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UNH City Fiscal Year 2018 Budget & Policy Priorities **Immigrant Legal Services**

UNH Supports the human services community proposal to address the underfunding of contracts by increasing funding by 12% to raise salaries, support reasonable fringe benefits and cover existing underfunding of OTPS.

Immigrant Opportunities Initiative – Baseline at \$13.3 million

FY 2017-2018 Preliminary: \$3.3m

FY 2016-2017 Adopted: \$8.6m (\$3.3m baseline, \$2.7m 1-yr. Admin; \$2.6m Council)

New York Immigrant Family Unity Project – Baseline at \$12 million

FY 2017-2018 Preliminary: \$0

FY 2016-2017 Adopted: \$6.23m (Council)

Unaccompanied Minor and Children’s Initiative – Fund at \$4.8 million

FY 2017-2018 Preliminary: \$0

FY 2016-2017 Adopted: \$1.5m (Council)

Services Funded:

- *The Immigrant Opportunities Initiative (IOI)* is designed to assist immigrants gain access to information and resources and to strengthen their participation in the democratic process. IOI legal services assist immigrants in applying for citizenship or permanent residency as well as support with other legal needs.
- *The New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP)* provides legal representation and social work services to New Yorkers that are detained and defacing deportation and cannot afford a lawyer.
- *The Unaccompanied Minor and Children’s Initiative* provides legal representation to children fleeing violence in Central America and at risk of deportation, as well as mothers with children also at risk.

Challenge and Opportunity:

Over the last year this nation has experienced an explosion of xenophobic rhetoric and hate attacks, as well as changes in federal policy that specifically target Muslims, Mexicans and undocumented individuals of all backgrounds. Between the President’s use of discriminatory and un-American Executive Orders and promises to ramp up detentions and deportations, many of New York’s immigrants are fearful and in need of legal representation. Due to this intense fear, and particularly for those that are undocumented, there is a heightened risk of these individuals being taken advantage of by unscrupulous scammers.

While NYC’s Mayor and City Council have affirmed their intent for New York City to remain a “sanctuary city,” it is imperative that free, safe and accessible legal services are made available through trusted community based organizations and other legal providers. Further, it is essential that funding for these services be expanded and baselined to meet increased demand and provide stability and continuity in their services.

UNH recommendation: Baseline IOI at \$13.3m and NYIFUP at \$12m to provide unrestricted services to at least 13,000 immigrants. Renew and expand Unaccompanied Minor and Children’s Initiative at \$4.8 million to represent 1,750 children and families

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