

## Chicago's Commitment to Immigrant, Migrant and Refugee Protections

The City of Chicago values the dignity, diversity and safety of all its residents. In line with Mayor Brandon Johnson's commitment to building an inclusive and supportive community, this resource provides essential information on the policies and protections that ensure immigrants, migrants, and refugees have access to the services and rights they deserve.

The City of Chicago stands as a welcoming home for everyone and is committed to serving and protecting all Chicagoans.

[The Welcoming City Ordinance \(WCO\)](#) ensures that the City of Chicago protects its immigrant residents, regardless of their immigration status. The ordinance prevents City agencies from inquiring about or sharing immigration status information with federal authorities, and importantly, guarantees that City services are available to all individuals without discrimination based on immigration status.

### Key Provisions of the Welcoming City Ordinance:

- **Non-Cooperation with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):** City agencies and their employees, including police officers, are prohibited from sharing information about immigration status with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The City of Chicago cannot cooperate with federal immigration authorities in ways that would harm undocumented residents. Furthermore, law enforcement cannot detain individuals based solely on their immigration status or hold them on immigration detainers without a court order.
- **Access to Critical City Services:** The City of Chicago guarantees all residents, regardless of immigration status, can access city services such as healthcare and emergency services. City agencies cannot deny services based on immigration status or inquire about it as a condition of providing services.
- **Due Process Protections:** Due process protections, such as ensuring individuals are not detained or targeted based on immigration status, are required. For example, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) is prohibited from questioning, arresting, or prosecuting individuals solely based on suspicion of being undocumented. CPD cannot act on ICE detainer requests or hold individuals in custody based on ICE warrants.
- **2021 Reforms:** The City Council eliminated certain "carve-outs" that had previously allowed CPD to cooperate with ICE in specific cases (e.g., individuals in the gang database or with felony convictions). These exceptions were removed to strengthen protections for undocumented residents.

### Related State Legislation:

- **Illinois TRUST Act:** Prohibits local police from complying with ICE detainers or warrants unless issued by a judge.
- **Illinois Way Forward Act:** Bans local police from enforcing federal immigration laws, including stopping, searching, or arresting individuals based on their immigration status. It also restricts state and local governments from contracting with the federal government to detain immigrants.

- **Keep Illinois Families Together Act:** Restricts immigration enforcement in public facilities like schools, health centers, libraries, and courthouses, ensuring access for all residents. It also prohibits law enforcement from asking about immigration status during arrests or interactions and requires state agencies and schools to review policies to protect personal information.

#### **Key Impacts:**

- The WCO ensures that undocumented individuals can access city services, such as healthcare, education, and law enforcement protection, without fear of deportation or discrimination.
- The ordinance also safeguards local autonomy, ensuring that Chicago's law enforcement does not become an extension of federal immigration enforcement.

#### **Language Access Ordinance Chapter 2-40**

The [Language Access Ordinance \(LAO\)](#), established in 2015, ensures that all residents, regardless of English language proficiency, can access City services.

#### **Key Provisions:**

- Assign a language access coordinator.
- Develop language access plan with the department-specific four-factor analyses
- Include the six Ordinance-required elements in your language access plan.
- Create a mechanism to receive feedback from residents.
- Submit language access plan by the compliance deadline set by IMRR.

#### **Key Impacts:**

The provisions aim to ensure that City departments provide meaningful access to services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). From accessing safety net programs to dealing with emergency situations, having a language barrier between clients and City officials produces undesirable and negative outcomes, not only for immigrants, but also for the city at large.

***The Welcoming City Ordinance and the Language Access Ordinance embody Chicago's commitment to being a "Welcoming City," protecting vulnerable populations and affirming the city's stance on inclusivity and diversity.***