



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Supervisor Nikki Fortunato Bas, AC Together For All Ad-Hoc Committee Chair
Supervisor Elisa Márquez, Public Protection Committee Chair

February 13, 2025

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Alameda
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, CA 94612

SUBJECT: CONSIDER AN ALLOCATION OF \$3.5 MILLION IN ONE-TIME EMERGENCY FUNDS TO SUPPORT RAPID RESPONSE, COMMUNITY EDUCATION, LEGAL AID AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES FOR ONE YEAR THROUGHOUT ALAMEDA COUNTY.

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Consider an allocation of \$3.5 million in one-time emergency funds to support rapid response, community education, legal aid and support services for immigrant and refugee communities for one year throughout Alameda County;
- B. Consider \$1.3 million of the proposed \$3.5 million emergency allocation to staff the Immigration Unit of the Public Defender's office for immigrant and refugee legal services;
- C. Consider \$2.2 million of the proposed \$3.5 million emergency allocation for the following immigrant and refugee services;
 - i. Rapid response and education, including rapid response hotline, "Know Your Rights" trainings, pre-emptive legal services and volunteer network response coordination in the amount of \$700,000;
 - ii. Resourcing and preparing communities, including support efforts among immigrants and refugees in workplaces and neighborhoods in the amount of \$500,000; and

- iii. Removal and detained defense legal services, including attorneys, staff support, and litigation expenses in the amount of \$1 million; and
- D. Direct the County Administrator to review the proposals for emergency funding with agency leadership to identify one-time funding for the proposed \$3.5 million emergency allocation and return to the Board on February 25, 2025, with a status report and funding options for specific contracts for the immigrant and refugee services outlined above.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

At this Board's January 28, 2025 Work Session, the Board voted to establish the ad-hoc committee, Alameda County Together for All, to address the anticipated federal policies and budgets of the new federal administration and their impact on vulnerable populations in Alameda County. Alameda County Together for All (ACT for All) is modeled after the work of the late Supervisors Wilma Chan and Richard Valle who in 2017, launched our County's efforts to protect immigrant and refugee communities. The purpose of ACT for All is to:

- Protect Alameda County communities and strengthen county policies, systems and practices for a coordinated response to anticipated federal policies and budgets;
- Organize support for healthcare, social services and public safety, i.e. immigrant, refugee, LGBTQ+ community member rights and access to services, reproductive rights, broader healthcare and social safety-net services; and
- Reaffirm and expand the County's welcoming policy for immigrants and refugees and align our local efforts with state partners who share similar goals.

Additionally, a key expected outcome of ACT for All is the establishment of a coordinated fund, similar to the one in 2017, with county, city, state and philanthropic resources to support and protect immigrant and refugee rights.

The new ad-hoc committee is comprised of Supervisors Fortunato Bas (Chair) and Elisa Márquez (Vice-Chair). The first meeting was held on February 6, 2025. At this meeting, committee members heard testimony from several individuals who are actively engaged in immigrant and refugee rights work. They identified a number of areas that need to be urgently coordinated and resourced to protect immigrants and refugees due to the policies of the new federal administration. These areas include:

1. **Public Defender Immigration Unit**, including attorneys, staff support, and litigation expenses within the criminal justice system;
2. **Rapid Response and Education**, including rapid response hotline, "Know Your Rights" trainings, pre-emptive legal services and volunteer network response coordination

(Centro Legal de la Raza, Street Level Health Project, Eden Church, Faith in Action Eastbay, and Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation);

3. **Resourcing and Preparing Communities**, including support efforts among immigrants and refugees in workplaces and neighborhoods (Trabajadores Unidos Workers United, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Filipino Advocates for Justice); and
4. **Removal and Detained Defense Legal Services**, including attorneys, staff support, and litigation expenses (California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice, East Bay Community Law Center, Pangea Legal Services).

Given the urgent nature of this funding request, it is anticipated that a resolution will be brought forward to waive Alameda County Administrative Code Sections 4.12.020 and 4.12.070 that require the solicitation of bids.

The ACT for All Ad-Hoc Committee funding request aligns with the Board's timely action on February 7, 2017, sponsored by Supervisor Wilma Chan, to allocate \$750,000 to fund rapid response, education, and removal defense and detained legal services among immigrant and refugee communities in response to the immediate and broad attacks from the federal administration. This county funding was a one-to-one match with philanthropic contributions that resulted in a total investment of \$1.5 million.

Given the swift and broad actions of the current federal administration, the requested one-year investment for 2025 is expected to be at least \$4.4 million for community-based response efforts. To follow the funding model adopted by the Board in 2017, the ACT for All Ad-Hoc committee is asking for 50% of that total, or \$2.2 million, with the remainder to be funded by city, state and philanthropic sources.

There is an urgent need to address these issues partly because, unlike some surrounding Bay Area counties, Alameda County does not have a dedicated office of immigrant affairs or similar infrastructure despite the fact that immigrants make up one third of our local population and almost half speak any number of Alameda's 120 languages other than English at home. Such an office was recommended as part of the 2021 final report commissioned by the Ad-hoc Committee on Immigrant and Refugee Rights ([FinalReport_AHCIRR.pdf](#)) but has not been implemented. Absent the institutionalization of this robust work, the previously established rapid response network, for example, would have likely remained operational and prepared to more swiftly respond to new federal policy and budgetary threats with community members and providers.

This funding request also aligns with the Board's ongoing commitment to the Public Defender's Immigration Unit which was launched in 2014 and provides legal support to the immigrants and refugees that they represent in the criminal justice system. In response to the first Trump administration, the Board approved the addition of 3.0 FTE Associate Deputy Public Defender's to work in the immigration unit with the acceptance of a grant amount of \$405,000. The unit currently serves approximately 100-150 clients annually and provides Padilla consults in approximately 1,100 cases annually. With the new federal administration, these numbers are expected to significantly grow this year. This increase will necessitate an additional investment of \$1.3 million for attorneys, staff support and litigation expenses.

The Public Defender's Office presented about the Immigration Unit's impact and time sensitive need for additional resources to the Board's Public Protection Committee on December 19, 2024, and at the ACT for All Ad-hoc Committee on February 6, 2025. The Office has clearly outlined the issues and concerns if the Immigration Unit does not have adequate funding to meet the increasing needs resulting from the broad and swift attacks from the new federal administration.

FINANCING:

Funding for emergency support for immigrant and refugee communities will come from one-time funds and will result in no additional net County cost. Staff will explore options and identify opportunities for a one-time reallocation of existing resources within the final Board-approved FY 2024-25 Budget.

VISION 2036 GOAL:

Providing supportive services to Alameda County immigrant and refugee families meet the 10X goal pathways of **Health for All** and **Eliminate Poverty and Hunger** in support of our shared vision of **Thriving & Resilient Populations** and **Safe and Livable Communities**.

Respectfully submitted,



Nikki Fortunato Bas, Supervisor
Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Fifth District



Elisa Márquez, Supervisor
Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Second District

cc: Auditor-Controller
County Administrator
County Counsel