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Director Selected for Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Orange County, Calif. (April 9, 2024) – The County of Orange is pleased to announce the selection of Jose A. Serrano as director of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA).

Established by the Board of Supervisors in April 2024, OIRA's goal is to support Orange County's immigrant and refugee populations in accordance with requirements of state and federal law and by doing so help them gain stability and self-sufficiency.

Jose, who started April 5, has spent more than a decade supporting immigrants through his work at World Relief Southern California and the State of California's Refugee Programs Bureau. In addition to chairing the Arab American Civic Council and leading the Good Neighbor Team Task Force to bring solutions to challenges immigrants face in Orange County, Jose has also helped over 800 refugees from across the world settle into new homes in Southern California.

"It is essential that we bring together partners from across Orange County to serve our residents. Given his experience, we know that Jose will successfully work with our community partners to create a supportive environment for immigrants and refugees in Orange County," said Vice Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District Supervisor.

Jose has managed direct services for refugees during their first 90 days in the United States, working with community-based organizations to connect newcomers with the resources to establish themselves in a new country.

"When Vice Chairman Chaffee and I proposed the creation of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs in 2023, we envisioned a central hub for coordinating services, resources, and advocacy efforts to support Orange County's immigrant and refugee populations. As an immigrant myself, I support centralizing county services that help immigrants and refugees gain stability, become self-sufficient, and financially prosper in our community," said Supervisor Andrew Do, First District.

Jose has conducted trainings and webinars on how immigration policies and laws affect communities, such as the end of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and what benefits individuals might qualify for.

"There has been a lot of anticipation surrounding the creation of this new office, and I am excited to welcome our new director. There is a real need for the services that he will oversee, as nearly 1 out of 3 residents in Orange County are immigrants. I look forward to working with him closely as he connects our most vulnerable residents with services," said Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento, Second District.



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Jose earned his bachelor's degrees in political science and Chicana/o studies from the University of California, Los Angeles. He is also fully accredited by the Office of Legal Access Programs, under the Department of Justice, to represent individuals going before immigration court and the Board of Immigration Appeals.

"We welcome Director Jose Serrano, a fellow Bruin, to join our County family at the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. Many immigrants move or seek refuge here in Orange County to restart their lives in pursuit of safety, opportunity, and the American Dream. Unfortunately, many immigrants and refugees don't know nor trust that the County offers plenty of services for our most vulnerable communities. Director Serrano will prioritize connecting immigrants and refugees to critical resources, resulting in more trust among immigrant communities and local government, community cultural organizations, and Orange County residents," said Supervisor Katrina Foley, Fifth District.

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