Beyond Welcoming

A Platform for Immigrant Inclusion for the Next Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County

May 2019

TENNESSEE
Immigrant
& Refugee
Rights
COALITION

TENNESSEE
Immigrant
& Refugee
Rights
COALITION

TIRRC is a coalition of immigrants, refugees, and allies working to lift up fundamental American freedoms and human rights and build a strong, welcoming, and inclusive Tennessee. We envision a society in which: immigrants are powerfully engaged as leaders in the civic, political, and cultural life of the community; the human rights and dignity of all people are respected, and diversity is welcomed and valued; people are free from discrimination and oppression, and immigrants are joined with others in a broader movement for religious freedom and social, racial, and economic justice.

Data throughout this document are compiled from:
American Community Survey
Migration Policy Institute
New American Economy
Metro Nashville Public Schools

Beyond Welcoming

About the Platform 3
Platform At A Glance 4
Policy Recommendations
- Dismantling the Deportation Pipeline 7
- Protect Nashvillians from Deportation 8
- Reform Policing & the Criminal Justice System 9
- Defend Workers' Rights & Economic Opportunity 10
- Invest in Affordable Housing & Thriving, Connected Communities 12
- Increase Access to Services & Civic Engagement 13
- Ensure Equitable & Inclusive Education 15
- Support Healthy Communities 16
- Defend Immigrant & Refugee Communities 18

About the Platform

Each week in Nashville, ICE is terrorizing immigrant neighborhoods and ripping residents away from their families and communities. As the federal government ramps up immigration enforcement, the state legislature has continued their efforts to make life harder for immigrant and refugee communities.

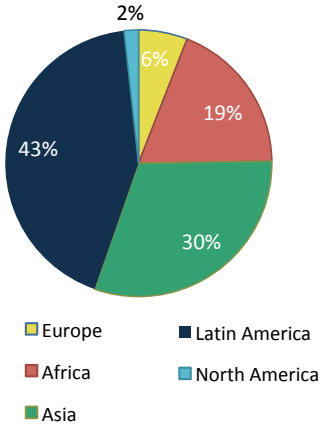
In the face of unrelenting attacks on our communities, what can the city of Nashville do?

In 2019 and beyond, Nashville can cast a new vision of belonging for our community and our state. Across the country, cities have been on the front lines of enacting policies to defend immigrant and refugee families and invest in our shared prosperity. We believe that Nashville should join the movement of cities advancing pro-immigrant policies and help to turn the tide in this country.

We created this platform to provide a blueprint for the next Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County.

This platform was generated through thousands of discussions with immigrant and refugee community members and organizations. We surveyed over 5,000 first- and second- generation immigrants and refugees in Davidson County, asking what issues are affecting their communities and what their priorities are for our next elected leaders. We facilitated community conversations with diverse immigrant and refugee communities to refine the platform. We interviewed dozens of partner organizations and other local experts about what our leaders can do to advance and defend immigrant rights. This platform is not exhaustive of the needs and aspirations of our communities, but it provides a roadmap for key priority issue areas for the next council and administration.

More than 1 in 10 Nashvillians are foreign born.



54% have lived in the U.S. for 10+ years

18% have lived in the U.S. since 2010

We would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their thoughtful feedback and input. This platform would not have been possible without their expertise.

ACE Nashville
American Civil Liberties Union of TN
American Muslim Advisory Council
Avi Poster
Central Labor Council of Nashville & Middle TN
Claudia Barajas
Conexión Américas
Ethiopian Community Association in Nashville
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT)
IUPAT DC91/Alianza Laboral
Iron Workers Local Union 492
Islamic Center of Tennessee
Jazmin Ramirez
Karla Campbell
Kyle Mothershead
Metro Human Relations Commission
Molly Sehring
Molly Stovall
Midinimo Community Center
Nashville Organized for Action and Hope
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum--Nashville Chapter
National Immigration Law Center
Open Table Nashville
Oromo Youth Association
Salahadeen Center
SEIU Local 205
Sekou Franklin
Sexual Assault Center
Siloam Health
Southeast Laborers' District Council
Sticky Rice Collective
TN Disability Pathfinder
TN Fair Housing Council
Tricia Herzfeld
Urban Housing Solutions
Vanderbilt Muslim Student Association
Vietnamese Community of Middle TN
Welcoming America
Workers' Dignity/Dignidad Obrera
Zomi Community of Tennessee
Mayor's New Americans Advisory Council and the community members who contributed to the Nashville Gateways for Growth report

Beyond Welcoming

Platform at a Glance

While the federal and state governments unleash unrelenting attacks on immigrants and refugees, cities like Nashville can cast a new vision of belonging for our community and country. In this historic moment, cities must boldly lead to protect immigrant communities and defend our values. **Below is a summary of our policy blueprint for Nashville's mayor and metro council so that we can be a truly welcoming city.**

Dismantle the Deportation Pipeline

Each week in Nashville, ICE is terrorizing immigrant neighborhoods and ripping residents away from their families and communities. The federal government's campaign of mass deportations is being supported by the resources and partnership of local governments. **Nashville can change policies and practices to ensure our city government is not helping ICE deport our neighbors so residents feel safe interacting with local government.** For example, the city must end the agreement that allows ICE to use our local jail as an immigrant detention facility and clarify policies to draw a bright line between the work of our city and federal immigration enforcement.

Protect Nashvillians from Deportation

Beyond disentangling the work of city government from federal immigration enforcement, the city can proactively protect Nashvillians from deportation. For example, local law enforcement and other government agencies could be required to inform residents of their rights when encountering immigration agents, and the city can create a Legal Defense Fund to help Nashvillians get a fair shot at fighting their deportation in immigration court, where they are not guaranteed an attorney.

Reform Policing & the Criminal Justice System

As demonstrated in the *Driving While Black* report, communities of color are criminalized, overpoliced, and disproportionately represented in our criminal justice system. **For immigrants, involvement in the criminal justice system, even for minor crimes, can lead to deportation and family separation.** The next mayor and council must institute policing and criminal justice reforms that ensure fairness, due process, and racial equity.

Defend Workers' Rights & Economic Opportunity

Immigrants and refugees have played a key role in our city's economic growth. Across sectors and industries, immigrant families have helped make Nashville thrive. **Although immigrants have high participation in the labor force, they experience higher rates of poverty than their U.S. born counterparts.** The city can invest in workforce development and entrepreneurship in the immigrant community, set a high standard for quality jobs, and hold bad actors accountable for exploiting workers and low-income communities.

Invest in Affordable Housing & Thriving, Connected Neighborhoods

If Nashville wants to be a welcoming city, we must ensure that low- and middle-income families—including immigrants and refugees—can have a safe and affordable place to live. **The city must make bold investments in affordable housing, create policies and programs that mitigate the impacts of displacement and protect tenant rights that are accessible to limited English proficient residents.** The city should ensure that resources for infrastructure, transit, parks, and other neighborhood improvements are equitably invested and that the assets of immigrant neighborhoods are protected and supported.

Increase Access to Services & Civic Engagement

Cities work best when everyone is able to fully participate and contribute. Immigrants and refugees, especially those who are newly arrived, face unique barriers to accessing and engaging with government agencies. **The mayor and city council should ensure city programs and services are accessible regardless of immigration status or language ability, support more targeted and robust immigrant integration initiatives, and coordinate efforts through an empowered Office of New Americans.** The city should also invest in leadership development within immigrant communities and opportunities to engage in the civic and political life of our community.

Ensure Equitable & Inclusive Education

More than a third of Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) students come from households that speak another language than English; the future of our city depends on the success of all students and the participation of all families. **Nashville must support MNPS in creating successful, equitable, and inclusive schools where all children can learn and thrive.** For example, the mayor and council should increase MNPS funding and investments that increase educational equity. City leaders can support the development and implementation of policies and programs to ensure families can engage in the school system without fear of immigration enforcement and that students whose parents have been detained or deported are supported.

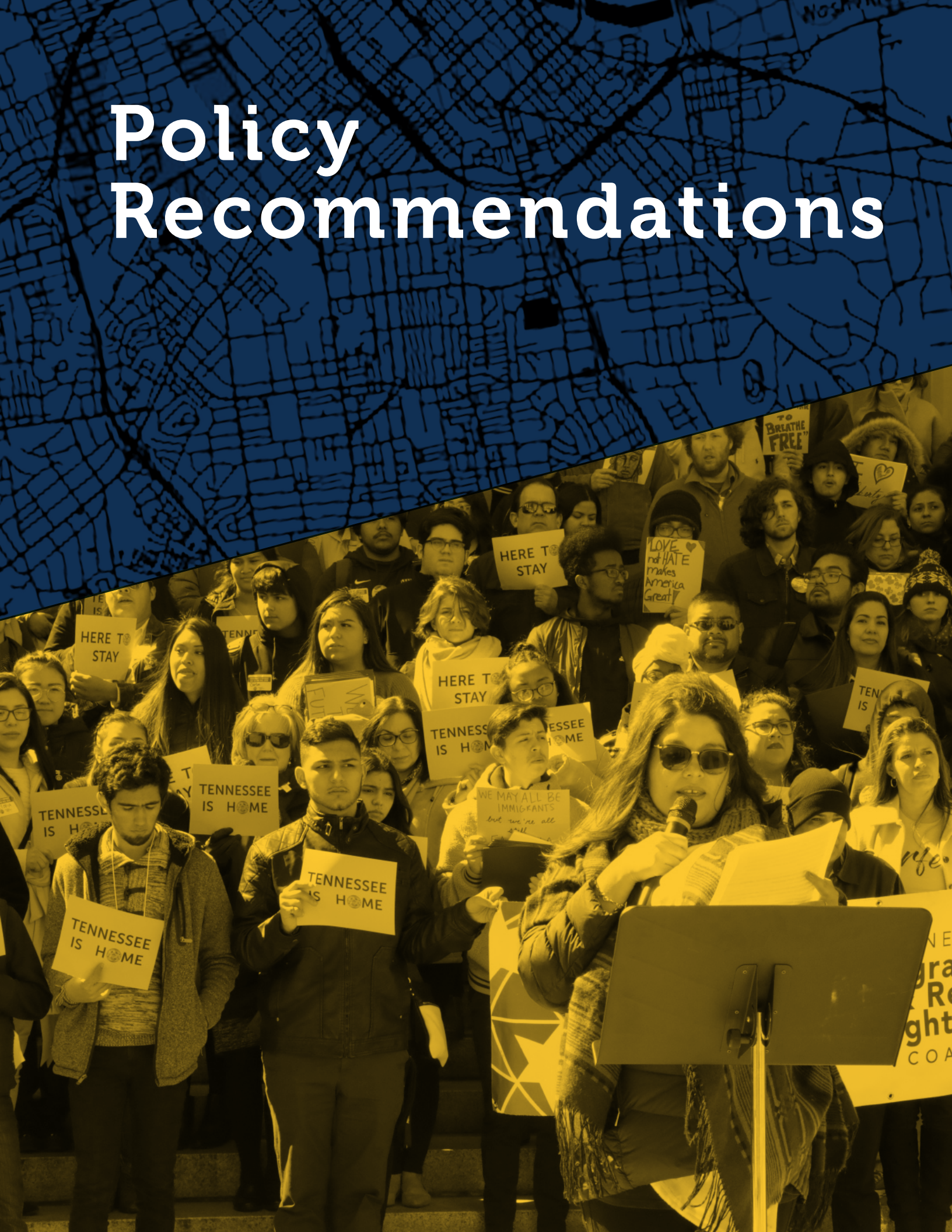
Support Healthy Communities

Federal and state policy changes and proposals have sent a wave of fear through immigrant communities making families hesitant to visit the doctor, report sexual or domestic violence, or access health and nutrition services because of fear it may lead to deportation. It also comes at a time of acute need for these services; fear and deportation of a loved one can lead to toxic stress and trauma for children of immigrants. **Our city can invest in resources and programs and enact policy change to educate communities members and public employees, restore trust and confidence in accessing services, and mitigate the harm that persistent fear of deportation can cause.**

Defend Immigrant & Refugee Communities

In the face of unrelenting attacks on immigrants and refugees, we need our elected officials to take a bold stance in defending our residents and our values against the federal government and our state legislature - **in the public conversation, in the legislature, and in the courts.**

Policy Recommendations



Dismantle the Deportation Pipeline

Policy 1: Stop the Davidson County jail from renting its bed space to ICE by ending the Intergovernmental Service Agreement

Policy 2: Disentangle local government agencies from federal immigration enforcement

Policy 3: Restore trust in government agencies

Policy 4: Track and assess how ICE is using local governments for immigration enforcement and the impact of entanglement

Each week in Nashville, ICE is terrorizing immigrant neighborhoods and ripping residents away from their families and communities. The federal government's campaign of mass deportations is being supported by the resources and partnership of local governments. Nashville can change policies and practices to ensure our city government is not helping ICE deport our neighbors and ensure residents feel safe interacting with local government

Stop the Davidson County jail from renting its bed space to ICE by ending the IGSA contract

- Terminate and renegotiate the InterGovernmental Service Agreement (IGSA). Any new contract must exclude holding people for ICE and prohibit our jail from serving as an immigrant detention center.

Disentangle local government agencies from federal immigration enforcement

- To the extent permitted by state and federal law, enact policies that disentangle local law enforcement and other local government agencies from federal immigration enforcement, such as by prohibiting participation in enforcement operations and prohibiting employees from spending time responding to inquiries from ICE (e.g. notifying ICE about an individual's custody status, release date, or scheduled appearance date for court or probation proceedings);
- Prohibit compliance with ICE administrative warrants or ICE detainers unless accompanied by a judicial criminal warrant[1];
- Allow individuals who allege a violation of these policies to file a complaint for investigation with the appropriate city agency;
- Support efforts to repeal and/or challenge Public Chapter 973, the 2018 state law that limits local government's ability to disentangle local government and federal immigration enforcement.

Restore trust in government agencies

- Require that each agency review its data collection, retention, and disclosure policies to only collect what is necessary to provide services; publicize these privacy protections with clients and communities; and
- Direct all public agencies and encourage all other institutions, such as courts, businesses and hospitals, to establish policies and procedures to create "safe spaces" for immigrants by strengthening privacy protections, prohibiting participation or assistance with civil immigration enforcement operations, and training staff on how to respond to requests for information or collaboration from federal immigration enforcement agents.

Track & assess how ICE is using local governments for immigration enforcement & the impact of entanglement

The Mayor's Office of New Americans should develop a plan to monitor and assess requests from ICE across metro agencies and should publish its findings on a publicly accessible website on a quarterly basis. Monitoring should include:

- The number of requests from ICE/CBP/USCIS to participate in or assist in any civil immigration enforcement operations, including any raids, investigations, detections, apprehensions, detentions, transfers or requests to establish traffic perimeters;
- The number of immigration detainer requests or administrative warrants received from ICE/CBP/USCIS;
- The responses from metro agencies to these requests;
- The number of times metro agencies shared or reported information to ICE/CBP/USCIS regarding any individual in custody; and
- The number of ICE/CBP/USCIS requests for a metro agency to share or disclose personal information about a potential non-citizen individual.

80% of Nashville's 31,000 undocumented immigrants have lived in the U.S. for **5-20+** years

30% of undocumented immigrants in Nashville own their home

66% of undocumented Nashvillians live below **200%** of the poverty line

[1] While TN Public Chapter 973 tries to force local governments to violate rights by detaining individuals under these unconstitutional requests, federal law defines compliance with these requests as voluntary, and according to numerous courts across the country, they do not meet the constitutional standards to detain an individual. Davidson County should follow the legal guidance and practice of Shelby County and require a judicial warrant to detain an individual who is eligible for release.

Protect Nashvillians from Deportation

Policy 1: Support Residents targeted for deportation

Beyond disentangling the work of city government from federal immigration enforcement, the city can proactively protect Nashvillians from deportation.

Support Residents Targeted for Deportation

- Establish a legal defense fund to provide access to legal representation for individuals threatened with or in removal proceedings; and
- Establish a fund to cover or support low-income residents in renewing their deportation protections through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

Reform Policing & the Criminal Justice System

Policy 1: Decriminalize certain offenses and end broken windows policing.

Policy 2: Institute police reforms

Policy 3: Provide adequate public defense

As demonstrated in the *Driving While Black* report, communities of color are criminalized, overpoliced, and disproportionately represented in our criminal justice system. For immigrants, involvement in the criminal justice system, even for minor crimes, can lead to deportation and family separation. We encourage the next mayor and council to immediately engage other community-based organizations in Nashville with an expertise in policing and criminal justice to institute the reforms below as well as broader reforms, such as eliminating cash bail and introducing alternatives to probation, to ensure fairness, due process, and racial equity.

Decriminalize certain offenses & end broken windows policing.

- Decriminalize certain low-level "crimes" or create civil enforcement options, which would reduce the number of arrests and decrease over-incarceration in local jails[2]; and
- Continue progress towards ending broken windows policing by eliminating aggressive, excessive, and unnecessary traffic stops by addressing the problems documented in *Driving While Black* by Gideon's Army and *An Assessment of Traffic Stops and Policing Strategies in Nashville* by the Policing Project.

Institute police reforms

- Adopt a policy specifically clarifying that no Davidson County personnel have the authority to prolong any stop in order to investigate immigration status or to allow ICE to investigate immigration status; and officers shall not rely to any degree on actual or perceived national origin, immigration or citizenship status, in deciding to initiate a stop, or in deciding to question, search, arrest, detain or take any other law enforcement action against any individual, except when a specific suspect description includes information related to the above categories links a specific person to suspected criminal activity;
- Increase diversity in language and cultural competency among law enforcement through reforms to hiring and training of police officers;
- Institute ongoing "know-the-consequences" training to educate law enforcement on the immigration consequences of arrests versus issuing warnings or citations for low-level offenses;
- Distribute "know your rights" cards to individuals who are arrested or given a citation that includes information about rights when residents are approached by ICE agents at home, at court, or in the jails; develop a distribution plan that maximizes dissemination of the information to at risk communities in multiple languages;
- Ensure immigrant communities are included in discussions about police reform and oversight in Nashville, by distributing information about the Community Oversight Board and publishing reporting mechanisms in multiple languages; and
- Have in place language access plans and policies for the Board and Board staff to provide non-English speaking community members opportunities to participate and issue complaints;
- Members of the Community Oversight Board should receive training and orientation to the experience of foreign-born community members and metro council must ensure diverse representation on the Board.

Provide adequate public defense

- Allocate sufficient funding for public defense;
- Fund immigration specialists for the Public Defender's Office and court-appointed attorneys to ensure that all lawyers representing indigent defendants have training and resources to adequately determine the immigration consequences of clients' charges, pleas, and sentences, as is required for constitutionally-sufficient criminal defense.

[2] The city of Austin passed a "Freedom City" Resolution that targeted racial disparities in arrests by requiring officers to issue citations instead of arrests for nonviolent class C misdemeanors, such as possession of marijuana, driving while license invalid and city ordinance violations.

Defend Workers' Rights & Economic Opportunity

Policy 1: Protect communities from wage theft, *notario* fraud, and dangerous working conditions

Policy 2: Strengthen workforce development opportunities

Policy 3: Support immigrant-owned businesses

Policy 4: Set the standard

Immigrants and refugees have played a key role in our city's economic growth. Across sectors and industries, immigrant families have helped make Nashville thrive. Although immigrants have high participation in the labor force, they experience higher rates of poverty than their U.S. born counterparts. The city can invest in workforce development and entrepreneurship in the immigrant community, set a high standard for quality jobs, and hold bad actors accountable for exploiting workers and low-income communities.

Protect communities from wage theft, *notario* fraud, & dangerous working conditions

- Develop coordinated strategy with community-based organizations to strengthen worker protections against wage theft by working with the District Attorney's office to:
    - Prosecute wage theft cases;
    - Increase reporting and enforcement of wage theft laws, unauthorized practice of law, and other consumer protections.
- Develop a robust, multilingual community education and reporting system to protect communities from fraud, identify bad actors, and increase enforcement;
- Support and coordinate with community-based organizations to fill information and service gaps in immigrant-dense neighborhoods where unscrupulous businesses are most prevalent;
- Ensure relevant metro departments are adequately funded and staffed to conduct workplace health and safety inspections.

	Percent of Families with Children in Poverty	Median Household Income in Nashville
U.S.-Born	18.5%	$54,895
Foreign-Born	30.8%	$43,161

35% of immigrant households in Nashville are **"cost burdened,"** or spend more than **30%** of their income on housing.

Immigrant households in Nashville pay an estimated **$899 million** in state, local, and federal taxes.

Workers' Rights & Economic Opportunity

Strengthen workforce development opportunities

- Build capacity of workforce development partners in Nashville to serve more diverse communities and to facilitate access to the labor market for high-skilled immigrants and refugees through trainings, accreditation assistance, and networking/mentoring;
- Expand and continue responsive development of post-secondary educational opportunities, such as Nashville State Community College's Medical Interpreter program, expand access to Nashville GRAD beyond those who can complete a FAFSA, and increase access to job training and skill-building programs for immigrants and refugees;
- Create or fund programs, including incentivizing union apprenticeships, that are targeted towards or inclusive of immigrant communities that offer training, higher education, or jobs with career pathways, especially in sectors and industries that are experiencing or projected to experience growth in Nashville;
- Expand and increase access to English classes through funding opportunities and coordination, including through partnerships with employers.

Support immigrant-owned businesses

- Increase access to resources, programs, and services in the public and private sectors for immigrant small business owners and entrepreneurs, including boosting language access;
- Create and distribute new resources and trainings to help immigrant communities understand licensing and application requirements, lending programs, grant opportunities, and other processes related to business development.

Set the standard

- Metro should lead the way as a model employer by providing wages that support a families' cost of living in Nashville and health and retirement benefits that raise the bar for the private sector;
- The city should strengthen the city's *Do Better Bill* and only do business with construction contractors who offer safe, quality jobs with living wages, with a preference towards contractors that use Department of Labor-certified apprenticeship programs;
- The city should advance creative policy-making to increase minimum wage and other benefits (e.g.. paid sick leave) among private employers through incentives, taxes, etc. that are not subject to preemption laws;
- Develop a reporting and monitoring system and develop policy solutions in compliance with state law that can ensure companies with a track record of wage theft violations are ineligible for city contracts or tax increment financing;
- The city should provide resources and support for employers to support immigrant employees, including increasing access to services like English classes and legal resources, and trainings to ensure that employers and employees are prepared for potential encounters or requests for information from ICE.

Of the foreign-born population 25 years and older, 56% of Nashville immigrants have a high school degree, GED or less.

Nationally, immigrants are twice as likely to start a business than U.S. Born Residents.

Nearly 74% of immigrants in Nashville are in the labor force.

Invest in Affordable Housing & Thriving, Connected Neighborhoods

Policy 1: Take bold action and make big investments in affordable housing

Policy 2: Support residents and newcomers in navigating housing market and impacts of displacement

Policy 3: Protect Tenants' Rights

Policy 4: Ensure Thriving and Connected Neighborhoods

If Nashville wants to be a welcoming city, we must ensure that low- and middle-income families—including immigrants and refugees—can have a safe and affordable place to live. We encourage the next mayor and council to immediately engage other community-based organizations in Nashville with an expertise in housing policy and community development to develop robust, concrete, and visionary plans for solving the housing crisis in Nashville.

Take bold action & make big investments in affordable housing

- Significantly increase funding for the Barnes Housing Trust Fund and create a permanent, dedicated revenue stream for affordable housing;
- Track the expiring affordability of apartments developed under Section 8 or Low Income Housing Tax Credits and develop a plan to invest in these properties;
- Educate and incentivize landlords and property owners to continue to accept Section 8 vouchers and to also accept recently resettled refugees and immigrants who lack credit or rental history.

Support residents & newcomers in navigating housing market & impacts of displacement

- Hire a dedicated relocation support specialist in metro government to help mitigate the impact of displacement for residents, accessible to limited English proficient residents, including available affordable housing, transferring children to new schools, and other support systems - this person could be part of a larger, new office dedicated to affordable housing, gentrification, and displacement;
- Create and maintain a multi-lingual housing resource guide for immigrants and refugees including information about housing-related services and tenants' rights.

Protect Tenants' Rights

- Enact policies that require legal documents, including those related to rent increases and eviction notices, to be translated into languages spoken by tenants or to make interpretation/translation services available;
- Support and partner with local organizations to increase access to justice for fair housing complaints and consumer protection, including developing and distributing multilingual "know your rights" information to immigrant families and having a complaint and enforcement mechanism.

Ensure Thriving & Connected Neighborhoods

- Conduct an assessment of public transportation and infrastructure in areas with higher percentages of foreign-born residents, including parks, sidewalks, crosswalks, bus stops, bike paths, and greenspace;
- Ensure equitable investment in residential neighborhoods and corridors across the county;
- Invest in the corridors of Southeast Davidson County to preserve and encourage immigrant-owned businesses and cultural landmarks and improve infrastructure to create thriving "international districts" that are celebrated, including supporting the purchase of commercial property to prevent displacement and in forming business alliances.

Increase Access to Services & Civic Engagement

Policy 1: Strengthen and expand language access policies and services

Policy 2: Connecting Communities to Information

Policy 3: Office of New Americans and the Mayor's New American Advisory Council

Policy 4: Support Immigrant Integration and Leadership Development

Policy 5: Ensure a Quality Census Count

Cities work best when everyone is able to fully participate and contribute. Immigrants and refugees, especially those who are newly arrived, face unique barriers to being able to access and engage with government agencies. The mayor and city council should increase access to city programs and services, regardless of immigration status or language ability, support more targeted and robust immigrant integration initiatives, and coordinate its efforts through an empowered Office of New Americans. The city should invest in leadership development within immigrant communities and opportunities to engage in the civic and political life of our community.

More than 33% of immigrants in Nashville are naturalized citizens.

58% of all foreign-born Nashvillians are limited English proficient

Strengthen & expand language access policies & services

- Drawing from the Metro-wide language access study conducted by the Metro Human Relations Commission, develop city-wide plans and uniform language access policies and standards that ensure meaningful access to services, including multilingual signage in public buildings, interpretation service, and translation of essential documents across metro departments;
- Partner with the Election Commission to increase language access in elections for limited English proficient voters;
- Strengthen training and professional development tools and plans to increase the capacity of Metro staff to work with diverse residents, including recruiting and retaining bilingual employees and cultural competency trainings; and
- Fund and conduct a multilingual outreach strategy to spread the word about language policy and programs, ensuring communities know about resources available in Nashville.

Connecting Communities to Information

- Invest in community education campaigns to inform immigrant communities about how to access city services, including the creation of a multilingual "Welcome to Nashville" guide and mobile immigrant welcome centers that publicize and explain metro departments and services and opportunities; and
- Invest in innovative approaches to increase interactions between metro government agencies and services and immigrant communities, including through developing Nashville's "hubs of integration" that facilitate integration and community engagement, like libraries, schools, and communities centers, where the city can offer relevant programming and connect immigrant communities to other services and through creative outreach and partnerships.

Office of New Americans & the Mayor's New American Advisory Council

- The mayor should expand and formalize an Office of New Americans with dedicated staff and funding tasked with ensuring the robust participation of and greater access for immigrant communities in local government; and
- In consultation with stakeholders, the mayor and the Office of New Americans should develop a clear mandate and role for the Mayor's New Americans Advisory Council that includes a robust advisory mechanism to gain input from key stakeholders and individuals that represent the diversity of background and perspective of the immigrant population in Nashville; and
- Through the Mayor's New Americans Advisory Council, identify emerging needs and trends, service gaps, and opportunities for collaboration to support immigrants and refugees.

Support Immigrant Integration & Leadership Development

- Increase funding for programs that promote the economic and social integration of immigrant communities, including offering existing programs and educational workshops in languages other than English;
- Increasing the availability of English classes for immigrants and refugees to boost civic participation and workforce development through funding and coordination of English instruction;
- Create a municipal ID card that can foster a sense of belonging and support engagement with local government agencies;
- Create more opportunities and activities for immigrant youth and families by expanding hours of operation and services for parks and community centers; create more spaces and centers for cultural celebrations and exchanges;
- Continue and expand participation in campaigns such as *America is Home* and *Cities for Citizenship* to promote naturalization among eligible immigrants and invest in initiatives to remove barriers to citizenship; and
- Strengthen the civic leadership development pipeline for immigrants and refugees including providing training for graduates of MyCity Academy on how to serve on boards and commissions; and
- Ensure that all residents have the opportunity to serve on boards and commissions, regardless of immigration status.

Ensure a Quality Census Count

- Through the Complete Count Committee, develop robust plans to maximize participation in the 2020 Census, include using city communication mechanisms to distribute information in multiple languages, using libraries, schools, and other community hubs to inform residents and create opportunities to complete census surveys electronically;
- Fund community-based organizations who can boost the participation of hard-to-count communities, including immigrants and refugees.

14,000
Nashvillians are eligible to apply for citizenship today.

Ensure Equitable and Inclusive Education

Policy 1: Support the Creation and Implementation of a Safe Schools Program in Metro Nashville Public Schools

Policy 2: Increase Funding for Public Schools and Invest in Immigrant Inclusion

More than a third of Metro Nashville Public Schools' (MNPS) students come from households that speak another language than English, as such the future of our city depends on the success of all students and the participation of all families. Nashville's mayor and metro council must support MNPS in creating successful, equitable, and inclusive schools where all children can learn and thrive.

Support the Creation & Implementation of a Safe Schools Program in Metro Nashville Public Schools

- Support MNPS leadership to design and fund trainings for school administrators and school resource officers to make sure schools are safe spaces for all families. Trainings should include explanations on: the existing privacy protections for students, prohibitions on staff asking or retaining information regarding a student's immigration status and that of their family members, and barring information-sharing, access to schools, or other collaboration with immigration authorities, unless required by law - at which point these measures should be first communicated to students and their families;
- Support MNPS to promote the mental health and well-being of students experiencing stress or trauma when a loved on is detained or deported.

140 languages are spoken in Metro Nashville Public Schools.

More than **a third** of Metro Nashville Public Schools students come from a household that speaks a language **other than English.**

Increase Funding for Public Schools & Invest in Immigrant Inclusion

- Increase investments in MNPS and funding strategies to improve outcomes for all students and increase equity in our school system;
- Increase funding for important supplemental and leadership development programs, such as after-school programming, Opportunity Now, and Summer Scholars Academy, and ensure sufficient funding to widely publicize these opportunities in multiple languages;
- Invest in school-based strategies to facilitate immigrant integration, including parent engagement, wrap-around services, and prioritizing diversity in MNPS hiring;
- Commit resources and technical assistance to support the development of a Kurdish language program in MNPS high schools that meets the foreign language requirement for graduation and serves as a model for including additional languages.

Supporting Healthy Communities

Policy 1: Support the creation and implementation of "safe spaces" in Davidson County health agencies

Policy 2: Ensure government services are trauma-informed

Policy 3: Reduce health disparities

Federal and state policy changes and proposals have sent a wave of fear in immigrant communities, making families hesitant to visit the doctor, report sexual or domestic violence, or access health and nutrition services because of fear it may lead to deportation. It also comes at a time of acute need for these services; fear and deportation of a loved one can lead to toxic stress and trauma for children of immigrants. Immigrants are more likely to be disproportionately uninsured and lack access to quality care leading to poorer health outcomes. We encourage the next mayor and council to engage other community-based organizations and non-profit health providers in Nashville to improve the health and well-being of immigrant families.

Support the creation & implementation of "safe spaces" in Davidson County health agencies

- Support Davidson County health agencies in designing and funding trainings for administrators and health care providers that ensure all public health agencies and hospitals are safe spaces for all patients/clients, regardless of immigration status. Trainings should include explanations on: the existing privacy protections for patients/clients; prohibitions on staff asking or retaining information regarding immigration status, unless required by law; and barring information-sharing or other collaboration with immigration authorities, unless required by law;
- Develop a plan to widely publicize the safe spaces policies to immigrant communities to restore trust and encourage access to services; and
- Partner with public health agencies to provide relevant and important information to immigrant clients and patients, including "know your rights" information, census information, and accurate and up-to-date information about the pending federal public charge rule(s) changes[3], in multiple languages.

Ensure government services are trauma-informed

- Continue to support the ACEs initiatives in Nashville and develop awareness and solutions to prevent and address toxic stress in immigrant and refugee communities, including as a result of deportation and detention;
- Hire and train staff to understand the specific traumas endured by immigrant families (here and in their home country), and be prepared to respond appropriately, compassionately, and in a culturally competent way when symptoms of trauma are present.

Reduce health disparities

- Promote health equity at all levels creating opportunities for immigrant families to be healthy by increasing prevention and educational programs in different languages (e.g. access to chronic disease early detection checkups and access to yearly early detection cancer screenings);
- Create multilingual, culturally appropriate mental health programs for children until 18 years of age in partnership with organizations that serve immigrants and refugees and develop community-friendly educational materials in multiple languages;
- Collect comprehensive and reliable data to evaluate the degree to which policies and programs enhance equity, and serve as a guide for new strategies in order to promote health;
- Support and advocate for ongoing funding for the Safety Net Consortium of Middle Tennessee; and continue to improve access to information about health care services by building upon safety net and public health services that promote health for all residents, including multilingual services like My Healthcare Home.

[3]The Trump administration is proposing to change how public benefits and services can be considered in deportation or in immigration status adjustments. This has led to widespread fear and misinformation, resulting in many immigrant and refugee families disenrolling from benefits they are legally entitled to. For more information: https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/

Defend Immigrant & Refugee Communities

Policy 1: Be a champion

Policy 2: Stand up to the legislature

Policy 3: Be a convener

In the face of unrelenting attacks on immigrants and refugees, we need our elected officials to take a bold stance in defending our residents and our values against the federal government and our state legislature - in the public conversation, in the legislature, and in the courts.

Be a Champion

- Stand up for our communities through op-eds, public statements, social media, and council proceedings; reach out to impacted communities and express solidarity and offer support;
- Use your platform to help receiving communities to celebrate and value immigration and the diversity of our communities;
- Defend the lifesaving work of refugee resettlement, advocate for increased resettlement to Nashville and for robust funding to successfully support resettlement services;
- Sign on to public letters, amicus briefs, and other efforts to support immigrants and refugees at the national and state level.

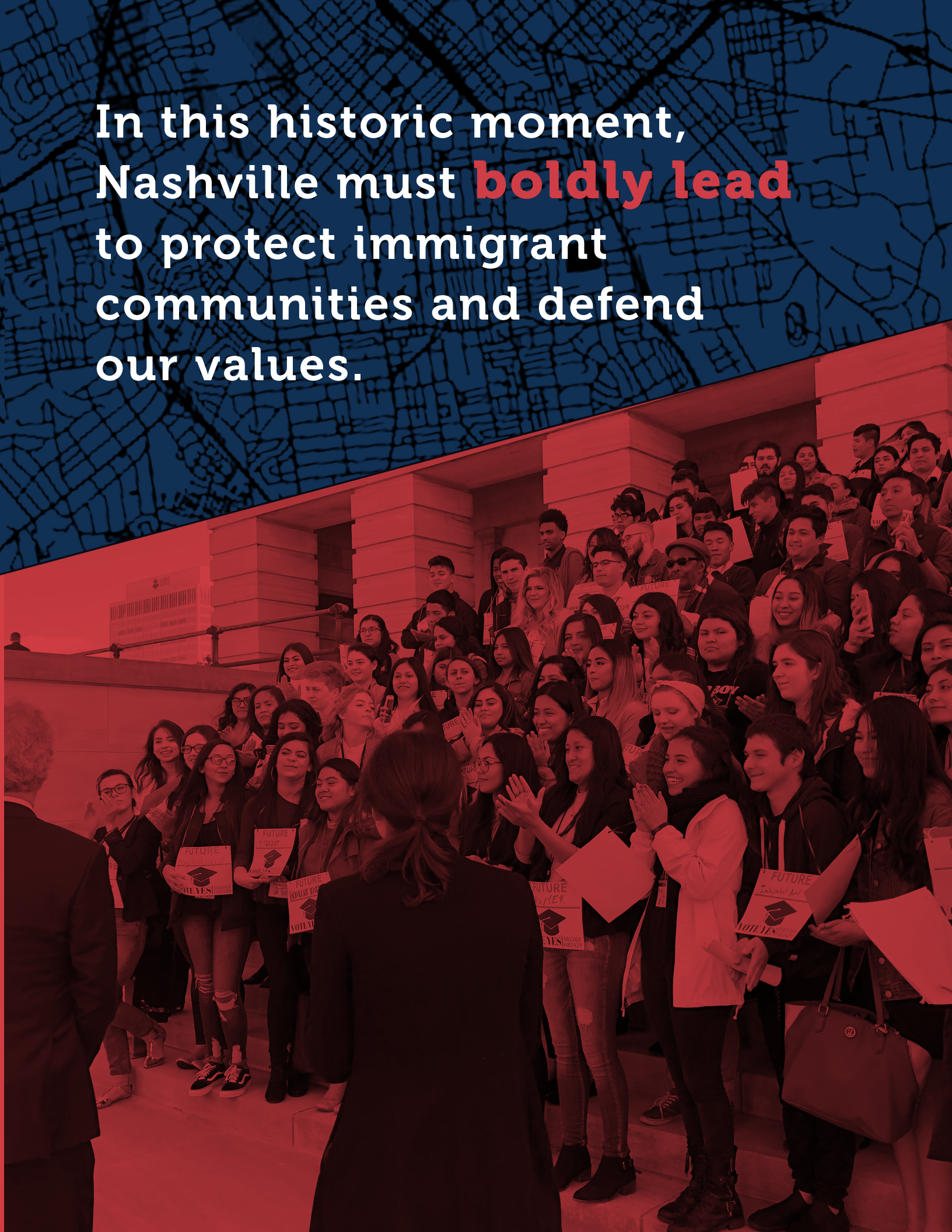
Stand up to the legislature

- Enact bold, progressive policies that move our city forward and courageously defend them in the face of attacks from the Tennessee legislature, including dedicating resources to defend the policies and positions of Davidson County in court;
- Partner with local governments across Tennessee to challenge preemption.

Be a convener

- Create a task-force or working group, comprised of immigrant and refugee leaders, service providers, and subject matter experts, to track new developments in immigration law, policy and enforcement and analyze data regarding the impact of Davidson County policies to provide recommendations that ensure the city remains responsive to the needs of the community in the ever-changing immigration environment;
- Convene and coordinate businesses, faith organizations, and other entities to leverage their institutions in support of immigrant inclusion (i.e. encouraging and supporting businesses to offer English or citizenship classes to their employees).

In this historic moment, Nashville must **boldly lead** to protect immigrant communities and defend our values.



TENNESSEE
Immigrant
& Refugee
Rights
COALITION

Beyond Welcoming Policy Platform 2019

www.tnimmigrant.org