GACRI Minutes 11/28/2018

Present: Lopez Lazaro, Marjean Perhot, Eva Millona, Jeff Goldman, Loan Dao & Mary Truong

Mary: ORI Update.

• Financial Literacy-

* MORI has now delivered 45 workshops in three regions. Conducted in Arabic, Spanish, Nepali, Somali, Swahili and Haitian Creole. Three new contracted service providers, totaling 7, who are delivering these workshops. Lopez asks if Mary can share the curriculum, and Mary says this all comes from FDIC materials, and she is using this to present to banks and others to recruit trainers. Materials are translated into many languages. Mary says participants have been here a short time and long time. We all look at wonderful photos and comments from participants on what they have gained. One good outcome: Peoples United Bank let audience know they charge only $30 to wire $3000 to family abroad. Next year is the last year of the program due to limited funding from a private fund. Mary is talking to Secretary Sudders about continuing next year with Financial Literacy program.

• ORR Youth Mentoring Grant -FY2019-FY2020-

* New one-time grant is ORR Youth Mentoring Grant, $194,000. Will be used for case management and mentoring of youth ages 15-21. Holistic social support for refugee youth. Will include ESL & financial literacy. Just posted to see who will be service providers.

• Vocational ESL extended hours & General ESL funding for FY19

* MORI posted the RFR for general ESL for FY19. ORI also amended its employment contract to include extended hours of vocational ESL.

• Budget FY19-

* State Audit is going on. They want all minutes of all GACRI meetings within three year period-July 2016-June2018.
* Budget FY2019, **projected** that will have an increase of 15% from Federal and State.

ORR’s new acting director is Johnathan Hayes.

On December 5, Mary starts a chain of Refugee Town Hall Meetings, starting in Lynn. She has guest speakers from USCIS, Atty General’s Office, Mass General Hospital, MBTA. This is open to refugees and immigrants.

Refugee arrivals FY2019 (less than two months), 55 in MA, and in entire country is 4033.

**Chair’s update:**

Chair asked members to share their thoughts.

Marjean explains that federal funding is based on three-year totals. Going to be really bad next year.

Eva suggests we ask Governor to add a line item for immigrants, not just refugees, so that asylum seekers and other non-refugee and asylees can access programs.

Lopez says maybe Latino Council can align with GACRI. Eva says others too.

Eva says package all that is good to help integrate. We write recommendations, and ask for meeting with Governor. Then we go to both chambers. Gov budget at end of December. ACT NOW. Jeff to ask GACRI now if they have thoughts, and then Jeff and Eva to quickly act and get ideas to Governor.

Eva also says we need more money in budget to help MA count many of the un-countable people. MIRA playing a role in this. They asked Sec Galvin and Sec Ash to bring to Gov’s attention, but we need to do this as well.

Mary: be sure to include financial literacy in this combined integration package.

Marjean says the low numbers are causing the dismantling of infrastructure that took years to build. Agencies are cutting, closing.

Mary says she had one employee retire, not replacing this person in case funds not there down the road.

General discussion of severe need for immigrants to receive competent legal services. Catholic Charities just can’t keep up with demand. Maybe Gov can add to Legal Services budget to help these people. It is a drag on the economy. Even just citizenship, State should cover the cost of the 300,000 backlog for naturalization help in Mass. This will increase our census numbers!! We will propose to Gov.

Discussion of fact that 43 million people in America are foreign born. Most citizens, 8 million green card holders. Why are they not citizens???

New: quiet push in DC to get a federal immigration integration bill passed.

Submitted by: Jeff Goldman