

The Oregonian

Chloe Eudaly seeks Portland Legal Defense Fund for Immigrants Facing Deportation

*By Shane Dixon Kavanaugh
March 2, 2018*

Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly wants nearly every immigrant who faces deportation in the city to have a lawyer — and will request \$750,000 in public funds to help launch a program to provide them.

Eudaly unveiled her plan in a letter to the Welcoming / Inclusive / Sanctuary Task Force, which on Thursday delivered a report to the City Council on how to best combat the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration.

The top recommendation by the task force, which formed last year, was the creation of a legal defense fund for non-citizens with modest means.

Such immigrant defense funds, aided in part with taxpayer dollars, already exist in cities like Seattle and Los Angeles.

"The hostile environment created by our federal administration has required us to give more of ourselves in order to stand united against attacks on our immigrant communities," Eudaly wrote in the letter, which was first reported by Willamette Week.

The proposal would require \$1.5 million in funding from the city of Portland and Multnomah County in the first year. The money would go to hiring at least five attorneys and provide other legal services.

Last year, the Portland council provided a \$50,000 grant to Metropolitan Public Defenders to help with immigration cases.

"Why on earth would any public entity aid and abet people here illegally?" said Jim Ludwick, a spokesman for Oregonians for Immigration Reform, which supports stricter limits on immigration.

The moves come as some cities and local governments throughout the country continue to look for ways to shield non-citizens from ramped-up federal enforcement of immigration laws.

Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agents in the Pacific Northwest arrested nearly 3,400 people in 2017, a 25 percent increase from a year earlier, figures compiled by the Pew Research Center show.

There were 814 Multnomah County residents with pending deportation cases in December 2017 and at least another 940 residents from Washington County, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University, which analyzes U.S. immigration court records.

Living in the country illegally is not a criminal violation, and immigration-court cases are civil proceedings. Unlike in criminal cases, people facing immigration charges aren't guaranteed a public defender.

Lawyers and other immigrant rights advocates say an attorney can often make the difference between an individual being forced from the country and being allowed to stay.

Roughly 35 percent of those appearing in immigration courts in Multnomah County lack legal representation, according to an analysis of Department of Justice data by Metropolitan Public Defenders.

In 2016, immigration judges in Portland moved to deport more than 80 percent of defendants who had no lawyer, the analysis found. Meanwhile, 44 percent of those who had legal representation won relief and were allowed to stay in the U.S.

"Clearly, Oregonians who have a lawful right to be here are being deported when they don't have an attorney," said Leland Baxter-Neal, an attorney with Immigrant Defense Oregon at Metropolitan Public Defenders. "And it's ripping families apart."

The Portland Tribune

Controversial renter protections back on Wednesday

By Jim Redden

March 4, 2018

City Council is scheduled to continue last week's hearing on measure to expand and make permanent a policy adopted last February.

The City Council is scheduled to consider expanding and making permanent a contested temporary renter protection policy on Wednesday.

The council ran out of time to vote on the issue after a lengthy hearing last Wednesday.

The temporary policy was first approved in February 2016. It requires landlords to pay relocation assistance ranging from \$2,900 to \$4,500 to tenants subject to no-cause evictions or who choose to move after their rent is raised more than 10 percent in a year. It expires in April.

The council originally exempted landlords with just one unit from the requirements. The proposed permanent policy would narrow that exemption to just a few circumstances. Many landlords oppose the change, which is supported by tenant advocates.

Mayor Ted Wheeler said the expansion is justified by the affordable housing crisis that is forcing many low-income renters from their homes at last week's hearing. They said that could reduce the overall amount of affordable housing in Portland.

Some single-unit landlords testified they would sell their rental units if required to pay the relocation fees. Wheeler agreed that could happen at what he said was the "margins" of the market.

You can read the proposed new policy at www.portlandoregon.gov/auditor/article/675369.

Willamette Week

After Two Searches, Portland's Agency That Answers 911 Calls Has a New Director

*By Rachel Monahan
March 2, 2018*

Bob Cozzie, formally of Clackamas 911, takes over the bureau after a year-long delay.

The city agency charged with answering 911 calls finally has a new director.

Mayor Ted Wheeler today announced the appointment of Bob Cozzie as director of the Bureau of Emergency Communications.

"It is a key step in improving bureau operations and providing strategies to improve staff retention, all which are essential to providing efficient and effective service to our community members in need," says Wheeler in a statement announcing the appointment of Cozzie, who most recently served as the director of Clackamas 911 for 12 years, according to the mayor's press release.

BOEC suffered major management problems, identified last year by the city ombudsman. In particular, it had vastly underestimated for years the amount of time callers to 911 from cell phone calls had to wait on hold.

Cozzie interviewed for the job a year ago, during a director search launched by Commissioner Steve Novick, who lost reelection in November 2016.

The year-long delay in Cozzie's appointment highlights a key weakness of Portland's commission form of government—where the commissioners are both managers of bureaus as well as elected legislators for the city. That can result in frequent changeover in management of bureaus—and can cause the direction of the agencies to veer erratically.

Wheeler assigned the bureau to Commissioner Amanda Fritz after Novick left office, and Fritz rejected all the applicants for the director search after a second round of interviews.

"We did not have the robust pool of candidates that we hoped for when we inherited the process, and while we did go forward with second interviews, we felt none of the candidates rose to the level we were seeking for a permanent director," Fritz's chief of staff Tim Crail told WW last May.

Fritz, through Crail, declined to comment today.

Wheeler assigned BOEC to Fritz from January 2017 to April 2017. Then the mayor took control of all the bureaus during the budget process. But Wheeler took the unusual step last spring of not giving BOEC back to Fritz and instead assigning her only one bureau, Portland Parks and Recreation. It was the second time he'd taken a bureau away from Fritz after management problems were identified.

Despite the year-long delay in naming Cozzie, the mayor's office says there were nonetheless key changes that have taken place under the interim director Lisa St. Helen, who will go back to being operations manager at the bureau. They say the bureau has now adopted nationally recognized standards for measuring performance and worked with the county and the city to better response to emergency calls.

OPB

Meet Portland's New Creative Laureate: Choreographer Subashini Ganesan

*By April Baer
March 2, 2018*

When Subashini Ganesan was named Portland's Creative Laureate, she didn't realize part of her role would be convincing the public her job exists.

"A friend of mine took me out for dinner," Ganesan said, "and told the bartender all about it and the bartender looked over and said, 'Is this a "Portlandia" episode?' They seriously were looking for cameras!"

The position of Creative Laureate is very real and very important for connecting the city to the arts community.

The job has only been held by one other person, photographer Julie Keefe. Just as poets laureate are ambassadors for poetry and prose, Portland's creative laureate is intended to champion the arts and broaden the city's sense of its expressive self.

Ganesan is a performer, teacher and choreographer. She also serves a critical role, providing room to work for hundreds of independent artists and arts groups as the director of a nonprofit arts space New Expressive Works in Southeast Portland. (Ganesan picked up an award this week from the Regional Arts and Culture Council for "Using the Power of Space and Place.") Her first act as creative laureate? Founding Portland's first-ever South Asian Arts Festival.

Q&A with Subashini Ganesan

April Baer: What's it like to wake up every morning and know you're advocating for an entire city's creative life?

Subashini Ganesan: I'm honored. I'm really honored. I find it a bit daunting at times. My real focus is in collaboration and creating relationships. So in this position I think I might have a way to connect helpers with those who need help.

Baer: In some ways, as you've been offering people a place at New Expressive Works, you have already been facilitating relationships. What have you learned at NEW about people's needs — both artists and audiences?

Ganesan: So for those who've not been to the space, it's in a gray building. And a lot of art happens in the back 40, as I like to call it. We house about 200 independent performing artists. There's theatre, music, entire seasons happening right now — Third Angle New Music and their Studio Series, PDX Contemporary Ballet, Corrib Theatre, which is focused on Irish playwrights. So [it's] really a place that brings the richness of the independent performing arts world alive, on our own terms. That's one important thing I learned. Being an independent performing artist, sometimes we need to teach. Sometimes we need to make work. Sometimes we need a production crew. We don't follow this institutional calendar cycle all the time. The other thing I would say is we need venues that are neutral.

Baer: What does that mean to you?

Ganesan: The lobby and the artwork and the space does not immediately say, "Ah, this is the kind of art I'm going to see in this space."

Baer: There are no subtle cues about what kind of art is happening here and, by extension, what kind of audience is welcome here.

Ganesan: Yes! A lot of work is being done to diversify audiences. I believe the strength of NEW is that we have diverse audiences because the space is neutral. When [audiences] walk in to see a piano recital, the space looks like it is hosting a pianist. When they walk in to see my performances, it is a space that's presenting multicultural dance forms in a professional way. That's something I learned by watching and connecting with this extremely wide array of professional artists.

Baer: No one could accuse you of aiming small. You're kicking off your tenure as creative laureate founding a new arts festival: Portland's inaugural South Asian Arts Festival. Was this in the works before you took on the creative laureate role for the city?

Ganesan: It was going to be much smaller! I remember speaking with Erin Boburg at Portland Institute for Contemporary Art last February about my dream of having a weekend event in their new space. I was super attracted to their concrete floor they have. It's almost 11,000 square feet of bare floor. I want to have a festival which brings to visibility all the cultural art forms of my region that most people might not see, one of which is a floor art decoration form called rangoli, or kolam, or alpina that, in the early times, only women would draw on the floor with rice flour. It's something you do daily in front of your house [to] welcome the day, and welcome joy and prosperity to your home. It's something that can be super elaborate or really simple. I thought, "What a great place to have my community create an installation, in addition to music and food and art." It's just grown: RACC gave us a grant, Multnomah County Library said, "Why don't we have a two-month exhibition about South Asians concurrently?" It'll be a four-day festival, launching March 8.