

TOPIC

Physical, Mental, & Behavioral Health

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

This topic highlights the importance of physical, mental, and behavioral health within the immigrant communities due to the increase in ICE raids and activities. The connection between the local enforcement and federal enforcement causes people within the immigrant community to feel guarded towards city and government officials who should be providing them with protection and support. Subsequently these emotions, cause individuals in the immigrant community to feel uncertain as they seek assistance for city services, such as healthcare, mental health support, and safety centers.



SIGNIFICANCE

These results are important for the youth and the adults living in Alexandria because they could advocate within the city or in their community, so city services could provide necessary mental health support, community resources to decrease severe trauma, and safety planning.

Communities should care about this issue because non-undocumented and immigrants are experiencing physical, social, and mental health struggles due to ICE raids increasing within their community.

Ex. In August 2025 Arlandria-Chirilagua multiple citizens were targeted by enforcement operations that happened in the Arlandria and Chilagua neighborhoods where 15 construction workers were put into detention on August 18. and one person was arrested at a local bus stop on August 19th.



A red arrow points from the March 2024 map to the March 2025 map, indicating an increase in active facilities.

CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

This issue strongly aligns with the Children and Youth Master Plan goals that are focused on safety, mental wellness and equity. Some strategic areas to focus on would be Mental Health and Wellness, Family and Community Support/Stability, and Early Childhood Education and Care.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The City of Alexandria provides support to immigrant families who experience ICE related trauma through the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS). It provides 24/7 crisis intervention, mental health counseling, and bilingual services. The City is communicating and working together with Alexandria City Public Schools, community partners, and leaders who are involved with refugees and immigrant communities. City officials are in contact with state officials and General Assembly leadership. The City of Alexandria is also having the Mayor and City Council members collaborate with their colleagues across the region and the country to share information and support one another.

City staff regularly meet and coordinate with the City Council, such as having the City Manager, City Attorney, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director. Together, they create clear plans in place that share information, support residents, and make sure that the City is prepared to respond.

This information was cited on the City of Alexandria Virginia Official Website.

IMPLEMENTATION

Public Health & Medical Providers:

- Creating safe spaces
- Protecting personal information
- Making connections within community outreaches
- Advocacy for policy changes
- Providing virtual and safe access

Advocacy Groups & Human Rights Organizations:

- Providing trauma-informed care
- Targeting their support towards immigrants
- Supporting families who were separated by deportation
- Advocating for "Know Your Rights" and policies

Educators & School Systems:

- Declaring "Safe Zone" policies
- Having mental health and behavioral services
- Having parents create emergency family plans
- Creating partnerships with communities

Researchers & Mental Clinicians:

- Implement culturally sensitive care with immigrant enforcement
- Having virtual and accessible support groups
- Creating community-based partnerships
- Having specialized training for clinicians (Having the Informed Immigrants specialized guides for clinicians on how to support DACA recipients and their families.)

PARTNERSHIPS



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

Based on the trends of 2025-2026, I believe that the City Services designed to provide assistance to immigrants who are experiencing trauma from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are not fully accomplishing the desired results they want. This is because ICE operations are independent of the city and the city doesn't get notified when the action increases. The ICE officers are usually often unidentified causing the city services to prevent the initial trauma. Some recent raids showed that ICE targeted non-citizens without criminal convictions which creates widespread fear and distrust of institutions even when they offer help.

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

The population that are impacted the most are immigrants who are in mixed status households and facing ICE. I believe that this population of people are affected because they are experiences issues such as family separation, economic and human right instability, and limited access to healthcare, social services, and education. The barriers that this population are experiencing include language and cultural sources, fear and legal status vulnerability, high costs of living, healthcare access, deportation/detention, and transportation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Alexandria should advocate more towards their programs and services for immigrants and refugees because I feel like the City is not advocating their services enough within the communities that are having the most effect towards ICE raids/activities. Some immigrant communities might not even know that they even exist or have the ability to access the internet.

Some policy or system changes that I would recommend within the City of Alexandria to decrease mental health struggle for immigrants who experience ICE activities would include establishing more local safe places in every community that have a high percentage of immigrants, reinforcing community-based mental health services with culturally responsive care, investing in a legal defense/protection funds, and developing more hot lines.

ONLINE

Freedom for Immigrants

It addresses the "hidden" mental health crisis in immigrant communities, offering resources to cope with fear, toxic stress, and trauma related to ICE.

Immigrants Rising

It highlights the specific psychological damage caused by isolation and family separation during the detention process.

IN PERSON

Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) - Multicultural Center

the Multicultural Center offers specialized mental health counseling for immigrants and refugees, including those navigating legal status or the fear of deportation.

City of Alexandria DCHS Emergency Services

DCHS provides 24/7 in-person emergency mental health crisis interventions.

CITATIONS

Status of ICE Operations. (2026, April 2). City of Alexandria, VA.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/Immigration>

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ICE operation in Northern Virginia nets 3 alien offenders. (2025, May 2). Ice.gov. <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-operation-northern-virginia-nets-3-alien-offenders>

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