



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER FORMALLY ESTABLISHING
THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS**

The Office of New Americans ensures that Chicago remains a Welcoming City

CHICAGO — Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot signed an Executive Order formally establishing the Office of New Americans (ONA). Created in 2011, ONA is dedicated to improving services and engaging Chicago's diverse immigrant and refugee communities through collaboration with community organizations, academic institutions, and the private sector. Since the beginning of Mayor Lightfoot's administration, ONA has worked on improving the day-to-day experiences of our City's 560,000 foreign-born residents by focusing on their economic development, community well-being, and civic integration.

"Throughout its history, Chicago has represented hope and opportunity for generations of immigrants and refugees. Foreign-born residents arrive here from over 140 countries, speaking more than 100 languages, and add to the vibrant fabric of this city," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The Office of New Americans has been dedicated to improving services and engaging Chicago's immigrant communities, and it is time that ONA is formally established."

To protect Chicago's legacy of being a Welcoming City, ONA will:

- Welcome and support immigrants and refugees in the City of Chicago.
- Provide oversight and guidance for a process that ensures immigrant and refugee inclusion in service delivery and policy creation.
- Promote and support immigrant and refugee integration into social, cultural, economic, and civic life.
- Enhance the accessibility of city programs, benefits, and services, including language access.
- Ensure compliance of the Welcoming City ordinance.

"The Office of New Americans is crucial for providing support to organizations like the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP). ONA has helped us craft coordinated, focused responses to the range of challenges immigrants face. Formally establishing



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the Office is good news for Chicago’s immigrants,” said Imelda Salazar, Community Organizer at SWOP.

“The Office of New Americans has served the critical role, especially during the pandemic, of ensuring that those arriving to Chicago have had the necessary access to crucial resources and information upon their arrival to our city,” said Karina Ayala-Bermejo, Chair of the New Americans Advisory Council and CEO and President of Instituto del Progreso Latino. “Now more than ever, with Title 42 lifted as of yesterday, and with the rapid increase of new arrivals, knowing that the Office of New Americans will continue to stand is critically important. As an immigrant myself, I am so grateful to Mayor Lightfoot and implore everyone to contribute to the positive direction and support all new Americans.”

“For more than a decade, the Office of New Americans has ensured our newest residents have the protection and support services needed to find success for their families and pursue the American Dream,” said Nubia Willman, Chief Engagement Office and Director of the Office of New Americans. “As the Director for the past four years, ONA partnered with the community, led national coalitions, and ensured the City maintained its status as a global welcoming city by setting national best practices. I am proud that ONA will be formally established as part of the Office of the Mayor and continue to position the City of Chicago as a leader in immigration.”

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