



Welcome to Portland!

A resource guide for immigrants and refugees



OFFICE OF
Community
& Civic Life





The City of Portland Welcomes You!

The City of Portland believes that immigrant and refugee communities keep Portland, and the country, culturally vibrant, innovative, prosperous, and more interesting.

This brochure is one way the Office of Community & Civic Life (Civic Life) is working to ensure immigrant and refugee communities feel welcome and have information to ease their transition into Portland. We hope that this brochure provides helpful resources that allow you to quickly settle into your new home.

The City of Portland's Values

On June 17, 2020, all City of Portland Commissioners voted to approve a resolution that creates a strict no-tolerance policy for racism, discrimination, and bias in the workplace, and encourages all City employees and services to operate with the values of anti-racism, equity, collaboration, communication, fiscal responsibility, and transparency. The passage of the resolution holds the City accountable to treat everyone fairly, regardless of race, religion, color, sex, marital status, familial status, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or income.

City of Portland's Government

Portland's governmental system is called a commission form of government. There are five elected officials who serve on City Council and serve as legislators and administrators of individual government agencies called "bureaus". Each commissioner oversees multiple bureaus. The mayor is considered the fifth commissioner who holds two distinct powers: (1) assign bureaus to each commissioner and can reassign them at any time; and (2) proposes the annual budget.

The other elected official is the auditor. The City auditor conducts independent and neutral reviews on all City-run programs and policies. They serve to support an accountable government.

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Civic Life Supports All Portlanders

[Civic Life](#) is one of 26 offices (commonly referred to as bureaus) within the City of Portland. Our bureau helps everyone feel welcome, safe, and heard as they engage with City government. Civic Life's programs work to grow future leaders, provide inclusive opportunities to engage in public policy, and advocate for the most vulnerable communities. We work every day to address local concerns and make life better in the city we all share.

Who Are the Immigrants & Refugees in Portland?

Portland has one of the largest immigrant and refugee populations in Oregon. According to research conducted by the New American Economy, 13.5% of the city's population are immigrants, compared to nearly 10% statewide.

The New American Economy study revealed what we already instinctively know, immigrants and refugees are important contributors to our economy, culture, and community. Immigrant and refugees play an important role as job creators, making up 32.9% of business owners in the hospitality industry, Portland's restaurant, bar, and hotel sector. They also serve in essential industries and represent more than 21.1% of all restaurant and food service workers and 20.1% of all transportation and warehouse workers in Portland.

Civic Life's Immigrant & Refugee Program

Immigrants and refugees contribute immensely to Portland's culture and economy, yet they continue to face barriers and inequitable access to our City's services. The Immigrant and Refugee Program builds strong partnerships with immigrant and refugee communities because we believe all Portlanders should have a seat at the table and have equal access to our City's services.

The Immigrant & Refugee Program activities include:

Bridging relationships: The New Portlanders Policy Commission is supported by Civic Life and makes sure the City's policies and programming are inclusive and reflect the needs of Portland's immigrant and refugee communities.



**No human is illegal.
Therefore, we refer
to immigrants and
refugees who do not
have U.S. citizenship
as undocumented
Americans.**



Advocating for equitable policies: Our program collaborates with communities, elected officials, and bureaus to advocate for city, state, and federal policies and resources that advance immigrant and refugee rights and support immigrant integration.

Serving as a resource: Our program staff works with city council, City of Portland bureaus, and community partners to build effective programs, policies, and services for Portland's immigrant and refugee communities.

New Portlanders Policy Commission

In 2016, Civic Life formed the New Portlanders Policy Commission (NPPC) to integrate immigrant and refugee voices into the City of Portland's policy decision-making process. The NPPC includes 25 Portland newcomers from multiple ethnic minority communities. Members are of all races, ethnicities, faiths, generations, genders, gender identities, sexual orientation, abilities and disabilities, and economic statuses. Each member provides knowledge in resettlement and integration, community organizing and advocacy, civic engagement, education, public safety, and health. The City continues to look toward the New Portlanders Policy Commission for expertise and ideas on how to improve the City's support of immigrant and refugees. If you are interested in learning more, visit their website: portland.gov/civic/immigrants/npcc

Know Your Rights

Undocumented immigrants have rights under the U.S. Constitution. According to due process, the police cannot detain anyone who hasn't at least been suspected of a crime. If a police officer encounters someone walking down the street who turns out to be undocumented, they cannot arrest that person because that person has not committed a crime (Immigration and Customs Enforcement, however, can). Similarly, if the police arrest someone undocumented – for example, someone suspected of committing a crime, who is then cleared, they must let that person go.

Holding an immigrant past the point when they should be released just so that ICE can pick them up, is unconstitutional. Undocumented immigrants can sue the police for unlawful holding. In a sanctuary city, the police will release an arrested immigrant—once the person has been cleared of charges, posted bail, or completed jail time—if that person has not committed any serious crimes.

If an undocumented person has committed a serious crime, the police can keep them in jail by filing charges. Or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) can present the police with a warrant or other order from a judge, which will result in a hold until ICE can come by.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has created resources and information about [your rights as an immigrant](#). The Immigrant Legal Resource Center has created “Red Cards” to help people assert their rights and defend themselves in many situations, such as when ICE agents go to a home.



All people in the United States, regardless of immigration status, have certain rights and protections under the U.S. Constitution. The Immigrant Legal Resource Center's [Red Cards](#) help people assert their rights and defend themselves in many situations, such as when ICE agents go to a home. Print the card, and carry it with you to ensure it's always accessible.

To report any incidents of raids or abuses/mistreatment by ICE, police, or border patrol, contact United We Dream's hotline: 1-844-363-1423 or text 877877.

To find out how to protect your family from ICE, visit [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#).

Find immigration legal resources such as attorneys and what to do after an ICE detention at [Freedom for Immigrants](#).

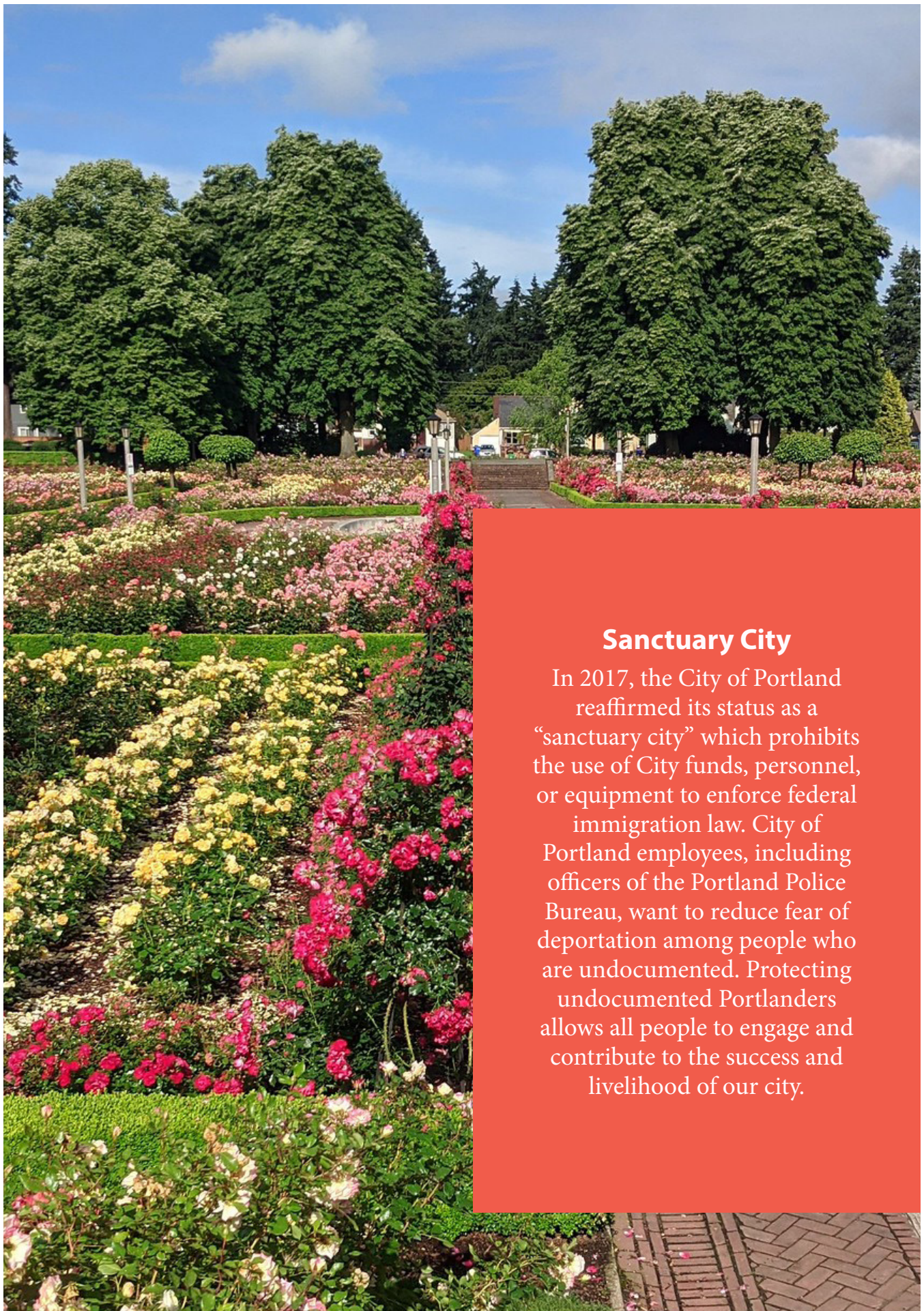
Driver's Licenses for All

In 2019, Oregon passed “Equal Access to Roads Act” which allows undocumented immigrants to get a non-commercial driver license or an identification card.

Requirements include:

- Pay a fee,
- Prove you live in Oregon, and
- Pass the necessary driving tests

For more information visit: [Oregon Department of Transportation](#) or get the information and instructions in [8 different languages](#).



Sanctuary City

In 2017, the City of Portland reaffirmed its status as a “sanctuary city” which prohibits the use of City funds, personnel, or equipment to enforce federal immigration law. City of Portland employees, including officers of the Portland Police Bureau, want to reduce fear of deportation among people who are undocumented. Protecting undocumented Portlanders allows all people to engage and contribute to the success and livelihood of our city.

Resources

Many organizations provide important services, including resettlement assistance, mental health, and job placement. We hope you find the following pages helpful as you adjust to your new home.

Resettlement Services

Catholic Charities provides essential and life-saving services to the most vulnerable Oregonians, including affordable housing, financial empowerment, mental health and counseling, pregnancy and parenting support, legal services, and case management.

2740 SE Powell Blvd, Portland, OR 97202

503-231-4866, catholiccharitiesoregon.org

Lutheran Community Services provides refugees and immigrants with skills, resources, and support, including mental health counseling in different languages, English language education, job placement, housing support, and citizenship assistance. Their multicultural and multilingual staff are also refugees and immigrants.

605 SE Cesar E. Chavez Blvd., Portland, OR 97214

503-231-7480, lcsnw.org

Legal Services

You may need to hire a lawyer to help navigate your immigration status. There are several local organizations that provide legal services. To find a list of participating organizations, visit Immigration Advocate's [Legal Directory](#).



Job Training and Placement

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) has employment and training programs including job coaching, skills development and work placement, vocational training, certification courses, and job retention services. IRCO's youth workforce development program also provides work experience for students and prepares youth for college and beyond.

10301 NE Glisan Street, Portland, OR 97220

503-234-1541, irco.org

Voz is a worker-led organization that empowers diverse day laborers and immigrants to improve their working conditions and protect civil rights through leadership development, organizing, education and economic opportunity.

240 NE MLK Jr Blvd., Portland, OR 97232

503-234-2043, portlandvoz.org

Food Access

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps you buy groceries. govstatus.egov.com/or-dhs-benefits or call 211

WIC serves low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under the age of five who have health or nutrition risks. oregon.gov/oha

Free and Reduced-Price Meals provides food to children during school hours so that they are healthy and able to learn. 888-997-4447, pps.net

Oregon Food Bank distributes food to 21 food banks statewide and approximately 1,400 food assistance sites serving all of Oregon and Clark County, Washington. They have a great resource that allows you to search for free food using their website that is available in 14 different languages. 503-282-0555, foodfinder.oregonfoodbank.org



"Resources and access to resources is really important as a sturdy stepping stone for immigrants and refugees. Understanding how everything works is really critical in making a transition to a new culture, a new life, much easier."

**- New Portlander Policy Commission
Member Mia Sabanovic**

Health Insurance

Multnomah County Clinics serve low-income residents and those who cannot obtain health insurance. The clinics operate primary care centers and dental clinics, most with on-site pharmacies. Clinic staff speak several languages including Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. All clinics offer in-person and tele-medicine. Interpreters are always provided free-of-charge and in compliance with County policy, no one is turned away for inability to pay.

- **Health Appointments:** 503-988-5558, multco.us/health/primary-care
- **Dental Appointments:** 503-988-6942, multco.us/dental

The Oregon Health Plan (OHP) is free health coverage for children and teens. The services include check-ups, vaccinations, mental health care, tooth fillings, glasses, and prescriptions. OHP also covers labs, x-rays and hospital care. It even pays for rides to and from medical appointments. OHP is open to all children and teens younger than 19, regardless of immigration status who meet income and other criteria. 800-699-9075, oregon.gov

Mental Health Resources

Multnomah County Crisis Center Intervention is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The team of mental health professionals is prepared to help anyone experiencing mental health issues in any language. 800-716-9769, Hearing-impaired dial: 711

Intercultural Psychiatric Program at Oregon Health & Sciences University provides culturally sensitive mental health services, including individual and group therapy, psychiatric evaluations, medication management, and case management. Staff are immigrants or former refugees and speak many languages. The Torture Treatment Center of Oregon is a program within IPP that meets the unique needs of survivors of torture.

2214 Lloyd Center, Portland, OR 97232
503-494-4222, ohsu.edu

Immigration & Citizenship

Gaining citizenship can provide a sense of stability and safety. When you obtain citizenship, you can participate in U.S. democracy by voting or even becoming a politician. Find out how to apply here: uscis.gov/citizenship/apply-for-citizenship

Citizenship Preparation Courses prepare you for the citizenship exam—a requirement for obtaining citizenship. These classes teach the English language, and offers U.S. history and civics knowledge needed to pass the citizenship exam. Below is list of local class resources.

- Multnomah Public Libraries: multcolib.org
- Lutheran Community Services: lcsnw.org
- SOAR: emoregon.org

A Green Card or a Permanent Resident Card allows immigrants and refugees to live and work permanently in the United States. The steps you must take to apply for a Green Card will vary depending on your individual situation. To find out more visit: uscis.gov



Free Public Education

In Oregon, children ages 4-18 years old, go to school for free. Children go to schools based on the area where they live; each area is called a “school district” which is made up of a group of schools. Within each school district, students must attend schools in their neighborhood. You must enroll in your school district.

Find your school district: pps.net Type your address into the white search box on the map. The first thing listed on the right will be your district name, with schools listed below it.

To register your child for school you will need to go to your school district’s website:

- Portland Public, 503-916-2000, pps.net
- Centennial, 503-760-7990, csd28j.org
- David Douglas, 503-252-2900, ddouglas.k12
- Parkrose, 503-408-2100, parkrose.k12.or.us

Parents will need to create a new account and follow the instructions that are offered in multiple languages. If you want to use a paper registration, there are documents available in your language.

Vaccinations

Students going to schools in the United States are required to get vaccinations to protect themselves and everyone else from certain diseases. Go to multnomahesd.org to learn about required vaccinations and how to get them. If your child cannot be vaccinated for medical, cultural, or religious reasons, there are instructions on the website to ask for an exception.



English Classes in Schools

Schools in Portland have programs to help students learn English. Each district has a different program. Use the link or contact below for your district.

Portland Public Schools

- General Info: pps.net/Page/16212
- Elementary School: 503-730-0384, vmagallanes@pps.net
- Middle and High School: 971-401-2665, jeanderson@pps.net

Centennial

- General Info: csd28j.org/Page/151
- Program Supervisor: 503-762-3719

David Douglas

- General Info: ddouglas.k12.or.us
- English: 503-261-8249 Ext. 8249
- Spanish: 503-261-8244 Ext. 8244
- Russian: 503-261-8397 Ext. 8397
- Somali: 503-261-8277 Ext. 8277

Parkrose

- 503-408-2143, knolejul@parkrose.k12.or.us

Language immersion programs teach students in English along with another language to support bilingualism. Different schools have different languages offered for their immersion programs. Portland Public Schools has language immersion programs in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian and Japanese. Find more information here: pps.net/Page/863



Adult Education

The General Education Development (GED) is a test you can take that will give you the equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma, which can be useful for employment and taking college classes. Below are some places that offer classes and tutoring.

Mt. Hood Community College

- mhcc.edu/AboutABE_GED
- English: 971-533-8813
- Spanish: 971-249-2129
- Email: Stephanie.Haas@mhcc.edu

Portland Community College

- pcc.edu/ged
- 971-722-6255

Multnomah County Library

- multcolib.org/ged
- 503-577-9984

Community Colleges offer affordable college level classes and worker training.

Portland Community College

- pcc.edu
- 971-722-6111 or 1-866-922-1010

Mt. Hood Community College

- mhcc.edu
- 503-491-6422

English Classes for Adults

The following places offer English classes:

Multnomah County Library

- multcolib.org/learn-english
- One-on-one tutoring: 503-577-9984, mcl.adult.literacy@multco.us

Portland Literacy Council

- portlandliteracy.org
- 503-217-4041
- info@portlandliteracy.org

Mt. Hood Community College

- English: 503-491-7333
- Spanish: 503-491-7675

Portland Community College

- pcc.edu/esol
- 971-722-8550,

Credential Evaluation

If you have a degree from a county outside of the United States and you want to apply for a job or enroll in school, you need to get your credits evaluated. A Credential Evaluation is a document that explains your degree's equivalent in the United States education system. The evaluation will allow for the employer/admissions officer to understand your education level and training. ece.org/ECE/Individuals





Someone Is Here To Help!

We recognize that we did not cover everything. We highly recommend taking advantage of the City of Portland's 311 program which works to improve access to information and services by providing a single point of contact – in person, online or over the phone.

Staff are fluent in English and Spanish, and have resources to assist community members in additional languages. The 311 Program's mission is to simplify community member access to local government programs and services. To reach 311:

- Email CityInfo@portlandoregon.gov
- Call “3-1-1” within Multnomah County limits or call 503-823-4000 when outside Multnomah County limits.
- In-person at the Portland Building's Customer Service Desk at 1120 Southwest Fifth Avenue (currently closed due to the COVID-19 emergency).
- In-person and over the phone services are available Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding federal holidays.

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Page 7, [Graham King](#), Peninsula Park's Rose Garden. This free public park is located in North Portland

Page 13, [Robert Tuck](#), Forest Park. This free public park in Portland is one of the largest urban forests in the U.S.