

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 24-0110

In Support of Expediting the Work Authorization Process for Asylum Seekers

WHEREAS, Individuals who are seeking asylum in the United States are subject to a 150-day waiting period after submitting their asylum claim to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) (also referred to as a work permit). During this waiting period, many asylum seekers must rely on counties and nonprofits within their communities to provide their basic needs as they are legally unable to work; and

WHEREAS, The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the administration to take actions to shorten the current waiting period for asylum seekers who are applying for an EAD. By shortening this arbitrary waiting period, asylum seekers will be able to contribute more quickly to the workforce and local economy, and reduce the need for them to rely on supportive services from counties; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. asylum process allows individuals fleeing persecution to seek residence in the U.S. The asylum system is currently heavily backlogged, which means it typically takes years for a case to be adjudicated; and

WHEREAS, While asylum seekers are protected from deportation during this time, they are not able to work until they get authorization. This generally takes at least half a year but typically more than a year. This places a burden on asylum seekers, sponsors, local communities, and the economy as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Legislative solutions would be more enduring and comprehensive. Counties have an interest in ensuring that our employers and industries of all types can hire and retain a qualified and legal workforce that meets their needs and helps to strengthen local economies not only in areas like construction and agriculture but in every facet of our economy; and

WHEREAS, Asylum seekers help build and maintain small and large business operating locally, as well as give them the means to become self-sufficient more quickly. The changes would lessen the burden on the budgets of communities hosting asylum seekers – and therefore the larger economy - by permitting such individual to obtain employment.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That the Council of the City and County of Denver supports expediting the work authorization process for asylum seekers.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that copies be transmitted to the National Association of Counties (NACo) and Metro Area County Commissioners (MACC).

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL February 5, 2024

PRESIDENT

