

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Office of
The Governor

No. 2 FY 23/24
DATE August 2, 2023

**AN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN MAINE'S ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES
BY DEVELOPING AN OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS**

WHEREAS, Maine is a welcoming and inclusive state that recognizes the value of people of diverse backgrounds to enhance the vibrancy of Maine's communities, the strength of our workforce, and the growth of our economy;

WHEREAS, Maine's aging workforce and growing economy have resulted in an imbalanced labor market with an average of two job openings for every one unemployed job seeker, affecting nearly every geographic area, profession and skill level, and requiring more workers to meet critical labor sectors such as health care, education, and construction;

WHEREAS, Maine's 10-Year Economic Strategy has set a goal of attracting 75,000 people to Maine's talent pool by 2029 and establishing Maine as an attractive state for new arrivals to secure meaningful employment that matches their career aspirations with their skills;

WHEREAS, Maine's nearly 50,000 foreign-born residents are a vital part of our state's communities and economy, with \$1.2 billion in spending power and contributing \$441 million in taxes;

WHEREAS, Maine has encouraged immigrants to become engaged community members by entering Maine's educational systems and workforce, through investments in childcare and Pre-K to 12 education systems, career and technical education, career exploration programs, English language learner programs, higher education opportunities – including free entrance to the Maine Community College Systems – as well as by expanding apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, targeted credential programs, and industry and sector training program opportunities;

WHEREAS, Maine is providing support for emergency, transitional, and permanent housing needs; health and human services, and legal assistance as New Mainers arrive in the State;

WHEREAS, federal immigration policies have unfairly burdened states and communities in providing such support;

WHEREAS, 18 other states have dedicated offices or staff for supporting the economic and civic inclusion of international immigrants and participate in the Office of New Americans State Network to share information and best practices;

WHEREAS, the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future is charged with planning and policy development to address long-term challenges facing Maine, including aging, housing, and workforce development;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Janet T. Mills, Governor of the State of Maine, pursuant to Me. Const. Art V, Pt. 1, §§ 1 & 12, do hereby Order as follows:

I. Order

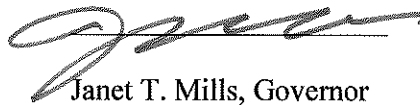
The Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future is hereby directed to:

- A. Deliver a plan to the Governor for establishing a new state office dedicated to supporting the long-term economic and civic integration of immigrants in Maine, in support of goals set forth in Maine's 10-year Economic Strategy, no later than January 19, 2024. The plan must outline the mission and structure of the office, the timing of its establishment, and the scope of its work, with the overarching goal of ensuring that Maine is effectively incorporating immigrants into its workforce and communities to strengthen the economy over the long-term.
- B. Engage with immigrant communities for input on needs, barriers, and opportunities for New Mainers;
- C. Gather input from business leaders, municipal and regional government leaders, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and service providers on the barriers, and opportunities for welcoming New Mainers into Maine's workforce, economy, and communities;
- D. Coordinate plan development with the following state agencies and entities: Department of Economic and Community Development; Department of Labor; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Education; Department of Professional and Financial Regulation; Department of Administrative and Financial Services; MaineHousing; the Maine Community College System; and the University of Maine System;
- E. Participate, on behalf of the State of Maine, in the Office of New Americans State Network to access information and best practices from other states on topics

including the role of education and training institutions, licensing system coordination, housing and shelter models, support for municipalities and employers, and relevant state and local systems necessary to support families and workers to successfully engage in communities and the workforce.

II. Effective Date

This Order is effective immediately upon signature.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet T. Mills", is written over a horizontal line.

Janet T. Mills, Governor