

March 6, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

The community of Worthington MN has been titled, “the fastest diversifying county in Minnesota” (Minnesota Public Radio, October 2021). This small rural community in southwest Minnesota has welcomed persons from all over the world, who now call southwest Minnesota home. Occupations in agriculture attract families, and strong schools, healthcare, and government have built an infrastructure to welcome immigrants and refugees to our community. I fully support a Minnesota Office for New Americans as our people are in need of assistance to further acclimate and contribute long-term to our growing community.

Rural Minnesota is greatly impacted by the workforce shortage post-pandemic. Particularly in healthcare, there are not enough caretakers for hospitalized, long-term care, home care, hospice, and a myriad of personal care services for all ages. There are many people living in our community that were licensed professionals in their home countries, but currently working entry-level labor positions related to agriculture. Assistance to obtain the Minnesota licensure necessary to practice would have tremendous impact on our work force. Rather than depending on “travel” nurses and lab technicians, from out of state, our own local persons could work in professions they were trained in. Rather than working food service or cleaning occupations, they could continue in profession they have a passion to serve in.

I’m not familiar with an Office of New Americans, and do not know all that is possible. The Worthington community likely has multiple organizations doing some of the tasks envisioned. All public and private organizations here are doing our best to support the many capable persons wanting to understand systems, as they become independent and contributing citizens. Our healthcare, schools, and government agencies need this new office to lead us in effective collaboration. This in turn allows each entity to be stronger in the focused work that we already do.

Thank you for recognizing that new Americans to rural Minnesota are welcomed and needed. Our communities are in need of a Minnesota agency to further support us. Please contact me, and many from our community would be happy to further explain the needs of our community and how we would benefit from a Minnesota Office of New Americans.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Weg, RN, MS
Executive Director
Sanford Worthington Medical Center and Clinics
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