The New York Immigrant Family Unity Project:

Good for Families, Good for Employers, and Good for All New Yorkers
The Center for Popular Democracy (CPD) promotes equity, opportunity, and a dynamic democracy in partnership with innovative community-based organizations, local and state networks, and progressive unions across the country. CPD develops cutting-edge state & local policies that deliver tangible benefits to communities and builds organizational infrastructure & capacity so our partners can grow stronger and expand.

The Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights (NMCIR) is a non-profit organization, founded by affected community members in 1982 to educate, defend and protect the rights of immigrants. Recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals, NMCIR provides legal immigration services to the dispossessed and leads in innovative policy making that includes the participation of directly affected members.

The Kathryn O. Greenberg Immigration Justice Clinic at Cardozo School of Law responds to the vital need today for quality legal representation for indigent immigrants facing deportation, while also providing students with invaluable hands-on lawyering experience. It represents immigrants facing deportation before federal immigration authorities and in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and represents immigrant community-based organizations on litigation and advocacy projects. The work of the Immigration Justice Clinic is generously supported by The JPB Foundation.

Make the Road New York (MRNY) builds the power of Latino and working class communities to achieve dignity and justice through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services.

This report was made possible through the generous support of The New York Community Trust & The JPB Foundation.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, thousands of New Yorkers — parents, siblings, employers, workers and students — face detention and the possibility of deportation without the assistance of legal counsel. These New Yorkers are isolated from their loved ones and confront the possibility of long-term and, in some cases, permanent separation from their communities.

This system of detention and deportation calls our collective commitment to due process into question. Immigration proceedings share many of the same features as criminal proceedings, with immigrant New Yorkers risking their liberty and extended separation from their families and communities. Yet, unlike criminal proceedings, immigration proceedings lack basic safeguards to guarantee fairness. Most strikingly, because New Yorkers have no guaranteed access to counsel in immigration proceedings, thousands face trained government attorneys in these high-stakes proceedings every year without the benefit of legal assistance. This leads to detentions that continue for months or years longer than necessary and deportations of New Yorkers who have viable legal claims to remain in the communities they call home.

But these are not the only costs. Current policies and practices are also costly in economic terms, resulting in significant annual outlays. Needlessly long detentions and avoidable deportations burden Empire State employers, New York State government, immigrant families and, ultimately, New Yorkers as a whole.

New York State employers pay an estimated $9.1 million in turnover-related costs annually as they are forced to replace detained or deported employees. NYIFUP would save employers $4 million in such costs each year.

The detention or deportation of a parent makes it difficult for some students to complete school, limiting their long-term earning potential, increasing reliance on public health insurance programs and decreasing tax revenues. Over 10 years of the NYIFUP program, this would translate into $3.1 million in annualized costs to the state each year. NYIFUP would save New York over $1.3 million in such costs each year.

NYIFUP would produce $4 million in savings for Empire State employers each year, by preventing turnover-related costs stemming from detentions and deportations. Taken together, these savings offset the majority of the investment needed to establish the program.

Few investments have the potential to yield such far-reaching returns. We urge New York State to seize the opportunity to create a first-in-the-nation, statewide system of universal representation for individuals who are detained and facing deportation. Doing so will produce $5.9 million in savings each year to New York State and employers, ensure that the system lives up to our most closely-held ideals and help to keep Empire State families whole.
An Investment in Fairness for All New Yorkers

THE NEW YORK IMMIGRANT FAMILY UNITY PROJECT (NYIFUP) would guarantee universal, quality legal representation for New Yorkers who are detained and facing deportation. While the New York City Council, recognizing the importance of this program for immigrants, their families and the City as a whole, has funded a pilot initiative, thousands of Empire State residents continue to face detention and deportation simply because they cannot afford counsel. NYIFUP would be the nation’s first, statewide government-funded deportation defense system, ensuring access to due process and helping to keep immigrant families together. This analysis discusses the often-overlooked impacts of detention and deportation at the state level and demonstrates the fiscal benefits associated with statewide implementation of a system of universal representation.

Currently, federal law fails to guarantee representation to immigrants involved in deportation proceedings because these proceedings are considered civil, not criminal. However, deportation proceedings resemble criminal cases in at least three important ways:

- They involve direct and severe restrictions on physical liberty;
- A negative outcome results in separation from family and community; and
- Many immigrants in removal proceedings are confined in county jails and DHS detention centers, in conditions identical to those of pre-trial criminal defendants.

Indeed, the Supreme Court has characterized deportation as a “drastic measure” that can result in the “loss of all that makes life worth living.”

NYIFUP would address this problem. Through an investment of $7.4 million – or 78-cents per personal income taxpayer per year – the program would bring our detention and deportation policies and practices in line with our shared values. NYIFUP’s system of universal representation with screening only for financial eligibility would produce six important benefits for the families that call New York home, the businesses that help to drive its economy and the state as a whole.

1. NYIFUP would bring immigration proceedings in line with our deeply-held values of justice, due process and equal treatment, and demonstrate the state’s commitment to its families;

2. The program would reduce dramatic disparities in outcomes in removal cases, enhancing the integrity of the current system;

3. A statewide system of universal representation would save New York State employers millions in costs associated with replacing employees who are lost due to deportation or detention;

4. NYIFUP would reduce costs associated with students who drop out of school due to the deportation or detention of a parent;

5. NYIFUP would reduce costs to the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) that result from elevated rates of obesity among children of detained and deported New Yorkers as well as the loss of a parent’s employer-provided coverage; and

6. The program would ease state costs related to foster care for children who are left without caregivers following detention or deportation of a parent.
1. NYIFUP Will Align Judicial Processes with Core Values. The failure of government to ensure legal counsel for detained immigrants is in stark conflict with our values of justice, due process, and equal treatment. This failure undermines our most closely held ideals as New Yorkers and as Americans. NYIFUP would help ensure that deportation proceedings reflect fundamental values. With NYIFUP, New York State would also signal that it values all New Yorkers. The program would represent an investment in Empire State employers who create jobs that fuel our economy and New York workers whose steady commitment and skill generate critical revenue and growth. By funding NYIFUP, New York State would also make it clear that it is fully invested in the young people who will both drive its economy and lead its communities in the years to come. Finally, NYIFUP would demonstrate a commitment to supporting strong families for a stronger New York.

2. NYIFUP Will Prevent Vastly Unequal Outcomes Among Similarly Situated New Yorkers. The lack of guaranteed, high-quality representation translates into disparate outcomes for immigrant New Yorkers involved in removal proceedings (See Chart 1). Immigrants who are unable to retain counsel are released from detention while their deportation cases are pending at significantly lower rates than immigrants who are able to secure counsel. Those detainees who are released have much more successful outcomes. Moreover, even among those immigrants who remain detained throughout their proceedings, representation makes a crucial difference. As a result of the lower release and win rates, detained immigrants with counsel are approximately 1000 percent more likely to succeed in preventing deportation than detained immigrants who are forced to proceed without attorneys. Indeed, immigrants who remain detained without counsel have almost no chance of preventing their deportation.

While a number of factors contribute to the government’s decisions about who is ultimately ordered deported, a particularly important factor is whether immigrants have qualified legal counsel. Competent immigration lawyers are able to help detained immigrants understand their rights, identify and fully prepare their legal claims to stay in the United States, seek release from detention, and communicate with employers and family members who can participate in their defense. Qualified attorneys are also able to provide accurate advice to detained immigrants about their legal options, including advising some immigrants that they have a low likelihood of success under current immigration

---

**Chart 1. Successful Outcomes by Legal Representation Status.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Representation Status</th>
<th>Successful Outcomes of Represented Detainees</th>
<th>Successful Outcomes of Unrepresented Detainees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Per income tax payer per year**

- 78 cents
- $4M

**Health insurance savings and tax revenue**

- $1.3M

**Per year in savings to State Child Health Insurance Program costs**

- $310K

**Foster care savings per year**

- $263K

**Total annual savings for NY State and employers**

- $5.9M

---

**Foster care savings**

- $263K

**Health insurance savings and tax revenue**

- $1.3M

**Per income tax payer per year**

- 78 cents

---

**Turnover related savings for NY State employers**

- $4M

---

Other savings:

- $5.9M
- $310K
- $263K
- 78 cents
- 4M
law. Accurate advice thus leads to shorter period of detention and shorter proceedings for immigrants who understand that they are unlikely to prevail.

The current system, in which most detainees lack legal representation, results in immigrant New Yorkers being detained months or years longer than necessary and results in the deportation of people who have viable legal claims to stay in the United States. These unnecessarily long detentions and avoidable deportations burden our state, our businesses, immigrant families and the millions of residents who live, work and attend school with immigrant New Yorkers every day.

3. NYIFUP WILL REDUCE COSTS TO NEW YORK STATE EMPLOYERS. When immigrants are detained for long periods of time without legal counsel, they miss the opportunity to communicate with employers through an attorney and to prepare a strong case for detention release, increasing the likelihood that they will lose their jobs. When immigrants are wrongly ordered deported, they will certainly lose their jobs. As a result, employers who need to replace these lost workers will incur new hiring and training costs and will experience a decline in productivity as new workers learn the ropes.

By ensuring that immigrants with viable claims to remain and work in the United States are not wrongly ordered deported without a chance to present those claims, NYIFUP will greatly reduce the business costs associated with unnecessary employee turnover. A Center for American Progress review of 30 previous studies of turnover costs shows that these costs are regularly 20 percent of annual wages for workers earning less than $50,000 and 16 percent of annual wages for workers earning less than $30,000. Assuming that all deportees and detainees held through their proceedings will be replaced, New York employers will bear up to $9.1 million in detention- and deportation-related turnover costs. Under NYIFUP, with the help of skilled attorneys, more New Yorkers would be released from detention and able to return to work while challenging removal, and more would prevail. As a result, turnover and re-training costs would drop to $5.1 million, saving New York’s businesses $4 million each year.

CHART 2. DIFFERENCE IN EMPLOYEE TURNOVER COSTS WITH NYIFUP, IN MILLIONS.

4. NYIFUP WILL ALLOW MORE CHILDREN OF DETAINED AND DEPORTED NEW YORKERS TO COMPLETE SCHOOLING AND SECURE BETTER JOBS, PROVIDING INCREASED REVENUE FOR NEW YORK STATE. Roughly 23 percent of detainees report having U.S. citizen children. The government does not keep statistics regarding non-citizen children and, as a result, the estimates in this section do not capture the full savings New York State will actually realize. Those detainees with children average 1.8 U.S. citizen children each. With approximately 2450 New Yorkers detained for deportation each year, roughly 1200 U.S. citizen children are directly affected. Several studies have detailed the effects on the psychological well-being, sense of security and stability, and school attendance and performance of the children of detained and deported immigrants. As a direct result of detention and deportation of a parent, children are at an increased risk for dropping out of school, which has lifelong implications for not only their earning potential, but also for state and local tax revenues and public health insurance costs.
The long-term consequences of citizen children dropping out are devastating, and the long-term costs to the state are enormous. Students who drop out of school become adults who earn significantly less because they lack a high-school diploma. As a result, they contribute less to state and local tax revenues and rely more heavily on public health insurance programs.

While these impacts are not felt in the year parents are deported or the year that children leave school, they accrue over time as families attempt to deal with the emotional and economic costs of loss of a loved one. We estimate that over the course of a decade, the state will lose $31,625,000 as a result of educational disruption that is linked to detention and deportation. This translates into an annualized cost of $3.1 million.

Under NYIFUP, however, fewer New York students would be forced to deal with the prospect of long-term or permanent separation from a parent while also trying to complete their studies. These young people would be more likely to remain in school, increasing their chances for significantly higher earnings over time and boosting tax revenues. As a result, in the first decade of its operation, on average NYIFUP would save New York over $1.3 million in educational disruption costs each year.

5. NYIFUP Will Reduce Costs to the State Children’s Health Insurance Program. Currently 57 percent of U.S. citizen children have health insurance through private coverage or their parents’ employer-based program. The detention or deportation of a parent who provides a family’s health insurance can often result in a lapse in coverage and children entering the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). This shift costs the state just about $161,000 per year. Under NYIFUP it would cost about $91,000 each year.

Further, one study found that 60 percent of the interviewed children of deportees were obese, compared to 19.1 percent among Latinos more generally. This is likely due to depression and anxiety arising from the loss of a parent and resulting financial instability. The public health-insurance medical costs for obese patients exceed those for normal-weight patients by $1100 per year. Under current conditions, we estimate the obesity related costs to SCHIP to be $523,000 annually. These costs carry on beyond the year in which a parent is deported. Under NYIFUP, we estimate the obesity related costs to SCHIP to decrease to $281,000 a year.

With NYIFUP, fewer immigrant New Yorkers would lose employer-based care, forcing their children to enter the SCHIP program. In addition, fewer deportations would lead to less obesity among children of immigrant New Yorkers and reduced public-health insurance medical costs for such patients. Based on these two factors, we estimate that detentions and deportations cost SCHIP around $685,000 each year and that NYIFUP would save the state about $313,000 annually.

**Chart 4 Increased Children’s Public Health Insurance Costs Resulting from Detention and Deportation**

---

Photo Chris Goldberg
6. NYIFUP Will Reduce State Foster Care Costs. Immigrant parents are often detained even if they are single parents or primary caretakers for their minor children. Of the approximately 1,200 children in a given year whose parents are detained, 32 will likely enter the foster care system as a result of their parents’ detention or deportation, at a cost of about $562,000 per year to the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). Under NYIFUP, more detainees will be released while awaiting proceedings and fewer will be deported. Among these will be parents who will be able to continue providing care. As a result, NYIFUP would reduce foster care costs by over $263,000 each year.

This study shows some of the ways in which NYIFUP will benefit New York economically, as it saves government and New York employers $5.9 million in costs associated with the detention and deportation of immigrant residents. NYIFUP will decrease costly, avoidable disruptions in employment, education and family life, while ensuring that New York more closely adheres to core values of justice, due process, and equal treatment for all.

New York State has an opportunity to lead by creating the nation’s first, statewide system of universal representation for residents who are detained and facing deportation. Investment in NYIFUP will demonstrate New York’s commitment to building strong families and safeguarding its economic future.

We urge the Governor and Senate and Assembly leaders to ensure that the 2014-2015 state budget includes a $7.4 million line item for NYIFUP, providing resources to bring judicial processes in line with core values, avert losses to New York State business and prevent the needless destruction of New York State families. An investment at this level would fund representation for the 2,450 New Yorkers statewide who are detained and face deportation but are unable to afford counsel each year.

If, however, New York State fails to seize this opportunity, we urge New York City leaders to do so. We strongly encourage the Office of the Mayor and the New York City Council to include a $5.3 million appropriation for NYIFUP in the 2014-2015 budget, furnishing resources for quality legal representation for the 1,650 New York City residents whose cases are venued either at the Varick Street immigration court or at courts in Elizabeth and Newark, New Jersey.

With federal immigration reform stalled, it is incumbent on state and local governments to innovate. Through NYIFUP, state and local leaders in New York can address weaknesses in our current immigration system that tear families apart, undermine our most deeply-held values, impose costs on Empire State businesses and sap resources from important public programs.
Appendix: Methodological Notes

Statewide Impact of Detention and Deportation. We estimated that 2,450 New Yorkers are detained each year. A Vera Institute analysis of Executive Office for Immigration Review data shows that 33 percent of detainees are represented. The same analysis shows that represented detainees have a 74.1 percent chance of being released before their hearing and unrepresented detainees have a 23.2 percent chance of being released before their hearing.

Rate of Deportation. We applied New York Immigrant Representation Study findings of the rates of deportation and relief for the different groups of detainees: detained through proceedings, without representation; detained through proceedings, with representation; released, without representation; and released, with representation.xv

To calculate the deportation rates under the NYIFUP condition, we applied the rates of deportation or relief for immigrants with legal representation under the current condition.

Detainees with U.S. Citizen (USC) Children and Affected Children. We relied on figures from a recent study of the impacts of detention and deportation practices in New York City on families.xvi This study shows that 23 percent of detainees report having U.S. citizen children and that those detainees average 1.8 children each. Importantly, this number is a conservative estimate because it is based on reports to ICE agents at the time of apprehension, when parents might be fearful for their families’ safety.

Immigrants at or Below 200 Percent of the Federal Poverty Level. To calculate the number of detainees and USC children of detainees at this income level, we used the figures for unauthorized immigrants in A Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Coverage Profile of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, page 4).

Workforce Disruption. To calculate the employer costs of workforce turnover caused by detention and deportation, we focused on...
the number of USC children in economically vulnerable families of immigrants detained through their proceedings and/or deported by 5.8 percent to get the number of USC children in foster care, based on findings in Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersections of Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System (New York: Applied Research Center, November 2011, pages 11 and 23). We multiplied the USC children of immigrants detained through their proceedings but not deported by the estimated cost of foster care for 32 days, derived from “Cost Benefit of Kinship Services,” a special section of the Kinship Care in New York: Keeping Families Together (New York: NYS KinCare Coalition, 2010). We multiplied the USC children of deportees by the average annual cost of foster care per case, as reported in the same source.

**Children’s Health Insurance Costs.** We multiplied the number of USC children of immigrants detained until their proceedings and of deportees by the percent of US-born and naturalized citizen children covered by employer or private coverage, according to A Demographic, Socioeconomic, and HealthCoverage Profile of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States (page 8). We multiplied that product by the annual average per-child cost to NYS of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, as reported in Total CHIP Expenditures, FY 2009 (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation) and FY 2010 Number of Children Ever Enrolled in CHIP (Washington, DC: Medicaid.Gov, 2010).

We then, calculated the number of USC children of deportees likely to be obese because of a parent’s deportation (so, subtracting out the rate of obesity in the general population of children, based on the interview data from Left Behind: Children of Dominican Deportees in a Bulimic Society (dissertation by Fenix Arias, 2011) and “Obesity Prevalence among low-income, preschool-aged children – NYC and LAC, 2003-2011 (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). We multiplied the number of deportation-induced pediatric obesity cases by the inflation-adjusted medical costs to Medicaid of care required by obese patients and not patients within a normal weight range, as reported in Annual Medical Spending Attributable to Obesity: Payer- and Service-Specific Estimates (Eric A. Finkelstein, Justin G. Trogdon, Joel W. Cohen, and William Dietz, Health Affairs, July

**Educational Disruption.** We multiplied the USC children of every detainee except those “released and not deported” by one-fifth to get the number of children having difficulty maintaining their grades, based on Facing Our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, February 2010, page 51). We then applied the high-school non-completion rate associated in “Finishing High School: Alternative Pathways and Dropout Recovery” (John H. Tyler and Magnus Lofstrom, Future of Children, Spring 2009, page 87) with struggling children in 6th and 9th grades to the estimated USC children of detainees in 6th grade or higher. We multiplied that non-completion number by the increased spending on public health insurance for and decreased tax revenues from school dropouts (“Finishing High School”, page 87).

**Foster Care Costs.** We multiplied

This analysis includes costs that are borne directly by the state as well as others that are borne indirectly through costs to local governments, most notably New York City.

While detentions and deportations impose costs at the city and federal levels as well, this analysis focuses on state-level impacts, which are less frequently discussed.


Ng Fung Ho v. White, 259 U.S. 276, 284 (1922).


The impacts reported here do not necessarily occur in the year of the detention or deportation. To calculate the impact we took the cumulative effects of 10 years of children of deportees under each condition and annualized them. We held the dollar value and number of deportees constant.


