



My City Academy 2021 At A Glance



[My City Academy](#) is a free leadership-training program sponsored by the [Denver Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs \(DOIRA\)](#). My City Academy educates and empowers Denver residents to learn about and participate in city government. This program is open to immigrant and refugee residents living in Denver.

MCA began in 2019 with two pilot cohorts – Cohort 1 in Montbello and Cohort 2 in West Colfax neighborhoods. A third cohort was added in Westwood. In 2021, we instituted virtual programming and defined three tracks.

← Councilwoman Stacie Gilmore presents an overview of Denver Government and how to engage with City Council to Cohort 1

Program Summary

The Denver Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs created My City Academy with the goal to connect immigrant, refugee, and newcomer residents in Denver with the vast number of resources provided by the city and our community partners to help them integrate into our community.


Our program shares information on issues such as family health and wellbeing, public safety, city services, community and civic engagement, and leadership.

- My City Academy is first and foremost an integration program.
- For our first five cohorts served 139 individuals
- Cohort 6, though virtual, added another 52 names to our alumni lists (58 total registered, 4 participants were from a previous cohort)
- In total, 20 alumni have participated in more than one cohort
- Alumni stay connected via the DOIRA monthly mailing. Alumni participate in other MCA tracks and programming. They share the information they have learned about city opportunities and resources with their networks.

This year, MCA flexed to the shifting needs of the community. In response to the continuing economic and social-emotional pressures caused pandemic, MCA provided a platform to deliver information necessary to maneuver through the series of difficulties encountered by residents through the restrictions, challenges, and changes.

Providing connections to community service providers and navigators is key in moments like these in our society. The need is great for resources, an increasing sense of apprehension of the government due to political polarity forces us to count on trusted voices in the community to share resources and reliable messaging.





DOIRA hosted one virtual cohort of the My City Academy program. Cohort 6 – Resources & COVID Response started July 7, through August 12, 2021, and focused on community navigators and community service providers to help them learn about and understand how the City of Denver continues to respond to community through the difficulties of the pandemic. The program includes information service providers and navigators would be able to use to help and/or share with their clientele as trusted messengers.

Cohort 6: Resources & COVID Response

40 participants

18 presenters – 13 represented City agencies, 1 city council member, 4 represented Denver Health & Denver Public Library

1 cohort, 5 sessions, 7.5 hours of programming
Interpretation provided in Spanish

Topics:

- Session 1: Denver's Municipal Structure, Anti-Discrimination & Conflict Resolution
- Session 2: Housing: Eviction & Mortgage Assistance
- Session 3: Meeting Basic Needs, Mental & Physical Health: Emergency Services & Resources
- Session 4: Partnership Building & Public Safety
- Session 5: Workforce Services & Unemployment: Requesting Assistance & Avoiding Fraud

Participant's responses:

Denver's Municipal Structure:

"It was helpful to understand how the City of Denver system works."

"It's helpful to find out about available city resources and how to help client's access/navigate."

Housing: Eviction & Mortgage Assistance:

"The resources available for my community! and to learn how the procedure of an eviction works."

Additionally, a My City Academy condensed video Welcoming Newcomers is available on the [My City Academy YouTube Playlist](#) available in [English](#), [Dari](#), and [Pashto](#) in response to Afghan evacuees' recent arrival to the Denver metro area.

For 2022, the Office will implement the Civic Engagement track in addition a Business track and continue to respond to the needs of the community by providing responsive programming necessary for residents to navigate successfully through the challenges caused by the pandemic and to obtain resources that make their lives easier.

For more information: Visit our [webpage](#), call us (720) 913-8457, or email Immigrants@DenverGov.org.

Supplemental Session: Denver Participatory Budgeting

On December 20, a supplemental virtual information one-hour session about [Denver Participatory Budgeting](#) (PB), a program where residents help lead the process of distributing public money to community projects was held. The initiative is focused on the far northeast and east side of Denver where the city hosts a large number of non-native households, we used the session to encourage participants and MCA leaders to apply for paid leadership positions. Additionally, navigators, stakeholders, and organizations were encouraged to apply for Community Connector Mini-Grants via an email to 109 alumni and direct contact with community partners.

5 registered, 2 attended

2 presenters represented Denver Department of Finance

1-hour session (with cohort 6, 8-total hours of programming)
Interpretation provided in Spanish

