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Int. No. 839

By Council Members Hudson, Velázquez, Hanif, Louis, Schulman, De La Rosa and Ung

A Local Law to amend the New York city charter, in relation to establishing an office of refugee and migrant settlement

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. The New York city charter is amended by adding a new section 18-a to read as follows:

§ 18-a Office of refugee and migrant settlement. a. For the purposes of this section, the term "director" means the director of the office of refugee and migrant settlement.

b. The mayor shall establish an office of refugee and migrant settlement. Such office may, but need not, be established in the executive office of the mayor and may be established as a separate office within any other office of the mayor. Such office shall be headed by a director who shall be appointed by the mayor.

c. The office of refugee and migrant settlement shall coordinate short and long term access to relevant resources, including housing, medical care, education, and food, to any individual who is resettled from a foreign nation, for any reason, in the city of New York, providing they meet eligibility requirements established by the Mayor’s office of Immigrant Affairs, including any individuals who:

(1) Have processing priority levels 1, 2 or 3 according to the federal department of state; or

(2) Are from a country designated for temporary protected status by the federal department of homeland security; or

(3) Are from a region for which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees declared a level 3 emergency.

d. The director of the office of refugee and migrant settlement shall:

1. Advise and assist the mayor in planning, developing and coordinating efforts among agencies under the jurisdiction of the mayor to coordinate an all-agency response to the arrival of refugees and migrants from anywhere under any circumstances to ensure those eligible individuals have the resources needed to resettle in the city of New York. The director shall, in collaboration with relevant departments and agencies, use a culturally-competent and holistic approach, based on socioeconomic and public health considerations, that addresses the needs of eligible individuals to safely establish themselves in the city of New York until they are able to return to their country of origin, or elsewhere, safely should they leave the city of New York. Such efforts may include the development and implementation of programs, initiatives and strategies that:

(a) Prevent eligible individuals from being homeless;

(b) Ensure the health and safety of eligible individuals;

(c) Place newcomer youth in schools where staff have training in supporting newcomer immigrants and English language learners;

(d) Ensure eligible individuals have access to culturally-competent, appropriate nutrition;

(e) Connect eligible individuals to appropriate city agencies, social services, legal services, and community-based organizations authorized and able to provide needed services and goods without fear of recrimination;

(f) Identify, secure and allocate funds from city, state, federal and other sources.

5. No later than September 1, 2023, and September 1 of every year thereafter, the office shall provide to the mayor and speaker of the council and post on such office's website, a report detailing the activities of the office during the previous calendar year, including the following:

(a) The number of people for whom the office coordinated access to services the office deems relevant to its mission, their countries of origin, and reasons for seeking refuge;

(b) Information regarding initiatives the office has undertaken, including initiatives conducted in partnership with other offices, agencies, and community-based organizations; and

(c) The nature and purpose of the services provided, the cost of such services, and whether the office sought and received remuneration from the state of federal government for delivery of such services.

6. Perform such other duties as the mayor may assign.

§ 2. This local law takes effect 30 days after it becomes law.

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