



JB Pritzker, Governor
James L. Bennett, Director

Illinois Task Force on Black Immigrants Releases Report and Recommendations
Governor's Office of New Americans, IDHR, and RefugeeOne Hosted Panel Conversation with Task Force Members during Black History Month

CHICAGO – The Task Force on Black Immigrants, housed within the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) and was convened in response to a Joint Resolution of the Illinois House of Representatives, has formally filed the Report of the Task Force on Black Immigrants with the General Assembly.

At a time when the federal landscape around immigration remains uncertain and often divisive, Illinois leaders show this work is not rhetorical but about responsibility. The Task Force was convened to elevate the experiences of Black immigrants living in Illinois, their contributions, the barriers they face, and the policies that can help ensure every family has a fair opportunity to thrive.

The report advances a detailed population analysis of the nearly 85,000 Black immigrants who are an essential part of the diverse fabric of our state. The report also advances recommendations across seven areas of focus including:

- Language Access
- Culturally Competent Services
- Healthcare & Mental Health
- Affordable Housing
- Law Enforcement
- Inclusion and Intersectional Identity
- Data Collection

The full report is available to read at <https://dhr.illinois.gov>.

On February 26, [RefugeeOne](#) hosted a public event to release the Task Force's final report during Black History Month to highlight the contributions and experiences of Black immigrant community within the context of Illinois' Black community. The event included a panel conversation moderated by the Director of the Governor's Office of New Americans, Isabella Hurtado. Panelists included:

- Hon. Sonya Harper, Illinois State Representative, Task Force Co-Chair

- Director Jim Bennett, Illinois Department of Human Rights
- Nneka Obasi, Chicago Mayor's Office of Immigrant Migrant and Refugee Rights
- Fasika Alem, Programs Director at United African Organization
- Johannes Favi, Director of Program Housing, Bridge Communities

"We are in a moment where immigrants of all backgrounds are facing heightened hostility and fear and Black immigrants often stand at the intersection of both anti-immigrant and anti-Black sentiment," **said Isabella Hurtado**, Director of the Governor's Office of New Americans. "This report reflects the lived experiences and contributions of Black immigrants in Illinois, which is a community whose voices have too often been left out of policy conversations."

Drawing from community testimony, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement, the report outlines practical recommendations aimed at improving access to services, strengthening economic opportunity, and ensuring that Black immigrants are fully seen and supported in state systems.

"Illinois has always been at its best when we lean into inclusion rather than retreat from it," **said Director Jim Bennett**. "When communities face hostility or uncertainty at the federal level, states must lead. This report calls on us to strengthen access to services, ensure equitable treatment under the law, and address structural barriers that disproportionately impact Black immigrants."

Illinois State Rep. Sonya Harper, Task Force Co-Chair, reaffirmed the administration's commitment to turning recommendations into action.

"From language access and credential recognition to discrimination in housing and employment, Black immigrants navigate barriers that are too often invisible in policy conversations but are deeply felt in everyday life," **said Illinois State Rep. Sonya Harper, D-Chicago**. "At a time when national rhetoric is dehumanizing immigrant communities, this report insists on dignity, data, and action. We are not just acknowledging inequities, we are strengthening a path forward to dismantle them. However, this is not an undertaking the state can do alone. We all must ask, 'How do I support others who feel voiceless?'"

About the Illinois Task Force on Black Immigrants

The Illinois Task Force on Black Immigrants was convened in response to a Joint Resolution of the Illinois House of Representatives, with the charge of “studying the state of Black immigrants in Illinois and providing recommendations on how to assist them.” The Task Force, which met quarterly during the year 2025, considered multiple topics related to the lives of Black immigrants in Illinois, provided detailed interviews to IDHR staff, and examined other data and information on Black immigrants. The Task Force on Black Immigrants was established to examine the social, economic, and legal conditions impacting Black immigrants in Illinois and to recommend actionable policy solutions. The work reflects Illinois’ commitment to equity, transparency, and inclusive governance.

About the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR)

The Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) enforces the [Illinois Human Rights Act](#), which prohibits discrimination in connection with employment opportunities, housing and real estate transactions, access to financial credit, and the availability of public services and public accommodations, including educational institutions. Any Illinoisan who believes they have been a victim of discrimination can file a complaint with IDHR within 2 years of the date of the incident (effective Jan. 1, 2025) or within one year of a housing violation. To file a complaint with IDHR, call (877) 236-7703 or 7-1-1 for *TTY users or visit dhr.illinois.gov/filing-a-charge.

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