

# **Building Bridges and Breaking Barriers:**

## **Career Pathways to Economic Stability for Seattle's Immigrant and Refugee Workers and Professionals**

A Report by the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs  
May 24, 2017

# Major Findings

- Economic and institutional barriers in several professional & middle wage occupations for I/R workers
  - Teaching
  - Healthcare
  - STEM fields
  - Government jobs
  - Building trades
- Expanding existing best-practice program and service models would :
  - Even the “playing field”
  - Accelerate I/R workers into targeted professional occupations and sectors
  - Support public policy goals: diversity, closing achievement gap

# Recommendations

1. Consider investing in the Puget Sound Welcome Back Center and house within Seattle College and community sites
2. OIRA participate in new inter-departmental team (IDT) for Workforce Entry and Employment Pathways.
3. OIRA and city departments build community based on-ramps into emerging career pathways and support an employer engagement strategy that focuses on placement into quality jobs.
4. OIRA work with the King County Skilled Immigrant and Refugee Support Network.

# Council Questions

1. What is the number of immigrants and refugees in Seattle and surrounding communities that would benefit from program?
2. What sectors or industries should be the focus of these services?
3. What is the best location of the services?
4. What would be the cost of these services?
5. What potential partnerships with organizations, businesses, and public sector institutions?
6. How will the services be integrated with services provided by the Seattle Colleges?

# Providing Services in Seattle

The costs of providing “Welcome Back” services in the City of Seattle would be approximately \$150,000 annually for case management, employer engagement and related activities to be offered on Seattle College campuses and in selected community based settings

# Feasibility Study Report Research

## Methodology

- Literature review
- Analysis of US Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Census
- Assessment of workforce development needs
- Analysis of wage and occupational structure of Seattle and King County workforce
- Interviews with college, CBO and workforce stakeholders
- Survey and data analysis of both national and regional “welcome back centers” and best practice models