

Department of Planning and Budget 2016 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB1309

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed
Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. Patron: Keam

3. Committee: Health, Welfare and Institutions

4. Title: Office of Immigrant Assistance created.

5. Summary: Office of Immigrant Assistance created. Establishes an Office of Immigrant Assistance within the Department of Social Services (DSS) to assist persons lawfully entering the United States and the Commonwealth for the purpose of becoming citizens. This office shall provide advice and assistance with the citizenship application process as well as employment, housing, and services for eligible immigrants.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates:

7a. Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2016	-	-	-
2017	\$407,116	2.0	general
2018	\$246,790	2.0	general
2019	\$246,790	2.0	general
2020	\$246,790	2.0	general
2021	\$246,790	2.0	general
2022	\$246,790	2.0	general

8. Fiscal Implications: There are estimated to be 508,811 foreign born persons in Virginia who are not United States citizens based on data from the United States Census Bureau and the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. Of this number, 20 percent or 101,762 (508,811 x .20) are estimated to be in Virginia illegally. Therefore, it is estimated that 407,049 (508,811 – 101,762) immigrants are legally present but not United States citizens and could potentially be served by the Office of Immigrant Assistance as established by this legislation.

It is assumed that the Office of Immigrant Assistance (OIA) would be an extension of the Office of Newcomer Services (ONS) and would coordinate and provide referrals for immigrant assistance, rather than providing direct services to immigrants. Currently, ONS

provides assistance to persons from around the world who have been forced to flee their homeland because of wars, armed conflicts, or gross violations of civil rights. ONS already has an existing network of local service providers that provide citizenship services, language, housing, and employment assistance, and understand the complexities of integrating the foreign born into Virginia communities. As such, there would be no additional cost to the department for the services provided to refugees, those seeking asylum, Cuban/Haitian entrants, and unaccompanied refugee minors, who are about seven percent of the total immigrant population, since these populations are being helped through the ONS. This legislation could also potentially impact other agencies if their service populations increase due to referrals from DSS for employment, housing and other services.

The two main cost areas involved in establishing an OIA are staffing expenses and the cost of a public outreach campaign. The ONS is currently funded by the federal Refugee and Entrant Assistance grant. Due to the restrictive nature of this grant, these funds cannot be used to fund the OIA. It is estimated that two additional positions consisting of a program administration manager (pay band 5) and a program administration specialist (pay band 5) will be needed. The program administration manager will provide in-house expertise in immigration needs and available services. The program administration specialist will know immigration needs, monitor the quality of service delivered by the local service providers, and work closely with the program administration manager to expand the network of local service providers. Using an average salary of \$70,124 for the program administration manager and \$55,646 for the program administration specialist, it is estimated that an additional \$207,116 in general fund would be needed for salaries, benefits and other operating costs in FY 2017; and \$196,790 in general fund in FY 2018 and each year thereafter.

In order for the OIA to be effective there must be a targeted public outreach campaign to make immigrants aware of the OIA and services it provides. The public outreach campaign would include, but not be limited to, public service announcements, pamphlets and publications, press releases, posters, promotional items, graphic design, and market boards. Public outreach must be done in multiple languages given the targeted audience of immigrants seeking citizenship, thereby increasing the cost. It is estimated to cost approximately \$200,000 in the first year and \$50,000 each year thereafter to conduct a public outreach campaign in multiple languages for the immigrant population.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Social Services

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: