



# A TOOL OF EMPOWERMENT

## A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of the New York Municipal ID Program



Westat®



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August 2016



# **IDNYC: A TOOL OF EMPOWERMENT**

## **A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of the New York Municipal ID Program**

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## LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

Dear Friends:

For too long, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers struggled to get affordable, accepted, U.S.-issued proof of identification. As a result, they could not enter their child's school during school hours, open a bank account, or present identification when needed to law enforcement. In a City that is strengthened by its diversity and celebrated for its inclusiveness, too many New Yorkers were living in the shadows.

With IDNYC, my team and I set out to right that wrong and to help all our people lead lives full of respect and recognition. Launched with crucial collaboration and input from my colleagues in the City Council a little over a year and a half ago, New York City's municipal ID program is now not only the largest in the nation, with 863,464 cardholders, but also one of the most effective, offering access to a host of critical services and cultural institutions for people of all backgrounds and walks of life. Most recently, we joined with NYC Health + Hospitals to streamline the patient registration process for IDNYC cardholders.

The following evaluation report outlines the incredible impact the program has already had on our City—half of the cardholders now use IDNYC as their primary ID and a quarter reported that it is their only form of U.S. photo identification—and suggests ways to refine the program in the months to come. As we continue to conduct outreach and forge new partnerships, we will take this feedback to heart.

Perhaps most strikingly, 77% of the immigrant cardholders surveyed said they feel a stronger sense of belonging to New York City since receiving their ID. Many shared that they also feel much safer. This outcome not only underscores the intentions behind our municipal ID program, but also the character of our great City.

New York has long attracted people from every corner of the map. They come here to raise their families, pursue their education, give back to their communities and build their dreams. They make our City a better City, and they deserve unfettered access to all that it has to offer. I am proud that our City's municipal ID program continues to flourish and unite all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill de Blasio  
Mayor

# LETTER FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE NYC CITY COUNCIL



Dear New Yorkers,

We are so proud of IDNYC's unparalleled success and ever increasing popularity among New Yorkers, local businesses and cultural institutions. We are grateful to Westat and Metis Associates for their thorough assessment, as well as to IDNYC cardholders and partner institutions for their insightful feedback.

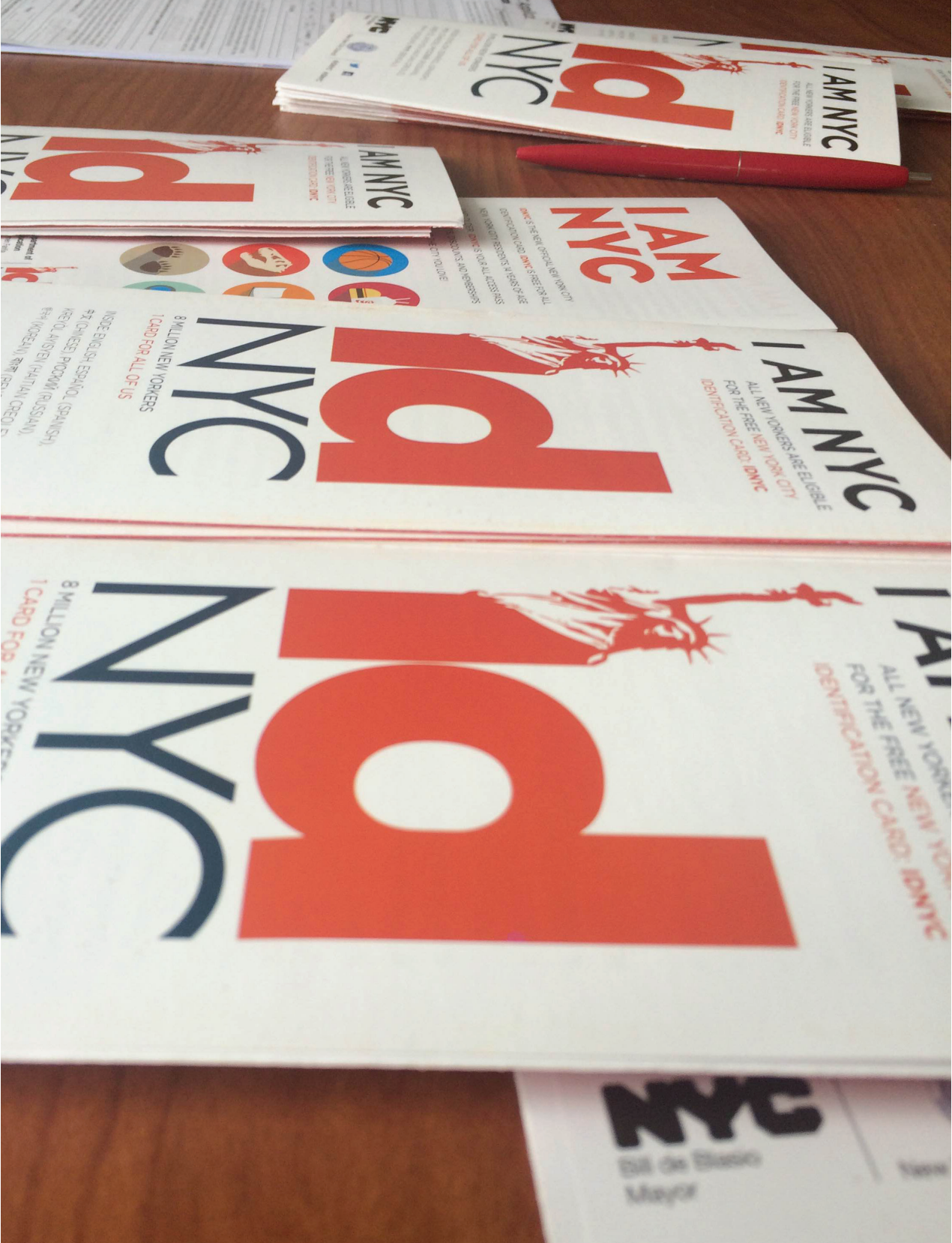
This evaluation serves to highlight our milestones and provides thoughtful recommendations to enhance the utility of IDNYC. We value this feedback as it is essential to the growth and betterment of the largest municipal identification program in the nation. This card provides New Yorkers with government-issued identification that can be used to access schools, libraries, city services, federal buildings, and memberships and discounts to countless New York institutions.

We are excited about how far we've come and look forward to addressing the recommendations contained in this evaluation so IDNYC can continue to be the most comprehensive municipal identification program in the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melissa Mark-Viverito'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'M'.

Melissa Mark-Viverito  
Speaker



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

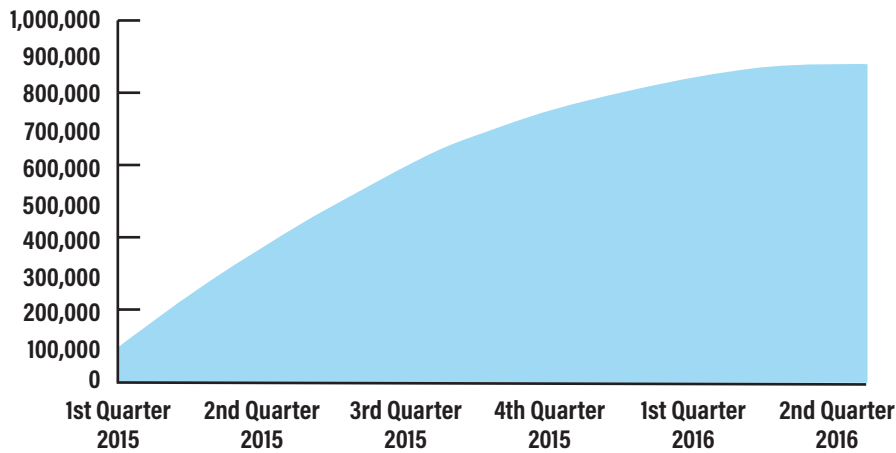


The New York City municipal ID, called IDNYC, was launched on January 12, 2015 with the goal to provide New York City residents with a government-issued form of identification, and in doing so, facilitate access to City services and amenities. While a benefit for all New Yorkers, the card was especially designed to serve the City’s most vulnerable populations, including immigrants, seniors, youth, individuals who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming, and individuals experiencing homelessness. The card is free and available to all New Yorkers age 14 and over who have documentation of identity and residency, regardless of immigration status.

By the most fundamental marker—number of New Yorkers with cards—IDNYC was a success almost immediately. With 863,464 cardholders as of June 30, 2016, IDNYC has far surpassed all other municipal ID programs in the country.

**FIGURE ES-1**

**Cumulative IDNYC Cardholders Enrolled Through June 30, 2016**



In January 2016, the Center for Economic Opportunity contracted with the Westat/Metis Associates research team to launch an evaluation of the IDNYC program. The evaluation was designed to examine both aspects of the program that have been successful, as well as areas where improvements may be needed. This report provides the results of this evaluation, covering the first year and a half of the program and synthesizing data drawn from focus groups, interviews, a survey of more than 70,000 cardholders, and administrative data.

## How Are New Yorkers Using IDNYC?

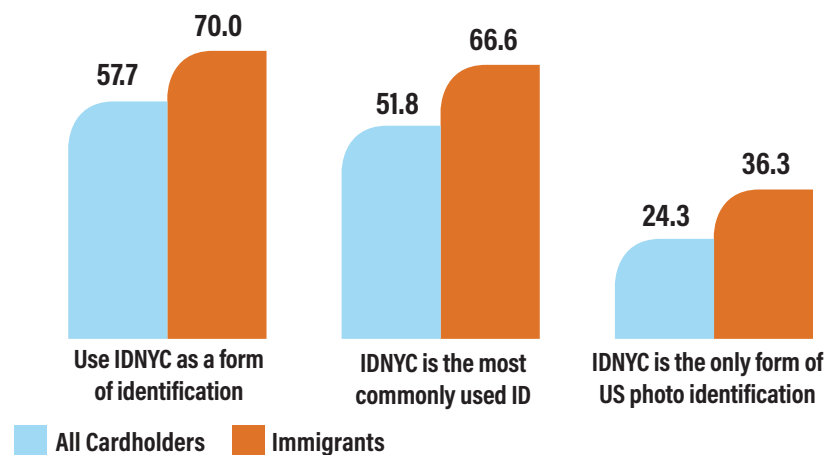
IDNYC has quickly become a fixture for many New Yorkers. For many, the card has opened the door to the numerous benefits of living in the City. Participants in focus groups reported that IDNYC has facilitated picking up children from school, identifying oneself if stopped by the police, and entering buildings, among other situations. Among cardholders responding to the survey, approximately half use IDNYC as their primary ID, and a quarter reported that IDNYC is their *only* form of U.S. photo identification. Among survey respondents who are immigrants, 36 percent rely on IDNYC as their only form of U.S. photo identification.

In addition to the benefit of formal identification, many focus group participants and over half of survey respondents have used IDNYC to obtain **free memberships** to 40 cultural institutions and to receive discounts on groceries and at pharmacies.

Beyond these tangible benefits, IDNYC was described by many focus group participants to create a **feeling of belonging**, something that makes them feel like a “real” New Yorker. Among immigrants responding to the survey, 77 percent reported that their IDNYC card had increased their sense of belonging to the City. Immigrants participating in focus groups appreciated that, unlike carrying a passport, IDNYC conveys no information about one’s country of origin and implies nothing about legal status.

**FIGURE ES-2**

**Percent of Survey Respondents Relying on IDNYC as a Form of Identification**



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016.

## What Did the City Get Right with the IDNYC Program?

- 1. The card was designed to be stigma-free.** The museum and other benefits have been a draw to New Yorkers who do not need the card as a form of ID, and their participation has ensured that IDNYC is not immediately associated with immigration status. This strategy may be one of the most important lessons to learn from the IDNYC program.
- 2. The card is highly accessible.** Among survey respondents, 94 percent reported that the process of getting the card was either *somewhat* or *very easy*. Being free, having enrollment centers located throughout the city, and the use of pop-up centers were all highlighted as critical factors in this regard.
- 3. A collaborative approach to both design and implementation of the card was taken.** During every phase of this program, the City engaged with a broad range of community-based organizations (CBOs), advocates, and government agencies, including the NYPD. The City took these collaborations seriously, and these successful relationships have helped encourage many New Yorkers who may not have applied otherwise.
- 4. Outreach, advertising, and promotion of the card were extensive and effective.** Outreach has included the work of multilingual staff and an active ground-level strategy in unique settings such as nail salons, churches, and other community locations. IDNYC also incorporated more traditional marketing strategies, such as through television, radio, newspaper, taxi, and subway ads.
- 5. The City's response to unanticipated demand was immediate and substantial.** The overwhelming demand for the card could have doomed its success if the City had not acted quickly. The City took immediate steps to increase enrollment capacity, including through the use of pop-up centers. The response by the City both increased capacity and also demonstrated the City's commitment to the program.
- 6. IDNYC includes provisions for multiple vulnerable populations.** In addition to being available to undocumented immigrants in New York, IDNYC has features that serve other vulnerable groups. Individuals who identify as transgender can indicate the gender of their preference on the card, and individuals who are homeless or survivors of domestic violence can apply using a "care-of" address and a state-run P.O. Box that does not reveal their location.

## How Could the IDNYC Program Be Improved?

While IDNYC has been very successful, there have also been challenges. The card is not always accepted where it should be, and is sometimes accepted when it should not be. The experience of participants in this evaluation suggests some areas for potential improvement.

- 1. Additional work is needed to clarify how the card can be used.** Although all cardholders get information through brochures about how to use and not use the card when they first receive their IDNYC in the mail, there is still misunderstanding about card use. Cardholders were quick to cast doubt on the entire program if a benefit did not occur the way they thought it would. More diverse mechanisms are needed to ensure that all populations understand how the card can be used.
- 2. Additional specific guidance is needed for cardholders about banking and museum memberships.** While IDNYC is accepted as a primary form of identification at several financial institutions, it is currently not accepted as a form of primary ID at several larger banks, which remains a source of confusion for cardholders. Similarly, there has been confusion about several aspects of museum memberships, likely due to variability in specific membership policies and benefits across institutions. Just as banking brochures have been developed, a similar mechanism for museums may be warranted to reduce confusion and encourage participation.
- 3. Establish mechanisms for ongoing communication with cardholders.** Both focus group participants and survey respondents noted that they would like to have regular updates about the card, and preferred to get this information primarily through their local community organizations. The website should be considered a secondary source of information only.
- 4. Additional work is needed to dispel myths about risks of getting an IDNYC.** In spite of considerable efforts to publicize the security measures in place, the single greatest reason people hesitated to get the ID was related to concerns that it was being used to monitor New Yorkers. Direct dialogue about this issue with CBOs could help create a communication plan that can be incorporated in upcoming recruitment materials. Transparency from the City about plans for the stored data is essential.

**5. Continue discussions regarding acceptable documentation of residency for individuals experiencing homelessness.**

The homeless often do not have the necessary documentation to demonstrate residency. In many cases, they can't obtain the card at all, must get a card with no address, or can try to obtain a card with "care-of" address. Because cards that do not display a residential address may not be accepted for purposes of issuing a summons in lieu of arrest, a card that does not help in this situation is viewed as having diminished value. Additional dialogue and outreach about the residency requirements related to individuals experiencing homelessness may be warranted.

- 6. Focus on more consistent acceptance of the card.** When asked how the IDNYC program could be improved, cardholders very commonly mentioned that it needed to be more widely and consistently accepted. The City could focus some effort on working through different membership and business organizations to better publicize the card and encourage its acceptance as well as emphasize the importance of consistent policies with respect to use of the card.

## **Conclusion**

This evaluation of implementation and early outcomes of the IDNYC program suggests that the program can serve as a robust model for municipal ID programs nationwide. IDNYC is cultivating a more inclusive society for immigrants, individuals who are transgender, and other vulnerable populations, which stands in clear contrast to divisive policies and proposals elsewhere in the country. The first year and a half of IDNYC has demonstrated that meaningful support for vulnerable populations can occur even in the largest and most diverse city in the U.S., when backed by a supportive Mayor, Council Speaker, and City Council, and through partnerships with community organizations, the police, and other key agencies.

# **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

## Overview

The IDNYC municipal ID card was launched on January 12, 2015 to provide New York City residents with a government-issued form of identification, and in doing so, opened the door to a wide range of City services and opportunities for the City's most vulnerable populations. IDNYC is a valid form of identification for entering City buildings and during interactions with the New York City Police Department (NYPD). The card also offers free memberships to 40 cultural institutions, can be used as a library card, provides discounts at pharmacies and for groceries, and to access numerous other benefits. The card is free and available to all New Yorkers 14 and over who have documentation of identity and residency, regardless of immigration status. As of June 30, 2016, there were 863,464 cardholders.

As a new initiative with particularly rapid growth, IDNYC is ripe for an examination of its implementation and early outcomes. In January 2016, the Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), a unit within the Mayor's Office of Operations, in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), contracted with the Westat/Metis Associates research team to launch an evaluation of the IDNYC program.

## The Evaluation

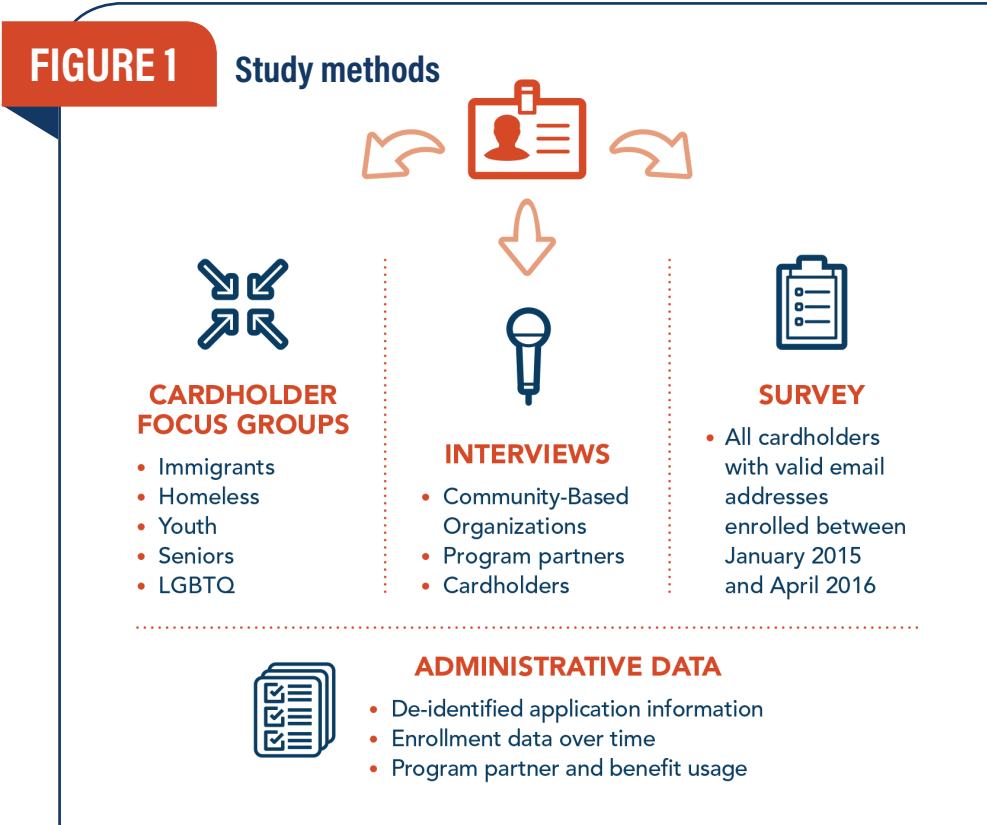
The IDNYC Program Evaluation was designed to examine both aspects of the program that have been successful, as well as areas where improvements may be needed. Research questions covered in this report include: What motivated so many New Yorkers to apply for IDNYC? In what ways has the program benefited the specific populations it was intended to help? What aspects of its development, marketing and roll out may have contributed to its success? On the other hand, in what situations have cardholders experienced challenges? And what changes in the IDNYC program could further improve the experience for current and future cardholders?


This report presents the answers to these questions, covering the first year and a half of the IDNYC program.


"We will reach out to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status — issuing municipal ID cards available to all New Yorkers this year — so that no daughter or son of our city goes without bank accounts, leases, library cards...simply because they lack identification."


-Mayor Bill de Blasio  
State of the City Remarks February 2014






 **Focus groups** were held with a total of 244 cardholders or potential cardholders representing five groups of primary interest. Conducted in all five boroughs, participants originated from more than 40 countries.

 **Individual interviews** were conducted with staff from 40 community-based organizations (CBOs) working with communities of particular need, and with program partners, such as banks, museums, and the NYPD. We also conducted individual interviews with 18 cardholders.

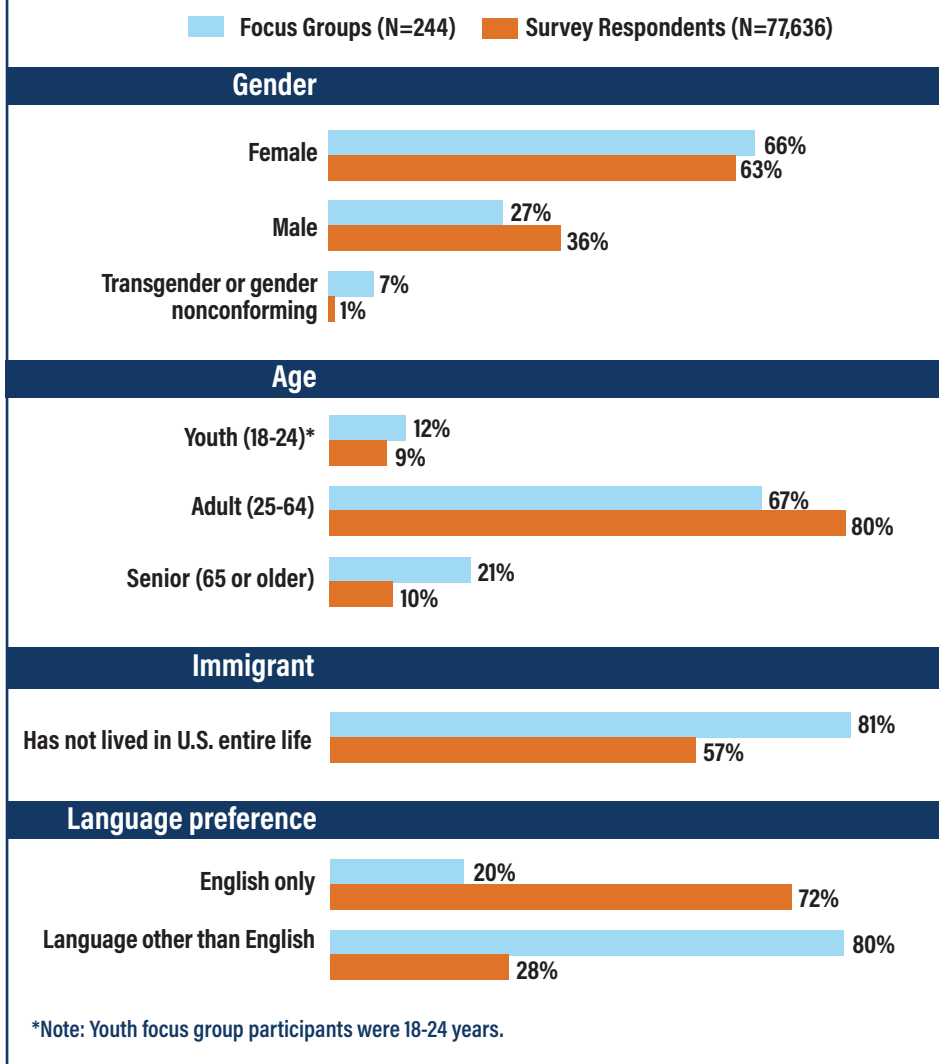
 An anonymous web-based **survey** was administered to all cardholders with a valid email address and who had been issued cards before April 30, 2016. A total of 77,637 IDNYC cardholders responded, for a response rate of 15.7 percent.

 De-identified aggregated **administrative data** was provided by the Human Resources Administration (HRA) on cardholder applications, enrollment, and use of program benefits. No identifying information about cardholders was obtained.



As noted, a significant component of this evaluation is based on data provided directly by cardholders, through the focus groups and IDNYC Cardholder Survey. In figure 2, we show key characteristics of the cardholders who participated in this study. Due to the sensitivity of immigration status, we purposefully did not ask any questions of survey respondents or focus group participants regarding this topic. Therefore, we are unable to provide an estimate of the number of cardholders who are undocumented. The Notes section of this report provides additional detail on the evaluation methods.

**FIGURE 2** Focus Group and Survey Respondent Characteristics



## IDNYC Development and Implementation

IDNYC originated as a key component in Mayor Bill de Blasio’s efforts to expand opportunities for all New Yorkers and address the economic divide in the City. The proposal to create a City-backed ID card was first announced in the Mayor’s policy proposal, *One New York, Rising Together*, and reiterated during his first State of the City address in January 2014. Under the leadership of Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Council Members Carlos Menchaca and Daniel Dromm, the New York City Council passed Introduction 253-A in June 2014. In the following month, Mayor de Blasio signed the law into effect, thus establishing the IDNYC program and setting into motion what has become the largest municipal ID initiative in the country. Figure 3 shows key milestones of IDNYC development and implementation.

The development of the card involved significant collaboration between the offices tasked with leading the effort—MOIA, the Mayor’s Office of Operations, and the City’s HRA—the NYPD, and community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout the City. During the planning and design phases, the IDNYC team held meetings with CBOs from different sectors. These meetings resulted in key decisions about the card, particularly in understanding which benefits would be desirable to potential cardholders and addressing concerns about security of the data.



*These banners appeared in locations throughout the City.*

The NYPD played an especially important role in the program's development. The NYPD advised HRA and the Mayor's Office on fraud prevention protocols, eligibility requirements, and documents needed to establish proof of identity and City residency, and assisted with outreach. As a result of this collaboration, the NYPD Patrol Guide was formally modified to include the IDNYC card as a valid form of identification.

The final formulation of the card followed NYPD's guidance about fraud prevention, while simultaneously addressing CBO concerns about privacy. Specifically, the IDNYC database is not integrated or linked to any law enforcement databases, and no law enforcement agencies are able to access cardholder information without a judicial warrant or judicial subpoena. The City also incorporated privacy safeguards, such as storing applicant photos separately from other data and limiting access of the database to key staff, as well as implementing encryption and security processes. Copies of cardholder documents proving identity and residency are currently stored for 2 years from the time of the application, and then will be destroyed.

In the 6 months after the IDNYC Local Law went into effect, HRA and the Mayor's Office hired 100 program staff, identified enrollment sites, fostered community and government partnerships, designed the card and its features, and created enrollment software and operational infrastructure. Eleven permanent enrollment centers were established across the five boroughs, including centers in Corona, Lower Manhattan, West Harlem, Long Island City, Midtown Manhattan, South Bronx, Coney Island, and Sunset Park and 6 additional non-public enrollment centers located within HRA and NYC Department of Probation offices across the City.

87

Enrollment has taken place at 87 pop-up locations since the start of the program

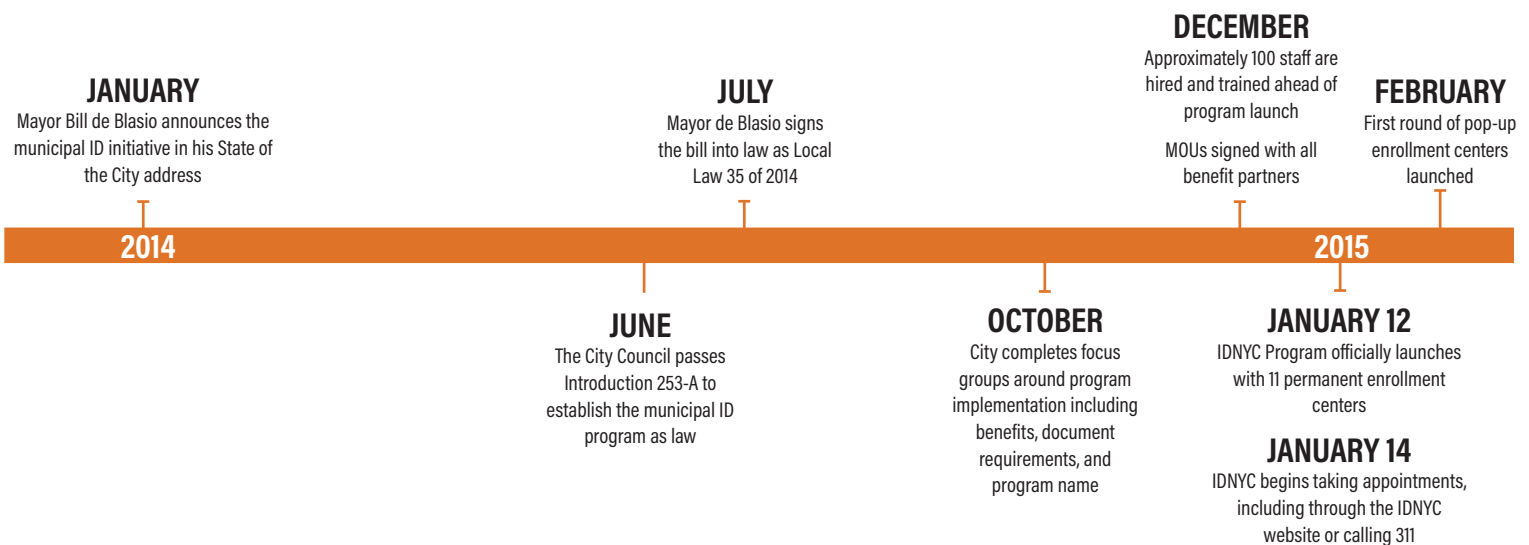
**Demand for the card immediately exceeded expectations.**

Within days of the launch, the City responded with steps to quickly expand operations. In the first 6 months, the initial staff size nearly quadrupled from the launch, the number of enrollment centers quadrupled, and program hours were extended to 15 hours a day in some locations. In addition to permanent hubs, the City opened pop-up centers, designed to be short-term (usually 2- to 4-week) locations for enrollment in diverse locations of the City. The use of pop-up centers has continued through the present, and they are increasing enrollment capacity as well as providing greater convenience to New Yorkers.

From well before the launch, IDNYC featured a comprehensive marketing and outreach strategy to inform residents about the benefits and process of applying for the card. As of May 2016, IDNYC staff had reached out to New Yorkers directly at over 1,400 community events and meetings across the City, and conducted week long outreach initiatives in each borough with presentations at local farmers markets, libraries, health fairs, and other community-based events.

**FIGURE 3**

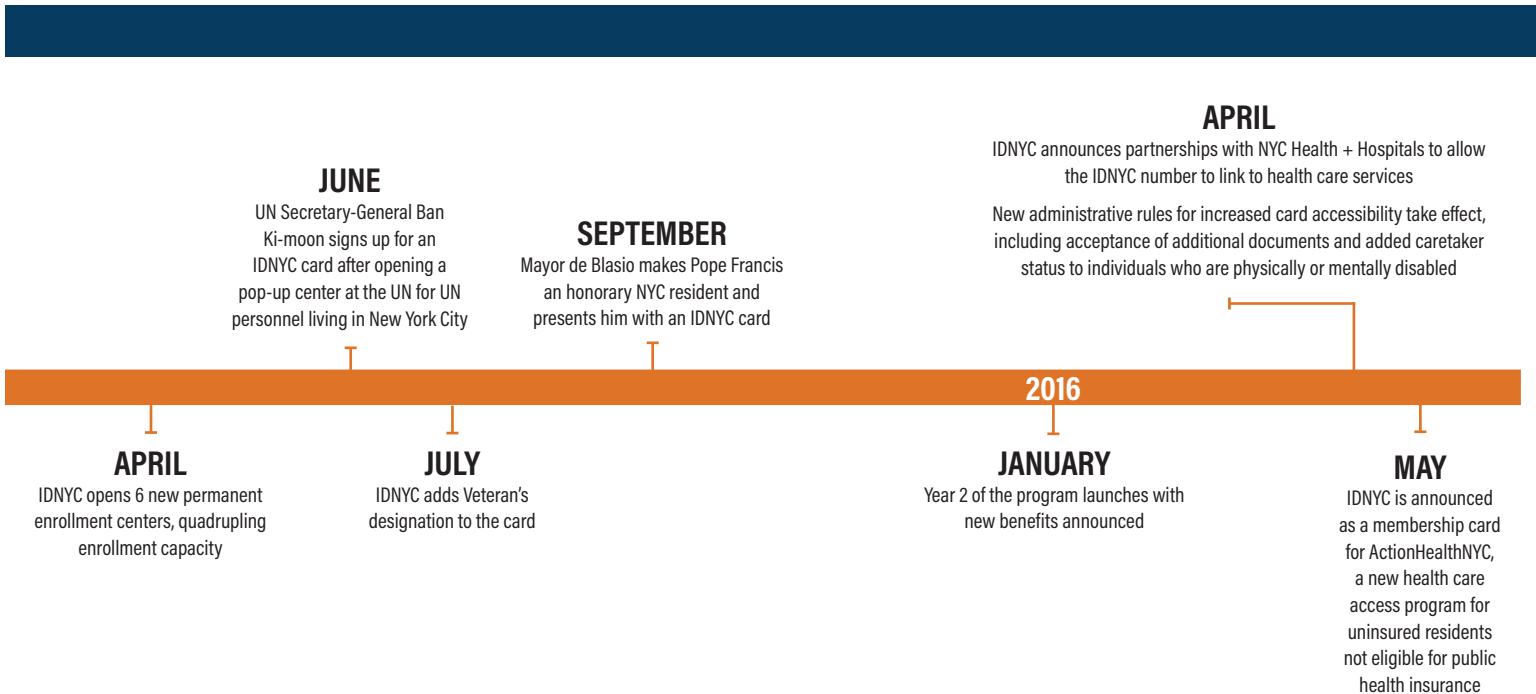
**Key Milestones in the Development and Implementation of the IDNYC**



Additionally, the City has distributed IDNYC brochures; created print advertisements to appear in buses, subways, taxis, check cashing operations, nail and hair salons and other settings; conducted radio ads and earned media outreach as well as social media campaigns; and held three telethons in collaboration with Telemundo TV station and the Hispanic Federation. Of note, the vast majority of print ads were placed in community and ethnic media outlets, and appeared in several languages.

The Mayor’s Office and HRA also worked closely on outreach with members of the City Council, many of whom hosted pop-up enrollment centers, helped promote IDNYC among their constituents, and contributed to the widespread excitement about the card.

One of the key benefits of the card is the opportunity for free memberships to 40 cultural institutions, made possible through a partnership with the City’s Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA). These memberships have been an enormous draw of the card, have been widely embraced, and have also had an impact on the cultural institutions themselves, as we discuss in the findings.



## Financial Institutions Accepting IDNYC as a Primary Form of Identification



**EAST WEST BANK**  
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University Settlement  
Federal Credit Union

*Financial Access. Financial Success  
For all our Members since 1940*



One goal for IDNYC was to provide banking access to populations who have historically been unbanked or underbanked. Immigrants, in particular, often turn to check cashing businesses and other sometimes unlawful forms of lending. Doing so both comes with a high cost in fees and charges, and also does not allow them to build savings and develop a credit history. Whereas some municipal ID programs incorporated a debit card component into their card in order to facilitate financial transactions for cardholders, the City felt that fees associated with the available debit card programs at the time were too high to pass on to consumers. The Mayor's Office and the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) have received guidance from key federal regulators that financial institutions may accept the IDNYC card for purposes of opening a bank account. When IDNYC launched, it did so with 12 banks and credit unions, all agreeing to accept IDNYC as a primary form of identification.

In early 2016, IDNYC published a banking brochure to outline the benefits of banking for cardholders and to list accepting institutions. IDNYC also has partnered with DCA to help the unbanked gain greater financial security and DCA also organized an event to promote NYC Free Tax Prep during which tax filers could open a bank account at one of these 12 financial institutions and file their taxes for free.

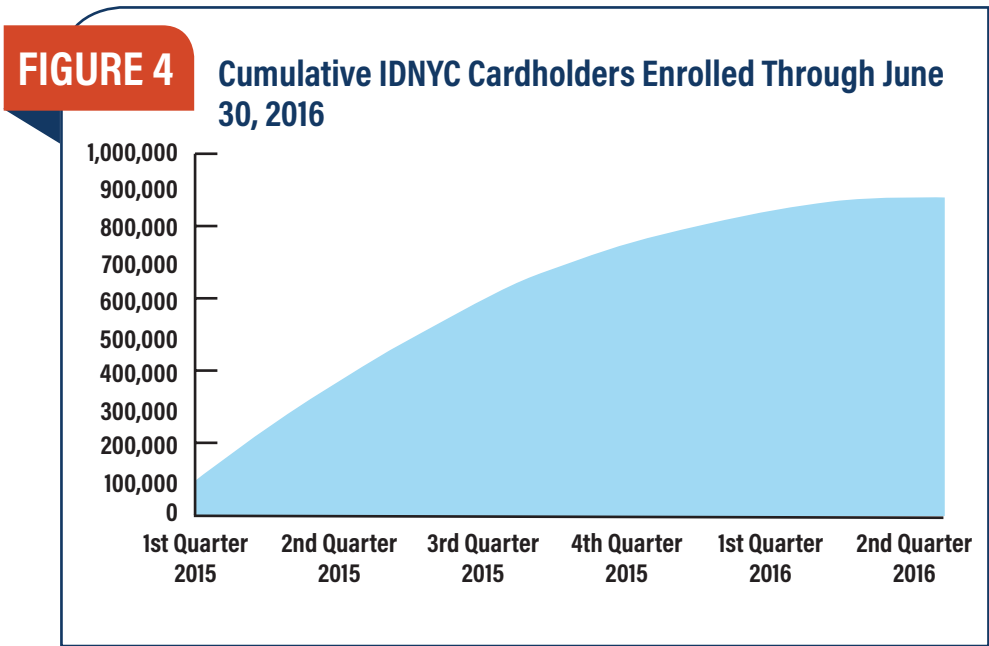
The City has continued to look for expanded ways for cardholders to use IDNYC. In December 2015, IDNYC established a streamlined referral system to IDNYC from ActionNYC, a new immigration legal assistance program. In April of 2016, IDNYC also entered a partnership with Health + Hospitals to allow cardholders to link their IDNYC number to their health care services during the patient registration process. And in May of 2016, IDNYC was announced as a membership card for ActionHealthNYC, the City's new health access demonstration project that offers low-cost health services and care coordination to New York City residents who do not qualify for Medicaid or other public health insurance programs due to their immigration status. Program enrollees can use their IDNYC cards to receive health care services at eight primary care homes located in Queens and Lower Manhattan.

## Program Enrollment

Over the first year and a half, the number of New Yorkers enrolling in the IDNYC program vastly exceeded the City’s expectations. With approximately 10 percent of eligible New Yorkers currently enrolled, IDNYC has surpassed the enrollment of all other municipal ID programs in the country.

For example, whereas San Francisco has enrolled 3.7 percent of its population in the SF City ID Card over the past 6 years, IDNYC enrolled a similar percentage of New Yorkers in the first 6 *months*. In New Haven, CT, the Elm City ID Card program enrolled 10 percent of the city population over an 8-year period<sup>1</sup>, as compared to New York enrolling 10 percent of New Yorkers within the first year and a half of operation.

Over 250,000 IDNYC cards were issued in the spring and summer of 2015 (see figure 4). There are a total of 863,464 cardholders as of June 30, 2016.



<sup>1</sup>Cities for Action (May, 2015). *Municipal ID Program Toolkit*.

## Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics of IDNYC cardholders are drawn from de-identified data provided on the application. The information below reflects data from 863,464 cardholders enrolled between January 12, 2015 and June 30, 2016. The IDNYC program does not collect information from applicants about their country of origin, length of time in the U.S., or any other data that might indicate immigration status (legal or undocumented) either directly or indirectly. In order to align with the potential pool of eligible New Yorkers, comparisons are made to the population of New York City residents who are age 14 and older, based on data from the U.S. Census' American Community Survey (ACS) in 2014.



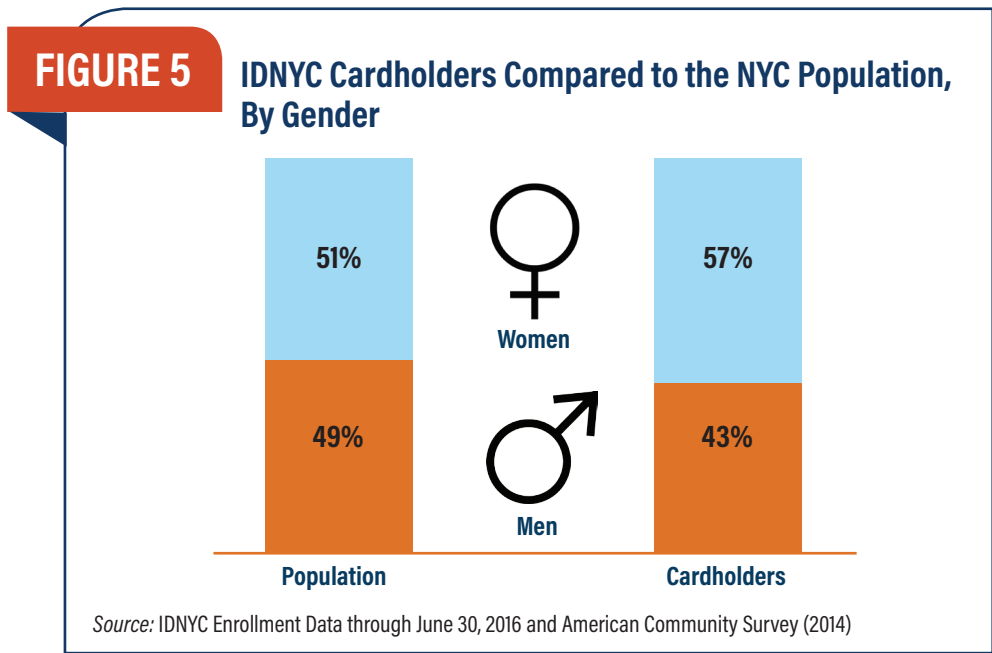
***New Yorkers from every area of the city and demographic group have become IDNYC cardholders.***



## Gender

Overall, 57 percent of cardholders designated that they are women and 43 percent designated that they are men. The proportion of female cardholders is higher than is present in the New York City population (see figure 5).

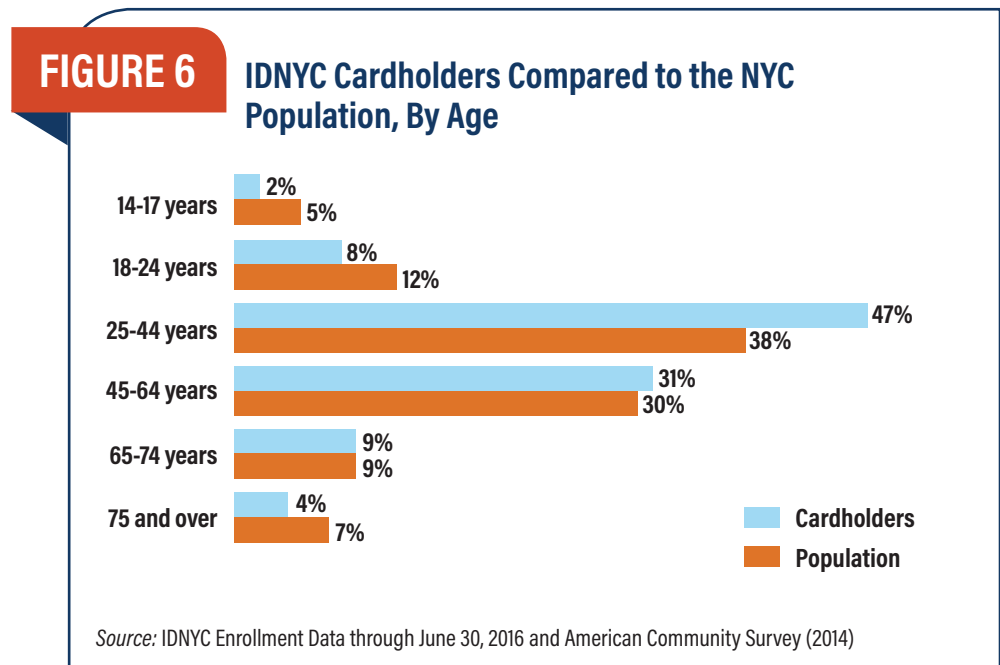
An important feature of the IDNYC card is that cardholders are able to identify the gender that matches their identity as opposed to the one that may appear on their birth certificates and other documents. It is unknown how many transgender cardholders have employed this option, since applicants are not questioned about their choice of gender when they apply. Advocates in the LGBTQ community believe that this feature has been widely used by transgender New Yorkers, and we discuss this in the findings section.



## Age

IDNYC is available to New Yorkers who are 14 years of age or older. As shown in figure 6, the number of cards issued to New Yorkers between 25 and 44 years has been relatively higher than among other age groups, particularly among those under 24 and over 75.

IDNYC has already had a number of partnerships that facilitate youth enrollment. New administrative rules issued in spring 2016 now expand the documents that young people can use to enroll for IDNYC, such as permitting students enrolled in New York City DOE schools to use documentation from their school to verify identity and residency. This change, in conjunction with expanded enrollment opportunities at schools themselves, is likely to lead to an increase in enrollment among teens in the upcoming months.



## Language

With over 200 languages spoken in New York City, language accessibility has been a key aspect of the program design from the start. Application materials are available in 30 languages, and bilingual staff work in specific neighborhoods to accommodate speakers of languages other than English.

Among cardholders, 29 percent identified a preference for a language other than English on their application. Across cardholders, more than 150 languages and dialects are spoken. The alternate language selected was primarily Spanish (20 percent) followed by Mandarin and Cantonese (5 percent). Additional languages were identified by less than 1 percent of cardholders. Figure 7 displays the top 20 languages of preference identified by applicants. Ensuring that the program continues to reach non-English speaking populations is a key focus of outreach efforts.

**FIGURE 7**

### Top 20 Languages of Preference Among Cardholders

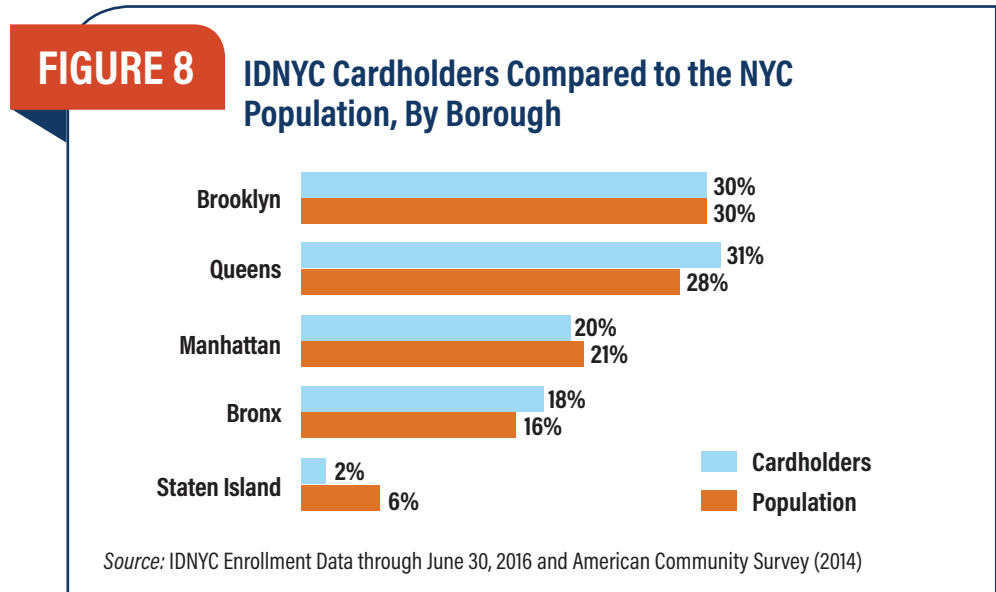
1. English	11. Haitian Creole
2. Spanish	12. Arabic
3. Mandarin	13. Hindi
4. Cantonese	14. Punjabi
5. Russian	15. Fuzhou
6. Korean	16. Tagalog
7. French	17. Urdu
8. Bangla	18. Thai
9. Polish	19. Hungarian
10. Japanese	20. Italian

Source: IDNYC Enrollment Data through June 30, 2016

## Geographic Distribution of Cards Issued

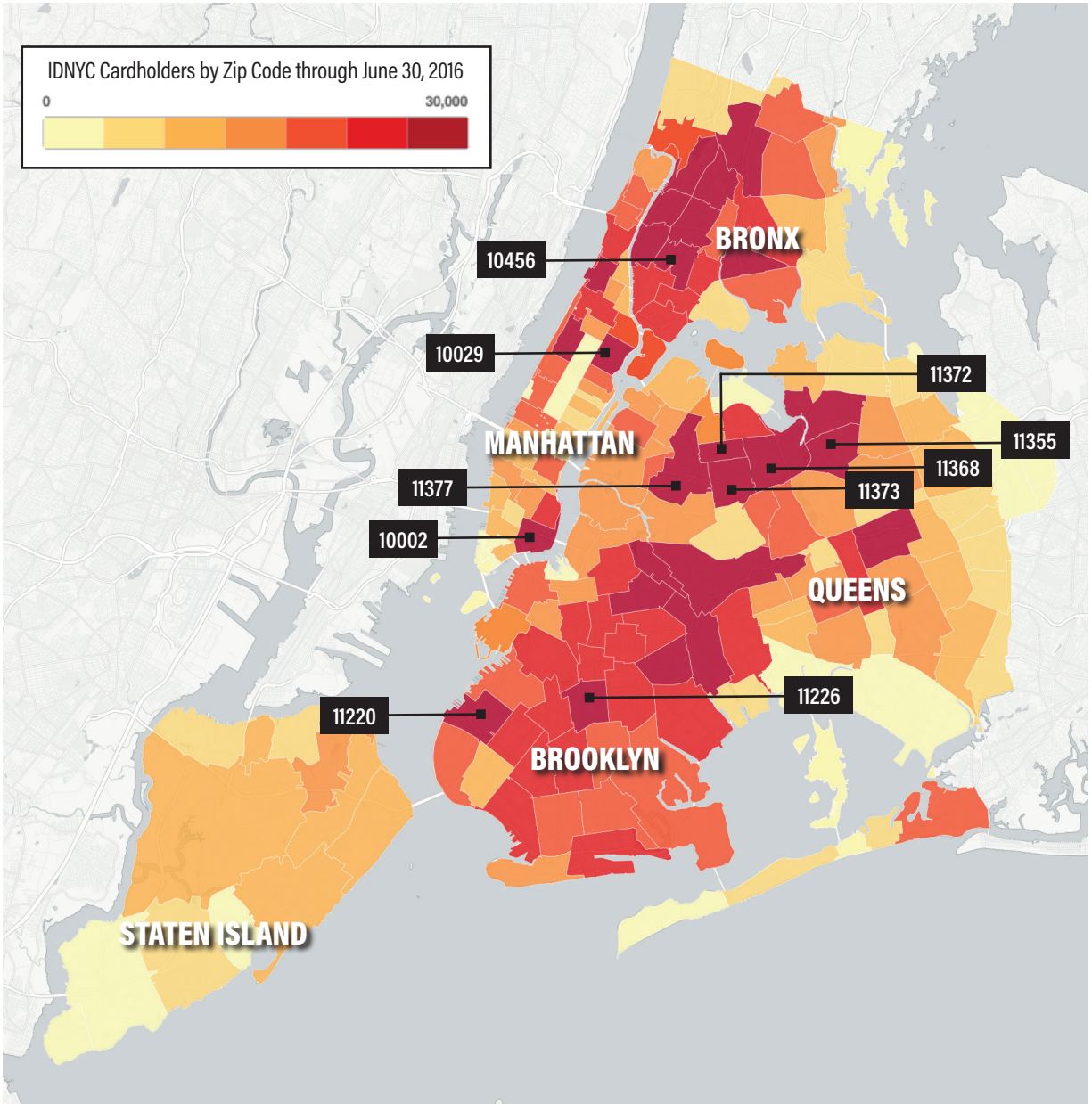
The distribution of cards issued across boroughs generally reflects the population of city residents aged 14 and older, as shown in figure 8. Enrollment of New Yorkers from Staten Island into the program has been lower than the other boroughs. IDNYC opened its first pop-up center in Staten Island in the fourth quarter of 2015 and has continued to work to increase participation among Staten Island residents.

Figure 9 illustrates cardholder address of residence by zip code. There are 14 neighborhoods in which 10,000 or more cardholders live. In Queens, the greatest concentration of cardholders are located in the neighborhoods of Corona, Elmhurst, Flushing-Murray Hill, Jackson Heights, Woodside, and Ridgewood-Glendale; in Brooklyn, concentrations are seen in Sunset Park and Flatbush. In the Bronx, there are more than 10,000 cards issued in the three neighborhoods of Morrisania, Belmont-Fordham-Bedford, and Norwood-Williamsbridge. Lastly, in Manhattan, the highest concentration of cardholders live in East Harlem, the Lower East Side-Chinatown, and the northern section of the Upper West Side. The majority of these high-enrollment neighborhoods are home to New Yorkers who are among the IDNYC program's communities of particular need.



**FIGURE 9**

**Cardholders Enrolled by Zip Code of Residence through June 30, 2016**



# FINDINGS

## Why Do New Yorkers Get the IDNYC Card?

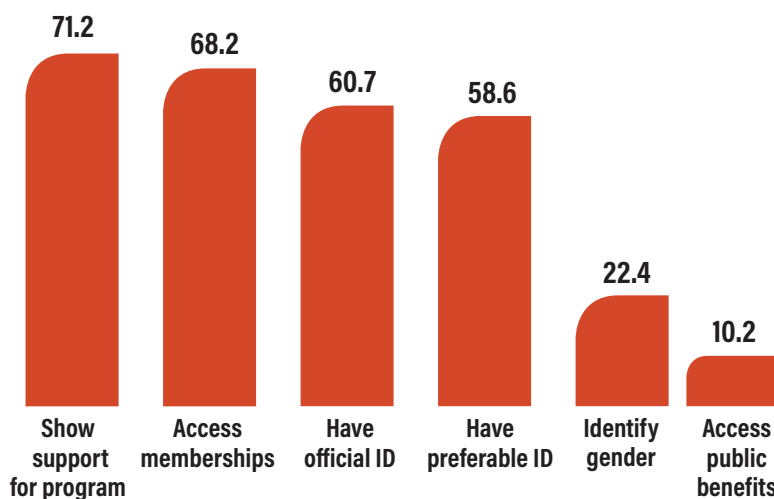
In this section, we describe trends in why people get IDNYC overall and among five groups: immigrants, seniors, youth, individuals who identify as transgender or gender nonconforming (GNC), and individuals experiencing homelessness<sup>2</sup>. The findings represent a synthesis of responses from focus groups and interviews with cardholders, interviews with community-based organization (CBO) leaders, and survey responses. For findings related to individuals experiencing homelessness, we draw from focus groups and CBO interviews only, as survey respondents were not asked about their living circumstances.

Overall, populations participating in the focus groups identified somewhat different reasons for getting an IDNYC card than survey respondents. Focus group participants consistently emphasized wanting a card to have a valid form of identification, because IDNYC is a preferable form of ID to one they already have, and to get free museum memberships and other discounts. The most frequently endorsed reason for getting the card among survey respondents was to show support for the program. The next three most common reasons coincide with those identified through the focus groups (see figure 10).

97%

of cardholders indicated multiple reasons for getting IDNYC

**FIGURE 10** Why Do New Yorkers Get IDNYC?



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016

<sup>2</sup>The size of these groups is as follows: All Cardholders N=77,636; Immigrant N=40,950; Youth N=6475; Seniors N=7031; Transgender or GNC N=508

I love using my IDNYC card and have tried to get my friends to get one as well. Before I wouldn't be able to afford to go to places like the Botanical Gardens or the New Museum, and now I can!

-Survey respondent

I got the card because I wanted to go to the museums, because I'm retired. And money, you know, gets a little short, and I like to go to the museum.

-English speaking senior

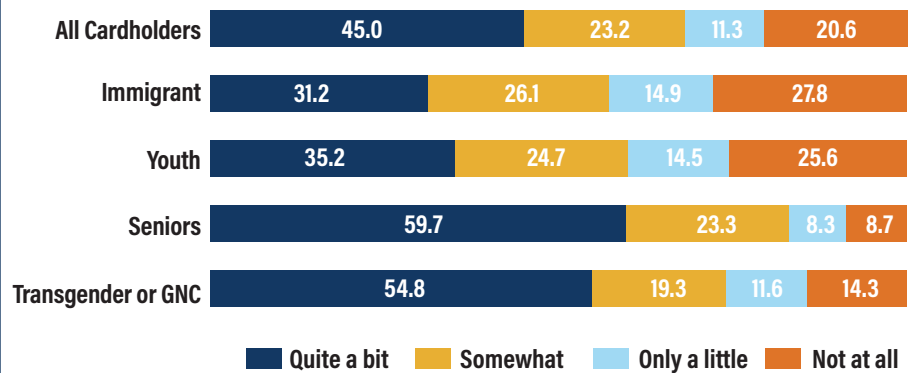
## Memberships to Cultural Institutions

New York is internationally known for its museums, zoos, and other cultural institutions, which draw millions of visitors each year. Gaining access to museums as a motivating factor to get the card was a strong theme across *all* populations participating in the focus groups. The museum and zoo benefits in particular were mentioned by cardholders in focus groups conducted with every immigrant group (e.g., from South America, Central America, West Africa, China, Korea, South Asia, and the Middle East). Seniors, youth and transgender individuals spoke excitedly of making use of these memberships in the future if they had not already. While less frequently mentioned than other reasons among individuals who are homeless, several participants in these groups also described their interest in obtaining memberships to different museums.

Forty-five percent of all survey respondents and 55 percent or more of both seniors and individuals who are transgender or GNC indicated that getting free memberships to these institutions was *quite a bit* a reason that they applied for the card (see figure 11).

**FIGURE 11**

### Why Do New Yorkers Get IDNYC? To Obtain Memberships to Cultural Institutions



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups above are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail.



## Danielle

### *Museum memberships are an incentive for everyone*

Born and raised in East Harlem, Danielle has lived in a shelter along with her domestic partner since 2012. As an avid reader, she heard about IDNYC both through the newspapers and through an advertisement on the news. Danielle thought the card would be helpful in case she needed to cash a check, and she was particularly motivated by the opportunity to visit museums and zoos. Danielle's domestic partner did the legwork of identifying which application location would have the shortest wait time, and they chose an office that was farther away from the shelter, but allowed them to get their cards more quickly.

As Danielle described, "whether you're shelter homeless like myself, or street homeless, it's always good to have some type of identification on you. You just can't have too much ID! Mishaps happen all the time, like your pocketbook gets stolen. You can use this as a backup." From her experience with others circulating in and out of the same shelter as hers, Danielle pointed out a harsh reality that exists for the street homeless: "Just to have ID is really important to have on you. Who are you? Things happen very quickly here, and New York is a very crowded place. Are you going to sit in the morgue til someone comes looking for you? You need to have some way to say who you are." Danielle, like many of the individuals experiencing homelessness we met, also emphasized the importance of having an ID to show to the NYPD if questioned.

While Danielle is interested in the zoo and museum memberships personally, she took a broader view about how IDNYC could benefit many New Yorkers. In her words, "I think the card is a very good incentive to get out more. Things are very costly, especially when you have children. And especially if you have more than one child, no one goes anywhere anymore. It's just too expensive. The average New Yorker can't afford to enjoy the things that New York has to offer, we have to walk by because we don't have enough money." She went on to note, "It's helpful for society in general to have a little motivation to get out there. People need to get out more, they're in front of their TV, computer, cell phones too much. So those museum memberships, that's a nice incentive for people to actually go out and get the ID. Even working class, that's a really good incentive for everyone."

It's a formal ID. At the end of the day, you need ID to gain entry into a lot of different service provider facilities, get a job, avoid being fingerprinted and taken into the precinct, and so many other things.

-CBO focused on homelessness

Me and my friends we are all in a shelter, so I told them to get the ID because it's free.

- English speaking youth who is homeless

Simple: Because they don't have any other form of valid ID. They may have a passport and visa, and both have expired, so they're walking around with an expired passport. They can't apply for social security, they're totally undocumented. They need a photo ID in English.

-CBO focused on immigrants

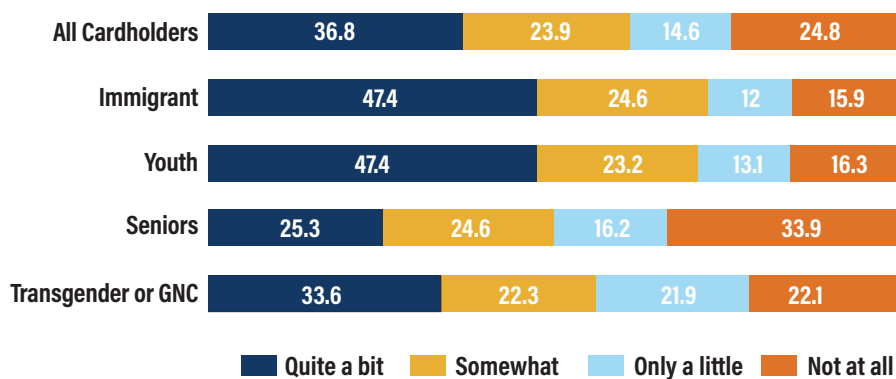
## To Have an Official Form of ID

Consistent with the City's primary intention for IDNYC, cardholders commonly mentioned that IDNYC could facilitate things like picking up children from school, identifying oneself if stopped by the police, and opening a bank account. Approximately 37 percent of survey respondents identify having an official form of identification as *quite a bit* their reason for obtaining the card (see figure 12). Among the nearly quarter of survey respondents who indicated that IDNYC is their only form of photo identification, the percentage who got IDNYC to have an official form of ID is considerably higher (65 percent). CBO leaders generally identified wanting a valid form of ID as the primary reason people choose to apply for the card, while also acknowledging memberships and other benefits as additional factors.

Individuals experiencing homelessness noted that they often struggle to keep and produce the kind of official documents needed to obtain other forms of photo ID. Getting an IDNYC for use with police was specifically mentioned among cardholders in this population and the CBOs that serve them.

**FIGURE 12**

### Why Do New Yorkers Get IDNYC? To Have an Official ID



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups above are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail.

# I AM NYC

“ IDNYC is my go to ID card in NYC. With benefits like movie tickets, recreation discounts, and free cultural memberships, IDNYC is the must have card for all New Yorkers. ”

SIGNING UP IS  
QUICK AND EASY!  
IMMIGRATION STATUS  
DOES NOT MATTER.

CALL 311 (TRS 711) OR  
VISIT [NYC.GOV/IDNYC](http://NYC.GOV/IDNYC)

NYC  
Bill de Blasio  
Mayor

id  
NYC  
8 million New Yorkers  
1 card for all of us

***Outreach efforts specifically focused on youth are anticipated to increase the number of teens who enroll.***

While the focus groups and interviews did not include cardholders between the ages of 14-17, other participants commented that teens may not have a school ID, and having some form of identification is critical as young adults seek jobs, open bank accounts, and navigate the adult world in other ways. Approximately 85 percent of survey respondents in this specific age group indicated that having an official ID was either *somewhat* or *quite a bit* the reason they applied for IDNYC.

For me, it was about having an ID without listing my nationality. Sometimes we have a problem when we show ID from our home countries. People associate it with the immigration situation.

-Spanish speaking immigrant

To me, a benefit card is embarrassing, showing it to somebody as ID. It's embarrassing.

-English speaking cardholder who is homeless

It's good too because some people like us, we walk all over the City with our passports and you could lose it. So it's better to have an ID that you could use all over.

-Haitian Creole speaking immigrant

It's a card that allows you to be a resident of New York City rather than carrying around your passport, which automatically identifies you as a non-citizen.

-CBO focused on youth

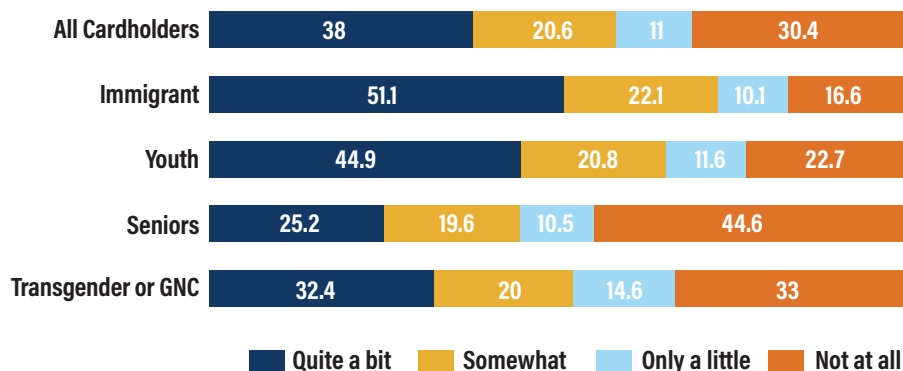
## To Have a Preferable Form of ID

Many cardholders reported that they got an IDNYC card because it was a form of ID they preferred to one they already had. For example, both focus group respondents and CBOs frequently mentioned a passport or consular ID would be very difficult to replace if lost or stolen. Even among those with another form of U.S.- or state-issued photo ID, many focus group participants indicated that they got IDNYC as a supplement to one that they already had because it would be easier and less expensive to replace if that became necessary.

Furthermore, unlike carrying a passport, IDNYC conveys no information about one's country of origin and implies nothing about legal status. This was something noted by quite a number of participants in the focus groups focusing on immigrants. Among survey respondents who were immigrants, approximately 73 percent indicated that IDNYC was a preferred ID was either *somewhat* or *quite a bit* the reason they applied for the card (see figure 13).

Cardholders who were homeless commonly mentioned a preference for IDNYC over the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, for reasons including that the EBT card is not recognized everywhere, does not have an address on it, and because they find it embarrassing to show publicly.

**FIGURE 13** Why Do New Yorkers Get IDNYC? To Have a Preferable ID



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups above are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail.

## Carlos

### *It's an ID that makes me feel confident*

Carlos, 30 years old, is originally from Mexico and has lived in the U.S. for the past 10 years. Carlos heard about IDNYC on TV, but also was told about it by an organization where his family regularly uses a food pantry. This organization told him about the program, and he and three other members of his family received the card, including his teenage son. Carlos was primarily motivated to have a different ID, one that didn't identify what country he was from. As Carlos described, "I got the card to have more possibilities and more opportunities. I knew I would feel better having an ID from the US. This card does not say where I'm from, so I knew I was going to feel more comfortable."

Carlos also talked about encouraging others he knew to get an IDNYC, however, "the problem is that they have doubts and fears to apply." Carlos explained that the majority of people he has talked to about the card in his immediate community believe, "the card is a trick, it's just a way for the government to keep track of illegals here." He added, "A friend of mine does not have his papers, and he thought they would ask for more papers if he went." While Carlos does not think this will happen, he has yet to convince his friend that nothing bad will happen through applying for IDNYC.

One of the main goals in getting the card for Carlos was to open a bank account. Similar to other cardholders who did were unaware that not all banks would accept the card, he was told at a bank that his IDNYC card was not valid. "That was embarrassing," he noted. "They gave it back to me in an embarrassing way that made me feel bad." While Carlos has since learned about other banks where he could use the IDNYC card to open an account, he is waiting to see whether his bank of preference will accept it instead. In the meantime, he has used IDNYC primarily as identification to receive food for his family at a nearby food pantry.

Carlos acknowledged that he has used the card only in a limited way when it comes to tangible benefits. Yet he emphasized, "I feel confident now that I have an ID. I have an ID if the police ask for it, and I have an ID if I am in an accident. I am protected. I am not discriminated against, because I have an ID, just like everyone else. It makes you feel good, because all of us here in New York, we all have the same card."

I use the ID as much as possible because I know the program is only as strong as the number of people who use it. It can't be a scarlet letter or a signpost to authorities that it is the ID of last resort for those who lack documentation. I use it in solidarity with all other cardholders and New Yorkers, and with those for whom it truly is their only option.

-Survey respondent

My biggest motivation was that I wanted to support the program. You know, if I applied, that means one more person is having the card. So overall the participation is increased.

-Bangla speaking immigrant

My mom is undocumented. It is important for me to also get this ID, then it becomes part of the city, part of the everyday people, rather than just particular communities.

-Spanish speaking youth

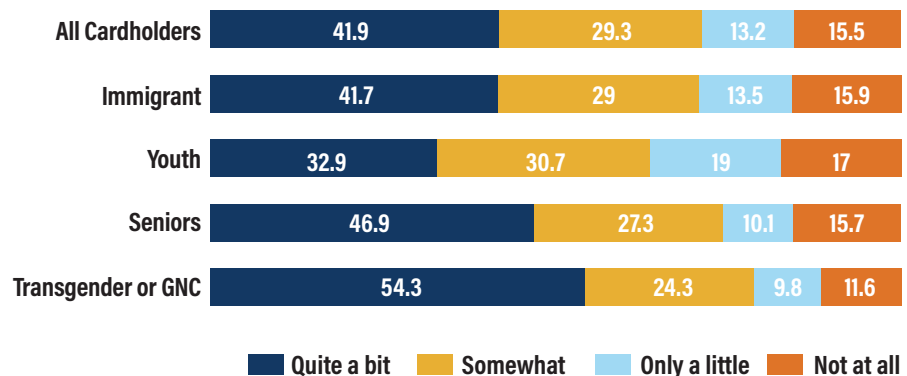
## To Show Support for the Program

Although IDNYC was intended to serve the needs of key vulnerable populations, it was purposely designed to attract a wide range of New Yorkers whose diversity and breadth would prevent stigma from being associated with the card. In comments in the focus groups and through the survey, many participants expressed how proud they were of their City and the Mayor for introducing the card.

Numerous focus group participants felt the program was such a positive step for New Yorkers that it should be available to people living elsewhere in the state, and in other cities. A desire to “show solidarity” with the program was specifically mentioned by both those in the focus groups and survey respondents as a factor that contributed to getting the card. A sizeable percentage of survey respondents overall (42 percent) indicated that showing support for the IDNYC program was *quite a bit* their motivation for applying for the card. Of note, this percentage was similar among survey respondents who identified as immigrants (see figure 14).

**FIGURE 14**

### Why Do New Yorkers Get IDNYC? To Show Support for the Program

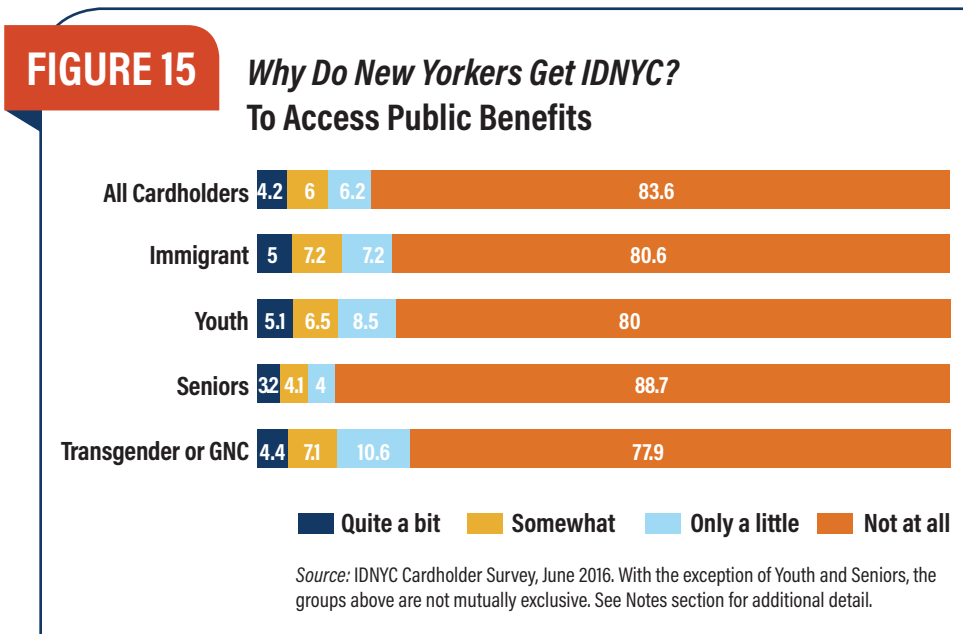


Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups above are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail.

## To Access Public Benefits

One goal of IDNYC was to facilitate access to a broad range of public services. Based on all sources of information and relative to other motivating factors, certain public benefits, such as SNAP (food stamps), cash assistance, and Section 8 housing, were less commonly cited as a reason for why people obtained the card. Participants in focus groups frequently mentioned having access to various public benefits already, and as shown in figure 15, only 16 percent of survey respondents indicated that accessing public benefits was a reason for obtaining the card at all. Across specific groups served by IDNYC, there was little variability in this pattern.

One reason for this finding may be tied to other eligibility requirements that are needed to access these specific benefits. An individual must meet the income criteria as well as have lawful immigration status in order to obtain certain public benefits; therefore, obtaining an IDNYC would not facilitate access to these benefits for an undocumented immigrant. It is also possible that individuals who are reached through IDNYC and who participated in the study’s focus groups and survey are already connected to the public benefits they need.



In the LGBT community, people are really excited. Some don't have other forms of ID or forms of ID that actually support their gender identity. People feel safer getting this ID knowing that they can have their gender of choice.

-CBO focused on LGBTQ community

I applied for it because I heard they didn't have an issue with putting all your, like, real affirming information on there - they weren't going to give you a problem with that.

-English speaking youth who is transgender

Countless people, from the immigrant family in Sunset Park to the transgender youth in Jackson Heights, now have access to identification vital to performing basic daily tasks, from accessing City buildings to opening bank accounts. A New York City identification card accessible to all only serves to strengthen the relationship of our diverse communities to our schools, our police, and City government as a whole.

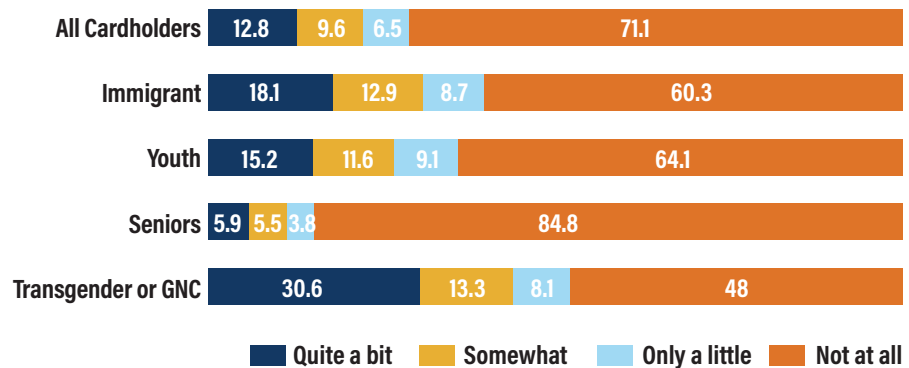
-City Council Member Daniel Dromm

## To Have a Form of ID With Preferred Gender

New Yorkers who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) are part of every other demographic group in the City—they are young and old, wealthy and poor, immigrants, and U.S. born. Traditional forms of identification display the biological sex of the individual as indicated on official documents, like a birth certificate or medical record. IDNYC, however, includes the option to self-identify one's gender, which can be a significant psychological and practical boost for an individual who is transgender. Among survey respondents identifying as transgender, gender nonconforming (GNC), or other gendered, approximately 44 percent indicated that the opportunity to have an ID that displays their gender of preference was either *somewhat* or *quite a bit* the reason for getting IDNYC (see figure 16).

**FIGURE 16**

### Why Do New Yorkers Get IDNYC? To Have an ID With a Preferred Gender



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups above are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail.



One related issue for individuals who are transgender that was frequently raised during the focus groups and individual interviews was the desire to use a chosen name, one that also matches their identity.

However, in order to use a name other than what is listed on the proof of identity documents, a legal name change is needed. While cardholders were appreciative of the option to self-identify their gender, they also noted the financial challenge in completing a legal name change. Steps that IDNYC has taken to fill the need are providing information about organizations that can support the process as well as co-sponsoring free name change clinics in collaboration with the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP) and other organizations.



***The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center was one of multiple CBOs that helped provide information about the card within the LGBTQ community.***

## Renee

### *It's a big deal to have an ID that matches who we are*

Born and raised in New York, Renee identifies as part of the local transgender community. She is active in several organizations that help support individuals who are transgender, including those with immigration questions. With her experience both as transgender herself as well as working in the field, she shared both her personal experience as well as her experience helping others learn more about IDNYC. Renee personally got IDNYC for the museum benefits and discounted movies, but she was also motivated to get the card because the photo on her State ID is so outdated that she sometimes has trouble using it, since it does not reflect how she currently looks.

In doing outreach for IDNYC among immigrant communities, Renee noted that she encountered a lot of hesitation and questions about the card. She highlighted a common concern among immigrants: "A lot of people were really concerned about whether it would be difficult for them to get it if they didn't have certain type of documents, and they were afraid of their names being given to immigration officials. But I told them that was not true."

In contrast, among the transgender community, IDNYC was an easy sell. While Renee has already gone through the legal avenues to change her name and gender herself, she recognized the significance of IDNYC for others. "The bottom line is that a lot of us in the transgender community, we don't have an affirming gender marker on our IDs. The most crucial part of this card is that there are no criteria to go through to get your gender ID and name matched. Otherwise, people in the trans community have a big barrier, it's a very difficult process for us."

Renee has been an advocate of IDNYC among the transgender community. "I have definitely told a lot of people in my community about it, people who don't have their name changed yet. I tell them it's a great way to have a legal ID in New York. I tell a lot of people in the trans community especially, since the state ID is a really big process to go through." She added that the feedback she has heard so far has been positive: "For everyone I know, they have pretty much had a great experience with IDNYC because they can put a gender that affirms their identity. And it's a big deal to have an ID that actually matches who we are."

## How Is the IDNYC Card Used?

At the most fundamental level, IDNYC provides cardholders with identification that can be used in a wide range of situations. As previously discussed, cardholders can obtain free memberships to many cultural institutions and receive discounts on groceries and at pharmacies. IDNYC can also be used as a library card. In addition to these uses, IDNYC has features that expand its utility and provide other benefits. In this section, we describe many of these uses, as well as identify situations in which cardholders have experienced challenges with using IDNYC.

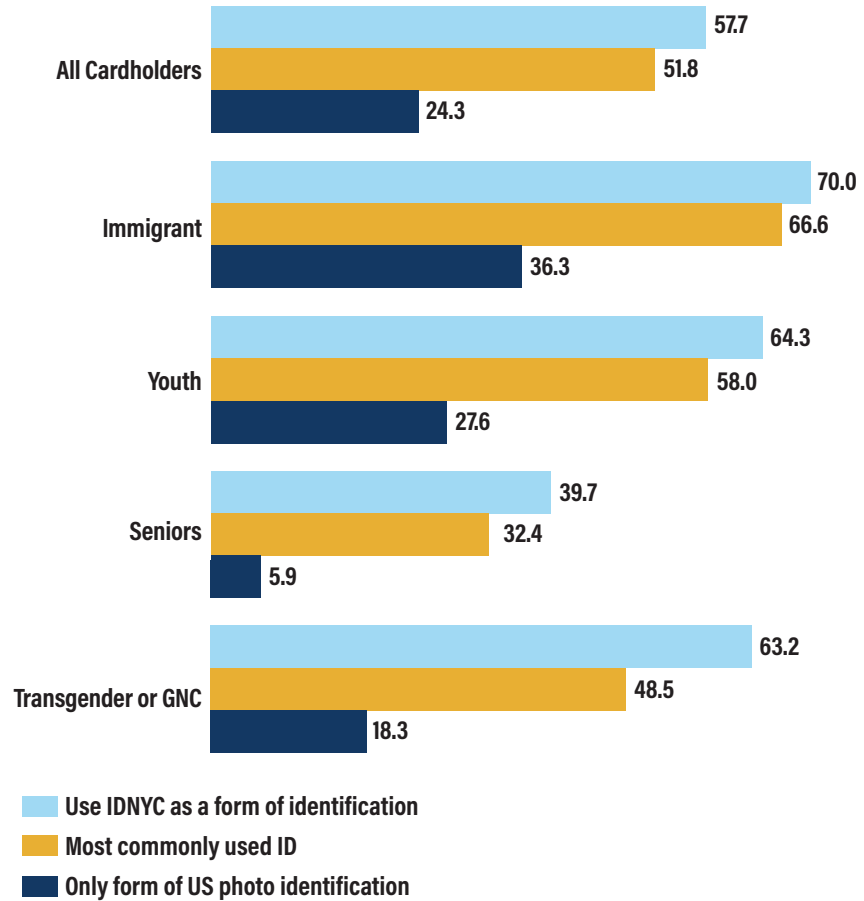
### Use of IDNYC as Identification

In a relatively short amount of time, IDNYC has become a card that many people have come to rely upon. Participants in the focus groups described keeping the card in their wallet, “just in case,” as well as purposefully turning to IDNYC over other forms of ID. As shown in figure 17, **approximately a quarter of survey respondents indicated that IDNYC is their *only* form of U.S. photo identification.** Among survey respondents who reported this, 79 percent indicated they were immigrants. As noted in the background, we are unable to identify whether these immigrants are documented or undocumented, since that question was not asked on the survey.

Consistent with its primary intended purpose, cardholders use IDNYC as a form of identification in a wide range of situations. The ability to enter buildings of different types, including government buildings, schools, and hospitals, were all frequently noted by both focus group participants and survey respondents as a common use of the card. As shown in figure 18, 12 percent of survey respondents reported using the card as a primary or secondary ID to open a bank account, which was one of the main reasons many focus group participants identified as a reason for obtaining the card. This could include use of IDNYC as either primary or secondary identification to do so. Overall, 58 percent of survey respondents used the card to prove their identity in one or more situations, which extend beyond entry into buildings. The variety of ways the card has been used for the purpose of identification is illustrated by the examples in figure 19.

**FIGURE 17**

### How Much Do New Yorkers Rely on IDNYC as Identification?



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail

One particularly important use of the card as identification is during interactions with the NYPD. If stopped by an NYPD officer for a violation of law, an individual will be asked to show a valid photo ID. If unable to do so, for certain violations of law, the officer will use his or her discretion to decide whether to bring the individual into a police facility or accept whatever identification is presented. Because IDNYC is a recognized form of identification within the NYPD, police officers can issue a court summons in lieu of an arrest for certain offenses. The usefulness of the card for this purpose was particularly emphasized by immigrants and individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as by leaders of CBOs who work with these populations. Having the card may not only expedite an interaction with law enforcement; cardholders also report a general feeling of safety and security knowing they can provide it if stopped. Approximately 12 percent of survey respondents reported that they had used IDNYC during an interaction with police.

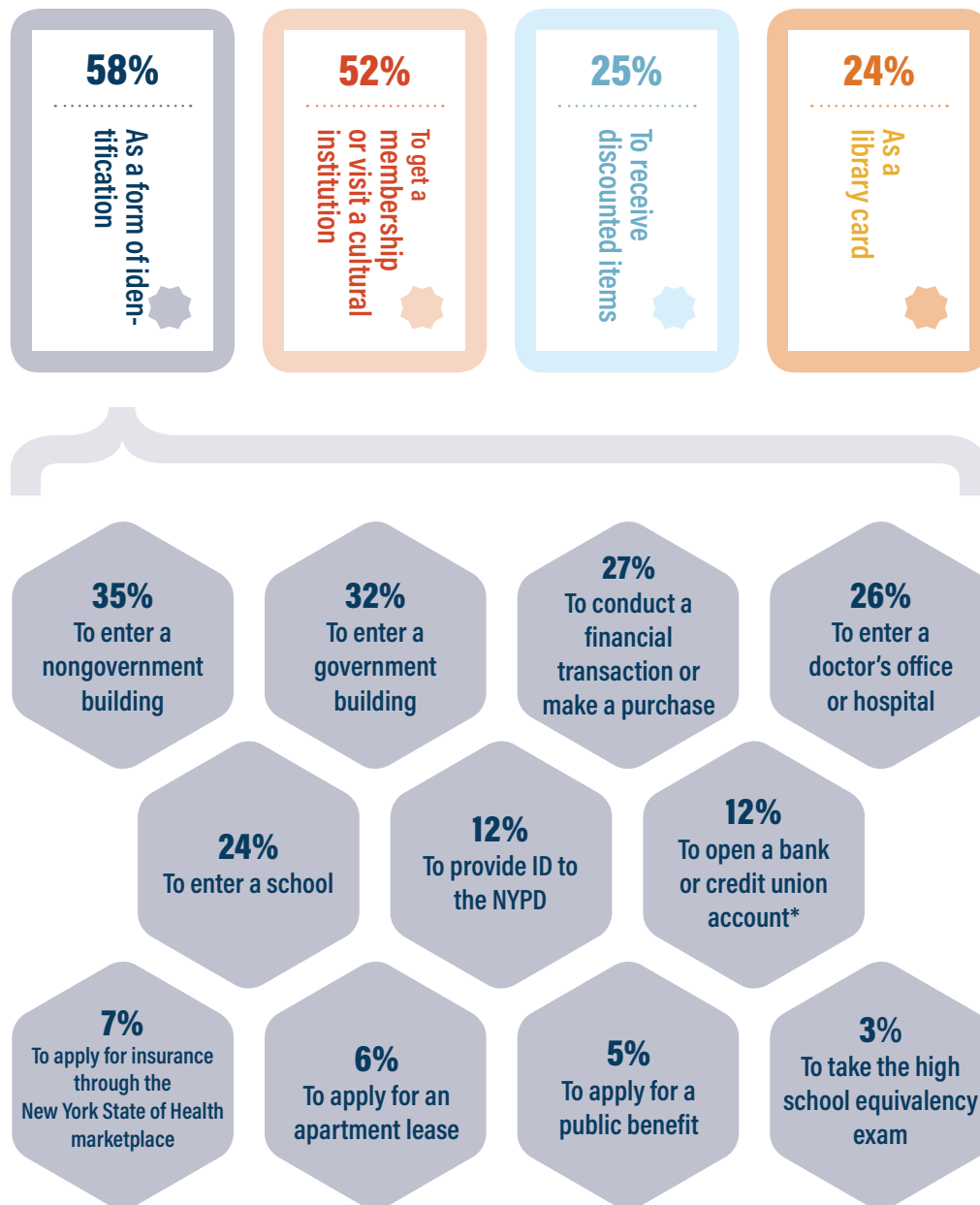
Now, I feel like it was about time for us immigrants to have somehow to identify ourselves. 'Cause we walk around scared in the street with fear, in the street like thinking, when the police going to stop you to ask you for identification? I think it's a good way of having an I.D.  
-Spanish speaking immigrant

My boyfriend got locked up in the prison. He had no type of identification on him. I used to tell him to carry his passport. He looks older, but he's only 19-- he's going to be 20 this year. I'm a student, and he's not, so they came in, and they took him, and he had no identification, that's how they took him. So that's why I want him to get the New York ID because that's a way for them to just give him a ticket and let him go, they wouldn't make him sit in the prison for a long time.  
-English speaking youth

We encounter the police all the time, and if you don't have anything to show them, or I show them my EBT card, it's discretionary, on their part, whether they want to accept it or not.  
-English speaking cardholder experiencing homelessness

This card represents us and identifies us anywhere, for example with the police. You feel unprotected without a card like that, and we haven't had something like this in New York in years, we haven't had this type of thing from the Mayor before.  
-Spanish speaking immigrant

**FIGURE 18** How Survey Respondents Use IDNYC

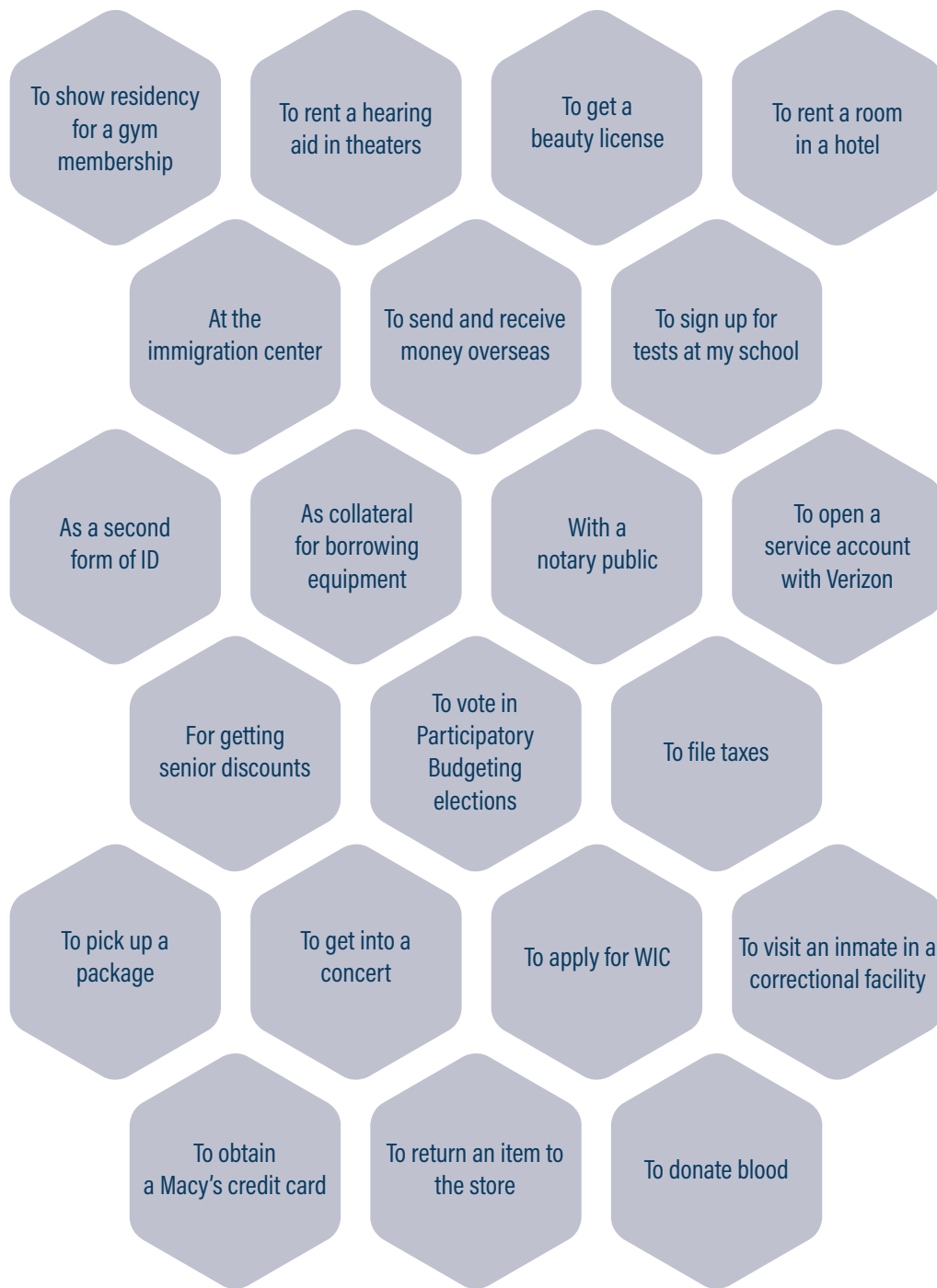


Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016

\*IDNYC may have been used as either a primary or secondary form of ID in this situation.

**FIGURE 19**

**Selected Additional Uses of IDNYC as Identification**



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016 and focus groups

39%

of survey respondents who used IDNYC to access public benefits reported that the card had “greatly” helped them receive the services

While IDNYC is effectively being used with police, some focus group respondents still questioned possible repercussions of using the card as ID. For example, one respondent believed that use of the card with the police triggers an automatic check of one's identity, and several perceived additional scrutiny when they have used their cards in the past. However, it was far more commonly reported that having IDNYC brings a sense of relief and reassurance when dealing with the police. While encounters with police were not a concern for approximately 45 percent of survey respondents, among those who *did* report concerns, 59 percent indicated that having the IDNYC card makes them feel more confident about potential encounters with officers. The remaining survey respondents largely reported that the card did not have an impact on their confidence one way or the other.

The IDNYC card has also been used by participants casting ballots in the City Council's Participatory Budgeting program, which permits all residents of New York City to directly vote on proposals for the spending of public money. Among the Participatory Budgeting voters who voted using their IDNYC card was Mayor de Blasio, who cast his ballot in his neighborhood of Brooklyn.

Using IDNYC as a form of identification to access public benefits was relatively infrequent, both among focus group participants as well as among survey respondents (endorsed by just 6 percent of survey respondents). However, among survey respondents who *have* used IDNYC to access City services, 39 percent reported that the card had *greatly* helped them receive the services, and an additional 33 percent indicated that it had *somewhat* helped them. Similarly, a relatively small number of survey respondents reported using IDNYC to participate in local activities, such as volunteering in schools or attending community meetings, but among those that did, 75 percent reported that it made it *somewhat* or much easier to do so.



## Memberships and Cultural Institutions

The IDNYC program has partnered with 40 cultural institutions, making a year-long membership free to cardholders. Accessing museums, zoos, and other cultural institutions is not only a primary reason for getting the card, but also a very popular use of the card. Throughout the focus groups, participants enthusiastically listed the different museums they had already visited, and others they planned for the summer. Figure 20 illustrates that over half of survey respondents reported using their card to get a membership or visit a cultural institution, with seniors (67 percent) and those identifying as transgender or GNC (63 percent) being the groups with the highest reported use for this purpose. As shown in figure 21, which is drawn from administrative data, over 400,000 museum memberships have been obtained since the start of the program.

It's a big benefit for us mothers, it's good to go the museums, to the supermarket to get discounts. It has been a huge relief for the African community. It's true that it's not an immigration document, but it's really helpful. Especially if you're a mother with kids in the school system, it helps for all the academic things that parents can take their kids do, and share. Most of the time, people don't realize that going out to museums is part of their education.

-French speaking (West African) immigrant

The IDNYC partnership with the cultural institutions put such a positive and optimistic cast over the whole program. It has been a great chance for people who have never been to our museum, and we really love that. Actually, our frontline staff really love it, because people are asking 'where should I go? What should I see?' and really talking to them about the exhibits. There's just a lot of positive feelings about the card in the building, so we've been really pleased to participate. Actually, we see it as a gift from the city.

-Museum Director of Membership

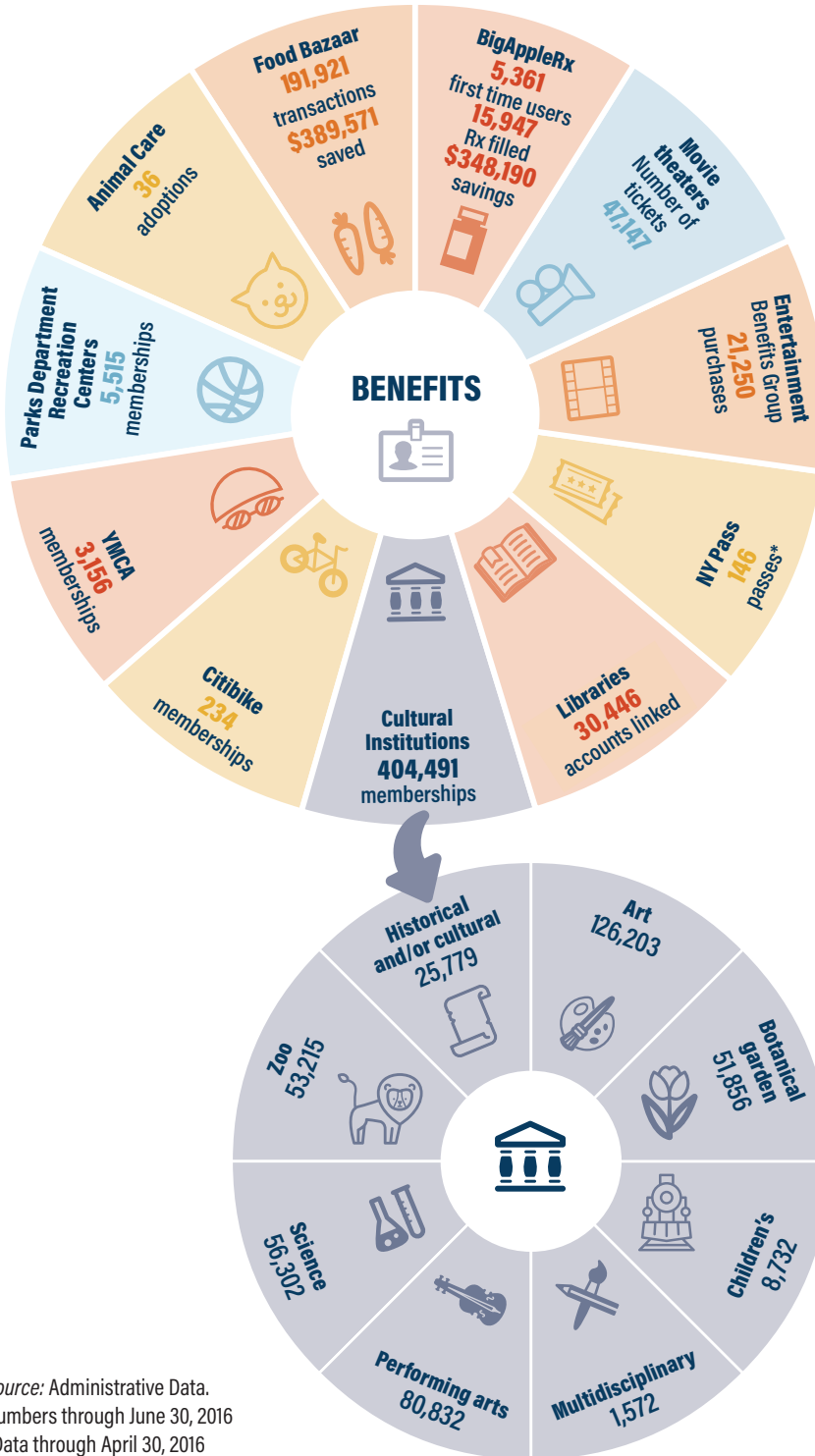
**FIGURE 20** Percent of Survey Respondents Using IDNYC to Get a Membership or Visit a Cultural Institution



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail

Access to museums and zoos has obvious benefits to New Yorkers, but participation in the program also has a potential benefit to cultural institutions themselves. For many museums, participation as an IDNYC benefit partner has resulted in a large influx of new members, including increases in visits from New Yorkers living in areas of the city that are outside the usual membership base. This influx has been a challenge for some of the institutions to manage, particularly a number of the smaller museums that have had to hire staff to handle processing memberships. Increased attendance, sales at museum shops, and other measures of engagement point to the ways the IDNYC program is helping institutions connect with new audiences. Naturally, museums are interested to see how many IDNYC members will renew their memberships once their free year expires. Based on discussions in the focus groups and survey responses, at least some cardholders are indeed viewing the free membership as a way to sample the different museums and consider which they may want to join. Regardless, museum staff in this study consistently reported that they were extremely pleased to be participating in the program, and are happy to see more diverse visitors access their institutions.

**FIGURE 21** Benefits Accessed by IDNYC Cardholders Through June 2016



Source: Administrative Data.  
 Numbers through June 30, 2016  
 \*Data through April 30, 2016

The card is beneficial for those of us that don't have any papers, we're 'illegal' but, for instance, we can purchase medicine, transportation. It helps mostly to get discounts.

-Spanish speaking immigrant

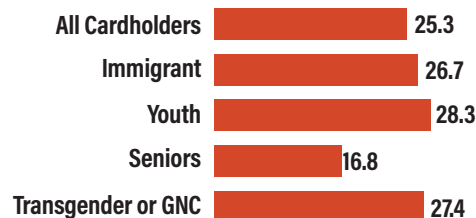
I just look at it as being a good resource. If somebody is really trying to save money, I think that's a good thing to have. Because it's hard trying to save money, and every cent counts. Even though Food Bazaar only give 5%, that counts towards your savings.

-English speaking youth

## Receive Discounts and Other Benefits

The IDNYC card confers discounts to more than a dozen different organizations, businesses and services. The most widely used discounts are for Food Bazaar, at which cardholders can receive 5 percent off their groceries, and for prescription drug discounts through the BigAppleRx program, the City's official prescription discount program for everyone visiting, living or working in New York City. New Yorkers can receive discounts for medications, including prescriptions, that are not covered by insurance, regardless of income, citizenship or health insurance status. Based on focus groups discussions, the discounts for these two resources were the best known, although participants were sometimes unclear about the details. The range of benefits and number of people who have accessed each is shown in figure 21. Many cardholders were unaware they could receive discounts for other places and programs; beyond the pharmacy and grocery discounts, reduced movie tickets was the only other discount benefit that was consistently mentioned during the focus groups. Data from survey respondents shows a quarter of respondents reported using the card for discounts overall (see figure 22). One difference between the seniors completing the survey and the seniors in the focus groups is that the latter were more positive and reported using discounts more frequently than those completing the survey.

**FIGURE 22** Percent of Survey Respondents Using IDNYC to Receive Discounts



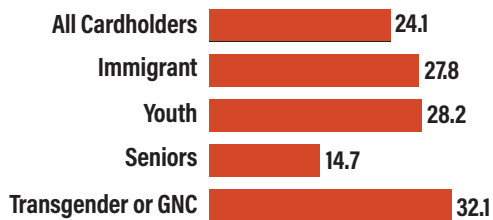
Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail

## Use as a Library Card

The New York, Brooklyn, and Queens Public Library systems have developed a mechanism to allow the IDNYC card itself to function as a library card at any library in the City. Based on documentation provided to the City from the libraries, over 30,000 New Yorkers have linked their card to the library system. About one-fourth of all survey respondents (24 percent) indicated using the card for this purpose, with those identifying as transgender and GNC being the most likely to do so (see figure 23). Use of IDNYC as a library card was especially noted in focus groups drawn from immigrant communities.

**FIGURE 23**

### Percent of Survey Respondents Using IDNYC as a Library Card



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016. With the exception of Youth and Seniors, the groups are not mutually exclusive. See Notes section for additional detail

Libraries, in contrast to museums, are already free. Thus, the library systems viewed participation in the IDNYC program as an excellent opportunity to serve additional New Yorkers who were not previously active library members. The libraries focus services toward similar populations as IDNYC, such as individuals experiencing homelessness and immigrants. One library staff member interviewed described the IDNYC initiative as an effective way to increase referrals to library programs that serve these populations. Libraries have also played a major role in the program by serving as enrollment locations.

All we do is serve people for free, so the more people we serve, the happier we are. There are potentially people who have never been in the library who are coming through our doors for the very first time now.

-Library staff

When I went to the library for the first time, I needed a library card. I went into the library, and they asked, 'Do you have a city ID? Because getting a city ID is like a library card.'

-Bangla speaking immigrant

## Use of IDNYC Special Features

IDNYC has additional features that serve New Yorkers in a variety of different ways.

In July 2015, Mayor de Blasio announced the card's **Veteran designation**. The designation appears as the word VETERAN printed under the photo and indicates that the cardholder has served in the U.S. Armed Services. The designation provides veterans with additional cultural discounts, and also qualifies them for free or discounted Veterans Advantage memberships, which offers access to exclusive military discounts from national retailers and travel providers. As of June 30, 2016, a total of 4,876 cards had been issued with the Veteran designation.

As a program particularly intended to serve immigrant New Yorkers, language accessibility has been a key aspect of the program design. Cardholders may indicate a **language of preference** to appear on the back of the card; in an emergency, this feature can provide a quick way for someone to know how to communicate. Based on administrative data provided by the City, 29 percent of cards issued included a language of preference. Among cards issued with this feature, the majority were Spanish speaking (70 percent) followed by Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, or Fuzhou, 18 percent); Russian (2 percent); and Korean (2 percent). Cardholders did not make significant note of this feature during our discussions; many were surprised, but pleased, to learn of its presence.

Cardholders are able to enroll as **organ donors** during the application process. Based on City enrollment data through June 30th, a total of 122,266 cardholders consented to organ donation. The highest rate of participation was among individuals who are between 25-44 years old, with 17 percent of cardholders in this group consenting to be a donor.

Among survey respondents, 25 percent of those who signed up to be an organ donor indicated that they were not a donor prior to enrolling in the IDNYC program. While the survey data cannot be generalized to the IDNYC population, if this figure is used as an estimate in conjunction with enrollment numbers, the IDNYC program may have led to more than 30,000 new organ donors entering the New York State Donate Life Registry<sup>3</sup>. Organ donation was not specifically addressed through focus groups. In general, most focus group participants seemed unaware that it was an option, suggesting that greater awareness of this feature may be needed.

Another feature incorporated into IDNYC is the ability to add an **emergency contact** on the back of the card. This is potentially useful to anyone in an emergency or compromised situation, but particularly helpful for minors, the elderly, and individuals with limited English proficiency. Almost three quarters (73 percent) of cards issued included this feature. As shown in figure 24, participation was even higher among cards issued to those under the age of 18 (85 percent). There was essentially no difference in use of this feature among cardholders who prefer English (74 percent) and those who prefer another language (73 percent).

Do you know what I like about the ID? That they put the emergency number. The state ID doesn't have it. If something happens to me, they pull that card, and they call my son. It makes you more relaxed. If something happened to you, they can call.

-English speaking senior

My 14-year-old has the card, and I felt very comfortable with the fact that, you know, if something happened to him, the back of his ID has my contact information. I think it's a great thing.

-English speaking immigrant

**FIGURE 24** Percent of Cardholders Listing Emergency Contact, By Age



Source: IDNYC Enrollment Data through June 30th.

<sup>3</sup>See the Notes section for additional detail about limitations in the generalizability of the survey findings.

77%

of survey respondents who were immigrants reported that IDNYC had increased their sense of belonging to the city

## IDNYC and Sense of Belonging to New York City

As described above, the IDNYC initiative has benefited New Yorkers in a variety of very concrete ways. One less tangible, yet extremely important way in which IDNYC has impacted cardholders is reflected in one of the slogans of the IDNYC campaign: **8 Million New Yorkers. 1 Card For All Of Us!** Throughout the focus groups, and supported by survey responses, cardholders described the card as something special for New Yorkers that makes them feel part of the City and like a “real American.” This was noted in focus groups with *all* populations, as well as across survey respondents. Among survey respondents who were born in the U.S., 58 percent reported that the IDNYC card had increased their sense of belonging to New York City and this feeling was even greater among immigrants, of whom 77 percent felt IDNYC had increased their sense of belonging to the City.

One of the biggest things it does it makes them feel a part of the city. Sometimes they feel it is hard to integrate. Having the cultural things, like the museums, that also helps them feel integrated and know the city better, too.

—CBO focused on immigrants

You come out from the shadows. You can show this without shame to show who you are. When you show this ID, it makes you feel different. It make you feel like estranged people no more. So those fears go away.

—Spanish speaking immigrant

The IDNYC is very important in that it's an enhancing document. Our clients use it as their main ongoing ID. When they pull the card out, they don't feel like they're identifying with a lesser group, but one they WANT to belong to...beyond what most people could have imagined, the card has become a community builder.

—CBO focused on homelessness

The greatest impact is that the ID leads to less discrimination. If you show an ID that is accepted here then you don't feel inferior, strange, or like you are not part of here. The ID provides a sense of belonging.

—Spanish speaking immigrant



## Challenges with Card Use

While IDNYC has been used as identification in many contexts, there are also situations in which cardholders report challenges. Figure 25 identifies survey respondent data of situations in which IDNYC was not accepted but should likely have been.

The most common situation in which cardholders have not been able to use IDNYC, which is well known to the City and the public, is at the larger banks. While the card is accepted as primary ID at 12 banks and credit unions, cardholders cannot use the card at certain larger national banks as a primary form of ID. (Recently, some of these banks such as J.P. Morgan Chase, Citibank, and Bank of America, began accepting IDNYC as a secondary form of ID or will do so by the end of this year.) In focus groups across all the populations, this was described as a great source of frustration, especially for those who got the card specifically to open an account. Among survey respondents, approximately 13 percent reported that their card was not accepted when trying to open a bank or credit union account.

**FIGURE 25**

### Survey Participants Report Situations in Which IDNYC Was Not Accepted



Source: IDNYC Cardholder Survey, June 2016

The City cannot require banks to accept IDNYC, but they have taken steps to try to address this issue. First, the City has secured guidance from federal banking regulatory agencies indicating banks are permitted to accept IDNYC as government issued ID. The larger banks are now beginning to accept IDNYC as a *secondary* form of identification, and it is possible that positive success with these accounts will encourage a change of policy among the banks more generally. Second, the City has been working to let cardholders know which banks do accept IDNYC as a primary form of identification. The Mayor's Office and HRA worked with DCA to develop a brochure describing the benefits of keeping money in a bank account or credit union, and highlighting institutions that accept IDNYC as a primary form of identification. Starting in January 2016, every IDNYC applicant has received this brochure.

As a *city*-level ID, IDNYC is generally not intended for use in exchanges that are regulated at the state or federal level. For example, two experiences commonly identified in which the card "didn't work" were trying to use the card as proof of age to purchase alcohol and as identification for air travel; neither of these are intended uses at the current time. The ways in which IDNYC cards cannot be used are identified on materials sent with each card, through outreach, and on the website. However, some respondents reported that they had successfully used the card in both these situations. The fact that the card is not accepted in some situations where it should be, and is accepted in some situations where it should not, illustrates the challenge with consistent implementation of a program in such a large city.

## What Did the City Get Right with the IDNYC Program?

The City of New York has taken on the challenge of launching a municipal ID program in the largest and most linguistically diverse city in the country. Based on the higher than expected enrollment during the first year and a half of the program alone, it is evident that the design and implementation of IDNYC incorporated many effective strategies. In this section, we highlight six of these key strategies.

### 1. Designed to be stigma-free

As previously discussed, IDNYC was designed to serve all New Yorkers including vulnerable and potentially harder to reach groups. Respondents consistently referenced the many benefits accompanying the card as an effective mechanism to draw New Yorkers who do not need the card as a form of ID, particularly emphasizing the free memberships to cultural institutions. This strategy may be one of the most important lessons to learn from the programs' success. Many cardholders themselves either noted specifically that the card does not carry a stigma or were unaware that one original purpose of the card was to benefit undocumented immigrants and other vulnerable populations. Furthermore, some respondents viewed the card as having cachet and as a trendy, "must-have" item, a notion that has also been promoted in many news articles and blogs about IDNYC.



***Museum memberships have helped broaden the appeal of IDNYC, substantially reducing the potential for stigma associated with the card.***

I liked the approach of the program, it was a very destigmatizing approach. People felt they were part of a good thing, and it wasn't like they were being singled out or stigmatized.

-CBO focused on homelessness

I received my IDNYC as a statement of political support. If only undocumented immigrants and the homeless had the ID, it would carry a stigma. It is essential for nonvulnerable folks to have this card.

-Life-long resident of New York

It's great that they lowered the number of points needed compared to a state ID, and allowed alternative documentation. It's a great step forward. They are open minded and willing to keep improving accessibility of card, and ensure that it's accepted.

-CBO focused on homelessness

I've heard good things about the pop-up sites being key to making it more accessible.

-CBO focused on youth

Having the enrollment sites in high-density areas was super smart. People didn't have to get into a car or bus.

-CBO focused on immigrants

You know, they made it very inviting. Yeah, it was very inviting, very easy. There were so many places to go. I mean - and there were so many people. We got to the floor, there was so many people taking your information, the line went so fast.

-English speaking cardholder experiencing homelessness

## 2. The card is highly accessible

The City ensured that the card could be easily accessed by enacting a variety of strategies, and these paid off. Among survey respondents, 94 percent reported that the process of getting the card was either *somewhat* or *very easy*. The following mechanisms in particular were highlighted as influential during our interviews with cardholders and community organizations.

- Billed as “the new, *free* identification card for all New York City residents,” the “free” aspect of IDNYC resonated strongly across populations. Being free was repeatedly noted to be an important reason for the program’s success; it not only allows low-income residents to obtain it, but it also removes a deterrent for residents who can afford it.
- The use of pop-up centers has allowed applicants to deal with organizations they trust and ones that are located in communities and settings in which they feel safe. Pop-up centers have also expanded the convenience for people who have difficulty getting to one of the established centers. Less than 1 percent of survey respondents reported difficulty in traveling to an enrollment center.



**Enrollment centers are located throughout the city.**



94%

of survey respondents reported that the process of getting IDNYC was either *somewhat* or *very easy*

***Pop-up centers have been a particularly popular program feature.***

- Whereas some municipal ID programs have been run out of a central location, IDNYC chose to locate enrollment centers throughout the city. There is no requirement for a cardholder to enroll at any particular center, and this has increased access. Many cardholders noted that when the center closest to them was busy, they simply found another center that had available appointments. In addition, appointments can be made online. Less than 2 percent of survey respondents reported that either the process of scheduling their appointment or the length of time it took to get an appointment posed a challenge.
- New Yorkers can use a range of documents to apply, and with the amendments to the rules in April, there are now expanded types of reliable and verifiable documents that will be accepted as proof of identity and residency. Accessing an ID remains particularly problematic for some individuals experiencing homelessness due to their difficulty establishing a verified address. However, the requirements for IDNYC are more inclusive than for a New York State ID (which still requires proof of lawful immigration status), while still remaining secure. Among survey respondents, less than 2 percent indicated that it was a challenge to gather the necessary documents to apply.

The campaign benefited from collaboration with organizations like ours and ethnic news media to spread the information to those most affected. Involving the organizations in the creation of the regulations and design of the program instead of doing it first and telling us about it later was key.

-CBO focused on immigrants

Number one, they worked with the community and were really receptive to the coalition. And they worked with the police.

-CBO focused on homelessness

It helped that we have respect in the community, they know us, so we were accessible.

-CBO focused on immigrants

### 3. A collaborative approach to both design and implementation of the card

During the planning and design phases, the City engaged with a broad range of CBOs, advocates, and government agencies, including the NYPD. According to CBOs interviewed for this study, the City took these collaborations seriously, made clear efforts to implement their feedback, and followed up when changes could not be made. This commitment to incorporate input in the design of the card built trust with the CBOs and in turn, brought many more organizations onboard. In addition, having been privy to many aspects of the development, these CBOs were already poised to help advertise and educate their communities about the advantages of the card, and to help their clients navigate the application process. In the months since the card has launched, CBOs have had continued involvement through advertising the card and hosting pop-up enrollment centers. These pop-up sites were consistently described by CBOs as a positive and exciting event at their centers.

The relationship with the NYPD was an especially critical one to the success of the program. At the most basic level, the Mayor's Office, HRA, and the NYPD had a shared goal to decrease the number of New Yorkers without a valid ID. An absence of identification creates problems for officers on the street because it is an inefficient use of resources to process an individual at the station for a non-serious offense. The successful partnership of the Mayor's Office and HRA with the NYPD is one of the clear success stories of this program.

As we will address in the next section of the report, there remain aspects of the IDNYC program where different agencies within the City, CBOs and advocates continue to disagree. However, when asked what the City had done right, the overwhelming response from CBOs was that the true collaborative nature of relationships with community partners has been a critical factor in the program's success.

#### 4. Outreach, advertising, and promotion of the card were extensive and effective

Marketing of the card and outreach went well beyond what was visible to the average New Yorker. IDNYC initially hired eight multilingual outreach staff with community organizing and related backgrounds, and this number grew to 16 during the height of the enrollment during the first year. The outreach campaign was very data-driven; staff members were equipped with detailed demographic information on the neighborhoods in which they worked in order to help them focus their work effectively. They met with faith-based organizations and other ground-level groups, spoke with people on the street, and ultimately made hundreds of presentations and participated in more than 1,400 community events. In fall of 2016, IDNYC also partnered with City Council and State Assembly members to engage small business owners by walking door to door to businesses in their districts to promote IDNYC. An information hotline run by the Hispanic Federation, Linea Informativa, generated more than 4,000 calls in a 3-week span. Currently, IDNYC has ongoing communication through its website and different social media formats, including Facebook and Twitter, and has launched an email newsletter.

IDNYC also incorporated more traditional marketing strategies. IDNYC ads were displayed in a range of languages and in a range of media, including many in ethnic media and newspapers printed in languages other than English. The ads were designed to communicate both the message of inclusiveness as well as the tangible benefits of becoming an IDNYC cardholder, and the campaign's designers won a national advertising award for their work creating identifiable images. When asked how they heard about IDNYC, many focus group respondents cited television ads or news programs, through community organizations, and through newspapers ads. A smaller number reported hearing about the program via subway ads, flyers, radio, churches, and the Internet. The vast range of ways that even a relatively small group of New Yorkers learned about the program demonstrates the breadth of reach of the media campaign as well as the importance of support from partnering CBOs.

They did an amazing job in media, on the subway, buses, with very accessible ads with people of all backgrounds, different stories and it really grabs you.

-CBO focused on homelessness

I remember the discussion happening in the news about how they were trying to approve it by the City Council. So, that's how I found out about it, then I did research about finding a place to get it, to apply for it. So it was in the media a lot, the news media.

-English speaking cardholder who is transgender

How I heard about it, it was actually advertised in the paper. And then I think I saw a TV commercial, and my supervisor [at the Center], he told me about it. So I'm not sure which came first, but all three realms I heard about it. And then after that I went to the library, and they advertised there, so it was all over the place!

-English speaking cardholder experiencing homelessness

Every time something is launched, there is stuff to learn. I think they weren't ready at first, but it was corrected quickly after the backlash. I like that they didn't wait until the next fiscal year to provide more resources and expansion and to fix things. The City Council and people behind it were able to respond to demand.

-CBO focused on immigrants

The City did a good job handling the back up quickly, and expanding the number of sites. Now, people can basically make an appointment same day or next day. The initial backup was good from a strategic standpoint because it showed demand, even though it was a little frustrating from the client side.

-CBO focused on youth

**The New York Times** | <http://nyti.ms/1xW9aPV>

N.Y. / REGION

## New York City's ID Card Program Draws a Large Response

By **MATT FLEGENHEIMER** JAN. 12, 2015

### 5. The City's response to unanticipated demand was immediate and substantial

During the first months of the program, the overwhelming demand for the card could have doomed its success if the City had not acted extremely quickly and with an appropriate level of urgency. The City responded by adding more workstations to existing enrollment centers; extending the hours of operation; improving the technology; opening new large scale enrollment hubs; and opening dozens of pop-up centers in diverse community locations such as libraries, churches, offices of elected officials, CBOs, schools, and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene health centers and clinics. These efforts resulted in substantially increased capacity and reductions in wait times. Equally as important, this rapid response demonstrated to New Yorkers that the City was serious about this program and instilled a sense of confidence that encouraged people to apply. These efforts did not go unnoticed by cardholders and the organizations serving these populations; participants commonly mentioned the response from the City in the context of describing how "it used to be" difficult to get the card, but that it is not anymore.



## 6. The IDNYC program included provisions for several particularly vulnerable populations

The largest vulnerable population served by IDNYC are the estimated 500,000 or more undocumented immigrants in New York.<sup>4</sup> There are at least two other groups that are marginalized and subject to victimization. First, immigrants who are also LGBTQ experience the same challenges as other immigrants, but with an additional layer of oppression due to their sexual orientation. If deported, some individuals who are LGBTQ could face persecution and even legal consequences for their gender in their home countries. By including the option to self-identify gender and by allowing for a wider range of acceptable documents, IDNYC at least provides one tangible form of security for this population, whether immigrant or born in the U.S.

Second, IDNYC includes a provision for individuals who are homeless or survivors of domestic violence to register using a “care-of” address, or, for survivors of domestic violence, by using a state-run P.O. Box that does not reveal their location. Approximately 2,000 cards have been issued using a “care-of” address, and while this is a fraction of the overall enrollment, it is another way in which the City designed the card with consideration of all residents.



*The option to self-identify gender was strongly supported by the LGBTQ community.*

<sup>4</sup>Source: NYC CEO unpublished data, 2014

Many LGBT immigrants are traumatized in the country of origin. Many settle in communities where trauma is replicated, and they're again seen as an outsider. This is even more so if they are transgender or gender nonconforming. As immigrants, they often don't have access to identity documents, so we wanted a threshold that was low enough to meet their needs.

-CBO focused on LGBTQ community

You always hear about all of the good things that the card provides, but people do need to know the limitations on the card, too.

-English speaking cardholder experiencing homelessness

Once they get rejected from one place, then they assume it won't be accepted. Word of mouth is really important, so if one person tells them that they had a bad experience, then they won't even try it. The city should continue with these programs and there will be more benefits, but there has to be a good communication.

-CBO focused on immigrants

## How Could the IDNYC Program Be Improved?

Any new program, and especially a program implemented on the scale of IDNYC, is likely to experience some challenges. While the majority of study participants emphasized the many positive aspects of the program, they also provide important input on ways IDNYC can be strengthened. Below we describe six potential areas for improvement.

### 1. Additional work is needed to clarify how the card can be used

Through our focus groups, we encountered a surprising number of cardholders who did not know what the ID was for. They had been swept up in the excitement of the new program and had enrolled at the encouragement of organizations and friends, but were unsure what to do with the card. Some comments demonstrated a basic lack of understanding of how the card was different from a New York State ID, and whether having an IDNYC would invalidate either a state ID or a driver's license. Other focus group participants were aware that the card was intended as identification, yet were not always clear in what situations it would work, such as whether it could be used to fly and buy alcohol, and believing that it could not be used to enter federal buildings. Many participants were unaware that there were discounts and memberships available. And finally, some participants were aware of the additional benefits but were confused about the details, for example, believing that the card would expire after a year, and not understanding that grocery discounts could only be obtained between 7 am and 7 pm on weekdays. Many cardholders reported trying to use the card in ways it was not intended, and then became dissatisfied. These areas of confusion appeared to be more common among immigrants and seniors than other groups, so targeting CBOs that serve these communities could be an important strategy to improve general understanding of card use among cardholders. For newly enrolling cardholders, more creative ways of conveying information could be considered, such as videos and use of infographics at enrollment centers. Such materials could also be distributed to the CBOs.

A related issue that arose from the focus group discussions is that through participating in IDNYC, many people are placing trust in the government in a way that they may never have before. Undocumented immigrants in particular are truly coming “out of the shadows.” This makes them especially sensitive to any discrepancies between the program as it is described and what they receive. Cardholders were quick to cast doubt on the entire program if a benefit did not occur the way they thought it would. This was most pronounced with the banks, but was also true if the card didn’t “work” in other situations. Some of these situations may not have been legitimate uses of the card, but because cardholders did not always understand the program’s finer points, their perception was simply that the entire program was suspect.

Even for less vulnerable populations, getting the card is seen as a type of social contract with the City, and ill will can be generated when the card doesn’t meet expectations. This was frequently the case with museum memberships. Even many New Yorkers fully fluent in English missed the fine print that memberships at some museums and botanical gardens would provide a different level of membership through the IDNYC card, for example, restricting access to certain exhibits. While this was a decision made by the museums, the resulting frustration was often directed at the City, for what was perceived to be false advertising.

Another source of frustration is that some cardholders did not receive the cultural institution memberships they expected to get. Before it was announced that the card would continue to be free in 2016, many cardholders rushed to enroll before the end of 2015. As comments from survey respondents and interviews with the cultural institutions show, there is variability in eligibility for museum memberships. Approximately half are available only to IDNYC cardholders who apply for membership during the same calendar year in which their IDNYC was issued. In early 2016, some of these cultural institutions granted 2015 cardholders a grace period in which to apply for membership. As previously discussed, attracting U.S.-born New Yorkers, many of whom enrolled for the cultural institution membership benefits, is a crucial strategy in keeping the card stigma-free. The City may want to issue an explanation of this policy in order to maintain the good will of cardholders who enrolled exclusively to access museum memberships.

The thing that is still concerning to people is access to benefits. I acknowledge that it was a huge undertaking in terms of getting the partners for the benefits for the city. But I think that it is difficult for families to navigate, especially for institutions that require you to register online, especially if they don’t have access to technology or the Internet. So there have been families that are having trouble getting access to the benefits. We also lose part of our credibility when we push for something and it doesn’t work out the way that everyone was expecting it.

-CBO focused on immigrants

You have to register at the museum when you arrive. It’s an extra step that if you don’t speak English or aren’t familiar with the museum, you simply don’t know that you have to do it and you aren’t granted admission. So you’ve gone all the way to the museum and you can’t get in.

-Spanish speaking immigrant

A lot of our community members don't have email, but for those who do have email, they were concerned that they weren't getting updated via email - they want to receive updates about the card and the benefits. Some don't have email and computers, but they can get emails on their phones and use texting a lot, so they would actually really like to get information that way.

-CBO focused on immigrants

Our population has low literacy and what IDNYC publishes is tough for them to understand. We boiled down the information and picked out the things that we thought would be most important for them to have. I would like to be an ongoing pop-up site and do this one day every week so that we could work with them and help them prepare.

-CBO focused on immigrants

## 2. Additional specific guidance is needed for cardholders about banking and museum memberships

As previously noted, most focus group participants did not realize that the card would only be accepted at certain banks and credit unions, and tried to open accounts at several large national banks. It appears that many cardholders, once turned away from these major banks, assumed that the card would not work at any bank. The City has already begun to address this by distributing a banking brochure to all new customers. For existing cardholders, more direct communication, including in-person discussions through CBOs, may be an effective way to correct this misconception and to use word of mouth to spread correct information.

Similarly, there was confusion about the free museum memberships. Many cardholders thought that they could just show the IDNYC card to gain access, and didn't realize that they had to sign up for memberships to each institution individually. The variability in this process also confused people; for most memberships, in-person registration was required, but not for all. For a membership at any zoo, cardholders sign up at the Bronx Zoo, but the botanical gardens each have individual, in-person sign-up processes. Many institutions issue actual cards, but some can use IDNYC after an online sign-up. Among the cardholders who knew or had discovered the need to initiate memberships to the museums separately, this logistic hassle was viewed very negatively. In addition, the "1 year membership" to museums was sometimes misunderstood to mean that the IDNYC card itself was valid for only 1 year.

All these points of confusion suggest the need for a communication strategy that both acknowledges the burden on cardholders, and explains the reasons it was necessary. In addition, it could be helpful to survey and obtain all the membership parameters from participating cultural institutions to provide at the time that cards are mailed. Lastly, given that museums themselves also noted the logistic challenges of handling the memberships, a mechanism to centralize some aspect of this process (at least for some institutions) may be welcomed by the institutions and cardholders alike.

### 3. Establish mechanisms for ongoing communication with cardholders

Both focus group participants and survey respondents pointed out that once they had received their IDNYC card they had received no further communication from the City. This placed the onus on the cardholder to stay updated about changes to the card, and since some don't have access to computers or face language barriers, they felt at a loss. While the program has begun an email newsletter and has always been active on social media, focus group participants were unaware of this. When asked, focus group participants seemed to prefer social media and getting their information through the CBOs best. For CBOs, the website may be a primary form of communication but for cardholders, it may be viewed as a "bonus" method of communication rather than one that is relied upon for updates.

### 4. Additional work is needed to dispel myths about risks of getting IDNYC

As described in the Introduction and Background Section, the IDNYC team partnered with CBOs to address concerns about how personal data would be protected. In spite of considerable efforts to publicize the security measures in place, the single greatest reason people hesitated to get the ID was related to concerns that it was being used to monitor New Yorkers. This was particularly reported by immigrant participants in focus groups, but was raised even in non-immigrant focus groups and among survey respondents born in the U.S. The pervasiveness of these beliefs may dissipate over time—assuming that there is no misuse of data—but in the interim, it is possible that a considerable number of undocumented immigrants may not be enrolling because of this fear. Direct dialogue with the CBOs about this issue could generate a more effective communication plan that can be incorporated in upcoming recruitment materials. It is important that CBOs trust the City, since they will ultimately be the best mechanism to convince their clients. To this end, transparency from the City about plans for the stored data is essential.

The rumors were, like, if you apply for this, you will be taken away. And your other ID would be taken away from you. And then they were saying that there is a \$500 fine if you apply for this.

-Arabic speaking immigrant

I have friends who told me, 'Oh, be careful, because this is just for control. It's just for the City to control the illegal immigrants.'

-Spanish speaking cardholder who is LGBT

I feel that the undocumented folks are the ones that benefit the most about this. But also, when a lot of people heard this ID was coming out, they thought it was a trick of the government, in order for them to be able to know how many people are undocumented. And because of this reason, because they're scared of the government finding out that they're undocumented, that's why a lot of people don't have the ID.

-Spanish speaking immigrant

A lot of our families are doubled up so don't have a lease and they can't prove their residence, so that has been difficult. If they are doubled up they really can't get on the lease or utilities in their names. We could get letters from schools, but sometimes they aren't accepted.

-CBO focused on immigrants

Many of the youth we work with are homeless and estranged from their families. Many of them don't have addresses or any documents. A lot of the young people here, may only have just one document. Here, we can only do so much. I was hoping it would be easier.

-CBO focused on youth

If they're going to offer a discount in a supermarket, or wherever, everyone who works there should be informed, because then everyone would get the discount and not just some people.

-Spanish speaking immigrant

It should be accepted everywhere, if it's an ID from New York.

-Spanish speaking immigrant

## 5. Continue discussions regarding acceptable documentation of residency for individuals experiencing homelessness

Among CBOs working with individuals who are homeless, frustration remains regarding the challenges specific to this population. CBOs who work with homeless (and the “very, very poor”) noted that street homeless often have minimal to no documentation, so in many cases, they can't obtain the card at all, must get a card with no address, or must try to obtain a card with “care-of” address. There was particular confusion among cardholders and CBOs about whether police will accept cards with a “care-of” address or not. Cards that do not display a residential address may not be accepted for purposes of issuing a summons in lieu of arrest. There is a need for additional dialogue about the residency requirements related to individuals experiencing homelessness. In fact, there is growing frustration that the needs of homeless individuals are not truly being met through IDNYC, and the City may want to reengage with some of these CBOs in particular.

## 6. Focus on more consistent acceptance of the card

When asked how the IDNYC program could be improved, cardholders very commonly mentioned that it needed to be more widely accepted. Leaving aside the necessary limits with respect to using the card for certain activities, it appears that there are also many inconsistencies where the card is accepted. For example, we heard people say they both could and could not use it at post offices, schools, or hospitals; for Western Union; and to make purchases, among other places. The City could focus some effort on working through different membership organizations to better publicize the card and ensure acceptance among businesses as well as emphasize the importance of training all staff to be familiar with any guidelines, such as which days and times the card is accepted at grocery stores. For agencies affiliated with the City in particular, this information should be relatively straightforward to provide.



*This [is] the largest and most successful program of its kind benefiting all New Yorkers as they access programs, services, and cultural institutions. Identification will no longer be a privilege for New Yorkers – a momentous step for the many communities that have historically felt disconnected from the City they call home.*

*-City Council Member Carlos Menchaca*

# CONCLUSION



# IDNYC is the right answer to a problem with an extremely high need.

— CBO focused on immigrants

By the most fundamental marker—number of New Yorkers enrolled—IDNYC was a success almost immediately. The 863,464 New Yorkers who have become cardholders in the first year and a half of the program reflects the remarkable degree to which IDNYC has become mainstream, something that is just as likely to be found in the wallet of a young professional as in the purse of a 50-year-old undocumented immigrant. The demographic characteristics of those who have been issued cards, as described in the Background section of this report, is reflective of the diversity of New York City itself. Cardholders are as young as 14 and older than 100, they speak more than 150 languages, and live throughout the City.

As we have described in this report, IDNYC has also been a success in how it is being used. A sizeable number of cardholders—half, according to our survey—now use IDNYC as their primary ID, and a quarter of survey respondents reported that IDNYC is their only form of photo identification. For this population, the card is a necessity, and opens the door to the many benefits of living in the City.

Cardholders are using IDNYC primarily as a form of identification, gaining access to buildings, conducting financial transactions, and using it during encounters with the NYPD. Cardholders are also accessing a wide array of discounts, for groceries, prescriptions, and for movies and other entertainment. Importantly, a sizeable number of New Yorkers of all ages and backgrounds have obtained memberships to 40 museums, zoos, and botanical gardens. Beyond these tangible benefits of the card, one of the key successes of the IDNYC program is the impact that it has made people safer and more connected to the City, a feeling that was particularly reported among immigrants.

The program has not been without its challenges. The most significant roadblock in implementation has come from certain financial institutions, which have not agreed to accept IDNYC as a primary form of identification to open an account. The City has worked steadily through several mechanisms to address this issue, and it is possible that some movement will be seen in this area in 2016 and beyond.

The IDNYC program was launched just months after President Obama's 2014 executive actions on immigration reform. Coming on the heels of this powerful action at the federal level, IDNYC served as a concrete way for New York City to demonstrate its commitment to inclusiveness. Two years later, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a nationwide injunction indefinitely delaying implementation of Obama's executive actions and the country has a presidential candidate who has suggested greater surveillance of immigrants is needed. North Carolina and other states have introduced laws that explicitly target the rights of transgender individuals, and several major cities have experienced a string of murders of individuals who are homeless.

This report on implementation and early outcomes suggests that IDNYC can serve as a strong model for municipal ID programs nationwide. Against a current national backdrop of hostility and challenges for a range of communities across the country, the first year and a half of the IDNYC program demonstrates that cities can lead the way in supporting and welcoming immigrants, the transgender and GNC, the homeless, and all of their residents.



*Flanked by community members and IDNYC supporters, Mayor de Blasio signs Local Law 35 into effect.*

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## Community Organizations

- African Communities Together
- Arab American Association of New York (AAANY)
- Arab-American Family Support Center
- Archdiocese of NY
- Asian American Federation
- BronxWorks
- Brooklyn Community Pride Center
- CAMBA
- Care for the Homeless
- Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens
- The Center for Popular Democracy
- Chhaya CDC
- Coalition for the Homeless
- Educational Alliance
- El Centro del Inmigrante
- Faith in New York
- GMHC
- Goddard Riverside Community Center
- Good Shepherd Services
- Goodwill NYNJ
- Grand St. Settlement
- Hispanic Federation
- The Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc.
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
- LSA Family Health Service
- Make the Road New York
- Manhattan Together

- Masa
- Mekong NYC
- New Economy Project
- New York Immigration Coalition
- New York Legal Assistance Group
- Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow
- Picture the Homeless
- Project Hospitality
- Queer Detainee Empowerment Project
- Sauti Yetu
- St. Jerome's H.A.N.D.S Community Center
- Sunnyside Community Services
- Sylvia Rivera Law Project
- The Door
- University Settlement
- Urban Justice Center
- VOCAL-NY

## Partners

- Amalgamated Bank
- Brooklyn Botanic Garden
- Brooklyn Coop
- Brooklyn Public Library
- El Museo del Barrio
- Museum of Modern Art
- New Museum
- New York City Police Department
- Queens Botanical Garden
- Spring Bank

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**NOTES**

## Study Methods

The IDNYC program evaluation took a mixed-methods approach to examine the implementation and early outcomes of the program. Primary data collection took place through three methods, supplemented by administrative data provided by HRA. The evaluation was independently designed and conducted by Westat and Metis, with consultation with representatives from Center for Economic Opportunity and Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

### Cardholder Focus Groups

Westat/Metis researchers conducted 39 focus groups with a total of 244 IDNYC cardholders over a 3-month period spanning from March 2016 through June 2016. Groups were conducted in collaboration with 28 community-based organizations (CBOs), located in all five boroughs. Participants were recruited from five populations of particular focus of IDNYC: immigrants (documented and undocumented); individuals experiencing homelessness and those lacking stable housing; seniors; youth (ages 18 – 24; individuals under age 18 were not included in focus groups), and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals (particularly those who are transgender). Staff at each organization helped recruit cardholders from among their clients, and in some cases, also provided translation support.

All consent forms and protocols were reviewed by both the Metis Associates and the Westat Institutional Review Boards, and all participants signed consent forms prior to participation. Consent forms were translated into Spanish and read aloud by translators in other languages as necessary.

Focus groups were recorded, with written permission of participants, and then transcribed verbatim. Following each focus group, participants were asked to anonymously complete a demographic questionnaire in order to verify the representativeness of the groups. At the close of each focus group, participants were given the opportunity to be contacted if they were interested in being considered for a follow-up interview. Participants were told that not all of those submitting their contact information would be interviewed. In appreciation for their participation, focus group participants received a \$20 gift card.

## Interviews

Individual phone interviews were conducted with three groups: 1) cardholders identified through the focus groups; 2) CBO staff working with one of the five focus populations; and 3) banks, museums, and other program partners. A total of 18 interviews were conducted with cardholders, 29 interviews were conducted with CBO staff, and 11 interviews were conducted with program partners. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Cardholder interviews focused on understanding more about the way in which the respondent had used the card and what value they saw, as well as how they believed it could be improved. CBO interviews covered a range of topics about the role played by the CBO, perceptions of the card and its use, and suggestions for improvement. Interviews with partners focused on how participation in the program had impacted their regular operations, and suggestions for program improvement.

## IDNYC Cardholder Survey

The IDNYC Cardholder Survey was developed with input from several City offices. We used multiple rounds of cognitive testing to ensure that questions and response options were being correctly interpreted by potential respondents, and to modify where needed. It was also tested through an anonymous pilot with 300 cardholders selected to represent the demographic population of IDNYC applicants. The survey was web-based, and available in English and six additional languages (Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Russian, Korean, Bengali, and Haitian Creole). Survey translation was provided by MOIA and verified at multiple stages of development.

The IDNYC Cardholder Survey was released by the City to all cardholders enrolled in the program through April 30, 2016 who had a valid email address and were subscribed to the IDNYC mailing list, a total of 493,777 individuals. The survey was available for a period of 3 weeks, and received a total of 77,637 valid responses for a final response rate of 15.7 percent. Survey completion was completely anonymous.



For analysis purposes, the groups of Immigrants, Youth, Senior and Transgender or Gender Nonconforming (GNC) were created from the survey respondent data as follows:

- **Immigrants** are any individual who indicated on the survey that they have not lived in the United States their entire life;
- **Youth** are respondents between the age of 14-24;
- **Seniors** are individuals who are 65 or older; and
- **Transgender or GNC** is based on a response of one or more of the categories of transgender, gender nonconforming, or other gender, irrespective of any other gender selected.

Because cardholders who completed the survey may differ in important ways from IDNYC cardholders at large, we examined how our survey respondents compare to the entire population of cardholders on available demographic characteristics (gender, age, language preference, and borough of residence).

- **Gender:** Women are overrepresented in the survey, constituting 63 percent of survey respondents compared to 57 percent of cardholders.
- **Age:** Survey respondents in the age bracket of 25-44 years are slightly overrepresented (53 percent of respondents compared to 47 percent of cardholders). There is a slight underrepresentation of survey respondents among 14-17, 65-74 and 75+ year olds.
- **Language:** There are fewer Spanish-speaking survey respondents (16 percent of total) than there are Spanish-speaking cardholders (21 percent of the total). For most other populations who reported a language preference other than English, there is a slight overrepresentation of respondents as compared to the population, but most of these populations are extremely small.
- **Borough:** There is underrepresentation of cardholders from the Bronx (13 percent compared to 18 percent); and overrepresentation of survey respondents from Manhattan (27 percent compared to 20 percent).

## Study Limitations

As with any study, this study has a number of considerations that must be acknowledged. First, responses from survey participants should not be generalized to cardholders as a whole. The response rate of approximately 16 percent is typical for an anonymous survey of this nature, but we cannot definitively identify how survey respondents may differ from both individuals who did not provide an email address at enrollment (and were therefore not included in the survey sample) and from the universe of all IDNYC cardholders.

Focus group participants were recruited by the CBOs and actively consented to be in the study. Focus group data is not intended to be representative of the larger population; rather, their views are intended to provide insight on the particular topics addressed. In addition, the focus groups consisted primarily of individuals who had enrolled in the program. While some participants did not have an IDNYC card, we did not specifically recruit individuals who had attempted to enroll and were not able to do so.

It is also important to note that the information presented in this report describes a specific snapshot in time, and since data collection has ended, the City has continued to make program improvements to the program including in some areas suggested by these findings. It is hoped that future research will continue to document the implementation and impact of this important program as it evolves over time.



