

# HOUSE BILL 15

P1

(11r0898)

## ENROLLED BILL

— Appropriations/ Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and Budget and Taxation —

Introduced by **Delegate Pena-Melnyk**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, \_\_\_\_\_ M.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker.

### CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Creating Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**

3 FOR the purpose of creating the Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs; providing for the  
4 appointment, powers, duties, and salary of the Director of the Office; providing for  
5 the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Office; providing for staffing of the  
6 Office; requiring the Director to submit certain annual reports to certain persons on  
7 or before certain dates; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the  
8 Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – State Government

11 Section 9–3301 through 9–3304 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 33. Governor's  
12 Office of Immigrant Affairs”

13 Annotated Code of Maryland

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#### EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

*Italics indicate opposite chamber/conference committee amendments.*



(2014 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

**Article – State Government**

**SUBTITLE 33. GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS.**

**9–3301.**

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) “DIRECTOR” MEANS THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE.

(C) “ESOL PROGRAM” MEANS AN ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES PROGRAM.

(D) “IMMIGRANT” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:

(1) IS A RESIDENT OF THE STATE;

(2) IS NOT A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES; AND

(3) WHOSE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IS A COUNTRY OTHER THAN THE UNITED STATES.

(E) “OFFICE” MEANS THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS.

**9–3302.**

(A) THERE IS A GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS.

(B) (1) THE HEAD OF THE OFFICE IS THE DIRECTOR.

(2) THE DIRECTOR:

(I) IS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR; AND

(II) SERVES AT THE PLEASURE OF THE GOVERNOR AND IS RESPONSIBLE DIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNOR; AND

(III) IS ENTITLED TO THE SALARY PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

1 (C) (1) THE OFFICE SHALL:

2 (I) ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON ALL MATTERS ASSIGNED TO  
3 THE OFFICE; AND

4 (II) CARRY OUT THE GOVERNOR'S POLICIES ON MATTERS  
5 ASSIGNED TO THE OFFICE.

6 (2) THE DIRECTOR SHALL:

7 (I) MANAGE THE OPERATION OF THE OFFICE AND ESTABLISH  
8 GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE THE ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT  
9 OPERATION OF THE OFFICE; AND

10 (II) ADOPT REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE  
11 PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.

12 (3) SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE DIRECTOR  
13 MAY ESTABLISH, REORGANIZE, OR CONSOLIDATE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE  
14 OFFICE AS NECESSARY TO FULFILL THE RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED BY THE  
15 DIRECTOR.

16 (D) THE OFFICE SHALL EMPLOY STAFF TO CARRY OUT ITS DUTIES AS  
17 PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

18 9-3303.

19 ~~THE~~ SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING, THE OFFICE SHALL:

20 (1) ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED  
21 OPPORTUNITY CENTERS THAT PROVIDE IMMIGRATION SERVICES TO IMMIGRANTS;

22 (2) INCREASE ACCESS TO ESOL PROGRAMS, INCLUDING BY  
23 ENGAGING NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER QUALIFIED PROVIDERS OF  
24 ESOL PROGRAMS;

25 (3) ASSIST IMMIGRANTS IN MATTERS RELATING TO IMMIGRATION  
26 STATUS, INCLUDING ASSISTING WITH THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS AND  
27 APPLICATIONS FOR DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA);

28 (4) CONNECT IMMIGRANTS TO:

29 (I) BUSINESS RESOURCES THAT USE THE IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS;

1 (II) EMPLOYMENT REFERRAL PROGRAMS; AND

2 (III) OTHER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;

3 (5) DEVELOP AND LEVERAGE IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS TO BENEFIT THE  
4 IMMIGRANTS' COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE;

5 (6) STRENGTHEN THE CONNECTION BETWEEN IMMIGRANTS AND THE  
6 IMMIGRANTS' COMMUNITIES THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT;

7 (7) REDUCE EXPLOITATION OF IMMIGRANTS;

8 (8) ESTABLISH A TOLL-FREE, MULTILINGUAL HOTLINE AND A  
9 WEBSITE FOR PURPOSES INCLUDING:

10 (I) DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMS AND  
11 SERVICES OFFERED BY THE OFFICE;

12 (II) REFERRING FOR SERVICES; AND

13 (III) RECEIVING COMPLAINTS RELATING TO FRAUD AND OTHER  
14 RELATED CRIMES AGAINST IMMIGRANTS;

15 (9) ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS REFERRED BY THE OFFICE ARE  
16 DIRECTED TO PERSONS WHO ARE:

17 (I) IN COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE 14, SUBTITLE 33 OF THE  
18 COMMERCIAL LAW ARTICLE; OR

19 (II) AUTHORIZED BY THE FEDERAL OFFICE OF LEGAL ACCESS  
20 PROGRAMS;

21 (10) USING INFORMATION DEVELOPED BY THE OFFICE THROUGH THE  
22 HOTLINE ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SECTION, ASSIST LAW ENFORCEMENT IN  
23 COMBATING CRIMES AGAINST IMMIGRANTS;

24 (11) ADVISE THE GOVERNOR AND DIRECTOR CONCERNING MATTERS  
25 AFFECTING IMMIGRANTS IN THE STATE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE  
26 THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE STATE'S CIVIC AND ECONOMIC  
27 LIFE;

28 (12) COORDINATE WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHERWISE USE  
29 THE RESOURCES OF THE STATE TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS; AND

1           **(13) ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE**  
2 **DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG**  
3 **IMMIGRANTS AND IN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.**

4 **9-3304.**

5           **ON OR BEFORE JUNE 15, 2022, AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE DIRECTOR**  
6 **SHALL SUBMIT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THIS**  
7 **ARTICLE, TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, A REPORT DESCRIBING**  
8 **THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE, INCLUDING:**

9                   **(1) SUMMARIES OF CALLS AND QUERIES RECEIVED THROUGH THE**  
10 **HOTLINE AND WEBSITE;**

11                   **(2) INFORMATION ON ESOL PROGRAMS PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE;**

12                   **(3) THE ESTIMATED OR EXACT NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS ASSISTED**  
13 **THROUGH OPPORTUNITY CENTERS;**

14                   **(4) THE STATUS OF ANY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS;**  
15 **AND**

16                   **(5) ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION.**

17           **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect**  
18 **October 1, 2021.**

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.