

Briefing on Lakewood-Denver Meeting

Staff Assignment:

Lakewood City Council directed staff to meet with representatives from the City and County of Denver to determine how Lakewood can learn about the migrant crisis and discuss potential opportunities to partner as a good neighbor responding to the increasing migrant population arriving in Denver. This document summarizes information gathered from that meeting.

Information shared:

Over the past year, Denver has received 38,000+ migrant newcomers (since December 2022)—averaging 200 arrivals per day. The number of people arriving throughout the year varies significantly month by month.

Denver spent approximately \$46M on migrant newcomer shelter and associated support in 2023, securing housing for 4,000 people through 900 leases, and providing more than 700,000 meals. The average costs are approximately \$4M per month.

Denver is anticipating that the cost for 2024 will be approximately \$180M.

Plan going forward:

Denver is winding down the program related specifically to housing migrant newcomers. This includes the current practice of placing people in shelters, utilizing 7 hotels, 2 congregate facilities, and 1 transitional housing facility.

- *Due to the shift away from placing migrant newcomers in shelters, Lakewood is not being solicited for hotel/motel or congregate housing support.*

Denver is initiating a “coordinated entry program,” dispersing migrant groups to willing cities throughout the country and outside of the Denver metro area. Mayor Johnston’s administration is actively and personally reaching out to request permission/support to receive the migrants in those cities across the country. This program is titled Denver’s ONWARD TRAVEL and includes Denver funded ONWARD TRAVEL SUPPORT.

Approximately half of the new arrivals deliberately chose to be relocated. To date, Denver has purchased about 19,000 onward transportation tickets for migrants in 2023, exceeding \$5M in cost (\$300 per ticket on average).

- *Lakewood has no role in this program and has not been requested to participate in the ONWARD TRAVEL program. The focus is an outreach to cities outside of the Denver metro the region.*

Agency partnership opportunities:

Two separate requests were identified by Denver. Lakewood, as a city organization, is asked to assist in the communication of resources available to the migrant community, and Lakewood, as

a community of residents, can volunteer and/or donate to Denver's established programs. In fact, Denver requested all community members in the metro area to consider the options for volunteering or donating.

The first request is relatively simple for the city organization to accommodate, as it would entail adding Denver's resource information to Lakewood's website. The second request is wholly dependent on personal decisions of residents throughout the metro area including Lakewood and would be administered without City of Lakewood involvement.

Request #1

Denver has requested the City of Lakewood's assistance in referring interested parties to the City and County of Denver website.

Request #2

Denver invites Lakewood and community members throughout the metro area to participate in volunteer and donation opportunities that can help migrant newcomers.

Opportunities for individuals who would like to help include:

- Volunteering to become a host family (adopting a migrant family) in their homes. There is a program available online outlining specifics, guidelines, etc.
- Making financial contributions.
- Donating the most needed items (men's clothing, children's clothing, shoes, winter gear, underwear).
- Contributing volunteer hours – most needed are bilingual speaking skills, coordination skills, case management skills, education/training skills, etc.
- Donating support to Lakewood faith-based organizations who currently provide resources to the newcomer migrant population.
- Donating support to Lakewood nonprofit organizations also being impacted by the newcomer migrant population.

In summary, Lakewood can be helpful by referring people to the resources identified on the City and County of Denver website. Additionally, if community members in Lakewood and elsewhere are interested in becoming personally involved, they are encouraged to volunteer in the areas listed above.

Denver indicated that the numbers of newcomers have drastically reduced in the past few weeks. Additionally, it's anticipated that this topic will be addressed at the Congressional level.

At this point in time, a potential partnership is limited to the information identified above. If City Council determines that conversations with Denver should continue, it is recommended that City Council invite a representative from Mayor Johnston's office to speak at a Lakewood

City Council meeting to share updated information and help answer questions from Lakewood's community.

Resources

- [Denver's Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs \(DOIRA\)](#) offers a variety of resources and support for migrants entering the Denver metro community and organizations that would like to get involved. Resources include:
 - Denver Immigrant Integration Sponsorship
 - Language Access' Interpreter Workforce Training
 - Neighborhood Language Map
 - Denver Immigrant Legal Services Fund
 - Immigrant & Refugee Commission
 - Language Access
 - Immigrant Integration Sponsorship Program
 - And more.
 - More information is available at www.Denvergov.org/MigrantSupport

- [Denver's Agency for Human Rights and Community Partnerships \(HRCP\)](#) works to create lasting change for all Denver community members through advocacy, capacity building, partnerships, community engagement, and direct services. Resources and services include:
 - Wage theft assistance
 - File a discrimination complaint
 - Denver City Guide
 - Funding opportunities
 - More information is available at www.Denvergov.org/HRCP

- [2-1-1 Colorado](#) provides a variety of immigrant, refugee and new American resources and support. Those looking for information can call 2-1-1 or text 898-211 to reach the 211 Colorado Help Center and speak with a live navigator. Spanish-speaking navigators are available and can provide free translation services as well as direct services for free transportation through Lyft rides and much more. More information is available at <https://www.211colorado.org/migrant-and-refugee-resources>

- The [Colorado Office of New Americans \(ONA\)](#) serves as the point of contact for state agencies, private sector organizations, and the public to advance the integration and inclusion of New Americans in Colorado communities. More information is available at <https://ona.colorado.gov/>