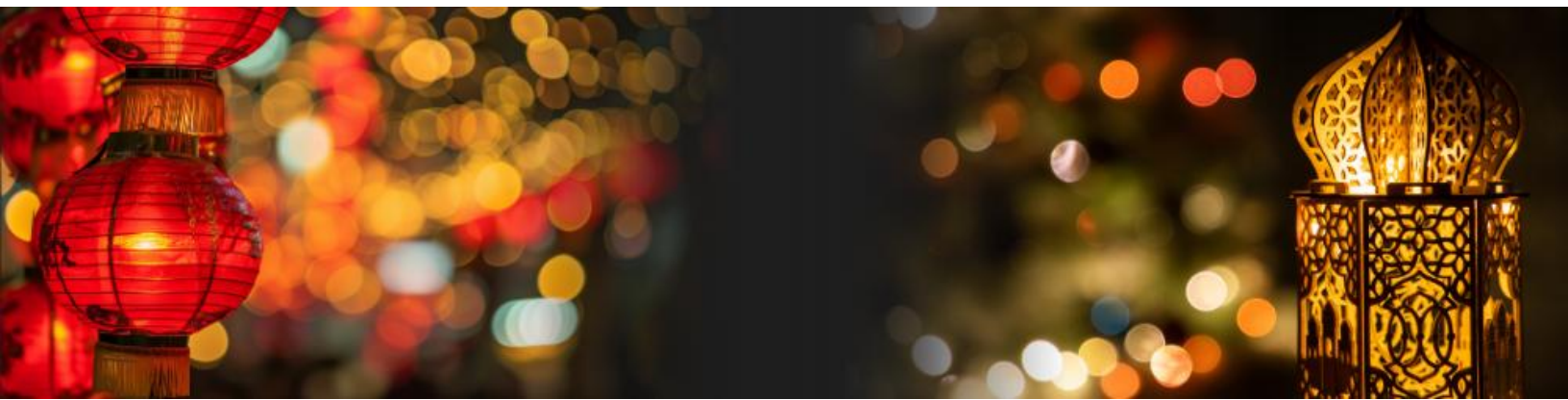




MIMA

Monthly Update

FEBRUARY 2026



Two Lunar Holidays

Happy Lunar New Year from the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA)! The start of the Lunar New Year, observed by many Asian cultures, falls on **February 17** this year. For many cultures that celebrate the Lunar New Year, this year corresponds to the fire horse in a sixty-year cycle. The fire horse embodies movement, bold decisions, and sudden change. This year represents the possibility of breakthroughs and major turning points.

Around that same time (depending on the sighting of the crescent moon), Muslim communities will begin their observance of Ramadan. In Islam, Ramadan is the ninth month of the lunar calendar and the holy month of fasting. Many immigrant communities in Baltimore celebrate Ramadan in line with their faith: Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, Yemen, and Bangladesh are a few of the places from which Baltimoreans who celebrate Ramadan hail. Ramadan Mubarak from MIMA!



UPDATES FROM OUR OFFICE

Introducing MIMA's Spring Semester Interns



Alana Fithian-Wilson is a senior at Towson University and will graduate with a degree in Political Science and Foreign Languages, concentrating in Spanish, with a minor in International Studies. Originally from Maryland's Eastern Shore, she previously worked with the U.S. State Department's Office of the Chief of Protocol and currently serves as a Towson Civic Fellow supporting civic and community engagement initiatives on campus. At MIMA, she looks forward to contributing to immigrant advocacy and inclusion by supporting the Director and Baltimore City Hispanic Commission.

Zaynab Mirza is a senior transfer student at Johns Hopkins University majoring in International Studies. She currently volunteers with the Episcopal Refugee and Immigrant Center Alliance and has previously lobbied U.S. senators on Capitol Hill in support of family-based immigration policies. As the daughter of immigrants, she brings a strong personal commitment to immigration and refugee advocacy. In her role as a MIMA intern, Zaynab will support immigrant and refugee families in Baltimore by helping them access community resources through the Baltimore New American Access Coalition (BNAAC) program.



Baltimore New American Access Coalition (BNAAC) is Enrolling New Families

BNAAC is a three-month program that connects Baltimore City's immigrant and refugee families to public benefits and local resources throughout the city. **This program is free, and services are available in multiple languages.**

[Refer someone or yourself to BNAAC](#)

Volunteer with Our Office

If you are looking for ways to get involved and support your immigrant neighbors, MIMA is seeking dedicated individuals to join our volunteer team.

As a volunteer, you can assist in various programs and initiatives to provide vital support, remotely or in-person (based on your preferences and our office's needs). Your involvement will directly contribute to empowering immigrant communities to thrive. Join us in making a difference.

[Apply to volunteer with MIMA](#)

Bi-Weekly Community Stakeholders Call

Our Community Stakeholders Calls take place every other Friday from 11:30 AM to 12:15 PM and are hosted virtually on Microsoft Teams. The call brings together a diverse group of partners and stakeholders, including non-profits, faith-based organizations, civic groups, educational institutions, and city agencies.

The call on **February 20** will feature the Luna Collective from TurnAround, Inc., and the Fund for Educational Excellence as presenters. The call on **March 6** will feature Hearts of Hope, Inc., and the Baltimore City Municipal ID program as presenters.



[Join MIMA's stakeholder calls](#)



CITY SERVICES



Department of Public Works (DPW): Sanitation Yards Closed for Presidents' Day

All DPW sanitation yards will be **closed** on Presidents' Day, Monday, **February 16**. The Presidents' Day closure does **NOT** impact residential trash and recycling collections.

DPW facilities closed on to residents and haulers on this day include:

- Northwest Transfer Station, 5030 Reisterstown Road
- Quarantine Road Landfill, 6100 Quarantine Road
- Northwest Residential Recycling Center, 2840 Sisson Street
- Southwestern Residential Recycling Center, 701 Reedbird Avenue
- Eastern Residential Recycling Center, 6101 Bowleys Lane

The City's 311 call center is still open on this day from 6 AM to 10 PM. DPW reminds residents and water customers to report water or sewer emergencies to the City's 311 call center.

Live Baltimore: Buy Back the Block Grants Available Again

The Buy Back the Block program provides grants to Baltimore City residents who rent and purchase a home within the grant-eligible Baltimore City area. These grants do not require repayment. To find out if you are eligible, visit the [Buy Back the Block webpage](#).



Mayor's Office of Employment Development: YouthWorks Now Accepting Applications

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development is now accepting applications for YouthWorks, a five-week employment opportunity for Baltimore City youth between the ages of 14 and 21. This program provides participants with meaningful, paid work experience, as well as opportunities for mentorship and to develop professional skills. Learn more on the [YouthWorks webpage](#).

[Apply to YouthWorks by March 7](#)

Businesses, non-profit organizations, community groups, and government agencies can apply to host youth workers. Learn more on the [YouthWorks webpage](#).

B'More Fresh Provides Additional Food Assistance for SNAP Recipients

Baltimore City residents enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can earn \$30 per month to purchase fruits and vegetables when they shop online with a participating grocery store. After spending \$5 on SNAP-eligible items, shoppers will receive a \$30 produce voucher in their online account. Visit the [B'More Fresh Voucher Program webpage](#) for more information.



LOCAL EVENTS AND RESOURCES



Lawyer in the Library: Immigration Information

Legal practitioners from Just Neighbors and World Relief will be available to speak with individuals seeking information on immigration-related matters. Practitioners can provide general information on basic immigration-related inquiries, distribute informational materials, provide referrals, and more. Services will be available in Spanish.

These sessions are hosted at the Southeast Anchor Library, 3601 Eastern Avenue, every other Wednesday from 11 AM to 2 PM, with upcoming dates on **February 18** and **March 4**.

Maryland CASH Campaign: Free Tax Preparation Services

[The CASH Campaign](#) and its partners are now providing free tax preparation services for taxpayers with incomes under \$69,000 per year. Trained and certified staff and volunteers prepare high quality returns, giving families access to refunds and credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. Holders of individual taxpayer identification numbers (ITINs) are eligible to receive help through this program.



To make an appointment by phone in the Baltimore area, call 410-234-8008 Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 2 PM, or [schedule an appointment online!](#)

United Way of Central Maryland: Free Stress and Trauma Awareness Workshop

United Way of Central Maryland offers free [Stress and Trauma Awareness Workshops](#) designed to support adults navigating the challenges of starting over in a new country. The sessions introduce simple, practical tools to understand how stress and trauma show up in the body and offer strategies to build resilience and restore balance.

Workshops are available in English and Spanish, in-person or online. Contact health@uwcm.org for more information.

AmASSI Wellness Center Clinic: Free, Confidential HIV/AIDS Testing

The [AmaSSi Wellness Center Clinic](#) provides vital health and wellness services to the LGBTQ+ community, with a focus on HIV prevention, testing, harm reduction, and linkage to care. The clinic's dedicated team of Peer Navigators and HIV Screeners work to ensure that every client receives confidential, judgment-free support tailored to their unique needs.

[Sign-up for a free, confidential HIV testing appointment through this form.](#) Cash incentives up to \$90 are available for getting tested.



Pride Center of Maryland: LGBTQ+ Youth Support Group

Every week, the Pride Center of Maryland (PCOM) hosts a LGBTQ+ youth support group, a safe space for connection, conversation, and support. Services are provided in English and Spanish. Stop by PCOM at 2418 St. Paul St, Baltimore, MD 21218 on Wednesdays from 4 to 5 PM. Contact Marcus Henry, Youth Service Coordinator, 443-286-4316, with any questions.

Immigration Outreach Service Center: Immigration Legal Clinic

The Immigration Outreach Service Center holds a weekly Immigration Legal Clinic, where individuals can meet one-on-one with an attorney for a consultation. Fees apply.

Consultations are provided in order of arrival. These clinics are held at 5400 Loch Raven Blvd, Baltimore, MD 21239 (inside Faith Presbyterian Church) every Wednesday between 9:30 and 11:30 AM. [Check the website for Legal Clinic cancelations.](#)

Cylburn Arboretum: Year of the Fire Horse Lunar New Year Celebration

[Celebrate Lunar New Year](#) with a mix of contemporary and cultural performances to celebrate AAPI performers from across Maryland on **February 22**, from 1 to 4 PM, at the Vollmer Center at the Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave, Baltimore MD 21209. [Sign up to attend through this form.](#)



This event is presented by the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives, Maryland Two Fifty, Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs and NAAAP Baltimore, in partnership with Baltimore City Recreation and Parks and Cylburn Arboretum Friends.

4th Annual "More than Hope" Benefit Concert in Support of Immigrants



Come together in solidarity and remember that there is more than hope: there is action! This annual fundraiser, with live music and dance, will take on the evening of **February 15** at the Owen Brown Interfaith Center.

Event proceeds will be donated to the Amica Center for Immigrant Rights and Comité Latino de Baltimore. Find more information and get tickets on [Eventbrite](#).



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs: Grant Applications Open for *Citizenship Maryland*

Citizenship Maryland is a program that aims to promote access to U.S. citizenship for Maryland immigrants who are eligible to naturalize but have not yet done so. Grantee organizations will work as part of a statewide network coordinated by the Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to conduct

continuous outreach, host naturalization information sessions, and provide pre-application screenings, support services, and referrals. Grant awards range from \$50,000 to \$125,000. The project period is 12 months, with a projected start date of **March 25, 2026**. Applications are due **February 25, 2026**.

See [this notice](#) for details, and apply through this [application form](#). To support interested applicants, the Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will host an [informational webinar](#) on **February 10** at 2:30 PM and a [group virtual office hour session](#) on **February 18** at 3:00 PM to review the NOFO and answer questions.



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Judicial Immigration Updates

Lawsuits have been filed against many of President Donald Trump's executive orders related to immigration. Follow the development of these and other lawsuits at the [Just Security Litigation Tracker](#).



Executive Immigration Updates

ICE memo on warrantless searches: An internal memo from U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement (ICE) was leaked in January. This memo authorizes ICE offers to use force to enter a residence based solely on an administrative warrant and without a judicial warrant.

At this time, immigration advocates stress that, despite this leaked memo, the law has not changed and encourage community members to continue [consulting Know Your Rights guidance](#) on the difference between administrative and judicial warrants.

Suspension of immigrant visa issuance for designated countries: In mid-January, the [U.S. Department of State announced](#) that it would be pausing all visa issuances to immigrant visa applicants who are nationals of seventy-five countries that were deemed by the federal administration "at high risk of public benefits usage." Consult the original announcement for the full list of countries. This policy impacts the cases that were pending as of **January 21, 2026**, and any new cases after that date. Affected individuals are still able to submit immigrant visa applications and attend interviews during this pause, but visas will not be issued.

Immigrant visas issued prior to the announcement have not been revoked. Non-immigrant visas, such as tourist visas, will continue to be processed and are not impacted. Dual nationals who apply using a valid passport from a country that is not listed in the restrictions are exempt from this pause.



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