg Rolls, Egg Creams, and Empanadas Street Festival at the Museum at Eldridge Street
- The annual concert dedicated to Mothers and Fathers, hosted by Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano at the General Grant National Memorial.
- African Cultural Heritage Storytelling hosted by African Life Center at the Bronx Lebanon Hospital.

MOIA, Collective Focus, and Consejo de Pueblos Originarios hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Indigenous Heritage Expo and Resource Hub in August. The celebration spanned multiple days and featured indigenous vendors selling and displaying handmade indigenous arts and crafts, musical and dance performances, an indigenous film festival, and a handmade textile fashion show. The expo also hosted an open-air educational conference with indigenous scholars that included family reunification between individuals living in Mexico and traveling to NYC for the expo.

MOIA also released the first set of images in a series of illustrations depicting various NYC immigrant enclave communities. Brooklyn based multi-media artist Fanesha Fabre created illustrations showcasing Little Haiti in Flatbush, Little Mexico in Port Richmond, Little Dominican Republic in Washington Heights and Inwood, and Little Colombia in Jackson Heights. MOIA plans to continue to highlight New York City's immigrant neighborhoods in 2024.

## Flag-Raisings

MOIA, Mayor's Office of International Affairs, and Community Affairs Unit hosted 35 flag-raising ceremonies in Immigrant Heritage Plaza, twice as many as in 2022. The flag-raising ceremonies included cultural celebrations for countries including Nepal, Mexico, Kenya, Colombia, Haiti, Pakistan, Dominican Republic, Peru, Ukraine, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Albania and more. MOIA organized these events in collaboration with cultural groups, faith groups, and various countries consulates office. MOIA also offered support to procure park permits for the space, provided sound, and live streamed the events, and honored key community members for their leadership.



Top to bottom, left to right: Dominican Republic, Ireland, Nepal, Bangladesh, Suriname, Mexico, Croatia, Ukraine, Guyana, Central America, Uruguay, Malaysia, Albania





Top to bottom, left to right:  
Puerto Rico, Nigeria, Bosnia, Panama, St.  
Lucia, Uzbekistan, ASEAN, Colombia, Korea,  
Kazakhstan, Haiti, Türkiye, Kenya, African  
Union



## Day of the Dead Celebrations at Gracie Mansion and Times Square

Mayor Eric Adams celebrated Día de Muertos, a beloved celebration widely observed in Mexico, at Gracie Mansion on November 2nd in partnership with MOIA and the Community Affairs Unit. Over 200 Mexican community members and leaders joined the celebration at the people's house. Honorees included:

- Pedro Zamora, Founder of MECENAS, an organization that promotes and fosters awareness of Mexican Culture and languages, as well as integration of the Mexican community in the US through educational initiatives.
- Jairo Guzman, Director of Coalicion Mexicana, focused on the empowerment of Mexican and Hispanic youth and families.
- Carmen Serrano, part of Pueblo Originarios or Council of Native People's with the goal of further developing the presence of indigenous community in NYC.

*Below:*

*Day of the Dead Celebrations at Gracie Mansion and Times Square.*

New York City also hosted its first Día de Muertos at Times Square Plaza. Celebrations kicked off on October 28th, with the display of five distinct Catrina art pieces provided by the Mexican Cultural Institute and the Mexican Consulate.





# Advocacy Initiatives

## Federal Advocacy and Coalition Building



*Mayor Adams giving remarks at the C4A Annual conference.*

MOIA represents the City as a founding member and current steering committee member of Cities for Action (C4A), a bipartisan coalition of U.S. cities and local governments that collectively advocate for pro-immigrant federal policies. C4A exchanges best practices on local policies and programs that advance inclusion of immigrant residents. C4A was founded in 2014 and since then has grown to nearly 200 cities and counties. The U.S. mayors and county executives that make up our coalition recognize the pivotal role that immigrants play in strengthening communities.

MOIA works closely with its co-chair counterparts in the Cities of Chicago and San Diego and its steering committee cities including Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Seattle to lead the coalition.

## C4A National Convening in NYC

In 2023, C4A held its 8th annual national convening in New York City, a two-day event that brought together representatives from more than 20 cities to discuss the national asylum seeker humanitarian crisis.

The convening was led and hosted by MOIA and supported by the coalition's co-chairs representing the City of Chicago's Mayor's Office of Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Rights and the City of San Diego's Office of Immigrant Affairs. City leaders participated in interactive panels and workshops to share best practices for managing the crisis and in advocating for additional federal support, such as providing cities with more financial resources, expediting work authorizations for additional recent arrivals, and enacting a national decompression and resettlement strategy.



*Commissioner Castro and C4A members at the annual C4A conference.*



*Commissioner Castro giving remarks at the C4A conference.*

The coalition's first in-person convening in over 3 years brought together localities from 23 jurisdictions from across the country, including Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, and Santa Clara Counties, CA; Aurora and Denver, CO; Miami-Dade County, FL; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Louisville, KY; Boston and Somerville, MA; Baltimore City and Baltimore County, MD; Saint Paul, MN; Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, PA; Austin, Houston, and El Paso County, TX; and Seattle, WA.

Members left the convening with practical and feasible solutions to support the short-term and longer-term needs of new migrants.

As part of the convening, NYC Mayor Eric Adams delivered remarks to attendees, welcoming them to the city and voicing continued support and dedication to advancing the work of C4A. Mayor Adams also detailed broader impacts of the city's ongoing efforts to support new migrants, and expressed desire to uplift migrants and integrate them into the fabric of the city.

Cities and counties have been tasked with complex responsibilities related to welcoming and serving new migrants, and through the convening, we strengthened unification around our mission to meet their holistic needs in a manner that prioritizes respect and dignity.

The convening included discussions and strategy sessions around federal immigration programs and policies, and preparing to continue supporting immigrant, refugee, asylum seekers, and others impacted by these programs and policies regardless of how they can potentially change in the future.



*Commissioner Castro with C4A Steering Committee Members from Chicago and San Diego*

## **Coalition Priorities**

In 2023, the coalition identified three strategic priorities to help guide the coalition's federal advocacy:

- Partner with local leaders to advocate for resources to support the needs of asylum seekers and recently arrived migrants.
- Advocate for undocumented communities including DACA recipients, refugees, TPS holders, unaccompanied Children, and other vulnerable populations.
- Promote civic and economic inclusion and workforce development.



With these priorities in mind, C4A engaged in various federal advocacy campaigns that unified the coalition in support of common-sense, pro-immigrant policies.

### Work Authorization

On March 28th over 50 C4A mayors and county executives sent a bipartisan letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (US DHS) to request it accelerate work permit processing, as well as address the inefficiencies and inequities in the policies and regulations on the processing of and access to EADs. The letter outlined several policy and regulatory actions that DHS could take immediately to improve the adjudication process of Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization. The letter highlights that delays in processing the Form I-765 not only wreak havoc on the lives of asylum seekers, parolees, employers, and their local economies, but also place significant unnecessary hardship on receiving communities. Local communities across the country have asylum seekers that want to work to support themselves and their families, and employers in these cities face a historic labor shortage. Addressing the work permit backlog would help get work permits into the hands of asylum seekers as soon as possible while expanding the available workforce within our cities and counties.



The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) replied to C4A's letter to communicate that it had begun working on many of the recommendations outlined in the letter.

### TPS Redesignation, Designations, and Extensions

On September 6th, more than 30 C4A mayors and county executives from across the country sent [a letter](#) to the Biden Administration requesting that they redesignate or designate 11 countries for TPS. The countries for redesignation included Venezuela, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cameroon, and Nepal and countries for initial designation include Guatemala, Mali, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mauritania, and Nigeria. The letter underscores how TPS redesignations and designations for these countries are good for communities and nation as a whole and would allow TPS beneficiaries to continue to live and work in the United States, which would also benefit the United States economy. TPS protections would add eligible workers to the workforce at a time of tight labor markets across the country and take pressure off the social safety net by allowing beneficiaries the ability to provide more fully for themselves.



*Photos of the annual C4A conference.*

Shortly after the release of the letter, on September 20, US Secretary Mayorkas extended and redesignated Venezuela for TPS. An estimated 472,000 nationals of Venezuela **currently living in the U.S.** are potentially eligible. On October 6, Secretary Mayorkas redesignated and extended TPS for Cameroon. An estimated 7,900 nationals of Cameroon living in the US are potentially eligible under this redesignation. In 2023, DHS also redesignated and extended TPS for Afghanistan, Sudan, and South Sudan. In 2023 the federal government extended the re-registration period for TPS designations of El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, and Nicaragua but have yet to re-designate these countries. C4A supports redesignations, designations, and extensions advocated for by the [TPS-DED Administrative Advocacy Coalition](#) who are highly valued partners.

## C4A Engagements



Commissioner Manuel Castro in a panel part of the C4A annual conference.

In 2023, MOIA convened 15 calls to brief C4A members on federal immigration policy developments, connect members with key national organizations, and host open discussions for localities to identify obstacles and brainstorm solutions for fostering safe environments for immigrant communities. Various C4A members from different cities took the lead on coordinating presentations and guest speakers from national and local immigrant advocacy organizations with the intention of growing partnerships across the country.

C4A also circulated several curated resources to keep our members informed about the rapidly changing national immigration landscape and to support local work to center and uplift the contributions of immigrant communities. These resources included:

- Monthly federal immigration policy summaries
- *Cities for Black Lives* - a resource guide to support municipalities' efforts to dismantle racist policies, structures, and institutions in ways that address the needs of Black immigrants in their communities.
- *2023 C4A Immigrant Heritage Month Local Actions Spotlight* - Cities for Action developed this toolkit to highlight local work being done to celebrate 2023 Immigrant Heritage Month. The toolkits, activities, and events are linked here to help inspire local action and to raise awareness about what other C4A members are doing in order to encourage resource and idea sharing for future advocacy and community organizing.





# CONCLUSION

MOIA has done groundbreaking work for immigrant communities. We have become a national leading office during times of crises, while continuing to care for and advocate for immigrant communities with empathy and compassion.

MOIA is a vital bridge between the city government and immigrant communities. Through its various strategies and initiatives, the office is working to enhance, assist, and advise city agencies in their work with immigrant communities.

The office addresses the range of issues that impact the quality of life of immigrants in the city and provide our new neighbors with the resources and support they need to thrive. As New York City continues to be a beacon for immigrants from around the world, the role of MOIA is more important than ever. MOIA will continue to serve as a model for other cities seeking to welcome immigrants and will lead the world to uphold our values as a nation of immigrants.



*Top left: Mayor Adams at a Ramadan event.*

*Bottom left: Sikh community members*

*Top right: Lunar New Year Parade*

*Middle right: Mexican Independence Parade*





*Above:  
Native American Gracie Mansion  
celebration*

# LOCAL LAW 185 OF 2017

This report was issued to the Mayor and the Speaker of the City Council in accordance with Local Law 185 of 2017,<sup>13</sup> which mandates annual reporting on the City's immigration population and MOIA's activities during the previous calendar year. This is the sixth such report, covering the calendar year 2023.





# APPENDIX

# Note on Terminology

Following Census Bureau and Center for Economic Opportunity's data, the terms and status of the individuals throughout this analysis are defined as the following:

<b>U.S.-born citizens:</b>	Persons born in the 50 states, Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories. Also included are children born abroad to U.S. citizen parents.
<b>Foreign-born:</b>	Persons born outside of the U.S. or its territories. Immigrants and foreign born are used interchangeably in the report.
<b>Naturalized citizens:</b>	Immigrants admitted into the U.S. as Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) became U.S. citizens through the naturalization process.
<b>LPRs, Green card holders and other status:</b>	LPRs, refugees, immigrants granted asylum, and nonimmigrants or temporary immigrants admitted on temporary visas such as students and workers admitted with H1B visas and their spouses and children.
<b>Undocumented immigrants:</b>	Persons who either entered the country across a U.S. border without inspection or previously had legal status but subsequently lost it.

The terms used to describe households are defined as:

<b>U.S.-born-only households:</b>	Every household member is U.S.-born.
<b>Immigrant Family households:</b>	At least one immigrant member, but no undocumented immigrants.
<b>Mixed-status household:</b>	At least one household member is undocumented.
<b>Undocumented-Only household:</b>	All members lack legal documentation.

# Official and Non-Official Acronyms

ACS	American Community Survey
NYC ACS	NYC Administration for Children's Services
BORTAC	U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol Tactical Unit
C4A	Cities for Action
C4C	Cities for Citizenship
CAU	NYC Mayor's Community Affairs Unit
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CCHR	NYC Commission on Human Rights
CEC	NYC Civic Engagement Commission
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CUNY	The City University of New York
CY	Calendar Year
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DCWP	NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
District Court	U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
DOE DML	NYC Department of Education's Division of Multilingual Learners
DOF	NYC Department of Finance
DOHMH	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DSS	NYC Department of Social Services
DVS	NYC Department of Veterans' Services
EIDL	Economic Injury Disaster Loan
ELL	English Language Learner

EMS	Emergency Medical Services
ENDGBV	NYC Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender- Based Violence
EOIR	U.S. Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FFCRA	Families First Coronavirus Response Act
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
H+H	NYC Health + Hospitals
HEAP	Home Energy Assistance Program
HEROES Act	Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HPD	NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development
HRA	NYC Human Resources Administration
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IERF	NYC COVID-19 Immigrant Emergency Relief Fund
IHW	Immigrant Heritage Week
KYR	Know Your Rights
LAC	Literacy Assistance Center
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LL30	Local Law 30 of 2017
LRIF	Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness
LST	MOIA's Language Services Team
LWWI	Low Wage Worker Initiative
MCC	IDNYC Mobile Command
MOCJ	NYC Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice



MOCTO	NYC Mayor's Office of the Chief Technology Officer
MOIA	NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
MOPT	NYC Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants
MWBE	Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises
NWNY	New Women New Yorkers
NYC Law	NYC Law Department
NYC Opportunity	NYC Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity
NYCHA	NYC Housing Authority
NYLAG	New York Legal Assistance Group
NYPD	NYC Police Department
NYS DREAM Act	New York State DREAM Act
OCME	NYC Office of the Chief Medical Examiner
OPHC	NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes
OSF	Open Society Foundations
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
PSA	Public Service Announcement
RFP	Requests for Proposals
RRLC	Rapid Response Legal Collaborative
SBS	NYC Department of Small Business Services
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
T2	NYC Test and Trace Corps
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
VAWA	Violence Against Women Act
WSNYC	We Speak NYC

