ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: July 5, 2016 (Tuesday)
TIME: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Room 209
Portland City Hall

A G E N D A

1. **City's possible new office for New American Mainers to assist with job opportunities and business development (5:00 to 6:30 p.m.). Discussion will focus what has been learned and next steps – Julianne Sullivan, Chief of Staff/Executive Department**

2. **Executive Session: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(C), the Committee will go into executive session to provide guidance regarding negotiations for small cell technology on City of Portland property (6:30 to 7:00 p.m.): - Brendan O'Connell, Finance Director**

Public Comment will be accepted on action items.

Next Meeting: July 26, 2016

Councilor David Brenerman, Chair

Economic Development Committee
Possible Creation of an Office of New Mainers
What We've Learned So Far
7/5/16

Questions: What role, if any, should the City play to ensure access to services and opportunities for immigrants/refugees/asylees to integrate effectively into the local workforce?

Should a dedicated office be created? For economic opportunities in general or specifically for immigrants/refugees/asylees?

Key Themes

- Immigration is a key part of an economic growth strategy for Portland and improving integration is critical to ensuring the work force and vitality of this city
- The Committee has heard from numerous community leaders, social service, education and employment providers
- Many needed services are being provided, though there are still gaps – most significantly in job opportunities, availability of ESL classes, addressing the K-12 achievement gap, as well as overall coordination (to ensure capacity across the system, collect and share impact data, better identify gaps)
- Portland needs to do more and to do things perhaps a little differently – look to other cities' best practices, innovations
- There may well be a role for the City to play – convening, coordination, data collection and evaluation of programs, policy development
    - Possibly also to ensure that Portland is a thriving, international city
    - Perhaps assuring that all Portlanders have access to job skills development, career counseling, and job placement services to maximize both individual potential as well as ensuring a vibrant workforce
    - Support and ignite economic development in the city
- Designating an office specifically for New Mainers can be viewed as exclusive, though the specialized needs of immigrants/refugees/asylees need to be addressed.
- There are a significant number of individuals and groups that may still need to be heard during the development phase of this process.
- How best to integrate services – co-location? MOUs?
- Focus of this new office is economic development, not health and social services

Possible approaches

- **Build up/expand HIRE program** – consider moving/linking the program to Economic Development and under supervision of this new Office.
    - Broaden scope so that GA is one of many sources of referral for it – target all Portlanders who need to access training and/or job linkage services

- Leverage work of Kim Moore/Greater Portland Workforce Initiative and perhaps tighten their connection with Portland Adult Ed to expand workforce development and training linkages (Career Center, Goodwill, CEI/Portland Jobs Alliance)
- Support businesses to hire non-traditional employees including internships/vocational mentoring programs (also as way to provide path to foreign-trained professionals to gain experience and certification in the U.S.)

- **Convene a broad-based collaborative** to work on four major areas:
  - **Rebranding Portland as a multicultural, international city** – marketing, data, trade
    - Celebrating the mosaic of ethnicities and nationalities here
    - Events, gardens, flags, and signage – examples of ways to strengthen Portland's image as multicultural and international
    - ME International Trade Center, Portland Downtown, Maine Historical Society, Chamber, ethnic groups, businesses
  - **Re-engineer the work force pipeline by ensuring ESL** capacity through a school district-wide strategy as well as expanding ESL capacity for adults
    - Removing language barriers has been found to be the single most important step to integrate successfully
    - USM (and SMCC?) role with training ESL teachers
  - **Create innovative entrepreneurial opportunities and support** including microfinancing (Opportunity Alliance, Living with Peace, CEI, Community Financial Literacy, Portland Development Corporation, SBA) and proactively connect to employers' needs (Diversity Hiring Coalition)
    - Learning from "bridge" programs to facilitate highly educated people to use their training here (Portland Adult Ed/New Mainers Resource Center)
  - **Ensure optimal coordination of the many service providers**, allowing the dots to be more easily connected, outcomes better measured by developing common metrics, and communication more open so that immigrants are more effectively integrated into the Portland community
    - Sustain Southern Maine/USM inventory of vocational programs and other existing services with unmet needs noted
    - Welcome Center Pilot Project/New Mainers Resource Center at Portland Adult Ed
- **Plan conference** for October

<u>Selected Resources in Portland for Immigrant Integration – Employment and Entrepreneurship Support</u>

Business Assistance Programs

- ***Portland Development Corporation*** (Barry Sheff)
  - Nearly 9% of PDC loans were made to immigrants; 13% of active loans have been made to immigrant businesses

- Provide matching grants of $10,000 per net new job created, up to $20,000 per business, to start-ups and growing businesses for full-time positions for low- to moderate-income Portland residents

- ***City's Economic Development Department*** (Greg Mitchell)
  - Guidance and support for individuals starting or growing businesses
  - The Economic Development Vision and Plan addresses "Supporting efforts to increase minority entrepreneurship and the entry of minority populations into business and the workforce"

Workforce Development

- ***Portland Adult Ed*** (Bethany Campbell)
  - High School credentials
  - ESOL
  - Street Academy serving homeless youth
  - Job readiness
  - New Mainers Resource Center – job classes, English language, and citizenship courses as well as case management
  - Need more advocacy and policy work to reduce barriers for new Americans, including transportation, housing and child care
  - Need to help businesses understand the benefits of hiring a more multicultural workforce
  - Need to create opportunities for employers to be more engaged with their future workforce
- ***Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.*** (Antoinette Mancusi)
  - Regional workforce board – oversees and funds service delivery
  - Regional plan to align with State strategies as well as local labor market needs
  - Local one-stop: 190 Lancaster St
  - For all job seekers, have current job opening databases, workshops, access to technology, referral/access to support services – ***Goodwill Workforce Solutions*** (Ryan Anderson)
  - Most successful with New Mainers has been work-based learning
    - International credential evaluation
    - Training with peers
    - Direct work with Portland Adult Ed (ESOL/ELL)
    - Access to translation services
    - Employment readiness workshops
  - Common barriers
    - Limited English proficiency
    - Difficulty transferring or translating credentials
    - Limited knowledge as to how to navigate the system and/or workplace culture
    - Transportation

- Common system problems
  - Lack of coordination makes it difficult to access the workforce development system
  - Resources duplicated/not maximized
  - Lack of data, tracking or evaluation on how immigrants are served
  - Lack of collaboration among funders
- Link workers to industry needs
- Create career pathways, not just quickly getting a job

- ***Greater Portland Workforce Initiative*** (Kim Moore)
  - Disconnect between skills of jobseekers and needs of employers
  - Funded by JT Gorman Foundation, the initiative works to close this gap by developing a streamlined workforce pipeline to train and connect workers and employers in growth industries
  - Focus on low-income populations, specifically single heads of household, immigrants and refugees, ex-offenders, disconnected older youth, and homeless
  - Primary barriers for jobseekers
    - Limited English proficiency
    - Lack of job search skills
    - Lack of basic work skills
    - Transportation
- ***Helping Individuals Regain Employment (HIRE), City of Portland*** (Dave MacLean, Aaron Geyer)
  - New program which identifies and addresses employment barriers for General Assistance clients to move to self-sufficiency and generates a pool of qualified candidates for local employers to meet staffing needs
  - Close collaboration with Portland Adult Ed (language, job classes), Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, Goodwill, Career Center
- ***Coastal Enterprises, Inc.*** (Jen Sporzynski)
  - Business development advising
  - Job training/development
  - Loans
  - Building Maine's Economy report

Other Immigrant/Refugee/Asylee Service Providers

- ***Catholic Charities*** (Steve Letourneau)
  - Serve primary refugees through Refugee & Immigrant Services program and Language Partners (translation)
  - City could coordinate business to hire immigrants/refugees, become welcoming at every level, not just for lowest-level jobs
    - Need job shadowing/mentoring, especially for people who were doctors, engineers in country of origin

- Need affordable housing

Written and Oral Testimony – General

(Please note, further detail on names and testimony can be found online at the Committee's web site)

- Alain Nahimana, Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
  - Vision: "An inclusive Greater Portland where diversity is valued, where everyone is involved and where the minority ethnic communities are welcomed, are given the opportunity to pursue their dream and empowered to contribute to the economic, social, political and cultural advancement of the Greater Portland area." "A Welcoming Community, An Opportunity Community and An Empowering Community for Immigrants."
  - Establish an interagency group to translate vision into strategic actions
  - Many gaps and lack of clarity, accountability and impact measurement tools to ensure resources are spent effectively and productively
  - Lack of coordination and communication among immigrant service providers
  - City should ensure that goals of immigrant integration are clearly understood and communicated; help shape vision and communicate priorities; promote accountability and achievement of measurable results
  - New office should begin with a comprehensive assessment and planning effort
- Dan Wallace, Partnership for a New American Economy
  - Immigration as key part of a strategy to promote economic growth
  - Consider all barriers immigrants face – lack of access to capital; public health and safety messages may not reach them; lack of trust in law enforcement may result in underreporting crime
  - An Office for New Americans can leverage external funding, ensure quality customer service, serve as a central hub for information
    - Help with pathway to citizenship
    - Language access policies
    - Connect immigrant entrepreneurs with small business services and microfinance
    - Connect underemployed, highly skilled immigrants with jobs in their field
  - NY – celebrates ethnic heritages with special events
- Chris Hall, Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce
  - Create an office – particularly need to address underemployment, open doors, add vibrancy to Portland's economy
- Odai Alibadi – support is needed for new projects and innovations from the immigrant communities.
- Damas Rugab – the new office should track its progress and learn what immigrants go through.
- Tae Chong – new office should connect the dots for existing services; evaluate what is working and what isn't
  - Significant ESOL needs

- Need strategic plan to answer the big questions
    - Brand Portland as an international community, not just refugee resettlement
        - Bring in non-traditional allies – ethnic groups, Maine Historical Society, Maine International Trade Center, Chamber, Portland Downtown
    - Address achievement gap in schools – re-engineer the workforce pipeline at the beginning, not just the end
    - Economic engine – innovation, entrepreneurship
- Kris Horton, Public Market – new office should address language and rules/regulations
- Rev. Ken Lewis, AME Zion Church – there already are many organizations for immigrants and what would this office do that hasn't already been tried. An office for new Mainers would be exclusive and such an effort should be inclusive; Portland is too small to segment; the City needs to address the population that is already here.
- Anne Gass – new office should advocate, coordinate, and plan its services to be a resource center.
- Calude Rwaganje, Community Financial Literacy – goal of new office should be to connect and collaborate with all services providers and be involved with policy-making decisions.
- Dawud Ummad – school system is suffering because of language challenges. Need to support that effort.
- Leonard Cummings – City should help all, not focus on immigrants/refugees.
- Kwan Malwal – agrees with Rev. Lewis.
- Deborah Cummings Khadraoui – a new office like this would be exclusive and will not offer anything new or what is needed.
- Aymen Korika, Sudanese community – do not need this office. Portland already does a great job for immigrants. Doesn't want to be labeled a new American and treated differently; such an office would create yet another division.
- Joby Thoyalil, Maine Equal Justice Partners – new office would be good but shouldn't exclude other minorities. Serve as a point of coordination.
- Dennis Ross – agrees with Rev. Lewis.
- Qamrul Islam – not opposed to office, but naming it for New Mainers is divisive. Should work to increase and improve collaboration.
- Christina Feller, Living With Peace – such an office would create greater divisiveness. Focus on overall diversity, not just citizenship status.
- Sue Roche, Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
    - Help people gain legal status and work authorization
    - New office should support and help coordinate work already being done, without replacing or replicating services others are already providing
    - City should ensure immigrants' basic needs are met since Office of Refugee Services closing
    - Office should be an information clearinghouse for the immigrant community and those who work with them

    - Office should also serve as a convener and connector for groups already working with the immigrant community to ensure better communication and avoid duplication of services
- Octavia Clarkson – new office should coordinate the many current service providers, resources, build on data for an economic strategy and have a multicultural focus, not just immigrants/refugees
- Stephanie Trice Gill – while there are services, we still lack efficiency, coordination, and clear pathways; we need a plan for better, more sustainable integration and we need data
- Tim Honey – need better understanding of where the gaps are, as well as better coordination, focus and accountability from existing service providers
    - City should provide leadership and create a strategic approach to priorities and programs
    - Immigrant communities are essential partners
- Henri Koy-Bofumbo, Congolese Community of Maine – want to partner with City
- Mahmoud Hassan, Somali Community – same
- South Sudanese, Iraqi– City should pull together the many disparate organizations working with immigrants on ways to pool efforts together to support self-sufficiency; engage the community leaders with all the service providers
- Maza Muhammed, Ethiopian Community – critical to support and expand Portland Adult Ed

Additional Local Resources

- Funding Collaborative on Immigrants & Refugees/ New Americans Funders Network of Maine – Erin Cinelli, Lerner Foundation, and Deb Felder, Broad Reach Fund
- Educate Maine – Ed Cervone
- USM (ESOL/ELL teacher certification) – Glenn Cummings
- New England Arab American Organization – Zoe Sahloul
- Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce – Quincy Hentzel

Economic Development Committee
Possible Creation of an Office of New Mainers
Best Practices
July 5, 2016

Reviewed all comparable cities in the northeast (see list at end of document) and found that despite far higher levels of foreign-born population, none have created anything like an Office of New Americans specifically; economic development activity is more in line with the current functions in our Economic Development Department.

The following are municipal offices unless otherwise specified as an outside organization.

Louisville, KY – Office for Globalization

- City department with mission is to assist new Americans in Louisville to achieve self-sufficiency and success; enhance and encourage multiculturalism in Louisville; engage in economic development through global economic outreach
- Spur the development of international councils – for each ethnic community
- Immigrant Business Resources
- Connect immigrants and refugees to governmental and non-governmental resources and serve as an information clearinghouse
- Started diversity initiative for all City employees
- Annual two-day WorldFest, including naturalization ceremony

Chattanooga, TN – HANDS Across Chattanooga

- Part of City Office of Multicultural Affairs
- HANDS = Helping All Nationalities Diversify Society
- Mission is to fight discrimination due to national origin and integrate immigrants into the city
- Link with services that will help them become more acclimated; Welcome Fair

Boulder, CO – Immigrant Advisory Committee

- Encourages immigrant involvement in city government and advises the city on issues relating to the immigrant community
- Seven members appointed by city manager – all are immigrant residents, either citizens or non-citizens, and must reflect the demographics of the immigrant community
- Have worked on public library services and programs, affordable housing programs, fire department's master plan, parks and recreation's master plan, transportation plans, etc.

Aurora, CO – Office of International and Immigrant Affairs; Office of International Initiatives

- Oversees the development and implementation of strategic citywide plan regarding policy, programs and initiatives for the local immigrant and refugee populations; also coordinates the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission
- Created comprehensive 3-year strategic plan, identifying key challenges which keep immigrants and refugees from being full partners in the life of the city and sharing their many contributions with the community, including:
    - Linguistic and cultural barriers
    - Possible fear of government and law enforcement agencies
    - Lack of awareness and understanding of available resources, medical coverage and employment services
- Aurora Welcome Center – one-stop to learn about resources and services
- Quotes the National Immigration Forum: "Integration is a long-term process through which immigrants and host communities communicate effectively, function together and enrich each other, create economic opportunities and have mutual respect and understanding among people of different cultures."
- Primary objectives of the plan are to maximize resources, develop innovative initiatives, and avoid duplications of programs and services – the plan organizes the city's often disparate immigrant and refugee efforts toward one goal: integration
- Please see attachments for selected parts of the strategic plan

Dayton, OH

- Welcome Dayton (www.welcomedayton.org) – "Immigrant-Friendly City" – community initiative:
    - Encouraging business and economic development
    - Access to education, government, health and social services
    - Ensuring equity in the justice system
    - Promoting an appreciation of arts and culture
- Government, non-profit, and business sectors engaged in a series of extensive community conversations regarding immigration in the region. Created Welcome Dayton Plan and the City of Dayton Commission unanimously adopted it in October of 2011
- Plan outlines clear, measurable actions for each of the areas above
- Please see attachments for selected parts of the strategic plan

Columbus, OH

- Global Columbus – community initiative which is a product of Columbus Council on World Affairs – mission is to give equal opportunity to all refugees and immigrants and allow them to become responsible, productive residents of Columbus
- Goals are to:
    - Coordinate resources with city, county, state and community

- Address the needs of growing immigrant and refugee populations in a culturally sensitive manner
- Maximize the impact of existing City and County services and establish community plan for peak performance service delivery
- Work together to empower new arrivals towards self-sufficiency and transition Columbus to a world community
- Enhance and promote educational and social activities that foster greater appreciation for diverse cultures

Buffalo, NY

- City of Buffalo: New Americans Study: A strategic action plan to advance immigrant and refugee integration and success (please see attachments for selected parts of the plan)
  - Process to develop strategic plan included data analysis, listening sessions, stakeholder interviews, research review
  - Strategies:
    - *Welcoming* – improving initial experiences of immigrants and refugees related to the resettlement experience, acculturation, and community organization
      - Enhance post-resettlement services
      - Improve language access
      - Promote information on essential services
      - Facilitate cultural exchanges
      - Encourage community engagement
      - Promote civic participation
    - *Settling In* – addresses issues of housing neighborhoods and public safety
      - Expand resettlement into new neighborhoods
      - Ensure adequate housing
      - Promote business districts
      - Encourage participation in recreational programs
      - Establish a community space
      - Engage with the Police Department
    - *Strengthening* – describes the importance of social services, health care, education and employment to providing a solid foundation from which to prosper
      - Increase language access for health and human service providers
      - Provide specialized training for school personnel
      - Purse opportunities for parental involvement
      - Encourage participation in enrichment programs
      - Improve access to adult education
      - Develop effective vocational training
      - Expand employment programs
      - Increase entrepreneurial efforts
      - Facilitate professional careers

        - Expand workforce opportunities
    - *Moving Forward* – actions for city to take to further integration of immigrants and refugees, improve access to city services, and develop initiatives where city uniquely positioned to make a difference
        - Pass a welcoming city ordinance
        - Provide cultural sensitivity training
        - Expand Office of New Americans capacity
        - Establish a New Americans Advisory Council
        - Apply best practices
- https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/%5Cfiles%5C1_2_1%5CMayor%5CNewAmericansStudy.pdf

Boston, MA

- Just changed name from Mayor's Office for New Bostonians to Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement
- The purpose of the Office is "to strengthen the ability of diverse cultural and linguistic communities to play an active role in the economic, civic, social and cultural life in the city of Boston. MOIA acts as a catalyst for providing opportunity, access and equality for immigrants, and highlights the contributions and the essential role that immigrants have played and continue to play in making Boston the world class city that it is."
- Focusing on:
    - K-12
        - Family engagement
        - Educate families on options for ELL
        - Increase recruitment and diversity of ELL teachers
    - ESOL
        - Expand ESOL to all caregivers of Boston Public Schools students to support children's learning
        - Improve quality and accountability of programs through consistent performance measures and feedback to stakeholders
        - Expand collaboration to ensure consistency of access, achievement of higher impact, and public awareness
    - Jobs
        - Enhance immigrants' progress through the workforce development system
        - Increase immigrants' success rate in achieving post-secondary degrees and credentials
        - Expand opportunities and support for immigrants to develop and strengthen entrepreneurship skills
        - Ensure immigrants with low-wage jobs have economic opportunities, fair wages and benefits
- Published guides to assist immigrants to access City and community resources
- ESOL class directory

- Immigration advice
- Interactive, online database of services for immigrants, refugees and newcomers for Greater Boston

Other Best Practice Information

- Most municipal offices for immigrant integration include:
    - Mayoral champion
    - Making the economic case
    - Develop, streamline and consolidate services
    - Work with law enforcement; promote civic engagement; engage policymakers; offer leadership to the region. AS/COA and USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, Opening Doors, Opening Minds, Opening Communities: Cities Leading for Immigrant Integration http://www.as-coa.org/sites/default/files/USC_Report_LayFinal2_17_WEB.PDF
- Financial coaching and small business development services should be right up there with next to learning English.
    - Immigrant integration has traditionally been understood as teaching English and supporting immigrants through the process of achieving legal status, both of which are necessary and important services.
    - Comprehensive immigrant integration, however, must include services that directly support immigrants to become robust economic contributors and foster economic mobility for immigrants and their children.
    - Need knowledge and tools to full participate in financial and real estate marketplace in the US.
    - It is time to more directly connect these important infrastructures to support immigrant economic integration. It is not enough for us to work in poorly connected silos. Need suite of integrated services, requiring multiple organizations to collaborate and integrate their services.
      Beginning with English language learning and legal support, including financial coaching, tax assistance, workforce development, and, for many, small business development services.
      http://www.shelterforce.org/article/4171/immigrant_integration_services_must_aim_to_build_assets/
- Need labor market intermediaries to connect immigrant job seekers to employer needs; limited English proficiency is most significant employment barrier for immigrants, both skilled and unskilled; need help with job search and application processes; transportation challenges
    - Key actions needed to address employment barriers
        - Access to intensive pre-employment language programs as well as flexible English classes at workplaces or other locations
        - Additional orientations to the cultural expectations of the labor-market process and US work environments

        - Increased education about the local economic and employment landscape, including key sectors and employers, to give immigrants more context for their job searches
        - Additional opportunities for tutoring, mentoring, volunteering, internships and apprenticeships that help immigrants integrate into the workforce
        - Increased networking opportunities for immigrant job seekers and employers, as well as employers with workforce intermediaries
        - Direct partnerships with Maine employers and workforce intermediaries
    - Building Maine's Economy: How Maine Can Embrace Immigrants and Strengthen the Workforce http://www.ceimaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/CEI-Immigration-Report-2016-WEB-PAGES.pdf
- Partnership for a New American Economy (http://www.renewoureconomy.org/) and Welcoming America (http://www.welcomingamerica.org/) – Gateways for Growth Challenge funding for research, technical assistance, and matching grants to support the development and implementation of multi-sector strategic plans for welcoming and integrating new Americans. http://www.renewoureconomy.org/news/updates/twenty-communities-selected-for-gateways-for-growth-challenge-to-welcome-and-integrate-new-americans/
- National League of Cities, 20 Cities, 20 Good Practices: Municipal Innovations in Immigrant Integration http://www.nlc.org/documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/Research%20Innovation/Immigrant%20Integration/municipal-innovations-immigrant-integration-20-cities-sep10.pdf
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Immigrant Integration in North Carolina https://migration.unc.edu/files/2015/02/ImmigrantIntegrationSummitReport.pdf
- Chicago Global Affairs Council, Reimagining the Midwest: Immigration Initiatives and the Capacity of Local Leadership http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/reimagining_the_midwest_report_2014.pdf
- Center for American Progress, All Immigration is Local: Receiving Communities and Their Role in Successful Immigrant Integration https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/09/pdf/rci.pdf
- Chicago New Americans Plan http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Office%20of%20New%20Americans/NewAmericanBookletfullplan.pdf
- Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, Investing in our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration https://www.gcir.org/sites/default/files/resources/GCIR%20Toolkit.pdf
- Career Pathways Toolkit; next is Credentialing Academy; SBA 101 classes; other resources White House Task Force on New Americans https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/image/tfna_progress_report_final_12_15_15.pdf

Comparable Northeast Cities Reviewed

City/Town	2010 Population	Median HH Income	Median Age	Foreign Born
Worcester, MA	183,016	$ 45,011	32.7	21.1%
Providence, RI	178,042	$ 36,378	29.1	25.3%
Springfield, MA	153,060	$ 34,734	32.7	11.0%
Bridgeport, CT	147,612	$ 42,687	32.1	29.2%
Manchester, NH	110,448	$ 51,248	36.2	9.4%
Lowell, MA	109,945	$ 42,270	32.4	25.3%
Brockton, MA	93,810	$ 51,274	35.4	24.7%
Quincy, MA	92,271	$ 61,142	39.4	27.7%
Lynn, MA	90,329	$ 47,155	35.3	30.8%
Lawrence, MA	76,377	$ 36,187	30.5	38.4%
Portland, ME	**66,194**	**$ 40,806**	**35.8**	**7.6%**
East Hartford, CT	51,252	$ 49,342	39.6	21.7%
Burlington, VT	42,417	$ 43,323	27.0	8.1%
Bangor, ME	33,039	$ 34,998	35.5	3.4%

Economic Development Committee

Possible Creation of an Office of New Mainers

Next Steps

July 5, 2016

- What are the "problems" we are trying to solve?

- What role should the City play?

- What else do we need to know and/or who else do we need to hear from in order to make decisions?

- What should the goals of the October conference be?

eptember 2015:

Week 3: Presentation to City Council

Week 4: Presentation to members of the immigrant and refugee communities, service providers and local organizations.

In order to develop and implement the goals of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan, the plan recommends changes related to organizational structure and governance, as well as a coordinated implementation effort between city departments. These policy recommendations have less to do with the simple provision of specific services than with establishing formal structures and opportunities for refugees and immigrants to develop their leadership skills and participate in decision-making in local government. The implementation of this important set of policy recommendations will put Aurora on track to becoming a national leader in the area of immigrant integration.

A. Create an Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Under the current organizational structure, the Office of International Initiatives resides within the City Manager's Office. During the discussion of the 2015 budget, the City Council tasked this office with coordinating the city's various efforts related to the international, immigrant and refugee community. After studying the best practices in the area of immigrant integration from all over the country and considering the changes in the demographics in Aurora, we strongly believe that it is time to retitle the office to better describe its responsibilities and purview. We therefore recommend the creation of an "Office of International and Immigrant Affairs" to replace the Office of International Initiatives (See Appendix A for examples nation-wide). This title better reflects the work envisioned in the Comprehensive Strategic Plan that will be outlined in section four of this document. This fits with the national trends for cities and towns across the United States. Such an office would focus on the following:

- Facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Aurora's civic, economic, and cultural life
- Teach civics with a goal to build empowerment and advocacy
- Provide effective leadership for issues impacting immigrants and refugees
- Oversee development and implement policy programs and services aimed at the local refugee and immigrant population
- Build partnerships with city departments to implement cohesive, coordinated, and accessible programs for immigrants and refugees
- Serve as a focal point for activities that would increase immigrant and refugee civic engagement and work on emerging issues that affect immigrants and refugees

- Support the city's international efforts, manage official international protocol activities and events, and serve as a liaison to the international community. Also, the head of this office would oversee the coordination of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission

B. Formalize the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force

The initial goal of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force (AIRTF) was to reach out to the community and build a relationship with its members to identify their needs. Since its creation in June 2014, the AIRTF has worked toward this goal, but still needs to establish a formal internal structure, or mission, and develop a plan to meet its stated goal. In order to adequately staff and set up the Task Force for success in both the short and long term, we recommend formalizing the AIRTF, including assigning staffing responsibilities to the proposed Office of International and Immigrant Affairs. The main objectives of this proposed model is to offer the following; 1) foster collaboration and partnership between the AIRTF and the city; 2) share resources and information; 3) develop joint efforts and projects; 4) avoid duplication and clarify community roles; 5) encourage more civic participation from these communities; 6) cultivate new leadership in the international population; and 7) identify emerging issues and offer advice and insight for elected leaders and city staff. Finally, we strongly believe that the AIRTF is an important voice and should transition into a formal city commission in the near future. Many cities have an advisory commission or other chartered group charged with similar tasks.

C. Establishment of the International Cabinet or inter-agency working group

Immigrant integration efforts at the city level require a comprehensive and coordinated effort between city departments and municipal agencies. This inter-agency approach will help ensure that programs, strategies, and plans for the local immigrant and refugee populations are implemented in a cost effective and timely manner. Having this kind of inter-agency working group will optimize city service delivery and avoid the duplication of city services and programs. In addition, collaboration between key city staff members and sharing of resources will improve efficiency, internal communication, and coordination among city departments. The cabinet will meet on a monthly basis and be comprised of department representatives with authority/responsibility over programs related to immigrant integration. The cabinet will be staffed by the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs.

D. Establishment of evaluation performance efforts

To evaluate these efforts, a metric evaluation system will be developed with a focus on measuring quantitative and qualitative results, depending on the nature of the project or program in accordance with the most modern evaluation methods used in the immigrant integration field. City staff will explore the possibility of local higher education institutions providing technical expertise regarding the evaluation of integration efforts.

3. COORDINATION OF INTEGRATION WORK ACROSS THE CITY

The findings from the online survey, community conversations and focus groups were considered in the prioritization of programs and initiatives described below.

A. INTEGRATION THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

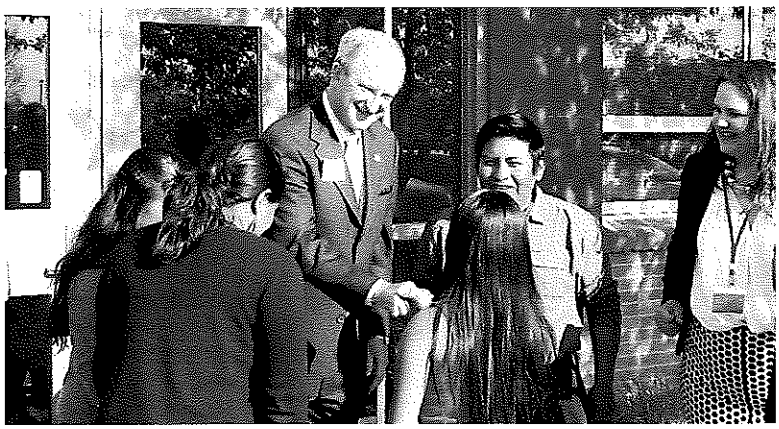
To encourage more people with an immigrant and refugee background to get involved in civic affairs so that their intercultural competence can be used for the benefit of the Aurora community

"Engaging immigrants and refugees in the civic life of the city, by promoting naturalization among newcomers will help local governments foster a more welcoming environment and encourage greater civic participation among our new residents." (National League of Cities)

Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Aurora Communications Department, non-profit immigrant and refugee serving organizations, International Cabinet, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Aurora Welcome Center, the Colorado African Organization, and volunteer church and service agencies

- Launch local naturalization efforts in collaboration with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and local community partners
- Explore opportunities to participate in national campaigns that promote naturalization and immigrant integration
- Encourage and celebrate the transition to citizenship by hosting naturalization ceremonies in city venues and celebrating National Citizenship Day
- Promote the benefits of naturalization through ethnic media and the city of Aurora Communications Department
- Establish new relationships and collaborations with national and international organizations to exchange best practices in the field of immigrant integration
- Train frontline city staff to provide information on citizenship services and ESL classes
- Develop the "New Americans Citizens Academy" to train and develop leadership skills among emerging community leaders from the immigrant and refugee community. The Academy is a program designed to educate newcomers, foster communication between new residents and city government, and even encourage future city leaders. Participants learn about a wide variety of topics, from city services to how local government functions. This program will help municipal officials and community leaders inform immigrants and refugees about local government. The Academy will also assist in broadening the pool of future leaders for service on city boards and commissions.
- Develop and implement the "Natural Helpers Program." This nationally recognized innovative program trains local volunteers from the immigrant and refugee community to assist newcomers and link them to programs, resources and services in the community.
- Support partnership efforts related to cultural immersion and integration programs focused on the immigrant and refugee population
- Enhance avenues for new residents to obtain information about available programs and resources across the city, and hold public meetings in places where immigrants will attend
- Expand outreach efforts to ensure newcomers are included in the planning of city development projects



- Organize special events at the Aurora Municipal Center to celebrate the contributions of the refugee and immigrant communities to the city of Aurora
- Increase the appointment of qualified members of the immigrant and refugee community on city boards and commissions
- Strengthen the mission and work of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force as the city 's premier advisory body for immigrants and refugees in the city

B. SAFETY IN OUR INTERNATIONAL CITY

To strengthen peaceful coexistence in our international city increasing security for all residents.

"Police-immigrant relationships are essential for effective community policing and public safety outreach is crucial for immigrants and refugees accustomed to different cultures and police expectations." (National League of Cities)

Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Aurora Police Department, Aurora Fire Department, Aurora Communications, International Cabinet, Aurora Welcome Center, Aurora Office of Emergency Management, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Aurora City Attorney's Office, The Asian Pacific Development Center, faith-based organizations, and victim advocates

- Support and expand the Aurora Police Department's Multicultural Neighborhood Watch program, which informs the immigrant and refugee community
- Engage the Aurora Police Department (APD) to create opportunities for regular meetings between immigrant advocates, community-based organizations, members of the refugee and immigrant community, and members of the police force
- Assist APD and the Aurora Fire Department (AFD) with cultural competence and cross-cultural training programs
- Develop a partnership with the APD and other local community partners for a series of public media educational and awareness campaigns in the area of child safety, prevention of domestic violence, human trafficking, and drunk driving
- Develop a partnership with the APD for a city wide effort in the area of crime prevention and community policing that engage newcomers, fighting crime by combating fears, and addressing concerns of all communities
- Develop a city wide "Emergency Preparedness Initiative" focused on the immigrant and refugee population
- Develop a series of fire safety programs in the refugee and immigrant communities

- Support APD and AFD recruitment efforts to increase diversity in our police and fire departments
- Create a specific public safety component as a part of the curriculum of "The New Americans Citizens Academy" to educate new residents about public safety and law enforcement issues and foster volunteerism through alumni organization of academy graduates

C. INTEGRATING THROUGH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Develop and implement a city sponsored innovative effort to offer English as a Second Language (ESL) and civic classes in the immigrant and refugee community.

"Learning English is an important tool for immigrants and refugees to gain the opportunities to reach their full potential and contribute to the community." (National Immigration Forum)

Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Aurora Public Schools, Communications/Aurora TV, Aurora Public Library, International Cabinet, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Cherry Creek Schools, Community College of Aurora, and other private and public service organizations offering language learning

- Produce a new television series to teach ESL and civics through the public library system, community partners, and Communications/Aurora TV. This television series will include tutorials, live discussions between teachers and students, and information on civics and American culture.
- Support expansion of ESL classes and adult education programs throughout the city
- Create public and private partnerships to create more accessible ESL opportunities
- Promote English language instruction information and community resources for English language learners in the Aurora Public Library system
- Extend opportunities to learn a second language for Aurorans wanting to communicate with newcomers for business and social purposes

D. INTEGRATION IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

To bring people together and eliminate boundaries of nations and generations in the city's neighborhoods, to disseminate information about city resources to newcomers, and to make the city attractive for all residents of the community.

"Immigrants and refugees face a unique set of challenges in accessing city services due to the language barrier, lack of trust in government, and cultural differences." (National League of Cities)

Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Aurora Neighborhood Services Department, Tri-County Health Department, RTD, International Cabinet, Aurora Welcome Center, Adams, Douglas and Arapahoe County governments, and Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force

- Train city staff to effectively identify and meet the needs of the immigrant and refugee population
- Develop a series of educational workshops and training sessions for the immigrant and refugee population related to neighborhood issues, such as zoning, permits, city regulations, business licenses, and a host of other diverse topics
- Develop training sessions on cultural awareness, sensitivity and cross-cultural programs for city employees, as well as boards and commissions
- Promote the concept of community gardens as a method to promote togetherness and expand outreach efforts toward the local immigrant and refugee populations
- Engage newcomers in current city programs and initiatives related to the city 's beautification, anti-loitering, and graffiti cleaning projects
- Assist the Tri-County Health Department in their outreach efforts to promote public health in the immigrant and refugee populations
- Develop an online information database for services offered to immigrant and refugee residents and make vital documents language accessible for non-English speaking residents
- Develop and implement a city program to educate Aurora residents about immigrants and refugees, including cultures, languages and foods
- Develop a partnership with RTD for a public media campaign focused on educating the immigrant and refugee population about public transportation, covering topics like how to ride the bus and buy tickets, information about routes, and provide maps

E. INTEGRATING THROUGH ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL GROWTH

To promote immigrant and refugee entrepreneurship as a route to economic integration and to promote wealth building and utilization of mainstream financial services among newcomers.

"While immigrants tend to set up businesses at higher rates than their native-born peers, they face greater obstacles such as limited access to capital and financial services, a lack of familiarity with the local markets and business environment, and lack of knowledge about resources and programs for entrepreneurs." (Migration Policy Institute)

Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

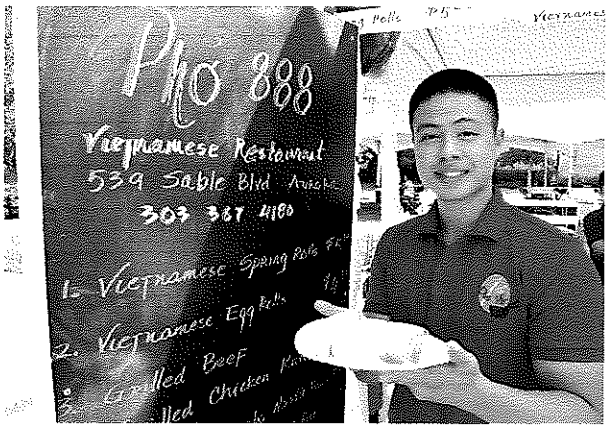
Key partners: Small Business Administration, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Ethnic Chambers of Commerce, International Cabinet, Aurora Economic Development Council, Aurora Welcome Center, Aurora Small Business Development Center, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Visit Aurora, Havana BID and 'Fax Aurora

Activities:

- Assess existing programs and services for immigrant and refugee small businesses
- Explore innovative models that are being implemented across the country
- Develop a citywide plan to support immigrant and refugee small businesses
- Explore the possibility to create a special start-up business fund to implement a micro-lending program to increase capital for immigrant and refugee small business owners supported by financial institution partners
- Partner with community lenders and local financial institutions to launch a citywide campaign to promote financial literacy among immigrants and refugees
- Develop an outreach plan to educate new residents about home buyer programs and resources
- Develop and expand education programs for tenants and home owners
- Expand current efforts to educate new renters about their rights and responsibilities
- Create a small business start-up information center to be located at the Aurora Welcome Center
- Develop training programs for immigrant and refugee small business owners in collaboration with the Aurora Welcome Center
- Support vocational targeted language and workforce training opportunities for newcomers
- Foster relationships with local ethnic chambers of commerce
- Reinforce affordable housing initiatives
- Support efforts at protecting newcomers from predatory practices targeting the immigrant and refugee community

F. INTERNATIONALITY AS A DRIVING FORCE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: To improve Aurora's appeal to entrepreneurs from all over the world and to further expand our international relationships in the field of science and business.



In order to continue to grow and become a key player at the international level, international strategic partnerships and collaborations in the areas of economics, culture, medicine, and business must be developed.

Lead agency: Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Key partners: Aurora Sister Cities, International Cabinet, Visit Aurora, Aurora International Roundtable, Aurora Economic Development Council, and the Anschutz Community-Campus Partnership

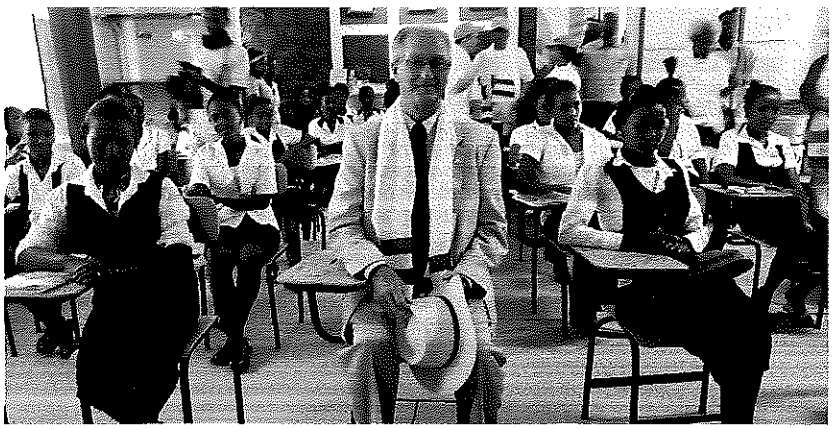
Activities:

- Define and promote international trade and investment in the city
- Develop relationships with foreign consulates, foreign governments, World Denver IIE, the World Trade Center and Aurora Sister Cities to promote Aurora as an international destination for business and tourism
- Promote the retention of foreign students attending colleges and universities in Aurora
- Monitor business activities of foreign companies in the Denver greater area and promote the participation of local companies in international trade and business missions
- Partner with Aurora Sister Cities and the Office of the Mayor/Council to participate in and plan trade/ exchange missions with cities abroad
- Support business and economic partnerships with our current Sister Cities
- Strengthen and expand the work and mission of the Aurora International Roundtable
- Expand current city branding efforts to promote Aurora as a business friendly, international city

G. INTEGRATING THROUGH SPORTS AND RECREATION

Goal: To utilize sporting activities to bring newcomers and Aurora residents together, to create a better understanding across ethnic and linguistic boundaries, to promote and develop social skills among new residents, and to promote social cohesion in the Aurora community.

"Recreational activities and sports help to improve the quality of life for all residents in the city, especially for those newcomers learning how to integrate into a new city." (National League of Cities)



Lead Agency: Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Key Partners: Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space, immigrant and refugee organizations, ethnic media, International Cabinet, Visit Aurora, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, and local sports organizations

Activities:

- Develop a citywide sports and recreation outreach effort to educate newcomers about parks programs, regulations and services
- Promote the use of parks facilities and sport and recreation programs among new residents of the city
- Organize the annual "International Bike Day event" to promote the use of bikes among new residents, introduce them to bike safety and Aurora trails and bike routes
- Organize the "Aurora International Soccer Cup" to bring newcomers and Aurora residents together to foster better relationships among different ethnic groups in the community
- Use sports and recreational activities as a key integration tool for our new residents, especially the youth of both genders

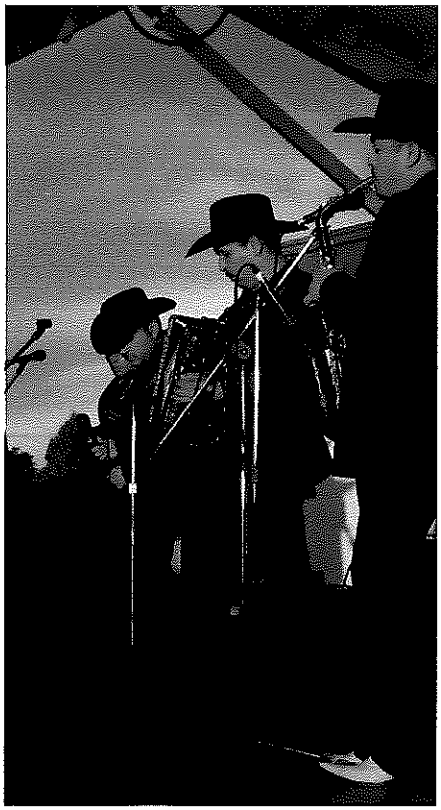
H. INTEGRATING THROUGH ARTS AND CULTURE

Goal: To achieve a greater immigrant and refugee participation in the cultural life of the city, to enrich the city's cultural life and to make the city more creative.

> **"Immigrants and refugees integrate more easily through artistic and cultural activities and experiences, while enriching the cultural life of the city as a whole." (National League of Cities)**

Lead agency: Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Key partners: Aurora Public Library, The Aurora Fox, Downtown Aurora Visual Arts, Aurora Public Schools, Aurora International Roundtable, Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space, Aurora Cultural Affairs Commission, International Cabinet, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Art in Public Places Commission, and Cherry Creek Schools, City of Aurora Poet Laureate, the Aurora History Museum, the Aurora Cultural Arts District and the Community College of Aurora



Activities:

- Develop outreach efforts to promote arts and cultural events among immigrants and refugees
- Establish partnerships with local art and cultural organizations to develop art programs for immigrant and refugee children and youth
- Promote art, music and culture as key integration tools among newcomers
- Work with the Aurora Public Library system to organize cultural events and programs geared toward the local immigrant and refugee population

- Support local public art projects geared toward the local refugee and immigrant population
- Celebrate the cultural heritage in the city and create an international calendar of events to promote international activities and cultural celebrations within the city
- Strengthen and expand "Global Fest" as the city's premier arts and cultural event
- Utilize Aurora Sister Cities as a resource to recruit international artists, musicians or performers for Global Fest and other events
- Establish an Annual Mini-Grant program to help immigrant and refugee organizations to fund community based projects, events and activities related to arts, culture and immigrant integration
- Identify significant dates honored in other predominant cultures and religions and limit city scheduled activities on those dates to honor them

I. INTEGRATION THROUGH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Goal: To reduce medical bankruptcy, illness burden, suicides and exacerbated chronic health conditions.

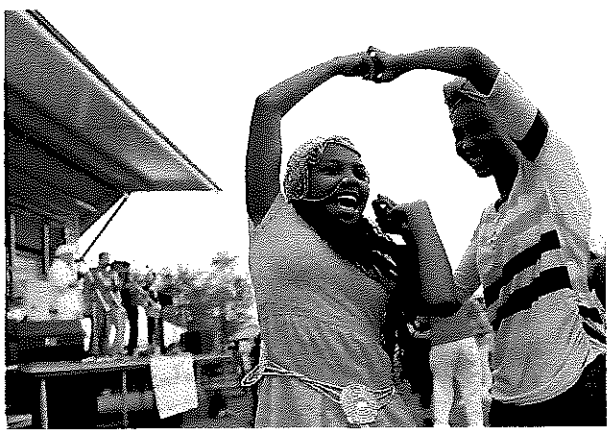
"Compared to their native counterparts, immigrants and refugees are at higher risk for developing mental health problems due to previous trauma and/or the stress of migration and resettlement; such as war, violence, poverty, and acculturation." (Wilder Foundation)

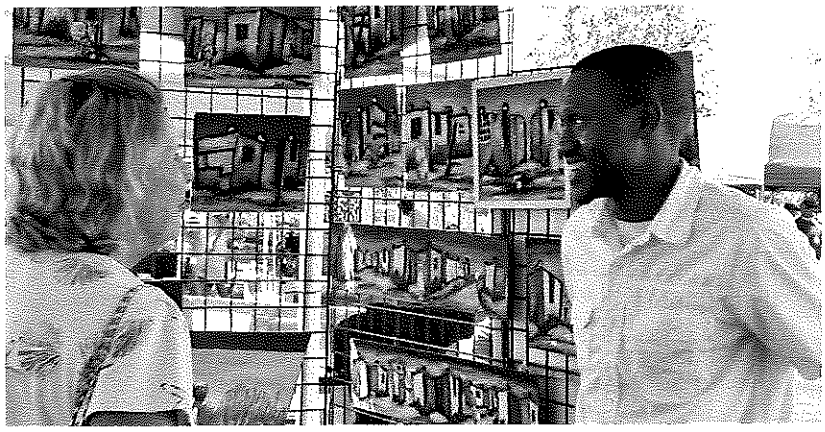
Lead agency: Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Key partners: Aurora Mental Health Center, Refugee Mental Health at the University of Colorado, Refugee Health Services of Colorado, Tri-County Health

Activities:

- Support HEAL, a campaign to promote healthy eating and active living among Aurora residents
- Promote availability of native and localized markets to bring familiar products to family tables
- With Tri-County, promote health initiatives to lower smoking, substance and drug use, especially in youth; to increase healthy eating and active living; to make connections to medically relevant primary care medical homes
- Feature immigrants and refugees in public media campaigns, particularly visual displays and ads targeted at health and mental well being





PROPOSED MODEL

City Manager's Office

Aurora Welcome Center

To serve as a resource for the growing immigrant and refugee community, the AWC connects newcomers to the resources, services, and opportunities they need to fully participate in the economic, civic, social and cultural life of the community.

Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

To facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Aurora's civic, economic, and cultural life and to oversee development and implementation of a strategic citywide plan regarding policy programs and initiatives toward the local refugee and immigrant populations. This office will lead international efforts focused in the establishment of strategic global partnerships and will manage official protocol activities and events, and serve as a liaison to the international community. Also the head of this office will oversee the coordination of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission.

Aurora Sister Cities

To foster mutually beneficial relationships with our international sister cities partners in the areas of culture, arts, economics and education

International Roundtable

To assist and collaborate with the city in the creation of international business opportunities, to celebrate the economic, cultural and civic contributions of the international community and to serve as a key partner in the organization of the Annual Global Fest event.

Global Fest

The City's premier international event to celebrate the diversity, arts, culture and economic contributions of the international community to the city of Aurora.

Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission

To serve as an advisory body to the city and to work with the office of international and immigrant affairs regarding programs and policies toward the local immigrant and refugee communities. The AIRC will support local immigrant integration efforts and assist the city in their outreach efforts toward the immigrant and refugee population.

International Cabinet

To coordinate all internal city efforts between city departments and municipal agencies toward the international community, this inter-agency approach will ensure that programs, strategies and plans for the local immigrant and refugee population are implemented in a very cost effective manner.

APPENDIX A

Examples of cities nationwide with office structures similar to the proposed City of Aurora Office of International & Immigrant Affairs:

City of Allentown, PA (118,577) Office of Immigrant and Multi-Cultural Affairs
http://www.allentownpa.gov/Government/Mayors-Office/Immigrant-and-Multi-Cultural-Affairs

City of Atlanta, GA (447,841) Office of International Affairs
http://www.atlantaga.gov/index.aspx?page=636

City of Cleveland, OH (390,113) Chief of Government and International Affairs
http://www.city .cleveland.oh.us/City of Cleveland/Home/Government/Cabinet/VMcCall

City of Denver, CO (649,495) Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
https://www.denvergov.org/humanrights/HumanRightsandCommunityPartnerships/OurOffices/ImmigrantandRefugeeAffairs/tabid/445156/Default.aspx

City of Newark, NJ (278,427) Office of International Relations and Diaspora Affairs
http://www.ci.newark.nj.us/government/mayor/intl-relations-diaspora-affairs/

City of Orlando, FL (255,483) Office of International Affairs
http://www.city oforlando.net/mayor/international-affairs/

City of Richmond, VA (214,000) Office of Multicultural Affairs
http://www.richmondgov.com/HispanicLiaison/

City of Seattle, WA (652,405) Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
http://www.seattle.gov/office-of-immigrant-and-refugee-affairs

Executive Summary

Business and Economic Development

Goals:

1. Identify and support a strategic neighborhood business district as a center for immigrant businesses desiring to co-locate in a commercial or industrial node.

2. Help ease the burdens/reduce the barriers for anyone (specifically immigrants) who want to open new businesses in the city serving whomever or wherever.

Recommendations:

1. Focus on East Third Street, generally between Keowee and Linden, as an initial international market place for immigrant entrepreneurship.

East Third Street, in addition to being a primary thoroughfare between Downtown and Wright Patterson Air Force Base, also encompasses an area of organic immigrant growth and available space to support continuing immigrant entrepreneurship.

a. Develop marketing plan for the area.

b. Provide façade grants and other tailored small business assistance programs.

c. Outreach to realtors and agencies to help market the area.

d. Establish an immigrant and small business friendly financial anchor.

e. Follow the WSU/UC corridor plan as a framework.

f. Facilitate an Immigrant entrepreneur ambassador program.

2. Create an inclusive community-wide campaign around immigrant entrepreneurship that facilitates startup businesses, opens global markets and restores life to

friendly in their program offerings rather than create a new entity.

b. Messages, materials and presentations should provide information about the benefits of immigrant entrepreneurs, awareness of how their needs might differ from other entrepreneurs, existing resources available to help address these issues, and basic cross-cultural etiquette.

c. Focus on Dayton's history of innovation and its immigrant past to overcome fear and embrace the full richness of cultural diversity.

d. Work with immigrant social networks to nurture the rebirth of strategic Dayton neighborhoods.

e. Actively explore the potential linkages to international markets by partnering with new immigrant residents.

Local Government and Justice System

Goals:

3. Increase trust and communication between immigrant communities and law enforcement.

4. Overcome language barriers in the court system and prosecutors' offices.

Recommendations:

1. Promote increased access to government services for Dayton's residents who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) by having language services available.

a. Establish a city/county-wide interpreter service for widely-used languages or establish accounts with professional phone interpreting services.

b. Develop a list or bank of city/county employees and/or volunteers who could be called to serve as interpreters.

c. Team up with existing language access programs and advocates to evaluate the best way to implement a program in the Dayton area.

d. Offer hiring incentives to those who speak a foreign language, including offering extra points on the civil service exam.

e. Offer incentives to encourage government employees to learn a foreign language and help provide them with the necessary resources to do so (e.g. buy a copy of Rosetta Stone).

f. Implement a diversity hiring plan aimed at hiring some immigrants who are residents and members of our community.

2. Adopt law enforcement policies that are "immigrant-friendly" throughout the greater Dayton area.

a. Emphasize immigration status checks limited to people suspected of serious crime only, and promote reporting of crime and prevent further victimization of victims of crime by not questioning victims/witnesses about their immigration status.

b. Focus enforcement efforts on serious/violent crime and not federal immigration law.

c. Training officers in cross-cultural competency.

3. Increase involvement of immigrants in policy making and community programs by removing barriers to participation and encouraging civic activities.

a. Develop a welcome protocol and host appreciation events for incoming immigrants.

b. Have the City of Dayton adopt a resolution that encourages all recognized community involvement bodies to create a seat for immigrants who reside in the respective areas without that immigrant being a registered voter.

c. Promote citizenship classes and programs such as the Neighborhood Leadership Institute or the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Dayton and similar programs that teach civics.

d. Create an advisory group to the city/county commissioners comprised of immigrants from the community who can advise the commissioners on issues important to their community.

e. Apply for grant for Citizenship and Integration program to help immigrants study for naturalization (English language skills and US civics) and to help them prepare their applications for naturalization.

4. Ensure access to the justice system for immigrants, regardless of language barriers or status.

a. Provide translations of FAQs and written materials

accessing the service.

c. Have a city/county-wide interpreter for widely-used languages.

d. Important: professional services as opposed to untrained volunteers should be utilized because of the higher stakes involved.

e. Work with Volunteer Lawyer Project, Dayton Bar Association & local attorneys to provide pro bono services or set up a referral bank of those attorneys who are willing to make language accommodations.

5. Implement a municipal identification card program for community residents who are not eligible for any other accepted identifying document.

a. Develop a proposal statement outlining the reasons for and benefits of implementing a municipal ID card program in the areas of crime prevention, access to banking and financial services, and access to local services and businesses.

b. Provide research on how and why other municipalities have implemented a municipal ID card program.

c. Submit to the City Commission a proposed Ordinance that would establish a municipal ID card program.

6. Educate immigrants about government services, laws, and social services and educate social service providers and government officials about immigrants.

a. Identify focus areas (e.g., Domestic Violence, Parenting, Housing, etc.).

b. Identify teachers or mentors.

c. Establish best way to conduct training (e.g., NLI classes, mentoring, civics infused ESL, etc.).

d. Establish training classes about immigrant's rights.

Social and Health Services

limited understanding of cultural and access issues that affect immigrant and refugee populations.

2. Systematically review all local laws and institutional practices that create artificial and unnecessary barriers to immigrants and refugees in accessing community services.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a website specific to immigrant populations that lists health and social service information.

a. Inventory all existing resources, their quality, accuracy, and accessibility.

b. Create a listing of known immigrant populations in Montgomery County, including a brief summary about the health culture and needs of each population.

c. Create a health and social services directory which lists health services, social services, and providers with the capacity to serve immigrant populations.

d. Develop a health and social services resources clearinghouse with links to health data and information in various languages across a wide range of topics.

2. Assess language accessibility and cultural competency at area hospitals, public clinics, and social service agencies.

c. Evaluate how non-English speakers feel they are served.

d. Check availability of bills and other notices in other languages.

e. Work with agencies on recruiting and maintaining bilingual/multilingual and culturally competent staff.

3. Create training of volunteers to serve as interpreters. Also develop a resource center or database of volunteer interpreters for medical and/or social service appointments.

a. Review resources already available in the Miami Valley Region.

b. Create a training module for volunteer interpreters. Either online with testing, or face-to-face with testing. Include cultural competence in the training module.

c. Formulate a database of trained, volunteer interpreters and translators.

4. Form a coalition for service providers who work or would like to work with immigrants using existing community models.

a. Interview leaders of Latino Connection and CARE for advice on their models.

b. Invite service providers to monthly/bi-monthly/ quarterly meetings for networking, educating, and sharing information.

c. Establish list of relevant presentations or discussion topics.

5. Advocate for immigrant friendly laws at the state and federal levels thru the City and County lobbying efforts.

a. Many service providers are limited by state and federal policies regarding benefits for immigrants. The City of Dayton has lobbyists who could speak to legislators on our behalf and advocate for necessary changes.

b. The Human Relations Council should engage local advocacy groups to assist the City in its lobbying efforts to bring social justice to all the residents of Global Dayton.

6. Educate immigrants about government services, laws, and social services and educate social services providers and government officials about immigrants.

a. Identify focus areas (e.g., Domestic Violence, Parenting, Housing, etc.).

b. Identify teachers or mentors.

c. Establish best way to conduct training (e.g., NLI classes, mentoring, civics infused ESL, etc.).

d. Establish training classes about immigrant's rights.

7. Assist the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Caucus in distributing the results of their community refugee survey.

a. Identify community partners and leaders who should be informed.

b. Develop methods to distribute info (e.g., community forum, press release, published report, agency level meetings, etc.).

Community, Culture, Arts and Education

Goals:

1. Increase the availability of ESL and literacy courses for adults.

2. Actively involve all community youth in international connections and community building.

3. Encourage cross-cultural programming among the community's cultural and arts organizations.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a "Cultural Brokers" training program, possibly through quarterly seminars, that sensitizes community volunteers and public agency workers to the cultural barriers experienced by immigrants.

a. Organize and execute quarterly training sessions.

b. Link trained Cultural Brokers to identified needs in the community.

2. Build a base of ESL and literacy tutors to volunteer in existing/expanded programs.

a. Identify sites for long and short term ESL tutoring.

b. Organize ESL training programs.

c. Link trained tutors to community needs.

3. Partner with existing programs such as Streetpeace and the Peace Academy as a base for involving other community partners working with school aged youth.

a. Clarify and promote the mission of these programs.

b. Replicate these programs in multiple neighborhoods throughout the City.

4. Support the ongoing work of Culture Builds Community (CityFolk) by removing barriers to increased participation of immigrants.

a. Create alignment between the IFC initiative and Culture Builds Community to share momentum.

b. Identify and work to remove barriers to participation with the Culture Builds Community program.

5. Establish a Global Dayton Soccer event with participants representing the cultural and ethnic diversity of Dayton.

a. Take steps to acknowledge the multi-cultural soccer games that currently take place in our community.

b. Support existing efforts to organize youth soccer teams and the development of a Global Dayton Soccer event.

Implementation Plan

The Welcome Dayton Plan is a consensus of the goals and recommendations of over one hundred individuals and representatives of a wide array of immigrant, public, and private groups who voluntarily came together to discuss how to engage our new residents in revitalizing our neighborhoods and how to work together to help Dayton become a center for world commerce.

The Welcome Dayton Plan was developed based on recommendations from four sub-committees covering business and economic development, local government and the justice system, social and health services, and community, culture, arts and education.

The Welcome Dayton Plan is designed to act as a framework for action. It is a way forward for not only the City organization but also the entire community.

The IFC Task Force recommends that the City undertake the following efforts to implement the Plan:

1. The Human Relations Council should be directed to prepare an Ordinance to establish a Welcome Dayton Committee to be appointed by the City Commission and to establish the membership, term of office and other parameters of the Welcome Dayton Committee.

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2. The HRC and the City Manager should work together to identify city as well as community resources to operate a small part-time office within HRC to staff the Welcome Dayton Committee and to facilitate and coordinate the efforts of community organizations and businesses since most of the recommendations are not within the mission of the City itself.

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3. The City Manager should identify a lead person within the City organization to coordinate those elements of the Plan which are within the mission and purview of the City organization.

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4. The Dayton City Commission should encourage immigrant groups, other government agencies, community institutions, and the business leadership to undertake their own initiatives, beyond this Plan, to make Dayton not only a welcoming place for new residents from other countries but also a center of world commerce.

Direct City Initiatives

Business and Economic Development

1. Focus on East Third Street, generally between Keowee and Linden, as an initial international market place for immigrant entrepreneurship.

East Third Street, in addition to being a primary thoroughfare between Downtown and Wright Patterson Air Force Base, also encompasses an area of organic immigrant growth and available space to support continuing immigrant entrepreneurship.

a) Develop marketing plan for the area.

b) Provide façade grants and other tailored small business assistance programs.

c) Outreach to realtors and agencies to help market the area.

d) Establish an immigrant and small business friendly financial anchor.

e) Follow the WSU/UC corridor plan as a framework.

f) Facilitate an Immigrant entrepreneur ambassador program.

2. Create an inclusive community-wide campaign around immigrant entrepreneurship that facilitates startup businesses, opens global markets and restores life to Dayton neighborhoods.

a) Coordinate, facilitate, and host the efforts of existing business development teams to become more immigrant friendly in their program offerings rather than create a new entity.

b) Messages, materials and presentations should provide information about the benefits of immigrant entrepreneurs, awareness of how their needs might differ from other entrepreneurs, existing resources available to help address these issues, and basic cross-cultural etiquette.

d) Work with immigrant social networks to nurture the rebirth of strategic Dayton neighborhoods.

e) Actively explore the potential linkages to the international markets by partnering with new immigrant residents.

Local Government and Justice System

1. Promote increased access to government services for Dayton's residents who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) by having language services available.

b. Develop a list or bank of city/county employees and/or volunteers who could be called to serve as interpreters.

d. Offer hiring incentives to those who speak a foreign language, including offering extra points on the civil service exam.

e. Offer incentives to encourage government employees to learn a foreign language and help provide them with the necessary resources to do so (e.g. buy a copy of Rosetta Stone).

2. Adopt law enforcement policies that are "immigrant-friendly" throughout the greater Dayton area.

a) Emphasize immigration status checks limited to people suspected of serious crime only, and promote reporting of crime and prevent further victimization of victims of crime by not questioning victims/witnesses about their immigration status.

b) Focus enforcement efforts on serious/violent crime and not federal immigration law.

c) Training officers in cross-cultural competency.

3. Increase involvement of immigrants in policy making and community programs by removing barriers to participation and encouraging civic activities.

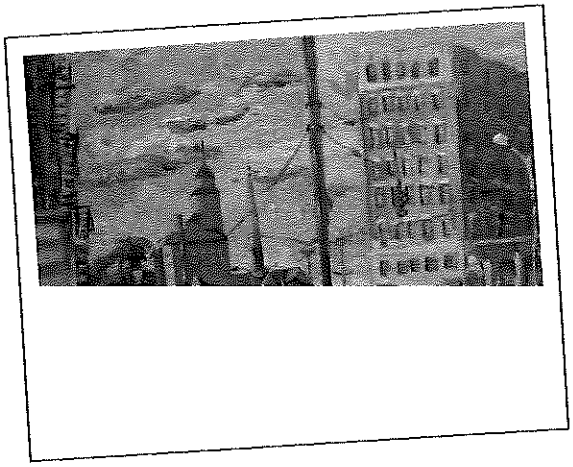
b. Have the City of Dayton adopt a resolution that encourages all recognized community involvement bodies to create a seat for immigrants who reside in the respective areas without that immigrant being a registered voter.

d. Create an advisory group to the city/county commissioners comprised of immigrants from the community who can advise the commissioners on issues important to their community.

4. Ensure access to the justice system for immigrants, regardless of language barriers or status.

a. Provide translations of FAQs and written materials (court instructions, standard forms, etc.).

c. Have a city/county-wide interpreter for widely-used languages.



5. Implement a municipal identification card program for community residents who are not eligible for any other accepted identifying document.

a) Develop a proposal statement outlining the reasons for and benefits of implementing a municipal ID card program in the areas of crime prevention, access to banking and financial services, and access to local services and businesses.

b) Provide research on how and why other municipalities have implemented a municipal ID card program.

c) Submit to the City Commission a proposed Ordinance that would establish a municipal ID card program.

Social Services and Health Services

5. Advocate for immigrant friendly laws at the state and federal levels thru the City and County lobbying efforts.

a) Many service providers are limited by state and federal policies regarding benefits for immigrants. The City of Dayton has lobbyists who could speak to legislators on our behalf and advocate for necessary changes.

b) The Human Relations Council should engage local advocacy groups to assist the City in its lobbying efforts to bring social justice to all the residents of Global Dayton.

Community, Culture, Arts and Education

5. Establish a Global Dayton Soccer event with participants representing the cultural and ethnic diversity of Dayton.

a. Take steps to acknowledge the multi-cultural soccer games that currently take place in our community.

b. Support existing efforts to organize youth soccer teams

Welcoming

1. Enhance post-resettlement services

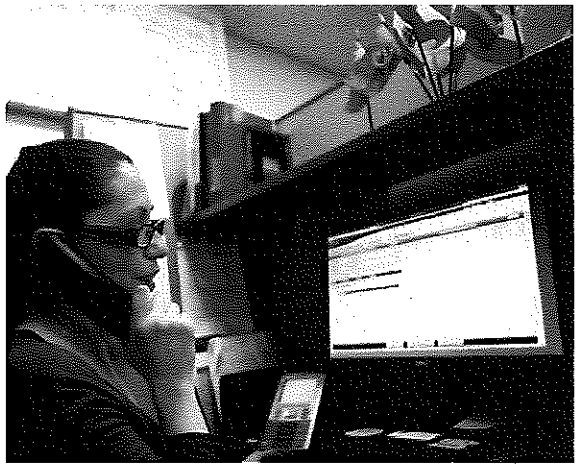
The initial resettlement period is just 90 days. Refugees have expressed a clear need for additional support beyond this period. This support includes assistance reading official correspondence; help navigating the community and securing services and resources; and the provision of interpretation assistance when attending appointments. Building relationships among resettlement agencies, Ethnic Community-Based Organizations, existing community centers, human service agencies, and academic institutions can enhance post-resettlement services.

The Office of New Americans can identify cross-collaboration opportunities, encourage the development and adoption of state-of-the-art programming in Buffalo, and implement strategic models of integration that have helped empower refugee and immigrant communities on a local and national level.

BEST PRACTICE

NYS Office for New Americans

The "New Americans Hotline" offered by the New York State Office for New Americans is now connected to Buffalo's 311 system. When a caller has questions about immigration assistance, they are now transferred to the "New Americans Hotline," where questions can be answered and referrals to local service providers made in over 200 languages.



2. Improve language access

To promote effective communication among government agencies and Limited English Proficient individuals, both the federal and state governments have issued executive orders concerning language access planning and implementation. Executive Order 13166 applies to all federal programs, while New York Executive Order 26 directs state agencies providing direct public services to offer language assistance services to LEP individuals. Buffalo is committed to helping monolingual and LEP individuals increase access to city services, programs, and timely information in languages other than English.

The Office of New Americans can work to implement a Language Access Plan, identify hiring opportunities for bilingual individuals, and extend language access resources to city departments that provide services to residents.

3. Promote information on essential services

Information on city services is transmitted by resettlement agencies, websites, printed materials, and word of mouth; but it generally has not been gathered and consolidated, and there are no consistent guidelines regarding what materials should be translated. As a result,

BEST PRACTICE

Expanded Language Line Access

Buffalo's 311 system offers "Language Line," so callers can be served in their native language. This access has been extended to the Traffic Violations Agency, and the city's Office of New Americans is working to expand it to other departments such as Civil Service, Permit and Inspection Services, and the City Clerk.

new arrivals face challenges in accessing key services, and are less likely to know if they qualify for programs that could assist them and their families.

The Office of New Americans can work with city departments, service providers, and Ethnic Community-Based Organizations to create and promote an online portal that connects new arrivals with needed resources, translated into the most common foreign languages.

BEST PRACTICE

Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians

Philadelphia's "Welcoming Center" offers a comprehensive range of services for immigrants, such as help with finding a job, starting a business, accessing legal advice, learning English, or locating resources. The Center partners with the Office of Immigrants and Multicultural Affairs to focus on language access within city departments, including the use of "I SPEAK" language access cards.

4. Facilitate cultural exchanges

Refugees report being harassed on the street and in public places, and perceive that they are often discriminated against in employment and other settings. Such challenges associated with acculturation can lead to increased family conflicts, and subsequent involvement with the law enforcement and court systems.

Cultural exchanges – where professionals such as child protection workers, police officers, and judges meet face-to-face with refugees to learn about their culture and explain American systems and expectations – have proven effective at increasing understanding on both sides and addressing the challenges associated with adjusting to a new culture. Several local groups currently conduct training for health care, education, social work, and law enforcement professionals.

The Office of New Americans can support efforts to broaden cultural exchanges and develop a curriculum to educate the general public about the benefits of Buffalo's growing diversity. These programs could then be shared with local businesses, non-profit and civic organizations, educational institutions, foundations, faith and community groups, and other stakeholders.

BEST PRACTICE

Family Court Collaborative

Erie County Family Court, the Universal School, the International Institute of Buffalo, and the Muslim Public Affairs Council organized the Family Court Collaborative to address issues of abuse and neglect cases among refugees and immigrants. It started at a local mosque with a training session in cultural competency for Child Protective Services case workers, social service agencies, and attorneys. Additional sessions have educated Iraqi and Somali leaders about the child protective service and public safety systems, increasing community awareness.

5. Encourage community engagement

Community engagement requires maintaining positive relationships with refugees and other newcomers throughout the year – whether celebrating with them on national holidays and ethnic festivals, acknowledging their triumphs, or providing comfort during times of grief and loss. Opportunities for residents to engage with refugees and other newcomers in meaningful ways should be promoted. This could include World Refugee Day in June, where the experiences and contributions of refugee groups are acknowledged; or an International Day at a school, where students are able to share their unique cultures through the arts, performance, and food.

The Office of New Americans can post a schedule of both local and national ethnic festivals and celebrations for Buffalo's communities on its web site; and provide official proclamations and private communications noting special achievements within the city's diverse communities.

6. Promote civic participation

Participation in civic institutions is an excellent way for refugees to interact with a broad range of residents, learn about local government, and successfully integrate into the larger community. Refugees are generally underrepresented in civic organizations: first-generation immigrants are only half as likely to participate as are second-generation immigrants. New arrivals can work with seniors, join parent-teacher organizations, and volunteer at a range of non-profits. By increasing their involvement, they will build deeper ties to local communities and strengthen institutions, while these organizations gain a deeper appreciation of the unique interests and concerns of immigrants and refugees.

The Office of New Americans can promote civic participation by connecting government, block clubs, non-profits, schools, and other civic-minded organizations to refugees, immigrants, and resettlement agencies.

BEST PRACTICE

Citizens' Participation Academy

Started in September 2006 by Mayor Brown, this program provides an interactive public forum for residents on the structure and management of city government. Participants are joined by elected and appointed officials to learn about economic development, community services, and public safety through a series of 10 presentations, case studies, and site tours. Upon completion, graduates are encouraged to continue their community involvement though a variety of volunteer opportunities.

Settling In

7. Expand resettlement into new neighborhoods

As the West Side housing market becomes increasingly saturated, there is a need to identify alternative locations for new arrivals. There has been growing interest among refugees in East Side neighborhoods, where rents are more affordable. Groups such as the Fillmore Corridor Neighborhood Coalition have already developed plans to incorporate refugees and immigrants into the community. These efforts offer the opportunity to approach resettlement in a more strategic manner, and to encourage both existing and new residents to become more invested in their neighborhoods through peer-to-peer engagement.

The Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency can provide technical support in developing neighborhood plans that address the needs of refugees and other new arrivals, and integrate these into broader community strategies.

8. Ensure adequate housing

Although resettlement agencies initially screen and approve properties, many new arrivals subsequently move out, only to face other challenges when they enter the housing market. In most cases, refugees do not understand their rights and are more likely to be taken advantage of by landlords. They also may not know where to turn for assistance with these issues, or lack transportation or an interpreter to access this help. Landlords also face challenges, as some tenants may need to be educated on issues such as food storage, trash and waste disposal, weatherization, and fire safety. Keeping refugees in adequate housing – while ensuring that the property is properly maintained by the tenants –provides benefits to all.

BEST PRACTICE

Green and Healthy Homes Initiative

Aging and deteriorated housing, coupled with high poverty and unemployment, can force families to live in homes that are unhealthy, unsafe, and energy inefficient. GHHI is a public-private partnership that provides cost savings, develops career pathways to green jobs, and produces stable neighborhoods by increasing the quality of housing stock. GHHI coordinates funding sources and programs for weatherization, lead hazard abatement, asthma control, and other health and safety interventions. Heart of the City Neighborhoods, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, and Jericho Road Community Health Center lead a coalition of service providers that has provided comprehensive services to almost 400 families to date. In recent years, the program has expanded to include community health workers with the language and cultural skills needed to reach out to the Burmese and Nepali communities.

The Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency can coordinate efforts among housing inspectors, non-profit providers, resettlement agencies, Ethnic Community-Based Organizations, and landlords to ensure that all are aware of property standards and how to work together to avoid landlord-tenant conflicts.

9. Promote business districts

Immigrant- and refugee-owned businesses often create distinct commercial districts. The city has experienced this on Grant Street, where large numbers of new arrivals have settled. Yet these businesses typically draw customers from a very limited range. A marketing strategy has helped the West Side Bazaar attract outsiders to sample ethnic cuisine and purchase goods from a variety of vendors. Similar efforts to draw customers to commercial corridors featuring immigrant, African-American, and Latino businesses can help to stabilize these districts while strengthening the overall economy.

The Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency can provide technical assistance and marketing support to immigrant business owners and commercial districts, including enterprises owned by local African-Americans and Latinos; and help to identify additional sources of support and funding.

BEST PRACTICE

Westminster Economic Development Initiative

WEDI helps immigrants and refugees develop and operate businesses by assisting with mentoring, micro-loans, and after-school education. In 2011, WEDI opened the West Side Bazaar in a small Grant Street storefront, offering incubator space to six entrepreneurs from Indonesia, Peru, Rwanda, and South Sudan. WEDI later acquired a larger building in the heart of the Grant-Ferry District, and expanded the Bazaar to accommodate 21 businesses. Over 15 of these have since graduated to their own spaces, but replacements have allowed the incubator to remain a destination where shoppers can find handcrafted gifts, clothing, jewelry, and ethnic cuisines from around the world.

10. Encourage participation in recreational programs

The city and its non-profit partners operate recreational facilities in many neighborhoods, which are open to all residents. Efforts to develop programming that will attract refugees and other new arrivals should be pursued, to provide youth with healthy alternatives after school and during the summer. Programs such as Soccer Without Borders offer youth an opportunity to play a sport while also receiving training and tutoring in English, and promote civic engagement and interactions with other young people from various cultural groups. All of these recreational programs help to decrease risky behavior and provide a productive outlet for young refugees.

The Division of Parks & Recreation can work to increase participation in recreational programs among immigrant and refugee youth, and attempt to bring programs such as Soccer Without Borders to Buffalo.

11. Establish a community space

A consistent request from refugees is to develop a multi-purpose space to house services for their community. Representatives from Ethnic Community-Based Organizations have indicated that they would be able to assume greater responsibility for providing assistance within their communities if such a facility were available.

The Office of New Americans can bring Ethnic Community-Based Organizations together with existing community center operators to explore opportunities to provide greater access to these facilities.

BEST PRACTICE

Westside Art Strategy Happenings

The WASH Project at Westside Value Laundromat is a place where people can come to play music, practice art, read books, learn languages, mingle with persons from other cultures, learn about a wide range of community services and cultural opportunities, and wash clothing.

12. Engage with the Police Department

Increased trust between refugee communities and public safety officials is essential to building safe neighborhoods. Ensuring that police officers understand the needs and concerns of new arrivals will lead to stronger relationships and safer neighborhoods. Refugees are often hesitant to report crimes or help with investigations because they do not believe they will get the assistance they require. Some may have had bad experiences with corrupt officials in their native countries, and assume that all police are not trustworthy. Language barriers and a lack of understanding of police duties also limit meaningful engagement with police officers.

The Police Department, in coordination with the Office of New Americans, can implement a Language Access Plan and continue to facilitate regular interaction and joint initiatives among Ethnic Community-Based Organizations and police officials; and form partnerships that include community policing efforts. These should be coordinated with the cultural sensitivity training proposed in the Welcoming section.

Strengthening

13. Increase language access for health and human service providers

Despite federal and state laws requiring access to interpretation services and translated materials, not all health and human service providers offer language assistance when rendering care, and few have written materials translated into high-demand languages. Providers often cite the expense and difficulty securing language services as the primary reason for this. Identifying opportunities to increase the availability of interpreters and translation services would enable these organizations to provide higher quality care to refugees.

The Office of New Americans can engage Ethnic Community-Based Organizations, resettlement agencies, and educational institutions to identify potential volunteers; work to secure funding; and partner with successful efforts to improve health care outcomes.

BEST PRACTICE

Jericho Road Community Health Center

Jericho Road provides culturally-sensitive care for refugees and immigrants, as well as a range of community services. Medical care includes maternity and child health, adult care (including diabetes care, mammograms, and programming for persons with chronic needs), and behavioral health care. Interpreters are available to assist with all visits and staff are specifically trained in cultural competency.

14. Provide specialized training for school personnel

Students need caring, knowledgeable, and involved teachers and administrators to succeed. The Buffalo Public Schools provide a wide range of supports to all students, but relatively few are specifically tailored to refugees. These students face many challenges – including the use of language immersion; age-based placement; harassment and bullying from classmates; and the stress and anxiety associated with testing – and school staff must be made aware of the best ways to offer support. Teachers, counselors, and school administrators can all benefit from learning more about these challenges, and the specific resources available to assist refugees and their families.

The Office of New Americans can broker partnerships among the Buffalo Public Schools, the Department of Multilingual Education, and Ethnic Community-Based Organizations to support collaborative teaching models and provide appropriate training for school personnel.

BEST PRACTICE

Hope Refugee Drop-In Center

Deaf refugees are highly marginalized due to the lack of American Sign Language training classes. Without ASL, deaf refugees are unable to utilize ASL interpreters in school, medical settings, or court. A pilot class has been developed at the Hope Refugee Drop-In Center, with a volunteer ASL teacher who is a deaf immigrant from Jamaica. Funding is being sought to hire an ASL teacher to provide language instruction equal to that of the Buffalo Public Schools, and a mentor to help integrate deaf refugees into the community.

15. Pursue opportunities for parental involvement

Schools strive to engage all parents, but many refugees need prompting to understand the role they are expected to play with regard to their child's education. Parents may avoid engaging with teachers and administrators because they lack experience with formal education systems, have different cultural expectations regarding the role of educators, or face language barriers. By increasing existing collaborations with resettlement agencies and Ethnic Community-Based Organizations, schools can expand opportunities to engage refugee parents, and bridge the language and trust gaps that often prevent them from reaching these families. Participating in these programs can also help parents serve as ambassadors within these communities, reaching out to provide important information and resources to other new arrivals.

The Office of New Americans can take on the role of mediator for school officials, the Department of Multilingual Education, and Ethnic Community-Based Organizations to discuss these issues and set up effective collaborations for immigrant, African-American, and Latino families.

16. Encourage participation in enrichment programs

Programs that provide educational experiences for younger students and build job skills for older ones help to counter the disruption in learning that occurs during summer and winter breaks. Students who do not participate in meaningful summer learning activities can lose over two months of grade level equivalency in math by fall, a loss that is typically much greater for foreign-born students. Enrichment programs improve educational outcomes, aid in the development of language and cultural awareness, and reduce the likelihood that students will engage in risky behaviors.

The Office of New Americans can work to make the Mayor's Summer Youth Internship Program more accessible to refugee youth and foster expansion of positive enrichment opportunities in the city for immigrant, African-American, and Latino youth.

BEST PRACTICE

Mayor's Summer Youth Internship Program

This program provides six weeks of employment and work-readiness training for at-risk youth between the ages of 14 and 21. According to Mayor Brown, "It is critically important to ensure that our young people have productive options for summer activities that prepare them for the jobs of the future." Fifty openings were added in 2015, bringing the total number of internships to 1,450. The program has provided over 20,000 employment opportunities since 2006.

17. Improve access to adult education

Over 20 percent of the city's foreign-born adults have not obtained a high school diploma, which is more than double that of the native-born population. The Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division offers English as a Second Language and High School Equivalency programs to assist refugees with developing language skills and obtaining the educational credentials needed to secure stable employment. Access and awareness of both programs could be improved by partnering with Ethnic Community-Based Organizations that offer native language literacy classes to their members.

The Office of New Americans can assist the Buffalo Public Schools to research and secure support for measures that can improve outcomes of adult education programs; and also partner with the Adult Education Division to facilitate awareness of new and available adult education programs.

18. Develop effective vocational training

Refugees possessing a wide range of skills require a variety of services to successfully secure employment. Vocational training programs can provide pathways from English as a Second Language and High School Equivalency courses into jobs. Resettlement agencies and community colleges can work with employers to increase access to training and improve programs for working adults – including refugees, African-Americans, and Latinos.

BEST PRACTICE

Placing Individuals in Vital Opportunity Training

The PIVOT Program, operated by the Erie County Department of Social Services, assists Temporary Assistance to Needy Families recipients to secure employment by paying the full-time wages of participants for six months during training. According to a report, approximately 400 TANF recipients had participated in PIVOT, and 85 percent were able to transition into a permanent job with their employer.

The Office of New Americans should help to link employers, working adults, and existing vocational training opportunities; and recommend new ones where gaps exist.

19. Expand employment programs

Subsidized employment programs such as the Placing Individuals in Vital Opportunity Training Program can cover full-time wages for six months while the participant receives on-the-job training. Health and human service providers and Ethnic Community-Based Organizations can then work with employers to provide a range of on-site services to refugee employees, including assistance in navigating the transportation and service systems, and help with official correspondence.

The Office of New Americans can promote awareness of and recruitment of eligible newcomers with service providers and Ethnic Community-Based Organizations.

BEST PRACTICE

Journey's End Refugee Services

Journey's End recently completed an innovative two-year project to help refugee mothers transition from being home-bound and dependent on government aid by offering culturally sensitive, state-certified daycare programs in Arabic, Burmese, French, Karen, Nepali, and Swahili. Journey's End collaborated with the Erie County Department of Social Services to link recipients of public benefits to daycare; and the Childcare Resource Network provided technical support to the program.

20. Increase entrepreneurial efforts

Entrepreneurial refugees play an important role by creating jobs and contributing to the local economy. There are a number of success stories, yet resources to expand these efforts are limited – especially with respect to production activities.

The Office of New Americans can work with economic development officials to raise awareness of the untapped potential of entrepreneurial refugees.

21. Facilitate professional careers

Many refugees who worked as doctors, nurses, engineers, or other professionals in their home countries are now employed in jobs that do not utilize these skills. The pool of highly-skilled workers critical to the region's economic growth can be expanded by facilitating the transition of refugees into professional careers.

The Office of New Americans can assist local colleges and universities to develop plans to help professionals prepare for certification exams and pursue necessary licenses.

22. Expand workforce opportunities

Organizations providing training and employment-related assistance do not currently have direct access to refugees; and issues with family care , language barriers and transportation must be addressed before refugees can take advantage of these opportunities. As a result, refugees lack connections to both high demand positions and training programs. Expanding the reach of workforce training and support programs are clearly needed for refugees, as well as African-Americans and Latinos. In the case of refugees, this can be achieved by expanding collaboration with resettlement agencies and Ethnic Community-Based Organizations.

The Office of New Americans can support the development of services that bridge gaps between organizations that provide training and refugees experiencing issues that affect their ability to take advantage of assistance.

The Office of Strategic Planning can assist by studying current transportation options, with an emphasis on reverse commuters and workers with non-standard hours; and identify improvements that will lead to better employment access for immigrants and other city residents without cars.

BEST PRACTICE

BAK USA

BAK USA came to Buffalo via Start-Up NY, a program that reduces taxes for qualifying companies partnered with a participating college or university. The company opened its world headquarters this year with 20 employees from Buffalo and a dozen other countries, kicking off its mission to bring affordable computer tablets and cellphones to developing nations in Africa.

Moving Forward

23. Pass a welcoming city ordinance

The city should prepare and pass an ordinance affirming and expanding basic protections to ensure that all refugees and immigrants are welcomed and provided access to city services. Once approved, city employees will require training to understand and uphold the new rules.

BEST PRACTICE

Welcoming America

The city has joined Welcoming America, a nationwide network of organizations and partners that works to promote an atmosphere in which foreign- and native-born residents can find common ground and shared prosperity. Welcoming America also offers training and technical assistance designed to foster more positive local climates for refugees and other newcomers.

The Office of New Americans can communicate these requirements to all employees, while those with significant interactions with refugees and other newcomers are given additional training to help them uphold the ordinance. ONA can also work with outside partners to develop training programs for police, fire, emergency responders, 311 call center personnel, and other city staff.

24. Provide cultural sensitivity training

To build a welcoming environment, the city must ensure that employees are equipped to interact with refugees and other newcomers, where cultural misunderstandings often make it difficult to communicate effectively. Cultural sensitivity training will help front-line staff understand how to welcome and assist persons from diverse backgrounds, and in turn make refugees and other newcomers more willing to engage with service providers.

BEST PRACTICE

Buffalo Police Department

The BPD has held regular community workshops with the Bhutanese-Nepali, Karen, and Burmese populations to address issues surrounding emergency calls to 9-1-1, share safety tips, and more. Events have also been held at schools to educate students on how policing in the U.S. may differ from policing in their home countries. BPD officers have also received training to help them learn how to engage populations with varying degrees of English language proficiency, and to improve outreach coordination.

The Office of New Americans can identify departments and services for which cultural sensitivity training will have the greatest impact, enlist partners to help develop the curriculum, and create a schedule. Training should cover immigration status, nationality, race, ethnicity, and religion, as well as the impacts of trauma, domestic violence, and child abuse.

25. Expand Office of New Americans capacity

The Office of New Americans is in a unique position, having been established at a time of great interest, need, and energy towards effecting positive change in the lives of refugees and other new arrivals. To realize its full potential, ONA will have to form multiple partnerships that will allow it to expand its capacity.

The Office of New Americans can continue to use the city's Urban Fellows Internship Program, which provides college students with hands-on experience in public service; and seek other partnership opportunities that allow it to expand its capacity.

26. Establish a New Americans Advisory Council

The Office of New Americans would benefit from the ongoing advice and counsel of a group such as the New Americans Study Steering Committee, which helped to guide this effort. It is recommended that the mayor establish a New Americans Advisory Council to assist the ONA in meeting its objectives and identifying new opportunities and directions.

27. Apply best practices

Buffalo is not alone in receiving increasing numbers of refugees, or in recognizing their potential to contribute to its future prosperity. The city should continue to stay abreast of national and local efforts, as others bring forward valuable programming and practices that can be used to improve the experience of refugees in Buffalo.

Steering Committee

Flor Aber	Hispanic Heritage Council
Denise Beehag	International Institute
Ann Brittain	Catholic Charities
Tulsi Dhimal	Bhutanese Community Group
Maggie Gibbons	Rediscover Riverside
Paul Harris	South Fillmore Block Club / Fillmore Corridor Neighborhood Coalition
Eva Hassett	International Institute
Anna Ireland	Jericho Road Community Health Center
Benoit Kabayiza	African Community Team
Ali Kadhum	Iraqi American Society / Buffalo Immigrant and Refugee Empowerment Coalition
Ba Zan Lin	Burmese Community Support Group
Joshua Mansaray	Sierra Leone Cultural Alliance
Meghann Perry	Journey's End Refugee Services
Khalid Qazi	Muslim Public Affairs Council
Saraphine Sargent	African Community Team
Marlene Schillinger	Jewish Family Service
Allan Sesay	Sierra Leone Cultural Alliance
Saladi Shebule	Somali Bantu Community Organization
Marcus Stanfill	HEAL International