

One Minnesota Budget

ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS

Immigrants and refugees are crucial to Minnesota's future growth. They significantly impact Minnesota's economy through small business creation, exceptional cultural contributions and meeting labor needs. But they face barriers like access to state government services and employment opportunities. Permanently establishing and funding the Office of New Americans would be a crucial step towards eliminating these obstacles for immigrants and refugees and fostering success and integration in Minnesota communities.

Following are DEED's priorities included in the One Minnesota budget.

SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES THROUGH THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS



- » The One Minnesota Budget proposes \$750,000 annually to support the Office of New Americans (ONA). This total included \$250,000 per year to fund agency translation services.
- » Foundation support currently funds a temporary ONA, but the One Minnesota Budget proposes using state funds to establish a permanent office. The office will focus solely on supporting immigrant and refugee integration, reducing barriers to employment and improving connections between employers and job seekers.
- » The ONA will lead the state's initiative to provide comprehensive and accessible services to the state's approximately 500,000 immigrants and refugees. The office will organize and lead quarterly interagency efforts to eliminate the barriers immigrants and refugees face by raising awareness of opportunities, educating about the process of accessing services and providing technical assistance. The Office of New Americans will also be the state agency lead on federal immigrant and refugee affairs.

THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS MAKES BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT ACCESSIBLE



- » While still a temporary office, the Office of New Americans has made significant strides in the workforce. Through increased outreach to local Workforce Development Boards, it conducted cultural orientation on how to engage with immigrants and refugees at work; drove more refugees and immigrants to access services at CareerForce centers; and connected more employers to potential employees. In all, ONA helped employers retain over 300 employees.
- » The office organized 13 state agencies to align budget ideas to integrate immigrant and refugees into the workforce. Its work included outreach to Minnesota's ethnic councils, complimenting their policy and research missions and expanding services to immigrants and refugee communities beyond those served by ethnic councils.

- » ONA's reach extends outside of Minnesota. It has partnered with similar offices in Michigan, Illinois, Colorado and Nevada to elevate state policies focused on immigrants and refugees and share best practices on welcoming new Americans and addressing barriers that face them.
- » Additionally, the office has hosted monthly Immigrant and Refugee Affairs forums and produced 12 blog posts with follow-up resources. It also collaborated with city-level Immigrant and Refugee Affairs offices to establish bi-weekly forums with Minneapolis and St Paul, and monthly multi-jurisdictional gatherings for sharing resources to help refugees and immigrants across the state.

NEW AMERICANS' SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO MINNESOTA'S ECONOMY



- » Immigrants have a significant economic impact on Minnesota communities. They own over 19,000 small businesses, earn \$17.5 billion in household income, generate \$411.7 million in business income and contribute over \$4.8 billion in federal, state and local taxes.
- » New Americans play a vital role in the workforce. Just over half of Minnesota's 2010-2020 labor force growth was driven by immigrants. The 435,000 immigrants in Minnesota that were aged 16 years and older in 2020 had a 72.7% labor force participation rate, higher than the statewide average. Foreign-born workers accounted for over 10% of the total available labor force in Minnesota in 2020.
- » But language and other barriers can keep immigrants and refugees from starting and growing a business or finding employment.
- » Minnesota is losing \$5.1 billion annually by not utilizing immigrant and refugee talents, according to RealTime Talent data.

DEED's Office of New Americans will connect immigrants and refugees to good jobs with family-sustaining wages, help entrepreneurs launch businesses that contribute to the cultural fabric of our state and ensure Minnesota is enjoying the full economic contributions of our new Americans.