

# WeRISE PLAN

## (Raise Immigrant Safety and Empowerment)

New York City is, and has always been, a city of immigrants. It is the “gorgeous mosaic,” as former Mayor David Dinkins famously put it, that defines what this city means to people from all over the world, as a destination for diversity and a place where everyone is embraced and free to pursue their dreams. We are not only home to the United Nations; we are the home of people from every nation.

It’s true by every metric. A 2015-19 estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau showed that 36.8 percent of this city’s residents — more than one out of every three — is foreign-born, living across the five boroughs. This city speaks more than 150 different languages. According to a 2018 report from the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), 52 percent of our businesses are immigrant-owned.

What the numbers may not show as easily are the challenges that our immigrant community faces every day in making their dreams a reality. Too many of our neighbors live in the shadows, scarred by the abusive rhetoric and tactics of the Trump era and fearing a denial of their rights. The intimidating complexity of our City bureaucracy is compounded by the challenges that immigrants with limited English proficiency face in navigating everything from education to housing to healthcare.

An Adams Administration will lift up immigrants as high as Lady Liberty lifts her torch in our harbor, as a beacon of hope for all who come to our shores. In addition to building on our existing efforts to increase civic engagement to new levels and foster the leadership of voices from every community, we will ensure that together WeRISE (Raise Immigrant Safety and Empowerment).



# WE WILL:

**LAUNCH A \$50 MILLION ANNUAL IMMIGRANT VENTURE FUND** for small businesses started by first- and second-generation New Yorkers, with a special weight toward businesses that support the immigrant community. To pay for this Venture Fund, we would divert funds from EDC's budget that are historically allocated for discretionary tax benefits and tax-exempt financing for major companies seeking City support.

**DIRECT ALL CITY AGENCIES TO MAKE THEIR SERVICES ACCESSIBLE WITHOUT PUTTING IMMIGRANTS AT RISK** of law enforcement action, and expand already existing legal services. We will also severely restrict cooperation between the NYPD and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) – including ensuring that ICE is removed from all City buildings and facilities – until there is major federal reform, including the use of body cameras by all ICE agents.

**BOOST FUNDING FOR NYC CARES** to expand outreach to immigrant communities and enroll them in the City's health plans for which they are already eligible. We will also create one-stop-shop health centers in underserved communities, sited in NYCHA complexes and open storefronts that are accessible to any New Yorker – no matter their legal status in the U.S., as well as pair safety-net hospitals with wealthier ones to share cost burdens.

**PRIORITIZE LANGUAGE JUSTICE, AND FUND IT.** The pandemic has proven once again the vital importance of reaching people where they are with credible messengers who can ably communicate in the many languages of our city. We need a fully-funded program as part of our crisis management strategy that ensures we have City translators to disseminate essential services and key information. We will also work closely with community-based organizations serving immigrants and our higher education institutions to recruit a diverse roster of qualified translators and stipend-based fellows that can expand the language access of our City's constituent assistance, documents, and public hearings. Every form and application should be available in multiple languages; Spanish and English are not enough, we have the technology to go further.

**ENHANCE THE IDNYC PROGRAM** with extraordinary security to protect users, an improved MyCity platform that provides direct connection to social services through a single portal, and mandating access to this program for any person leaving Rikers Island

and needing proof of identity. Imagine typing only one number into a secure app or Web site and instantly receiving every service and benefit you qualify for — such as SNAP — without any paperwork, as well as constant up-to-date information that will help you protect you and your family. If you own a business, you can manage City paperwork through it. If you are making repairs to your property, you will have direct access to the Department of Buildings. And, if you opt-in to using a chip-enabled City ID, you can sail through in-person interactions with City agencies, instantly have access to a bank account, and even get City loyalty discounts at participating local businesses. With the technology now available, there is no reason New York City cannot do that for every New Yorker. This is a 311 for the digital age, and so much more.

**USE OUR LEVERAGE AS A CLIENT TO CREATE A FAIRER ECONOMY FOR IMMIGRANTS.** We will reward businesses that hire local workers and benefit minority and female owners and workers — especially on City-financed projects. Specifically, businesses will be asked to commit to hiring 75 percent city-based workers, prioritizing M/WBE contractors, and ensuring their contractors pay a living wage and report their workers’ residency and ethnicity statistics. Employers who agree to these terms could benefit from tax breaks and special consideration for City contracts.

**HIRE A CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER** to drive change on equity for minorities and women, and also create a tool to track the share of M/WBE contracts and how much the City is spending on those companies versus others in real-time. We will also much more closely track who these M/WBE employers and contractors are employing, and the Chief Diversity Officer will be tasked with tracking gender pay equity and the progress we are making toward closing the gap; first they will focus on pay equity within City agencies, and then we will push to track it across private employers in the City.

**BOLSTER CITY LEGAL SERVICES BATTLING DISCRIMINATION** in the workplace, such as cases of wage theft and unjust denial of Section 8 vouchers, as well as any other forms of harassment based on immigration status. This will include increasing the number of attorneys at the Commission on Human Rights.

**COMBAT HATE CRIME WITH A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY, INCLUDING ATTACKS TARGETING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.** We will direct the NYPD to prioritize language justice for victims to make it easier to safely report, and work in partnership with our district attorneys to ensure that they have the resources they need to swiftly identify, apprehend, and prosecute those who prey on innocent New Yorkers through these cowardly acts.

We will take a more robust approach with the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes that includes rapid graffiti removal, support for expanded anti-hate curriculums in our public schools, and innovative cross-cultural dialogue initiatives like our "Breaking Bread, Building Bonds" program at Brooklyn Borough Hall that brings together everyday people each from all various ethnicities, identities, and faiths around a dinner and conversation.

**INSTITUTE A ROBUST PROGRAM FOR CULTURALLY-AWARE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS.**

Nearly one-half of all New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home, and new New Yorkers from hundreds of different countries move here every year. Their kids may have very different cultural norms that affect how they learn and their ability to succeed in an American classroom. We will create a professional development program for educators to ensure they are culturally responsive to those students.

**OPEN A NEW MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND ETHNIC MEDIA,** to expand the resources they need to continue bringing vital information to New Yorkers. Building on Executive Order 47 of 2019, which mandated that all City agencies spend at least 50 percent of their annual print and digital publication advertising in local community media outlets, we will ensure the inclusion of New York City's ethnic TV and radio outlets with no more than five staff members already within the scope of the executive order. A community and ethnic media marketing executive director position will be created and tasked with upholding a unified message of the City's services, distribution of paid advertisements, and campaigns to community media.

