



**January 30, 2024**

Good afternoon,

My name is Fatuma Hussein, and I'm the executive director of the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine (IRCM). When I moved to Maine in 2001, it felt like I had been transported to another world. I remember seeing snow for the first time and wondering what I got my family and myself into. While it was an adjustment, I'm so grateful for making that brave decision to build a new life here for my family and myself. Maine offered me more than safety and comfort for my family; this state I call home now has provided me the tools, resources, and opportunities to build a strong foundation and develop into the person you see before you today. But I wasn't alone in this personal development because my story is one of many that unfolded for young New Mainers across the state.

I witnessed the growth in ethnic stores, restaurants, and services built to support and accommodate the rapidly growing New Mainer community. I was proud to see how quickly different communities forged their place, but I recognized the vital work that still needed to be done to bridge the continued cultural and economic gap for vulnerable community members. Like others, I found purpose in helping vulnerable New Mainers, and eventually, my journey became intertwined with that of the New Mainer communities.

My work in helping the New Mainer community began as the United Somali Women of Maine in 2001. As the organization began to develop, we grew to incorporate new languages and cultures to reflect the increasingly diverse community we serve. We changed our name to the Immigrant Resource Center of Maine to officially reflect our staff and community's diversity. Our mission has always been to support refugee and immigrant communities by offering culturally and linguistically sensitive services to promote a healthy and equitable Maine. I'm proud to see this work persist through the Office of New Americans.

I'm proud to see how far we've come over the last two decades, and the opening of the Office of New Americans shows the continued effort toward building a more equitable, inclusive Maine for all. I look forward to seeing how the ONA's upcoming civic and economic work has the

lasting impact that Maine's immigrant communities need and desire. Moreover, I'm excited to see and assist in continuing to help New Mainers forge their paths toward achieving their goals and building sustainable lives in Maine.

Sincerely,

Fatuma Hussein,  
Executive Director, Immigrant Resource Center of Maine  
[fhussein@uswofmaine.org](mailto:fhussein@uswofmaine.org)