

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/new-york-immigrant-family-unity-project-evaluation>

Campaign and Advocacy

Publication

This study evaluates the impact of the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP). NYIFUP is the nations first public defender system for immigrants facing deportation defined as those in removal proceedings before an immigration judge. Funded by the New York City Council since July 2014, the program provides a free attorney to almost all detained indigent immigrants facing deportation at Varick Street Immigration Court who are unrepresented at their first court appearances.

This evaluation offers quantitative and qualitative analyses about the impact of government-funded counsel in New York City deportation proceedings on clients, their families, and the local economy.

Because of the NYIFUP program, every low-income immigrant detained and facing deportation in the Varick Street Immigration Court now has equal access to the defenses and protections available under the law. NYIFUPs lawyers make a marked difference in helping their clients achieve successful outcomes.

A common misperception is that deportation proceedings are only for unauthorized immigrants. In fact, any non-citizen including lawful permanent residents (green card holders), refugees, and people who entered legally on visas can be placed in deportation proceedings.

The obstacles facing unrepresented immigrants, and detained immigrants in particular, are substantial. Immigration law is among the most complex areas of American law and has been described by federal courts as labyrinthine.

Immigrants are a major part of the citys fabric and contribute heavily to the local economy. According to the NYC Comptrollers Office, immigrants account for nearly 1/3 of the citys total gross product.

PROJECT

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