



Brent Blackaby  
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR  
April 29, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Blackaby (Author), Councilmember Lunaparra (Co-sponsor),  
Councilmember Tregub (Co-sponsor), Mayor Ishii (Co-sponsor)

Subject: Budget Referral: Deportation Defense Legal and Education Funds

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Process an allocation of \$200,000 for Deportation Defense Legal and Education Funds.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

\$200,000 in FY 2026.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

When President Donald Trump was elected he promised “Mass Deportations.” On his first day of office, President Trump rescinded the Biden Administration’s guidelines to not allow immigration enforcement in or near “sensitive” areas such as schools, hospitals, social service centers and places of worship, unless there are exigent circumstances. Now Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can enter and deport Berkeley residents at those sites as well as others.

This Budget referral would fund additional legal and educational services to help protect our immigrant communities against the national mass deportation movement. Wait lists for these services are already at 200+ people at our Berkeley-based Immigration Service Providers (Social Justice Collaborative, Oasis Legal Services, Multicultural Institute, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant, East Bay Community Law Center). East Bay Sanctuary Covenant would distribute the funds among the five agencies for coordinated Legal Consultation and Support for Immigrants, including:

- Legal consultations/screenings
  - 20 min legal consultations/screenings - from trained attorney or DOJ accredited representative
  - Pro-se clinics for I-589 (affirmative asylum)
  - Virtual consultations and screenings
- Legal immigration services and limited scope representation, including limited relief and defensive relief.
- Community legal consultation events

- Know Your Rights (KYR) events
- Support Family Preparedness Preparation Trainings across the schools.
- Coordination with BUSD to implement 1-2 Train the Trainer workshops for all school staff (with follow up support).

The funding would allow our local immigration services agencies to implement urgently needed legal support services for Berkeley residents, demonstrate the City of Berkeley's commitment to protect and defend immigrant communities, and leverage additional funding. County funding recently allocated for emergency legal services is not going to any Berkeley based non-profits.

The City shall enter into a contract with East Bay Sanctuary Covenant that requests documentation at six months and 12 months to ensure that funds were used for the purpose for which they were allocated.

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant is currently seeking additional funding for coordinated legal consultation and support for immigrants through a grant from the Vera Institute of Justice SAFE Network catalyst funding of \$100,000, participation in a California Funder briefing on April 17th to leverage additional funds, and partnering with county organizations like Alameda County Immigration Legal and Education Partnership.

#### BACKGROUND

East Bay Sanctuary Covenant has been supporting Berkeley's sanctuary movement for over 40 years. They are one of the largest affirmative-asylum programs in the U.S.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with adopting this recommendation.

#### CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Brent Blackaby    Council District 6    510-981-7160



