

## LOCAL LAW NO. "R" FOR 2018

### A LOCAL LAW OF THE COUNTY OF ALBANY, NEW YORK PROHIBITING ALBANY COUNTY GOVERNMENT FROM ASSISTING IN THE INVESTIGATION OF CITIZENSHIP OR IMMIGRATION STATUS OF ANY PERSON

Introduced: 7/9/18

By Messrs. Fein, Simpson and Bullock:

BE IT ENACTED, by the Legislature of the County of Albany as follows:

#### **Section 1. Title**

This local law shall be known as the "Welcoming Albany County Act"

#### **Section 2. Legislative Intent**

The Legislature finds that Albany County has a diverse population, with residents from many different cultures and backgrounds, including many different races, ethnicities, faiths, and national origins.

The Legislature further finds that the residents of Albany County benefit from the County's diverse cultural heritage.

The Legislature further finds that it is in the best interest of the residents of Albany County to be a welcoming place for all people of all walks of life with no deference to nationality or citizenship.

Therefore, the purpose of this local law is to ensure that Albany County is a welcoming place for all individuals and that Albany County officials do not investigate individuals' immigration or citizenship status, do not participate in the enforcement of Federal immigration law, and leave the enforcement of Federal immigration law to Federal officials.

#### **Section 3. Definitions**

As used in this local law, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

A. "Administrative warrant" means an immigration warrant of arrest, order to detain or release aliens, notice of custody determination, notice to appear, removal order, warrant of removal, or any other document, issued for a civil immigration enforcement purpose and that is not issued or signed by a judge

appointed pursuant to article III of the United States constitution or a federal magistrate judge appointed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 631. This definition includes, but is not limited to, administrative warrants entered into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center database. This definition does not include any criminal warrants issued upon a judicial determination of probable cause and in compliance with the requirements of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and New York law.

B. "Agency" means every Albany County department, agency, division, commission, council, committee, board, or other body established by authority of a local law, resolution, or executive order, and shall encompass, for the purposes of this local law, all contractors performing work on behalf of the county.

C. "Agent" means any person employed by or acting on behalf of an agency or county contractor.

D. "CBP" means the United States Customs and Border Protection agency and shall include any successor agency charged with the enforcement of federal civil immigration laws.

E. "Certification" means any law enforcement certification or statement required by federal immigration law including, but not limited to, the information required by Section 1184(p) of Title 8 of the United States Code (including current United States Citizenship and Immigration Service Form I-918, Supplement B, or any successor forms) for purposes of obtaining a U visa, or by Section 1184(o) of Title 8 of the United States Code (including current United States Citizenship and Immigration Service Form I-914, Supplement B, or any successor forms) for purposes of obtaining a T visa.

F. "Certifying agency" means Albany County law enforcement agency or other authority that has responsibility for the investigation, prosecution, or sentencing of qualifying criminal activity. "Certifying agency" includes any agency that has criminal investigative jurisdiction in its respective areas of expertise.

G. "Citizenship or immigration status" means an individual's recorded citizenship or immigration status, as such status is defined in the federal immigration and nationality act, at the time an agent or agency receives such information.

H. "Contact information" means home address, work address, telephone number, electronic mail address, social media information, or any other information that can be used as a means of locating or contacting an individual.

I. “Eligible for release from custody” means that the person may be released from custody because one of the following conditions has occurred:

- a. All criminal charges against the person have been dropped or dismissed.
- b. The person has been acquitted of all criminal charges filed against him or her.
- c. The person has served all the time required for his or her jail or prison sentence.
- d. The person is ordered to be released from custody pending the disposition of his or her pending criminal case.
- e. The person has posted a bond.
- f. The person is otherwise eligible for release under state or local law, or local policy.

J. “Family member” means a person’s (i) mother, father, spouse, brother or sister (including blood, step or half), son or daughter (including blood, step or half), father-in-law, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent or grandchild; or (ii) court-appointed legal guardian or a person for whom the person is a court-appointed legal guardian; or (iii) domestic partner or the domestic partner's mother, father, brother, sister (including blood, step, or half), son or daughter (including blood, step or half).

K. “ICE” means the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and shall include any successor agency charged with the enforcement of federal civil immigration laws.

L. “Immigration detainer” means a request by ICE or CBP to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency that requests that the law enforcement agency provide notice of release or maintain custody of an individual, including detainers issued pursuant to Sections 1226 or 1357 of Title 8 of the United States Code or 287.7 or 236.1 of Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These detainers include DHS Form I-247-A “Immigration Detainer – Notice of Action”; DHS Form I-247D “Immigration Detainer – Request for Voluntary Action”; DHS I-247X “Request for Voluntary Transfer”; DHS Form I-247N “Request for Voluntary Notification of Release,” or any successor forms.

M. “Immigration enforcement operation” means any operation that is primarily for the purpose of identifying or apprehending a person or persons: 1) in order to subject them to civil immigration detention, removal or deportation proceedings, and/or removal or deportation from the United States; or 2) to criminally prosecute a person or persons for offenses related to immigration status, including but not limited to violations of Sections 1253, 1304, 1306(a) and (b), 1325, or 1326 of Title 8 of the United States Code, or violations of Sections 1028A or 1546 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

N. “Judicial warrant” means a warrant based on probable cause and issued by a judge appointed pursuant to article III of the United States constitution or a federal magistrate judge appointed pursuant to 28 USC 631, that authorizes federal immigration authorities to take into custody the person who is the subject of such warrant. This does not include warrants or orders issued by employees of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, or the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

O. “Qualifying criminal activity” means any activity involving one or more of the following or any similar activity in violation of federal, state, or local criminal law: rape; torture; trafficking; incest; domestic violence; sexual assault; abusive sexual contact; prostitution; sexual exploitation; female genital mutilation; being held hostage; peonage; involuntary servitude; slave trade; kidnapping; abduction; unlawful criminal restraint; false imprisonment; blackmail; extortion; manslaughter; murder; felonious assault; witness tampering; obstruction of justice; perjury; fraud in foreign labor contracting (as defined in Section 1351 of Title 18 of the United States Code); or attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above-mentioned crimes. This list of qualifying criminal activity is not a list of specific statutory violations, but instead a list of general categories of criminal activity. Activity not listed in the first sentence of this definition shall be presumed to be qualifying criminal activity when its nature and elements are substantially similar to any qualifying criminal activity listed herein. Qualifying criminal activity that occurs during the commission of non-qualifying criminal activity shall be considered qualifying criminal activity regardless of whether criminal prosecution was sought for the qualifying criminal activity.

P. “Victim of qualifying criminal activity” means any individual who has reported qualifying criminal activity to a law enforcement agency or certifying agency, or has otherwise participated in the detection, investigation, or prosecution of qualifying criminal activity, who has suffered direct or proximate harm as a result of the commission of any qualifying criminal activity and may include, but is not limited to, an indirect victim, regardless of the direct victim’s immigration or citizenship status, including the spouse, children under 21 years of age, and, if the direct victim is under 21 years of age, deceased, incompetent or incapacitated, parents and unmarried siblings under 18 years of age of the direct victim. A bystander victim may also be considered as a “victim of qualifying criminal activity.” More than one victim may be identified and provided with certification depending upon the circumstances. For purposes of this definition, the term “incapacitated” means unable to interact with law enforcement agency or certifying agency personnel as a result of a cognitive impairment or other physical limitation, or because of physical restraint or disappearance.

#### **Section 4. Requesting information prohibited**

No agent or agency shall request information about or otherwise investigate or assist in the investigation of the citizenship or immigration status of any person, except as may be required under Section 10 of this local law, unless such inquiry or investigation is required by court order. Notwithstanding this provision, the Albany County attorney may investigate and inquire about citizenship or immigration status when relevant to potential or actual litigation or an administrative proceeding in which the county is or may be a party.

### **Section 5. Conditioning benefits, services, or opportunities on immigration status prohibited**

A. No agent or agency shall condition the provision of Albany County benefits, services, or opportunities on matters related to citizenship or immigration status unless required to do so by state or federal law, or court order.

B. Where presentation of a driver's license or identification card issued by New York State or any U.S. State or U.S. territory is accepted as adequate evidence of identity, presentation of a photo identity document issued by another country, such as a driver's license, passport, or consular identification document or presentation of a photo identity issued by a school, college, or employer located in the United States, shall be accepted and shall not subject the person to a higher level of scrutiny or different treatment than if the person had provided a driver's license or identification card issued by New York State or any U.S. State or U.S. territory except that this subsection (b) shall not apply to the completion of the federally mandated I-9 forms.

C. In order to ensure that eligible persons are not deterred from seeking Albany County benefits, services, or opportunities, all agencies shall review their confidentiality policies and identify any changes necessary to ensure that information collected from individuals is limited to that necessary to perform agency duties and is not used or disclosed for any other purpose, except as may be required under Section 10 of this local law. Any necessary changes to those policies shall be made within 60 days of the adoption of this local law, consistent with agency procedures.

D. All applications, questionnaires, and interview forms used in relation to Albany County benefits, opportunities, or services shall be promptly reviewed by the pertinent agencies and any questions regarding citizenship or immigration status, other than those required by statute, federal law, or court order, shall be deleted within 60 days of the adoption of this local law.

### **Section 6. Immigration enforcement actions and Federal responsibility**

A. No agency or agent shall stop, arrest, detain, or continue to detain a person after that person becomes eligible for release from custody or is free to leave an encounter with an agency or agent, based on any of the following

- a. an immigration detainer;
- b. an administrative warrant; or
- c. any other basis that is based solely on the belief that the person is not present legally in the United States, or that the person has committed a civil immigration violation.

B. No agency or agent shall accept requests by ICE, CBP, or other agencies to support or assist in any capacity with immigration enforcement operations, including but not limited to requests to (1) provide information (including custody status, release date, home address, or work address) regarding persons who may be the subject of immigration enforcement operations except as may be required under Section 10 of this local law, (2) investigate or interrogate such persons, (3) establish traffic perimeters, or (4) otherwise be present to assist or support an operation. In the event an agent receives a request to support or assist in an immigration enforcement operation, he or she shall report the request to his or her supervisor, who shall decline the request, except as may be required under Section 10 of this local law, and document the declination in an interoffice memorandum to the agency director through the chain of command.

C. No agency or agent shall enter into an agreement under Section 1357(g) of Title 8 of the United States Code or any other federal law that authorizes or permits state or local governmental entities to enforce federal civil immigration laws.

D. Unless presented with a valid and properly issued judicial warrant, no agency or agent shall:

- a. stop, arrest, detain, or continue to detain a person after that person becomes eligible for release from custody or is free to leave an encounter with an agency or agent;
- b. permit ICE or CBP agents access to a person being detained by, or in the custody of, the agency or agent;
- c. transfer any person into ICE or CBP custody;
- d. permit ICE or CBP agents use of agency facilities, information (except as may be required under Section 10 of this local law), or equipment, including any agency electronic databases, for investigative interviews or other investigative purpose or for purposes of executing an immigration enforcement operation; or
- e. expend time to respond to ICE or CBP inquiries or communicate with ICE or CBP regarding a person's custody status, release date, home address, work address, or other information, except as may be required under Section 10 of this local law.

## **Section 7. Certifications for victims of qualifying criminal activity**

A. A certifying agency shall execute any certification requested by any victim of qualifying criminal activity or representative of the victim including, but not limited to, the victim's attorney, accredited representative, or domestic violence service provider, within 45 days of receiving the request. If the victim seeking certification is in federal immigration removal proceedings, the certifying agency shall execute the certification within 14 days of receiving the request. If the victim or the victim's children would lose any benefits under Sections 1184(p) and 1184(o) of Title 8 of the United States Code by virtue of having reached the age of 21 years within 90 days after the certifying agency receives the certification request, the certifying agency shall execute the certification no later than 14 days before the date on which the victim or child would reach the age of 21 years. Requests for expedited certification must be affirmatively raised by the victim.

B. If a certifying agency denies a request for certification, the agency shall notify the applicant in writing of the basis for the denial and the process for appealing the denial to the agency head. Within 90 days of receiving an applicant's letter appealing a denial, the certifying agency head shall notify the applicant in writing that the appeal is rejected and the initial denial is upheld or that the appeal is granted and the certifying agency will issue a certification.

C. The head of each certifying agency shall perform, or designate an agent with a supervisory role within the agency to perform, the following responsibilities:

- a. respond to requests for certifications;
- b. provide outreach to victims of qualifying criminal activity to inform them of the agency's certification process; and
- c. keep written records of all certification requests and responses.

D. All certifying agencies shall implement a language-access protocol for non-English speaking victims of qualifying criminal activity.

E. A certifying agency shall reissue any certification within 45 days of receiving a request from the victim of qualifying criminal activity or representative of the victim including, but not limited to, the victim's attorney, accredited representative, or domestic violence service provider.

F. There is no requirement that there be a current investigation, the filing of charges, a prosecution, or a conviction in order for a certifying agency to provide a certification, and there is no statute of limitations on providing a certification.

G. A certifying agency shall not refuse to provide certifications to applicants with criminal histories or outstanding warrants.

H. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a certifying agency's completion of a certification shall not be considered conclusive evidence that the victim has met eligibility requirements for a U or T visa, and completion of a certification by a certifying agency shall not be construed to guarantee that a victim will receive federal immigration relief. It is the exclusive responsibility of federal immigration officials to determine whether a victim of qualifying criminal activity is eligible for a U or T visa. Completion of a certification by a certifying agency merely verifies factual information relevant to the immigration benefit sought including information relevant for federal immigration officials to determine eligibility for a U or T visa. By completing a certification, the certifying agency attests that the information is true and correct to the best of the certifying official's knowledge. If after completion of a certification, the victim unreasonably refuses to assist in the investigation or prosecution of the qualifying criminal activity of which he or she is a victim, then the certifying agency may notify the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in writing.

### **Section 8. Federal registry programs**

No agency or agent shall expend any time, facilities, equipment, information, or other resources of the agency or agent to facilitate the creation, publication, or maintenance of any federal program to register individuals present in the United States based on their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or national or ethnic origin, or the participation of any residents of the Albany County in such a registry.

### **Section 9. Commitments**

A. The county commits to working with community advocates, policy experts, and legal advocates to defend the human rights of immigrants.

B. The Albany County Sheriff's Department will continue to respond to requests from immigrant communities to defend them against all crimes, including hate crimes, to assist people with limited language proficiency, and to connect immigrants with social services.

C. The county recognizes the arrest of an individual increases that individual's risk of deportation even in cases where the individual is found to be not guilty, creating a disproportionate impact from law enforcement operations. Therefore, for all individuals, the Albany County Sheriff's Department will recognize and consider the extreme potential negative consequences of an arrest in exercising its discretion regarding whether to take such an action, and will arrest



an individual only after determining that less severe alternatives are unavailable or would be inadequate to effect a satisfactory resolution.

#### **Section 10. Information regarding citizenship or immigration status**

Nothing in this local law prohibits any Albany County agency from sending to, or receiving from, any local, state, federal agency, information regarding an individual's citizenship or immigration status.

#### **Section 11. Severability**

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, subdivision, or other part of this local law or its application shall be inconsistent with any federal or state statute, law, regulation or rule then the federal or state statute, law, regulation, or rule shall prevail. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, subdivision, or other part of this local law or its application shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder of the local law which shall remain in full force and effect except as limited by such order or judgment.

#### **Section 12. Effective Date and Applicability**

This local law shall be effective immediately upon filing in the Office of the Secretary of State.

*Referred to Law, Public Safety and Audit and Finance Committees – 7/9/18*