

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

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Department Overview

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) was established in 2012 by Seattle Ordinance 123822 to recognize the importance and need for a stronger relationship and increased accountability between the City of Seattle and immigrant and refugee communities. OIRA serves as the backbone and coordinator of key City efforts across all departments to advance equity and access for immigrants and refugees.

As an office dedicated to serving immigrants refugees, OIRA's core values and shared agreements are centered around integrity, humility, communities, innovation, gratitude, respect, accountability, partnership, and transparency. OIRA address the underlying causes of inequities and develop programs and policies that empower community partners and those they serve.

OIRA serves immigrant and refugee Seattle residents in the areas of language access, immigration legal services, workforce development, and more. OIRA is focused on incorporating community needs and direct feedback in policy decisions and program development while also centering the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative.

Budget Snapshot

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	5,462,339	6,241,007	6,224,830	6,570,612
Other Funding - Operating	175,004	163,114	142,227	151,567
Total Operations	5,637,344	6,404,121	6,367,057	6,722,179
Total Appropriations	5,637,344	6,404,121	6,367,057	6,722,179
Full-Time Equivalent Total*	12.00	12.50	12.50	12.50

* FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Human Resources Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here

Budget Overview

The City's 2025-2026 Proposed Budget maintains core services for OIRA. The department will continue to invest in programs such as the Legal Defense Network, the New Citizen Campaign, the New Citizen Program, the Immigrant Safety and Access Network, the Language Access program, and the Ready to Work program. Due to the General Fund forecast for the City's 2025-26 Proposed Budget being insufficient to cover all anticipated Citywide costs, budget alignments were made to reduce OIRA's budget for an intern, reduce some of their position underspend costs, and distribute their language access subscription cost to all departments who use the language access tool.

OIRA's core services will allow OIRA to respond to issues affecting immigrants and refugees in the region, including assisting recent migrant arrivals with translation, legal, and social services.

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Incremental Budget Changes

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

	Dollars	FTE
2024 Adopted Budget	6,404,121	12.50
Baseline		
Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget	225,557	-
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	54	-
Removal of 2024 One-Time Adds	(225,000)	-
Remove CDBG From Baseline	(650,200)	-
Proposed Operating		
Align Workforce Development Position Budget	(37,150)	-
CDBG Ready To Work Continuation	700,000	-
Eliminate Intern Budget	(16,850)	-
Transfer Language Access Program Costs	(25,000)	-
Proposed Technical		
Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	(14,872)	-
New Citizenship Program Fund Source Update	6,397	-
Total Incremental Changes	\$(37,064)	-
Total 2025 Proposed Budget	\$6,367,057	12.50

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Bargained Annual Wage and Market Wage Increases to Base Budget

Expenditures \$225,557

This centrally administered change adjusts appropriations to reflect the Annual Wage Increases and Market Adjustments, as outlined in the agreements between the City and the Coalition of Unions or other standalone Unions, for personnel costs included in this department’s baseline budget. This includes increases to salary, FICA, Medicare, retirement, overtime and temporary labor.

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$54

Citywide technical adjustments made in the baseline phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare, retirement, and industrial insurance charges for the department. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

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Removal of 2024 One-Time Adds

Expenditures \$(225,000)

This item removes \$225,000 of one-time General Fund added in the 2024 Adopted Budget to support a conference on human trafficking.

Remove CDBG From Baseline

Expenditures \$(650,200)

Revenues \$(650,200)

For the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, the Executive removed Community Development Block Grant funds from departments' baselines and reviewed department proposals for use of the federal grant funds for facilities and public services projects.

This item was restored and increased in the Proposed Budget. See corresponding item "CDBG Ready To Work Continuation."

Proposed Operating

Align Workforce Development Position Budget

Expenditures \$(37,150)

This item decreases expenditures by \$37,150 Payroll Expense Tax ongoing to align salary budget for the Workforce Policy and Partnerships Manager position with actual costs. The position was added in the 2023 budget, and the actual cost of the position is less that what was added in the budget. There are no programmatic impacts to this reduction.

CDBG Ready To Work Continuation

Expenditures \$700,000

Revenues \$700,000

For the 2025-2026 Proposed Budget, the administration removed Community Development Block Grant funds from departments' baselines and reviewed department proposals for use of the federal grant funds for facilities and public services projects.

In OIRA, the budget provides \$700,000 to support the Ready To Work (RTW) program which was created by the City of Seattle in 2015 to empower and support immigrants and refugees in overcoming barriers on their journey to economic stability, quality jobs, and integration into life in Seattle.

See corresponding item "Remove CDBG From Baseline."

Eliminate Intern Budget

Expenditures \$(16,850)

This item decreases expenditures by \$16,850 General Fund ongoing to eliminate the intern program. OIRA has hired an intern the past three years to provide opportunities for immigrant youth to integrate into the workforce.

Transfer Language Access Program Costs

Expenditures \$(25,000)

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This item decreases expenditures by \$25,000 General Fund ongoing to reflect the transfer of the subscription costs for the city's centralized translation tool from OIRA to IT central costs. There are no programmatic impacts from this reduction.

Proposed Technical

Final Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures \$(14,872)

Citywide technical adjustments made in the proposed phase reflect changes to internal services costs, including rates from the Department of Finance & Administrative Services, Seattle Information Technology Department, Seattle Department of Human Resources, and for healthcare for the department. These adjustments reflect final decisions about these costs made during the Proposed Phase of the budget process.

New Citizenship Program Fund Source Update

Expenditures \$6,397

Revenues \$6,397

This item updates the funding source for two annual grants received to support the New Citizen Program (NCP). The NCP partners with 10 community-based organizations located through Seattle and King County to help low-income immigrants and refugees become US citizens.

Expenditure Overview

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Appropriations				
OIRA - BO-IA-X1N00 - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs				
00100 - General Fund	5,462,339	6,241,007	6,224,830	6,570,612
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	175,004	163,114	142,227	151,567
Total for BSL: BO-IA-X1N00	5,637,344	6,404,121	6,367,057	6,722,179
Department Total	5,637,344	6,404,121	6,367,057	6,722,179
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	12.00	12.50	12.50	12.50

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	5,462,339	6,241,007	6,224,830	6,570,612
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	175,004	163,114	142,227	151,567
Budget Totals for OIRA	5,637,344	6,404,121	6,367,057	6,722,179

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Revenue Overview

2025 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
331110	Direct Fed Grants	595,938	650,200	700,000	700,000
334010	State Grants	679,093	865,600	870,000	870,000
337010	Grants & Contr From Local Govt	29,678	51,652	53,649	53,649
360900	Miscellaneous Revs-Other Rev	100,000	-	-	-
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		1,404,710	1,567,452	1,623,649	1,623,649
Total OIRA Resources		1,404,710	1,567,452	1,623,649	1,623,649

Appropriations by Budget Summary Level and Program

OIRA - BO-IA-X1N00 - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

The purpose of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Budget Summary Level is to facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Seattle's civic, economic, and cultural life and to advocate on behalf of immigrant and refugee communities so that the City's programs and services better meet the unique needs of these constituents.

Program Expenditures	2023 Actuals	2024 Adopted	2025 Proposed	2026 Proposed
Office of Immigrant and Refuge	5,637,344	6,404,121	6,367,057	6,722,179
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