



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

FACT SHEET

FROM THE OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Fact Sheet: Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

SEATTLE (January 20, 2016) – Seattle’s Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) works to improve the lives of Seattle’s immigrant and refugee communities by engaging them in decisions about the City’s future, and improving the City’s programs and services to meet the needs of all constituents. OIRA initiatives include:

- **NEW CITIZEN CAMPAIGN**

The New Citizen Campaign makes citizenship assistance more accessible to larger numbers of eligible Seattle residents through partnerships with community centers, libraries, and neighborhood service centers. The New Citizen Program provides free naturalization assistance and support through 14 community-based organizations.

- **READY TO WORK**

Ready to Work was designed for residents who face immense barriers to learning English and gaining employment. The program combines English as a Second Language (ESL) classes with computer literacy instruction and case management to help immigrants gain job readiness skills and take steps toward economic self-sufficiency.

- **IMMIGRANT FAMILY INSTITUTE**

Immigrant Family Institute is an innovative program designed to build understanding and trust between Seattle refugee communities and the Seattle Police Department (SPD). The institute helps build a grassroots network of refugee/immigrant leaders while increasing the cultural competency of the participating SPD officers.

- **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

OIRA staff has deep relationships in immigrant and refugee communities that enable them to provide technical assistance and cultural expertise across City departments.

- **LANGUAGE ACCESS**

The goal of our Language Access Program is to ensure City of Seattle departments serve all City residents regardless of the language they speak. This includes providing interpretation services, translating important documents/outreach materials, and simplifying access. OIRA also provides language access technical assistance to other City departments.

- **ETHNIC MEDIA PROGRAM**

We believe successful outreach to immigrant and refugee communities must involve ethnic media. OIRA assists City departments in developing comprehensive outreach campaigns, which include media that serves immigrant and refugee communities. OIRA also ensures ethnic media outlets have equitable access to the latest information from the City.

- **SEATTLE VOTES**

Seattle Votes is our community outreach and engagement campaign to identify and better document the barriers to civic engagement for Seattle's immigrant and refugee residents. By partnering with hundreds of organizations, thousands of Seattle-King County immigrants and refugees will be surveyed about why they don't become citizens, register to vote, or vote. The findings will help inform local election policies.

For more information about OIRA, visit <http://seattle.gov/iandraffairs>.

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