



# Report of the Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force

Illinois Department of Human  
Services  
Great Cities Institute at  
University of Illinois Chicago  
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The Great Cities Institute of the University of Illinois Chicago conducted research for this report and developed report drafts in consultation with IDHS. Rob Paral is principal author of the report. Other Great Cities staff involved with the report include Teresa Córdova, Professor and Great Cities Institute Director; and Haley Anne Ventura, Graduate Assistant.

Fred Tsao of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights provided valuable review of a draft of this document.

## **Members of Immigrant Impact Task Force:**

### **Members of the Legislature**

Hon. Jeff Keicher, State Representative, 70th District

Hon. Aaron Ortiz, State Representative, 1st District

Hon. Celina Villanueva, State Senator, 11th District

### **State Agency Representatives**

Nelson Aguiar, Associate Director English as a Second Language / Immigrants and Latino Issues, Illinois Community College Board

Jenny Aguirre, Assistant Director, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services

Joanne Clyde, Director of Multilingual Services, Illinois State Board of Education

Ariana Correa, Program Manager for the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity (JEO) Initiative, Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Aniema Ekong, Administrator, Illinois Department of Public Health

Daniel Fitzgerald, Chief Diversity Officer, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Latoya Hughes, Chief Inspector, Illinois Department of Corrections

Omar Jamil, Senior Policy Advisor, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice

Ahlam Jbara, Chief of Staff, Division of Family and Community Services, Illinois Department of Human Services

Liz Kersjes, Planning and Research Specialist, Illinois Housing Development Authority

Ruth Lopez-McCarthy, Senior Immigration Fellow, IDHS and Office of the Governor

Selma D'Souza, Chief of Staff, Illinois Department of Aging

Steven Monroy, Director of Fair Housing, Illinois Department of Human Rights

Nkechi Onwuameze, Associate Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education

Janice Taylor Brown, Employment Services Manager, Illinois Department of Employment Security

Vanessa Uribe, Office of Minority Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Peter Yuh, Associate General Counsel, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

### **Community Leaders**

Nancy Asirifi-Otchere, Executive Director, United African Organization

Inhe Choi, Executive Director, HANA Center

Dr. Maggie Rivera, President/CEO, Illinois Migrant Council

Rebecca Shi, Executive Director, American Business Immigration Coalition

José Eduardo Vera, Executive Director, Southwest Suburban Immigrant Project

# Executive Summary

This report has been developed by the Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force, which was created by the Illinois General Assembly to address a set of specific questions related to immigrants in Illinois. A copy of the enacting legislation is in the appendix of this report.

The following is a high-level summary of the contents of this report:

## Profile of Illinois Immigrants

- Illinois is home to 1.8 million immigrants, who are 14 percent of the state's population.
- Immigration is critical to maintaining Illinois population levels, making up for declines in the native-born population.
- The great majority of immigrants are naturalized citizens or legal permanent residents.
- Immigrants play a key role in the Illinois labor force, more than one-third of physicians and surgeons are immigrants, and about 43 percent of metal and plastic workers are immigrants.
- Illinois immigrants have \$51 billion in spending power and make \$20 billion in tax payments.

## How Has Illinois Welcomed Immigrants?

- Over five decades, the State of Illinois has built an important infrastructure to meet the needs of refugees and immigrants.
- Programs of Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors and Adults are delivering healthcare to more than 50,000 immigrants.
- The Refugee Resettlement Program Network has resettled more than 150,000 refugees and asylees since 1980.
- Governor Pritzker issued an emergency disaster proclamation in response to the unprecedented numbers of migrants coming to Illinois via buses from the Southwest border. This action allows for the state to ensure public health, safety and welfare by coordinating with the City of Chicago the provision of basic services such as shelter and food for new arrivals. Illinois is helping asylum seekers to transition toward stable housing and self reliance through the Asylum Seeker Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ASERAP).
- The Immigrant Family Resource Program has served more than 32,000 immigrants, linking them to appropriate human services, including access to public benefits for which they are eligible.
- The New Americans Initiative (NAI) has assisted thousands of immigrants in becoming naturalized U.S. citizens, serving 28,000 immigrants in 2022. The NAI also provides legal services and counseling to young persons with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.
- Immigrant Welcoming Centers are one-stop centers that assist immigrants with a comprehensive range of services.
- The Access to Justice program provides legal services to immigrants on immigration issues via a network of nearly 60 legal aid and non-profit organizations. The program provided case management and additional services to over 10,000 people in 2022.
- Multiple other state programs assist immigrants in accessing healthcare, higher education, motor vehicle licenses, professional licenses and other services.
- State agencies include immigrants in their programs and services while there may be service gaps that still need to be met.

## How Does the State Interact with ICE?

- Illinois prohibits law-enforcement agencies from detaining immigrants charged solely with civil immigration-related violations. For-profit immigrant detention facilities are not allowed in Illinois. The Illinois Secretary of State has no contracts with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

## What Can Illinois Do Going Forward?

Illinois can take a set of steps to further improve its services to immigrants:

- Assess service needs for regions of the state that have not previously seen increases in immigrant populations and provide the necessary assistance to local governments, service providers and community leaders to support welcoming communities.
- Partner with immigrant-serving organizations to develop policies and practices that will minimize language barriers preventing limited-English proficient immigrants from accessing state services.
- Increase the recruitment and hiring of bilingual staff across state agencies.
- Appoint experts in immigration and persons with lived immigrant experience to state boards and commissions. Include immigrant perspectives in the work of the Commission on Poverty Elimination and Economic Security, the Health and Human Services Task Force and the Interagency Task Force on Homelessness.
- Continue to require anti-immigrant bias training for state employees and improve the effectiveness of current trainings.
- Support the development of a program within a public university that can conduct studies to provide the state with updated information on immigrants, including demographic data, barriers and solutions for successful immigration integration.
- Build capacity for state agencies to include immigrants in their programs and services through outreach and special initiatives that meet the needs of the diverse immigrant populations, especially recent arrivals from Central and South America, the Middle East and North Africa.
- In light of federal inaction on immigration, secure federal support to respond effectively to the recent arrivals of asylum seekers from the U.S. southern border, and advocate for the federal government to expedite work authorization and enable states like Illinois to support immigrant visas and work authorization to fill employment gaps.

# Introduction

Illinois has always been a leading destination for immigrants to the United States. A century ago in 1920, 1.2 million immigrants lived in our state, and as of 2017-2021, 1.8 million immigrants choose to make their home here. Immigrants currently represent one in seven Illinois residents.

As discussed in this report, immigrants make enormous contributions to the economy of Illinois, with \$51 billion in spending power and \$20 billion in tax payments. Immigrants are more than one-third of both metalworkers and physicians, showing the diverse roles they play.

Recognizing the importance of immigrant communities, Illinois has responded, as described later, with numerous state policies that support and enhance the contributions of immigrants. Laws and programs have been created that promote immigrants' civic, social and economic integration.

In fact, Illinois is a national leader in providing a welcoming environment to immigrants where they and their families may thrive. Only Illinois and California, among the fifty states, offer programs to most immigrants in six key areas: driver's licenses, professional licenses, postpartum services to mothers, healthcare to children and healthcare to older adults.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1 shows the number of immigrants served in major immigrant-serving programs discussed later in this report.

<b>Total</b>	<b>153,381</b>
Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors 65+	14,414
Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults 55-64	13,164
Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults 42-54	24,336
Cash assistance for immigrants not eligible for federal and state assistance	3,750
Welcoming Centers	19,616
Access to Justice	17,648
New Americans Initiative	28,150
Illinois Family Resource Program	32,303

Despite the state's significant accomplishments, shifts in immigrant demographics call for constant refinement and adjustment of state policies. While immigrants historically moved to urban centers, today 60 percent of immigrants live in suburban Chicago, as described later in this report. Yet those same areas have not developed an infrastructure of immigrant-serving organizations commensurate with their new foreign-born populations.

This report identifies several dozen laws passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor over approximately the last decade to support immigrants. State agencies administer dozens of programs that address the unique needs of immigrants. In describing Illinois' comprehensive immigrant-supportive policies, this report seeks to address the large amount of work that the state has achieved, but also to identify areas for further investment and concern.

This document is a product of a task force created by the Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force Act passed in August 2021 by the Illinois General Assembly. The task force was charged with addressing a set of issues, including what the State of Illinois is doing to proactively help immigrant communities; the status of immigrant communities in urban, suburban and rural areas; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant communities; and other topics.

Members of the task force met during 2022 and 2023 to discuss the questions posed by the act. During that same period, the Illinois Department of Human Services organized community meetings across the state to hear from immigrants themselves.

# Methodology

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Multiple information collection and verification steps were used in this report. The research methods included:

- Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is conducted on a monthly basis and annually surveys about one percent of the U.S. population. ACS data are often presented as five-year averages, as seen in this report.
- Community meetings held across the state.
- Numerous electronic (email) queries and communications and in-person interviews with subject experts in state government and in the private sector.
- Discussions within meetings of the task force.
- Literature review as cited throughout this document.

# Profile of Illinois Immigrants

## Overview

Illinois is home to 1.8 million immigrants, who are 14 percent of the state’s population.<sup>10</sup> Numerically, the foreign-born population in Illinois is the sixth largest in the United States. In terms of the immigrant share of the population, Illinois ranks 13th among the fifty states.<sup>11</sup>

Over the last decade, immigration has proved crucial to maintaining Illinois population levels. Between the 2008-2012 and the 2017-2021 period, the native-born population declined by 37,000 persons, compared to a growth of 35,000 among foreign-born residents. Without immigration, Illinois would experience more serious population decline.

**Table 2: Population Change by Nativity in Illinois: 2008-2012 to 2017-2021**

	2008-2012	2017-2021	# Change	% Change
Total:	12,823,860	12,821,813	-2,047	0.0%
Native	11,055,555	11,018,479	-37,076	-0.3%
Foreign-Born	1,768,305	1,803,334	35,029	2.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Immigrants in Illinois have various types of legal statuses. About 900,000 immigrants are naturalized U.S. citizens, as many as 600,000 are legal permanent residents, and about 400,000 may be described as undocumented.<sup>12</sup> The undocumented population includes some persons with temporary legal statuses, most notably 31,000 young persons in Illinois with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.<sup>13</sup>

The share of Illinois immigrants who are naturalized has grown over the years. About 53 percent were naturalized in 2019, compared to 45 percent in 2010, according to the American Community Survey. The legal permanent resident population grows by about 36,000 per year,<sup>14</sup> although many of these persons later naturalize. The undocumented population has been declining in Illinois, falling by more than 100,000 since its peak in the mid-2000s.<sup>15</sup>

Illinois is home to many refugees and asylees. The federal government admits these persons on humanitarian grounds, and many eventually become naturalized citizens. Several thousand refugees enter Illinois annually, as do a much smaller number of asylees.

Other immigrant groups include persons and their family members admitted to the U.S. on a temporary basis to fill labor needs in agriculture, seasonal, high-skill and low-skill job sectors. These are discussed later in this report.

## Countries of Origin

Persons from Mexico are the largest foreign-born group in Illinois, but there are large communities of immigrants from India, Poland, the Philippines and China, among other countries.

**Table 3: Top 10 Countries of Origin of Illinois Immigrants: 2017-2021**

	#	% of Total
Total	1,795,280	100.00%
Mexico	644,788	35.91%
India	156,084	8.69%
Poland	130,079	7.25%
Philippines	89,589	4.99%
China	77,308	4.31%
Korea	40,328	2.25%
Pakistan	30,296	1.69%
Guatemala	25,696	1.43%
Ukraine	25,087	1.40%
Vietnam	23,035	1.28%
Other	552,990	30.80%

Source: American Community Survey

## Economic Role and Contributions of Immigrants

Immigrants play a key role in the Illinois economy and workforce. Illinois immigrants pay \$20 billion in taxes and have \$51 billion in spending power.<sup>16</sup> There are more than 117,000 immigrant entrepreneurs in Illinois, with business income of \$2.8 billion.<sup>17</sup> Immigrants are 43 percent of Illinois metal and plastic workers, 41 percent of software developers, and 34 percent of physicians and surgeons. A quarter of Illinois STEM workers are foreign born.<sup>18</sup>

Within the immigrant population, there is a wide range of both formal education and earnings. About a quarter, 24.6 percent, of immigrants in Illinois have less than a high school education, compared to only 6.8 percent of the native born population. On the other hand, 15.0 percent of immigrants have a graduate or professional degree, compared to 14.2 percent of the native born population, according to the 2017-2021 American Community Survey. Similarly, even though 29.2 percent of immigrants earn more than \$75,000 per year in income, about 12.1 percent of immigrants have income below the poverty line (compared to 11.8 percent of the native-born population).

The economic diversity among immigrants means that needs for human services are different across specific populations and geographic areas where immigrants are concentrated in the state.

As reflected by their ability to speak English, immigrants are increasingly integrated into Illinois society and its workforce. The share of immigrants who speak English at least very well rose from 46 percent to 51 percent during the 2010s.

## Differences Between Urban, Suburban and Rural Immigrant Communities

Immigrants are concentrated in metro Chicago, but are increasingly present in downstate areas. Currently about 31 percent of immigrants live in the city of Chicago, 60 percent live in the suburban metro Chicago area and 9 percent live downstate. Over the last decade, however, the number of immigrants downstate rose by 6 percent, compared to 4 percent in suburban metro Chicago and -3 percent in Chicago.<sup>19</sup>

By some measures, immigrants in downstate Illinois have greater needs than those in metro Chicago. Downstate immigrants are more likely to be recent arrivals to the U.S. Some 23 percent of downstate immigrants arrived in the U.S. in the last five years compared to 14 percent of immigrants in Chicago and 12 percent of immigrants in the Chicago suburbs. The naturalization rate of downstate immigrants is 43 percent which is lower than in Chicago (46 percent) or suburban Chicago (55 percent).<sup>20</sup>

Many immigrant-serving organizations are based in Chicago, and use satellite offices or other means of reaching immigrants in the suburbs or downstate. These 100-plus organizations are listed later in this report.

About a third of immigrants live in Chicago, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, but 60 percent of immigrant-serving organizations are based in Chicago. Almost two-thirds of immigrants are in the suburbs, but only 25 percent of the organizations are suburban-based. One out of ten immigrants lives downstate and about 15 percent of organizations are headquartered downstate.

## Immigrant Population by County

Significant immigrant populations reside across the state, including outside of metro Chicago. Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will counties all have more than 50,000 immigrants, and 12 counties have at least 10,000. The latter include counties outside of metro Chicago such as Champaign, Winnebago, McLean, Rock Island and Peoria. Immigrants are at least 10 percent of the population in eight counties: Cass, Champaign, Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake and Will.

**Table 4: Immigrant Share of the Illinois Workforce by Selected Occupations: 2015-2019**

	<i>Immigrant Share of Workers</i>
<b>HIGH SKILLS</b>	
Physical Scientists, NEC*	45.83%
Software Developers, Applications and Systems Software	40.89%
Physicians and Surgeons	33.91%
Other production workers, including semiconductor processors and cooling and freezing equipment operators	36.67%
<b>OTHER SKILL LEVELS</b>	
Butchers and Other Meat, Poultry and Fish Processing Workers	50.43%
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	48.74%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	47.16%
Packers and Packagers, Hand	44.38%
Metal Workers and Plastic Workers, NEC*	42.93%
Grounds Maintenance Workers	39.48%
Dishwashers	38.98%
Construction Laborers	37.44%
Food Preparation and Serving Workers, NEC	36.34%
Chefs and Cooks	35.34%
Assemblers and Fabricators, NEC	32.69%
Janitors and Building Cleaners	32.15%

\*NEC=not elsewhere classified.  
Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019

**Table 5: Distribution of Immigrant Population by Illinois Region**

	<b>2008-2012</b>	<b>2017-2021</b>
Illinois	100.0%	100.0%
Chicago	32.4%	30.7%
Suburban Metro Chicago	59.0%	60.3%
Downstate	8.6%	9.0%

Source: American Community Surveys of 2008-2012 and 2017-2021

**Table 6: Immigrant Population by Illinois Region: 2010-2019**

	<b>2008-2012</b>	<b>2017-2021</b>	<b># Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Illinois	1,768,305	1,803,334	35,029	2%
Chicago	572,416	553,354	-19,062	-3%
Suburban Metro Chicago	1,043,236	1,088,103	44,867	4%
Downstate	152,653	161,877	9,224	6%

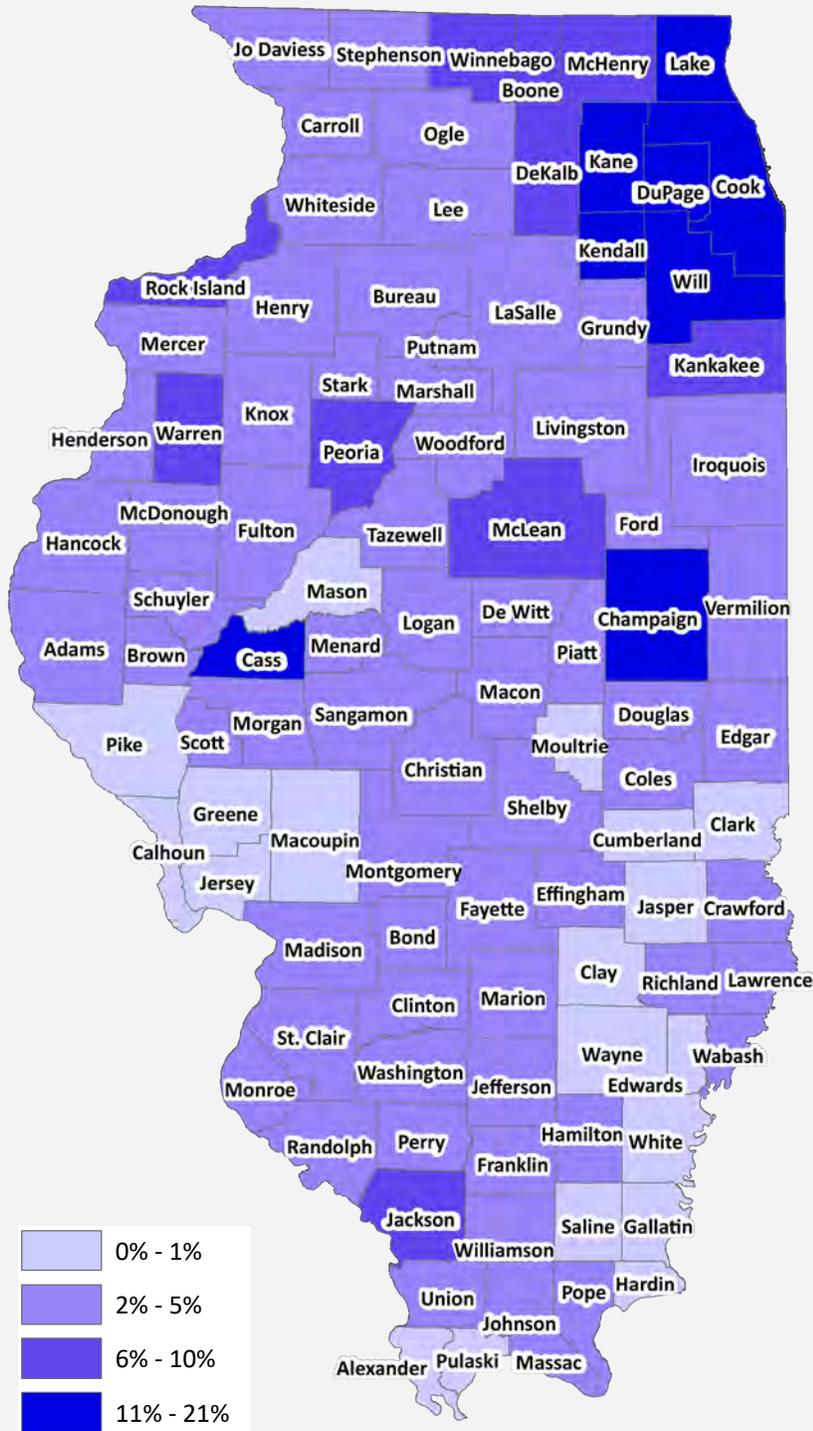
Source: American Community Surveys of 2008-2012 and 2017-2021

	<b>Total 2016-2020</b>	<b>Foreign-Born 2016-2020</b>	<b>Foreign-Born % 2016-2020</b>
Adams	65,670	827	1%
Alexander	6,011	16	0%
Bond	16,520	251	2%
Boone	53,293	4,757	9%
Brown	6,599	189	3%
Bureau	32,878	1,240	4%
Calhoun	4,782	39	1%
Carroll	14,398	207	1%
Cass	12,324	1,428	12%
Champaign	210,006	25,930	12%
Christian	32,705	412	1%
Clark	15,602	79	1%
Clay	13,217	54	0%
Clinton	37,549	576	2%
Coles	51,065	947	2%
Cook	5,169,517	1,078,475	21%
Crawford	18,833	203	1%
Cumberland	10,787	99	1%
De Witt	15,764	203	1%
DeKalb	104,588	6,810	7%
Douglas	19,551	599	3%
DuPage	926,005	179,392	19%
Edgar	17,272	212	1%
Edwards	6,431	39	1%
Effingham	34,151	739	2%
Fayette	21,418	370	2%
Ford	13,155	157	1%
Franklin	38,688	403	1%
Fulton	34,654	418	1%
Gallatin	4,983	16	0%
Greene	12,988	37	0%
Grundy	50,798	1,845	4%
Hamilton	8,151	127	2%
Hancock	17,820	194	1%
Hardin	3,890	17	0%
Henderson	6,737	90	1%
Henry	49,032	733	1%
Iroquois	27,437	872	3%
Jackson	57,517	3,297	6%
Jasper	9,547	79	1%
Jefferson	37,774	682	2%
Jersey	21,776	211	1%
Jo Daviess	21,429	485	2%
Johnson	12,391	202	2%
Kane	531,756	91,881	17%
Kankakee	109,924	5,612	5%
Kendall	127,583	12,896	10%
Knox	50,052	1,558	3%
Lake	699,682	130,880	19%
LaSalle	108,998	3,975	4%
Lawrence	15,830	204	1%
Lee	34,204	950	3%

	<b>Total 2016-2020</b>	<b>Foreign-Born 2016-2020</b>	<b>Foreign-Born % 2016-2020</b>
Livingston	35,757	650	2%
Logan	28,818	446	2%
Macon	104,688	2,495	2%
Macoupin	45,243	434	1%
Madison	264,403	6,046	2%
Marion	37,524	404	1%
Marshall	11,562	184	2%
Mason	13,486	96	1%
Massac	14,041	166	1%
McDonough	30,107	999	3%
McHenry	307,291	27,467	9%
McLean	172,164	11,512	7%
Menard	12,261	132	1%
Mercer	15,503	339	2%
Monroe	34,444	471	1%
Montgomery	28,598	359	1%
Morgan	34,012	562	2%
Moultrie	14,557	104	1%
Ogle	50,793	2,012	4%
Peoria	181,111	10,212	6%
Perry	21,092	273	1%
Piatt	16,412	202	1%
Pike	15,571	83	1%
Pope	4,177	65	2%
Pulaski	5,414	38	1%
Putnam	5,720	98	2%
Randolph	31,973	607	2%
Richland	15,677	238	2%
Rock Island	142,801	11,206	8%
Saline	23,735	182	1%
Sangamon	195,963	5,973	3%
Schuyler	6,897	105	2%
Scott	4,982	74	1%
Shelby	21,623	232	1%
St. Clair	261,186	8,029	3%
Stark	5,393	94	2%
Stephenson	44,683	930	2%
Tazewell	132,524	2,306	2%
Union	16,829	466	3%
Vermilion	76,704	1,507	2%
Wabash	11,390	272	2%
Warren	16,981	890	5%
Washington	13,967	176	1%
Wayne	16,309	120	1%
White	13,712	128	1%
Whiteside	55,583	1,678	3%
Will	689,704	83,399	12%
Williamson	66,929	1,148	2%
Winnebago	283,635	24,853	9%
Woodford	38,503	691	2%

Source: American Community Survey

# Map 1: Immigrants in Illinois by County: 2016-2020



Source: American Community Survey

## Immigrants in Municipalities

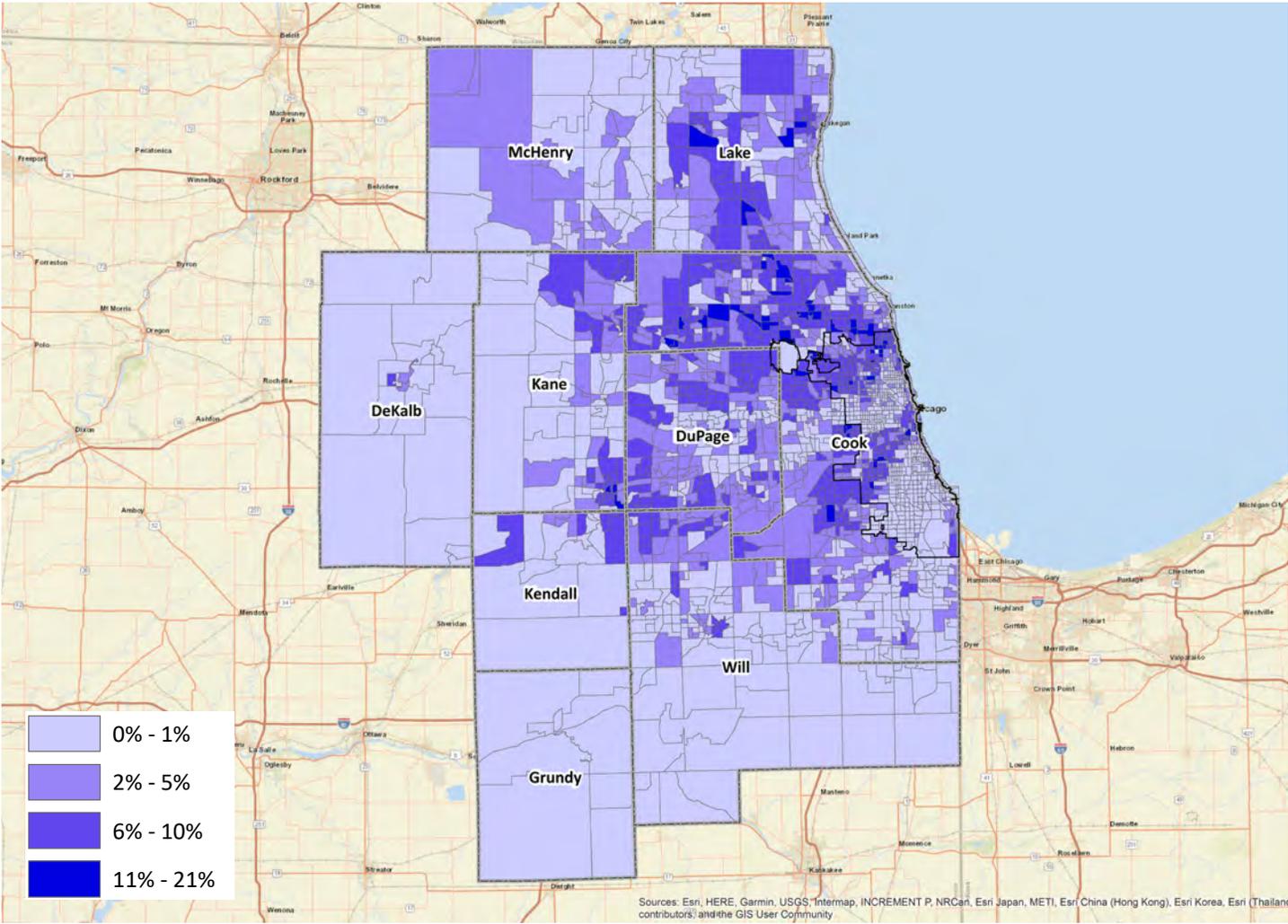
Numerous municipalities in the metro Chicago area have large immigrant populations. Chicago is home to 550,000 immigrants who are 20 percent of the city's population. Thirty suburbs have at least 1,000 immigrant residents and have populations that are at least 30 percent foreign-born. Cicero, Skokie and Schaumburg all have more than 20,000 immigrants. In Harwood Heights, Niles, Rosemont, Schiller Park and Wheeling, foreign-born persons are at least 40 percent of the overall population. Map #2 shows the immigrant share of population across metro Chicago.

**Table 8: Immigrants in Selected Illinois Municipalities: 2016-2020**

	<b>Total 2016-2020</b>	<b>Foreign- Born 2016-2020</b>	<b>Foreign- Born % 2016-2020</b>
Addison	36,714	12,302	34%
Buffalo Grove	40,804	14,238	35%
Cicero	81,471	31,566	39%
Des Plaines	58,316	17,807	31%
Franklin Park	17,779	5,695	32%
Glendale Heights	33,863	12,097	36%
Hanover Park	37,811	12,084	32%
Harwood Heights	8,393	3,897	46%
Hickory Hills	14,253	4,382	31%
Hoffman Estates	50,464	15,966	32%
Lincolnwood	12,338	3,893	32%
Melrose Park	25,404	8,792	35%
Morton Grove	22,937	8,780	38%
Mount Prospect	54,165	16,251	30%
Niles	29,198	11,792	40%
Norridge	14,465	4,998	35%
Park City	7,636	2,877	38%
Prospect Heights	15,986	6,074	38%
River Grove	9,957	3,145	32%
Rosemont	4,173	1,839	44%
Round Lake	18,235	5,506	30%
Schaumburg	73,392	22,749	31%
Schiller Park	11,499	5,576	48%
Skokie	63,300	24,136	38%
South Barrington	4,963	1,525	31%
Stone Park	4,842	1,807	37%
Summit	11,171	4,253	38%
Vernon Hills	26,396	8,507	32%
West Chicago	26,998	8,700	32%
Wheeling	38,684	16,396	42%

Table includes places with 1,000+ immigrants and where immigrants are 30%+ of population. Source: American Community Survey

# Map 2: Immigrant Share of Population in Metro Chicago by Census Tracts: 2016-2020



Source: American Community Survey 2016-2020

# Illinois: A Welcoming State



Risingthermals. (August 08, 2021). Bursting Into Smile: India Day Parade Naperville, IL, USA [photograph]. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com>

This section describes policies and programs that directly address immigrants' needs.

## Administrative Structure for Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees

Over five decades, the State of Illinois has built a strong infrastructure to meet the needs of refugees and immigrants. The passage of the 1980 Refugee Act formalized the creation of an office at the state level to administer federal funding to provide assistance to refugees arriving in Illinois. This Refugee Office expanded its scope of services with the passage of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which allowed for the legalization of many undocumented immigrants who had been living in the U.S. since at least January 1, 1982.

IRCA allowed for the legalization of immigration status for an estimated 3 million undocumented immigrants nationally. Congress also established the State Legalization Impact Assistance Grants (SLIAG) as part of IRCA. SLIAG provided \$4 billion in funding over seven years to reimburse state and local agencies for the costs of providing public assistance, public health and education services and to ensure basic health, welfare and education services for eligible legalized immigrants.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to federal funding, Illinois has also invested state resources to maintain and expand immigrant integration services, including citizenship/naturalization assistance, to ensure that refugees and immigrants resettling in Illinois have the opportunity to contribute economically, culturally and civically to their new community.

Today, thanks to the investment made by federal and state government, Illinois has created an extensive refugee resettlement and immigrant integration service network of providers statewide under the management of the Office of Welcoming Centers for Immigrants and Refugees within the Illinois Department of Human Services, including:

### **Refugee Resettlement Program Network**

The Refugee Resettlement Program was established in 1980 to provide services to refugees, asylees, and certain other categories of persons admitted by the U.S. for humanitarian reasons. Community service providers are provided with federal and state funding to provide assistance to refugees and asylees. Since 1980, Illinois has provided assistance to over 150,000 refugees. In 2020 some 2,716 persons were served. Currently, most refugees are resettled in the Chicago, DuPage/Aurora, Quad Cities and Rockford areas.

New arrivals are eligible for case management assistance to locate employment, housing, English instruction and other services. Time-limited cash assistance is available subject to an early employment requirement.<sup>22</sup> The Refugee Resettlement Program is administered by IDHS in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

### **Immigrant Family Resource Program**

The Immigrant Family Resource Program (IFRP) is a contract between immigrant-serving organizations in Illinois, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), and the Illinois Department of Human Services to support immigrant access to public benefits.

IFRP ensures that low-income immigrant families and other limited-English-speaking persons can thrive by

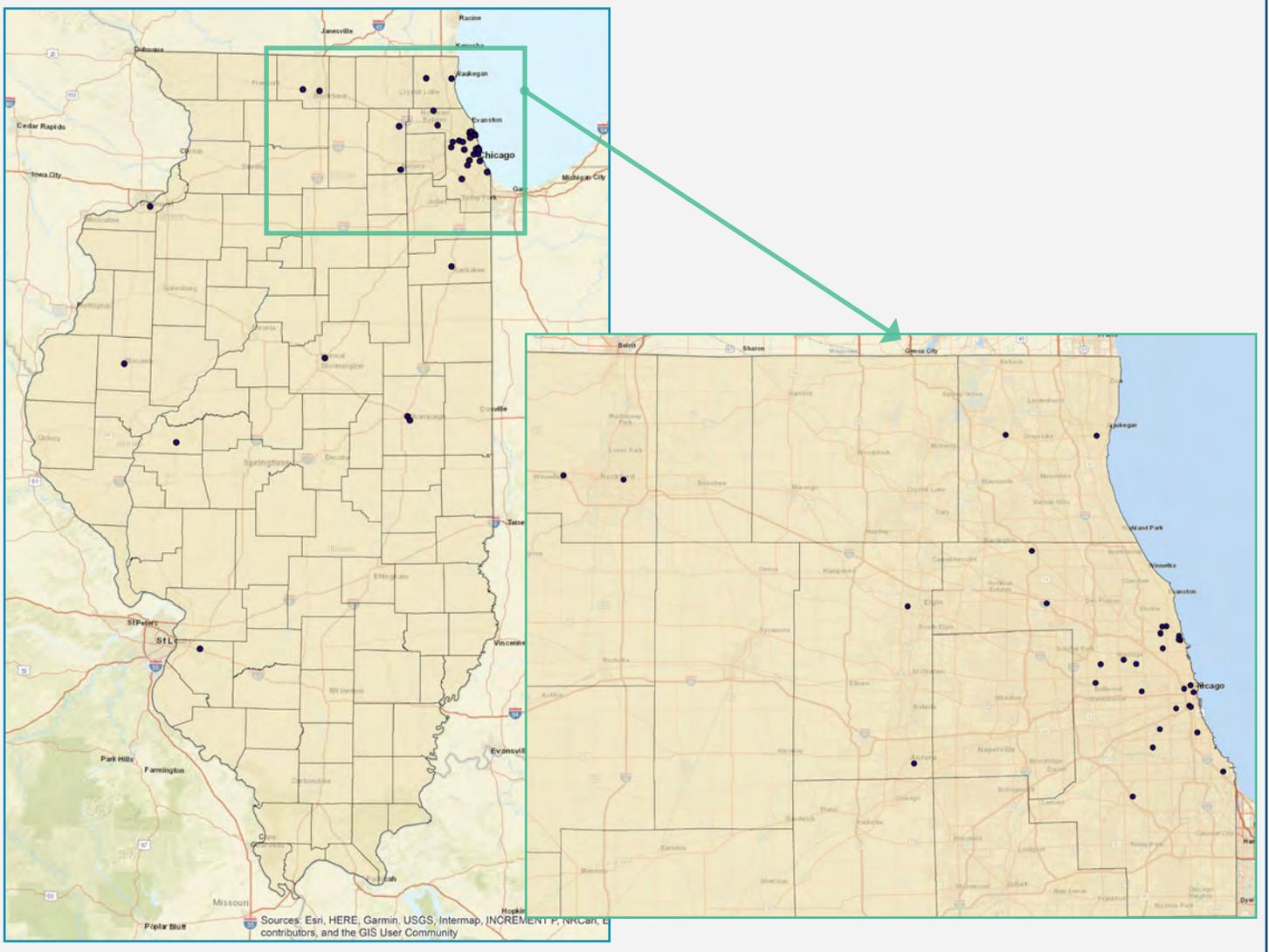
reducing barriers to public benefits (nutritional, medical, housing, psychological, childcare, employment) and the cash support they need for proper health, well-being and economic self-sufficiency. IFRP currently partners with 44 community-based organizations with a capacity of 59 different languages. In fiscal year 2022, IFRP provided services to 32,303 immigrants.

### ***New Americans Initiative***

The New Americans Initiative (NAI) was created in 2005 after the governor’s New Americans Executive Order was signed. With state funding from IDHS, the program is managed by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. In FY22 ICIRR worked with 49 community agencies to offer citizenship services to qualified permanent residents. Citizenship services include English-language preparation, study of U.S. civics and history needed to pass the naturalization examination, and naturalization application preparation. A total of 28,150 immigrants were served in fiscal year 2022.<sup>23</sup>

NAI community service providers also assist young persons who have Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status.<sup>24</sup> DACA allows eligible undocumented individuals who were brought to the U.S. as children to receive employment authorization and protection from deportation for a two-year renewable term. About 31,000 young Illinoisans have DACA status.

## Map 3: Immigrant Welcoming Centers in Illinois



## ***Immigrant Welcoming Centers***

Immigrant Welcoming Centers (IWCs) are designed to be one-stop centers to assist immigrants with a comprehensive range of services. The first IWC opened in 2007 as a state-operated center for information on human services. The Welcoming Center model has since expanded to include 34 comprehensive service centers providing a variety of free support services to all immigrants and refugees in Illinois, regardless of status, such as:

- Comprehensive and holistic case management and service coordination, delivered in a linguistically and culturally sensitive manner.
- Access to benefits and services provided by the state, federal and social service agencies and connection of individuals to appropriate services through case management or referral.
- Coordination of social services in particular geographic locations through the creation of Community Alliances, which consist of meetings with local service providers to address common challenges shared in delivering services to immigrants and refugees, enhance service effectiveness, and improve service coordination.
- Various community education workshops to help immigrants and refugees learn about resources and information that can advance their successful integration and build the capacity of immigrant and refugee communities.

## ***Access to Justice***

With funding provided by the state and administrated by IDHS, Illinois Access to Justice (A2J) is a statewide program that provides legal services to immigrants on immigration issues via a network of nearly 60 legal aid and non-profit organizations. The immigrant legal aid program is administered by the Resurrection Project.

Services offered by A2J partner agencies include case management, legal literacy and education, and legal counsel and representation. About four out of five Illinois immigrants who have been detained by U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement do not have legal counsel, which is key to obtaining release from ICE custody.<sup>25</sup>

In 2022, A2J provided representation for clients on cases including work permits, adjustment of status, and asylum.<sup>26</sup> Access to Justice provided case management and additional services to over 10,000 people in fiscal year 2022, and 2,117 legal cases were accepted for representation.<sup>27</sup> Individuals from over 122 countries were served by A2J partner agencies.

In addition to the programs listed above designed specifically to meet the needs of refugees and immigrants, Illinois also developed legislation and special initiatives to address unmet needs of undocumented immigrants, including the following.



Faircloth, T. October 29, 2019. "Calavera Creatures: Mural by @mr.pintamuro seen at 26th and Central Park in the Little Village Area of Chicago, IL." Online image. December 29, 2022. [Flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/faircloth/4888888888/)

## Driver's Licenses

Residents of Illinois who do not have an immigrant visa, who cannot obtain a Social Security card and who meet certain other requirements have been able to apply for a Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDL) under the Illinois Vehicle Code since December 2013.<sup>28,29</sup> As of spring 2022, some 761,662 TVDLs have been issued by the Illinois Secretary of State. The number includes TVDL renewals, which are required every three years. There are reportedly about 216,000 persons currently driving on a TVDL in Illinois.<sup>30</sup>

## Professional Licensure

Legislation passed in recent years has supported immigrants seeking professional licenses. In 2018, the state's Department of Professional Regulation Law was amended to allow individuals to use an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) in lieu of a Social Security number when applying for a professional license from that department.<sup>31</sup> This amendment also specifies that no person applying for a license can be denied based solely on their immigration or citizenship status. Public Act 099-0419, signed in 2015, amended the Attorney Act to allow persons with DACA status to apply for admission to the Illinois Bar.<sup>32</sup>

## Access to Higher Education

### *Illinois Dream Fund*

The Illinois Dream Fund was signed into law in 2011 to provide financial assistance to undocumented students who are not eligible for many forms of financial assistance for college.<sup>33</sup> Funds are raised from philanthropic, corporate and private donations. The fund is governed by the Dream Fund Commission, appointed by the governor with Senate consent. Fiscal management is by the Chicago Community Trust and administration is by unpaid volunteers.

The Illinois Dream Fund has served more than 400 students since its inception. In the fall of 2022, the fund granted approximately \$124,000 to 42 students, who may receive a grant for the second semester.<sup>34</sup>

As a measure of potential need, about 79,000 Illinois students are estimated to have been eligible for DACA status, though many have not applied.<sup>35</sup> Based on available funding, Illinois Dream Fund scholarships are available to DACA and non-DACA students who have a high school/GED or meet a minimum college GPA of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale). Students must have lived with a parent, legal guardian or partner while they attended high school or gotten the equivalent of a high school diploma (GED) in Illinois while having attended for at least three years.<sup>36</sup>

### *Support for College Savings*

The Dream Act also made it possible for undocumented students and their families with ITINs to participate in the state's 529 college savings and prepaid tuition programs. This includes the Bright Start and Bright Directions college savings plans and the College Illinois! Prepaid Tuition Program.

## Access to Healthcare

### *Children and Adolescents*

In the case of undocumented children, the Illinois All Kids program provides health insurance coverage to lower-income children regardless of immigration status. For lower-income adults, Illinois has taken several steps in recent years to offer a Medicaid-like, state-funded program of healthcare.

### *Older Adults*

Noncitizens aged 65 years and over who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid became eligible for Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors (HBIS) as of December 1, 2020. This coverage was extended on April 1, 2022, to similarly Medicaid-ineligible noncitizens aged 55-64 years, and on July 1, 2022, to those aged 42-54 years.

Undocumented Students in Higher Education	17,757
DACA-Eligible Students in Higher Education	8,784
Non-DACA-Eligible Students in Higher Education	8,973
Undocumented Students Graduating High School Each Year	4,000
Source: <a href="#">Higher Ed Immigration Portal Illinois Data</a>	

## Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant impact on immigrant communities. For example, Latino unemployment rates rose sharply in 2020, tripling from 4 percent to 12 percent,<sup>37</sup> rising faster than other major groups. Many immigrants work in the service sector economy, and the disproportionate impact on immigrant workers is seen in the rising share of unemployment claims coming from workers in the hospitality industry. Their share of unemployment insurance (UI) claims was about 5 percent of all claims in January 2020, but by June of that year reached 18 percent of all claims.<sup>38</sup>

Given their disproportionate employment in manufacturing and hospitality industries, some immigrants, particularly Latinos, were less likely during the pandemic to be able to work from home. In May 2020 about 23 percent of Latinos teleworked because of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to 35 percent of Whites, 52 percent of Asians and 29 percent of African Americans.<sup>39</sup>

### ***COVID-Related Support for Immigrants***

The Illinois Department of Human Services Office of Welcoming Centers for Refugee and Immigrant Services was allocated \$30 million from the Illinois CURES Act to provide programs and services to immigrant and refugee communities impacted by COVID-19. As a result, the Office of Welcoming Centers developed and implemented the following: 1) the COVID-19 Employment and Training Project, 2) the COVID-19 Housing and Utility Assistance Project, 3) the COVID-19 Public Health/Health Navigator Project, and 4) a full-scale multilingual media campaign for COVID-19 outreach, education, prevention, testing and treatment.

In addition to CURES Act funds, the Office of Welcoming Centers also received GRF increases for the Immigrant Family Resource Program, the New Americans Initiative and the Illinois Welcoming Centers. The COVID-19 Immigrant Family Support Project (IFSP) was created from GRF funds to provide pandemic-related emergency assistance to immigrants ineligible for federal funding relief and facing unemployment, loss of income, medical costs, food and housing insecurity as a direct result of COVID-19.

Persons served under COVID-19 relief efforts directed to the immigrant community have included:

- 8,942 households given cash assistance for basic needs (housing, food, medical needs).
- 5,440 households provided assistance with rental and mortgage bills.
- 2,807 households provided assistance with utility bills and 2,573 referred to other social services.
- 1,554 individuals provided with employment and training services.
- 1,319 individuals provided with case management and 629 referred to other vital social services.
- 428 community members recruited and trained as community health navigators.
- 20,040 community members reached with health information through health navigator programs.

There are some existing public assistance programs that can serve immigrants with a special status known as “parolees.” Lengthy application times can mean that many parolees have to go some time without aid. Nine partner agencies and ICIRR have administered the IFSP to Afghan arrivals. They provided services as the new arrivals sought housing, waited on employment authorization from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and began to resettle. The Recent Arrival program was expanded in recent years to include a small number of Haitians and Ukrainians paroled into the United States after events of political upheaval and war in both countries.

IFSP served 999 recent arrivals in fiscal year 2022.<sup>40</sup> Of these, 945 were individuals evacuated from Afghanistan during the summer of 2021 who would receive humanitarian parole and be resettled in Illinois.

### **Providing Linguistically and Culturally Accessible Services**

On December 7, 2020, the Governor’s Office issued a memo titled “Ensuring Access to State Websites, Materials, and Communications” to all state agencies. The memo required agencies, boards, and commissions to conduct two self-assessments, one for language access issues and a second regarding access for individuals with disabilities, by December 23, 2020. The information provided in the agency self-assessments offered a picture of the state’s

strengths and challenges in providing meaningful access to websites and services. As a result of the assessment, in the spring of 2021 each state agency created and adopted a Language Access Plan (LAP) and designated a language access coordinator to serve on an agency-wide Language Access Coordinator Working Group. The agency LAPs include: agency language access needs assessment, available translation resources, a process for oral and written translation, interpretation for staff and client, in-house language capacity and trainings, outreach materials, vital documents, and complaint procedure. The working group meets quarterly to discuss language access and service delivery issues. Most recently, the coordinators updated their agency's vital documents to ensure their agency's LAP is compliant with federal standards. The working group is now focused on community outreach and engagement in language access services.

The Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) introduced the Illinois Document Translation Portal (IDTP), a web-based application utilizing Google Machine Learning technology that allows agencies to quickly translate English documents into any of the top six most frequently used languages in Illinois: Polish, Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog. The portal accepts most common document types and can perform translations within seconds.

DoIT also provides a language interpretation service as a means for customers to accept and respond to calls from non-English-speaking clients or constituents via a three-way call with a live operator. And Video Remote Interpretation (VRI) for sign language provides a means of communication with deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals utilizing an interpreter through a computer with a webcam, tablet or smartphone. Following the account setup, a login and password are provided to access an interpreter.

These services are available to State of Illinois agencies, boards, commissions, universities, Offices of the Illinois House and Senate, and Constitutional Officers. Illinois Central Management Services also procures master contracts with vendors that can provide multilingual translation and interpretation services for state agencies.

The mission of the Office of Hispanic and Latino Affairs (OHLA), housed within the Illinois Department of Human Services is to eliminate barriers in the delivery of human service programs and services to Limited-English-Proficient



College of DuPage Newsroom. (August 28, 2015). "Celebrate Citizenship, Celebrate America" Naturalization Ceremony at College of DuPage 2015 62 [photograph]. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com>

customers. OHLA staff and contracted vendors provide interpretation and translation services to ensure that program information is accessible to non-English speakers. There is 3-way phone interpretation available via OHLA staff in English/Spanish, and Spanish/English calls. For all non-Spanish calls, OHLA arranges and schedules an interpreter for the customer. It should be noted that many IDHS community offices have bilingual staff who can assist clients with English language barriers.

The Illinois Secretary of State and the Illinois Department of Human Services publish materials in multiple languages. The Secretary of State offers the driving exam in 12 languages. The websites of state agencies include translation functions that allow the website content to be displayed in multiple languages.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is required to accommodate Spanish-speaking families under the Burgos Consent Decree, which was made on January 14, 1977, following a 1975 class-action lawsuit filed by several Chicago-area Puerto Ricans who alleged discrimination by DCFS. This accommodation includes:

- Making documents available in Spanish.
- Hiring bilingual employees and/or interpreters.
- Providing documents, forms, and brochures in Spanish.
- Informing Spanish-speaking families of their rights and how to maintain those rights.
- Posting signs in Spanish at DCFS offices.
- Displaying a phone number to speak to a bilingual ombudsperson.
- Requiring that children whose primary language is Spanish be placed in Spanish-speaking foster homes.

## Summary of State Legislation Related to Immigrants

The table below provides an overview of state legislation related to immigrants. Included are public acts created over approximately the past decade.

<b>Table 10: Legislation to Provide Legal Protection for Immigrants</b>			
<b>Public Act #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Illinois General Assembly Session</b>
PA 098-0212	<u>The Illinois Human Rights Act [amended]</u>	Amends the Illinois Human Rights Act to state that no employer can discriminate based on citizenship status.	2013-2014
PA 100-0463	<u>Illinois TRUST Act</u>	Restricts law enforcement agencies from detaining or arresting individuals based only on their immigration status, and from complying with non-judicial immigration warrants.	2017-2018
PA 101-0019	<u>Keep Illinois Families Together Act</u>	Restricts ability of local law enforcement agencies to partner with ICE and lays out protections for all residents regardless of immigration status at public and state-run institutions.	2019-2020
PA 101-0020	<u>Private Detention Facility Moratorium Act</u>	Prohibits local governments from making agreements with private detention facilities.	2019-2020
PA 102-0234	<u>Illinois Way Forward Act</u>	Modifies Illinois TRUST Act. Closes all immigrant detention centers. Restricts local law enforcement's collaboration with federal immigration authorities.	2021-2022
PA 102-0408	<u>The Department of Human Services Act [amended]</u>	Requires the Illinois Department of Human Services to organize a public information campaign for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers on their rights as protected by the U.S. Constitution and laws of Illinois, regardless of immigration status.	2021-2022
PA 102-0410	<u>The Counties Code [amended]</u>	Allows for public defenders to act as attorneys for non-citizens in immigration court in counties with over 3,000,000 people.	2021-2022
PA 102-0827	<u>Right to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Act</u>	Establishes the Task Force on Counsel in Immigration Proceedings to investigate and report on representation for individuals in immigration court.	2021-2022
PA 102-1030	<u>Amendments to Illinois Notary Public Act</u>	Removes "the dehumanizing term 'alien'" from all Illinois statutory provisions.	2021-2022
PA 097-1157	<u>The State Finance Act [amended]</u>	Allows the Secretary of State to issue Temporary Visitor Driver's Licenses; lays out procedures and eligibility for doing so.	2011-2012
PA 098-0651	<u>The Illinois Public Aid Code [amended]</u>	Allows for the State of Illinois to cover the costs of kidney transplants for non-citizens who have end-stage renal disease and have been receiving dialysis.	2013-2014
PA 098-0918	<u>The School Code [amended]</u>	Notes that school counseling services may include supporting undocumented students or students whose parents are undocumented.	2013-2014
PA 099-0419	<u>The Attorney Act [amended]</u>	Amends the Attorney Act to state that no individual can be denied a license based only on their status as a non-citizen; authorizes persons with DACA status to apply for admission to the Illinois Bar.	2015-2016
PA 099-0762	<u>Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act [amended]</u>	States that employees seeking to recover unpaid wages that have been deposited into the Department of Labor Special State Trust Fund are not required to provide a Social Security number or proof of citizenship.	2015-2016
PA 099-0870	<u>Survivor Support and Trafficking Prevention Act</u>	Amends the Illinois Public Aid Code and includes foreign-born victims of trafficking and other serious crimes in the category of non-citizens who can access cash or medical assistance.	2015-2016
PA 100-1078	<u>The Department of Professional Regulation Law [amended]</u>	Allows an individual to provide their ITIN rather than a social security number when applying for a professional licensure from the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. Establishes that no individual may be denied licensure based only on immigration or citizenship status.	2017-2018

**Table 10: Legislation to Provide Legal Protection for Immigrants**

<b>Public Act #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Illinois General Assembly Session</b>
PA 100-0320	<u>Language Access to Government Services Task Force Act</u>	Removes barriers for limited-English-proficient residents to access government services.	2017-2018
PA 101-0021	<u>Retention of Illinois Students and Equity Act (RISE)</u>	Makes certain non-citizen students who have not obtained lawful permanent residence eligible for state financial aid and benefits.	2019-2020
PA 101-0300	<u>The University of Illinois Act [amended]</u>	Allows non-citizen students to serve as student trustees on the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois by eliminating the requirement that they must be registered to vote in Illinois.	2019-2020
PA 101-0439	<u>Immigrant Tenant Protection Act</u>	Increases protections for immigrant tenants: restricts evictions and landlord behavior relating to the immigration or citizenship status of a tenant.	2019-2020
PA 101-0541	<u>Civil Administrative Code [amended]</u>	Establishes that no individual may be denied licensure by any state agency based only on immigration or citizenship status. Applies to all state agencies.	2019-2020
PA 101-0550	<u>Code of Civil Procedure [amended]</u>	Limits the use of immigration status in a civil proceeding. Provides that a party intending to offer evidence regarding another person's immigration status shall file a written motion at least 14 days before trial. Provides that a person who threatens to disclose a witness's immigration status with the intent to deter the person from testifying commits a Class C misdemeanor.	2019-2020
PA 102-0233	<u>Illinois Human Rights Act [amended]</u>	Amends the Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination based on an individual's type of legal work authorization.	2021-2022
PA 102-0235	<u>Criminal Code of 2012 [amended]</u>	Amends the hate crime statute to include citizenship and immigration status as protected characteristics.	2021-2022
PA 102-0259	<u>The Juvenile Court Act of 1987 [amended]</u>	Addresses how an immigrant minor may obtain status of "special immigrant minor," and the assignment of a guardian for that youth.	2021-2022
PA 102-0475	<u>The University of Illinois Act</u>	Designates an "Undocumented Student Resource Liaison" and lays out their responsibilities for undocumented and mixed-status students for the 2022-2023 academic year.	2021-2022
PA 102-1063	<u>The Healthcare Worker Background Check Act [amended]</u>	Allows an individual to use their ITIN rather than a Social Security number when registering for the Health Care Worker Registry through the Illinois Department of Public Health. Allows undocumented nursing students to register as required during their educational programs and internship.	2021-2022

**Table 11: Legislation to Create Task Forces to Work on Immigrant Issues**

<b>Public Act #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Illinois General Assembly Session</b>
PA 097-0233	<u>The State Treasurer Act [amended]</u>	Requires the establishment of the Illinois Dream Fund Commission to create the Illinois Dream Fund and establish a process for children of immigrants to apply for scholarships from the fund (Section 67).	2011-2012
PA 098-0467	<u>The Governor's Office of New Americans Act</u>	Lays out the creation and responsibilities of the Office of New Americans in the Office of the Governor.	2013-2014
PA 100-0459	<u>Illinois Muslim American Advisory Act</u>	Establishes a position to advise the governor and general assembly on issues relating to Muslim Americans and immigrants (Section 15).	2017-2018
PA 102-0236	<u>Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force Act</u>	Outlines the Immigrant Impact Task Force and its duties.	2021-2022
PA 102-0812	<u>Task Force on Internationally-Licensed Health care Professionals Act</u>	Seeks to remove barriers to licensure and practice for healthcare professionals licensed and practicing in other countries.	2021-2022
PA 102-0827	<u>Right to Counsel in Immigration Proceedings Act</u>	Establishes a task force to investigate and report on representation for individuals in immigration court.	2021-2022
PA 102-1054	<u>The Governor's Office of New Americans Act</u>	Outlines the duties of the Governor's Office of New Americans.	2021-2022
PA 102-1058	<u>Illinois Indian American Advisory Council Act</u>	Creates the Illinois Indian American Advisory Council and lays out a position on the council for advising the governor on issues related to Indian Americans and Indian immigrants.	2021-2022

**Table 12: Other Relevant Legislation**

<b>Public Act #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Illinois General Assembly Session</b>
PA 096-0623	<u>The Right to Privacy in the Workplace Act [Amended]</u>	Urges employers voluntarily using E-Verify systems to be aware of current IDHS rules and updates to the program, as E-Verify may have inaccurate information that prevents it from confirming the work authorization status of individuals.	2009-2010
PA 96-1208	<u>The Unemployment Insurance Act [Amended]</u>	Includes certain types of agricultural work in the definition of "employment"; excludes work in that sector completed by immigrants allowed entry into the U.S. to perform agricultural labor.	2009-2010
PA 098-0029	<u>The Illinois Notary Public Act</u>	Describes the maximum fees that can be charged by a notary public, or other person who is not an attorney, for filling out or translating immigration forms.	2013-2014

# Immigrant Detention and State Relationships with ICE

The Immigrant Impact Task Force was requested to address the state of immigrant detention in Illinois and what relationships Illinois has with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Immigrants deemed to be in violation of U.S. immigration law may be detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Up until recent years, immigrants in Illinois could be detained in both private and public facilities. The Illinois TRUST Act, signed into law in 2017, prohibits law enforcement agencies and officials from detaining individuals solely on the basis of “detainers” or civil immigration warrants, and prohibits those agencies and officials from stopping, arresting, searching or detaining a person solely based on an individual’s citizenship or immigration status.<sup>41</sup>

In 2019, the Private Detention Facility Moratorium Act prohibited local governments in the state from making agreements with private detention contractors to own, manage or operate detention facilities, including immigrant detention centers.<sup>42</sup> This effectively ended immigrant detention in privately owned facilities. As of January 2022, the Illinois Way Forward Act prohibits law enforcement agencies and units of state and local government from detaining individuals for civil immigration violations;<sup>43</sup> the act also prohibits law enforcement agencies and law enforcement officials from inquiring about or investigating the citizenship or immigration status or place of birth of an individual in custody.

As a result of the implementation of the Illinois Way Forward Act, persons being held in immigration detention in state facilities in Illinois were transferred to facilities in other states to await deportation or were released from ICE custody.<sup>44</sup> Immigrants who are not detained by ICE may have their locations monitored using “alternatives to detention” such as GPS, telephonic reporting or online tracking. As of November 2023, the Chicago ICE Area of Responsibility – which includes states other than Illinois – had 13,533 persons in detention alternatives.

## Illinois Secretary of State and ICE

The Office of the Illinois Secretary of State (SOS) confirms that it has no contracts with ICE. The SOS does participate in a program implemented by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services involving the SAVE database, particularly for applicants who present an immigration document during a Real ID transaction (as required by federal regulations).<sup>45,46</sup> SAVE is not used for Non-Visa Status Temporary Visitor Driver's Licenses. In logging into the SAVE database, SOS does not grant access to its own database, but inputs a person’s immigration number, I-94 number, Certificate of Naturalization number or other identifying number to verify eligibility.

## Illinois State Police and ICE

The Illinois Way Forward Act requires that law enforcement agencies submit an annual report to the Illinois Attorney General regarding requests from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security related to immigration enforcement.

A 2018 memorandum of understanding was created between the Illinois State Police and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement – Homeland Security. The document designated certain Illinois State Police officers “as Customs Officers (Excepted), without additional compensation, to perform the duties as noted on the Designation, Customs Officer (Excepted) – Title 19 Task Force Officer (ICE Form 73-001).”<sup>47</sup>

# State Services Inclusive of Immigrants

This section of the report addresses programs and policies that serve all Illinois residents, but which incorporate immigrants.

## Education

### *Eligibility*

For **K-12 public education**, all Illinois residents are eligible to enroll without regard to immigration status. School districts are prohibited from inquiring about a student's or a student's parents' immigration status.<sup>48</sup>

### *Federal Support for Immigrant Students*

Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act authorizes grants to local education agencies for specialized services to English learners. Grants are processed by the Multilingual Department at Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Districts apply for grants covering **language instruction education programs (LIEPs)** which serve children identified as English learners (many of whom are immigrants or U.S.-born children of immigrants), as well as professional development for school staff and family and community engagement activities. Districts may also apply for **Immigrant Student Education Program (ISEP)** funding, which provides support to districts in meeting the needs of immigrant students through activities including family literacy and public outreach; basic instructional services; and other services.<sup>49</sup>

**In 2021, 511,637 students lived in a household where a language other than English was spoken.**

For **adult education and higher education** such as ESL classes at community colleges or classes leading to a bachelor's degree at a university, in-state tuition is available to naturalized citizens and legal permanent residents on the same basis as for U.S.-born citizens. For undocumented students who meet the definition of an Illinois resident, in-state tuition rates have been available since the University of Illinois Act was amended in 2003.<sup>50 51</sup>

State-funded **financial assistance** for Illinois residents in adult and higher education is available to qualifying undocumented students per the RISE Act, which became effective January 1, 2020.<sup>52</sup> This includes Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants (which do not need to be repaid) administered by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.<sup>53</sup> (Undocumented students are not eligible for federal student loans and grants.) The RISE Act helps qualifying low-income undocumented students afford college by permitting Illinois public universities to award them financial aid.<sup>54</sup> It also removes a requirement that students complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, form in order to be eligible for a state MAP grant.<sup>55</sup>

### *K-12 Education*

The ISBE manages several programs related to the needs of children who speak a language other than English or who live in a household where a language other than English is spoken. Families of all elementary and secondary students in Illinois enrolled in a public school respond to a Home Language Survey at registration the first time they enroll in a particular district.<sup>56</sup> Potential English language learners are identified through a state-defined screening procedure and are placed in English learner services if necessary and if their parents agree with the placement.<sup>57</sup>

ISBE annually reviews data collected from the Home Language Surveys completed by parents at registration. The 2021 Home Language Survey found that 511,637 students lived in a household where a language other than English was spoken. Among these students, the top five leading languages spoken at home were Spanish (358,087 students), Polish (21,358), Arabic (17,719), Urdu (10,409) and Tagalog (7,247).

### *English Learners*

Public schools assess the English proficiency of students upon admission and annually with assessment tools such as the WIDA Screener and the ACCESS test. Depending on their assessment results, students may be identified as English learners and enrolled in one of two programs: **Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)** or a **Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)**. Schools with 20 or more English learners of the same home language enroll them in Transitional Bilingual Education. Instruction may be provided in both the home language and in English in core subject areas depending on the English and native language proficiency of the student. Schools with 19 or fewer English learners with the same home language can offer a Transitional Program of Instruction, which provides instructional services such as English as a second language (ESL) with support in the student’s home language where available. Separate from TBE and TPI, some schools offer **dual-language programs** that have an overall goal of bilingualism and biliteracy.<sup>58</sup>

In school year 2020-2021, 182,172 students were enrolled in TBE. Another 53,172 students were enrolled in a TPI. In fiscal year 2023 there are about 272,449 English learners in K-12 public education in Illinois. While all schools must provide English learner services by law, participation in Title III programs of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act is voluntary.

**Table 13: K-12 English Learners in Top Ten School Districts in Illinois: 2022**

District Name	Number of English Learners
TOTAL	271,929
City of Chicago SD 299	70,855
SD U-46*	13,977
Waukegan CUSD 60	6,236
Aurora East USD 131	6,117
Rockford SD 205	5,585
Cicero SD 99	5,384
CUSD 300**	3,772
Aurora West USD 129	3,288
Palatine CCSD 15	3,267
Joliet PSD 86	3,161
Other	150,287
*Elgin, Hanover Park, other northwest suburbs	
**Carpentersville, Dundee and other northwest suburbs	
Source: ISBE Fall Enrollment Report	

**Table 14: Top 15 Languages by Number of English Learners in Illinois: 2020-2021**

Language	Number of Students
TOTAL	232,329
Spanish	182,159
Other	13,368
Arabic	9,527
Polish	6,405
Urdu	4,099
Russian	2,257
Gujarati	2,252
Pilipino (Tagalog)	2,159
French	1,627
Vietnamese	1,591
Mandarin (Chinese)	1,516
Telugu (Telegu)	1,483
Hindi	1,450
Ukrainian	1,332
Cantonese (Chinese)	1,104
Source: ISBE 2021 Home Language Survey	

Title III has two grant programs: the Language Instruction Education Program (LIEP) for English learners and the Immigrant Student Education Program (ISEP) for qualifying districts that are especially impacted. About 245,262 students are served by LIEP and 14,199 students by ISEP.

### Adult Education

The Illinois Community College System (ICCS) consists of 48 colleges in 39 districts located around the state. Most community colleges in Illinois offer English as a second language courses in which immigrants and persons from Puerto Rico often enroll.

There were 20,664 adults enrolled in English as a second language courses in 2012. By 2021, that number had dropped by more than half to 8,350, likely reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The three Illinois community colleges with the highest ESL enrollments in 2021 were the College of DuPage with 1,047, the College of Lake County with 1,040, and the Harry S. Truman College in Chicago with 1,297 students enrolled in ESL.

## ***Migrant Education***

The Illinois Migrant Education Program (MEP) helps schools to serve agricultural migratory students who may be negatively impacted by frequent migration and interrupted schooling.<sup>59</sup> Funding is provided by Title I Part C of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. In 2020-2021, there were 951 eligible migratory children ages 3-21 in Illinois, with 667 (70%) participating in instructional and/or support services. The number of eligible students has been in decline over the past decade, from a high of 1,753 in 2010-2011 to 951 in the 2020-2021 school year.<sup>60</sup>

## **Health and Human Services**

### ***Eligibility***

Health and human services include an array of activities such as doctor visits, childcare, services to the elderly, income support, nutrition, transportation assistance, employment-related services, veterans' counseling, public health promotion and many more. As a general though not all-encompassing rule, eligibility for programs is limited to naturalized and legal permanent residents when direct federal support is involved. An example is in the field of older-adult services, where older persons may participate in meals-on-wheels or caregiver respite programs without regard to immigration status, but where in-home caregiver services via the Community Care Program are not available to undocumented persons.

### ***Hospital Patients***

Hospital patients in Illinois, including some undocumented patients, can be beneficiaries of the Hospital Uninsured Patient Discount Act<sup>61</sup>, which offers discounts and caps hospital bills for uninsured patients in Illinois. Hospital charges to eligible uninsured patients cannot exceed the costs of the services plus 35 percent. The Patient Discount Act also caps the charges hospitals can collect for services from eligible uninsured patients to no more than 25 percent of a patient's family income.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Children and Family Services***

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) manages various efforts directed to immigrants and their families. DCFS developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mexican Consulate to avoid unnecessarily long custody for children with families in Mexico.

For undocumented youth who come into the care of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and who will not be returned to their parents by court order, the department works to provide a special juvenile immigrant visa. The Burgos Consent Decree of 1977 requires DCFS to provide services be offered in Spanish, verbally and in writing, when necessary for children or families involved with DCFS.<sup>63</sup> Caretakers with ITIN numbers may provide relative care/foster homes.<sup>64</sup>

The DCFS Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DDEI) provides culturally appropriate services through multiple offices including the Office of Latino Services, the Latino Advisory Council, and the Asian American Advisory Council. The Office of the Guardian's Immigration Services Unit oversees immigration matters such as obtaining social security numbers for certain children who seek authorization for employment, assisting eligible children with maintaining continued residency in the U.S., and legalizing when possible the status of undocumented children under DCFS guardianship.

## **Housing**

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) administers a variety of programs that can be utilized to support the housing needs of immigrants. IHDA follows all Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and Ginnie Mae guidelines. While Freddie Mac does not authorize loans to DACA recipients, IHDA utilizes the allowance made for this under all other loan types.

The following current or recent IHDA-administered programs do not include citizenship or legal permanent residency requirements:

## ***Illinois Homeowner Assistance Fund***

The Illinois Homeowner Assistance Fund (ILHAF) was another program created with the American Rescue Plan of 2021 funding in response to the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Impacted mortgage holders received up to \$30,000 in assistance to pay past due mortgage debt and future mortgage payments to avoid foreclosure risk.

## ***Emergency Rental Assistance Program and Court-Based Rental Assistance Program***

With federal funding from the Department of U.S. Treasury, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), and IHDA launched the ERA statewide program to provide rent and utility assistance program to thousands of households at risk of evictions and homelessness due to COVID-19. A special program, Court-Based Rental Assistance Program (CBRAP) was available to tenants and landlords across the State (except for Cook County). With the allocation of up to \$60 million for the CBRAP program, this program was designed to assist renters in eviction court. For both the ERA and CBRAP programs, renters must have experienced financial hardship, directly or indirectly, due to the pandemic and may qualify for a one-time grant matched to their specific need to cover up to 12 months of past due rent and 3 months of future rent to prevent eviction and homelessness.

## ***Community Affairs Housing Counseling Programs***

IHDA's Community Affairs Department administers programs which provide operational and capacity-building funding to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-approved housing counseling agencies and community-based organizations, which in turn supports housing counseling, financial literacy, and organizational capacity-building across the state. There are currently six programs serving these objectives and funding housing counseling services.

## **Temporary Workers**

### ***Temporary Visas for Workers***

The federal government, through the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, allows employers to petition for the admission and work authorization on a temporary basis of some foreign workers. Among the most numerically significant categories of temporary work visas are H-1B, H-2A and H-2B. Generally, H-1B visas are for high-skill workers, H-2A visas are for agricultural laborers, and H-2B visas are for both high- and low-skill workers needed to meet seasonal or peak-load needs. About 5,900 H-1B visas, 2,900 H-2A visas and 1,900 H-2B visas were awarded to workers coming to work in Illinois in 2021.<sup>65</sup>

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) assists employers in navigating federal H-2A hiring rules, and tests the labor market for qualified U.S. workers to ensure that a sufficient labor shortage exists.<sup>66</sup> In 2022, 161 Illinois employers took part in the H-2A program and 202 employers took part in the H-2B program.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers***

Migrant seasonal farmworker means an individual who is employed, or was employed in the past 12 months, in farmwork of a seasonal or other temporary nature and who travels to the job site so that the farmworker is not reasonably able to return to his/her permanent residence within the same day.

IDES Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Outreach and the H-2A Foreign Labor Certification Program provide services and resources including, but not limited to, information on applicable labor laws, employment services, referrals to partner organizations and enforcement agencies, housing and worksite inspections, and assistance with complaints and apparent violations.

### ***Day and Temporary Labor Service Agencies***

Many immigrant workers use temporary labor agencies to find employment. The Day and Temporary Labor Services Act<sup>68</sup> requires employment agencies that employ persons to provide to a third party to register with the Illinois Department of Labor and to comply with specific standards.<sup>69</sup> It is unlawful for employers to use a temporary labor agency that is unregistered.

1,207 day and temporary labor service agencies are enrolled with the Illinois Department of Labor. These include 358 addresses of company headquarters and 849 branch offices. Most Illinois counties are home to at least one day or temporary labor agency.

## Human Rights

The Illinois Human Rights Act, enacted in 1979, was amended in the 1990s to protect against employment discrimination based on citizenship status, and was further amended in 2021 to prevent employers from refusing to hire an individual based on the status or length of status of their work authorization.<sup>70</sup> The act is enforced by the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR).

“Immigration” is not an explicitly stated protected category under the Human Rights Act, but immigrants in Illinois are often covered by protected categories. National origin is a protected category in all areas, such as employment, housing, access to financial credit and public accommodations. Citizenship status, language and work authorization status are additional protected categories in employment.

Between fiscal year 2018 and 2022, IDHR docketed approximately 1,420 charges that alleged discrimination based on one or more characteristics related to immigrants. Most of these charges pertained to employment (1,183), followed by housing (129), public accommodations (107), and financial credit (1). For comparative purposes, in fiscal year 2021, IDHR docketed approximately 2,145 charges and received 8,702 inquiries based on all characteristics covered by the Illinois Human Rights Act, including immigrant-related characteristics.<sup>71,72</sup>

Over a recent 12-year period, 2011-2022, the U.S. Justice Department<sup>73</sup> settled or resolved at least nine claims of citizenship or national-origin discrimination in the workplace in Illinois. Of these, four involved employers requiring some immigrants to present specific documents or undergo enhanced verification procedures that either are not required by federal law or were not also requested of U.S. citizen employees. Two involved cases in which employers wrongfully expressed preference for U.S. citizen workers. The remaining cases included an employer requiring 10 years of residence, and an employer favoring holders of temporary work visas.<sup>74</sup> In 2019 the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission found “reasonable cause to believe” that an Illinois beverage company assigned sales accounts and territories that “when accepted, resulted in national origin or race discrimination.”<sup>75</sup>



Male, Mack. (November 8, 2016). Chicago Chinatown [photograph]. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com>

## Services to Older Adults

Services to older adults in Illinois are primarily funded through the federal Older Americans Act. The Illinois Department on Aging contracts with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) that serve regions within the state. Each AAA has the flexibility to provide services for their region based on the local needs of older adults. For example, this could mean ensuring that there are home-delivered meal providers that offer cultural and ethnic food options.<sup>76</sup>

The Community Care Program (CCP), managed by the Illinois Department of Aging and the AAAs, is a Medicaid home- and community-based services waiver program that enables older persons to avoid nursing home care and receive in-home and community-based services that allow them to remain at home. Eligibility for CCP is limited to U.S. citizens and certain non-citizens. Generally, undocumented immigrants are not eligible for CCP services.<sup>77</sup>

## Human Trafficking

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority implements the Violence Against Women Act; Victims of Crime Act; Adult Redeploy Illinois program; the Restore, Reinvest, Renew Program, and other state and federal grant programs. The Authority's programs are available to immigrant communities, although data on immigration status is not collected.

The Illinois Attorney General's Crime Victims Services Bureau manages Victim Compensation Programs providing financial assistance and reimbursement to victims for crime-related out-of-pocket expenses. The Illinois Attorney General also funds The Domestic Violence Fund for legal advocacy, legal assistance, and legal services to victims of domestic violence who are or have been married or in a civil union.

The IDHS Division of Family Services manages a Victims of Trafficking, Torture & Other Serious Crimes (VTTC) Program. VTTC serves individuals who may qualify for state-funded public benefits if they intend to file or have filed for a visa (such as U-Visa, T-Visa, and/or an asylum application) for survivors of crime and abuse. If eligible, immigrants could receive Medicaid, VTTC Food Assistance, and VTTC Cash Assistance.

Some applicants for U visas (for crime victims who have been helpful to law enforcement) or T visas (for victims of certain types of trafficking) may need assistance from law enforcement agencies to document their experience. The Illinois Voices of Immigrant Communities Empowering Survivors Act<sup>78</sup> sets guidelines for law enforcement agencies in Illinois to provide that documentation.

## Help to Become Business Owners

The Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO), through its Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE), provides business development support and multilingual assistance to businesses owned by minorities, women, persons with disabilities and veterans.<sup>79</sup> These categories can include immigrants. OMEE provides minority-owned and other businesses with technical assistance and workshops. Some webinars are provided in Spanish.

DCEO makes other resources available to minority enterprises, which can have immigrant owners. DCEO offers business loans, incentives and tax assistance, Small Business Development Centers, and a First Stop Business Information Center that gives information in English and Spanish. Community navigators managed by DCEO provide assistance in multiple languages.

## Access to Technology

The Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force was charged with considering the question of what kind of access to technology Illinois immigrants may have. Review of American Community Survey questions on technology finds that immigrants in this state have approximately the same access to (or lack of) digital equipment as native-born persons. About 9 percent of native-born Illinoisans report not having access to the internet, compared with 9 percent of naturalized citizens and 12 percent of non-citizens.<sup>80</sup> In other words, at least one in ten immigrants does not have digital equipment in their home.

As significant as internet access for immigrants is whether digital information is available in languages other than

English. This is reflected in comments made at community meetings held by the task force, where participants noted the need for multilingual information from the state government.

### ***Illinois Broadband Equity + Inclusion***

The Connect Illinois digital equity program is a comprehensive approach designed to help communities identify and address existing broadband equity gaps, as well as to leverage new and existing sources of funding for long-term broadband equity. To create an ecosystem of digital equity and inclusion, the State of Illinois introduced complementary programming to pair with its ongoing \$420 million capital broadband investment that, combined, seeks to ensure affordable in-home broadband service, access to personal computers, digital literacy training and ongoing technical support. Illinois is working alongside public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic partners to raise capital for and awareness of the digital equity challenges facing communities. Illinois Broadband Lab was launched as a collaborative effort among the State of Illinois, university partners, and key stakeholders, including the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society.

# Challenges and Opportunities: What Can Illinois Do Going Forward?

Immigration and immigrants are critical to the demographic and economic viability of Illinois. Immigrants are replacing a declining native-born population on an almost one-to-one basis, and immigrants are a large portion of Illinois workers in high-tech, healthcare, manufacturing and service occupations. The National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) reports that “many important benefits of immigration – including on economic growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship” happen at the state and local levels. However, the NAS adds that state and local governments do have to cover costs associated with serving immigrants, such as education.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the fact that immigration policies are primarily the purview of the federal government, Congress has failed to meaningfully reform a broken immigration system that is not working for immigrants, receiving communities and the State of Illinois. The last systemic change to policies governing the admittance of immigrants (the Immigration Act of 1990) was passed more than three decades ago. Asylum seekers today must wait as long as five years for determination of their eligibility. Petitions for family reunification can be on waiting lists for 10 or more years.

As a result of a broken immigration system, some immigrants seek entry to the U.S. through other means and many immigrants are undocumented. Employers are unable to fill positions requiring both high-skill and low-skill immigrants. An estimated 450,000 undocumented Illinoisans<sup>82</sup> lack legal immigrant status despite the fact that they have lived here for many years, are employed, pay taxes and have U.S.-born children and other family members.<sup>83</sup>

**In the absence of effective federal immigration reform and investment in immigrant integration, Illinois has had to create its own policies and investment in multiple programs, as described in this report, to meet the needs of Illinois residents who are immigrants. Illinois will continue to seek innovative ways to support immigrants and maximize their potential to contribute to the state’s economy and civic life.**

As a welcoming state for immigrants, Illinois has been a leader in the provision of support and services to ensure the contributions of a healthy and thriving immigrant population. It is important for the state to conduct periodic reviews of current programs for immigrants to address any service gaps.

Illinois has much work to do in continually refining and improving its services to the immigrant community. A few recommendations that the Immigrant Impact Task Force suggests include:

- Assess service needs for regions of the state that have not previously seen increases in immigrant populations and provide the necessary assistance to local governments, service providers, and community leaders to support welcoming communities.
- Partner with immigrant-serving organizations to develop policies and practices that will minimize language barriers preventing limited-English proficient immigrants from accessing state services.
- Increase the recruitment and hiring of bilingual staff across state agencies.
- Appoint experts in immigration and persons with lived immigrant experience to state boards and commissions. Include immigrant perspectives on the work of the Poverty Task Force, Workforce Task Force, Health and Human Services Commission, and Homeless Prevention Interagency Council.
- Continue to require anti-immigrant bias training for state employees and improve the effectiveness of current trainings.

- Support the development of a program within a public university that can conduct studies on immigrants to provide the state with updated information, including demographic data as well as barriers and solutions for successful immigrant integration.
- Build capacity for state agencies to include immigrants in their programs and services through outreach and special initiatives that meet the needs of the diverse immigrant populations, especially recent arrivals from Central and South America, the Middle East and North Africa.
- In light of federal inaction on immigration, secure federal support to respond effectively to the recent arrivals of asylum seekers from the U.S. southern border, and advocate for the federal government to expedite work authorization and enable states like Illinois to support immigrant visas and work authorization to fill employment gaps.

Illinois has been and remains one of the primary destinations of immigrants, who have profoundly enriched our state's economy and social fabric. This report is designed to document bipartisan efforts at both the legislative and executive levels of Illinois government to welcome and integrate immigrants into all communities across Illinois.

### **Asylum Seeker Arrivals**

Poverty and political instability in Venezuela and other countries in Central and South America have resulted in large numbers of migrants leaving their countries of origin and crossing the U.S. southern border to seek asylum. The Governor of Texas and organizations working at the border began to place asylum seekers on buses and send them north to New York, Washington, DC and Chicago. The first group of asylum seekers arrived at Union Station in Chicago at the end of August, 2022. Since then more busloads of migrants continued to arrive in fall of 2022 with the total reaching more than 3,750.

In the interest of aiding the people of Illinois and the local governments responsible for ensuring public health, safety and welfare, Governor JB Pritzker declared the State of Illinois as a disaster area allowing the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to implement the State Emergency Operations Plan, coordinate State resources, and aid with emergency purchases necessary for response. The State of Illinois has worked closely with the City of Chicago to provide shelter and basic supportive services to newly arrived migrants.

Beyond meeting the basic needs, the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago are helping asylum seekers to transition toward stable housing and self reliance through the Asylum Seeker Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ASERAP). Families and individuals are provided with support to locate apartments with six-month rental assistance. Immigrant service providers are available to assist with case management and link asylum seekers to community resources, such as food pantries, childcare and education services.

# Appendices

## Agencies Contracting with Illinois for Services to Immigrants

Note: this list is not exhaustive and is subject to change.

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Refugee Program</i>	<i>Illinois Welcoming Center (IWC)</i>	<i>New Americans Initiative (NAI)</i>	<i>Immigrant Family Resource Program (IFRP)</i>	<i>Public Charge Information</i>
Alianza Hispanoamericana NFP, Inc.	West Dundee					
Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment	Chicago			•		
Arab American Action Network	Chicago			•	•	•
Arab American Family Services	Worth		•	•	•	•
Ascend Justice	Chicago					
Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, Inc.	Olympia Fields		•			•
Beyond Legal Aid	Chicago					
Binational Institute of Human Development	Chicago					
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council	Chicago		•	•		
Cambodian Association of Illinois	Chicago				•	•
Cass County Health Department	Virginia		•			•
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago	Chicago	•				
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Rockford	Rockford	•				
Catholic Charities – Waukegan	Waukegan		•	•		•
Center for Changing Lives	Chicago					
Central States – SER	Chicago					
Centro de Información	Elgin		•	•	•	•
Centro de Trabajadores Unidos: United Workers' Center	Chicago			•		
Centro Romero	Chicago			•	•	•
Chicago Community and Workers' Rights	Chicago					
Chicago Volunteer Legal Services	Chicago					
Chicago Workers Collaborative	Waukegan					
Children's Legal Center	Chicago					
Chinese American Service League	Chicago		•	•	•	•
Chinese Mutual Aid Association	Chicago		•	•	•	•
Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago	Chicago					
Ecker Center for Behavioral Health	Elgin					

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Refugee Program</i>	<i>Illinois Welcoming Center (IWC)</i>	<i>New Americans Initiative (NAI)</i>	<i>Immigrant Family Resource Program (IFRP)</i>	<i>Public Charge Information</i>
Enlace Chicago	Chicago					
Erie Neighborhood House	Chicago			•	•	•
Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago	Chicago	•	•			
Family Focus Aurora	Aurora					•
Family Focus Chicago/Hermosa	Chicago		•	•	•	•
Family Focus Cicero	Cicero					•
Farmworker & Landscaper Advocacy Project	Chicago					
Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois / Casa Michoacán	Chicago		•	•	•	•
Greater Chicago Legal Clinic, Inc.	Chicago					
HANA Center	Chicago		•	•	•	•
Hanul Family Alliance	Mt. Prospect			•	•	•
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights – National Immigrant Justice Center	Chicago		•	•		
Heartland Human Care Services	Chicago	•				
Hispanic American Community Education & Services (HACES)	Waukegan			•	•	•
Illinois Legal Aid Online	Chicago					
Illinois Migrant Council	Crystal Lake				•	•
Indo-American Center	Chicago			•	•	•
Instituto del Progreso Latino	Chicago			•	•	•
Iraqi Mutual Aid Society	Chicago					•
Irish Community Services	Chicago			•		
JCFS Chicago/HIAS	Skokie	•		•		
Latino Organization of the Southwest	Chicago		•	•	•	
Latino Resource Institute of Illinois	Chicago		•			•
Legal Aid Chicago	Chicago					
Logan Square Neighborhood Association	Chicago			•		
Mano a Mano Family Resource Center	Round Lake Park		•	•	•	•
Metropolitan Family Services	Chicago					
Middle Eastern Immigrant and Refugee Alliance	Chicago		•	•	•	
Mujeres Latinas en Acción	Chicago			•		
Muslim Women Resource Center – Community Help Center	Chicago		•		•	•
North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic	Highland Park					
Northern Alliance For Immigrants	Hoffman Estates			•		

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Refugee Program</i>	<i>Illinois Welcoming Center (IWC)</i>	<i>New Americans Initiative (NAI)</i>	<i>Immigrant Family Resource Program (IFRP)</i>	<i>Public Charge Information</i>
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors	Chicago			•		
Northside Community Resources	Chicago				•	•
Northwest Side Housing Center	Chicago					
Onward House	Chicago		•			
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	Melrose Park		•			•
Pan African Association	Chicago					•
Partners for Our Communities	Palatine		•			
PASO – West Suburban Action Project	Melrose Park			•		
Polish American Association	Chicago			•	•	•
Puentes de Esperanza	Fairview Heights		•		•	•
Puerto Rican Cultural Center	Chicago					
Pui Tak Center	Chicago		•			
Quad Cities Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees	Davenport			•		
Refugee One	Chicago	•		•		
Rincon Family Services	Kankakee		•			
Rock Valley College	Rockford	•				
Rock Valley College Refugee and Immigrant Services	Rockford		•	•		
Saint Anthony Hospital	Chicago				•	
SAL Family and Community Services	Rock Island		•			•
SGA Youth and Family Services	Chicago					
South-East Asia Center	Chicago				•	•
Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)	Chicago			•		
Southwest Suburban Immigrant Project	Bolingbrook			•	•	
Spanish Community Center	Joliet					•
Syrian Community Network	Chicago		•	•	•	•
The Immigration Project	Normal		•	•		
The Refugee Center (ECIRMAC)	Champaign	•	•	•	•	•
The Resurrection Project	Chicago			•		
Township High School District 214 Community Education	Arlington Heights			•		
United African Organization	Chicago		•	•	•	
University of Illinois YMCA	Champaign		•	•	•	•
Vietnamese Association of Illinois	Chicago		•	•	•	•
Western Illinois Dreamers	Monmouth		•			
World Relief Chicago/DuPage/Aurora/Quad Cities	Chicago	•	•	•	•	•

<i>Name</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Refugee Program</i>	<i>Illinois Welcoming Center (IWC)</i>	<i>New Americans Initiative (NAI)</i>	<i>Immigrant Family Resource Program (IFRP)</i>	<i>Public Charge Information</i>
Xilin Association	Arlington Heights		•			•
Youth Service Bureau of Illinois Valley	Ottawa				•	•
YWCA Elgin	Elgin			•		
YWCA – Northwestern Illinois (YWCA – La Voz Latina)	Rockford		•		•	•

## Community Voices

At the first meeting of the Immigrant Impact Task Force, members agreed that the report needed to include community perspective on “the status of immigrant communities from urban, suburban and rural areas of Illinois.” In the summer and fall of 2022, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the administrative liaison for the task force, worked with task force members and the Illinois Welcoming Centers to host a series of “listening sessions.” These sessions were held both virtually and in person (when possible) to mitigate COVID-19 infection risk.

The goals of the listening sessions were to:

- Engage varied groups of immigrant communities from diverse geographic regions of the state.
- Learn of the successes and failures of state programs and support services provided in immigrant communities.
- Hear recommendations from participants for how the State of Illinois could improve the lives and livelihoods of immigrant communities.
- Determine prioritized locations for listening sessions; the task force looked at the top 10 counties in Illinois with the largest immigrant population (excluding Cook County), and locations were selected based on geographic and demographic representation, as well as community-based organizational support.

## Session Format and Participation

Each session was hosted by a local community organization and IDHS administrative staff. Sessions were on average 10-40 people. Breakout groups were randomly assigned virtually and consisted of 5-8 individuals in each session. Those convening in person gathered in one large discussion group. All sessions included an adaptation of the following discussion questions for breakout conversations:

- Can you tell us about the needs and challenges you experience when it comes to accessing services for yourself and your family, like health, education, transportation, housing, English language classes, etc.?
- Does your community have appropriate resources for immigrant and refugee families? Are there non-profit organizations in your community that offer services for you?
- Can you discuss the health, economic, social, etc. impact of the pandemic on you and your family? Did you receive help from the government or non-profit organizations? What types?
- Anything else you would like the Governor’s Office to know about immigrants and refugees in the State of Illinois?

## Community Listening Session Locations

<i>Location</i>	<i>Host</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Setting</i>
Beardstown	Western Illinois Dreamers	English/Spanish	In person
Bolingbrook	Southwest Suburban Immigrant Project (SSIP)	English/Spanish	In person
East St. Louis	Puentes de Esperanza	English/Spanish	In person
Peoria	Western Illinois Dreamers	English/Spanish	In person
Rock Island	World Relief Moline	English	In person
South Chicago	Centro de Trabajadores Unidos	English/Spanish	Via Zoom
Springfield	Western Illinois Dreamers	English/Spanish	In person
North Chicago	Hana Center	English/Korean	Via Zoom
Statewide	Department on Aging Area Agency on Aging	English	Via Zoom
Statewide	Broadband Lab Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Administrators	English	Via Zoom

## Community Recommendations

Below is a summary of recommendations made by community members categorized by themes heard across the community listening sessions.

<b>Childcare</b>	Fund childcare collectives and cooperatives to function for families with nontraditional work hours.			
<b>Linguistic and Cultural Barriers</b>	Fund community reinvestment through translation and interpretation training and recruiting immigrant community members to fill the need for licensed translators and/or interpreters	Community input on training materials to help state agencies understand immigrant communities and best practices.	Provide immigrant communities with training on how state agencies function and ways to access services, especially translation and interpretation	
<b>Employment</b>	Provide more accessible information about labor rules and rights for the workforce	Hire community navigators that can assist with education on labor rights Low levels of education abroad make ESL classes and school even more difficult and a barrier for adult and children immigrants alike	Increase wages so families can afford childcare, transportation and housing costs	Provide access to trade instruction and other job training programs for adults and youth
<b>Transportation</b>	Support transportation collectives	Extend public transportation, particularly bus lines during early morning and late at night to include more routes and service times	Drivers License: remove “Not valid for Identification Purposes” on the TVDL.	
<b>Mental Health/Health</b>	Need more investments for immigrant communities and mental health providers that are culturally and linguistically proficient	Children are in most need of mental health services and should have them in accessible community locations like libraries		
<b>Education</b>	Ensure education plan includes an acknowledgment of an immigrant’s education and abilities in their native language	Parents need more accessible school administrators and interpretation with teachers, and to learn the U.S. school system, which is so different than other countries		
<b>Legal Services</b>	State could provide immigration lawyers since immigrants need to access immigration law and there are very few to none in rural communities	Immigrants do not know their legal rights and responsibilities; providing Know Your Rights in many areas of law would educate immigrants on how to protect themselves and their families from harm		

The following is a summary of major themes that emerged from the conversations, along with direct and paraphrased quotes. Comments have been edited to avoid unintentional attribution to any specific person or geographic location.

### Linguistic and Cultural Barriers

- “[Refugee and immigrant communities] need cultural training to understand the system. Having a basic knowledge of how [agencies] in the U.S. operate would go a long way.”
- “Maybe [state institutions] could train community members who have the system figured out to explain these systems to fellow community members.”
- “The domestic violence shelters that are available don’t offer Spanish language services. When they do have Spanish services, it’s only on certain days or times.”
- “It’s often hard to communicate with the police because they don’t speak Spanish and many immigrants can’t communicate in English.”

## **Identification/Documentation/Legal Status**

- “The children in the Latino community aren’t getting the help that they need even though they are often citizens and/or residents, because their parents do not have the correct documentation.”
- “People often don’t have the Social Security numbers, background checks or credit scores that are needed to apply for housing.”
- “Immigrants are not accessing services because they are afraid of being caught or turned away.”
- “People in the community are scared of speaking up.”

## **Childcare**

- “Parents without childcare can risk losing their children to DCFS...they have to go to court, where they don’t have an immigrant advocate or interpreter.”
- “Many parents work long hours, off shifts and late hours. In addition they often have many children, which makes childcare even more difficult and expensive to access.”
- “Some local immigrants have tried to get licensed to provide childcare, but they are usually unable to get the license/papers to do so.”

## **Legal Needs**

- “There’s no access to lawyers when they’re needed. People end up having to represent themselves.”
- “There are very few immigration legal service providers. The ones that are available are so saturated that it’s hard to get an appointment.”

## **Transportation**

- “Transportation is an issue. Many people don’t have cars or driver's licenses.”
- “Even when resources are available, people either don’t know about them, can’t get an appointment or don’t have access to transportation to get there.”

## **Adult ESL**

- “Most people are too tired after working a 10-plus-hour day to go to an English class after work.”
- “Community members do not have the childcare to attend classes.”
- “Many people work late and/or long hours and it makes it almost impossible to go [to ESL classes].”

## **Medical Interpreters / Mental Health**

- “People are sometimes given digital translators or iPads in place of an interpreter. They don’t work well and the patients don’t understand what is going on or being said.”
- “Parents don’t know where to take their children when it comes to mental health issues.”
- “There is especially a need for mental health resources for victims of domestic violence and very young mothers.”
- “Discussing mental health is still very taboo in the immigrant community.”

## **Access to Technology**

- “Many community members do not know how to use technology very well. They come to the community center for help with that.”

## **Access to Financial Services**

- “Why can’t I use my TVDL as identification? It would make [opening a bank account] so much easier.”
- “People in our community can’t use the banking system. We must go through third parties and end up paying high percentages to cash checks there.”

## Housing/Shelter

- “People often don’t have the Social Security numbers, background checks or credit scores that are needed to apply for housing.”
- “Some landlords take advantage of immigrants. They charge unreasonable prices for deplorable living conditions.”

## Policing

- “Most people don’t know their rights when dealing with the police. The police take advantage of it and will give unnecessary tickets that the immigrant community can’t afford.”
- “When you call the police office, they don’t talk to you.”

## Work Opportunities

- “The biggest barriers to employment are language, childcare and transportation.”
- “Immigrants are afraid to file reports with the Department of Labor regardless of their status. They’re scared that they will have repercussions with immigration.”
- “Immigrant communities contribute with their work and taxes, but do not receive or are not eligible for all the benefits and programs that those taxes pay for. They don’t have pensions, they work overtime and don’t get paid for it, and they suffer from labor abuses.”

## COVID-19

- “Many people thought they had other illnesses, but in reality it was COVID.”
- “There wasn’t much education for the immigration community on what to do.”
- “We were able to access resources during the pandemic.”



Gaines, R. (March 11,2007). Tiny Dancer [photograph]. Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com>

# Immigrant Impact Task Force Enacting Legislation

Public Act 102-0236

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force Act.

Section 5. Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force.

- A. There is hereby established the Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force.
- B. The Task Force shall consist of 27 members appointed as follows:
  - 1. one member appointed by the President of the Senate;
  - 2. one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
  - 3. one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;
  - 4. one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;
  - 5. one representative of the Governor's Office;
  - 6. one representative of the Governor's Office of Management and Budget;
  - 7. one representative of the Lieutenant Governor's Office;
  - 8. the Executive Director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority or his or her designee;
  - 9. the Secretary of Human Services or his or her designee;
  - 10. the Director on Aging or his or her designee;
  - 11. the Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity or his or her designee;
  - 12. the Director of Children and Family Services or his or her designee;
  - 13. the Director of Public Health or his or her designee;
  - 14. the Director of Healthcare and Family Services or his or her designee;
  - 15. the Director of Human Rights or his or her designee;
  - 16. the Director of Employment Security or his or her designee;
  - 17. the Director of Juvenile Justice or his or her designee;
  - 18. the Director of Corrections or his or her designee;
  - 19. the Executive Director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority or his or her designee;
  - 20. the Chairman of the State Board of Education or his or her designee;
  - 21. the Chairman of the Board of Higher Education or his or her designee;
  - 22. the Chairman of the Illinois Community College Board or his or her designee; and
  - 23. five representatives from organizations offering aid or services to immigrants, appointed by the Governor.
- C. The Task Force shall convene as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, and shall hold at least 6 meetings. Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation. The Department of Human Services, in consultation with any other State agency relevant to the issue of immigration in this State, shall provide administrative and other support to the Task Force.
- D. The Task Force shall examine the following issues:
  - 1. what the State of Illinois is currently doing to proactively help immigrant communities in this State, including whether such persons are receiving help to become citizens, receiving help to become business owners, and receiving aid for educational purposes;
  - 2. what can the State do going forward to improve relations between the State and immigrant communities in this State;
  - 3. what is the status of immigrant communities from urban, suburban, and rural areas of this State, and whether adequate support and resources have been provided to these communities;

4. the extent to which immigrants in this State are being discriminated against;
  5. whether the laws specifically intended to benefit immigrant populations in this State are actually having a beneficial effect;
  6. the practices and procedures of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency within this State;
  7. the use and condition of detention centers in this State;
  8. all contracts in Illinois entered into with United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including contracts with private detention centers, the Illinois State Police, and the Secretary of State's Office, Division of Motor Vehicles;
  9. the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrant communities, including health impact rates, employment rates, housing, small businesses, and community development;
  10. the disbursement of funds received by different agencies that went to immigrant communities;
  11. language access programs and their impact on helping immigrant communities better interact with State agencies, and whether existing language access programs are effective in helping immigrant communities interact with the State. The Task Force shall also examine whether all State agencies provide language access for non-English speakers, and which agencies and in what regions of the State is there a lack of language access that creates barriers for non-English dominant speakers from accessing support from the State;
  12. the extent to which disparities in access to technology exist in immigrant communities and whether they lead to educational, financial, and other disadvantages; and
  13. the extent to which State programs intended for vulnerable populations such as victims of trafficking, crime, and abuse are being implemented or need to be implemented.
- E. The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations based upon its examination of issues under subsection (d) to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before May 31, 2022.

Section 10. Repeal. This Act is repealed on January 1, 2023.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.

# Endnotes

- 1 See: National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), "States Offering Driver's Licenses to Immigrants," <https://www.ncsl.org/immigration/states-offering-drivers-licenses-to-immigrants>; NCSL, "Tuition Benefits for Immigrants," <https://www.ncsl.org/immigration/tuition-benefits-for-immigrants>; NCSL, "Professional and Occupational Licenses for Immigrants," <https://www.ncsl.org/immigration/professional-and-occupational-licenses-for-immigrants>; KFF, "Health Coverage and Care of Immigrants," <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-and-care-of-immigrants/>.
- 2 Milliman, Inc., as of February 2023
- 3 Milliman, Inc., as of February 2023
- 4 Milliman, Inc., as of February 2023
- 5 As of fall, 2022.
- 6 FY23
- 7 FY22
- 8 FY22
- 9 FY23 (number based on families).
- 10 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 The American Community Survey does not inquire about immigration status, so these numbers of LPRs and undocumented are the author's estimate based on published information from the Department of Homeland Security and other sources.
- 13 Migration Policy Institute, "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools," <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles> (accessed January 16, 2023).
- 14 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *2021 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2021>.
- 15 Pew Hispanic Center.
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- 21 Unless otherwise noted, information in this section has been provided by the Illinois Department of Human Services.
- 22 Jewish United Fund Illinois Refugee Resettlement Services, state fiscal year 2020 annual data.
- 23 Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, *New Americans Initiative Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2022*.
- 24 *Higher Ed Immigration Portal*, <https://www.higheredimmigrationportal.org/state/illinois/> (accessed January 14, 2023).
- 25 Rob Paral and Associates, "Assessing Capacity to Provide Legal Services to Undocumented Immigrants in Illinois," *The Resurrection Project*, <https://resurrectionproject.org/assessing-legal-capacity/#:~:text=The%20Resurrection%20Project%20and%20Rob,of%20legal%20service%20providers%2C%20and>.
- 26 Illinois Access to Justice, *2022 Illinois Access to Justice Annual Report*, <https://ilaccesstojustice.com/2022ila2jreport/>.
- 27 Illinois Access to Justice, fiscal year 2022 periodic performance report.
- 28 Illinois General Assembly Public Act 097-1157.
- 29 Illinois Secretary of State, "Temporary Visitor Driver's License Program (TVDL)," <https://ilsos.gov/departments/drivers/TVDL/home.html> (accessed November 18, 2022).
- 30 Amanda Vinicky, "What Illinois Offers Undocumented Immigrants," *WTTW*, July 16, 2019, <https://news.wttw.com/2019/07/16/what-illinois-offers-undocumented-immigrants>.
- 31 Illinois General Assembly Public Act 100-1078.
- 32 Illinois General Assembly Public Act 099-0419.
- 33 Illinois General Assembly Public Act 97-0233.
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- 41 Illinois General Assembly, Public Act 100-0463.
- 42 Illinois General Assembly, Public Act 101-0020.
- 43 Illinois General Assembly, Public Act 102-0234.
- 44 Elvia Malagón, "Immigration Detention Ends in Illinois after ICE Transfers Those Awaiting Deportation to 46 Out-of-State Jails," *Chicago Sun Times*, February 15, 2022, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2022/2/15/22934966/chicago-immigration-illinois-way-forward-ice-detention-immigrants-detainees-mchenry-kankakee>.
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- 46 Pursuant to 92 Illinois Administrative Code 1030.6(q) and 92 Illinois Administrative Code 1030.8(i).
- 47 Electronic communication with Lieutenant Colonel Rebecca Hooks, Chief of Staff, Office of the Director, Illinois State Police, January 19, 2023.
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- 49 Illinois State Board of Education, "Grants and Funding: Division of English Language Learning," [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Grants\\_Funding.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Grants_Funding.pdf), (accessed November 18, 2022).
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- 56 Illinois State Board of Education, "Multilingual Identification," <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Screening-for-English-Language-Proficiency.aspx>.
- 57 2 Illinois Administrative Code 228.
- 58 Illinois State Board of Education, *English Learners in Illinois SY 2020-2021 Statistical Report* accessed November 18, 2022 at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/el-program-stat-rpt21.pdf>.
- 59 Illinois State Board of Education, "Migrant Education Program: Evaluation Report 2020-21," prepared by META Associates, April 2022, [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL\\_MEP\\_Evaluation.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL_MEP_Evaluation.pdf).
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Illinois General Assembly, Public Act 95-0965.
- 62 Illinois Department of Public Health, "Hospital Uninsured Patient Discount Act," [http://www.healthcarereportcard.illinois.gov/contents/view/Hospital\\_Uninsured\\_Patient\\_Discount\\_Act](http://www.healthcarereportcard.illinois.gov/contents/view/Hospital_Uninsured_Patient_Discount_Act).
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- 66 Illinois Department of Employment Security, accessed December 12, 2022.
- 67 Electronic communication with Edgar Revuelta, Public Service Administrator, Illinois Department of Employment Security.
- 68 Illinois General Assembly, 820 ILCS 175.
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- 70 Illinois General Assembly, Public Law 102-0233.
- 71 Electronic communication with Steven Monroy, Director of Fair Housing, IDHR, December 15, 2022.
- 72 The Chicago Commission on Human Relations reports that about 10 percent of its complaints of discrimination involved ancestry or national-origin discrimination. City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations, "2020 Annual Report," <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cchr.html>, (accessed December 12, 2022).
- 73 U.S. Department of Justice, "Justice Department Resolves Discrimination Claim Against Bolingbroke, Illinois, Meat Processing

- Plant,” March 5, 2018, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-resolves-discrimination-claim-against-bolingbrook-illinois-meat-processing-and-others>.
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- 75 Jake Wittich, “Breakthru Beverage Agrees to \$950,000 Settlement Over Employment Discrimination Allegations,” Chicago Sun Times, October 23, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/business/2019/10/23/20929300/breakthru-beverage-agrees-to-950000-settlement-over-employment-discrimination-allegations>.
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- 77 See Illinois Administrative Code at <https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/089001200H03100R.html>.
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- 82 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2015–January 2018,” <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/population-estimates/unauthorized-resident>, (accessed February 2, 2023).
- 83 Rob Paral and Associates, “Illinois’ Undocumented Immigrant Population: A Summary of Recent Research,” *Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights*, <https://robparal.com/wp-content/uploads/Illinois-Undocumented-Immigrant-Population.pdf>.