



2023 ICIRR Policy Platform

State issues

- **Full state funding for immigrant services**

The Immigrant Service Line item provides funding for direct cash assistance to immigrants, citizenship application assistance, English classes, DACA and citizenship application fee waivers, and resource navigation for immigrants throughout Illinois. As our program partners continue to serve immigrant families harmed by the COVID pandemic as well as refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Venezuela, and other countries, ICIRR will continue to advocate that the Illinois General Assembly provide full funding of **\$53 million** for the Immigrant Services Line Item so that immigrant serving organizations can meet the needs of their communities.

- **Drivers licenses and state IDs for all (SB 2397 - Villivalam/ HB 3882 -Rep. B. Hernandez)**

Undocumented immigrants in Illinois are able to get temporary visitor's driver's licenses that enable them to drive legally but might suggest that they are undocumented. We will push to enable undocumented motorists to get regular licenses and IDs that do not flag their immigration status. (Under the federal REAL ID Act, such licenses and IDs could not be used to board airplanes or for other federal identification purposes.) We will also work to limit how the Secretary of State can share driver information so that ICE cannot gain access.

- **Preventing medical debt through pre-screening for coverage eligibility (SB 2080 - Peters/ HB 2719 - Avelar)**

Thousands of uninsured Illinoisans, including many immigrants and African Americans, are burdened by debts they incur from medical services, or refrain from seeking medical help for fear of running up debts. This debt burden continues to grow despite all of our victories to expand healthcare coverage due in part to disconnects between coverage programs and the people they are intended to serve. To address these gaps and the resulting debt, we will push to require all hospitals to screen each uninsured patient for eligibility for public health insurance programs and discounted care programs prior to beginning the bill process, and to provide information and assistance for patients to apply should they qualify.

- **Healthcare for ALL in Illinois (working with Healthy IL) (HB 1570 - L. Hernandez/ SB 122 - Aquino)**

Illinois has passed a series of laws that provide medical coverage for low-income immigrants age 42 or older and children age 18 and younger regardless of their immigration status. We will push to further expand coverage to include all other income-eligible adult immigrants, and to cover home- and community-based care services and longer-term care.

- **Child Tax Credit for all tax filers (working with Economic Security Project) (SB 1444 - Simmons/ HB 3950 - Evans)**

We and our allies in the Economic Security Illinois Coalition will build on our 2022 victory expanding the state Earned Income Credit to immigrant households who file tax returns using Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) and other excluded families. The next phase would create a permanent state child tax credit for every low-income household, including ITIN filers.

- **Childcare for ALL in IL (working with SEIU HCII)**

Child care in Illinois is under-resourced and inaccessible for many working families. SEIU HCII has launched a campaign to increase child care capacity, ensure that child care workers are paid for the value of their work, and expand child care access to all families earning up to \$100,000 a year.

- **Non-citizen voting in certain local elections (SB 1345 - Villanueva)**

Non-citizens should have a voice in local government matters. Their lack of representation became an issue during last year's debates over the elected Chicago school board and the Chicago police accountability structure. Allowing non-citizens to vote in elections for school board and other local elections will provide essential representation. We will continue to develop state legislation that provides voting rights while still protecting non-citizens and guarding against mistaken votes that could lead to deportation.

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National issues

- ICE accountability on data surveillance (working with Mijente)

Even as many communities and states (including Illinois) have enacted policies limiting information sharing and other communication with ICE, ICE has still gained access to personal information from government agencies (such as the Illinois Secretary of State), utility companies, and other sources through third-party data brokers that buy this information and then sell access to ICE. Limiting this information sharing would help protect everyone's privacy and ensure that information for immigrants and other individuals will not be abused.

- ICE accountability through local deportation cases (working with OCAD)

So long as ICE continues to pursue deportations, we will continue to support and advocate for those individuals who are facing deportation. We have worked closely with Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) to bring the stories of many of these individuals to light and to push ICE locally and nationally to stop their deportations.

- Defund ICE in the federal budget (working with Defund Hate)

The federal government spends \$25 billion each year on immigration enforcement with little accountability from ICE or CBP but devastating impacts on our families and communities. The Defund Hate campaign seeks to reduce this funding and shift it to other programs and policies that respect and rebuild our communities and provide safety and care for immigrants seeking refuge or otherwise vulnerable to deportation. We will continue to build support for these efforts among Illinois' Congressional delegation and the broader community.

- DACA defense

Although DACA survived the previous administration's attempt to kill it, DACA remains vulnerable. A federal court has ruled that the Obama Administration acted improperly in putting the program together, and further court rulings could further damage the program. The Biden Administration has written DACA into federal regulations, but even that move could face a legal challenge. We need to make sure that DHS continues to defend and strengthen DACA, and ensure that people trying to renew will not see any gaps in their protection or work authorization due to DHS backlogs. We also need to continue to push Congress to pass legislation that will finally grant permanent legal status to everyone who has or qualifies for DACA, and everyone else who remains vulnerable to deportation.

- Ending 5-Year bar to national health access access (working with NILC/PIF)

Under the 1996 welfare laws, most immigrants are ineligible for Medicaid and other federal public benefits even after they have received their green cards. This five-year bar harms immigrant families who need health care and other support and hurts our entire community. The LIFT the BAR and HEAL Acts would remove these restrictions and enable immigrants who are able to get green cards to receive the care they need.