

## **Welcome to Colorado!**

This Welcome Packet is intended to assist asylum seekers and migrants who do not yet have an immigration legal status but are intending to call Colorado home. This guide is not legal advice and it does not include all of the information that you need to know. It is only a guide to help you get started. We are happy to have you as our newest Coloradans! [Spanish translation coming soon]

#### **TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

1) <u>Welcome to Colorado</u>	2
2) How to Use this Guide	2
3) Getting Connected: Phone & Internet Service	2
4) <u>Accessing Services</u>	3
5) Accessing Emergency Health Care, Health Care and Mental Health Services	4
6) <u>Health Insurance</u>	5
7) <u>Crisis Support and Emergencies</u>	5
8) <u>Enrolling your Children in School</u>	5
9) <u>Public Charge</u>	6
10) Individual Taxpayer Identification Number	6
11) Colorado ID and SB 251 Driver's Licenses	7
12) <u>Understanding Your Options To Remain in the United States</u>	8
13) <u>Legal Assistance</u>	8
14) <u>Immigration Proceedings</u>	9
15) Know Your Rights	11
16) English Language Programs	11
17) <u>Employment</u>	11
18) <u>Occupational Licenses</u>	12
19) <u>Starting Your Own Business</u>	13
20) Your Local Government Resources: Cities and Counties	13
21) <u>Additional Resources</u>	13

#### 1) Welcome to Colorado

To Our Newest Neighbors,

Our state has a long history of welcoming refugees, immigrants, and others fleeing persecution. Welcoming newcomers showcases our American values of humanitarianism and compassion, and our responsibility to step forward to support you is one we take very seriously.

Numerous Coloradans, including immigrants and former refugees, faith-based organizations, municipalities, community-based organizations, state government, philanthropy, and healthcare providers are committed to working together to provide new opportunities for you, and your families, in our great state.

We know that you have experienced hardship, and want you to know that you are welcome here.

Today, you find yourselves at a crossroads, transitioning to a new life in a new place, and we know that it is hard. We have faith in your ability to find a new life with new opportunities in our state, and together, we are ready to partner with you, to rebuild your lives in Colorado. We know that investing in you helps newcomers stabilize and builds wellbeing for their families. Supporting you, our new neighbors, also helps build a more vibrant, inclusive, and economically thriving state - a Colorado for all.

Welcome to Colorado.

## 2) How to Use this Guide

- This guide is intended as a resource for asylum seekers and new arrivals arriving in Colorado who do not yet have an immigration status. As such, 'you' is used throughout the guide to address the primary intended user of this guide, asylum seekers and new arrivals without an immigration status. Members of the welcoming community may also use this guide as they support new arrivals in rebuilding their lives here.
- This guide is intentionally not specific to a certain part of Colorado, as you may choose to resettle in any number of cities or towns across the state.
- This guide is to help provide you with information in addition to that information you
  may be receiving from a community sponsor, individuals, or other nonprofit
  organizations you may be working with.

## 3) Getting Connected: Phone & Internet Service

- Access to a mobile phone and reliable internet is an important way to gain access to information and seek support.
- Mobile phones
  - No contract phone services are often the easiest to access. Most wireless providers have a no-contract option. Carriers like Cricket Wireless, Boost Mobile, and others can be found online or at a nearby wireless store. You can purchase additional minutes online, at convenience stores, Walmart, Target and others.
  - Free wifi is available in many areas of Denver including downtown.

- With free wifi you can connect with your loved ones almost anywhere in the world via WhatsApp, facetime, zoom, google, skype, or other free service.
- Public Libraries Here is a <u>list</u> of Colorado libraries by county.
  - Most public libraries offer free computer access and free wi-fi. There may be a limit on the amount of time you can use the internet on a daily basis, especially if others are waiting.

## 4) Accessing Services

- 2-1-1 Colorado is a statewide community resource that can connect you to critical resources and supports available throughout Colorado, from shelter locations, food (including food pantries or hot meals), housing options, job search, childcare, transportation assistance, healthcare, and more.
  - Learn about available resources in your area either by visiting <a href="https://www.211colorado.org/">https://www.211colorado.org/</a> or by calling 2-1-1 (toll free: 866-760-6489) or texting 898-211.
  - o Bilingual operators (Spanish/English) are available Monday-Friday, 8 am 5 pm
  - For other languages, dial 2-1-1 and then press "8". You'll hear additional prompts, but if you wait on the line, you'll be connected to the next available representative. Once connected, share your language, as best as possible, and the 2-1-1 representative will work to conference in an interpreter in the language you prefer.
  - For additional information, 2-1-1 recently developed an <u>Immigrant and Refugee</u> Resource Guide.

#### Rental and housing assistance:

- 2-1-1 Colorado offers information and connection to local housing assistance resources. Available resources are very limited and often limited to those with legal immigration status.
- Colorado Housing Connects (<u>www.coloradohousingconnects.org</u> or 1-844-926-6632) is a statewide housing navigation service that can help individuals in need of housing assistance.

#### Childcare and family health line supports

- Colorado Shines Childcare is a free confidential service helping families find quality and affordable childcare and referrals to local, available, licensed child care providers. The service can also inform you how to become a licensed childcare provider.
- The family health line support can also connect you to free resources (diapers, formula, car seats) for children under 5 years old.
- To access this support, dial 2-1-1, 866-760-6489 (toll free), or text "child care referrals" to 898-211.

#### Transportation

- Mile High United Way 2-1-1 partners with Lyft to help provide transportation to individuals who need help with shelter or food assistance. This free transportation is only available after all other available transportation resources have been exhausted.
- To access this service, visit <a href="https://www.211colorado.org/">https://www.211colorado.org/</a> or call 2-1-1 on your phone.

# 5) Accessing Emergency Health Care, Health Care and Mental Health Services

• In the case of an emergency, call 911. For urgent health concerns, individuals should go to the closest Urgent Care or Emergency Room.

#### **Emergency Medicaid**

- To be eligible for Emergency Medicaid, you must meet the same eligibility requirements as all other Health First Colorado applicants, <u>except for immigration or citizenship requirements</u>. You also must have a qualifying life- or limb-threatening medical emergency (e.g., labor and delivery, heart attack, severe symptoms from COVID-19) that is covered by Emergency Medicaid.
- Under federal law, all hospitals are required to provide emergency medical care to anyone who is having a medical emergency, even if you cannot pay for the care. Applications for Emergency Medicaid are done at the hospital.
- In the United States, you have important health care rights. You have the right to interpreter services, and you have the right to confidentiality. The right to privacy means that your doctor or nurse cannot tell anyone anything about your health without your permission.
- For medical questions, to make an appointment, or to arrange a refill of medications already prescribed at Denver Health, you may call the 24 hour Denver Health NurseLine at 303-739-1211. You will hear an English recording and during that recording, press '3'. Wait on hold until someone answers and state your preferred language. They will link you to an interpreter. You can call this number even if you do not live in Denver.
- If you are sick, need immunizations or vaccinations, or need health care for a non-urgent problem or ongoing health care needs, find a community health center closest to you with this tool. Community health care centers offer high-quality services at low-cost.
- COVID-19 Learn about Colorado's COVID response and services <u>here</u> and <u>in</u> español.

#### **Colorado Indigent Care Program (CICP)**

- CICP is not a health insurance program. It provides discounted health care services through specific hospitals and clinics.
- You can qualify if you live in Colorado, meet income guidelines, and are not eligible for Medicaid.
- To apply you must provide personal identification and household income for you and your household.
- To find a hospital or clinic that participates in CICP, see this <u>directory</u> or call 1-800-221-3943.

#### Mental Health Care:

 Mental health refers to how you feel, think, and behave as you handle stress and cope with life. Newcomers need to pay special attention to their mental health because they often have experienced challenging events in their recent past and often experience significant stress as they adjust to life in the United

- States. If you ever feel that life is too hard and you cannot cope with everyday activities, you should seek mental health services.
- Community health centers have mental health services. Find one close to you using this tool.
- There are also community mental health centers with services for you. Find a location that works for you.

#### 6) Health Insurance

- In Colorado, and in the United States, it is very important to have health insurance. Health insurance helps pay for medical care you receive. Without it, you can be stuck with big medical bills. For example, if you broke a leg, treating it at the hospital can cost up to \$7,500, without health insurance.
- OmniSalud is a new health insurance program that provides individuals without legal status who reside in Colorado, a safe way to compare affordable health insurance plans, and enroll through a secure online platform.
  - To be eligible, you must live in Colorado and not be eligible for other medical insurance programs.
  - You are determined eligible for these plans through self-attestation and the information you provide is not shared with any federal government partners and cannot be used for immigration enforcement.
  - o Open enrollment is annually between November 1st and January 15th.
  - To find a certified assister that provides free application assistance, visit Omni Salud's <u>webpage</u>.

## 7) Crisis Support and Emergencies

- If you witness or are involved in an emergency anywhere in the United States, dial 9-1-1 to have emergency services (fire, police, paramedics) respond. It is extremely important to only call 9-1-1 in emergencies. Emergencies require an immediate professional response, for example a fire, a person who is choking, passed out, or who is having a hard time breathing, a serious car accident, or a crime (someone is beating another individual) in progress. Interpretation is available with 911.
- If you witness a crime or are a victim to a crime, please call the police. The police will not share your information with federal government partners, and the information will not be used against you for immigration enforcement.
- If you are suffering from anxiety, loneliness, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse or another personal crisis, call <u>Colorado Crisis Services</u> at 1-844-493-8255 or text 'TALK' to 38255. Interpretation is available when you call, text service is in English only.

## 8) Enrolling your Children in School

- All children, between the ages of 5 and 20 years old (if they have not yet graduated high school) are entitled to a free public education regardless of their or their parents' actual or perceived national origin, citizenship, or immigration status in the United States. You can review an overview of your rights in this <u>fact sheet</u> prepared by the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice.
- Most schools in Colorado begin the third week of August and run through mid-May.

- In Colorado, you have the right to send your child to a school that is not in your neighborhood, because Colorado has open enrollment for public school. To read more about school choice, see this <u>article</u>.
- The school or school district you are likely to enroll your child in, usually depends on where in Colorado you live. We recommend you reach out to an individual school to determine what the process is and what information you need to enroll your child.
- Click <u>here</u> for school districts' contact information. For questions about identifying your local school or school district, call the Colorado Department of Education at 303-866-6600.

#### 9) Public Charge

- You may have heard that if you receive any governmental assistance, the federal government will determine that you are a public charge.
- It is important for you to know what public charge is, so that if you or your family is in need of assistance, that you do not let fear stop you from getting the assistance or services that you need.
- If you apply for legal permanent residence or a visa in the future, a federal
  immigration officer with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must
  decide whether you are likely to primarily rely on the government to take care of
  you. If the immigration officer decides you are likely to rely on the government to
  take care of you, you can be determined to be a public charge and denied
  admission into the United States.
- Receiving public benefits or assistance does not automatically make someone a public charge.
- A federal immigration officer must consider a number of factors before making a determination that someone is likely to become a public charge.
- On December 23, 2022, DHS published a final rule "Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility" that took effect.
  - Under the new rule, when making a public charge determination, DHS will
    consider an applicant's age, health, family status, assets, resources, financial
    status, education, skills and prior or current receipt of Supplemental Security
    Income (SSI), cash assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
    (TANF), state or local income maintenance (often called "general assistance") or
    long-term institutionalization paid for by the government.
- DHS will not consider your receipt of noncash benefits like school breakfast or lunch programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), public housing, CHIP, Medicaid, vaccines, etc.
- The public charge ground does not apply to everyone, not even to everyone who
  applies for legal permanent residence. There are certain groups of people
  (refugees, asylum applicants, U and T visa applicants) who are exempt from public
  charge or may get a waiver for public charge when applying for admission into the
  United States.

 For more information regarding public charge, see the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services <u>Public Charge Resources</u> webpage. It has a very informative questions and answers section.

#### 10) Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

- The Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) was created by the federal government's <u>Internal Revenue Service (IRS)</u> to allow foreign nationals and individuals without a social security number, including individuals without an immigration status, to comply with U.S. tax laws and pay U.S. taxes.
- An ITIN is not a social security number.
- Employers generally require an ITIN or a social security number.
- ITINs do not provide legal immigration status or work authorization.
- Many immigrants, those who are lawfully present and those who are not, have ITINs
- An ITIN can help you provide proof of residency, obtain a driver's license, and open an interest bearing bank account.
- While ITIN holders pay taxes, they are not eligible for all of the federal public benefits that U.S. citizens and other taxpayers receive.
- If an ITIN holder has a U.S. citizen child under the age of 18 with a social security number, the parent(s) should be eligible for the federal child tax credit (CTC).
  - Colorado law allows Coloradans with an ITIN to be eligible for the <u>Colorado</u> <u>Earned Income Tax Credit</u> and the <u>Colorado Child Tax Credit</u> if they meet other qualifications. If you file a state income tax return and you qualify, it will allow you to claim these refundable credits. Additionally, as an ITIN holder, if you file a Colorado income tax return, you may be eligible to obtain a refund through <u>TABOR</u>, when the state has excess revenue.
- Federal law states that the IRS is not supposed to release taxpayer information to other federal government agencies (like immigration enforcement), except to investigate for tax administration or under a federal court order for non-tax criminal investigations.
  - Colorado law provides similar protections that prohibit the state from releasing taxpayer information to other government agencies for immigration enforcement purposes.
- To learn more about the ITIN including whether to apply, read this helpful <u>fact sheet</u> written by The American Immigration Council.
  - If you choose to apply for an ITIN, the IRS provides <u>free application support</u> to complete the process. So do other community organizations. While there is no cost to obtain an ITIN, the IRS is experiencing a backlog in processing and the wait time can be long.

## 11) Colorado ID and SB 251 Driver's Licenses

- A Colorado ID is an important form of identification that is easily recognizable by a variety of programs and is important for life in Colorado. A Colorado ID is simply an identification document.
- Through Senate Bill 13-251, the Colorado legislature passed the Colorado Road and Community Safety Act (CO-RCSA) allowing all Coloradans to obtain a non-REAL ID SB 251 compliant driver license, regardless of immigration status, as

- long as you meet all requirements, pass the necessary driver's test, and provide proof of identity and Colorado residency.
- While driver licenses and identification cards issued under CO-RCSA can not be used for federal purposes, voting, or public benefits, these credentials are a valid Colorado identification.
- The Rocky Mountain Immigration Advocacy Network created a very helpful <u>Guide to Obtaining A Colorado Identification Document</u> which provides step by step information on what documents you need to bring, what agencies can help you (pg. 19), and what agencies can provide vouchers to apply (pg. 21).
- To schedule an SB 251 driver's license appointment, click <u>here</u>.
- For more information about SB 251 driver's licenses or identification, visit the <u>DMV</u> website.

#### 12) Understanding Your Options to Remain in the United States

- Individuals who have been allowed to cross a border or travel into the interior of the United States do not automatically have the right to stay in the United States.
- It is very important to understand where you are in the immigration process, and what options may be available to you and your family to seek immigration relief and the ability to remain in the United States.

#### 13) Legal Assistance

- It is important to find a good immigration attorney that can provide you with quality legal advice. You can find immigration attorneys a few different ways and they can be pro-bono (free of charge) or charge a lot of money for their services. These immigration attorneys either work with a nonprofit organization or are in private practice.
- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the federal government agency that oversees immigration to the U.S. Visit the <u>USCIS website</u> to learn more.
- Here is an important <u>article</u> from the American Immigration Law Association (AILA) regarding finding a good lawyer or an accredited representative. It says that good immigration attorneys should be:
  - Licensed in good standing in at least one state;
  - Have been AILA members for two years or more;
  - Have professional liability insurance coverage of \$100,000 or more, and
  - Have taken at least 9 hours of classes in the last year to stay up to date on immigration law.
- Here is a <u>list</u> of nonprofit organizations that have immigration attorneys by the Immigration Advocates Network. Here is another <u>recent list</u> compiled by the Rocky Mountain Immigration Advocacy Network (RMIAN).
- You can search for a <u>list of AILA attorneys</u> by city or the state of Colorado. RMIAN also has a <u>partial list</u> of immigration attorneys in private practice.

- Federal law and the U.S. Department of Justice have allowed non-attorney individuals to train to become accredited representatives in immigration law. These accredited representatives are allowed to represent individuals in immigration courts and the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). Click <a href="here">here</a> to read more about the program. Here is a <a href="list of Recognized Organizations">list of Recognized Organizations and Accredited Representatives</a> in Colorado.
- Beware of notarios, who may charge a lot of money and are not authorized to represent you in immigration court. To learn more about notario fraud, watch a <u>video</u> from the Immigrant Legal Resource Center.

#### 14) Immigration Proceedings and Relief

- If you are unsure whether you have a case in immigration court, read this article.
- If you were processed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) when you entered the country, it is very important that you attend all check-ins with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and all immigration court hearings.
- If you do not show up for even one hearing or check-in, it can result in an order of deportation. You may have received the following:
  - Notice to Report If you received a Notice to Report (Form I-385), it may state that you are required to check-in with ICE within 60 days.
    - To schedule a check-in with ICE, click <a href="here">here</a>. You can also try calling the ICE Detention Reporting and Information Line at 1-888-351-4024. Finally, for ICE locations, phone numbers and email addresses, click <a href="here">here</a> and scroll down to the bottom of the page.
    - If you are having trouble scheduling an appointment with ICE, the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project recommends that you keep trying and keep records and screenshots of your attempts.
    - To learn more about the Notice to Report, read this <u>article</u> from the Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project.
  - Notice to Appear DHS may have provided you with a Form I-862 or A Notice to Appear (NTA). DHS provides an individual with an NTA when it believes that you do not have permission to be in the United States, it is the first step in removal proceedings. The NTA may list the date, time or location of your next hearing.
    - If it does not list the date, you may receive a hearing notice in the mail. You can also call the immigration court hotline at **1-800-898-7180** or check the <u>immigration court system</u> at least once a week for any updates.
  - Change of Address If you have an immigration case and you have moved from the address you first provided, it is very important that you notify the immigration court as soon as possible of your change of address. You can do so by filling out this <u>form</u>. You should file a separate form for every member of your family.
  - Change of Venue If you now live far away from the immigration court where your hearing will take place, you can file a motion to change venue. This

- <u>self-help guide</u> was created by the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR).
- Asylum If you are considering applying for asylum to remain in the United States, remember to speak with an experienced immigration attorney or DOJ accredited representative about your options. See section 12 in this guide for information regarding seeking legal assistance. Here is some additional information for you to consider regarding asylum.
  - The Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP) put together a very detailed video "<u>Deciding Whether to Apply for Asylum in the United States.</u>" The video also discusses other potential legal relief that you may be eligible to apply for, including T visa, U visa, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), etc.
  - Innovation Law Lab published this helpful video "Asylum: Your Case Is In Your Hands."
  - If you came into the country, without a visa or without being processed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and are not in immigration proceedings, if you submit an asylum application, you will alert immigration authorities to your presence in the United States. You will also have to submit your address on your application and keep it up to date, if you move. If you are not granted asylum, then you may be referred to Immigration Court for deportation proceedings.
  - Generally speaking, you must file your asylum application within the first year of your arrival to the United States.
  - The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services within DHS processes the <u>asylum application</u> for an individual who is not in immigration proceedings.
  - If you are in immigration proceedings, and you file an application for asylum, you cannot be deported until your application has been reviewed by the Immigration Court.
  - If you have submitted an application for asylum, you can apply for a work permit 150 days after submitting your asylum application, without having to pay a fee.
- The Rocky Mountain Immigration Advocacy Network (RMIAN) also has compiled a
  great list of <u>self-help</u> resources to provide general information about immigration
  proceedings.
- Temporary Protected Status (TPS) The U.S. Department of Homeland Security may designate a foreign country for TPS if the country's conditions temporarily prevent its nationals from returning safely or if the country would be unable to handle the return of its nationals. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) under DHS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries who are already in the United States. If you are from a country that the DHS has designated, you may be able to register to stay and work in the United States for a certain period of time.
  - There are currently over a dozen countries that have TPS designations.
  - To see whether your home country is currently designated for TPS and for more information regarding eligibility and the application process, visit USCIS' <u>Temporary Protected Status webpage</u>.

## 15) Know Your Rights

- Even if you do not have a legal immigration status, you do have rights when you are in the United States.
- In Colorado (according to C.R.S. § 16-3-103), a police officer may stop you if they reasonably suspect that you are committing, have committed or are about to commit a crime and require you to provide your name, address, identification (if applicable), and an explanation of your actions.
- If you speak, do not lie, as anything you say can be used against you.
- You have the right to not sign paperwork unless or until you have had the ability to speak with an attorney.
- For additional information, please visit Informed Immigrant's <u>Know Your Rights</u> webpage, or ACLU's <u>Know Your Rights</u>, <u>Immigrants' Rights</u>.

## 16) English Language Programs

- It is very important to continue learning English. Learning English is central for navigating life in the United States, accessing resources, building relationships with others, and advancing your career or job prospects.
- There are many places where you can enroll in virtual and in-person English classes. Some are free, while others have an associated cost. Research the following to identify English language classes:
  - Map of current Colorado Department of Education grantees
  - Colorado Libraries
  - o Colorado's Community Colleges
  - Immigrant-serving nonprofits
  - Mosques, churches, or other congregations of faith
  - Apps and programs such as <u>Duolingo</u> are also available (often with free options) for self-directed learning.

## 17) Employment

- If you have won an immigration status that allows you to apply for the ability to work in the United States, do not delay in applying. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will process your application for employment authorization.
- If you do not yet have employment authorization, you may make the difficult choice
  to work in order to provide for yourself or your family. However please note, that if
  you work without authorization, it may be held against you in the future if you are
  offered the opportunity to become a legal permanent resident or citizen of the
  United States.
- Employees, with or without immigration status, have rights in the United States.
- The state of Colorado also has minimum wage laws and certain cities within Colorado have additional minimum wage laws. The Colorado minimum wage for 2023 is \$13.65/hour.
- The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) investigates and enforces labor law on wages, whistleblowing, public contracting, etc. Read more information about wage and hour laws.

- If you would like to submit a tip to CDLE's Division of Labor Standards and Statistics (DLSS) that conducts employer-wide investigations of potential violations of Colorado Wage and Hour law, email <u>cdle\_di@state.co.us</u>.
- If you would like to file an individual claim for unpaid wages with the state, regardless of immigration status, you must fill out a <u>wage and hour complaint</u> form.
- If you think your rights as an employee have been violated, you may also contact a nonprofit organization, <u>Towards Justice</u>, at 720-441-2236 or complete their <u>online</u> intake form.

#### 18) Occupational Licenses

- Many New Americans hold degrees, licenses, and/or credentials in other countries
  that they hope to transfer to, or re-obtain, in the United States. Receiving credit for
  prior learning can help you advance in a career path and move you towards
  successful economic integration. Below are links to credential evaluation companies
  that can help you review your curriculum vitae or foreign credentials for alignment.
  Note that many of these have costs.
  - Colorado State University Global International Transcript Evaluation
  - National Association of Credential Evaluation Services
- For teachers and educators, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has information regarding how to enter the field here: <u>Licensure Requirements for Foreign Applicants</u>
- For most other licenses, Colorado's Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) oversees the process. DORA has a webpage on <a href="Immigrant Licensure Information">Immigrant Licensure Information</a>. For applicants whose first language is not English, please email the <a href="Division's licensing staff">Division's licensing staff</a> or call 303-894-7800 to determine English language requirements for your profession or occupation.
  - For internationally trained barbers, cosmetologists or engineers, see the following guides:
    - Barber and Cosmetologists Skilled Immigrants Licensing Guide
    - Foreign Trained Professional Engineers Licensure Guide
- The state legislature passed <u>Senate Bill 21-199</u>, Concerning Measures to Remove Barriers to Certain Public Opportunities (SB 21-199), which clarified that state and local public benefits, without federal funding, should be made available to all Coloradans, regardless of their immigration status. Therefore, state agencies must ensure that all state and local benefit programs, including state licensure programs, are open to all individuals who call Colorado home and must remove requirements for documentation or information that prevent all Coloradans from accessing these programs.
- One thing to note however, if you are able to transfer or re-obtain a license in Colorado in your area of expertise, but do not have employment authorization, you still may not be able to use your license as an employee, but you may be able to start your own business.

#### 19) Starting Your Own Business

- If you ran your own business overseas, or have a business idea, the <u>Colorado's Minority Business Office (MBO)</u> can connect you to the pathway to legally establish a business in Colorado.
- Among other programs, the MBO created the Business Foundations Technical
  Assistance Program (BFP) that helps businesses get established and become
  eligible for additional start up funds. The BFP provides technical assistance with
  virtual office hours. Click <a href="here">here</a> to register for the BFP. The program is currently
  available in English and Spanish, and the MBO works with partner organizations to
  address the cultural and linguistic needs of other applicants.

#### 20) Your Local Government Resources: Cities and Counties

- You may be able to access government run or public services in the city or county where you reside. Search online for your city and county to learn more about what they offer.
- The services provided by cities and counties vary, but typically include things like
  public libraries, fire department, police, ambulance, parks, recreation centers, and
  more. Some municipalities have additional programs and resources specifically for
  new Americans, low-income residents, and other populations.
- Local libraries provide a wide array of services, from ESL classes and children's storytime to providing access to books, music, internet access and more. Visit <u>Colorado Libraries</u> to find a library near you.

## 21) Additional Resources

• Are you an immigrant organization that wants to provide help to asylum seekers or individuals who do not yet have legal status? <u>Please submit this form</u> to share the services your organization can provide.

#### Overall - Statewide

- Undocuhub Undocuhub's website acts as a central hub to provide digital resources, webinars, and direct forms of contact with the goal of connecting asylum seekers and individuals without legal status to experienced service providers and available resources. You can also call 720-597-8001.
- USA Hello's <u>FindHello</u> app helps users to connect to local services in cities across the country.

#### Denver Metro

- Public No Cost Grocery Programs
- Denver Public Library (303) 865-2362 Plaza programs have 9 locations around the city of Denver and serve as a resource hub for new immigrants to meet new people, practice skills, find resources, and work toward goals. We can connect people with a wide variety of resources in most topic areas.

#### Southern Colorado

Accompaniment & Sanctuary Coalition Colorado Springs (ASC COS)
 (719) 257-1218 - provides utilities, food assistance, housing and job search, connections with vetted organizations and services in Colorado Springs