

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Scott to provide \$4 Million in ARPA Funds for Baltimore New American Access Coalition (BNAAC)

Mayor Brandon M. Scott recently announced the ARPA-funded Baltimore New American Access Coalition (BNAAC), an initiative seeking to minimize the economic and social disparities faced by immigrant and refugee families. The initiative, managed by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA), connects these communities to short- and long-term health and social resources to help them weather the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts.

During COVID, immigrant and refugee families had fewer resources to sustain themselves financially through the pandemic as many were ineligible for unemployment benefits, the payment protection plan, stimulus checks, and child tax credits -- further exacerbating economic disparities within these communities.

Today, immigrant and refugee families continue to face a range of systemic barriers to accessing federal, state, and local health and social services, including program eligibility rules and lack of language access. Even families that qualify struggle to navigate complicated programs as these are not often available in languages other than English. This has been exacerbated by the limited bilingual capacity in public entities available to help residents with application forms and information.

In response, the BNAAC establishes a cadre of Benefits Navigators across four (4) community-based organizations (CBO) to help residents with limited English proficiency (LEP) navigate and access health and social resources based on immediate and long-term needs. Partner organizations were selected based on target communities and geography to meet New Americans where they reside.

Through this project, MIMA standardizes immigrant and refugee case management across participating CBOs. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) will serve as a technical assistance provider to access national best practices on immigrant and refugee case management. This will be critical as local case management models do not target immigrant and/or refugee populations living in Baltimore City. Through this partnership, Benefits Navigators will be trained on case management best practices, navigation of different government systems, and eligibility criteria based on immigrant status. Benefits Navigators are critical to overcoming barriers related to language and not knowing how to navigate benefits across government entities.

Key Takeaways:

4

Community-based Organizations

**Services offered
City-wide**

\$4M

total investment

SUMMARY:

\$4 million in ARPA funding will support the Baltimore New American Access Coalition (BNAAC), an initiative seeking to minimize the economic and social disparities faced by immigrant and refugee families