

# **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS- NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER**

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## **NASW-NYC IMMIGRATION and GLOBAL SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE**

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### **Upholding Social Work Values Amid Trump's Immigration Orders**

#### **I. Introducing Our Committee**

NASW-NYS, one of the largest chapters of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), is committed to professional growth, upholding standards, and advancing social policies that promote equity. The NASW-NYC Immigration and Global Social Work Committee (IGSWC), established in 2016, leads advocacy efforts to reshape immigration narratives and empower the social work community through education, coalition-building, and policy engagement.

Guided by the core [social work values](#) of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships, IGSWC strives to inspire action and advance equity in immigration policy and practice.

#### **II. Purpose of This Statement**

This statement provides social workers with a summary of the Trump Administration's January 20, 2025, executive orders on immigration, their impact on vulnerable communities, and actionable guidance. It includes strategies for advocacy, legal and political challenges, and trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices to support affected populations.

#### **III. Overview**

President Trump's executive orders mark a dramatic shift in immigration policy, emphasizing punitive enforcement. On his first day of his second term, he issued a series of directives targeting communities of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and DEI initiatives, dismantling key policies implemented by President Joseph R. Biden.

These orders include:

- Ending birthright citizenship, challenging the 14th Amendment.
- Declaring a national emergency at the southern border, expanding deportations and enforcement authority.
- Reinstating the "Remain in Mexico" policy, leaving asylum seekers vulnerable to violence and deprivation.
- Terminating parole programs and expanding military involvement in immigration enforcement.

- Revoking protections for immigrants in sensitive locations such as schools, religious institutions, and healthcare facilities.

#### IV. New York City's Immigration History and Contributions

NYC has long been a gateway for migrants. From 1900 to 1914, the peak years of Ellis Island's operation, an average of 1,900 individuals passed through the immigration station daily, amounting to approximately 693,500 people each year. Historically, immigration fueled the city's growth, and today's asylum seekers continue to play a vital role in stabilizing public institutions and filling essential job vacancies. Between 2020 and 2021, New York City's population shrank by approximately 468,000 residents (5.3%), triggering widespread consequences. The city lost a congressional seat, reducing its representation in the U.S. House. Public school enrollment declined, leading to reduced state funding and severe budget cuts. Meanwhile, workforce shortages left around 90,000 positions unfilled, particularly in city government, healthcare, caregiving, and social services. Between 2022 and 2024, NYC welcomed 130,000 asylum seekers, contributing to economic growth, workforce stabilization, public school enrollment increases. These contributions highlight the positive economic and social impact of NYC's newest residents.

#### V. Trump's 2025 Executive Orders on Immigration

Trump's ten executive orders on immigration signal an aggressive rollback of protections. Key provisions include:

1. **Ending Birthright Citizenship** – Undermines the 14th Amendment, creating second-class citizenship.
2. **Expanding Deportations** – Empowers local law enforcement to act as immigration officers.
3. **Terminating Parole Programs** – Ends protections for immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.
4. **Reinstating the "Muslim Ban"** – Restricts refugee admissions and enhances screening measures.
5. **Restructuring Refugee Admissions** – Lowers caps, shifting focus to regional containment.
6. **Deploying the Military for Immigration Enforcement** – Increases border surveillance and enforcement.
7. **Designating Cartels as Terrorist Organizations** – Raises concerns over potential misuse of authority.
8. **Declaring a National Emergency** – Mobilizes the military and expands border infrastructure.
9. **Limiting Asylum Protections** – Effectively suspends asylum claims at the southern border.
10. **Rescinding Family Reunification Efforts** – Eliminates Biden-era efforts to reunite separated families.

## **Rescinded Protection in Schools/Religious Organizations/Events**

Under federal law, all children, regardless of their immigration status, have the right to an education, including access to college. However, the executive order titled "Protecting the American People Against Invasion" [revoked](#) previous guidelines that had restricted immigration enforcement actions in sensitive locations, such as schools, hospitals, and churches. This change removed the limitations that had been in place since 2011, allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to carry out operations in these areas without prior approval. Consequently, ICE officers and agents are now able to conduct enforcement actions at the following locations and events:

- Schools (including preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, and other institutions of learning, such as vocational and trade schools).
- Hospitals.
- Churches, synagogues, mosques and other institutions of worship, such as buildings rented for the purpose of religious services.
- During funerals, weddings and other religious ceremonies.
- During public demonstrations, such as marches, rallies and parades.
- Places where children gather, such as playgrounds and bus stops.
- Social service establishments, such as domestic violence shelters and food pantries; and
- Disaster/emergency responses sites, such as evacuation routes.

## **VI. Steps Organizations Can Take to Protect the Immigrant Community**

The immigrant community still retains basic constitutional rights during this difficult time, and as a result, there are several steps we can take to support individuals and families in all previously designated areas:

- Identify any applicable federal, state and local laws and district policies that protect immigrant students and families.
- If policies don't exist, develop a written response policy and preparedness plan in advance for when there's an interaction with an immigration enforcement officer at or near your school or other setting.
- Designate an authorized person to review warrants and subpoenas.
- Understand the distinction between public and private areas.
- Train non-authorized staff and volunteers on how to respond to ICE requests.
- Document all interactions with immigration enforcement.
- Connect with immigration response networks in your area.

## **VII. Proactive Steps to Prepare for Immigration Raids**

Immigrant families can take proactive steps to prepare for potential immigration raids, ensuring they are informed, organized, and ready to protect their rights and well-being. Planning reduces fear and confusion during uncertain times and strengthens family resilience in the face of immigration enforcement actions. Here's a guide:

## 1. Know Your Rights

- **At Home:** Immigration officers need a signed judicial warrant to enter your home. Do not open the door unless they provide one.
- **During a Raid:** You have the right to remain silent and do not need to answer questions about your immigration status. Carry a Know Your Rights card to assert this.
- **Legal Representation:** You have the right to speak to a lawyer. Do not sign any documents without legal advice.

## 2. Create a Family Preparedness Plan

- **Emergency Contacts:** Designate a trusted person who can help with childcare, finances, or legal matters and share this information with trusted members of your child's school.
- **Childcare Arrangements:** Ensure your children know who to contact and where to go if you are detained.
- **Power of Attorney:** Assign legal guardianship or power of attorney for your children and financial matters.

## 3. Keep Important Documents Safe

- **Accessible Copies:** Store copies of identification, immigration documents, birth certificates, and marriage certificates in a safe place. Share copies with a trusted person.
- **Emergency Packet:** Include medical records, legal documents, and contact information for your lawyer or community organizations.

## 4. Connect with Support Networks

- **Community Organizations:** Reach out to local immigrant advocacy groups, such as Make the Road, [United We Dream](#), or local immigrant coalitions, for resources and support.
- **Legal Assistance:** Identify an immigration attorney or legal aid organization in advance.
- **Raids Rapid Response Networks:** Join or familiarize yourself with local networks that can provide immediate support during raids.

## 5. Train Your Family

- **Know Your Rights Training:** Educate all family members on what to do if approached by immigration officers.
- **Role-Playing:** Practice scenarios to help children and adults respond calmly and appropriately.

## 6. Prepare Financially

- **Secure Savings:** Set aside emergency funds if possible.
- **Access to Accounts:** Ensure trusted individuals have access to necessary accounts or resources if you are detained.

## 7. Stay Informed

- **Community Alerts:** Monitor trusted sources for news about raids in your area.
- **Hotlines:** Keep hotline numbers handy, such as those from [immigrant rights organizations](#).

## VIII. Steps Immigrants Should Use in Dealing with Immigration Authorities

- **Do not open the door.**  
ICE authorities cannot come in without a signed *judicial* warrant. Tell them to pass the warrant under the door before you open it.
- **Remain silent.**  
ICE can use anything you say against you in your immigration case, so claim your right to remain silent! Say “*I plead the Fifth and choose to remain silent.*”
- **Do Not Consent to a Search**  
If authorities attempt to search your belongings, vehicle, or home without a warrant, you have the right to refuse.
- **Ask for Identification and Documentation**  
Request to see identification from the officers and verify whether they have a **judicial warrant**.
- **Do not sign.**  
Don't sign anything ICE gives you without talking to an attorney.
- **Document the Interaction**  
If possible, note the names and badge numbers of the officers and the location of the encounter.
- **Carry Essential Documents and Know-Your-Rights Cards**  
Keep a "Know Your Rights" card and a valid ID and a copy of any legal documents related to immigration but avoid carrying documents that could reveal your immigration status unnecessarily.
- **Prepare for Detention**  
If detained, assert your right to a lawyer and avoid discussing your case with anyone except your attorney.
- **Legal Representation**  
Keep the phone number of an Immigration attorney and/or legal services office on you at all times.
- **Fight back!**  
Get a trustworthy attorney, contact a local immigrant rights organization and explore all options to fight your case. If detained, you may be eligible for bail—don't lose hope and keep fighting for your rights.

## IX. How Social Workers Can Address These Policies

In response to the Trump executive orders outlined above, social workers can uphold their professional values and navigate the complex policy landscape in their work with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations by focusing on the following key areas:

- **Advocacy:** Engage in policy advocacy to promote inclusive and equitable policies. This includes collaborating with professional organizations like the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) to oppose policies that undermine immigrant rights. Actively champion policies and initiatives that protect the rights of vulnerable populations, challenge injustices, and promote equity. Collaborate with professional groups, organizations and policymakers to bring about systemic change.
- **Education:** Inform clients, communities and colleagues about their rights and the potential impacts of these executive orders. Provide accurate information to empower individuals to make informed decisions and access necessary resources such as Know Your Rights Training.
- **Preparation:** Equip clients with resources, know-your-rights training, and safety plans.
- **Collaboration with Legal and Community Partners:** Partner with immigration attorneys, advocacy groups, and local organizations to provide comprehensive support. Disseminate accurate information about rights and available resources.
- **Community Engagement:** Strengthen partnerships and alliances with community organizations, advocacy groups and stakeholders to build networks and support marginalized groups affected by these policies. Build coalitions to enhance collective advocacy efforts and provide a broader support network for clients.
- **Promoting Equity and Justice:** Use professional platforms to speak out against discriminatory policies. Engage in policy analysis and advocacy to promote inclusive and humane immigration practices.
- **Ethical Practice:** Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, by prioritizing the dignity and worth of the individual and upholding the responsibility to challenge social injustice and protect the rights of vulnerable populations. This may involve ethical decision-making when policies conflict with professional values.
- **Self-Care and Peer Support:** Recognize the emotional toll that such policy changes can have on practitioners. Engage in self-care practices and seek support from peers to build and maintain resilience in order to sustain effectiveness in this difficult work.

## X. Engaging in Trauma-Informed & Culturally Responsive Practices

The Trump executive orders on immigration highlight the need for social workers to engage in [trauma-informed](#) and [culturally responsive practices](#). These approaches enable social workers to

address the unique challenges faced by immigrants while respecting their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. Social workers are trained to:

- Recognize and address the impact of biopsychosocial effects of exposure to extreme Violence, particularly from migration-related experiences.
- Promote safety and build trust in client interactions.
- Demonstrate cultural humility and adapt practices to align with clients' cultural contexts.
- Empower clients by restoring agency and supporting informed decision-making.
- Advocate for policies and systemic changes that reduce barriers for immigrants.
- Acknowledge and address the inherent power imbalance in the social worker-client relationship.
- Build skills to identify and de-escalate trauma responses while preventing the retraumatization of clients - during assessments or interviews
- Trained to be culturally responsive by applying cultural humility, ensuring language accessibility, understanding the ecological perspective of immigration contexts, recognizing the importance of family and community systems, and adopting a strength-based approach.

## **XI. Summary**

These sweeping immigration policies, along with other measures targeting communities of color, and members of the LGBTQ+ community—originally outlined in Project 2025—seek to reshape presidential powers and the federal government to reflect Christian nationalism. This movement is deeply rooted in the rhetoric of [white replacement theory](#), a conspiratorial and racist ideology portraying nonwhite populations as threats to societal and cultural dominance. By advancing such measures, the Administration reinforces white supremacy, institutionalizes systemic inequities, undermines the rights and dignity of marginalized communities, and fosters a climate of fear, exclusion, and division across the nation.

Through our core values of service, social justice, the inherent dignity and worth of each person, and the importance of human relationships, social workers have a long-standing history of working with marginalized communities. Our engagement with immigrants—including authorized individuals, asylum seekers, refugees, and the undocumented—dates back to the [Settlement House Era](#). More recently, [social workers](#) have supported immigrants in navigating and resisting the challenges imposed by restrictive federal and local policies rooted in fear and racism.

The issuance of ten executive orders on the first day of the Trump administration's second term has intensified anxiety within immigrant communities and added significant challenges to the work of social work practitioners. These policies have deepened the barriers to serving this vulnerable population, complicating efforts to provide support and advocacy.

Despite these obstacles, social workers remain steadfast in their commitment. Guided by core values, we continue to advocate for, educate, and work alongside immigrant individuals, students, families, groups, and communities to resist these draconian measures. These policies, which undermine human rights, only strengthen our resolve to uphold justice and dignity for all.

## **XII. Resources**

- National Education Association [immigration guide](#)
- American Federation of Teachers-Toolkit, [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- Know Your Rights for Immigrant Students & Schools, [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- 15 Things Educators & School Support Staff Can Do, [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
- [International Refugee Assistance Project](#)
- Publications
  - [Migration Policy Institute - MPI](#)
  - [National Immigration Project](#)
  - [Human Rights First](#)
  - [Immigration Hub](#)
  - [America's Voice](#)
- Nonprofit organizations working with immigrants
  - [United We Dream](#)
  - [ACLU](#)
  - [Catholic Legal Immigration Network](#)
  - [The Public Law Center](#)

**Together, we resist policies that threaten the rights and dignity of immigrants, ensuring that social work remains a force for justice and equity.**