

Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

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Department Overview

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) facilitates the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Seattle's civic, economic and cultural life; celebrates their diverse cultures and contributions to Seattle; and advocates on behalf of immigrants and refugees.

OIRA works with the Immigrant and Refugee Commission, community partners, and City departments to define and achieve desired outcomes for City investments for immigrant and refugees. According to the 2014 American Community Survey, immigrants and refugees comprise approximately 18% of Seattle's population. It is OIRA's job to ensure that these residents are effectively connected with City services.

OIRA is dedicated to supporting the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative by improving services and better engaging immigrant and refugee communities. OIRA also partners and collaborates with other City departments, government agencies, community organizations and the private sector.

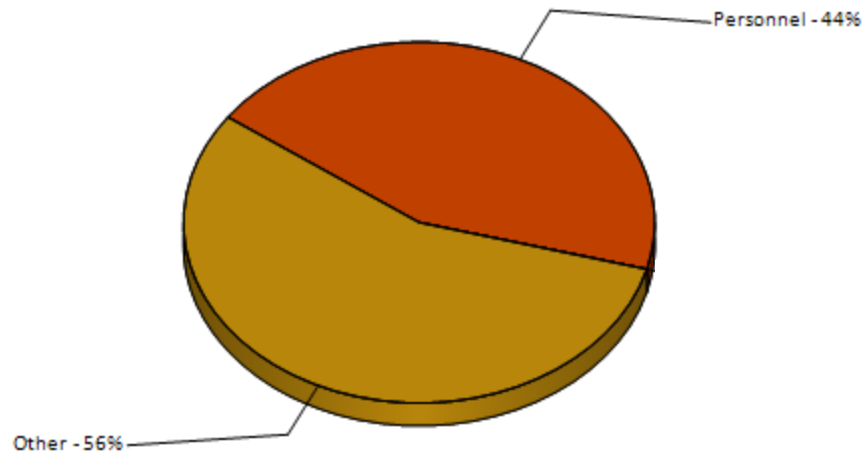
Budget Snapshot

Department Support	2015 Actual	2016 Adopted	2017 Proposed	2018 Proposed
General Fund Support	\$1,033,630	\$2,261,083	\$2,281,544	\$2,291,564
Other Funding - Operating	\$192,301	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
Total Operations	\$1,225,931	\$2,661,083	\$2,681,544	\$2,691,564
Total Appropriations	\$1,225,931	\$2,661,083	\$2,681,544	\$2,691,564
Full-time Equivalent Total*	7.00	9.50	9.50	9.50

* FTE totals are provided for information purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.

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2017 Proposed Budget - Expenditure by Category



Budget Overview

Since coming into office the Mayor has made it a priority to better integrate immigrants and refugees into the social and economic fabric of Seattle. In 2014, the Mayor's first year, OIRA began with a budget of less than \$360,000 to serve a city where almost one in five residents are immigrants or refugees. The Mayor has increased OIRA's budget every year and the 2017-2018 Proposed Budget will further increase OIRA's budget to over \$2.6 million - a more than seven-fold difference since 2014. The budget adds resources for increased translation and interpretation services, allows staff to implement expanded efforts to help naturalize immigrants, and provides funding for improving City outreach and engagement efforts to the East African community.

The budget also builds off of OIRA's successful work in enacting the City's Ready to Work program. In 2015, the City developed Ready to Work to better support residents with limited English proficiency gain the skills needed to earn a living wage in a stable job, including computer literacy, functional English, and applying for work and performing on the job. The City partnered with Seattle Colleges and community-based organizations to integrate services to provide easier access to potential students. The program's approach is based in communities and neighborhoods with job readiness classes taught by Seattle College ESL instructors at community-based organizations. ESL instructors work with staff from these organizations to provide personalized instruction, including bilingual classroom support. The budget provides resources for additional classroom support for Ready to Work students to better serve a diverse array of English-language learners.

The proposed budget also reduces consultant contracts without affecting the ability of OIRA to carry out services to its constituents.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2017		2018	
	Budget	FTE	Budget	FTE
Total 2016 Adopted Budget	\$ 2,661,083	9.50	\$ 2,661,083	9.50
Baseline Changes				
Adjustment for One-Time Adds or Reductions	-\$ 35,000	0.00	-\$ 35,000	0.00
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 76,774	0.00	\$ 113,023	0.00
Proposed Changes				
Language Access	\$ 15,000	0.00	\$ 15,000	0.00
East African Community Action	\$ 25,000	0.00	\$ 0	0.00
Ready to Work Bilingual Classroom Assistants	\$ 25,200	0.00	\$ 25,200	0.00
Reduce Consultant Contracts	-\$ 93,088	0.00	-\$ 94,498	0.00
Proposed Technical Changes				
New Citizenship Program Job Reclassification	\$ 6,575	0.00	\$ 6,756	0.00
Total Incremental Changes	\$ 20,461	0.00	\$ 30,481	0.00
2017 - 2018 Proposed Budget	\$ 2,681,544	9.50	\$ 2,691,564	9.50

Descriptions of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline Changes

Adjustment for One-Time Adds or Reductions - (\$35,000)

This item includes budget reductions for one-time additions in the 2016 Adopted Budget: a Welcome Back Center feasibility study.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$76,774

Citywide technical adjustments made in the initial planning phase reflect changes in the internal services costs (excluding Seattle IT), health care, retirement contribution rate, and updates to unemployment and industrial insurance charges. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

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Proposed Changes

Language Access - \$15,000

This adjustment doubles the funding for language access to meet increased demand by City departments for translation and interpretation services. Language access allows the City of Seattle to better serve its residents with limited English skills by providing needed information and services in various languages.

East African Community Action - \$25,000

In 2016, the City and OIRA commissioned a report, "Voices of Seattle's East African Communities," in part, to inform and guide the City and OIRA in improving outreach and services to these communities. The Mayor welcomed the report and asked City departments to provide a list of action items to improve how the City tends to the needs of residents of East African background. This item provides one-time funding to hire a consultant to evaluate the outreach and engagement efforts of City departments and then provide support to departments to implement their plans.

Ready to Work Bilingual Classroom Assistants - \$25,200

This adjustment provides OIRA with ongoing additional funding to distribute to local community-based organizations taking part in the City's Ready to Work program. Two bilingual classroom assistants will be added to help immigrant and refugee students follow along in class in order to learn English and gain employment. Increased capacity is needed to address the needs of students of various ethnic and language backgrounds.

Reduce Consultant Contracts - (\$93,088)

This item reduces consultant contracts without impairing the ability of the office to carry out its programs or decreasing the level of service to residents.

Proposed Technical Changes

New Citizenship Program Job Reclassification - \$6,575

This adjustment changes the classification of a Grants and Contracts Specialist in the New Citizenship Program to a Strategic Advisor 1. This will allow staff to help implement an expanded strategy aiming to increase the numbers of legal permanent residents in Seattle-King County who become U.S. citizens.

