

Tri-County Refugee Planning Committee (RPC)

2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:



Creating a New Economic Reality for Immigrants and Refugees in Washington

- Maintain full funding for the LEP Pathway Employment program and Naturalization Services. Both programs are critical to helping Refugees and Immigrants become successful, contributing members in their new homeland. These services are more important than ever to help the most vulnerable during the pandemic and recovery period, a time of unprecedented crisis.
- Support legislation that is progressive, equitable and inclusive for all, including:
 - **HB 1723: The WA Digital Equity Act**

LEP PATHWAY & NATURALIZATION SERVICES:

COST EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS THAT SAVE MONEY & PROMOTE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

1. LEP PATHWAY is an essential program that provides English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and employment services to refugees and limited English speaking TANF recipients to increase their employability. ESL is critical for refugees to become gainfully employed with living wages. Professional case managers, often refugees themselves, help clients enroll in ESL, assist with job search, skills training, job placement and job retention, helping refugees and immigrants integrate into the American work culture. Often this means assisting in transferring skills and education from careers in their home country. Case management services address barriers along the way and result in employment leading to self-sufficiency and reduces or eliminates reliance on TANF and other assistance programs. Refugees and immigrants support the local economy and help businesses meet their workforce needs.
2. NATURALIZATION SERVICES help refugees and immigrants, including the elderly and disabled, to obtain U.S. citizenship. Qualified case managers and instructors help clients complete the application process, prepare for their interview and test. As naturalized U.S. citizens, they can vote, apply for government jobs, travel freely, and protect themselves and their families. As citizens, the elderly and disabled are eligible for federal rather than state funded benefits, saving the state money and increasing benefits for clients.

We ask that legislators support progressive policies that benefit low-income immigrant and refugee families. The tri-county RPC strongly supports the following bill that has been introduced in the current 2022 legislative session:

- **HB 1723: The WA Digital Equity Act**

We thank the legislature for past and continued support of the LEP Pathway & Naturalization Services



For more information, please contact Vicki Asakura, Tri-County Refugee Planning Committee, at (206) 251-3079 or vasakura@comcast.net

TRI COUNTY REFUGEE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Serving King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties with affiliate members in Spokane and other regions in WA State