

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/immigrant-justice-during-covid-19>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Our immigration system is on the threshold of a new crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. People in detention face high risks of infection from the close quarters of facilities, shelters, and courtrooms, and they lack adequate sanitation, health care, and protective measures. The frequent transfer of people throughout the immigration detention system also contributes to the rapid spread of the virus. Moreover, unlike in criminal court, immigrants facing deportation do not have the right to a lawyer even if they cannot afford one, leaving most without access to legal representation. As local leaders seek to protect immigrant communities, safeguarding access to legal services for everyone is of critical importance. The Vera Institute of Justice created this guidance brief to equip local leaders with practical actions and policy solutions to ensure access to justice for all amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

To protect equal access to justice during the pandemic, local leaders must act now, paying particular attention to those who are most vulnerable, including immigrants in detention or those at risk of detention and their families.

PUBLICATION

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