

Tools for Navigating Immigration Policy Changes

Ash Alvandi & Ronnette V. Ramos, Esq.

2026

Cal Cities Annual Conference & Expo
Wednesday, September 23, 2026 •
3:30–4:45 p.m.
Anaheim, California

Planned with the Cal Cities API Caucus
Moderator: Helen Tran, President, League of CA
Cities API Caucus

Immigration Law & Policy Landscape: Federal, State, & Local Updates

Federal

- Executive-order implementation: border and interior enforcement, citizenship, screening and travel
- Detention and removal capacity expansion under H.R. 1 / Public Law 119-21
- \$45B for detention capacity + \$29.85B for ICE enforcement through 2029
- 2026 travel / visa restrictions expanded to 39 countries
- Public Charge rule and immigration-fee changes

State

- SB 54 remains a central California law-enforcement cooperation framework
- July 2026 SB 580 guidance for state and local agencies
- New focus on access to agency spaces, information requests, data, vendors and training
- Updated school / child-care protections and response protocols

Local

- Federal enforcement continues to create operational questions for local agencies
- 287(g) participation and state-supported local cooperation have expanded in some jurisdictions
- California cities operate under state law plus their own local policies and protocols
- Frontline questions increasingly involve facilities, records, data and service access

Status of Legal Challenges: What Has Changed Since 2025?

Enforcement / Local Authority

- Noem v. Vasquez Perdomo — Supreme Court stayed the Los Angeles-area injunction while litigation continued
- Challenges continue over the boundaries of immigration enforcement, stops, warrants and local cooperation
- State and local governments continue to litigate the division of federal, state and local authority

Asylum / Status / Citizenship

- Mullin v. Al Otro Lado — Supreme Court reversed and remanded in June 2026
- Trump v. Barbara — Supreme Court affirmed the judgment protecting birthright citizenship in June 2026
- TPS, humanitarian-status and H.R. 1 fee implementation remain active areas of litigation

What to watch

- How courts define agency authority and procedural protections
- Country-specific TPS / humanitarian-protection cases
- Challenges involving data sharing, courthouse enforcement and federal funding conditions

[Justice Action Center Litigation Tracker](#)

Implications for Local Government & Community Preparedness

Operational Questions for Cities

- What happens if federal immigration officers arrive at a city facility?
- Who reviews warrants, subpoenas or information requests?
- What records or data does the city hold — and who can access it?
- Which staff need a response protocol beyond public safety?
- How does the city keep ordinary services operating during a high-attention event?

Community Impacts & Access Concerns

- Fear and uncertainty can lead residents to delay or avoid health care, public benefits, and other public services
- Increased demand for Know Your Rights education, legal screening, family preparedness, and trusted referrals
- Language-access barriers become more consequential when policies and guidance change quickly
- Housing instability after missed work, detention, or household-income disruption
- Community-safety concerns can affect reporting, engagement, and trust in public institutions
- School absences, youth concerns, and family-preparedness needs

The city role is often operational: keep services clear, consistent and accessible while legal questions are routed to the right experts.

What Can Local Government Do?

- Designate an immigration-response lead and a clear escalation path to city counsel
- Train frontline staff — including libraries, community services, housing, HR and public safety
- Review city-facility access protocols and document-handling procedures
- Audit sensitive data, database access and vendor practices
- Maintain current multilingual public information and Know Your Rights resources
- Build a vetted referral list for legal aid, housing, health and family support
- Coordinate with trusted community-based organizations before a crisis
- Practice the plan through tabletop scenarios and update it as law and policy change

DISCLAIMER: THIS IS NOT LEGAL ADVICE.

Jurisdictions should consult city counsel regarding jurisdiction-specific legal obligations and protocols.

Community Issues Residents Are Asking About in 2026

Immigration / Status

- Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Asylum and humanitarian protections
- Travel and visa restrictions

Citizenship / Benefits

- Birthright citizenship developments
- Naturalization and immigration-fee changes
- Public Charge

Enforcement / Access

- Immigration check-ins and courthouse enforcement
- Worksite / community enforcement activity
- Language access and trusted legal information

Local effect

Residents often bring these questions to the institutions they already know — city offices, libraries, schools, service providers and community organizations.

What Is Happening on the Ground?

Federal

- Larger detention and enforcement capacity
- Expanded use of state / local partnerships, including 287(g)
- Enforcement activity affecting workplaces, courthouses and community routines

California & Other Jurisdictions

- California: SB 54 + new SB 580 guidance for state / local agencies
- Texas: state grants support county sheriffs with qualifying 287(g) agreements
- Different states and cities are building very different response and cooperation models

Minneapolis: Aftermath Example

- Operation Metro Surge became a major local-government response issue
- City's June 2026 assessment estimated nearly \$700M in community and economic impacts
- Reported effects included missed work, school disruption, delayed care and business losses

Reality for Local Communities

- Immigration policy can quickly become a housing, health, education, workforce and community-safety issue
- Impacts vary by language, immigration history, family composition and access to counsel
- Local agencies and community organizations are often the first place residents seek reliable information

Legal Services & AAPI Community Impact

What AJSOCAL Is Seeing

- More questions about travel, TPS, asylum, benefits and enforcement risk
- Greater need for legal screening and trusted referrals
- Language barriers make fast-moving policy harder to understand
- Immigration issues spill into housing, family stability, employment and health access

How AJSOCAL Is Responding

- Direct immigration legal services and legal clinics
- Know Your Rights and family-preparedness education
- Asian-language legal services and intake and community outreach
- Referrals to housing, health and other support services
- Coalition coordination, policy advocacy and partnerships with cities and CBOs

AJSOCAL can be a community-facing legal and referral partner; city-specific legal decisions remain with city counsel.

Moderated Discussion

Questions:

- Where are immigration policy changes showing up first in your city — public safety, housing, schools, health or other services?
- What should a workable city protocol look like when federal agents or information requests arrive?
- How can cities maintain community trust and access to services while meeting their legal obligations?
- What can local leaders learn from the different approaches in California, Texas and Minneapolis?
- Which partnerships or resources should be in place before the next major policy shift?
- What is one action a city can take now to be better prepared six months from today?