



MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR IMMIGRANT ADVANCEMENT

Martin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston

Basic Guide of Services and Benefits Available to Boston Residents Regardless of Immigration Status

The City of Boston is a Welcoming City that provides services and programs to all City residents regardless of immigration status. For a longer guide visit: boston.gov/departments/immigrant-advancement.

BOS: 311

boston.gov/311; Dial 311 to reach the City of Boston's non-emergency 24 hour phone line to ask to be transferred to any city service or city department or to report an issue with a city service such as trash, snow, potholes, etc. Capable to answer calls in multiple languages, 365 days per year.

Community & After-School Programs

Boston Centers for Youth & Families: (617) 635-4920, boston.gov/departments/boston-centers-youth-and-families.

Classes and activities for all ages including English classes, literacy classes, youth employment and exam preparation.

Department of Youth Engagement & Employment: (617) 635-2240, youth.boston.gov/. Help finding afterschool programs, scholarships, summer employment and other opportunities for youth of all ages.

Boston Public Library: (617) 536-5400, bpl.org. Free books, DVDs, CDs, free internet and computer access, computer classes, English classes, children's activities at 24 neighborhood branches. Each branch has an Immigrant Information Corner with immigration, financial planning, and tax assistance information, and some branches have workshops on immigration services.

Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Elder Abuse

SafeLink: (877) 785-2020, casamyrna.org/safelink-home. Statewide program. Trained advocates offer confidential support, assistance with safety planning, direct connections to shelters and referrals to community services.

Elder Services

Elderly Commission: (617) 635-4366, boston.gov/departments/elderly-commission. Assistance with housing, transportation, health care, employment, cultural events and volunteer opportunities for senior citizens (above the age of 55).

Education

To Enroll in School:

Pre-Kindergarten (ages 3-5, limited spots) (617) 635-9288,

countdowntokindergarten.org/.

Kindergarten – 12th grade (free and available to all); Contact the BPS Welcome Center nearest to you or visit discoverbps.org, (617) 635-9000.

- **Dorchester** (617) 635-8015; 1216 Dorchester Ave.
- **Roxbury** (617) 635-9010; 2300 Washington St., 2nd floor
- **Roslindale** (617) 635-8040; 515 Hyde Park Ave.
- **East Boston** (617) 635-9597; 312 Border St.
- **Mattapan** (617) 635-9596; 5 Mildred Ave.

English Language Learners Program: (617) 635-1565, bostonpublicschools.org/ELL. Support for students learning English.

College/University: Open to applicants at varied costs. List of scholarships available regardless of immigration status at: www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/supporting-undocumented-youth.pdf, pages 23-26.

- **Public:** Massachusetts residents, including undocumented students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, (DACA) pay in-state tuition (a lower amount). Undocumented students without DACA must pay out-of-state tuition (a higher amount).
- **Private:** Anyone can apply to a private college or university. Some may offer scholarships regardless of immigration status.

Adult Education: (617) 635-9300, bostonpublicschools.org/Page/4480. Adult classes in literacy, English, job training or to get a high school diploma.

Food Assistance

FoodSource Hotline: (800) 645-8333, projectbread.org/get-help/. Provides information on food pantries and community meal programs; also helps callers apply for:

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** - limitations depending on immigration status however household members may be eligible.
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** - for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, infants and children up to age five.

Healthcare

Mayor's Health Line: (617) 534-5050, bphc.org. Enroll in health insurance, locate health centers, find information about: child care, food assistance, elderly services and legal help.

Homelessness

For assistance with finding emergency shelter:

- **Individuals: Boston Public Health Commission, Emergency Shelter Commission:** (617) 635-4507, boston.gov/shelter.
- **Families: Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Development, Emergency Assistance:** (877) 418-3308, mass.gov/hed/housing/stabilization/emergency-assistance.html.

Housing

Boston Housing Authority (BHA): (617) 988-4000, bostonhousing.org/en/Home.aspx. Provides stable, quality affordable housing for low and moderate income people; some limitations depending on immigration status.

Inspectional Services Department (ISD): (617) 635-5300, boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services. Inspections Officers help to ensure building, housing, health, sanitation and safety regulations are enforced; complaints about a landlord or tenant can be filed here.

If you experience discrimination or mistreatment by your landlord for filing a complaint, contact ISD (number above) or the Office of Fair Housing and Equity (number below).

Office of Fair Housing and Equity: (617) 635-4408, boston.gov/departments/fair-housing-and-equity. Contact if you believe you have been discriminated against in receiving housing, public services, accommodations or employment. Also provides assistance in finding **rental housing** through MetroList: (617) 635-3321.

Department of Neighborhood Development: (617) 635-3880, dnd.cityofboston.gov. Help to: buy a home or keep a home; start, expand or improve a small businesses; learn the rights and responsibilities in landlord/tenant conflicts.

Immigration Services

Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement: (617) 635-2980, boston.gov/departments/immigrant-advancement. Volunteer attorneys provide free one-on-one immigration legal information at clinics on the first and third Wednesday of every month from 12pm – 2pm, no appointment needed, Room 806, Boston City Hall. The office also organizes citizenship and legal screening clinics and referrals to community and legal organizations.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In the Workplace, You Have the Right to:

- File a complaint for unpaid wages, overtime, and vacation pay;
- File a demand for worker's compensation benefits if you are injured on the job;
- Sue an employer for retaliation or wrongful discharge if fired for speaking out about working conditions or wages;
- Organize and bargain over wages and working conditions;
- Protection against discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or transgender status, race, religion, disability, ethnic origin, national origin, or age.

For more information or to file a complaint contact the Fair Labor Division at the Attorney General's Office at (617) 727-3465, mass.gov/ago/bureaus/public-protection-and-advocacy/the-fair-labor-division/.

When Encountering the Police

The Boston Police *will not* detain you for reporting a crime. Call 911 if you are the victim of a crime or see something that concerns you.

The Boston Police Department follows a community policing practice and does not inquire about or report your immigration status. It does **not** arrest or detain immigrants *unless* there is a warrant. You do not have to discuss your immigration or citizenship status with the police or any other officials. Do not lie about your citizenship status or provide fake documents.

Know the Facts to Protect Yourself from Immigration Scams

- You should only go to a licensed lawyer or a BIA accredited representative for immigration legal advice.
- Notaries and other community members are only able to fill out forms, they should not be advising you as to what form to fill out or how to fill out the form.
- For a list of licensed attorneys visit: massbbo.org/bbolookup.php.
- For a list of BIA accredited non-profit organizations and their representatives visit: justice.gov/eoir/recognition-accreditation-roster-reports.

If you believe you have experienced immigration fraud contact the Attorney General's Office at (617) 727-8400, mass.gov/ago/.