



MIRA Coalition FY2024 Budget Requests

Protect low-income immigrant families from evictions

\$250M for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), Line Item 7004-9316

Low-income immigrant tenants are especially vulnerable to evictions, especially in the current housing crisis. RAFT is a homelessness prevention program within DCHD that provides short-term financial assistance to low-income families facing an eviction or utility shutoff. We also strongly recommend allowing earlier access to assistance by ending the requirement of a “notice to quit”, and eliminating the flat cap of \$10,000 per year.

Support essential wrap-around services for newly arrived immigrants

\$10M for Immigrant-Serving Organizations within Line Item 4000-0103

Immigrant-serving community organizations are often the first point of contact for the hundreds of immigrants arriving in MA each month fleeing political and humanitarian disasters. These organizations provide essential services that complement state efforts, including needs assessments, benefits enrollment, legal services, and more, but they need state support to meet increased demand.

Support economic self-sufficiency for immigrants and refugees

\$3 Million for Employment Support Services Program (ESSP) within Line Item 4401-1000

Administered by the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants, ESSP is a targeted program for TAFDC recipients whose first language is neither English nor Spanish, providing immigrants and refugees with occupational skills training and other supports to enter the workforce, including training in vocational English. Increased funding is essential to build self-sufficiency for newly arrived immigrants.

Support credentialing of internationally-trained nurses

\$190,000 for the Boston Welcome Back Center in Line Item 7518-0100

Since 2005, the Boston Welcome Back Center has helped over 600 internationally-trained nurses from 125 countries return to their profession. Founded at Bunker Hill Community College to meet our Commonwealth’s healthcare workforce needs, Welcome Back provides mentoring, foreign credential evaluation, and test prep for the nursing licensure exams. With targeted funding, the center can double its English language instruction, and also help offset the cumulative costs of nursing examinations, applications, test prep materials and classes that often frustrate progress toward licensure.

Support Adult Education & English Classes for Immigrants (ABE/ESOL)

\$70M for Line item 7035-0002

Ten percent of Massachusetts residents do not speak English well, limiting their employment opportunities, their economic mobility and their civic participation. Yet waitlists for adult English language classes still limit access for thousands of adult learners. Robust funding will improve staff compensation and retention and stimulate program innovation.

Support the Citizenship for New Americans Program (CNAP)

\$1,758,019 for Line item 4003-0122 (Level funding)

The Citizenship for New Americans Program (CNAP) helps eligible low-income immigrants apply for citizenship with English and civics classes and provides legal assistance with the 22-page citizenship application, among other services. Participants in citizenship programs are more likely to succeed in acquiring citizenship. Level funding for CNAP in FY24 allows providers to address continuing demand for citizenship services for immigrants seeking the benefits of citizenship – including the ability to vote!