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Governor Hochul Announces Launch of New York State's Institute for Immigration Integration Research & Policy to Help Immigrants Transition to Community Life, Further Education, and the Workforce

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From the office of Governor Hochul

Advisory Board of Community Leaders Confirmed to Set in Motion Groundbreaking Policy Development and Select an Executive Director and Assistant Director in the Coming Months

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced the launch of New York State's Institute for Immigrant Integration Research & Policy to help immigrants transition to community life, further education, and the workforce. The Institute, which received funding in the FY 2023 State Budget, will be housed at the Rockefeller Institute of Government, the State University of New York's public policy think tank. The announcement coincides with the selection of an Advisory Board of community leaders, who will set in motion groundbreaking policy development and select an Executive Director and Assistant Director in the coming months.

"New York is built on the hard work and determination of generations of immigrants, and this Institute will work to improve the lives of those who are trying to build better lives for themselves and their families," **Governor Hochul said.** "By clearing the boundaries for new New Yorkers, we can help to better integrate them into the New York community and access the New York Dream."

Upon arrival, immigrants often struggle to learn English, help their children to assimilate in school, ^{MENU} find safe and affordable housing, secure jobs with a livable wage, secure transportation to commute to said jobs, and access available services—often for fear of deportation. The Institute's Executive Director and Assistant Director will analyze real-time immigration, economic, labor, and other data and identify potential solutions for policymakers to help build on the state's commitment to supporting immigrants of all ages, nationalities, and backgrounds.

The launch of the Institute follows Governor Hochul's mission to protect immigrants, including those who are undocumented, who were forced to leave their homelands. In October 2021, the Governor signed legislation (S.343-A/A.3412-A) classifying certain threats to report a person's immigration status as extortion or coercion under New York law. She opened up educational and housing opportunities to assist evacuees from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

According to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), 900 refugees and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders resettled in New York State in 2021, primarily from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, Afghanistan, and Burma. In the last 12 months, at least 1,300 Afghan evacuees were resettled in NYS as well.

Assemblymember Catalina Cruz said, "I am proud to have led the effort to create this Institute, which will focus on helping better shape policies that will improve the social, economic, and political integration of our state's large and growing immigrant communities. SUNY's vast resources of talent and experts in related fields is a promise of excellent research and policy recommendations that will improve the lives of all New Yorkers. The strong financial support provided for the Institute by Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie and the Assembly Majority is an enormous step in continuing to ensure New York leads the nation in not just welcoming immigrants but working to ensure they fulfill their American Dream."

SUNY Interim Chancellor Deborah F. Stanley said, "SUNY campuses comprise one of the world's most diverse learning opportunities, and welcome students from all walks of life, countries, and backgrounds. We are honored to have the Rockefeller Institute of Government house this Institute and facilitate its much-needed work to advance our state's longstanding commitment to supporting and welcoming immigrants and ensuring their success. I thank Governor Hochul and the Legislature - particularly Assembly Member Catalina Cruz - for filling a critical policy need through the creation of this Institute, and also extend my gratitude to our esteemed advisory board members for their service."

The Institute's Advisory Board is a broadly based group of accomplished leaders who bring an array of experiences and relationships, as well as a shared commitment to immigration integration to the Institute's work. The Advisory Board—which will also provide the Institute with guidance and

recommendations with respect to research, programming, fundraising opportunities, and community events—includes:

- Wilma Alvarado-Little, MA, MSW, Director of Minority Health and Health Disparities Prevention, NYSDOH
- Dr. Laura Anker, Professor, American Studies, SUNY Old Westbury
- Murad Awawdeh, Executive Director, New York Immigration Coalition
- Marcos Crespo, Board Trustee, SUNY
- Dr. Isaac Ehrlich, Professor, Economics, University at Buffalo
- Lucia Gomez, Political Director, New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO
- Laura Gonzalez-Murphy, Executive Director, Office for New Americans, NYS Department of State
- Ramona Hernandez, Director of the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, CUNY
- Paola Martinez, Community Organizer
- Cesar Perales, Board of Trustees Vice Chairman, SUNY
- Dr. Dina Refki, Director of the Center for Women in Government & Civil Society, University at Albany
- Jennifer Rizzo-Choi, Executive Director, International Institute of Buffalo
- Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director of the Asian American Federation

University at Albany Director of the Center for Women in Government & Civil Society Dr. Dina Refki said, "The Institute will occupy a unique niche in the immigrant integration landscape. It is designed to strengthen the preparation of students interested in pursuing integration work and enhance the training of the next generation of immigrant integration professionals. It will generate knowledge that seeks to accelerate immigrants' workforce development and improve Immigrant access to health and social services. The Institute will also inform New York's immigrant integration policy processes through research and data-driven policy analyses."

International Institute of Buffalo Executive Director Jennifer Rizzo-Choi said, "I am honored to serve as an advisory board member of the newly launched Institute for Immigrant Integration Research & Policy. New York has always excelled at welcoming immigrants and refugees into our state. At the International Institute of Buffalo, we have over 100 years of experience integrating immigrants and refugees into our region, helping to create the unique and diverse fabric our community enjoys today. We are immensely proud that Buffalo is one of the leaders in the state in accepting and integrating our new neighbors. With the launch of this statewide institute, I am excited to play a role in ensuring that New York becomes even more efficient in welcoming refugees and immigrants into our communities and workforce."

Asian American Federation Executive Director Jo-Ann Yoo said, "As an immigrant and the first in my family to attend college in the United States, I am moved and honored to be invited to be a part of the advisory board of SUNY's Institute for Immigration Integration Research and Policy. This initiative will

help ensure that immigrants have ample opportunities to hone their skills and contribute to making ^{MENU} New York State a welcoming place for all newcomers to innovate. We only need to look to history to see how, despite exploitation, prejudice, and unjust policies that hindered their belonging and integration, immigrants continue to create and sustain economies in small towns and big cities across the nation. I am proud to be part of this endeavor that aims to build on this history and nurture new ideas and talented people to strengthen the social and economic fabric of New York State."

About The Rockefeller Institute of Government

The Rockefeller Institute of Government is the State University of New York's public policy think tank, conducting cutting-edge research and analysis to inform lasting solutions to the problems facing New York State and the nation. The Institute's mission is to improve the capacities of communities, state and local governments, and the federal system to work toward genuine, evidence-based solutions. As part of that mission, the Institute leverages the research expertise of SUNY's 64 campuses, connecting scholars from across the system and allowing the Institute to quickly pivot in to new and emerging policy areas. SUNY professors are often included in Rockefeller Institute grant proposals and the Institute has a long track record of working with campuses on events and forums.

Additionally, the Rockefeller Institute provides opportunities for SUNY students with the Center for Law & Policy Solutions internship program as well as the Future Leaders in Policy Competition, which highlights SUNY undergraduate and graduate research.


About the State University of New York

The State University of New York, which celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, is the largest comprehensive system of higher education in the United States, and more than 95 percent of all New Yorkers live within 30 miles of any one of SUNY's 64 colleges and universities. Across the system, SUNY has four academic health centers, five hospitals, four medical schools, two dental schools, a law school, the country's oldest school of maritime, the state's only college of optometry, and manages one US Department of Energy National Laboratory. In total, SUNY serves about 1.4 million students amongst its entire portfolio of credit- and non-credit-bearing courses and programs, continuing education, and community outreach programs. SUNY oversees nearly a quarter of academic research in New York. Research expenditures system-wide are nearly \$1.1 billion in fiscal year 2022, including significant contributions from students and faculty. There are more than three million SUNY alumni worldwide, and one in three New Yorkers with a college degree is a SUNY alum. To learn more about how SUNY creates opportunities, visit suny.edu.

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