



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Office of Civic Engagement
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March 9, 2026

Honorable Daniel Lurie
Mayor, San Francisco City and County
City Hall, Room 200
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Priorities and Service Needs of Immigrant Communities in San Francisco

Dear Mayor Lurie, President Mandelman, and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission (IRC), we write to outline the urgent priorities and service needs of immigrant communities in San Francisco amid escalating federal immigration enforcement and renewed threats of discriminatory federal immigration policies.

San Francisco is home to a diverse immigrant population, with immigrants accounting for over one-third of the City's population. Our immigrant community contributes profoundly to the city's economic vitality, workforce stability, cultural richness, and civic life. Immigrant families are small business owners, frontline workers, students, caregivers, and community leaders. Ensuring their safety, stability, and full participation in civic life is essential not only to their well-being, but to the well-being of the city as a whole.

In light of the rapidly changing federal landscape and its impacts on the immigrant community, the IRC has hosted a series of hearings to understand these immigration policy changes from subject matter experts as well as directly impacted community members, particularly in the areas of newly imposed travel bans, efforts to terminate the lawful status of many immigrants living in the U.S., immigration enforcement actions, our City's sanctuary policies, impacts on the LGBTQIA+ immigrant community, and local City-funded resources available to immigrant communities.

Based on these public hearings, community testimony and ongoing community engagement, the IRC has issued statements and resolutions which the Commission has shared with your offices. With that, we call your attention to the following areas of focus:

Urgent Priorities and Service Needs

Protection from Federal Immigration Enforcement:

- Recent reports of increased federal immigration enforcement — including arrests in the community, at immigration court proceedings and during check-ins — have created widespread fear across immigrant communities. This chilling effect discourages residents from attending school, accessing health care, reporting crimes, and utilizing City services. Strong sanctuary implementation is fundamental to public safety, public health, and trust in local government. We call on the City to use strong messaging affirming San Francisco’s Sanctuary City policies and to provide clear, consistent, and transparent protocols for City departments when interacting with federal immigration agents, in full compliance with state and local law, and ensuring City-owned property and resources are not used for federal immigration enforcement.

Housing, Food Security, Health Access, and Mental Health Support:

- Immigrant families, particularly mixed-status households and low-income immigrants and seniors, tend to face disproportionate barriers to stable housing, health care, mental health support, and food access. We urge the City to continue investing in tenants’ legal representation to prevent further displacement of immigrant families living on a fixed income. We also call on the City to identify strategies focused on solutions to uplift the housing needs of San Francisco’s low-income immigrant families and seniors, particularly given the increasing number of unhoused families. These emerging needs require urgent attention from the City. The City’s leadership and prompt response were evident in the Mayor’s deployment of the GiveCards program during the SNAP emergency in November 2025. This lifesaving support prevents further crises and reduces long-term public costs.

Access to Immigration Legal Services and Representation:

- Escalating federal immigration enforcement, the expansion of discriminatory travel bans, and the termination of many immigrants’ lawful status heighten the risk of family separation and destabilization. We call on the City to increase funding for immigration legal services, rapid response efforts, immigration “know-your-rights” community education and outreach, access to City-funded naturalization and immigration filing fee assistance, dedicated immigration legal resources to LGBTQIA+ immigrant residents, and prompt and effective coordination with the City’s Rapid Response Network for immigration raid verification. Access to legal counsel is one of the most effective tools for protecting due process and family unity.

Language Access and Equal Access to City Services:

- Nearly one in five San Francisco residents identifies as Limited English Proficient (LEP). In moments of heightened enforcement and policy shifts, language access becomes even more critical. We stress the need to prioritize language access, ensuring LEP residents have equal access to vital information and public services. With the passage of the 2024 amendments to the Language Access Ordinance, we urge the City to provide sufficient funding and staffing support to City departments and community partners required for successful implementation of our local language access law. Without language access, residents cannot fully access services or understand their rights.

Economic Stability and Workforce Support:

- Immigrant workers are disproportionately represented in frontline industries. Fear of enforcement and travel restrictions destabilizes employment and local businesses. We cannot emphasize enough the need to support and maintain programs that offer workforce development tailored to immigrant workers and business support for small business owners, regardless of immigration status. These programs strengthen families, support neighborhood vitality and contribute to our city’s sustained recovery.

San Francisco has long been a national leader in immigrant inclusion and protection. At this moment of uncertainty, strong leadership from local government is critical, ensuring that immigrant residents can live, work and thrive in our city without fear. Addressing the above-mentioned urgent priorities and needs will not only strengthen our City’s sanctuary protections, but also create a more welcoming and inclusive San Francisco for all residents.

The IRC stands ready to partner with the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to advance policies and investments that reflect the dignity, resilience, and contributions of our immigrant communities.

Sincerely,

Sarah Souza
Commission Chair

Kudrat D. Chaudhary
Commission Vice Chair

San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission