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Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

To engage and empower the city's new residents

Aaliyah Gupta, Acting Director

600 4th Avenue Floor 6, Seattle, WA98124-4028
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About The Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs

It is our mission to promote a citywide culture that understands and values the contributions of immigrant and refugee communities.

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs was created to recognize the importance and need for a strong relationship between the City of Seattle Government and the Immigrant and Refugee communities which it serves. The Office's goal will be to set measurable outcomes to ensure a consistent implementation of principles of social justice issues which include employment, economic development, public health, student achievement, citizenship, public safety, and criminal justice, civic engagement and protection of civil rights.

In order to improve services for the Immigrant and Refugee communities the Office will work in conjunction with other City departments, community organizations and members of the private sector.

The Office will work in partnership with the Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission. The Commission is made up of 15 members that reflect the diversity of the immigrant and refugee communities in Seattle. This partnership will help to establish goals and suggest policy creation to tackle any existing and emerging needs of these communities.

- Magdaleno M. Rose-Avila Response to Council Questions - Acrobat PDF
- Legislation creating an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs - Acrobat PDF
- Welcome letter from Mayor McGinn - Acrobat PDF

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Immigrant Voting Taskforce

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

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Seattle, WA 98124-4028
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OIRA@seattle.gov

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Michael Fong/MF
Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Ord.
January 25, 2012
Version #5

ORDINANCE 123822

AN ORDINANCE relating to the organization of City government; creating an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs; establishing the powers and duties of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs; renaming the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board to the Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission; establishing the responsibility to provide staffing for the Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission; amending Chapter 3.14 and repealing Sections 3.35.090, 3.35.100, 3.35.110, and 3.35.120 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, Seattle is home to many immigrant and refugee communities and the City is committed to strengthening the relationship between government and these communities; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the value of cultural diversity and its contribution to Seattle's civic and economic identity; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that language and cultural barriers may compromise equal access to government services and programs; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the complex and dynamic nature of issues that impact immigrant and refugee communities in Seattle; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council have worked to enhance and improve both the relationship of the City government with Seattle's refugee and immigrant residents and access to City services and resources for these communities; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council have taken proactive steps the address the challenges facing immigrant and refugee communities through the creation of the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board in 2007 and the subsequent development and ongoing implementation of an Immigrant and Refugee Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board has worked with the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative to integrate principles of social justice and ensure consistency with the Race and Social Justice Initiative; and

WHEREAS, as part of the 2012 Budget process, the City Council added funding and position authority to create a new Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs; and

WHEREAS, it is the City Council's intent and expectation that creating the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs will further strengthen the ongoing efforts to address existing and emerging needs of immigrant and refugee communities; NOW, THEREFORE,

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BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Department created. There is created within the Executive Department an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

Section 2. The Mayor shall allocate resources in accordance with Ordinance 123758 adopting the 2012 City Budget and as delineated in Council Green Sheet Budget Action 44-2-A-3 found in Clerk File 311810 in order to effectuate this ordinance.

Section 3. Subchapter III of Chapter 3.14 of the Seattle Municipal Code is redesignated "Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs" and new sections are added as follows:

3.14.505 Office Created – Functions.

There is created within the Executive Department an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, under the direction of the Mayor. The mission of the Office shall be as follows:

A. To facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Seattle's civic, economic, and cultural life;

B. To celebrate diverse cultures of immigrants and refugees and their contributions to Seattle; and

C. To advocate on behalf of immigrants and refugees.

D. To promote a citywide culture that understands and values the benefits that all members of our society receive when immigrants and refugee communities are successfully integrated into our civic, economic and cultural life.

In order to advance its mission, the Office will provide staff support to the Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission. The Office will work with community partners, City departments, and the Race and Social Justice Initiative to define and achieve desired outcomes for City investments for immigrant and refugees, including setting specific measurable outcomes related to

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employment, economic development, public health, student achievement, citizenship, public safety, and criminal justice, civic engagement, and protection of civil rights.

The Office shall coordinate and facilitate City efforts aimed at improving services and better engaging immigrant and refugee communities. The Office shall work in partnership with other City departments, government agencies, community organizations, and the private sector to advance the mission of the Office in a manner consistent with the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative.

3.14.515 Director – Appointment and Removal.

The Director of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs shall be appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by a majority vote of all members of the City Council, and may be removed by the Mayor at any time upon filing a statement of reason therefore with the City Council.

3.14.525 Director – Duties.

The duties of the Director of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs shall be as follows:

A. Oversee and manage the functions of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to advance the mission of the Office as prescribed in Section 3.14.985;

B. Appoint, remove, supervise and control officers and employees in the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs in accordance with Civil Service rules and regulations;

C. Manage the preparation of the proposed budget of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, authorize necessary expenditures and enter into contracts for professional and expert services in accordance with the adopted budget, develop and manage programs, and undertake authorized activities;

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D. Execute, administer, modify and enforce such agreements and instruments as he or she shall deem reasonably necessary to implement programs and carry out the responsibilities, functions, and activities of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs; apply for grants and donations for department programs; and solicit and use volunteer services;

E. Serve, in conjunction with other affected Department heads, as the City's representative to boards, commissions, and organizations engaged in issues pertaining to immigrant and refugee issues;

F. Promulgate rules and regulations to carry out departmental activities pursuant to the Administrative Code, SMC Chapter 3.02;

G. Exercise such other and further powers and duties as shall be prescribed by ordinance; and

H. Report to the Mayor and City Council on the City's efforts to advance the mission of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

Section 4. A new Section 3.14.996 of the Seattle Municipal Code, is added as follows:

3.14.535 Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission – Purposes and Duties.

The Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission shall act in an advisory capacity, and shall have the following purposes and duties:

A. Advise the Mayor, City Council and other departments and offices on ways to enhance and improve access to City services and resources for immigrants and refugees, as well as strengthen opportunities for immigrants and refugees to participate in the civic life of the city;

B. Advise the City concerning the successful implementation of the Immigrant and Refugee Action Plan and on future updates to the plan;

C. Advise all departments and offices of the City in matters affecting immigrants and refugees, as appropriate;

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D. Encourage understanding between and among the various immigrant and refugee communities and the larger Seattle community;

E. Meet on a quarterly basis through a designated representative with the Seattle Women's Commission, the Seattle Human Rights Commission, the Seattle LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) Commission, and the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities, to ensure coordination and joint project development; and

F. Develop an Annual Work plan for the coming year and an Annual Report on the previous year's work. The Annual Report will include a summary of the Commission accomplishments and challenges, as well as recommendations on how the City can continue to facilitate access to City services and programs and strengthen the City's Immigrant and Refugee Action Plan. The Commission will brief the Mayor's Office and the City Council on the Annual Work plan and Annual Report.

Section 5. A new Section 3.14.997 of the Seattle Municipal Code, is added as follows:

3.14.545 Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission -- Appointments, Membership and Terms

A. The Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission shall consist of 15 members. Seven members shall be appointed by the City Council; and eight members shall be appointed by the Mayor. All Mayoral appointments are subject to confirmation by a majority of the City Council. The appointing body shall provide written public notice for a vacant position(s).

B. In making appointments to the Commission, the goal should be to maintain the gender balance and reflect the diversity of the immigrant and refugee community in Seattle. Attempts should be made to include two members from the Asian/Pacific Islander Community, two members from the Latino Community, two members from the African Community, and two members from the European/Middle East Community. At least, two members should be youth or young adults under the age of 25 or represent youth issues. At least 2/3 of the members should be

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immigrants and refugees themselves. All members shall demonstrate experience or expertise with immigrant issues as well as commitment to all immigrant and refugee communities. The Mayor and Council will coordinate appointments to help achieve the representation goals in this Subsection.

C. Each Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission member shall serve for a term of two years. No member of the Commission shall serve more than three consecutive terms. Any vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as originally appointed. If a person is appointed to fill the duration of an unexpired term, then that term shall qualify as one of the three consecutive terms only if the portion of the unexpired term actually served is one year or more.

D. If the appointing authority fails to appoint or re-appoint a person to fill a Commission position before the incumbent Commissioner's term has expired, then the incumbent may remain in his or her position for a period not to exceed 90 days until such appointment or re-appointment is made. The authority that appointed a Commissioner may remove that Commissioner at will. The Commission may, by majority vote, recommend to the appointing authority, removal from office of a Commissioner who is absent without excuse from three Commission meetings during any one -year period. The Commission shall select a chair, and may adopt, promulgate, amend and rescind administrative rules and regulations for its own conduct.

Section 6. The initial membership of the Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission shall be the same as the membership of the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board just prior to its elimination by this ordinance. Those members shall be considered as Mayoral or Council appointments for purposes of Section 3.14.997 according to who originally appointed each member. Any term served on the Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board shall count towards the three term limitation in Section 3.14.997.

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Section 7. A new Section 3.14.936 of the Seattle Municipal Code, is added as follows:

3.14.555 Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission -- Annual Workplan

The Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission will develop an Annual Workplan for the coming year and an Annual Report on the previous year's work. The Annual Report will include a summary of Commission accomplishments and challenges, as well as recommendations on how the City can continue to facilitate access to City services and programs and strengthen the City's Immigrant and Refugee Action Plan. The Commission will brief the Mayor's Office and the City Council on the Annual Workplan and Annual Report.

Section 8. Section 3.35.090 of the Seattle Municipal Code is repealed.

((~~**3.35.090 Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board Established.**~~

~~There is established an Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board. The Department of Neighborhoods shall provide staff and meeting space to the Board, and shall maintain its records.~~))

Section 9. Section 3.35.100 of the Seattle Municipal Code is repealed.

((~~**3.35.100 Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board – Purposes and Duties.**~~

~~The Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board shall act in an advisory capacity, and shall have the following purposes and duties~~

~~A. To advise the Mayor, City Council and other departments and offices on ways to enhance and improve access to City services and resources for immigrants and refugees, as well as strengthen opportunities for immigrants and refugees to participate in the civic life of the City;~~

~~B. To advise the City concerning the successful implementation of the Immigrant and Refugee Action Plan and on future updates to the plan;~~

~~C. To advise all departments and offices of the City in matters affecting immigrants and refugees, as appropriate; and~~

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~~D. To encourage understanding between and among the various immigrant and refugee communities and the larger Seattle community.~~))

Section 10. Section 3.35.110 of the Seattle Municipal Code is repealed.

((~~**3.35.110 Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board – Appointments, Membership and Terms.**~~

~~A. The Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board shall consist of fifteen (15) members. Seven (7) members shall be appointed by the City Council; and eight (8) members shall be appointed by the Mayor. All appointments are subject to confirmation by a majority of the City Council. The appointing body shall provide written public notice for a vacant position(s).~~

~~B. In making appointments to the Board, the goal should be to maintain the gender balance and reflect the diversity of the immigrant and refugee community in Seattle, and attempts should be made to include two (2) members from the Asian/Pacific Islander Community, two (2) members from the Latino Community, two (2) members from the African Community, and two (2) members from the European/Middle East Community. At least, two (2) members should be youth or young adults under the age of 25 or represent youth issues. At least two-thirds (2/3) of the members should be immigrants and refugees themselves. All members shall demonstrate experience or expertise with immigrant issues as well as commitment to all immigrant and refugee communities. The Mayor and Council will coordinate appointments to help achieve the representation goals in this Subsection.~~

~~C. Each Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board member shall serve for a term of two (2) years; provided, however, that three (3) of the initial Mayoral appointees and three (3) of the initial City Council appointees shall serve initial terms of one (1) year, to provide for staggered terms. The initial terms shall begin no later than January 2008 following the passage of this legislation creating the Board. No member of the Board shall serve more than two consecutive terms. Any vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as originally appointed. If a~~

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~~person is appointed to fill the duration of an unexpired term, then that term shall qualify as one (1) of the two (2) consecutive terms only if the portion of the unexpired term actually served is one (1) year or more.~~

~~(If the appointing authority fails to appoint or re-appoint a person to fill a Board position before the incumbent Board member's term has expired, then the incumbent may remain in his or her position for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days until such appointment or re-appointment is made. The authority that appointed a Board member may remove that Board member at will. The Board may, by majority vote, recommend to the appointing authority, removal from office of a Board member who is absent without excuse from three (3) Board meetings during any one (1) year period. The Board shall select a chair, and may adopt, promulgate, amend and rescind administrative rules and regulations for its own conduct. No employee of the City of Seattle shall serve on the Board.))~~

Section 11. Section 3.35.120 of the Seattle Municipal Code is repealed.

~~((**3.35.120 Annual Work Plan.**~~

~~The Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board will develop an Annual Workplan for the coming year and an Annual Report on the previous year's work. The Annual Report will include a summary of Board accomplishments and challenges, as well as recommendations on how the City can continue to facilitate access to City services and programs and strengthen the City's Immigrant and Refugee Action Plan. The Board will brief the Mayor's Executive Team and the City Council on the Annual Workplan and Annual Report.~~))

Section 12. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.

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Michael Fong/MF
Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Ord.
January 25, 2012
Version #5

Passed by the City Council the 10th day of February, 2012, ~~2011~~, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 10th day of February, 2012, ~~2011~~.

President _____ of the City Council

Approved by me this 14th day of February, 2012, ~~2011~~.

Michael McGinn, Mayor

Filed by me this 15th day of February, 2012, ~~2011~~.

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)

addressed as part of the 2012 Budget review process and reflected in the 2012 Adopted Budget by Council.

____ **This legislation has financial implications.**
(If the legislation has direct fiscal impacts (e.g., appropriations, revenue, positions), fill out the relevant sections below. If the financial implications are indirect or longer-term, describe them in narrative in the "Other Implications" Section. Please delete the instructions provided in parentheses at the end of each title and question.)

Other Implications:

a) **Does the legislation have indirect financial implications, or long-term implications?**
Creation of the Office assumes continued operational support into the future.

b) **What is the financial cost of not implementing the legislation?**
Implementing the legislation is consistent with policy direction approved by the Council in November, 2011.

c) **Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?**
The legislation will change the staffing relationship of DON and SOCR with the Refugee and Immigrant Commission as it transfers this responsibility to the newly created Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. The new Office will interact with all other City agencies and departments on issues related to immigrant and refugee communities.

d) **What are the possible alternatives to the legislation that could achieve the same or similar objectives?**
Implementing the legislation is consistent with policy direction approved by the Council in November, 2011.

e) **Is a public hearing required for this legislation?**
No

f) **Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?**
No

g) **Does this legislation affect a piece of property?**
No

h) **Other Issues:**

List attachments to the fiscal note below:

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