

Current aggressive federal immigration enforcement has created massive disruption throughout the U.S. and significant financial hardship in impacted communities.

**Racial profiling by immigration officials** means Black and Latino communities are particularly harmed.

People in impacted communities are reasonably concerned that any information they provide in connection with accessing financial services or in interactions with federal, state, or local government could be used to target them for detention and deportation, regardless of immigration status. Immigration officials' access to and use of an unprecedented array of information drives many immigrants out of the formal banking sector and leaves immigrant families exposed to abuse and predation by fringe financial service providers. Mainstream financial service providers may also be emboldened to discriminate against immigrants by the federal government's refusal to enforce fair lending and fair housing statutes. In addition, fear of being in public spaces can lead immigrants to miss court hearings and not assert their rights in debt collection, evictions, and other legal proceedings. Below are ways that states, counties, and local governments can help protect immigrants, their families, and communities from financial exploitation and other consumer abuses.

The more comprehensive **[What States & Local Governments Can Do to Support Immigrants' Financial Stability](#)** issue brief contains NCLC's full list of recommendations. This document highlights the recommendations related to access to justice, including access to courts, counsel, and legal process.

**600%**

The Trump Administration has increased the use of **"at-large" arrests in U.S. communities by 600%**, putting families at financial risk when wage earners are arrested.



According to **a Nov. 2025 report**, 50% of immigrants report difficulty paying for essentials — up from 30% in 2023 — and 50% say that it's increasingly difficult for them to earn a living.

## Protect Immigrant Tenants

### CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Detainees, their families, and those fearing detention may not be able to pay rent, leading to evictions and records that will appear on future **tenant screening reports**.

### STATE SOLUTIONS

Ensure that detainees and those fearing detention can seal/expunge any resulting eviction records.

## Bolster Anti-Discrimination Protections for Immigrants

### CONSUMER PROBLEMS

### STATE SOLUTIONS

Immigrants are subject to a wide variety of discriminatory housing and credit-related policies and practices.

Increase protections for immigrants in civil rights, human rights, and fair lending laws. Include explicit disparate impact liability and strong anti-retaliation provisions.

Banks and credit unions may close or deny deposit accounts to certain immigrants based on their immigration status or the type of identity document provided by the consumer.

Make clear that banks and credit unions may bank applicants with ITINs and accept alternate forms of ID to open accounts such as municipal IDs. (See [Treasury Comment at 13-14](#), [NCLC FAQ](#).)

## Ensure Immigrant Access to Financial Assistance and Social Services

### CONSUMER PROBLEMS

### STATE SOLUTIONS

Loss of income — because wage earners are detained or because families fear leaving their homes — leads households to struggle to pay mortgages, property taxes, student loans, auto loans, and other obligations, and harms credit records.

Require lenders and servicers to temporarily stay a foreclosure if the inability to pay is due to the detention of a wage earner that the borrower depends on for payment of the mortgage.

Require lenders and servicers to offer forbearances or payment relief and in such cases to refrain from negative credit reporting per industry standards.

Restrict warrantless access to non-public work areas by immigration officers (e.g., [CA AB 450](#)).

Enhance financial assistance programs, including utility assistance and rental assistance. Create affordable payment plans for tax bills based on household income that waive past due interest. Allow temporary, interest-free deferral of taxes owed.

## Protect Immigrant Consumer Data

### CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Consumer data — including data shared with financial services companies, landlords, social services, colleges and universities, and utility companies — can be used to target people for immigration enforcement.

### STATE SOLUTIONS

Where possible, prohibit collecting information about a person's immigration status. Prohibit sharing personally identifiable data that includes or can be linked to immigration status information. (E.g., [MD Data Privacy Act](#).)

## Prevent Needless Interaction with the Criminal Legal System

### CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Immigrants may be arrested for crimes of poverty — e.g., outstanding fines and fees, or driving on a license suspended due to such debt — and then deported.

### STATE SOLUTIONS

Eliminate fees from the criminal legal system, stop suspending driver's licenses for outstanding debt, and decriminalize poverty-related offenses. Prohibit law enforcement from collecting immigration status data and from affirmatively contacting ICE, unless required by federal law (e.g., [MA's H.5316](#), [Washtenaw County MI Prosecutor's Policy](#)).

## Require Language Access for Public Agencies and Financial Transactions

### CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Immigrants (other than Spanish speakers) cannot obtain their credit reports in their primary language.

### STATE SOLUTIONS

Require credit bureaus to provide credit reports in the top five languages in the state (in addition to Spanish) (e.g., [NJ Rev Stat § 56:11-34](#) as implemented by [N.J.A.C. 13:45A-38.4](#)).

**To speak to an expert about any of these problems or solutions**, please contact Chi Chi Wu, [cwu@nclc.org](mailto:cwu@nclc.org).

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The nonprofit National Consumer Law Center® (NCLC®) works for economic justice for low-income and other disadvantaged people in the U.S. through policy analysis and advocacy, publications, litigation, and training.

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