

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 2012 American Community Survey, immigrants and refugees comprise more than 19% 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.

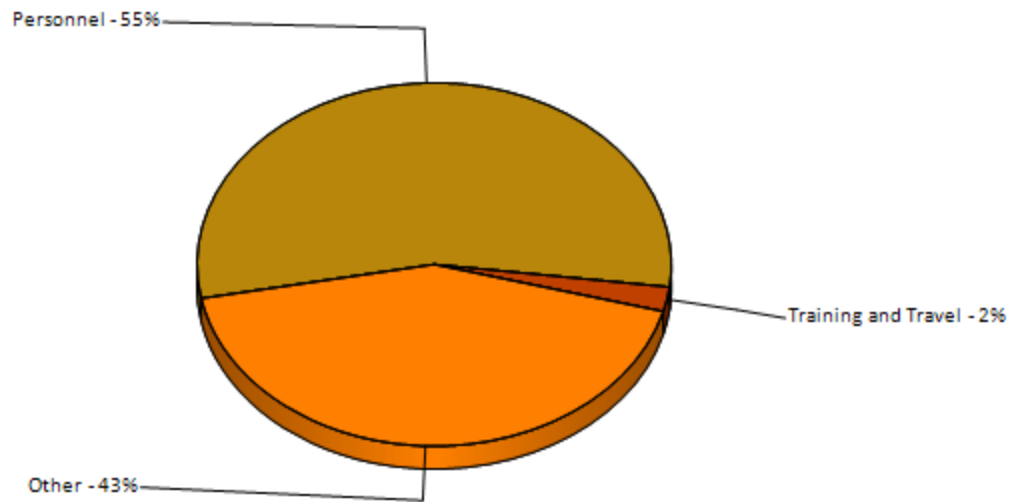
Budget Snapshot

Department Support	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted	2015 Adopted	2016 Endorsed
General Fund Support	\$405,444	\$358,650	\$1,070,281	\$1,843,431
Other Funding - Operating	\$0	\$0	\$400,000	\$400,000
Total Operations	\$405,444	\$358,650	\$1,470,281	\$2,243,431
Total Appropriations	\$405,444	\$358,650	\$1,470,281	\$2,243,431
Full-time Equivalent Total*	3.00	3.00	7.00	8.00

* 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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2015 Adopted Budget - Expenditure by Category



Budget Overview

The Mayor made expanding the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) a priority of his administration, and the 2015 Adopted Budget and 2016 Endorsed Budget includes several new initiatives and services with the goal of increasing immigrant and refugee integration. In mid-2014, the Mayor and City Council added two new positions, an English-Language Learner program specialist and a community relations advisor, to OIRA to build greater capacity to engage with immigrant and refugee communities. These positions, along with additional funding to increase resources for programming and communications, help build OIRA's capacity to better support immigrant integration.

OIRA has mapped out key areas where the City can expand its services to establish Seattle as a leader in immigrant integration with a focus on building capacity and decreasing barriers to immigrant participation in City programs and services. OIRA has developed a Five Point Action Plan that identifies discrete areas where the office and the City can continue to support and expand services and programs for immigrant and refugee communities. These priorities are:

- Strengthen language access policies and protocols
- Expand access to English as a Second Language (ESL) programs
- Support immigrant-owned small businesses
- Build a Citizenship Corners & Naturalization campaign
- Community safety

The adopted budget is responsive to this action plan and includes several new programs and services that build on these areas. In several cases, the City currently offers services that address these issues and the adopted budget includes ways to leverage these existing services by increasing coordination across the City.

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Strengthening Immigrant Integration Across the City

A key component of OIRA's action plan, immigrant integration is an intentional effort to build vibrant and cohesive communities. To facilitate this integration process, the adopted budget adds a language access coordinator and an ethnic media and communications coordinator to OIRA. These two new positions will work to increase the City's capacity and competence in engaging and serving immigrant and refugee residents who have limited English skills.

The language access coordinator will manage a new City-wide Language Access Initiative and work closely with City departments to create annual department-specific language access plans focusing on increasing the use of translation and interpretation services. Part of this effort is focused on ensuring language access resources are readily available and providing additional training and development around language access for City employees. Additionally, OIRA will continue working with community organizations and vendors that have contracts with the City for interpretation and translation services to ensure a consistent quality of service.

Consistent with the Language Access Initiative's intent to provide equitable language access, the ethnic media and communications coordinator will increase OIRA's capacity to ensure immigrant and refugee residents are well informed about the City's programs, services and initiatives. This position will assist the Mayor's Office, City Council, and departments to develop customized ethnic media plans and strengthen the City's relationships with ethnic media outlets. As a part of this effort to strengthen ethnic media and communications outreach, OIRA will also continue to expand its social media and web presence.

These positions will leverage the City's existing infrastructure and approach to responding to the unique needs of immigrant and refugee communities while increasing the City's capacity to engage in this work more effectively.

Ready to Work: ESL and Computers

The American Community Survey shows that 28.5% of Seattle's foreign-born population is linguistically isolated - living in a household without any English speakers. Almost half of Seattle's foreign-born population is not proficient in English. Residents not proficient in English face immense barriers to gaining employment and must navigate multiple complex systems in order to obtain the skills necessary to advance in a career. There is currently a broad gap between programs and services that meet the needs of the population with limited English skills who are unemployed or underemployed. Existing services target survival English and everyday life skills or pre-academic English skills.

In 2013, the City convened an English Learner Steering Committee (ELSC) to create a policy framework and program design that accelerates literacy, improves employability skills, and identifies and supports multiple pathways to careers to address the existing service gap. Working with the Steering Committee, the Office of Economic Development (OED), and the Human Services Department (HSD), OIRA developed Ready to Work: ESL and Computers as a new initiative to coordinate services across multiple organizations to better support residents with limited English proficiency obtain the skills necessary for living-wage careers.

The adopted budget establishes this program, a new partnership between the City, the Seattle Colleges, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), to lower the barriers residents with limited English skills face by integrating services that have traditionally been provided separately. It will address employability skills, functional English related to job training, applying for work and performing on the job. Using a neighborhood-based approach, Ready to Work will offer ESL and job readiness classes at local community-based organizations taught by Seattle College ESL instructors in collaboration with the CBO's staff. Seattle College instructors and CBO staff will co-lead classes to build off each other's expertise. The curriculum will bridge the existing gap between higher-level academic English instruction provided at the college level and the survival ESL programs offered at CBOs.

Concurrent with ESL instruction, students will improve their job readiness through a blended instruction approach emphasizing applying English language skills to the employment process, including navigating online applications, job searches and improving digital literacy. Students will also receive additional support services, including case

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management through CBOs, where they will develop a comprehensive services plan to ensure continued participation and success. Case managers will work closely with the team of ESL and CBO instructors to ensure a coordinated approach to addressing challenges facing students.

In 2015, the City will identify a Community Based Development Organization (CBDO) to manage all aspects of the project, with support from OIRA. The CBDO will work directly with the Seattle Colleges and community based organizations to plan, develop and implement this project and will play a particularly important role in coordinating across all of the participating organizations to ensure consistency. This program will be coordinated by OIRA in partnership with OED and HSD and will be funded with federal Community Development Block Grant funds.

To measure the success of Ready to Work, the adopted budget includes funding to develop and implement an evaluation of the program in both 2015 and 2016. The evaluation will help inform decisions about instruction, program design and professional development using empirical evidence gathered as well as tracking participants' progress throughout the program. Early evaluation results will ensure that quality improvement is continuous throughout the implementation process and provide data for longer-term assessments to identify successes achieved, challenges encountered and areas for improvement as the program grows.

Building A Citizenship Corners & Naturalization Campaign

Citizenship is a key component of immigrant integration. It promotes stable communities, contributes to socioeconomic growth and encourages civic participation. Immigrants who obtain U.S. citizenship gain a wide range of benefits for themselves and their families, including citizenship for minor children, the ability to vote, and access to certain federal jobs and government benefits. Every year, many residents of Seattle who are eligible to be naturalized do not. There are several barriers to completing the naturalization process: it is expensive, time-intensive and confusing.

The New Citizen Program (NCP), an existing program in HSD, provides grants to local organizations to provide assistance throughout the naturalization process. In 2016, the endorsed budget transfers the NCP into OIRA to integrate into OIRA's Citizenship Corners & Naturalization campaign. This campaign will ensure larger numbers of immigrants are naturalized and participating in civic processes by:

- Promoting the benefits of citizenship at community centers, neighborhood service centers, and libraries as well as through ethnic media outlets;
- Providing additional resources and training to City employees who regularly interact with immigrants on citizenship services, ESL classes and other resources;
- Leveraging national partnerships and participating in national campaigns promoting naturalizations and immigrant integration; and
- Celebrating new Americans by hosting naturalization ceremonies at City venues and community organizations.

Incorporating NCP into OIRA will strengthen the ties between the promotion of the benefits of naturalization and the citizenship services. The program is a pivotal piece of OIRA's mission and integrating it into the office will amplify its impact and reach.

City Council Changes to the Proposed Budget

The Council made no changes to the 2015-2016 Proposed Budget.

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Incremental Budget Changes

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	2015		2016	
	Budget	FTE	Budget	FTE
Total 2014 Adopted Budget	\$ 358,650	3.00	\$ 358,650	3.00
Baseline Changes				
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 6,066	0.00	\$ 6,066	0.00
Supplemental Budget Changes	\$ 409,238	2.00	\$ 409,238	2.00
Proposed Changes				
Increase Staffing to Enhance Immigrant Integration	\$ 230,496	2.00	\$ 230,496	2.00
Ready to Work: ESL and Computers	\$ 450,000	0.00	\$ 450,000	0.00
Transfer the New Citizen Program from HSD	\$ 0	0.00	\$ 744,573	1.00
Proposed Technical Changes				
Citywide Training and Travel Reallocation	-\$ 313	0.00	-\$ 313	0.00
Final Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	\$ 16,144	0.00	\$ 44,721	0.00
Total Incremental Changes	\$ 1,111,631	4.00	\$ 1,884,781	5.00
2015 Adopted/2016 Endorsed Budget	\$ 1,470,281	7.00	\$ 2,243,431	8.00

Descriptions of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline Changes

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$6,066

Citywide technical adjustments made in the "Baseline Phase" reflect changes due to inflation, central cost allocations, retirement, healthcare, workers' compensation, and unemployment costs. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Supplemental Budget Changes - \$409,238/2.00 FTE

This adjustment reflects changes made through supplemental budget legislation since the last Adopted Budget. Supplemental budget legislation is developed by the Executive and adopted by the City Council four times a year to provide for corrections to the Adopted Budget, unforeseen changes in circumstance, new funding opportunities or new policy priorities. Two full time strategic advisor positions (an English-Language Learner (ELL) program specialist and a community relations advisor) were added to OIRA in the 2014 Quarter 1 supplemental. To assist with OIRA's ELL programs, develop a strong branding campaign and increase resources available for community events and meetings, an additional \$145,945 was added to OIRA's budget.

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Proposed Changes

Increase Staffing to Enhance Immigrant Integration - \$230,496/2.00 FTE

This adjustment adds funding for two full-time strategic advisor positions (a language access coordinator and an ethnic media and communications coordinator) and increases OIRA's budget by \$30,000 to provide resources for community mapping and ethnic media tracking tools, as well as other operational needs such as office equipment and supplies. Translation, interpretation, and multilingual communications are all critical aspects of immigrant integration and require additional staff and resources to address the growing need for these services in the City. This adjustment increases OIRA's ability to engage with the Mayor's Office, City Council and City departments to enhance capacity in serving the immigrant and refugee population.

Ready to Work: ESL and Computers - \$450,000

This item adds \$400,000 of federal Community Development Block Grant funds to launch a new partnership program between the City, the Seattle Colleges (previously known as the community colleges) and community organizations to increase the opportunity for residents with limited English skills to obtain and retain employment. This item also includes General Fund support of \$50,000 for a two-year comprehensive implementation evaluation that will begin in 2015 concurrent with the program's launch. This evaluation will assess the program design, quality of instruction and student performance.

Transfer the New Citizen Program from HSD

The New Citizen Program (NCP), an existing program currently in the Human Services Department (HSD), gives grants to local organizations to provide citizenship eligibility screening, interview preparation, application assistance, disability waivers and referrals for legal assistance. The NCP receives \$402,051 in General Fund support, and also receives \$328,409 in state funding and \$24,112 from the Seattle Housing Authority. As part of the 2016 Endorsed Budget, the NCP is transferred from HSD to OIRA as well as a full-time grants & contracts specialist currently assigned to the program.

Proposed Technical Changes

Citywide Training and Travel Reallocation - (\$313)

This adjustment makes small reductions to training and travel budget appropriations Citywide. The Budget reallocates these funds to a new Centralized Management and Leadership Development program in the Department of Human Resources. More information on the new training program can be found in the Department of Human Resources budget section.

Final Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes - \$16,144

Citywide technical adjustments made in the "Proposed Phase" reflect changes due to inflation, central cost allocation, retirement, healthcare, workers' compensation, and unemployment costs. These adjustments reflect updates to preliminary cost assumptions established in the "Baseline Phase."

City Council Provisos

There are no Council provisos.

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Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	Summit Code	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted	2015 Adopted	2016 Endorsed
CDBG - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Budget Control Level	6XN10	0	0	400,000	400,000
Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Budget Control Level	X1N00	405,444	358,650	1,070,281	1,843,431
Department Total		405,444	358,650	1,470,281	2,243,431

Department Full-time Equivalents Total* 3.00 3.00 7.00 8.00

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Appropriations By Budget Control Level (BCL) and Program

CDBG - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Budget Control Level

The purpose of the CDBG - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Budget Control Level is to provide support to community-based development organizations with the goal of increasing the socioeconomic and civic opportunities for immigrants and refugees in Seattle.

	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted	2015 Adopted	2016 Endorsed
Program Expenditures				
CDBG - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs	0	0	400,000	400,000
Total	0	0	400,000	400,000

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Budget Control Level

The purpose of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Budget Control Level is to facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Seattle's civic, economic, and cultural life, to celebrate their diverse cultures and contributions to Seattle, and to advocate on behalf of immigrants and refugees.

	2013 Actual	2014 Adopted	2015 Adopted	2016 Endorsed
Program Expenditures				
Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs	405,444	358,650	1,070,281	1,843,431
Total	405,444	358,650	1,070,281	1,843,431
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