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**HOUSE BILL 2368**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Gregerson, Eslick, Thai, Low, Senn, Leavitt, Davis, Farivar, Nance, Reed, Doglio, Ramel, Simmons, Ormsby, Street, Goodman, Timmons, Pollet, and Santos

Read first time 01/15/24. Referred to Committee on Human Services, Youth, & Early Learning.

1 AN ACT Relating to assisting refugees and immigrants by  
2 describing the role of the office of refugee and immigrant assistance  
3 within the department of social and health services in administering  
4 federal funding regarding refugee support services and authorizing  
5 the office of refugee and immigrant assistance within the department  
6 of social and health services to administer services to immigrants;  
7 and adding a new chapter to Title 74 RCW.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The purpose of this chapter is to  
10 establish the scope of refugee and immigrant assistance administered  
11 by the office of refugee and immigrant assistance within the  
12 department.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
14 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
15 otherwise.

16 (1) "Department" means the department of social and health  
17 services.

18 (2) "Federal act" means Title IV of the federal immigration and  
19 nationality act, 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1521 et seq. as amended, including any  
20 federal rules adopted pursuant to the federal act.

1 (3) "Immigrant" means a person who has arrived in the United  
2 States and the state of Washington from another country seeking  
3 residence who is not a naturalized citizen.

4 (4) "Refugee" means a person admitted into the United States  
5 under section 207 of the immigration and nationality act and others  
6 who are eligible for federal refugee resettlement services under the  
7 federal act.

8 (5) "State plan" means the Washington state plan for refugee  
9 resettlement described in section 4 of this act.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The department shall coordinate state,  
11 federal, and local efforts to support the economic and social  
12 integration of immigrants and refugees arriving and resettling in  
13 Washington.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The department is designated as the single  
15 state agency responsible for the development, review, and  
16 administration of the Washington state plan for refugee resettlement.  
17 The department shall submit the state plan to and seek approval from  
18 the federal office of refugee resettlement within the federal  
19 department of health and human services according to the federal act.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The department shall provide refugee  
21 cash assistance, refugee medical assistance, and refugee support  
22 services in accordance with the federal act and the state plan.

23 (2) The refugee support services described in this section may  
24 include:

- 25 (a) Employment services;
- 26 (b) English language instruction;
- 27 (c) Case management; and
- 28 (d) Other services or assistance consistent with the federal act.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) The department may administer services  
30 to immigrants who are ineligible for federal services described in  
31 section 5 of this act.

32 (2) The department may contract with external entities, including  
33 community-based organizations, to provide the services authorized  
34 under this section.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**    The department may adopt rules in order to  
2 achieve the purposes of this chapter.

3        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 8.**    Sections 1 through 7 of this act  
4 constitute a new chapter in Title 74 RCW.

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