CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs: understanding and responding to immigration challenges in Minneapolis

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Minneapolis
City of Lakes
Background: Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

- City and Community input leading to creation of the office
- Operational starting July 2018
- Office Structure: 1 person office within larger Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations

- Mission(s):
  - Inform
  - Support
  - Advocate
  - Collaborate
MISSION OF OIRA

• Participate in development of city policies to positively impact immigrant and refugee populations in Minneapolis
• Collaborate with legal service organizations that provide immigration related legal services to Minneapolis residents
• Ensure that immigrant related concerns raised by community organizations are heard and acted upon by the city
• Inform immigrant and refugee groups of immigration related developments and ensure they have the information they need to act to increase their safety and security
• Participate in trainings informing the community on how individuals obtain immigration status
• Assist in the integration of immigrant and refugee communities in Minneapolis and beyond
Major Immigration Challenges and Opportunities

Bombardment of initiatives to reduce eligibility for immigration status in the US leads to fatigue, stress and overload:

• Immigrant Populations: every population—from asylum applicants to highly skilled workers are impacted in current administration
• Donors: Minnesota—consortium of funders supplied $1 million in 2017—incapability to repeat for 2018 though need is only more acute
• Immigration Legal Service Providers: need more staff to serve population
• Private Immigration attorneys—at/beyond capacity in provision of pro bono legal services
Major Immigration Challenges and Opportunities

Example of challenges: NPRM (Notice of Proposed Rulemaking) on Public Charge:

• Would significantly increase number of individuals denied permanent residence on public charge grounds
• Expands category of people government can obtain more public charge assessment information on to include nonimmigrants who extend/change status in the US
• Notice and Comment period ends 12/10/18
Opportunity: Collaboration and Novel Solutions

Challenging times create opportunities for collaboration in the developing new solutions:

• City/County development of novel ways to support immigrant populations (Example: immigration legal defense funding)
• Community organization activism working to help identify issue and solution, including activism by affected populations for affected populations (Unidos MN, National TPS Alliance, Release MN 8)
• Powerful opportunity for critical alignment of municipalities, statewide, and through our elected representatives to effectuate change that benefits Minnesota’s immigrant populations
• Opportunities for businesses to be more active in support of immigration solutions: unique opportunity for increased visibility
Resources for additional information

• http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/oira
• https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/
• https://www.ilcm.org/resources/document-library/