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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. **330**

01/11/2023 Authored by Feist, Noor, Vang, Norris, Frazier and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on State and Local Government Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to state government; creating the Office of New Americans; establishing
1.3 the Interdepartmental Coordinating Council on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs;
1.4 requiring reports; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter
1.5 116J.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. **[116J.4231] OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS.**

1.8 Subdivision 1. **Office established; purpose.** (a) The Office of New Americans is
1.9 established within the Department of Employment and Economic Development. The governor
1.10 must appoint an executive director who serves in the unclassified service. The executive
1.11 director must hire a program manager, an office assistant, and any staff necessary to carry
1.12 out the office's duties under subdivision 2.

1.13 (b) The purpose of the office is to serve immigrants and refugees in Minnesota by:

1.14 (1) addressing challenges that face immigrants and refugees in Minnesota;

1.15 (2) creating access in economic development and workforce programs and services; and

1.16 (3) providing interstate agency coordination, policy reviews, and guidance that assist in
1.17 creating access for immigrants and refugees.

1.18 Subd. 2. **Duties.** The Office of New Americans has the duty to:

1.19 (1) create and implement a statewide strategy to support immigrant and refugee integration
1.20 into Minnesota communities;

1.21 (2) address the state's workforce needs by connecting employers and job seekers within
1.22 the immigrant and refugee community;

2.1 (3) identify strategies to reduce employment barriers for immigrants and refugees;

2.2 (4) ensure equitable opportunities and access to services within state government for
2.3 immigrants and refugees;

2.4 (5) work with state agencies and community and foundation partners to undertake studies
2.5 and research and analyze economic and demographic trends to better understand and serve
2.6 the state's immigrant and refugee communities;

2.7 (6) coordinate and establish best practices for language access initiatives to all state
2.8 agencies;

2.9 (7) convene stakeholders and make policy recommendations to the governor on issues
2.10 impacting immigrants and refugees;

2.11 (8) promulgate rules necessary to implement and effectuate this section;

2.12 (9) provide an annual report, as required by subdivision 3; and

2.13 (10) perform any other activities consistent with the office's purpose.

2.14 Subd. 3. **Reporting.** (a) Beginning January 15, 2025, and each year thereafter, the Office
2.15 of New Americans shall report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over the
2.16 office's activities during the previous year.

2.17 (b) The report shall contain, at a minimum:

2.18 (1) a summary of the office's activities;

2.19 (2) suggested policies, incentives, and legislation designed to accelerate the achievement
2.20 of the duties under subdivision 2;

2.21 (3) any proposed legislative and policy initiatives;

2.22 (4) the amount and types of grants awarded under subdivision 6; and

2.23 (5) any other information deemed necessary and requested by the legislative committees
2.24 with jurisdiction over the office.

2.25 (c) The report may be submitted electronically and is subject to section 3.195, subdivision
2.26 1.

2.27 Subd. 4. **Interdepartmental Coordinating Council on Immigrant and Refugee**
2.28 **Affairs.** (a) An Interdepartmental Coordinating Council on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
2.29 is established to advise the Office of New Americans.

3.1 (b) The purpose of the council is to identify and establish ways in which state departments
3.2 and agencies can work together to deliver state programs and services effectively and
3.3 efficiently to Minnesota's immigrant and refugee populations. The council shall implement
3.4 policies, procedures, and programs requested by the governor through the state departments
3.5 and offices.

3.6 (c) The council shall be chaired by the executive director of the Office of New Americans
3.7 and shall be composed of the commissioners, department directors, or designees from the
3.8 following state departments and offices:

3.9 (1) the governor's office;

3.10 (2) the Department of Administration;

3.11 (3) the Department of Employment and Economic Development;

3.12 (4) the Department of Human Services;

3.13 (5) the Department of Human Services Refugee Resettlement Programs Office;

3.14 (6) the Department of Labor and Industry;

3.15 (7) the Department of Health;

3.16 (8) the Department of Education;

3.17 (9) the Office of Higher Education;

3.18 (10) the Department of Public Safety;

3.19 (11) the Department of Corrections; and

3.20 (12) the Office of New Americans.

3.21 (d) Each department or office specified in paragraph (c) shall designate one staff member
3.22 as an immigrant and refugee services liaison. The liaison's responsibilities shall include:

3.23 (1) preparation and dissemination of information and services available to immigrants
3.24 and refugees;

3.25 (2) interfacing with the Office of New Americans on issues that impact immigrants and
3.26 refugees and their communities; and

3.27 (3) where applicable, serving as the point of contact for immigrants and refugees accessing
3.28 resources both within the department and with boards charged with oversight of a profession.

3.29 Subd. 5. **No right of action.** Nothing in this section shall be construed to create any
3.30 right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party

4.1 against the state; its departments, agencies, or entities; its officers, employees, or agents;
4.2 or any other person.

4.3 Subd. 6. **Grants.** Within the limits of available appropriations, the Office of New
4.4 Americans may apply for grants for interested state agencies, community partners, and
4.5 stakeholders under this section to carry out the duties under subdivision 2.