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NEW REPORT UNDERSCORES IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Houston, T.X. – A new report from the Tahirih Justice Center sheds light on the increased vulnerabilities that immigrant communities are confronting in the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. [*A System Under Stress: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on non-detained cases in Immigration Courts*](#) brings together existing literature and interviews with direct service providers and experts in the field to detail how extended closure of immigration courts, policy changes, and communication difficulties have added barriers for non-detained immigrants on a path to obtain legal status.

“Again and again, we found that the COVID-19 pandemic cultivated an environment where immigrants are bearing the brunt of compounded health, safety, and economic challenges,” said Julia Bevan, a Weil Legal Innovator at Tahirih. “In this setting, the systems and people in place to support them are stretched to their limits.”

The report findings also reveal that rapid and confusing policy changes and uncertain and varied court closures further complicate a long and backlogged system for immigrants, while also significantly limiting the capacity of direct service providers. An immigration system so severely stressed means that less communities are served and that immigrant survivors face even greater barriers to accessing justice in the U.S.

Tahirih offers recommendations that Congress and the administration can take to address the health and economic needs of immigrant communities, relieve case backlogs, and mitigate confusion as immigration courts reopen. A second report which looks at the impact of the pandemic on immigrants who are detained will be released later in July.

Julia Bevan is available for comment. Please contact media@tahirih.org for more information on this topic.

About the Tahirih Justice Center

The Tahirih Justice Center is a national, nonprofit organization that serves immigrant survivors fleeing gender-based violence. By centering the voices of survivors in communities, courts, and Congress, Tahirih’s mission is to create a world in which all people share equal rights and are treated equitably.