



A BLUEPRINT FOR JUSTICE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR IMMIGRANT NEW YORKERS

Adopted March 2011

Top City Budget & Policy Priorities For 2011

1. **Protect the services provided through the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, by restoring funding to FY 2010 levels of \$5 million.** IOI funding should be used to ensure access to legal and ESL services that enable immigrants throughout New York City to fully contribute to our city's economy. Additionally, the Adult Literacy Education funding administered by DYCD should be continued past FY 2011 at the \$3.5 million level and the City Council Adult Services Literacy Initiative should be restored to \$1.5 million. Finally, the Mayor should keep his promise to provide an additional \$3 million for ESL, \$2 million for legal services, and \$1 million for summer jobs for immigrant youth.
2. **Increase the academic success of English Language Learners and low-performing students by:**

Immigrants account for more than one-third of the city's residents. That figure rises to two-thirds when the children of immigrants are included in the count. Immigrants account for 29% of all voters in New York and made up nearly half of all new voters in the 2008 presidential elections. These numbers demonstrate the increased civic engagement of immigrant communities and their growing political presence.

- a. Funding the creation of ten Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in public schools in partnership with local immigrant community-based organizations. These centers would provide 1) one-stop access to all school-related information; 2) parent education (native language, computer and financial literacy, ESL, GED, etc.); and 3) essential social services for immigrant families. FRCs promotes civic participation and leadership of immigrant parents and students.
- b. Fully implementing the change in policy on IDs accepted by school safety officers so as to ensure that every immigrant parent can enter New York City public schools.

3. **Adopt a policy that local law enforcement WILL NOT hold pre-trial detainees at Rikers Island and other Department of Corrections facilities on immigration detainers issued by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).** Over the past several years federal immigration agents have established a permanent presence on Rikers Island and in other New York City Department of Corrections (“DOC”) facilities. Without any oversight, accountability or written agreement, ICE agents have regularly interrogated pre-trial detainees, effectively denying those detainees their constitutional rights to be presumed innocent, to remain silent and to be represented by an attorney.
4. **Create an Informal Housing Pilot Program.** The city should create an “accessory dwelling unit” program allowing existing units that are safe but currently prohibited by law to be permitted and regulated under the city’s housing and building codes. Legalizing these units would increase the supply of affordable housing, provide occupants of informal units with tenant protections, and allow for an accurate count of population size. The city could begin with a targeted pilot program to test the policy mechanism.
5. **Establish a Network of Cultural Marketplaces in New York City parks.** The city should work with existing cultural markets, like the vendors at Red Hook Park, to establish a model for ethnic marketplaces in other parks throughout the five boroughs. These places would help to create economic and civic engagement opportunities for immigrant workers, reflect and celebrate the diversity of our neighborhoods in parks, and become local and regional cultural destinations.
6. **Ensure full and improved implementation of Executive Order 120 across all agencies.** The Executive Order requires City agencies to establish language access policies and provide interpretation and translation services to New York residents who do not speak English well. The EO should be updated to require that the Operations Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs provide more oversight accountability over agencies. EO 120 currently does not include any consequences for not complying with its provisions. Requiring agencies to publish annual reports describing the steps the agency has taken to achieve compliance, including what performance indicators were used, provides additional accountability to improve implementation and compliance.
7. **Protect Health and Hospitals Corporation funding** and other critical health funding in the budget. For the vast majority of low-income, uninsured immigrants, the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation remains the only affordable and accessible option for health care, addresses critical public health needs, and warrants continued support.