



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NYIFUP DEMANDS ANSWERS FROM ICE ON HOW DETENTION CENTERS WILL RESPOND TO CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Defender Services, and The Bronx Defenders – New York City’s defender organizations providing free legal representation through the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) to detained immigrants with pending cases at the Varick Street Immigration Court – sent a letter on Friday to ICE and the administrators of New York City-area ICE detention facilities demanding answers on how they plan to address the crisis surrounding the impending spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Last summer, because prison administrators were unable to prevent an [outbreak of mumps](#) at Bergen County Jail in New Jersey, detained immigrants were subjected to long periods of quarantine and isolation. The letter asks for solutions from ICE that will ensure the health and safety of detained immigrants are protected without infringing on their due process rights.

The NYIFUP organizations also released the following joint statement:

“ICE has a proven track record of failing to respond appropriately to public health crises and maintaining safe, humane conditions for the people they detain. We are deeply concerned for the health and well-being of our clients and whether ICE will be able to adequately protect them from the impending spread of COVID-19. Our clients deserve answers on how ICE plans to respond to this public health emergency without infringing on their rights. We urge ICE to do the responsible thing and release our clients back to their families and communities as their cases move forward.”

The letter can be viewed here: <https://legalaidnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Response-Plan-Letter-0309.pdf>

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The New York Family Immigrant Unity Project ([NYIFUP](#)) is the nation’s first public defender system for immigrants facing deportation—defined as those in removal proceedings before an immigration judge. Funded by the New York City Council since July 2014, the program provides a free attorney to almost all detained indigent immigrants facing deportation at Varick Street Immigration.