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 addresses 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

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Department Support				
General Fund Support	6,550,953	10,677,283	10,526,393	10,575,901
Other Funding - Operating	145,227	148,766	146,590	146,532
Total Operations	**6,696,180**	**10,826,049**	**10,672,984**	**10,722,432**
Total Appropriations	**6,696,180**	**10,826,049**	**10,672,984**	**10,722,432**
Full-Time Equivalents Total*	12.50	16.00	14.00	14.00

** 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 2027 Proposed Budget for the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is $10.7 million. This budget is reduced by $153,000, or 1.4%, from the 2026 Adopted Budget, yet remains $4.3 million more than the 2025 Adopted Budget. The reduction is primarily due to a transfer of $125,000 to the Office of Labor Standards for labor-related training and education for immigrant and refugee communities. The budget also includes a baseline technical reduction to reconcile the employer contribution rate for the City's retirement system.

The 2027 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, Rapid Response, the Immigrant Safety and Access Network, the Language Access program, and the Ready to Work program, while continuing to refine newer programming commenced in 2026, including emergency assistance, and the expansion of Rapid Response program areas such as Community Small Grants, sector-based investments, and resource navigation. The proposed budget also extends the sunset date of a Strategic Advisor position to help implement and maintain these newer programming elements.

Incremental Budget Changes

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

	Dollars	FTE
2026 Adopted Budget	**10,826,049**	**16.00**
Baseline		
Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes	5,734	-
Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate	(33,799)	-
Proposed Operating		
Extend Sunset Date for Strategic Advisor 1	-	-
Transfer Immigration Support Funding to Office of Labor Standards via Finance General Transfer	(125,000)	-
Proposed Technical		
Net-Zero Grant Funding Sources Adjustment	-	-
Remove Sunsetting Positions	-	(2.00)
Total Incremental Changes	**$(153,065)**	**(2.00)**
Total 2027 Proposed Budget	**$10,672,984**	**14.00**

Description of Incremental Budget Changes

Baseline

Citywide Adjustments for Standard Cost Changes

Expenditures $5,734

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 and other central cost factors. These adjustments reflect initial assumptions about these costs and inflators early in the budget process.

Reduce SCERS Retirement Contribution Rate

Expenditures $(33,799)

The City’s employee retirement system, the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS) is a defined benefit pension program funded by a combination of salary-based employer (i.e., the City) and employee contributions, and investment earnings. Based on the updated actuarial valuation for 2026, this item reduces the employer contribution rate from the endorsed rate of 15.06% to the SCERS minimum actuarial required rate of 13.48% for 2027 and 13.52% for 2028.

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Proposed Operating

Extend Sunsetting Position

This item extends the sunset date of a Strategic Advisor 1 position to the end of 2027. The position was originally included in the 2026 Adopted Budget with a sunset period of one year, but its scope of work requires continued support. The funding for the sunset position is supported by the 2026 voter-approved change to the Business and Occupation Tax, which provided $4 million in additional funding for OIRA, a 60% growth in the office's budget. Managing this increased funding, including requests for proposals, contract oversight and other related programming requirements, requires sustained staffing capacity for one more year to implement the new and expanded initiatives.

Transfer Immigration Support Funding to Office of Labor Standards via Finance General Transfer

Expenditures	$(125,000)

This item transfers $125,000 in ongoing General Fund from the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs to Finance General to support a cash transfer to the Office of Labor Standards Fund. The Office of Labor Standards will use this funding for Community Outreach and Education Fund contracts that include Know Your Rights trainings and labor standards education for immigrant and refugee communities. Please see the Finance General Budget and the Office of Labor Standards Budget Sections for the appropriations increase supported by this cash transfer. The additional funding for the training is supported by the 2026 voter-approved change to the Business and Occupation Tax, which provided $4 million in additional funding for OIRA.

Proposed Technical

Net-Zero Grant Funding Sources Adjustment

Expenditures	-
Revenues	-

This technical item involves net-zero base budget transfers from 2026 funding sources to 2027 and 2028 funding sources to reconcile budget.

Remove Sunsetting Positions

Position Allocation	(2.00)

This technical item removes two sunsetting positions, a Strategic Advisor I and Grants and Contracts Specialist. These one-year positions were funded in the 2026 Adopted Budget as part of the $4 million added to the department by the voter-approved changes to the City's Business and Occupation Tax.

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Expenditure Overview

Appropriations	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
OIRA - BO-IA-X1N00 - Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs				
00100 - General Fund	6,550,953	10,677,283	10,526,393	10,575,901
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	145,227	148,766	146,590	146,532
Total for BSL: BO-IA-X1N00	**6,696,180**	**10,826,049**	**10,672,984**	**10,722,432**
Department Total	**6,696,180**	**10,826,049**	**10,672,984**	**10,722,432**
Department Full-Time Equivalents Total*	**12.50**	**16.00**	**14.00**	**14.00**

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Budget Summary by Fund Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
00100 - General Fund	6,550,953	10,677,283	10,526,393	10,575,901
14500 - Payroll Expense Tax	145,227	148,766	146,590	146,532
Budget Totals for OIRA	**6,696,180**	**10,826,049**	**10,672,984**	**10,722,432**

Revenue Overview

2027 Estimated Revenues

Account Code	Account Name	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
331110	Direct Fed Grants	700,000	700,000	700,000	700,000
334010	State Grants	888,829	870,000	870,000	870,000
337010	Grants & Contr From Local Govt	46,331	53,649	53,649	53,649
Total Revenues for: 00100 - General Fund		**1,635,159**	**1,623,649**	**1,623,649**	**1,623,649**
Total OIRA Resources		**1,635,159**	**1,623,649**	**1,623,649**	**1,623,649**

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

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	2025 Actuals	2026 Adopted	2027 Proposed	2028 Proposed
Office of Immigrant and Refuge	6,696,180	10,826,049	10,672,984	10,722,432
Total	**6,696,180**	**10,826,049**	**10,672,984**	**10,722,432**
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