



A BLUEPRINT FOR JUSTICE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR IMMIGRANT NEW YORKERS

Adopted January 2011

Top 10 State Budget & Policy Priorities For 2011

1. Issue a statewide language access Executive Order, similar to New York City's Executive Order 120, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to vital government services, regardless of the language they speak.
2. Prevent racial profiling and improve public safety by ending participation in the federal "Secure Communities" program. If fully implemented, the Secure Communities program would shift new immigration enforcement responsibilities to New York's already strained police force. In particular, detaining immigrants while they are being processed would require additional officer time, supervision, and money. Establishing a clear line of separation between federal immigration enforcement and our state/local workers not only makes smart fiscal sense, but also helps protect the integrity of the relationship between law enforcement and New York communities.
3. Adopt new revenue-raising measures to ensure sustained funding streams for the New York State Citizenship Initiative, New York Immigration Hotline, refugee resettlement and human trafficking programs – vital services for the most vulnerable New Yorkers. Strategic/targeted revenue raising measures should be adopted from proposals made by the Human Services Council and Fiscal Policy Institute, such as an extension of Personal Income Tax surcharge, closing corporate tax loopholes and other recommendations. These measures are essential to ensure that vital services for immigrant New Yorkers are not jeopardized.
4. Ensure access to affordable health care for all New Yorkers through the strategic implementation of federal health care reform and by protecting "safety net" institutions. Include immigrant representation on all stakeholder groups advising the State on implementation. Ensure the new health insurance exchange and other reform benefits are accessible to all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status or language spoken. Maintain adequate funding for all hospitals that serve patients who are uninsured and comply with the Hospital Financial Assistance Law, and improve the accountability of the Indigent Care Pool and other safety net funding.

Immigrants account for more than one in five New Yorkers. Our state is home to approximately 4.2 million immigrants – more than the total population of Los Angeles, California. Immigrants comprised 26.6% of New York's workforce in 2009 (or 2,673,904 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. 52% of immigrant New Yorkers (or 2,179,877 people) were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2009—meaning that they are eligible to vote.

5. **As part of the newly-proposed Medicaid redesign effort, the “emergency Medicaid” program should be streamlined** by establishing a community screening and enrollment process to enable low-income immigrants to receive an Emergency Medicaid card that can be presented when seeking care, and extending the medical certification period to one year for certain medical conditions.
6. **Help stem the English Language Learner (ELL) dropout crisis in New York** by investing a proportionate share of Race to the Top funds to implement successful, innovative ELL strategies and strengthen accountability for school performance. In 2010, there were 293,334 k-12 English Language Learners in New York State schools (approximately 10% of all k-12 students); these students deserve their fair share of funds (at least 10%). Successful immigrant and English Language Learners strategies should include parent engagement, recruitment and training of Bilingual Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers, fair and accurate assessment, and expansion of successful programs for increasing English Language Learner achievement.
7. **Preserve New York’s supply of affordable housing, and stop predatory equity abuses** by ensuring passage of legislation to strengthen rent regulation laws (S5149 Stewart-Cousins / A7416 Rosenthal) and reform the rent increase system for both major capital improvements (S745-A Krueger / A1928 O’Donnell) and individual apartment improvements (S5296 Squadron / A5316-A Silver). These reforms are essential to decrease unwarranted rent increases and strengthen tenant notification processes.
8. **Continue and expand the work of the pardon panel in the Governor’s Office to prevent the unjust deportation of immigrants** with minor criminal records from the past who have served their time, demonstrated rehabilitation and have since made positive contributions to the community.
9. **Ensure equal access to government services by adopting a statewide confidentiality policy**, similar to New York City’s Executive Order 41, that enables all New Yorkers to access health, public safety and other services and safeguards the confidentiality of personal information unrelated to the service being sought.
10. **Strengthen protections for immigrant workers by enacting the Farm Worker Fair Labor Practices Act** to eliminate exclusions in labor law and ensure that farm workers are entitled to a weekly day of rest, overtime, and the right to collectively bargain.