

IDNYC Builds Confidence, Belonging and Access to Public Services

In January 2016, the Center for Economic Opportunity contracted with Westat/Metis Associates to launch an evaluation of IDNYC. The evaluation was designed to examine areas of success and areas of potential improvement. Researchers focused on answering several questions: How are New Yorkers using IDNYC? What did the city get right with IDNYC? And, how could IDNYC be improved? To answer these questions, the study used a mix-methods evaluation and drew data from several sources:

- Focus groups and interviews
- Email survey of 70,000+ cardholders
- Administrative data

Key Evaluation Findings

The evaluation findings were encouraging. Many of the program’s intended benefits, as well as unexpected positive externalities, were cited as successes:

- Over 50% of survey respondents **use IDNYC as photo identification** and for nearly 25%, **it is their only form of US photo identification**
- **59% of survey respondents** who responded to a question about interactions with the NYPD reported that having the card makes them feel more confident about potential encounters with police officers
- 77% of survey respondents who are **immigrants report an increased sense of belonging in NYC**
- 52% of survey respondents used the card **to access cultural institutions**
- 39% of respondents who used IDNYC to access public benefits reported that the card had “greatly” helped them receive services
- 94% of respondents found **acquiring the card somewhat or very easy**

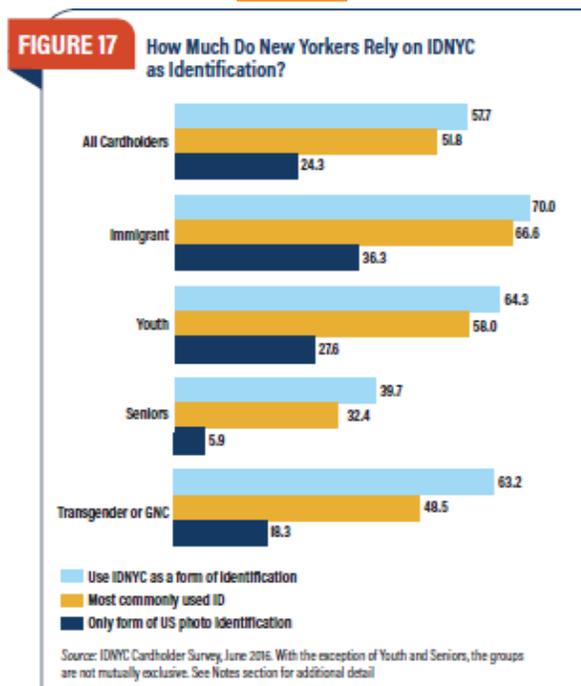
What is IDNYC?

IDNYC was launched in January of 2015 with the goal of providing New York City (NYC) residents a government-issued photo identification, while also facilitating access to city services and free membership at cultural institutions. The card was especially designed to serve NYC’s most vulnerable populations, including immigrants, seniors, youth, individuals who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming (GNC), and the homeless. The card is free and available to New Yorkers aged 14+ who have documentation of identity and residency, regardless of immigration status.

New Yorkers Rely on IDNYC for Identification

Many cardholders chose to enroll in IDNYC because the card offers a **preferable form of identification**. IDNYC is easier to replace than other forms of identification, making it less risky to carry around. In addition, IDNYC is **particularly appealing to vulnerable populations**: immigrants appreciate that it does not reveal country of origin or legal status; and transgender or GNC individuals appreciate that they can use it to formally indicate gender of preference.

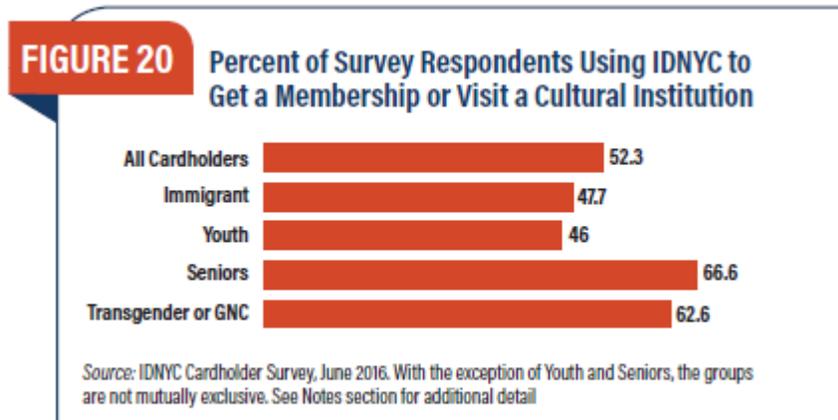
Chart 1



Free Memberships and Discounts Reduce Stigma and Broaden Audience

In an effort to enroll all types of New Yorkers in IDNYC and make it stigma-free, the City paired free memberships, discounts and easier access to city services with the card. These benefits were cited as being big draws for New Yorkers: over 50% of cardholders reported using the card to visit a cultural institution or set up a membership. Further, senior and transgender or GNC individuals used the card disproportionately, with 66.6% and 62.6% using it to take advantage of these perks, respectively. The additional benefits helped to attract a wide swath of New Yorkers who may not otherwise have been interested, further enhancing its value to cardholders.

Chart 2



Cardholder Reactions to IDNYC

“You come out from the shadows. You can show this [IDNYC] ...without shame to show who you are. When you show this ID, it makes you feel different. It make you feel like estranged people no more. So, those fears go away.”

–Spanish speaking immigrant

“In the LGBT community, people are really excited. Some don’t have other forms of ID or forms of ID that actually support their gender identify. People feel safer getting this ID knowing that they can have their gender of choice.”

–CBO focused on LGBTQ community

Looking Ahead

Building upon IDNYC’s initial successes, the evaluation made several recommendations that could improve cardholder experience and further strengthen it as a national model that other municipalities should follow:

- Establish mechanisms for ongoing communication with cardholders to share information and updates.
- Some cardholders misunderstand how IDNYC can be used. Dissemination of more information about the card is needed.
- For individuals experiencing homelessness, proof of residence can be hard to produce. The city should collaborate with community-based organizations to better understand the needs of this population with regard to identification and ensure that they are met.

Further Reading

To read the full evaluation report, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/html/data/reports.shtml>

For more information about IDNYC, visit <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/idnyc/index.page>

For more information about CEO, please visit: <http://www.nyc.gov/ceo>