There are over three million immigrants who call New York City home, more than a third of all New Yorkers and more than half of the City’s workforce. Hailing from Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Middle East, New York’s newcomers, speaking more than 140 languages, build communities and revitalize neighborhoods from Port Richmond in Staten Island to Parkchester in the Bronx, bringing a renewed diversity and richness to the shifting tapestry that is New York City. Yet immigrant communities continue to face major challenges – lack of access to affordable health care, shocking English language learner proficiency rates, persistent barriers to full economic, political and civic participation, and the deportation crisis tearing apart too many families.

The election of the first new mayor of New York City in 12 years brings a new opportunity for the city to make progress in addressing these challenges, and a chance for Mayor-Elect De Blasio to build upon the city’s history as a welcoming place for immigrants and put in place policies and practices that firmly situate New York City as a leader nationally in pro-immigrant community initiatives.

While this wish list is a broad review of varied immigrant community priorities, it is meant to encourage Mayor-Elect De Blasio to provide leadership and work on specific policy proposals necessary to make this list a reality. The New York Immigration Coalition’s 200 member groups are ready to work together with the new Administration and the new City Council to improve the lives of immigrant and non-immigrant New Yorkers. We look forward to working together for a New York City that welcomes, respects, and supports all its residents.

1. **Play an Active Role in Promoting Comprehensive Immigration Reform**
   While the House holds up a vote on an immigration reform bill and the administration continues with record levels of deportation, the Mayor of New York City, as the leader of the city with the most diverse immigrant population in the United States, has a critical role in pushing for just, comprehensive immigration reform. We ask that the Mayor play a leading role in rallying New York’s political establishment and our City’s immigrant communities to push for immigration reform that would reunite immigrant families, end senseless deportations, bring undocumented immigrants out of the shadows, and promote our economy.

2. **Ensure Access to Health Care for All**
   As the Affordable Care Act takes effect in New York and across the country, our City’s immigrants continue to face major linguistic, legal and financial barriers to receiving affordable health care, as more than one out of three immigrants in New York City lack health insurance. We ask the Mayor to ensure that all of the City’s immigrants have access to affordable, quality health care.

3. **Support Fair Economic Development in Immigrant Communities**
   The engine of the City’s economy are its small businesses, and immigrant small business owners play a critical role in creating economic wealth and keeping families out of poverty. We ask that the Mayor create a fair economic development plan that strongly supports immigrant businesses, emphasizes the creation of jobs and economic opportunities for our immigrant communities, promotes economic mobility, and helps end poverty in all of our communities.
4. Expand Civic Participation of Immigrant Communities

Immigrants make up more than a third of the City’s residents and are students, taxpayers, and workers yet their political voices have been silenced by the lack of language access, arcane elections rules and a political process that shuts out all but a small minority of immigrants. We ask the next Mayor to ensure that immigrants are included in the political system, that barriers to civic engagement are removed, and that our elected officials are held accountable to our communities.

5. Support Immigrant Students’ Path to Success

More than 60% of all of the City’s students are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and nearly one of every six students is still learning English (or an ELL — English Language Learner). Despite their vast potential and unique language skills, these students face serious obstacles to educational success: the lack of bilingual education and adequate support for such students has created a troubling gap between them and their native-born peers, with graduation rates for ELL students falling 20% behind that of other students. We ask that the next Mayor support these immigrant and ELL students so that they realize their full potential to help strengthen the City’s future.

6. Support Fair Treatment of Immigrant Workers

More than half of New York City’s workforce is immigrant, and these workers are responsible for $200 billion in economic output citywide. Yet many of these immigrant workers are concentrated in low-wage service work where they face exploitation, are not paid their legal wages, or face dangerous working conditions. We ask that the next Mayor support these immigrant workers and protect their rights to fair compensation and safe working conditions.

7. Ensure Resources for Services to Immigrants

As the City’s newcomers make their transition here in New York, many of these immigrants are in need of basic services — ranging from ESOL classes to legal services — yet cannot access them because of a lack of City resources for immigrant-serving organizations. We ask that the next Mayor ensure that immigrant-led and immigrant-serving organizations have access to resources to provide these critical support lifelines to our immigrant population.

8. Fight for Legal Identification Documents & Licenses for Undocumented Residents

Many of our City’s undocumented residents are prevented from acquiring identification documents that would be helpful for basic everyday tasks — drivers’ licenses to allow immigrants to earn a basic living, identification documents to allow immigrants to open bank accounts and take other steps to fuller economic integration. We ask that the next Mayor fight to ensure that undocumented immigrants have full access to these documents City- and State-wide as a step toward integration into mainstream society.

9. Fight for DREAMers & Immigrant Youth

Nearly 100,000 DREAMers live in New York - undocumented immigrant youth who call the United States their home. While the advent of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) has helped some students gain work permits and protection from deportation, thousands of other students either have not been able to benefit, and lack access to resources such as tuition assistance and legal help. We ask that the next Mayor maintain the critical support the City is currently allocating for these undocumented immigrant youth, and show leadership in pushing for passage of the New York State DREAM Act on the State level.

10. End Unlawful Police Practices & Surveillance of Muslim Communities

New York’s Muslim communities as well as other communities of color have been the target of unlawful and unjust police practices, ranging from secret surveillance, infiltration and harassment. These practices have dramatically weakened trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement trust that had been tenuous to begin with. We ask that the next Mayor end these practices and restore trust and cooperation between the Police Department and our communities.