



# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN

2015-2018



**Office of International and Immigrant Affairs**

CITY OF AURORA • 15151 E. Alameda Parkway, Aurora, Colorado

## **WHAT WE DO**

The Office of International and Immigrant Affairs was created to facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Aurora's civic, economic and cultural life. The office will oversee the development and implementation of a strategic citywide plan regarding policy, programs and initiatives toward the local immigrant and refugee populations. This office will oversee the coordination of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission, Aurora International Roundtable, Aurora Global Fest and the Aurora International Cabinet. In addition, the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs will lead international efforts focused in the establishment of strategic global partnerships, manage official protocol activities and events, and serve as a liaison to the international community.

## **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**On behalf of the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs,  
we would like to offer a special thanks to:**

**Aurora City Council  
City of Aurora Staff  
Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force  
Aurora International Roundtable  
Aurora Welcome Center  
Aurora Sister Cities International  
Aurora Strong Resilience Center  
Rights for All People  
Providers, Advisors and Community Members**



## LETTER FROM THE MAYOR AND THE CITY MANAGER

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As each year passes, we see Aurora becoming a more diverse and international city. People from about 140 countries make their home in this community because they feel welcome, find opportunity and achieve success. Our international community has found a comfortable place to live here, with excellent housing values and access to great schools and job opportunities.

For many of these residents, moving here means adopting a whole new way of life and learning how to become an integral part of the community. True integration happens at the local level, and cities and local officials play a key role in that integration process.

In the past few years, the addition of Aurora Sister Cities International, the Aurora International Roundtable, the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, and the Aurora Welcome Center has created a strong foundation of support for our international newcomers. With the support of the Aurora City Council, the time has come to take the city to the next level in the city's commitment to its immigrant communities.

The city of Aurora's newly renamed Office of International and Immigrant Affairs is launching this comprehensive strategy to further address the challenges related to immigrant integration in our city. We sought extensive input from the community right from the start, so the plan is a reflection of those thoughts and ideas.

These policies and innovative programs involving collaborations with other local organizations target issues related to civic engagement, promotion of citizenship and naturalization, small business, economic development, public safety, sports and recreation, arts, education and culture, among others.

Ultimately, this three-year plan is designed to meet the needs of our international community and fully engage them in civic, economic and cultural life, putting the city on track to becoming a national leader in the area of immigrant integration.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen D. Hogan".

Steve Hogan  
MAYOR OF AURORA



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George".

George "Skip" Noe  
CITY MANAGER







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# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018

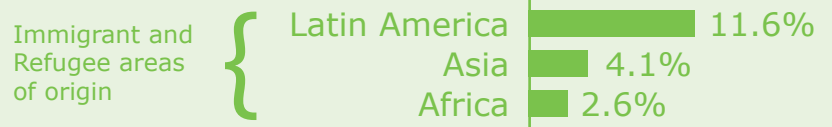
## BACKGROUND

Today, like many cities and towns across the United States, Aurora is becoming a more diverse and international city. Local officials from all over the country are recognizing that supporting immigrant integration is essential to the vibrancy, safety, economic prosperity and cultural richness of their cities.



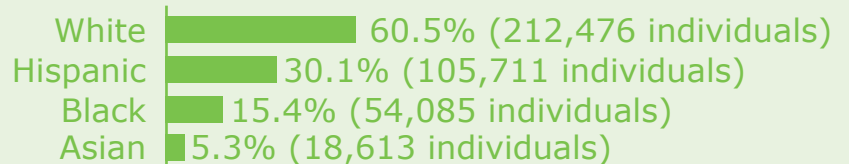
Immigrants and refugees are a growing segment of Aurora’s population. Although immigrants and refugees use Aurora’s schools, parks, libraries, emergency and social services, they face unintended obstacles to participating in civic and public life. These challenges include linguistic and cultural barriers, possible fear of government and law enforcement agencies, and a lack of awareness and understanding of available resources, such as access to social services, medical coverage and employment services. These factors keep immigrants and refugees from being full partners in the life of the city and sharing their many contributions with the community.

**Total number of foreign residents in Aurora is 67,967 (19.7% of the total population, or 1 in 5)**



*\*139 languages spoken in the Aurora Public School system*

**According to the 2015 U.S. Census, Aurora’s current race/ethnic composition includes:**



Over the past several years, the city of Aurora has increased its commitment to including immigrants and refugees in civic and public life. As a result of that commitment, the city has established the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, the International Roundtable, Global Fest, and reestablished Aurora Sister Cities International. Also, the city has played a key role in the establishment and opening of the Aurora Welcome Center, which is dedicated to empowering new arrivals through education about resources and services.

## IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

While the city has put forth resources to address the needs of the immigrant and refugee community, the manner in which it deploys those resources and to what end is critical in implementing an effective strategy. In other words, the question that must be asked is, “why are we doing this work?” The following definition of integration helps to answer the question:



"Integration is a long-term process, through which immigrants and host communities communicate effectively, function together and enrich each other; create economic opportunities, and have mutual respect and understanding among people of different cultures." (National Immigration Forum)

Successful "integration," as defined above, should drive our efforts as we work with immigrant and refugee communities. That integration occurs at the local level, where municipal governments seek to meet the needs of new residents and embrace the diversity embodied in the immigrant and refugee community. As a municipal government and "host community," we play a key role in that integration process, ensuring that our newcomer community feels welcome and views government as a resource rather than an impediment.

The Comprehensive Strategic Plan 2015-2018 that follows proposes a set of policies and strategies that aim to further the city's integration efforts. The primary objectives of the plan are to maximize resources, develop innovative efforts, and avoid duplication of programs and services aimed at the local immigrant and refugee community. Rather than a constellation of related and at times disparate activities (e.g. Roundtable, Sister Cities, Welcome Center), the comprehensive plan organizes the city's immigrant and refugee efforts toward one goal: integration.

The plan that follows is made up of five key areas:

- **Community Engagement & Public Input:** This section outlines how city staff was able to engage Aurora's immigrant and refugee communities in order to identify needs and priorities, while also soliciting feedback on the draft comprehensive plan.
- **Timeline:** The timeline offers key dates for the review of the plan and its rollout to key constituencies.
- **Strategic Policy Recommendations:** The comprehensive plan lays out four policy recommendations to more effectively implement the plan moving forward. Generally, these recommendations reflect the City Council's creation in the 2015 budget of an "Office of International Initiatives." Importantly, the dedication of this office provides an appropriate location organizationally for activities related to the international, immigrant, refugee, and newcomer communities. The strategic recommendations speak to four areas: 1) the work of the Office of International Initiatives moving forward; 2) the constitution of the Immigrant & Refugee Commission; 3) the coordination of activities across city departments; and 4) the evaluation of the office's efforts.
- **Comprehensive Strategic Plan: Goals & Proposed Activities 2015-2018:** This section of the plan proposes eight distinct goals to be undertaken by the city related to successful integration. Each goal is described and assigned a lead agency, proposed key partners for implementation, and activities to achieve the specific goal. This section essentially represents the proposed programs and initiatives to be undertaken over the next three years.



- **Organizational Structure:** The final section provides an organizational chart outlining the city's efforts with the immigrant, refugee and newcomer community moving forward. It also touches on the programs' work with partner agencies.

## 1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INPUT

In order to identify the needs and priorities of Aurora's immigrant and refugee population, as well as to gather input and suggestions on the draft plan, an online survey was distributed to local service providers, key immigrant and refugee leaders, and community advocates working with these populations. In addition, as part of this community engagement process, the city organized several focus groups, as well as community meetings in different languages across the city. These efforts were undertaken in partnership with the Aurora Welcome Center, the International Roundtable, Aurora Sister Cities, and the Aurora Immigrant & Refugee Task Force. The groups allowed us to gather key information to determine how immigrant and refugee residents rank issues, challenges and opportunities. This data will assist the city in prioritizing the different projects focused on the needs of the international community over the next three years.

## 2. TIMELINE

### May - Ongoing 2015:

Meetings with stakeholders and members of the Aurora International Roundtable, Aurora Sister Cities, Aurora Welcome Center, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, senior city staff, and local community leaders in social, faith based, housing and all other aspects of community presence.

### July 2015:

Weeks 1-2: Development of the online survey, content and agenda of the focus groups, and community meetings.

Week 3-4: Send out online survey, hold focus group/community meetings.

Week 4: Data processing and preparation of draft Comprehensive Plan.

### August 2015:

Weeks 1-2: Incorporate survey and focus group findings in to draft Comprehensive Plan and present to Foundations, Quality of Life, & Boards & Commissions Committee.

Weeks 3-4: Final review.





## September 2015:

Week 3: Presentation to City Council

Week 4: Presentation to members of the immigrant and refugee communities, service providers and local organizations.

### 3. STRATEGIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to develop and implement the goals of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan, the plan recommends changes related to organizational structure and governance, as well as a coordinated implementation effort between city departments. These policy recommendations have less to do with the simple provision of specific services than with establishing formal structures and opportunities for refugees and immigrants to develop their leadership skills and participate in decision-making in local government. The implementation of this important set of policy recommendations will put Aurora on track to becoming a national leader in the area of immigrant integration.

#### Recommendations:

##### A. Create an Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

Under the current organizational structure, the Office of International Initiatives resides within the City Manager's Office. During the discussion of the 2015 budget, the City Council tasked this office with coordinating the city's various efforts related to the international, immigrant and refugee community. After studying the best practices in the area of immigrant integration from all over the country and considering the changes in the demographics in Aurora, we strongly believe that it is time to retitle the office to better describe its responsibilities and purview. We therefore recommend the creation of an "Office of International and Immigrant Affairs" to replace the Office of International Initiatives (See Appendix A for examples nation-wide). This title better reflects the work envisioned in the Comprehensive Strategic Plan that will be outlined in section four of this document. This fits with the national trends for cities and towns across the United States. Such an office would focus on the following:

- Facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Aurora's civic, economic, and cultural life
- Teach civics with a goal to build empowerment and advocacy
- Provide effective leadership for issues impacting immigrants and refugees
- Oversee development and implement policy programs and services aimed at the local refugee and immigrant population
- Build partnerships with city departments to implement cohesive, coordinated, and accessible programs for immigrants and refugees
- Serve as a focal point for activities that would increase immigrant and refugee civic engagement and work on emerging issues that affect immigrants and refugees



- Support the city’s international efforts, manage official international protocol activities and events, and serve as a liaison to the international community. Also, the head of this office would oversee the coordination of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission

## **B. Formalize the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force**

The initial goal of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force (AIRTF) was to reach out to the community and build a relationship with its members to identify their needs. Since its creation in June 2014, the AIRTF has worked toward this goal, but still needs to establish a formal internal structure, or mission, and develop a plan to meet its stated goal. In order to adequately staff and set up the Task Force for success in both the short and long term, we recommend formalizing the AIRTF, including assigning staffing responsibilities to the proposed Office of International and Immigrant Affairs. The main objectives of this proposed model is to offer the following; 1) foster collaboration and partnership between the AIRTF and the city; 2) share resources and information; 3) develop joint efforts and projects; 4) avoid duplication and clarify community roles; 5) encourage more civic participation from these communities; 6) cultivate new leadership in the international population; and 7) identify emerging issues and offer advice and insight for elected leaders and city staff. Finally, we strongly believe that the AIRTF is an important voice and should transition into a formal city commission in the near future. Many cities have an advisory commission or other chartered group charged with similar tasks.

## **C. Establishment of the International Cabinet or inter-agency working group**

Immigrant integration efforts at the city level require a comprehensive and coordinated effort between city departments and municipal agencies. This inter-agency approach will help ensure that programs, strategies, and plans for the local immigrant and refugee populations are implemented in a cost effective and timely manner. Having this kind of inter-agency working group will optimize city service delivery and avoid the duplication of city services and programs. In addition, collaboration between key city staff members and sharing of resources will improve efficiency, internal communication, and coordination among city departments. The cabinet will meet on a monthly basis and be comprised of department representatives with authority/responsibility over programs related to immigrant integration. The cabinet will be staffed by the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs.

## **D. Establishment of evaluation performance efforts**

To evaluate these efforts, a metric evaluation system will be developed with a focus on measuring quantitative and qualitative results, depending on the nature of the project or program in accordance with the most modern evaluation methods used in the immigrant integration field. City staff will explore the possibility of local higher education institutions providing technical expertise regarding the evaluation of integration efforts.

# **4. COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN: GOALS AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

The findings from the online survey, community conversations and focus groups were considered in the prioritization of programs and initiatives described below.

## **A. INTEGRATION THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

**Goal:** To encourage more people with an immigrant and refugee background to get involved in civic affairs so that their intercultural competence can be used for the benefit of the Aurora community.



**“Engaging immigrants and refugees in the civic life of the city, by promoting naturalization among newcomers will help local governments foster a more welcoming environment and encourage greater civic participation among our new residents.” (National League of Cities)**

**Lead agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key partners:** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Aurora Communications Department, non-profit immigrant and refugee serving organizations, International Cabinet, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Aurora Welcome Center, the Colorado African Organization, and volunteer church and service agencies

### **Activities:**

- Launch local naturalization efforts in collaboration with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and local community partners
- Explore opportunities to participate in national campaigns that promote naturalization and immigrant integration
- Encourage and celebrate the transition to citizenship by hosting naturalization ceremonies in city venues and celebrating National Citizenship Day
- Promote the benefits of naturalization through ethnic media and the city of Aurora Communications Department
- Establish new relationships and collaborations with national and international organizations to exchange best practices in the field of immigrant integration
- Train frontline city staff to provide information on citizenship services and ESL classes
- Develop the “New Americans Citizens Academy” to train and develop leadership skills among emerging community leaders from the immigrant and refugee community. The Academy is a program designed to educate newcomers, foster communication between new residents and city government, and even encourage future city leaders. Participants learn about a wide variety of topics, from city services to how local government functions. This program will help municipal officials and community leaders inform immigrants and refugees about local government. The Academy will also assist in broadening the pool of future leaders for service on city boards and commissions.
- Develop and implement the “Natural Helpers Program.” This nationally recognized innovative program trains local volunteers from the immigrant and refugee community to assist newcomers and link them to programs, resources and services in the community.
- Support partnership efforts related to cultural immersion and integration programs focused on the immigrant and refugee population
- Enhance avenues for new residents to obtain information about available programs and resources across the city, and hold public meetings in places where immigrants will attend
- Expand outreach efforts to ensure newcomers are included in the planning of city development projects



- Organize special events at the Aurora Municipal Center to celebrate the contributions of the refugee and immigrant communities to the city of Aurora
- Increase the appointment of qualified members of the immigrant and refugee community on city boards and commissions
- Strengthen the mission and work of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force as the city’s premier advisory body for immigrants and refugees in the city

## B. SAFETY IN OUR INTERNATIONAL CITY

**Goal:** To strengthen peaceful coexistence in our international city increasing security for all residents.

**“Police-immigrant relationships are essential for effective community policing and public safety outreach is crucial for immigrants and refugees accustomed to different cultures and police expectations.” (National League of Cities)**

**Lead Agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key partners:** Aurora Police Department, Aurora Fire Department, Aurora Communications, International Cabinet, Aurora Welcome Center, Aurora Office of Emergency Management, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Aurora City Attorney’s Office, The Asian Pacific Development Center, faith-based organizations, and victim advocates

### Activities:

- Support and expand the Aurora Police Department’s Multicultural Neighborhood Watch program, which informs the immigrant and refugee community
- Engage the Aurora Police Department (APD) to create opportunities for regular meetings between immigrant advocates, community-based organizations, members of the refugee and immigrant community, and members of the police force
- Assist APD and the Aurora Fire Department (AFD) with cultural competence and cross-cultural training programs
- Develop a partnership with the APD and other local community partners for a series of public media educational and awareness campaigns in the area of child safety, prevention of domestic violence, human trafficking, and drunk driving
- Develop a partnership with the APD for a city wide effort in the area of crime prevention and community policing that engage newcomers, fighting crime by combating fears, and addressing concerns of all communities
- Develop a city wide “Emergency Preparedness Initiative” focused on the immigrant and refugee population
- Develop a series of fire safety programs in the refugee and immigrant communities





- Support APD and AFD recruitment efforts to increase diversity in our police and fire departments
- Create a specific public safety component as a part of the curriculum of “The New Americans Citizens Academy” to educate new residents about public safety and law enforcement issues and foster volunteerism through alumni organization of academy graduates

## **C. INTEGRATING THROUGH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

**Goal:** Develop and implement a city sponsored innovative effort to offer English as a Second Language (ESL) and civic classes in the immigrant and refugee community.

**“Learning English is an important tool for immigrants and refugees to gain the opportunities to reach their full potential and contribute to the community.” (National Immigration Forum)**

**Lead agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key Partners:** Aurora Public Schools, Communications/Aurora TV, Aurora Public Library, International Cabinet, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Cherry Creek Schools, Community College of Aurora, and other private and public service organizations offering language learning

### **Activities:**

- Produce a new television series to teach ESL and civics through the public library system, community partners, and Communications/Aurora TV. This television series will include tutorials, live discussions between teachers and students, and information on civics and American culture.
- Support expansion of ESL classes and adult education programs throughout the city
- Create public and private partnerships to create more accessible ESL opportunities
- Promote English language instruction information and community resources for English language learners in the Aurora Public Library system
- Extend opportunities to learn a second language for Aurorans wanting to communicate with newcomers for business and social purposes

## **D. INTEGRATION IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS**

**Goal:** To bring people together and eliminate boundaries of nations and generations in the city’s neighborhoods, to disseminate information about city resources to newcomers, and to make the city attractive for all residents of the community.

**“Immigrants and refugees face a unique set of challenges in accessing city services due to the language barrier, lack of trust in government, and cultural differences.” (National League of Cities)**

**Lead agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key partners:** Aurora Neighborhood Services Department, Tri-County Health Department, RTD, International Cabinet, Aurora Welcome Center, Adams, Douglas and Arapahoe County governments, and Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force

## Activities:

- Train city staff to effectively identify and meet the needs of the immigrant and refugee population
- Develop a series of educational workshops and training sessions for the immigrant and refugee population related to neighborhood issues, such as zoning, permits, city regulations, business licenses, and a host of other diverse topics
- Develop training sessions on cultural awareness, sensitivity and cross-cultural programs for city employees, as well as boards and commissions
- Promote the concept of community gardens as a method to promote togetherness and expand outreach efforts toward the local immigrant and refugee populations
- Engage newcomers in current city programs and initiatives related to the city 's beautification, anti-loitering, and graffiti cleaning projects
- Assist the Tri-County Health Department in their outreach efforts to promote public health in the immigrant and refugee populations
- Develop an online information database for services offered to immigrant and refugee residents and make vital documents language accessible for non-English speaking residents
- Develop and implement a city program to educate Aurora residents about immigrants and refugees, including cultures, languages and foods
- Develop a partnership with RTD for a public media campaign focused on educating the immigrant and refugee population about public transportation, covering topics like how to ride the bus and buy tickets, information about routes, and provide maps

## E. INTEGRATING THROUGH ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL GROWTH

**Goal:** To promote immigrant and refugee entrepreneurship as a route to economic integration and to promote wealth building and utilization of mainstream financial services among newcomers.

**“While immigrants tend to set up businesses at higher rates than their native-born peers, they face greater obstacles such as limited access to capital and financial services, a lack of familiarity with the local markets and business environment, and lack of knowledge about resources and programs for entrepreneurs.” (Migration Policy Institute)**

**Lead agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs





**Key partners:** Small Business Administration, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Ethnic Chambers of Commerce, International Cabinet, Aurora Economic Development Council, Aurora Welcome Center, Aurora Small Business Development Center, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Visit Aurora, Havana BID and 'Fax Aurora

### Activities:

- Assess existing programs and services for immigrant and refugee small businesses
- Explore innovative models that are being implemented across the country
- Develop a citywide plan to support immigrant and refugee small businesses
- Explore the possibility to create a special start-up business fund to implement a micro-lending program to increase capital for immigrant and refugee small business owners supported by financial institution partners
- Partner with community lenders and local financial institutions to launch a citywide campaign to promote financial literacy among immigrants and refugees
- Develop an outreach plan to educate new residents about home buyer programs and resources
- Develop and expand education programs for tenants and home owners
- Expand current efforts to educate new renters about their rights and responsibilities
- Create a small business start-up information center to be located at the Aurora Welcome Center
- Develop training programs for immigrant and refugee small business owners in collaboration with the Aurora Welcome Center
- Support vocational targeted language and workforce training opportunities for newcomers
- Foster relationships with local ethnic chambers of commerce
- Reinforce affordable housing initiatives
- Support efforts at protecting newcomers from predatory practices targeting the immigrant and refugee community

## F. INTERNATIONALITY AS A DRIVING FORCE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Goal:** To improve Aurora's appeal to entrepreneurs from all over the world and to further expand our international relationships in the field of science and business.



**In order to continue to grow and become a key player at the international level, international strategic partnerships and collaborations in the areas of economics, culture, medicine, and business must be developed.**

**Lead agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key partners:** Aurora Sister Cities, International Cabinet, Visit Aurora, Aurora International Roundtable, Aurora Economic Development Council, and the Anschutz Community-Campus Partnership

**Activities:**

- Define and promote international trade and investment in the city
- Develop relationships with foreign consulates, foreign governments, World Denver IIE, the World Trade Center and Aurora Sister Cities to promote Aurora as an international destination for business and tourism
- Promote the retention of foreign students attending colleges and universities in Aurora
- Monitor business activities of foreign companies in the Denver greater area and promote the participation of local companies in international trade and business missions
- Partner with Aurora Sister Cities and the Office of the Mayor/Council to participate in and plan trade/exchange missions with cities abroad
- Support business and economic partnerships with our current Sister Cities
- Strengthen and expand the work and mission of the Aurora International Roundtable
- Expand current city branding efforts to promote Aurora as a business friendly, international city

**G. INTEGRATING THROUGH SPORTS AND RECREATION**

**Goal:** To utilize sporting activities to bring newcomers and Aurora residents together, to create a better understanding across ethnic and linguistic boundaries, to promote and develop social skills among new residents, and to promote social cohesion in the Aurora community.

**“Recreational activities and sports help to improve the quality of life for all residents in the city, especially for those newcomers learning how to integrate into a new city.” (National League of Cities)**





**Lead Agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key Partners:** Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space, immigrant and refugee organizations, ethnic media, International Cabinet, Visit Aurora, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, and local sports organizations

**Activities:**

- Develop a citywide sports and recreation outreach effort to educate newcomers about parks programs, regulations and services
- Promote the use of parks facilities and sport and recreation programs among new residents of the city
- Organize the annual “International Bike Day event” to promote the use of bikes among new residents, introduce them to bike safety and Aurora trails and bike routes
- Organize the “Aurora International Soccer Cup” to bring newcomers and Aurora residents together to foster better relationships among different ethnic groups in the community
- Use sports and recreational activities as a key integration tool for our new residents, especially the youth of both genders

## H. INTEGRATING THROUGH ARTS AND CULTURE

**Goal:** To achieve a greater immigrant and refugee participation in the cultural life of the city, to enrich the city’s cultural life and to make the city more creative.

**“Immigrants and refugees integrate more easily through artistic and cultural activities and experiences, while enriching the cultural life of the city as a whole.” (National League of Cities)**

**Lead agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key partners:** Aurora Public Library, The Aurora Fox, Downtown Aurora Visual Arts, Aurora Public Schools, Aurora International Roundtable, Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space, Aurora Cultural Affairs Commission, International Cabinet, Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Task Force, Art in Public Places Commission, and Cherry Creek Schools, City of Aurora Poet Laureate, the Aurora History Museum, the Aurora Cultural Arts District and the Community College of Aurora

**Activities:**

- Develop outreach efforts to promote arts and cultural events among immigrants and refugees
- Establish partnerships with local art and cultural organizations to develop art programs for immigrant and refugee children and youth
- Promote art, music and culture as key integration tools among newcomers
- Work with the Aurora Public Library system to organize cultural events and programs geared toward the local immigrant and refugee population



- Support local public art projects geared toward the local refugee and immigrant population
- Celebrate the cultural heritage in the city and create an international calendar of events to promote international activities and cultural celebrations within the city
- Strengthen and expand “Global Fest” as the city’s premier arts and cultural event
- Utilize Aurora Sister Cities as a resource to recruit international artists, musicians or performers for Global Fest and other events
- Establish an Annual Mini-Grant program to help immigrant and refugee organizations to fund community based projects, events and activities related to arts, culture and immigrant integration
- Identify significant dates honored in other predominant cultures and religions and limit city scheduled activities on those dates to honor them

## I. INTEGRATION THROUGH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**Goal:** To reduce medical bankruptcy, illness burden, suicides and exacerbated chronic health conditions.

**“Compared to their native counterparts, immigrants and refugees are at higher risk for developing mental health problems due to previous trauma and/or the stress of migration and resettlement; such as war, violence, poverty, and acculturation.” (Wilder Foundation)**

**Lead agency:** Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

**Key partners:** Aurora Mental Health Center, Refugee Mental Health at the University of Colorado, Refugee Health Services of Colorado, Tri-County Health

### Activities:

- Support HEAL, a campaign to promote healthy eating and active living among Aurora residents
- Promote availability of native and localized markets to bring familiar products to family tables
- With Tri-County, promote health initiatives to lower smoking, substance and drug use, especially in youth; to increase healthy eating and active living; to make connections to medically relevant primary care medical homes
- Feature immigrants and refugees in public media campaigns, particularly visual displays and ads targeted at health and mental well being





# City Manager's Office

## Aurora Welcome Center

To serve as a resource for the growing immigrant and refugee community, the AWC connects newcomers to the resources, services, and opportunities they need to fully participate in the economic, civic, social and cultural life of the community.

## Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

To facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Aurora's civic, economic, and cultural life and to oversee development and implementation of a strategic citywide plan regarding policy programs and initiatives toward the local refugee and immigrant populations. This office will lead international efforts focused in the establishment of strategic global partnerships and will manage official protocol activities and events, and serve as a liaison to the international community. Also the head of this office will oversee the coordination of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission.

## Aurora Sister Cities

To foster mutually beneficial relationships with our international sister cities partners in the areas of culture, arts, economics and education

## International Roundtable

To assist and collaborate with the city in the creation of international business opportunities, to celebrate the economic, cultural and civic contributions of the international community and to serve as a key partner in the organization of the Annual Global Fest event.

## Global Fest

The City's premier international event to celebrate the diversity, arts, culture and economic contributions of the international community to the city of Aurora.

## Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission

To serve as an advisory body to the city and to work with the office of international and immigrant affairs regarding programs and policies toward the local immigrant and refugee communities. The AIRC will support local immigrant integration efforts and assist the city in their outreach efforts toward the immigrant and refugee population.

## International Cabinet

To coordinate all internal city efforts between city departments and municipal agencies toward the international community, this inter-agency approach will ensure that programs, strategies and plans for the local immigrant and refugee population are implemented in a very cost effective manner.

## APPENDIX A

Examples of cities nationwide with office structures similar to the proposed City of Aurora Office of International & Immigrant Affairs:

City of Allentown, PA (118,577) Office of Immigrant and Multi-Cultural Affairs

<http://www.allentownpa.gov/Government/Mayors-Office/Immigrant-and-Multi-Cultural-Affairs>

City of Atlanta, GA (447,841) Office of International Affairs

<http://www.atlantaga.gov/index.aspx?page=636>

City of Cleveland, OH (390,113) Chief of Government and International Affairs

[http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/City of Cleveland/Home/Government/Cabinet/VMcCall](http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/City%20of%20Cleveland/Home/Government/Cabinet/VMcCall)

City of Denver, CO (649,495) Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

<https://www.denvergov.org/humanrights/HumanRightsandCommunityPartnerships/OurOffices/ImmigrantandRefugeeAffairs/tabid/445156/Default.aspx>

City of Newark, NJ (278,427) Office of International Relations and Diaspora Affairs

<http://www.ci.newark.nj.us/government/mayor/intl-relations-diaspora-affairs/>

City of Orlando, FL (255,483) Office of International Affairs

<http://www.cityoforlando.net/mayor/international-affairs/>

City of Richmond, VA (214,000) Office of Multicultural Affairs

<http://www.richmondgov.com/HispanicLiaison/>

City of Seattle, WA (652,405) Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

<http://www.seattle.gov/office-of-immigrant-and-refugee-affairs>









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