



**FILED**  
INDEX DEPARTMENT  
AUG 02 2021  
IN THE OFFICE OF  
SECRETARY OF STATE

August 2, 2021

Executive Order 2021-17

**EXECUTIVE ORDER – THE WELCOMING ILLINOIS OFFICE**

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois seeks to be a welcoming state to immigrants and refugees; and,

**WHEREAS**, immigrants are students, entrepreneurs, scientists, and workers who are important contributors to Illinois' workforce, communities, and social and cultural fabric; and,

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois is home to 1.8 million immigrants, the sixth largest immigrant population of any state in the nation; and,

**WHEREAS**, immigrants make up 13.5% of our state's population and 17.5% of our state's workforce; and,

**WHEREAS**, immigrants are integral to our state's economy, generating \$2.8 billion of business income and contributing over \$21.4 billion in federal, State, and local taxes, annually; and,

**WHEREAS**, immigrants and refugees have successfully rebuilt their lives and made positive social and economic contributions to Illinois by revitalizing neighborhoods and adding to the cultural vitality of our state and communities; and,

**WHEREAS**, while immigration policy is set at the federal level, the benefits of and barriers to immigration integration are experienced at the state and local levels; and,

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois recognizes the barriers existing in immigrant communities and has responded with increased investments in immigrant services; and,

**WHEREAS**, as the public health crisis caused by COVID-19 amplified existing systemic inequities, the State of Illinois provided rental and utility assistance and financial assistance for immigrants excluded from federal COVID-19 relief programs; and,

**WHEREAS**, now more than ever in our country, there is a need for programmatic and policy leadership from states to protect and advance the rights of immigrants and refugees; and,

**WHEREAS**, it is a moral and fiscal imperative to support immigrants' health, well-being, economic progress, and social progress; and

**WHEREAS**, the 102<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly passed the Immigrant Impact Task Force Act to appoint immigrant and refugee leaders to work across agencies and with external stakeholders to develop strategies to ensure that Illinois is a more welcoming state; and,

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois is committed to developing and implementing a comprehensive approach and action plan to ensure better governmental practices, public policies, and programs across all government sectors;

**THEREFORE**, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of Illinois, by virtue of the executive authority vested in me by Article V of the Constitution of the State of Illinois, hereby order as follows:

**1. Establishment of The Welcoming Illinois Office**

The Welcoming Illinois Office shall be created, administered by and housed within the Illinois Department of Human Services, and reporting to the Office of the Governor and the Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The Welcoming Illinois Office shall have the following duties, powers, and responsibilities:

- A. Convene and lead internal and external stakeholders to coordinate and develop a policies and practices blueprint to make Illinois a more welcoming and equitable state for immigrants and refugees, including but not limited to implementation of the Immigrant Impact Task Force Act and other relevant statutes.
- B. Identify, research, analyze, and address economic and demographic trends and issues related to immigrants and refugees to better serve immigrant and refugee communities.
- C. Make policy recommendations to the Governor on issues impacting immigrants and refugees, including strategies to eliminate employment barriers, improve health outcomes, and strengthen social services.
- D. Work with State agencies identified by the Governor's Office as part of an interagency effort to ensure that there is access to critical services and supports for resiliency and recovery for the immigrant and refugee communities in Illinois.
- E. Develop and implement outreach campaigns, community resources and record gathering processes to ensure that immigrant and refugee communities have access to services and programs for which they are eligible at state and federal levels.
- F. Promote and celebrate the success of Illinois' immigrant and refugee communities.

**2. Establishment of the Senior Immigration Fellow**

A Senior Immigration Fellow shall be appointed by the Governor, reporting to the Secretary for the Illinois Department of Human Services, and based in the Illinois Department of Human Services. The Senior Immigration Fellow will lead all aspects of the Welcoming Illinois Office, with support from the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Governor's Office.

**3. Savings Clause**

Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to contravene any federal or state law or regulation. Unless specifically referenced in this Order, nothing in this Order shall affect or alter the existing statutory powers of any State agency or be construed as a reassignment or reorganization of any State agency.

**4. Prior Executive Orders**

This Executive Order supersedes any contrary provision of any prior Executive Order.

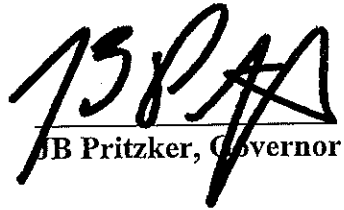
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5. **Severability Clause**

If any part of this Executive Order is found to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect. The provisions of this Executive Order are severable.

6. **Effective Date**

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State.



JB Pritzker, Governor

Issued by the Governor August 2, 2021  
Filed by the Secretary of State August 2, 2021

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