

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Increase Access to Workforce Development Programs for New Maine Residents

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §20 is enacted to read:

§ 20. Immigrant Workforce Development Fund

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Fund" means the Immigrant Workforce Development Fund established in subsection 2.

B. "Ethnicity-based community organization" means an organization in this State that provides services to legal immigrants and refugees, including but not limited to:

(1) Helping with naturalization applications;

(2) Assisting with social and cultural adjustment;

(3) English language skills classes for adults and youth;

(4) Citizenship classes;

(5) Financial literacy classes for adults and youth;

(6) Parenting classes;

(7) Interpretation services;

(8) Assistance with reading documents; and

(9) Training and supporting adults and youth seeking employment.

2. Establishment. The Immigrant Workforce Development Fund is established to provide competitive grants to ethnicity-based community organizations to fund programs and services to help legal immigrants and refugees become economically self-sufficient.

3. Qualification for grants. An ethnicity-based community organization may apply for a grant under this section using forms and procedures determined by the commissioner. The commissioner shall adopt rules for the standards, approval and administration of the fund, including the establishment of grant award requirements and specifications and procedures for the application and distribution of available funds. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are major substantive rules as defined by Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF

Initiative: Provides funding for the Immigrant Workforce Development Fund to provide services to legal immigrants and refugees.

GENERAL FUND	2017-18	2018-19
All Other	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000

SUMMARY

This bill establishes and funds the Immigrant Workforce Development Fund, which provides competitive grants to ethnicity-based community organizations to fund programs and services to help legal immigrants and refugees become economically self-sufficient.