

New York City's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs - An Innovative Partner for Immigrants at the Local Level and Beyond

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Mayor Bill de Blasio and Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito celebrating IDNYC in 2015.

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Introduction

As cities across the country experience growth in their immigrant populations, the New York City Mayor's Office

of Immigrant Affairs shows every day that engaging in meaningful partnerships with immigrant communities, advocates, nonprofit, private sector, and philanthropic leaders, is key to our success as a city. This collaboration strengthens our ability to create innovative programming that advances immigrant inclusion, promotes access to justice, and advocates for positive reforms for immigrant communities at the national level. We envision a city in which immigrant families thrive, being an immigrant is an asset, immigrants are able to access and participate in civic life, and immigrant communities are empowered and informed about their rights, available services, and opportunities. As part of this mission, we must ensure City agencies and policymakers systematically integrate immigrant inclusion in their work, and engage a range of communities at all levels of government. This article shares our experiences and best practices in an effort to accomplish these goals, through robust partnerships with key stakeholders in the field.

New York's Immigrant Experience

New York City has a long history as a city of immigrants. Since the city's early days, New York has been a top destination for immigrants. Today, nearly 38 percent of New Yorkers are foreign-born, the highest level in a century (NYC Department of City Planning n.d.; NYC Department of City Planning 2017). At 3.2 million people, if New York City's immigrant population were a city on its

own, it would be the second largest city in the country -- only trailing NYC itself. These numbers increase substantially when factoring in the children of immigrants; together, immigrants and their children constitute approximately 60 percent of NYC's population (American Community Survey 2015). Immigrant New Yorkers contribute greatly to the city's cultural and civic life, with many immigrants and their children taking prominent roles in the arts, the restaurant and tech industries, and politics, among others. Immigrants contribute substantially to the city's economy, earning one hundred billion dollars a year (about one-third of total earned income in New York City), owning 51 percent of small businesses, and accounting for roughly half of workers in core sectors of our economy like technology, financial analysis, entertainment, and medical (NYC Comptroller 2017). The benefits of steady immigration to New York City over the last half century in the areas of civics, culture, and the economy are mirrored across the country, and highlight the importance of working with and supporting immigrants as integral members of our communities.

For decades, recognizing and celebrating the value of immigrant New Yorkers has been a priority for local government across mayoral administrations. Former Mayor Ed Koch first created the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs in 1984. At that time, the Office of Immigrant Affairs was a branch under the Department of City Planning. Former mayors David Dinkins and Rudy

Giuliani, both elevated the office to further prominence during their administrations. In 2001, the city's voters approved a referendum establishing the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs as part of the city's Charter, safeguarding the rights of immigrants to City services as the city's legal responsibility. The following year, Mayor Bloomberg appointed the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs' first commissioner. Under Mayor de Blasio's leadership, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has considerably expanded its programming and staff to more meaningfully integrate the voices and experiences of immigrants into City government.

Immigrant Inclusion

Given the central role that immigrant communities play in the vibrancy of the city, it is critically important to integrate their voices and experiences in City government, including in policymaking and program development. Through our trailblazing work with the IDNYC program, language access and immigrant workers' rights, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has reified our commitment to make New York City even more inclusive.

IDNYC

New York City's landmark municipal identification card program, IDNYC, is a prime example of how the public, nonprofit, and private sectors can come together to respond to the needs of immigrant communities. IDNYC

was developed to meet the gap of residents who did not have government-issued identification, including immigrants, homeless individuals, seniors, survivors of domestic violence, and transgender and gender non-conforming residents. Until recently, many New Yorkers lacked government-issued IDs and many immigrant New Yorkers faced a heightened challenge in obtaining IDs, as undocumented immigrants generally cannot apply for driver's licenses in the State of New York. For years, activists and organizers pushed for the creation of a municipal ID program, and during his first campaign for mayor, then-candidate Bill de Blasio vowed to sign a bill enacting a municipal ID. In July 2015, Mayor de Blasio delivered on this promise by signing into law the municipal ID program and tasking the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to take the lead in crafting the program.

IDNYC has several features that benefit immigrant communities, which has led to more than one million New Yorkers obtaining the card. First and foremost, immigration status is not a barrier to obtaining an IDNYC. To apply for IDNYC, New Yorkers age 14 and up must prove identity and residency in New York City. To establish identity and meet eligibility criteria, a variety of documents including foreign and domestic passports, driver's licenses, and a range of other ID documents can be used, often in combination (NYC Human Resources Administration/IDNYC 2017). Second, on the back of an IDNYC, each cardholder can designate their preferred

language. This is valuable not only because the city of New York recognizes its residents speak over 200 languages, but also because awareness of an individual's preferred language has important applications in emergency situations. Third, IDNYC's comprehensive security protections mean that an applicant's personal information is safe. The city respects and takes seriously that confidentiality is a major concern for New Yorkers across all backgrounds. These three features play an important role in the overwhelming demand for IDNYC since its launch in January 2015 -- by March 2017, IDNYC had more than one million cardholders. Today, roughly one in 10 eligible residents is connected to her fellow New Yorker through this common signifier of belonging.

To better understand the cardholder experience, in August 2016, the city commissioned an independent, comprehensive evaluation to obtain a better understanding of how the program was working with cardholders in the year and a half since launch. The study analyzed survey response data from more than 70,000 cardholders, as well as from focus groups and interviews (Bergman et al 2016, i). In the evaluation, 77 percent of immigrant survey respondents said that they felt a stronger connection with New York City thanks to their IDNYC (Bergman et al 2016, ii). 52 percent of respondents reported that they used IDNYC as their primary form of identification. Critically, nearly a quarter of immigrant respondents noted that it was their only form of U.S.

photo ID. This data validated the city's approach in making a municipal ID accessible and responsive to the diversity of communities we serve.

Immigrant advocate groups and community-based organizations rooted in immigrant communities have been integral to IDNYC's success. In addition to IDNYC's many permanent enrollment centers throughout the five boroughs and IDNYC's mobile enrollment center, IDNYC operates temporary "pop-up" enrollment sites. Many advocacy and service-based organizations have hosted a pop-up site, in which IDNYC staff set-up the equipment to process applications at a venue, as they would at a permanent site, and operate out of the venue typically from one to two weeks. This brings IDNYC even closer to the community so that organizations can more easily promote IDNYC and bring their staff, volunteers, and community members to sign up for the card. These pop-ups are also important opportunities to forge deeper partnerships and share information on City services with senior centers and shelters, among other organizations. Innovative collaborations for service delivery are a core piece of the city's approach to ensuring that immigrant communities are plugged into New York.

While the IDNYC program has had many successes, the program also faced challenges in its early days including responding to initial overwhelming demand and coordinating with banks to recognize IDNYC as a valid form of identification to open an account. The city

estimated that approximately 100,000 people would have IDNYC after the first year. However, 50,000 people applied for IDNYC in the program's first week alone, and by the end of the first year, more than 670,000 New Yorkers had IDNYC. This demand reflects the broad support IDNYC has across NYC's communities, resonating with many New Yorkers. The city was able to manage this demand through programmatic changes and by working across agencies to increase enrollment capacity. On its third day of operation, responding to high demand, IDNYC switched from walk-in enrollment to an appointment-based system (NYC Mayor's Office 2015). Shortly thereafter, the city was able to expand enrollment sites at City agencies and public buildings, such as at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and LaGuardia Community College, as well as pop-up enrollment sites across the city. These measures allowed the city to meet demand swiftly and improve the enrollment experience.

The city has been able to form meaningful partnerships across sister agencies and with private and nonprofit partners to offer a myriad of popular benefits to cardholders. The city has worked to make the card highly functional across many agencies. New Yorkers can use their IDNYC as their library card for all three City library systems, to look up their children's vaccination records with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and as valid ID recognized in interactions with the New York City Police Department. Beyond our work with City

agencies, IDNYC's partnerships have enabled New Yorkers to open bank accounts, realize savings, and enjoy some of the city's most celebrated cultural touchstones. With participating banks and credit unions, IDNYC can be used as a primary or secondary form of ID to open a bank account, critical to many New Yorkers who would otherwise have difficulty accessing traditional banking. Since the beginning of the program, cardholders have saved more than \$908,000 on groceries through partnering with Food Bazaar, as well as more than \$569,000 on generic prescription drugs through the city's prescription drug discount plan, Big Apple Rx (Banks et al 2017, 7). IDNYC cardholders can receive free and discount memberships at more than 40 cultural institutions across the city, including the American Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. More than 500,000 New Yorkers have redeemed cultural benefits to date. These partnerships have made tangible, measurable impacts in New Yorkers' lives and have helped make IDNYC as popular as it is.

Interagency Work and Language Access

Much like with IDNYC, our sister agencies play an extremely important role in making New York a city for all New Yorkers. In a city of more than 8.5 million people -- with nearly 300,000 City and other public employees (Goodman 2017) -- the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs advises fellow City agencies on best practices to

make services more inclusive of immigrants. This year, for example, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs worked with the NYC Department of Education to issue updated protocol on access to schools for non-local law enforcement, including federal immigration agents (NYC Mayor's Office 2017). Under this protocol, non-local law enforcement will not be permitted to enter public schools, except when absolutely required by law. Similarly, information will only be shared when required by law. This guidance has been important in demonstrating to many New York City school families that the city is seriously responding to their concerns. By working with City agencies, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs can leverage its role as chief advocate for immigrant New Yorkers to make the city even more inclusive.

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs builds on this approach by advancing language rights in New York City and serving as a language bridge to our city's residents. Nearly half of New Yorkers speak at least one language other than English at home, and almost a quarter of New Yorkers have limited English proficiency. Since the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs was established in 2003, our office has worked to strengthen language rights. The Office facilitates interpretation and translation services for the Mayor's Office, such as at town halls in which the Mayor meets directly with community members, and we advise our sister agencies on how to bolster their internal commitments to language access.

This year, our office worked with the City Council on Local Law 30, the city's new language access law requiring agencies that provide direct services to the public to make their most popular documents available to New Yorkers in the city's ten most spoken languages, including the six that were previously required via executive order -- Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Haitian Creole, Korean, and Bengali -- as well as four additional languages -- Arabic, Urdu, French, and Polish (NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs 2017). The Office is helping to implement the new law in a variety of ways, including closer work with agency language access coordinators. The de Blasio Administration has also increased local investments: contracted language services expenditures have increased from 13.8 million dollars in FY2014 to 21.2 million dollars in FY2016 (Agarwal 2016). Multiple agencies have increased their bilingual and multilingual staff, such as the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Protecting and advancing language rights in New York helps city residents get the information they need to take advantage of their rights and opportunities.

Workers' Justice

Mayor de Blasio's Administration has not only worked to make City agencies more inclusive and responsive to needs of immigrant communities, but has also launched many new initiatives to strengthen workers' rights and immigrant working families. Universal Pre-K and

guaranteed paid sick leave have been major boons to advancing workers' rights, including immigrant workers (NYC Mayor's Office 2014). In partnership with the NYC City Council, in 2014, the first bill Mayor de Blasio signed into law guaranteed paid sick leave for an additional 500,000 New York City workers. Through the Department of Consumer Affairs' enforcement of the paid sick leave law, two years after its enactment, nearly 9,600 workers received restitution under the law, and the city received 1.7 million dollars in fines. Mayor de Blasio's championing of high-quality childcare has been important for working families of all backgrounds, including immigrant families.

The Mayor made universal Pre-K a reality in New York for the approximately 70,000 eligible four-year-olds in the city (NYC Mayor's Office 2014); families with students enrolled in the universal Pre-K program now save on average \$10,000 a year on childcare (NYC Mayor's Office 2016). As with our K-12 schools, the universal Pre-K program in New York City is available to all students, regardless of immigration status. These initiatives have made New York City a more sustainable home for immigrant working families.

With the leadership of the de Blasio administration, including the Department of Consumer Affairs, New York City has been at the forefront of safeguarding immigrant workers' rights. A major advancement in this effort was the establishment of the Office of Labor and Policy Standards (OLPS) within the Department of Consumer

Affairs, to serve as the city's permanent voice for New York City's workers (NYC Mayor's Office 2016). The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has worked closely with OLPS to advance immigrant workers' rights -- in April 2017, our Office, OLPS, and the New York City Commission on Human Rights held a public hearing on the state of workers' rights in the city -- hearing directly from workers, particularly many immigrant workers, about challenges they have faced (NYC Department of Consumer Affairs 2017). The Office of Labor and Policy Standards enforces many local labor laws, including the city's new Fair Workweek laws, which enshrine predictable schedules and paychecks as a right in the fast food and retail industries (NYC Mayor's Office 2017). This will significantly benefit immigrant families -- while immigrant New Yorkers make up approximately 46 percent of the city's workforce, they play a large role in the retail industry, as 48 percent of first-line supervisors of retail workers and 56 percent of cashiers (Rivera and Hamaji 2016, 8). Under the de Blasio Administration, New York City will continue to lead the way to protect and advance the rights of immigrant workers.

City Immigration Legal Services Programs

New York City has a wide variety of immigration legal service programs that allow the city to work with existing community-based providers with deep ties to the residents they serve. Legal status plays a complex and

important role in the lives of many New Yorkers. About half of all immigrant New Yorkers are naturalized citizens, approximately 1.6 million people in total. Another 650,000 New Yorkers are legal permanent residents who are eligible to naturalize and become U.S. citizens (Enchautegui and Giannarelli 2015, 10). In addition, about 500,000 New Yorkers are undocumented, including more than 30,000 recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival program, or DACA (American Community Service 2015). This wide range of immigration statuses in New York City requires that City services, such as immigration legal services, limits the degree to which immigration status is a barrier, so that as many people as possible have access to resources they need to thrive. By partnering with providers New Yorkers already know and trust, we can reach more people, more efficiently. Many immigrants are interested to learn how they can apply for citizenship or certain visa programs, but are unsure of the procedures or lack the funding to seek legal help. This is where the city has stepped in to remove barriers to access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers with two signature legal programs, NYCitizenship and ActionNYC

NYCitizenship provides no-cost and secure legal help and financial counseling for immigrants interested in applying for naturalization. While an estimated 650,000 New Yorkers are eligible to apply for citizenship, some find the process daunting and unaffordable. NYCitizenship works to bridge that gap, enabling more immigrants and their

communities to enjoy the many benefits that come with citizenship. Through the program, New Yorkers can make an appointment to receive a free screening at a participating public library to help answer questions related to applying for citizenship, including fee waivers. All clients are also referred to free, confidential financial counseling services. Citizenship status bestows meaningful benefits for immigrants and their communities. Citizenship is positively correlated with increased pay, greater levels of home ownership and more civic participation. On average, immigrants who naturalize realize an increase in annual earnings of 8.9 percent (American Community Service 2015). Private philanthropy has played a major role in supporting NYCitizenship, helping the program reach 1.6 million dollars in funding for its second year (NYC Mayor's Office 2017), a demonstration of how the city and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs can leverage its role as a convener and advocate to increase immigrants' access to services.

While NYCitizenship specifically targets naturalization, ActionNYC provides free and safe immigration legal help on a wide range of immigration issues for New Yorkers. In order to reach as many people as possible, the city encourages New Yorkers with immigration legal questions to schedule an appointment with ActionNYC, the city's premier program providing immigration legal services to New Yorkers. Through ActionNYC, New Yorkers can receive a free legal screening in the languages they speak

from community navigators at trusted locations, like local community-based organizations, schools, and hospitals. From there, attorneys and community navigators work to determine which clients they will represent through the program and which will be referred to other City-funded, free legal service providers, among other legal services.

In the process of receiving a legal screening, ActionNYC can also connect its clients to other public programs that they are eligible for, like IDNYC or Medicaid. In the year and a half that ActionNYC has been in operation, the program has served thousands. Helping immigrants receive a qualified legal screening, more secure immigration status and bringing City services closer to the people we serve is not only a great economic empowerment tool, it increases accessibility and visibility for services like Medicaid that can meaningfully improve an individual's quality of life.

ActionNYC's ability to deliver immigration services across the city is a result of working with a variety of partners in creative ways. Mayor de Blasio announced the creation of the program in December 2015, starting with a 7.9-million-dollar investment from the city (NYC Mayor's Office 2015). Through ActionNYC, the city contracts with partners throughout the five boroughs to achieve the three goals at the heart of the ActionNYC model: community navigation, legal services, and outreach. Permanent navigation sites within community-based organizations situated in immigrant-dense neighborhoods

have allowed ActionNYC to be accessible to the thousands of clients it has already served. With a combination of attorneys and community navigators, the navigation sites efficiently provide legal screenings, deliver legal services (such as application assistance and legal representation), and assist in referrals for complex cases. In order to reach immigrants who have been most in need of free and confidential immigration legal services, ActionNYC initially relied on a robust outreach and marketing program (NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs 2016, 6). From City-supported community outreach groups canvassing neighborhoods and conducting community presentations, to transit ad campaigns, community and ethnic media roundtables, websites, and creative social media content (NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs 2016, 12-15), ActionNYC's outreach has connected with New Yorkers in need of services in inventive ways.

ActionNYC's navigation model is designed to bring immigrant voices to the forefront. ActionNYC partners with immigrant advocacy groups across the city to conduct culturally competent advising in immigrant communities. Community navigators at these sites are reflective of their community and take the lead in connecting community members with legal help and other City services in the languages they speak. ActionNYC community navigators also receive training, ongoing supervision, and continued support to become accredited

representatives of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Legal Access Programs. As accredited representatives, they can provide legal advice thereby increasing the city's capacity to provide immigration legal services. This model has the additional benefit of focusing trained attorneys on complex cases that require representation. ActionNYC continues to find new ways to improve providing services to residents, including placing sites in locations New Yorkers already live, learn, work and play. In partnership with the NYC Department of Education, our ActionNYC in Schools initiative has held more than 80 immigration legal clinics at approximately 30 targeted schools. By using schools to host legal clinics and navigation sites, ActionNYC can partner with trusted institutions to provide convenient immigration legal services in places that New Yorkers already trust.

Alongside partnerships with City agencies, through ActionNYC, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is committed to helping build capacity with trusted community partners with deep ties to the city's newer immigrant populations, particularly from the Caribbean, Asia and Africa. To that end, in summer 2017, ActionNYC is holding a fellowship program for 17 community-based organization partners to provide organizing and legal training, as well as technical assistance, to assist community-based organizations in their work with ActionNYC, and to build their internal capacity (NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs 2017). These

programs highlight how seriously the city takes its mission to reach immigrant New Yorkers at every level through innovative partnerships with fellow City agencies and community organizations, and support those community partners in the important work they already do in their neighborhoods.

The need for immigration legal services spiked following the presidential election in 2016. In the first three months of the Trump administration, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested nearly 40 percent more immigrants nationwide than in the same period the previous year (Sacchetti 2017). From January to February 2017, calls to ActionNYC's hotline increased by 140 percent compared to the same period the previous year. In response, in April 2017, Mayor de Blasio announced a major increase for New York City's provisioning of immigration legal services. New York City has invested an additional 16.4 million dollars for immigration legal services (NYC Mayor's Office 2017), bringing the Mayor's investment to more than 31 million dollars for immigration legal services, an unprecedented investment at the local level. Our office is also dramatically expanding our work providing Know Your Rights Forums in immigrant communities. This investment is responsive to the fact that many immigrants lack access to attorneys -- particularly those with complex cases -- as people are not guaranteed access to representation in federal immigration court. From NYC Citizenship, to ActionNYC and

the additional funding for immigration legal services this year, New York City continues to seek innovative ways to address the need for access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers, particularly under the new federal administration.

Unaccompanied Migrant Children

Under the leadership of Mayor de Blasio, New York City was able to responsibly and compassionately welcome an unprecedented influx of unaccompanied migrant children. Migrant children crossing the border steadily increased in the early 2010s before reaching crisis levels in 2014 (Rosenblum 2015, 2). While New York City traditionally does not have a large refugee population (roughly 8,000 refugees were originally settled in New York City in the last 15 years) (American Community Survey, 2017), more than 2,000 migrant children were placed in New York City, the second highest placement in the country. Recognizing that addressing the needs, including placement, of this exceedingly vulnerable immigrant population would take a collaborative approach, the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs under Mayor de Blasio, Nisha Agarwal, led the city's interagency task force to craft best practices for addressing the issue. One major task force recommendation was the unprecedented decision to place City representatives directly in Immigration Court in September 2014 (NYC Mayor's Office 2014). As one example, representatives from the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Mental

Hygiene were stationed at the courts to help migrant children enroll in school and health insurance. Creative problem-solving and interagency partnerships, rather than an increase in the city's budget, were key to figuring out how best to facilitate access to services.

While the city provided the impetus to address the unaccompanied migrant crisis in New York through City agency collaboration and bringing services closer to migrant children, philanthropic groups played a critical role in providing migrant children with legal representation. The Robin Hood Foundation and the New York Community Trust, two New York City-based charitable organizations, collaborated with the City Council in creating the Immigrant Children Advocates' Relief Effort (ICARE), an initiative to provide legal representation to migrant children (New York City Council 2016). In the 2017 fiscal year, the Council provided 1.5 million dollars to ICARE and the Robin Hood Foundation and the New York Community Trust contributed 1.1 million dollars. Through ICARE, more than 1,000 cases involving migrant children received representation, showing how government and philanthropy together can help protect children.

This kind of resourcefulness, along with close coordination with other City agencies and local organizations, demonstrates how cities can take an innovative approach to solve problems when they make the commitment to invest in immigrant communities and

leverage partnerships with City agencies, philanthropy, and service providers.

Cities for Action

As the ultimate city of immigrants, NYC is an important leader in the national conversation around immigration policy. Local leaders have a unique perspective based on their on-the-ground work with immigrant families.

Collaboration among mayors around the country has proven impactful in enabling American cities to advocate on a national level for their residents' needs. In December 2014, in tandem with President Obama's announcement of executive action, 20 mayors from across the country gathered in New York City to discuss how best to implement the President's expansion of DACA and creation of the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents program, or DAPA (NYC Mayor's Office 2014). This meeting grew into Cities for Action, a national coalition of more than 150 mayors and municipal leaders from across the country working together to advocate for and support immigrants, through support for a humane federal immigration overhaul and measures to protect immigrant residents (Cities for Action 2017). The coalition worked together to file an amicus brief in support of the Obama administration's actions to expand DACA and establish DAPA in *U.S. v. Texas*. In total, 118 mayors and county leaders signed on to the Cities for Action amicus brief, representing 55 million people (Cities

for Action 2016). Cities for Action harnesses the power that cities have when working collectively to tackle one of the nation's most intractable issues.

More recently, Cities for Action has taken several steps to support immigrant communities under the Trump administration. Cities for Action coordinated on five legal briefs in response to President Trump's executive orders. Three amicus briefs were in support of plaintiffs challenging the Administration's travel ban: *Darweesh v. Trump* in the Eastern District of New York, legal briefs submitted to the Fourth Circuit and Ninth Circuit, and two lawsuits challenging the Administration's "sanctuary city" executive order in *Santa Clara County v. Trump* and *City and County of San Francisco v. Trump*. In addition, more than a dozen mayors and county leaders signed on to a Cities for Action letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of State calling for a full 18-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti, which impacts 50,000 Haitian nationals settled in the U.S. following the devastation of the 2010 earthquake (Walsh et al 2017). Shortly after, DHS Secretary Kelly announced a six-month extension of Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for Haiti (DHS Office of the Press Secretary 2017). The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will continue our work to advocate for a full extension of TPS through vocal advocacy with cities across the country as well as by actively working with the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit,

community partners, legal providers, and faith leaders to provide information to Haitian communities and connect them to legal services. Even in this challenging environment for immigration, Cities for Action is addressing real policy issues for immigrants across the country, and mayors and county leaders will continue to lead on smart immigration policy despite gridlock in Washington.

Conclusion

Many studies show that immigrants strengthen city economies and create jobs, and that is exactly what immigrants and the children of immigrants have done in New York City. As the biggest city in the country, and one that is deeply in touch with our immigrant heritage, the city of New York goes beyond thinking only about what immigrants can do for the city, but instead how we can shape the city to be more inclusive of immigrant communities. We do this by engaging with our residents and stakeholders in innovative ways to reach our vision: a city where immigrants are empowered as civic actors and deeply integrated in all facets of city life. With the largest Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs in the nation, we use our position to come up with new ways to bring immigrant perspectives in city government to create world-class programming like IDNYC and ActionNYC to support and strengthen immigrant New Yorkers. Working together with our partners in other cities, we will continue to share what

works in NYC, incorporate what works in other cities and strive to improve our cities as open and welcoming places for all.

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