

Mobile Pathways
March 2026



NEW YORK IMMIGRATION BRIEFING

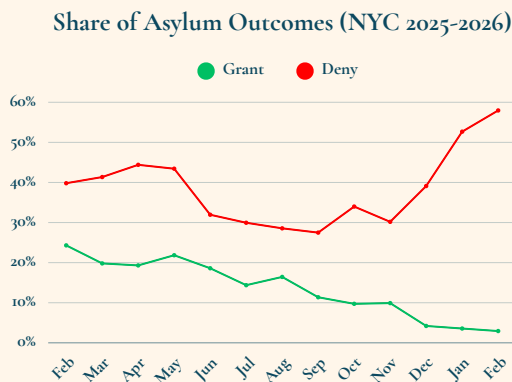


City of Immigrants... On Paper

New York City, the titular sanctuary city, is not immune to the nation's shifting immigration landscape. As local leaders pledge to protect immigrant communities, the data tells a far bleaker story. This report examines how federal enforcement, courtroom upheaval, and sweeping policy shifts are dismantling access to asylum and due process across the City.

Recent Findings

Are We Nearing the End of Asylum?



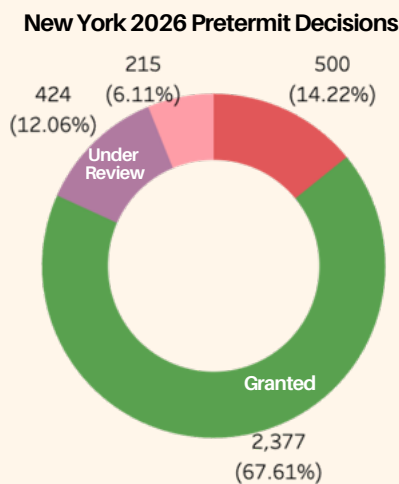
New York's asylum system has shifted sharply toward negative outcomes. Abandonments peaked at over half of all decisions in September 2025 and, while slightly down, remain high at 34%. **Denials have hit an all-time high at 57%, while grants have nearly disappeared at just 2.3%.**

New York's **withdrawal rate of 4%** sits far below the national average of 11%, **suggesting applicants feel trapped with fewer alternatives to removal proceedings.**

Source: Asylum Navigator

Since a major enforcement expansion last fall, approvals collapsed and denials doubled. Combined with **work permit restrictions, steeper fees, expanded detention, and faster deportations**, these trends point to an asylum system that is increasingly out of reach.

DHS Orders Halt to "Third-Country" Deportations



Judge Jem Sponzo issued 446 grants and zero denials, accounting for **34% of all prepermits**. 83% were filed orally by DHS, giving respondents no prior notice.

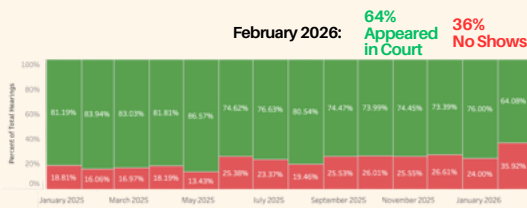
Source: EOIR Motions

Our data on "third-country" deportations fomented growing public and legal pressure on prepermit motions (requests to end hearings before they begin). [The AP, citing our data, reports that DHS has ordered a stop to these deportations;](#) advocates are hesitant to confirm this stoppage as it is based on an unclear email.

Meanwhile, deportations to "safe third countries" in New York more than doubled in 2025, often tied to once rare motions to prepermit. New York's prepermits continue to grow: **2026 has already seen more cases than all of 2025 combined.**

The Shrinking Path to Protection in Courts

Unrepresented Asylum Seekers Missing Court



More cases are ending before they're heard: the share of "no shows" in non-detained asylum cases grows as total adjudications fall.

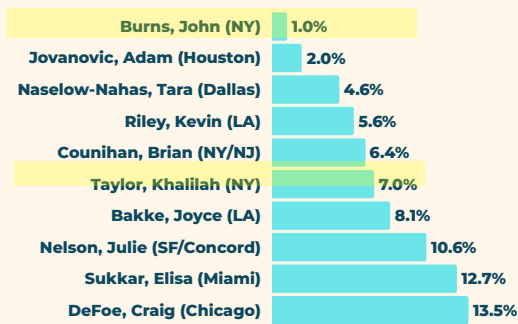
Source: In Absentia Dashboard

"No-show" deportations are surging in New York's immigration courts.

Unrepresented asylum seekers deported in absentia doubled from February 2025 to February 2026. In the latest data, 41% of all unrepresented cases were "no shows," and 36% of asylum cases specifically, meaning nearly half of those without lawyers never showed up, or couldn't.

New Court Leadership, Stronger Enforcement

ACIJ Grant Rates



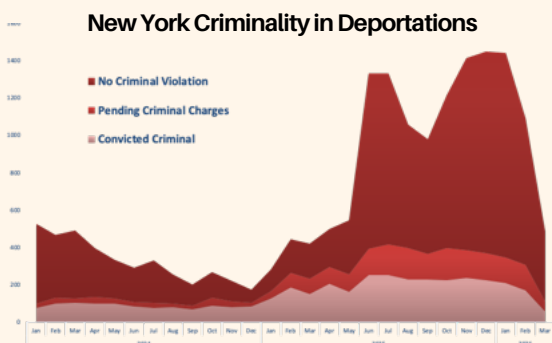
NY fired ACIJs averaged grant rates of **27.2%** (Khan) and **14.4%** (Ul-Haq), a stark contrast with current leadership.

Source: Asylum Navigator, Judge Profile

New York's immigration courts have seen dramatic leadership upheaval since the start of the Trump administration, with **two Assistant Chief Immigration Judges (ACIJs) and a third of judges (27 total) leaving Federal Plaza, Broadway, and Varick.**

ACIJ John Burns now leads Federal Plaza with a 1% grant rate, and the remaining court averages an 18.4% grant rate. Six new judges joined the bench, including **three military judges under the expanded JAG program.**

From Check-Ins to Expulsions: Expanded ICE Enforcement



From January 2025 to January 2026, deportations jumped 836% for those with no criminal record, compared to 65% for those with convictions.

Source: Deportation Data Project

Deportations in New York increased fivefold in 2025 compared to the prior year. Many now believe appearing in court could get them detained, so they stay home. **Fear itself has become an effective enforcement weapon.** Yet, the odds of being arrested in immigration court are low, roughly 1 in 100 nationally, while missing a hearing carries about a 99% chance of deportation. **Read more [here](#).**

Deportation Hotspots: Queens and Bronx



Further north, Spring Valley in Rockland County closely trailed Corona with 1,657 deportations, most of whom were Ecuadorian.

Source: US Deportations by ZIP Code

Deportation orders hit hardest in **Queens and the Bronx**, followed by Brooklyn — all outer-borough neighborhoods with large immigrant populations, limited legal resources, and heavy law enforcement contact. **Corona, Queens alone recorded more than double the removal orders of any other ZIP code**, with 68% of those ordered removed being Ecuadorian. Despite sanctuary protections, most arrests targeted **people with no criminal record**, at homes, courthouses, and routine check-ins.

Pressured to Leave: Voluntary Departures Spike



New York voluntary departures **more than tripled from 2024 to 2025** and continue to grow, with 167 cases granted in 2026 so far.

Source: EOIR Motions

The consequence: immigrant requests for voluntary departure have reached record highs in New York. Faced with court backlogs, aggressive enforcement, and severely limited options once detained, many respondents are opting to forgo hearings and leave the U.S., raising serious concerns about due process and the future of asylum.

About Us

Mobile Pathways is a technology nonprofit that uses data, and AI to advance fair access to justice and economic opportunity for immigrants. Our **Pathfinder** platform aggregates 300M+ rows of federal immigration data to quickly surface immigration trends. Trusted by thousands of organizations and covered widely in the press, it highlights real-time patterns like these in New York.

Further Reading

[The Pressure Valve: Federal Courts as Immigration's Front Line](#)



How Habeas petitions are bypassing the bond hearing bottleneck.

[What Are The Odds of Being Arrested in Court?](#)



We explore the chances of being arrested in court against the harsh outcomes of missing your hearing.

[The Quiet Cruelty of America's Third-Country Removals](#)



Deportations to "third-country" destinations are skyrocketing nationwide. Here's what it means.

[The Bond Plummet. Is the Supreme Court Next?](#)



Bond hearings hit a record low while habeas filings skyrocket. This ends at the Supreme Court.





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