



The New York State Liberty Defense Project responds to the surge in demand for help that is overwhelming nonprofit organizations serving immigrants. In April 2017, Governor Cuomo announced a historic \$11.4 million investment in this project in the state budget. The initiative is a public-private partnership between the New York Department of State, two dedicated philanthropic allies—the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Ford Foundation—and a statewide coalition of 182 advocacy organizations and legal entities. Private sector law firms, law clinics at universities, bar associations and advocacy organizations will be coordinated by the New York Department of State’s Office for New Americans to provide pro bono legal and additional resources for immigrants.

Scope

Through the Office for New Americans, the Liberty Defense Project:

- Provides free legal assistance and representation to immigrants in New York State through a network of experienced non-profit attorneys, pro bono attorneys, other legal professionals and law students.
- Assists immigrants in deportation proceedings.
- Assists in completing and filing applications, including lawful permanent residence, temporary status, and work permits.
- Provides outreach and educational help to assist parents who are potentially at risk of deportation to fill appropriate forms and prepare emergency plans for the care of their children.

Structure

The New York Department of State and its Office for New Americans is overseeing the Liberty Defense Project, which includes \$11 million of state funding, and resources from the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation. Non-profit immigration service providers will work with the Office for New Americans to deliver legal and other services around the state through grants from the state’s \$11 million investment. Catholic Charities is launching a pro bono project which will connect lawyers to nonprofits serving immigrants and will create partnerships to train interested attorneys in immigration law. The State is also partnering with Equal Justice Works to place full-time attorneys in communities with limited legal resources and high immigrant populations.

Partners

The Liberty Defense Project includes a statewide coalition of 182 advocacy organizations, 14 law schools, 21 law firms and 14 bar associations. Among these are several prominent multi-national law firms, the New York State Bar Association, and several other bar associations that focus on New York’s immigrant communities. The main project partners are: the Asian American Federation; Catholic Charities Community Services (Archdiocese of New York); Empire Justice Center; Hispanic Federation; New York Immigration Coalition; Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights; and the Vera Institute of Justice.

For more information or to request legal assistance

New York State New Americans Hotline:

1-800-566-7636

<https://www.ny.gov/programs/liberty-defense-project>