

## Stand Up for New Mainers!

- Please continue to provide transitional support for immigrants through the General Assistance (GA) program.
- At least 900 individuals and hundreds of families would become homeless if the City does not find a solution to this problem; GA currently helps them to pay the rent to keep a roof over their heads.
- In light of the recent inaction by the Legislature to pass necessary language to protect GA for immigrants, the city must act to protect these Portland residents.
- The Legislature was unable to pass language in the state budget to preserve GA for new Mainers because certain legislators blocked these efforts by perpetuating misinformation about asylum seekers and other immigrants who rely on GA. We know better than that here in Portland. These are our neighbors. These men, women, and children are now an integral part of our community. Here in Portland we know the truth about these families and we must do what is right, and stand by and with these families.
- Asylum seekers came to this country because they were fleeing unsafe and dangerous conditions. They have already suffered unfathomable hardship. Let's not inflict more pain unnecessarily.
- These are men, women, and children who have already been displaced when they were forced to leave their home country. If Portland chooses to stop helping these individuals and families they will again be uprooted and forced to leave their new home.
- GA provides a bridge to stability for people fleeing violence and persecution while they are waiting 180 days for work permits from the federal government.
- Providing 3 months of transitional support does not provide a real solution to this problem. It will close the door to people seeking safety and refuge here, people who have much to offer our community. Providing 3 months of help simply postpones a crisis and a bad outcome. Instead let's find a way to continue to support immigrants who have made Portland their home.
- Raising property taxes is a far better option than turning our backs on 900 Portland residents. Especially in light of the fact that the Legislature just increased the homestead exemption to \$15,000 next year and \$20,000 thereafter - this will provide tax relief to homeowners.
- Providing assistance for asylum seekers and other immigrants is an investment today that will pay dividends into our future for our City and our State.
- A report "Making Maine Work," published by the Maine Chamber of Commerce and the Maine Development Foundation, cites hiring more foreign born workers as one of the key strategies for increasing Maine's workforce by 2020.