



Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal to the New York City Council Committees on Small Business and on Immigration regarding Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Policy Changes

May 6, 2026

Good afternoon, Chairs Shanel Thomas-Henry and Elsie Encarnación and members of the committees. Thank you for convening this hearing. I'm Brad Hoylman-Sigal, and I have the honor of serving 1.6 million New Yorkers, including nearly half a million immigrants, as Manhattan Borough President.

Manhattan has a long and storied history as a borough of immigrants. Our economy, in particular, was built by immigrants and runs on their entrepreneurship, their labor, and their tax contributions. Across New York City, [immigrants own nearly half of our city's 220,000 small businesses](#). They make up the [overwhelming majority of workers](#) in home care, food service, hospitality, transportation, and major parts of our construction workforce. These contributions to our economy cannot be understated. In 2019, immigrants accounted for [\\$244 billion](#) (23%) of the City's GDP. Nearly [90% of foreign-born New Yorkers](#) have called the United States home for at least five years, with over 55% staying for over twenty years. Immigrants come here with the same dreams to work, build a community and raise a family that every New Yorker has. Long term residents and new arrivals alike are all New Yorkers.

And yet, as you well know, the federal government is dismantling the freedoms and infrastructure that lets immigrant New Yorkers live here, work here, raise families here, and contribute here. The cost will be borne by every New Yorker.

We have all seen the harms of ICE operations on our streets. Less visible, but no less consequential, is the restructuring of federal agencies far outside DHS--housing, food assistance, employment authorization, tax administration, public records--into instruments of immigration enforcement. Each of those shifts transfers cost to New York City.

Nowhere is that more clear than in housing.

In April, my office submitted [formal comments opposing HUD's proposed rule](#), Docket No. FR-6524-P-01, that would effectively force mixed-status families out of federally

assisted housing. If implemented, this rule could displace roughly 11,000 New Yorkers, including approximately 5,000 children. In Manhattan alone, hundreds of families and more than a thousand children could be affected.

Families who have spent years complying with federal rules would face an impossible set of choices: family separation, displacement, or homelessness. Manhattan's average rent has now reached approximately [\\$5,324 a month](#). The Section 8 waitlist is closed. Public housing waitlists have been functionally closed for years. For these families, there is nowhere else to go.

HUD claims this rule would free up resources for other households. [Its own analysis](#) shows the opposite. Mixed-status households often generate higher effective rents because ineligible family members pay market-adjacent rates. HUD itself projects that removing those households would cost New York housing authorities between \$48 and \$57 million in annual revenue at the exact moment NYCHA faces a nearly \$80 billion capital deficit and a nearly \$800 million operating gap. This is almost certainly an undercount of the potential direct and downstream costs related to this rule.

Families forced from federally assisted housing will enter shelter systems, hospitals will absorb housing-related health crises, and NYCHA staff will be pulled away from mold remediation, lead abatement, elevator repair, and heat restoration to carry out immigration verification and reporting requirements. Shelter costs alone could impose between \$330 million and \$1.27 billion in new annual costs on New York City, with no federal reimbursement.

The same pattern is emerging in food security.

More than [1.8 million New Yorkers rely on SNAP](#), including roughly 500,000 children. As of April 1, in response to changes in federal law, [New York State has begun removing SNAP eligibility](#) from entire categories of legally present noncitizens, including refugees, people granted asylum, survivors of human trafficking, and survivors of domestic violence. These are people the federal government itself granted humanitarian protection. They are now being stripped of food assistance.

Beyond those direct cuts, [mixed-status households who remain eligible are disenrolling](#) out of fear that participation will expose family members to enforcement. Food pantries are reporting surging demand. Community providers are being forced to backfill what was once a federal entitlement. Bodegas, grocery stores, and small food businesses lose consumer spending when federal nutrition dollars disappear from local circulation.

The chilling effects extend beyond housing and food: Workers are hesitating to report wage theft. Families are delaying medical care. Parents are avoiding benefits enrollment for U.S.-citizen children. Eligible residents are declining to file taxes or interact with

public systems because they no longer trust that the information they provide will remain within the agencies that collect it.

Local government cannot fully offset the assault from the federal government. But we can, and we must, do everything in our power to mitigate the damage and protect the immigrant New Yorkers upon whom our economic infrastructure so directly depends. I urge the Council and Administration to:

1. Conduct a full audit of the direct and downstream impacts of these policies to New York City;
2. Coordinate multilingual outreach making clear that benefit participation by eligible household members does not, under City policy, expose family members to immigration enforcement;
3. Expand City investment in immigrant legal services; and
4. Build protections against data transfer between City agencies and federal immigration enforcement.

I'm also pleased to share that my office is opening an Immigrant Welcome Center at our Northern Manhattan office. The Center will be a single trusted intake point for any Manhattanite, providing walk-in legal referrals, multilingual benefits navigation, Know Your Rights materials, tenant protections, and more.

Our City's economy was built by immigrants. It is currently being dismantled by federal policy. We have a moral and fiscal obligation to build a local firewall that protects the workers, entrepreneurs, and families who keep New York running.