



NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Inclusion of Immigrants with Disabilities

Jae Jin Pak

Claudia Castillo-Ayala

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DITI
Disability &
Immigration
Taskforce of
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Agenda

- Introduction of speakers
- Definitions of immigrant categories: refugee, asylee, etc.
- Stats of immigrants/refugees globally and in the US
- Highlight issues faced by disabled immigrants
- Introduce DITI
- Discuss how to be supportive
- Resources ie: KYR trainings, rapid response, etc
- Language is access
- NOTHING About US WITHOUT US in different languages
- Q & A

Meet the Speakers



Jae Jin Pak

University of IL Chicago
Institute on Disability and
Human Development
Research Associate



Claudia Castillo

University of IL Chicago
Department on Disability &
Human Development
PhD Candidate

So, who is an immigrant?

- **Immigrant** — anyone living in a country other than the one where they were born. It is not itself a legal status.
- **Refugee** — fled persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or social group; screened and granted status while still **outside** the U.S.
- **Asylum seeker / Asylee** — same legal definition as “refugee,” but applies for protection from **inside** the U.S. or at a U.S. border/port of entry. Once granted, the person is called an “asylee.”

More than one category

- **Refugees and asylees are only 2 of dozens of categories** — nonimmigrant visas alone (tourist, student, work, etc.) span 20+ classifications, plus many permanent paths (family-, employment-, and diversity-based, TPS, U/T-visas, VAWA, DACA, parole).
- Of the 51.8 million immigrants in the U.S. in 2023, only about 2.6 million were asylum applicants — most are naturalized citizens (46%) or green-card holders (23%) (Pew Research)

Immigration Facts: U.S. and Illinois

- **46.2 million** foreign-born people lived in the U.S. in 2022 — 13.9% of the total population, up from 12.9% in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau)
- **~2 million immigrants** lived in Illinois in 2024 — 15.4% of the state's population, slightly above the national rate (USAFacts / Census)
- **54,350 people** were granted asylum in FY2023, representing over 100 nationalities (American Immigration Council)
- **122.1 million people** were forcibly displaced worldwide as of 2025 — a record high (UNHCR)

Immigrants with disabilities

To understand the intersectionality between them we need to understand the interaction between:

- Disability
- Language
- Race
- Immigration status
- Poverty
- Family roles
- Institutional power

Migrants with disabilities: the gap

- **1.3 billion people** — 16% of the world's population, roughly 1 in 6 — live with a significant disability (WHO)
- **No official international statistics** exist on disability prevalence among people on the move — disabled migrants are undercounted by design, not by accident (IOM / UNHCR Migration Data Portal)
- **Older migrants and women/girl migrants with disabilities** face disproportionate, still largely undocumented barriers
- **U.S. agencies do not publish** a standard “disability rate among immigrants” statistic.

Immigrants with disabilities in the U.S.

There is no comprehensive, current national count of immigrants with disabilities across all ages and immigration statuses.

- **49%** of working-age immigrants with disabilities live below 200% of the federal poverty level.
- **35.3%** have limited English proficiency, creating potential needs for both language and disability access.

- **Urban Institute's analysis of 2015–2019 American Community Survey data*

Key Policy and Access Issues

- Medical neglect and abuse in immigration concentration camps
- Public Charge Rule
- Language Access
- Durable Medical Equipment Access
- Fighting Deportation
- Responding to ICE raids
- Political education ie: Know Your Rights

Impact of immigration policy, detention and raids

Communication — may require a qualified (sometimes foreign-language) sign interpreter, a Certified Deaf Interpreter, plain language, extra time, or accessible digital formats

Continuity of care — enforcement can cut off medication, personal assistance, mobility devices, medical/mental-health treatment, or housing and benefits support

Due process — can the person understand what's happening, communicate their history, request an accommodation, or communicate with counsel?

Family, caregiving & community access — disabled children whose caregivers are detained; disabled adults who depend on immigrant relatives; disrupted emergency caregiving and medical consent

Fear itself — a technically available service becomes practically inaccessible: missed appointments, reluctance to attend in person, withdrawal from healthcare or public services

DISABILITY AND IMMIGRATION TASKFORCE of ILLINOIS (DITI)

What is DITI?



Mission and Purpose

The Disability and Immigration Taskforce of Illinois (DITI) strives to:

- Empower and support immigrants, refugees, and/or asylees with disabilities and their families to access culturally and linguistically appropriate services.
- Create systems change through advocacy, education, training, and sharing resources that are inclusive of all communities.

DITI Partners & Supporters Highlights

Access Living
Alianza Americas
Arab American Family Services
Chicagoland Disabled People of Color Coalition (Chicgoland DPOC)
El Valor
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (ICIRR)
Illinois Unidos
Latino Policy Forum
Mexican Consulate
National Immigration & Justice Center (NIJC)
RAMP CIL
Resurrection Project
Rincon Family Services
Sen. Durbin Office'
Sen. Duckworth Office
Rush Hospital
UIC Sanctuary for All
University of IL Chicago Institute on Disability & Human Development (UIC IDHD)
University of IL at Chicago Disability Cultural Center (UIC DCC)
Young Center

DITI Accomplishments

- Created Know Your Rights Training and Know Your Rights palm cards
- Development of data collection survey
- Webinars
- 2026 Summit

How can you support?

- **Learn and use accurate, current terminology** — bring it back to your own team or organization
- **Get trained, and share the training:** Know Your Rights, rapid-response/emergency planning, cross-disability awareness
- **Build cross-movement solidarity:** disability orgs, immigrant-rights groups, faith communities, unions, mutual aid networks
- **Make resources accessible:** multilingual, accessible-format materials; shared resource hubs instead of duplicated effort
- **Use your platform:** lift up directly-impacted voices, engage students and volunteers, contact elected officials
- **Invest long-term:** support disability-awareness training in law schools and legal-aid networks

Nothing about us without us

- **English** — Nothing About Us Without Us
- **Spanish** — Nada sobre nosotros sin nosotros
- **Tagalog** — Walang tungkol sa amin, nang wala kami
- **Korean** — 우리 없이 우리에게 대한 것은 없다
- **Russian** — Ничего о нас без нас
- **Polish** — Nic o nas bez nas (*the phrase's original-language form*)
- **Urdu** — ہمارے بغیر ہمارے بارے میں کچھ نہیں
- **Chinese** — 关于我们的事，不能没有我们
- **Vietnamese** — Không có gì về chúng tôi mà không có chúng tôi
- **French** — Rien sur nous sans nous
- **Arabic** — لا شيء عنا بدوننا
- **Portuguese** — Nada sobre nós, sem nós

Resources

- [Alianza Americas](#)
- [Arab American Family Services](#)
- [Chicagoland Disabled People of Color Coalition \(Chicagoland DPOC\) linktree](#)
- [Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health \(CIMH\)](#)
- El Valor
- Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (ICIRR) Family Support Hotline (855) HELP-MY-FAMILY (855) 435-7693
- [Illinois Immigration Information Hub](#)
- [Latino Policy Forum](#)
- [Mexican Consulate Chicago Office](#)
- [National Immigration & Justice Center \(NIJC\)](#)
- [Resurrection Project](#)
- [Sen. Dick Durbin Office](#)
- [Sen. Tammy Duckworth Office](#)
- [Young Center](#)

Q&A

Contact us:

Jae Jin Pak, jjpak@uic.edu

Claudia Castillo, ccast48@uic.edu

