

HOUSTON IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

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FACTS ABOUT IMMIGRATION IN HOUSTON REGION

- The Greater Houston metropolitan area is home to more than 1.3 million immigrants.
- More than 25% of the population of Harris County is foreign-born.
- One-third of the foreign-born immigrants in the Houston region are non-citizens.
- The immigrant population of the Houston region grew almost 50% between 2000 and 2012, with the populations from Guatemala and Honduras more than doubling.
- Houston is home to approximately 350,000 immigrants who are eligible for naturalization and 205,000 who are eligible for administrative relief: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) or Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Legal Permanent Residents (DAPA).
- It is estimated that if Texas' undocumented immigrants were granted legal status, the state's Gross State Product would increase \$144.6 billion and tax revenues would increase \$6.53 billion.¹
- In 2012, 30 percent of Texas' immigrant families with children under 18 lived below the poverty threshold, compared to 17 percent of U.S.-born families with children under eighteen.²
- There are not enough service providers or lawyers in Houston to serve our immigrant population, particularly those who are low-income.
- Two organizations – Catholic Charities and YMCA International – account for over 90% of the direct legal services provided to immigrants in the Houston region.
- It is estimated that local service providers are currently serving only 20% of low-income clients who are eligible for immigration services.
- Despite the many immigrants in the Houston area eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship or administrative relief, cost, educational gaps, lack of legal services, and confusion about programs for which they might qualify are significant barriers.

¹ Lynch, Robert and Patrick Oakford. *National and State-by-State Economic Benefits of Immigration Reform*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2013. Web. <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/EconomicsOfLegalization-21.pdf>

² MPI Data Hub. Texas: Income and Poverty Characteristics.