



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IMMIGRATION

OVERVIEW

On March 3, 2025, the City of Syracuse convened local and state organizations to discuss the changes to federal immigration policy. This community briefing was held to provide updates to residents seeking guidance and resources to navigate changes to federal immigration policy, understand local enforcement, and understand their rights. This document outlines the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) received by the City and addressed at this event.

GENERAL POLICY AND ACTION

What does it mean to be a welcoming city?

Syracuse has been and always will be a welcoming city and proud refugee and immigrant resettlement community. The City of Syracuse's goal is to protect the safety of all our residents and help connect residents to information and resources.

How can I stay informed about policies that affect me?

The Federal U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website has the most up to date information on changes to immigration policy. In addition, residents can connect with local refugee resettlement agencies and immigration attorneys who are front-of-line in receiving updates and clarifying information.

What steps should I take now to secure my status or prepare for possible changes?

Preparation will depend on your current legal status. If you are unsure about your status, contact a local resettlement agency or immigration attorney for support.

Where can I find free or low-cost legal aid to support immigration or civil rights issues?

The Volunteer Lawyers Project of CNY and Hiscock Legal Aid Society help support residents in navigating immigration issues. The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) is also active in supporting civil rights issues.

What Federal fiscal changes are taking place that are affecting programming on a local level? What has been the impact to date?

On January 20, 2025 President Trump signed an executive order "Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program", which indefinitely suspended the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. This executive order in addition to state and federal impacts to funding have affected resettling, agency staffing capacity, and the provision of services to New Americans.

DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

What is the latest information regarding DACA? Any proposed changes or restrictions? What are the impacts on the local level?

The latest information regarding DACA can be found on the USCIS website. For support navigating your situation, connect with Hiscock Legal Aid Society, VLPCNY, or any local resettlement agency.

What happens to other family members if a child or parent is detained?

Families should have an emergency plan together to establish who will care for family members in the event that the main caretaker is detained. What happens with remaining family members is dependent on the plan that has been put in place (power of attorney, caregiver authorization affidavit, guardianship, verbal agreement etc.). If a family member is detained and no plan has been put in place, please contact NYCLU, Hiscock Legal Aid Society, VLPCNY, or a local resettlement agency for help navigating your situation.

TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE STATUS (TPS)

What is the latest information regarding TPS? Any proposed changes or restrictions? What are the impacts on the local level?

USCIS has the latest information for changes related to TPS. To date, impacted populations have included Venezuelans and Afghans. If you are concerned regarding your status, please contact a local resettlement agency, Hiscock Legal Aid Society, or VLPCNY.

ICE ENFORCEMENT AND DETAINMENT

What rights do I have when engaging with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in a public and private setting (home)?

Regardless of immigration status, every person in the United States has the right to remain silent, the right to be free from unreasonable searches, and the right to an attorney. Law enforcement cannot enter private spaces (home) or search your person without permission or a judicial warrant. The warrant must have a valid date, address and name. You have the right to remain silent and request a lawyer.

What does emergency preparedness look like for families?

Emergency preparation should include a Child Care Plan, knowing where to go for trusted immigration services, and knowing your constitutional rights in case of an encounter with an immigration officer. Agencies encourage individuals to carry U.S. identification at all times in case of an emergency.

Do we envision ICE entering city schools? What is the Syracuse City School District's (SCSD) policy around sharing information?

In the event SCSD staff engage with ICE, Department of Homeland Security, or Federal agents, the district's protocol directs staff to ensure visitors sign in and adhere to district policy, maintain a calm demeanor, and immediately contact the Superintendent's office, who will contact the district's legal counsel for advice on how to proceed. Parents and guardians will be contacted when warranted. Schools cannot disclose student immigration status without parental consent. Personal identifiable information can only be shared if required by a judicial order or subpoena, or with parental/guardian consent.

ICE ENFORCEMENT AND DETAINMENT CONTINUED

What do I do as an employer if ICE visits? How can I protect my employees?

Immigration agents may come to your workplace for a Form I-9 audit, raid or to detain specific people. ICE agents can enter public areas of your business without permission but that does not give them authority to stop, question, or arrest just anyone. No one can enter private areas of your business without your permission. To prepare, you can make a written response plan ahead of time, train staff, and understand your rights as a business owner and your employees' rights.

HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

Visit syr.gov/immigration for more information, including a list of online resources provided by Immigration Partners to help connect families to information about their rights and legal options.

IMMIGRATION PARTNERS

Local Government

City of Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business Development: 315-448-8100 | nbd@syr.gov | syr.gov/NBD

City of Syracuse Police Department: 315-442-5200 | spd@syr.gov | syr.gov/police

Onondaga County Sheriff's Office: 315-435-3044 | sheriff.ongov.net

Onondaga County Probation Department: 315-435-2321 | onondaga.gov/probation

Syracuse City School District Superintendent Office: 315-435-4161 | tpiraino@scsd.us | syracusecityschools.com

Local Community

Catholic Charities: 315-424-1800 | ccoc.us

Hiscock Legal Aid Society: 315-422-8191 | hlalaw.org

InterFaith Works' Center for New Americans: 315-449-3552 | info@ifwcny.org | interfaithworkscny.org

New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU): 1-212-607-3300 | cnyintake@nyclu.org | nyclu.org

New York Immigration Coalition: 917-734-6148 | nyic.org

Refugee and Immigrant Self-Empowerment (RISE): 315-214-4480 | info@syracuserise.org | jubadmedia.wixsite.com/rise

Volunteer Lawyers Project of CNY (VLPCNY): 315-471-3409 ext. 601 | immigration@vlpcny.org | vlpcny.org

Workers Center of CNY: 315-218-5708 | wccny@workerscentercny.org | workerscny.org

State and Federal Government

New York State Office of Attorney General Letitia James: 1-800-771-7755 | ag.ny.gov

New York State Office for New Americans (ONA): 1-800-566-7636 | Hotline Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. | newamericans@dos.ny.gov | dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS): 1-800-375-5283 | uscis.gov | uscis.gov/humanitarian