

Packer Collegiate Institute
Cities at the Vanguard: Migration and the Metropolis
New York City
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Governance:

Any U.S. citizen regardless of socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, or religion are eligible to run for office. Traditionally, members of the lower class and minorities have not had as large of a voice in elected office, however their votes towards a representative are weighted equally with those of other citizens. In order to win an election, a candidate needs to be able to project their voice out into the public and garner public attention. This part of the election process requires a lot of money which is why those of lower classes usually have a harder time winning elections. However, it is possible for people of lower class to win. A prime example is Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. AOC came from a migrant family and worked as a bartender before she won her election to become a congresswoman. Overall, while the majority of political representation within in the United States rests with the upper class, the path to victory is the same for everyone.

New York City mainly counters the federal government's stance on immigration mainly because of the government's marginalization of groups. This is why New York has created our own policy towards harboring undocumented immigrants and protecting the people and families living in New York. Along with disobeying the federal laws that the Trump administration has put in place, we also have several lawsuits pertaining to migrants that address the issues of deportation and affordable social services for migrants that would be funded by the federal government.

New York City ultimately wants to collaborate with civil society to protect immigrants, however, we will not succumb to outside force in the name of protecting its citizens. New York City has legal restrictions that prohibit ICE from fully functioning in this city and has ample legislation to protect migrants within the city. If a person is a victim or witness of a crime and approaches a police officer, it is illegal for them to inquire about your immigration status. New York City's government has the ability to prohibit the involvement of ICE in most circumstances. The NYPD and the DOC (Department of Correction) will only adhere to ICE if "ICE presents a warrant issued by a federal judge establishing that there is probable cause to take the person into custody and if a person has been convicted of a "violent or serious crime" within five years of the arrest or is a possible match on the terrorist watch list." Other ways in which we protect citizens within New York is by not allowing police officers to inquire about immigration status if a person is a victim or witness of a crime.

Along with protecting migrants' civil rights, New York City does a lot to integrate immigrants into New York City's economy and provide them with opportunities. Migrants within New York City are given IDNYC cards which allow for them to open bank accounts in

their own names and manage their financial portfolios. New York City migrants, who have immigrated legally, are also permitted to have green cards and other types of visas which allow for them to stay within the country for a certain amount of time without being considered an illegal immigrant.

Urban Planning

New York City has been named a “City of Immigrants” and a “melting pot” due to its large immigrant population and intermix of cultures, races, and religions. Like many cities across America, New York City is a Sanctuary city. Sanctuary cities positively affect the city’s economy, limit crime, and improve the health of immigrants. Normally, in Sanctuary cities, the local government limits their cooperation with the federal immigration authorities in order to protect illegal immigrants from deportation. President Trump’s hostile attitude toward immigrants is not the first instance of racism toward immigrants; the United States has a long history of discrimination imposed by the United States government, the American public, and within public and private institutions. New York City today stands in opposition to all forms of institutional and cultural violence and discrimination. In addition, New York City is instituting public welfare programs for immigrants with the ideology that safety and access to medical care is a human right.

The City of New York is divided into 5 boroughs and is home to a total population of 8.6 million.¹ Of that total population, 3.1 million are foreign born.² Although New York City neighborhoods are typically diverse, there are diasporas of foreign-born people throughout the five boroughs. Staten Island has the lowest percentage of foreign born people per neighborhood primarily due to its conservative communities, while Queens has the highest percentage.³ On account of its generally high cost of living and expensive real estate, Manhattan also has a low percentage of foreign born population.⁴ This results in high concentrations and larger populations of foreign born people in Harlem (upper Manhattan), Queens, Brooklyn and parts of the Bronx.

Immigrant Distribution in NYC⁵

Borough	Population of Immigrations	Density of Immigrants per Square mile
Queens	1,100,000	20,553.6
Brooklyn	970,000	35,369

¹Barron, James. “New York City's Population Hits a Record 8.6 Million.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 22 Mar. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/03/22/nyregion/new-york-city-population.html.

² “State of Our Immigrant City Annual Report March 2018.” *NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs*, Mar. 2018, https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/moia_annual_report_2018_final.pdf.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

Bronx	501,000	32,903.6
Manhattan	460,000	69,467.5
Staten Island	101,000	8,083.3

New York City immigrants live in both private and public housing with 32% of black and hispanic immigrants (Highest country of origin being Dominican Republic and Jamaica) living in public housing and 22% of all immigrants residing in overcrowded households.⁶ To qualify for public housing, immigrants must have citizenship, be considered political refugees or asylees, or must be granted special permission by the U.S. Attorney General.⁷ Therefore, illegal immigrants can not be granted public housing. To prevent immigrants, legal or illegal, from being denied public or private housing, the mayor's office has been working with the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to improve the process of granting asylum and approving shelter requests and to combat tenant harassment.⁸

New York City's housing availability has not kept up with its surging population; the high rate of residential construction during past decade has not come close to meeting the needs of the growing population. In addition, few of the new housing units are affordable to low- or moderate-income households. Over 50% of the housed immigrant population spend more than half of their income on rent.⁹ Due to eligibility restraints on public housing, and a low income, 70% of surveyed immigrant renters said that they or someone they knew lived in substandard conditions.¹⁰ The mayor's office will work with federal, state, and city governments to implement a rent-stabilization model to provide immigrants with affordable housing. However, New York does not plan to create new infrastructure.

New York City can proudly say that, with the help of NGOs in the city, migrants will continue to be able to access a broad array of social welfare programs. Some key programs include: health programs such as the ActionHealthNYC pilot project and language programs such as We are New York (WANY).

Being one of the world's most populous megacities, and having the highest gross metropolitan product (GMP) in the world, New York City has incredible infrastructure and resources which are already and will continue to be available to immigrants. Immigrants are able to travel easily throughout the City on our vast network of public transportation which spans all five boroughs to the edge of the City. For a reasonable fare of \$2.75, immigrants, like every other New Yorker, can ride the subway, bus, ferry, or the tram. Taxis, although more expensive, are also an alternative form of transportation. On a different note, all homes in New York City are connected to the power grid and electricity, and all homes have irrigation systems. On the street, there are also public drinking fountains and now there are publicly funded charging stations for mobile devices. By 2020 NYC aims to have charging stations dispersed throughout

⁶Ibid; "Confronting the Housing Squeeze: Challenges Facing Immigrant Tenants, and What New York Can Do." *Pratt Center for Community Development, with the New York Immigrant Housing Collaborative*, Feb. 2008, https://prattcenter.net/sites/default/files/confronting_the_housing_squeeze.pdf.

⁷"Low Income Apartments in New York." *Affordable Housing Online*, Affordable Housing Online, <https://affordablehousingonline.com/guide/housing-for-immigrants/eligible-noncitizens>.

⁸"State of Our Immigrant City Annual Report March 2018."

⁹"Confronting the Housing Squeeze."

¹⁰Ibid.

the five boroughs, not just in business districts of Manhattan Brooklyn. All people in New York City have the right to connect to a free and unmonitored internet. Access to internet can aid in the job search, communicating with others and researching schools, among other things. Right now there are many places with free wifi in the city, and the transportation system is starting to put wifi in the stations.

In summation, the Mayor's Office of New York City stands in solidarity with immigrants seeking a better life in our city. We do not completely agree with some of the beliefs held by the Trump administration, but we must work under the parameters laid out by our federal government, regardless of our sanctuary city status. While we do support the immigrants, due to preexisting problems and a need for necessary repair to existing infrastructure and programs, providing immigrants with housing and accommodation for all of their needs is just something we do not have the resources for and will not focus on.

Health:

Starting summer of 2019, we will be launching a system that provides healthcare to anyone in New York City, regardless of immigration status. Mayor Bill de Blasio views healthcare as a “human right,” and vows that in NYC, “[He’s] going to make that a reality.”¹¹ Around 8 million NYC residents are covered by some form of private health insurance, most often from the company at which they work, and another half a million residents are covered by the city’s existing public health insurance plan, called MetroPlus. MetroPlus provides free or affordable insurance to people on Medicaid, Medicare, or who purchase private insurance separately from workplace insurance. However, around half of the 600,000 New Yorkers who go uninsured are undocumented immigrants who are not eligible for any of the healthcare options. Our plan called NYC Care will connect anyone in the city with comprehensive care across all NYC Health and Hospitals’ locations. Applying for health insurance will not affect an immigrant’s status or application for status. Their immigration status will not be shared with federal immigration authorities.¹² De Blasio says he will not be raising taxes to pay for these plans, but will direct at least \$100 million of the city’s yearly budget to the city’s hospital system to support care for those without insurance.¹³

Mental health is a pressing issue, and one that the city of New York takes seriously. Currently, New York State has the Office of Mental Health that serves 700,000 individuals each year, offering free online therapy (both mental and physical) services and other services to help New York citizens. We do not believe these services will need to be expanded to match the influx of immigrants because our database guides people to other local services and we have enough resources in house already to withstand more people calling for the free services that we offer.¹⁴

The City of New York has advanced sewer systems in place that are constantly monitored by the board of sanitation. Our systems have been evolving since 1881 to make New York

¹¹<https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/01/de-blasio-new-york-city-health-care-plan-universal-coverage/579787/>

¹²<https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/01/de-blasio-new-york-city-health-care-plan-universal-coverage/579787/>

¹³<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/08/nyregion/de-blasio-health-care-plan.html>

¹⁴<https://www.omh.ny.gov/>

cleaner and have running water available to all New Yorkers. In addition, some of the services that the department of sanitation covers are waste disposal and collection (trash, recyclables, food waste, clothing, electronics, and other harmful products), street cleaning, litter removal, notices and signage, and snow response. The majority of New Yorkers have indoor plumbing, as it is a legal requirement of building codes. However, those living in illegal forms of housing, which includes immigrants, may not have the same standard of plumbing.¹⁵ Some of the problems we face as a growing population, however, is the influx of water in an already overflowing system (especially during storm surges), the ability to support the growing population in terms of trash collection, and the increasing amount of non-renewable waste (with the increasing population of New York) and its effect on the environment.

We are the first major city in the United States to set nutritional standards for all foods purchased or served by the city, aiming to improve the health of all New Yorkers.¹⁶ Our nutritional standards were enacted in September of 2008 and we have since revised them in both 2011 and 2015.¹⁷ Per year, 250 million meals and snacks are served in public institutions like schools, senior centers, correctional facilities, hospitals, and parks, and we are trying to better the health of those who eat in such places by means of serving healthier beverages (such as skim or 1% milk and water as opposed to sodas and drinks alike), including two servings of fruit and vegetables in both lunch and dinner, reducing and eliminating deep frying, and lowering the salt contents in various foods to increase the amount of fiber in meals.¹⁸ While these standards were created solely for public New York City institutions, we strongly suggest to implement these nutritional standards in other institutions. We have other food standards in areas such as vending machines: see document footnoted.¹⁹ We have also suggested the importance of procuring food resources produced and/or harvested in the state of New York to ensure a variety of health and fresh foods.²⁰

For 50 years and counting, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), essentially food stamps, has helped Americans simultaneously avoid hunger as well as have access to healthy and nutritious food.²¹ This is done to promote better health outcomes and alleviate some of the consequences regarding food in poverty, and provides benefits to more than 44 million low-income U.S. residents at a cost of around \$70 billion for the fiscal year 2015.²² However, this is not to say that not every resident of our nation has access to these food safety programs; many are even unaware of their existence, making it impossible to join these

¹⁵ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/home>

¹⁶ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/initiatives/procurement.page>

¹⁷ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/initiatives/procurement.page>

¹⁸ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/initiatives/procurement.page>

¹⁹ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cardio/cardio-vending-machines-standards.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mocs/downloads/pdf/epp/New%20York%20State%20Food%20Purchasing%20Guidelines%203.pdf>

²¹ <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2018/07/30/food-insecurity-among-the-immigrant-population-of-nyc/>

²² <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2018/07/30/food-insecurity-among-the-immigrant-population-of-nyc/>;
<http://www.cunyrurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access>

programs, and others face obstacles regarding the enrollment to these programs.²³ Among those who face this predicament are immigrants. In 2013, our immigrant population reached a peak of more than 3 million; immigrants make up 37% of our city's population and 43% of immigrants are in our workforce.²⁴ Although the population of immigrants in our city is large, 10% of immigrants throughout face food insecurity, meaning they have inadequate access to food.²⁵ In 2006, a report showed that around 180,000 immigrants were not enrolled for, but eligible for, SNAP. (See image below for details on eligibility for SNAP). This suggests that our city needs to do a better job of promoting SNAP for immigrants who are not aware of the program. To do so, we should create more Policies and Laws on Immigrants Access to Food Benefits, Create Immigrant Knowledge, Values, and Beliefs about Food Benefits, and Organize Practices of Immigrant Food Security Groups.²⁶ Ideas presented by the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute regarding the possible changes in regulations and policy regarding immigrants' access to food are shown below:²⁷

1. Remove requirement for social security number on the School Food form
2. Improve data sharing among city and state agencies (with proper confidentiality protections) to facilitate enrollment in multiple benefit programs for which recipients are eligible, and create new eligibility systems as New York City and State restructure and modernize public benefits delivery systems[i]
3. Establish policies and practices at city and state agencies that can enroll applicants in multiple programs for which they are eligible at the same time (e.g., Single Stop programs)
4. Develop strategies to minimize adverse impact of higher minimum wage on eligibility for food benefits
5. Ensure that a percentage of caseworkers in Human Resources Administration (HRA) offices speak the same language as the populations they assist[ii]
6. Deliver extra and continuing training on immigrant eligibility rules for HRA caseworkers[iii]
7. Facilitate naturalization procedures to enable more immigrants to pursue this route. One study found that easing naturalization would reduce SNAP expenditures because naturalization opens up financial and market opportunities for the self-employed that have a large impact on earnings.[iv]

POSSIBLE CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

²³<http://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access>

²⁴<http://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access>

²⁵<http://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access>

²⁶<http://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access>

²⁷<http://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access>

1. Establish formal and informal partnerships between immigrant serving and food security organizations to exchange and disseminate best practices and to share respective expertise
2. Improve training around protected classes such as immigrant victims of domestic violence, and refugees and their eligibility to benefits
3. Ensure food benefit advocates speak two or more languages in order to make understanding the process more accessible to all people, particularly those for whom English is not the primary language
4. HRA should continue to participate in language-appropriate outreach and application assistance, including supporting collaborations with more recently arrived immigrant communities that immigrant-serving and food security organizations have not yet been able to reach.
5. Increase options for “one stop” shopping to make it easier for immigrant families (and others) to get multiple benefits in one setting.
6. Link programs and activities related to food benefits to other healthy eating initiatives in immigrant communities
7. Create a New York-based municipal and state sponsored program to provide benefits equivalent to SNAP for all immigrants not currently eligible due to immigration status

Table 1. — Guide to Immigrant Eligibility for SNAP³⁸

Immigrant Category	Eligibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawful permanent residents who do not have 40 qualifying quarters of work • Persons paroled into the U.S. for at least one year • Victims of battery or abuse • Persons 65 years of age or older who were lawfully residing in the U.S. on August 22, 1996 	<p>Eligible for SNAP after 5 years of qualified immigration status.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawful permanent residents who have 40 qualifying quarters of work • Qualified immigrant children under 18 years of age • Qualified immigrants receiving disability-related assistance or benefits • Veterans or persons on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces (and qualifying family members) • Refugees, asylees, and victims of human trafficking (and their derivative beneficiaries) • Persons with Iraqi or Afghan special immigration status • Amerasian immigrants • Cuban and Haitian entrants • Persons whose deportation has been withheld or who have been granted conditional entry • Certain Hmong or Highland Laotians entrants (and their spouses and children) • Certain American Indians born abroad 	<p>Exempt from the five-year requirement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undocumented immigrants³⁹ 	<p>Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for SNAP, but may apply on behalf of their qualifying U.S. citizen children.</p>

²⁸<http://www.cunyrurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2016/11/9/policy-brief-immigrants-and-food-access>

Social Cohesion:

In today's world, we as a global community face many challenges surrounding the smooth immigration of many people. In Europe and the United States, immigration has become a hot topic issue and there it much debate over what to do going forward. We in New York believe that we must accept these people in need of refuge. We are a nation of immigrants ourselves and must stand together to offer help to those in need. We must stand strong with our values and treat immigrants with the same respect we treat our current citizens or we are no better than those the immigrants are trying to escape. We are the land of opportunity for a reason and will continue to shine as a beacon of hope and refuge for all who arrive on our shores.

It is important that as a city we work to incorporate immigrants into our lives, not shun them for their differences. New York is a vast and diverse place with people from all over the globe calling it home. It should then be assumed that for the majority of New Yorkers, these immigrants can find a place to call their own in a community that supports them and understands their struggles.

New York has always been a city that welcomed its immigrants to an extent, as it was on the frontlines of the waves of immigrants that swept into the country from Europe and elsewhere. These waves of people looking for a new life in the land of opportunity build New York a reputation as a place to come if you were looking for a new opportunity in life. Ellis Island is just one example of New York's migrant past memorialized, as today the integral gateway to America and a new life inside.

At the moment the nation as a whole has strict laws that make it very difficult to gain entry. However, we as a city are very open to immigrants and their families coming here for a fresh start. There would be some inevitable discrimination as there would be anywhere an immigrant went; however in New York when your here you tend to blend easily and transform quickly from an immigrant in New York into a New Yorker.

New York is also attempting to create outlets online for immigrants through programs such as Tech Takes Action (TTA) which which allow for both dreamers and immigrants to find opportunities in the tech space, a quickly growing industry in New York. TTA and other programs like it foster growth in the tech industry while staying inclusive and helping many find jobs in the sector.