

Public Support in New York State for Government-Funded Attorneys in Immigration Court

The Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) partnered with the survey firm Lucid to conduct a public opinion poll to explore attitudes toward government-funded attorneys for people in immigration court in New York State. The survey was fielded in January 2020 and included 2,000 adults (18 years and older) living in the state. The results are statistically weighted to be representative of the New York State population with regard to age, education, gender, household income, race and ethnicity, and region of residence (percentage living in New York City, Long Island, and Upstate New York—meaning all areas outside of New York City and Long Island). The survey asked respondents about the importance of access to attorneys and whether they supported or opposed government-funded legal representation for people in immigration court, among other questions.

Key findings

Ninety-three percent of New Yorkers believe that access to attorneys for all people, including those in immigration court, is (somewhat or very) important. This belief is pervasive, held by:

- 97 percent of people residing in New York City, 85 percent of those residing in Long Island, and 92 percent of those residing in Upstate New York;
- 96 percent of likely voters;
- 95 percent of people who self-identify as Democrats, 92 percent of those who self-identify as Republicans, and 91 percent of people who do not identify with either party; and
- 98 percent of Clinton voters, 93 percent of Trump voters, and 78 percent of those who voted for third-party candidates (among those who voted in the 2016 presidential election).

Ninety-three percent of New Yorkers support government-funded attorneys for people in immigration court. This support is widespread, existing among:

- 99 percent of people residing in New York City, 88 percent of those residing in Long Island, and 88 percent of those residing in Upstate New York;
- 91 percent of likely voters;
- 98 percent of people who self-identified as Democrats, 86 percent of those who self-identify as Republicans, and 91 percent of people who did not identify with either party; and
- 99 percent of Clinton voters, 84 percent of Trump voters, and 88 percent of those who voted for third-party candidates.

Even among people who oppose immigration to the United States, the vast majority, 77 percent, support the government funding attorneys for people in immigration court.