



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

FACT SHEET

FROM THE SEATTLE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Fact Sheet: OPCD works to support Seattle immigrants and refugees

SEATTLE (January 20, 2016) – Seattle’s Office of Planning and Community development was established by Mayor Ed Murray’s Executive Order to plan for thriving and equitable communities as Seattle grows.

Over the last 20 years, Seattle’s population increased by 100,000 people and our economy created 73,000 new jobs. Immigrants and refugees have been an important part of our growing population, with about 1 in 5 residents born overseas. Seattle continues to grow and change. In the next 20 years, we expect even more people to move to Seattle, creating an additional 70,000 homes and 115,000 jobs.

“There is a lot more change that is going to come in the next 20 years. We need to shape that future rather than react to it. We plan to create a more equitable city that welcomes immigrants and refugees,” said OPCD Director Samuel Assefa.

- **Leading on Affordable Housing:** Seattle’s Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) is guided by an ambitious 10-year goal for producing both market-rate and guaranteed affordable housing, which will include homes for new refugees and immigrants. One HALA recommendation, the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) program, ensures that all new multifamily residential and commercial buildings throughout Seattle contribute to affordable housing. Other recommendations include Strengthening Tenant Protections and finding new ways to preserve existing affordable housing through the housing preservation program.
- **Investing in Immigrant/Refugee Communities:** Seattle’s Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) will leverage \$16 million from the sale of Civic Square for capacity building and other targeted equitable development strategies. OPCD will establish a program to include leaders from immigrant and refugee communities to help determine how these funds will be awarded. Beginning in 2017, OPCD’s new EDI staff team will focus place-based strategies in neighborhoods that are home to larger proportions of

immigrants and refugees.

- **Supporting Community Based Organizations:** OPCD is supporting capacity building for the Multicultural Community Center (MCC), which includes the Eritrean Association of Greater Seattle, the Eritrean Community in Seattle and Vicinity, the Ethiopian Community of Seattle, Horn of Africa and Somali Community Services of Seattle. The Multicultural Community Center will be a cultural home for organizations serving immigrants, refugees, and communities of color in SE Seattle.
- **Monitoring the Impact:** OPCD will begin to report on equity indicators as part of monitoring the Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan. These indicators will be developed this year with opportunities for input from immigrant and refugee communities. These indicators will provide early warning signals of heightened displacement risk and longer-term measures to gauge achievement of equitable outcomes. The City's equity measurements will track growth and displacement issues and be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and income, when possible.
- **Educating the Public:** In 2016, OPCD created #RSJIFridays, a social media campaign that highlights planning-related RSJI work, locally and globally. The intention is to expose our audience to the social justice issues that affect communities of color, especially immigrants and refugees. It is also meant to show the challenging, yet meaningful neighborhood planning work behind those issues.

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