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FEBRUARY 23 - FEBRUARY 27, 2026



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# Immigration Basics for Educators

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# Agenda

- Understanding the immigration landscape
- Basics of immigration statuses
- Navigating work with students
- Resources and opportunities

## Legal Disclaimers:

- This presentation is for informational purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice. Wisconsin Literacy does not provide legal representation. For case specific guidance, consult a licensed attorney or DOJ accredited representative.
- Immigration policy changes frequently. This information is accurate to the best of our knowledge and belief as of February 2026; WL cannot guarantee its accuracy after this date.
- No unauthorized recording or AI notetakers permitted.
- Any resources shared by others during this presentation have not been verified by Wisconsin Literacy.



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# How Are You Involved?

**Do you currently assist immigrant communities with navigating information and resources in the community?**

Put your answer in the chat:

1. Not at all
2. Informally / as needed / referrals
3. Occasionally / optional workshops / classes
4. This is our mission

# Who Are Community Navigators?

Community leaders who receive training to provide quality & reliable information and services for their communities in an **empowering** and **effective** way.

Community Navigators:

- are community leaders, educators, organizers
- provide community outreach and education around rights, resources, opportunities
- accompany individuals in accessing services (immigration, health, food)
- do not provide legal advice
- refer individuals to quality and trusted legal services
- develop their leadership through their engagement and involvement with community-based organizations

# NPNA Legal Services Capacity Building Model



Attorneys

Practice Removal Defense in Immigration Courts, Represent Clients

DOJ Accredited Representatives (Partial & Full)

Application Assistance: Citizenship, DACA, Adjustments of Status, Screening, TPS, Asylum, etc  
Removal Defense (Fully Accredited)

Community Navigators

Public Education, Referral to Legal Services, Application Assistance with DOJ/Attorney Supervision

Volunteers / Community Leaders

Public Education, Referral to Legal Services

# Role of Community Navigators

## Community Navigators DO

- Remind people you are not a lawyer
- Inform community members of their rights & resources
- Refer people to workshops and screenings tools
- Provide general information and material from trusted sources
- Help people collect their documents
- Encourage applicants to seek legal help

## Community Navigators DON'T

- Provide legal advice
- Tell someone they do or don't qualify for an immigration benefit
- Tell someone whether their application is complete
- Say they are a legal expert or attorney
- Charge fees for services

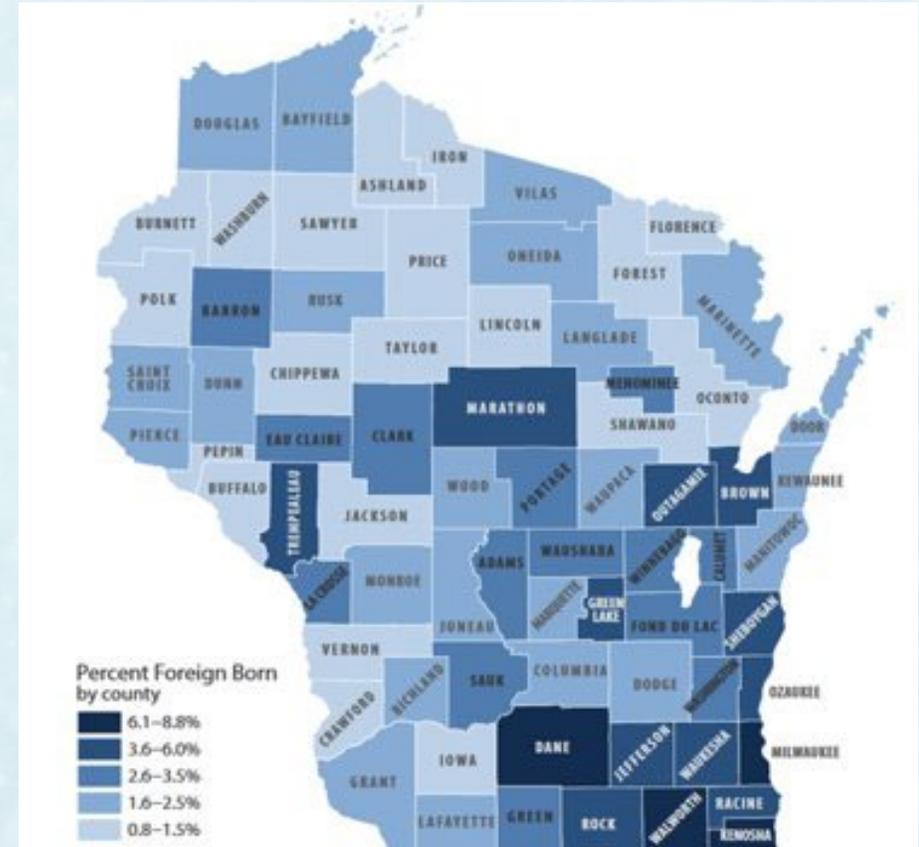


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# Immigration in Wisconsin: What Do You Think?

# Immigrants in Wisconsin

- ~47 million (14.3%) of US population is foreign born
- 315,683 (5%) born in the US to at least one immigrant parent
- 278,981 (5%) immigrants in Wisconsin
  - Top countries of origin: Mexico, India, China, Laos, Philippines



Data taken from American Immigration Council and National Partnership for New Americans

[https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/immigrants\\_in\\_wisconsin.pdf](https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/immigrants_in_wisconsin.pdf)



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# Economic Impact

**+\$123.8B**

FISCAL IMPACT ON THE  
AMERICAN ECONOMY  
BY REFUGEES & ASYLEES

2005-2019

<https://acf.gov/archive/blog/2024/02/refugees-us-have-contributed-nearly-124b-us-government-budget-new-hhs-study>



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# Economic Impact

The fiscal surplus from all immigrants from 1994 to 2023 was \$14.5 trillion, compared with a deficit of \$48 trillion without immigrants. That means that immigrants cut deficits by nearly a third in real terms over the last three decades.

<https://www.cato.org/white-paper/immigrants-recent-effects-government-budgets-1994-2023>

# Immigration Statuses and Designations

- Citizen
- Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) / Green card holder
- "nonimmigrant" status
- Humanitarian parole
- Temporary protected status
- Undocumented
- Refuge and asylum



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# Refugee, Asylees, and Asylum Seekers

Must meet the same legal standard:

"Refugee or asylum status may be granted to aliens who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of future persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, and/or political opinion."

Definition from USCIS

# Refugee, Asylees, and Asylum Seekers

- Difference is **where** they apply for protection
  - **Refugees** apply overseas and are approved before entering the US
  - **Asylees** apply in the US and are approved after entering the US
  - **Asylum seekers** request asylum at the US port of entry or while already in the US.
    - CBP One app
    - Limits to requesting asylum at port of entry – see DHS and USCIS website
    - There is often a long wait for asylum approval – if denied, they may become undocumented



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# Language and Civics Test for Citizenship

- 2025 Civics Test Standards:
  - Applies to applications submitted on or after October 20, 2025
  - 128 possible questions instead of 100
  - Applicant asked 20 questions instead of 10
- Resources on the WL website -  
<https://wisconsinliteracy.org/resources/resources/citizenshipcivics-test.html>
- Lynne Weintraub's session "*Preparing Students for the New Naturalization Exam*" recording will be on our website

# Test Exemptions

- Language test exemption (50/20 or 55/15 Exemptions)
  - 50 years old+ and lived in the US as LPR for 20 years
  - 55 years old+ and lived in the US as LPR for 15 years
- Language and civics test exemption (65/20 Exemption)
  - 65 years old+ and lived in the US as LPR for 20 years

<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/exceptions-and-accommodations>

# Tips for Navigating Student Questions

DO	DON'T
Check with your program – do they have a policy?	Help students fill out legal forms or applications
Educate yourself on "know your rights" and "family preparedness" resources and/or share them with students	Tell students they do or don't qualify for a certain status, like citizenship
Refer people to vetted legal providers	Say the words 'enough' or 'should'
Help students understand terminology	Tell someone their application is complete
Stay calm	Provide legal advice
	Charge fees for legal services

# Unauthorized Practice of Law (UPL)

The unauthorized practice of law (UPL) is the practice of law by an individual who is not authorized to do so.

- Who can practice law:
  - Licensed attorneys
  - Department of Justice (DOJ) accredited representatives
  - Law students under supervision by an attorney
- Consequences of UPL:
  - Punishment for UPL can be civil or criminal in nature
  - A person can be sued for injuries resulting from UPL
  - A court can order a person to stop practicing law, impose fines, or send someone to jail

# Beware of Fraud and Scams

- Help students avoid fraud by sharing only reliable legal resources
- Potential signs of fraud
  - Provider:
    - is not a licensed attorney or DOJ accredited rep
    - says they have special relationships with USCIS or others that will speed up the process
    - asks student to put false information on an application
    - refuses to give back original documents



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# Know Your Rights and Family Preparedness

All individuals in the United States, have certain constitutional rights, regardless of their immigration status.

- Red cards- list out these rights and can be used as a reference to remind one of these rights if approached by police or ICE.
- Family Preparedness
- Family emergency plans



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# Immigration and Legal Services

- [Legal Services | Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#)
- [Wisconsin Immigration Legal Resources Directory](#)



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# Other Helpful Resources

- [Switchboard](#)
- [Immigration Legal Resource Center](#)
- [Catholic Charities Milwaukee YouTube Videos](#)
- [National Partnership for New Americans \(NPNA\)](#)
- Centro Hispano - Milwaukee



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# Want to get more involved?

Learn more about:

- [Community Navigator](#)
- [DOJ \(partial or full\) accredited representative](#)





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# Complete our survey, please!

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting end screen. The Zoom logo is in the top left, and "Support English" is in the top right. The main content is a white box with the following text: "Thank you for attending the Meeting. Please click Continue to participate in a short survey." Below this, it says "you will be leaving zoom.us to access the external URL below" followed by the URL "https://forms.office.com/r/2PVx189yEX". A question "Are you sure you want to continue?" is followed by two buttons: "Continue" (blue) and "Stay on zoom.us" (grey). At the bottom, there is a copyright notice, links for "Privacy & Legal Policies", "Your Privacy Choices", and "Cookie Preferences", and a blue speech bubble icon in the bottom right corner.

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