

KING COUNTY IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMISSION BRIEFING

Agenda

Bookda Gheisar,
Office of Equity and Social Justice

Task force Recommendations,
Formation of a commission

Minal Kode Ghassemieh
Co-chair, KCIR Commission

Purpose, Make-up, Duties of
Commission

Nimco Bulale
Co-chair, KCIR Commission

Commission Work-Plan and areas of focus
and priority

Hamdi Mohamed
KCIR Commissioner

Equitable Community Development:
Commission meetings with the SeaTac
Community Coalition and displaced
businesses

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The following table provides a summary overview of community input by topic/issue area.

Table 3. Summary of Issues Shared by Communities

Issues Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
Housing and homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable/low income housing, need for rent control (particularly in South King County), need for increased rental assistance, and improved Section 8 assistance • Discrimination in housing, issues with landlords (undocumented people feel particularly vulnerable to abusive landlords due to fear of being reported), language barriers, lack of advocacy support and legal aid • Issues with substandard housing and code violations -- -people don't know where to turn for assistance and are afraid to report due to fear of landlord retaliation • Increasing homelessness problem, insufficient shelters, need for crisis intervention, prevention and reintegration programs • Need for pathways/supports to home ownership so that immigrants and refugees are investing in their futures; opportunities for ownership regardless of status and specific supports for people who face status related barriers • Increase Muslim housing options • Utilities assistance

Issues Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
Employment and small business needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity and access for minority businesses • Need for living wage jobs -- focus should be on building economic self-sufficiency so communities have capacity and feel they are contributing • Need staffing agency for immigrants and refugees to support their access to jobs and to help navigate employment application process and systems • Issues with jobs not being close to where people live; long and expensive commutes • Issues with applicability of educational and professional credentials in US job market; inability to apply home country experience in US market • Need for employment supports like job placement, training, internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, and training/workshops on how to get government jobs • Need for small business supports like loans, investments, and capacity-building for business owners • Investment in immigrant and refugee businesses like capacity building and interest free loans
Barriers to accessing services and insufficient investment in immigrants and refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inequitable and insufficient funding for services, need for culturally-appropriate services in South King County in particular • Language and cultural barriers to accessing services -- lack of materials in multiple languages; lack of cultural competency of agencies; lack of understanding of unique needs and challenges • Lack of awareness in communities of available services (and lack of information coming to communities in accessible and appropriate ways), changes in services • Lack of awareness and barriers create burden for young people in supporting elderly -- research services, explain, fill out forms, translate, etc. • Lack of coordination, gaps and eligibility issues for services • Need for one place to go for services -- hub that has basic information, language competency and is accessibility (in right place, staffed, open appropriate hours) • Need support to navigate systems, mentorship, and counseling

Issues Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
<p>Criminal justice, youth engagement and community safety</p> <p><i>(Inclusion of additional questions focused on disproportionality in the youth criminal justice system led to an elevated ranking of this group of issues. However, the task force agreed that the issues are pressing and should remain in the top four for focus by the new Commission working groups. This judgment call was made in recognition of the fact that, while disproportionality and profiling issues do not impact every immigrant and refugee community, they contribute to increased marginalization and vulnerabilities of people of color and lower-income segments of the immigrant and refugee population, and require special focus.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with profiling and racism in police force, especially targeting young men -- immigrants confused or misidentified by police, searching bags of kids of color, King County sheriff arresting youth because of who they hang out with • Communities don't trust police and feel police hold negative stereotypes of Latino and E African communities in particular • Police should be directed not to report people to or collaborate with Im-migrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) -- people don't call the police because they fear being reported to ICE and ending up in Tacoma detention center • Need for improved policing, more coordination between police and commu-nities, and cultural competency of police and justice system; need training for police on de-escalation and respect for communities • Need for addressing hate crimes, hate speech and particularly issues of Islamophobia • Issues with youth violence, addiction, and interaction with criminal justice system, and need for prevention, rehabilitation and post-incarceration rein-tegration programs for youth • School-to-prison pipeline • Address bullying in schools • Recreation, after school programs, social and emotional supports for youth (language and culture appropriate) • Parenting support, family counseling services that are appropriate for low-income families and respectful of culture • Need funding and good services in communities of color, not just in white neighborhoods; change funding to focus on prevention, not prisons • Harmonize and co-locate youth programming to give youth a single place to meet needs like GED, technical training, job placement, leadership, civic engagement, mentoring, and connection to resources -- consider placing at schools so there is a continuum for youth reaching 18 and beyond; need summer job program for youth in S King County • Need for education on criminal justice system rights for parents and youth, support for understanding and navigating the system, advocating for kids • Diversion programs to reduce arrests, give second chances • Need access to legalaid • Need culturally-appropriate domestic violence information and services, info on protections in multiple languages, and supports that last long enough to reestablish self-sufficiency and security • Issues with safety in neighborhoods, schools, and issues with unclean streets, graffiti and trash

Issues Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
Health, mental health and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for increased availability of language and culture appropriate health services, including rehabilitation to address chemical dependency • Affordable health and dental care that is accessible to communities where they live • Increased mental health supports/services, including for PTSD, generational issues, depression and anxiety • Need for increased awareness of mental health services and strategies for addressing cultural stigmas regarding mental health • Education on US health system, insurance, etc. so that immigrants and refugees understand services, rights and responsibilities • Supports for family health care providers • Support for people with disabilities • Affordable, healthy and culturally-appropriate food available to communities and increased cultural competency in food banks; reverse recently added requirements for accessing food bank services; extend period for receiving food stamps to give families time to adjust to new circumstances (new job, child reaching 18 but still living at home, etc.)
School, education and childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language and cultural competency in schools, need for more bilingual programs and schools, more representation of immigrants and refugees in teacher workforce, language-appropriate tutoring and parental support, and culturally-appropriate school food options (halal) • Remedies for discrimination in schools; better education for communities of color • Better and increased supports for refugee and immigrant students to navigate school requirements to graduate or obtain GED if aging out of system • Welcome immigrant/refugees into PTA systems, support engagement of parents in schools • Increase school bus service to areas where immigrant and refugee families live • Universal pre-K and access to ESL classes regardless of income or status; improved ESL and ELL; explore ways to keep kids in general classroom with language support (removing kids reduces ability to integrate into school community/increases marginalization) • Accessible, affordable, appropriate (language and culture) childcare • Support for college students (scholarships and grants), vocational and technical training for youth after high school

Issues Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
Transportation, parking and roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of parking • Lack of free parking and street parking, fees for parking on MLK and Rainier • Issues with affordability, accessibility and supports for transportation; issues with availability and frequency of bus service in suburban and rural areas (workers must take multiple buses at unreasonable hours to get to work), and difficulty of finding direct routes between suburban areas • Lack of transportation to jobcenters • Need for more Park-and-Rides • Lack of sidewalks along roadways in some areas and lack of crosswalks presenting safety issues for students walking to school in suburban areas • Potholes • Poor lighting of roadways - safety issue for students • Need transportation for elderly
Parks, recreation, and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about safety of parks and marijuana smoking in public parks • Cleanliness of parks • Availability of parks and facilities for community use, particularly elderly and youth; free gym access for refugee youth

Solutions

Communities were also asked to share ideas about how to address issues and set immigrants and refugees up for success. The table below provides a summary overview of solutions shared through community input. Some common threads emerged that are worth noting.

Inclusion and connection

Communities shared that they are looking for help to understand and connect to each other, the broader community, and political processes. Communities want to be included, have their voices heard, and engage in meaningful ways economically, socially, and politically.

“Invite us. If we’re not invited, how are we going to participate?”

~Community Conversation Participant

Representation

As much as communities are ready to put effort into engaging, they want that effort to be reciprocated so that pathways of power and influence are open to immigrants and refugees. Immigrants and refugees want to see themselves reflected in elected bodies and government workforces, and want the voice and capacity to identify their challenges and come up with solutions.

“The County has to be inclusive and innovative. They should hire folks that are reflective of the demographics they are serving.”

~Community Conversation Participant

Table 4. Summary of Solutions Suggested by Communities

Top Solutions Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
Investing in immigrant and refugee communities, integration, and civic engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in community-based organizations (funding, capacity building, leadership development) because they know how to serve immigrant and refugee communities and have appropriate language and cultural resources. community-based organizations need to be able to deliver culturally-appropriate services (mental health, chemical dependency, and domestic violence, for example) and engage in advocacy for communities • Need for citizenship, and civic, voting, and cultural integration education and support • Civic engagement programs and trainings, and translated election and candidate information • Move beyond basic needs to help communities take next steps, such as life skills training, ESL, rights awareness, home ownership, and education on other cultures • Help communities connect within and between communities, and with mainstream for increased understanding, collaboration, and unity • Need for workshops and education in communities on integration, political system, civic engagement, community resources, and volunteering • Dedicate specific resources to immigrant and refugee communities to support them in addressing problems and developing solutions • community-based organization funding and capacity development to enable service delivery, facilities expansion, and capacity for advocacy • Leadership development • Programs to increase youth awareness of own culture, language, and history (classes teaching native languages, history and cultural appreciation; history of immigrants and communities of color in US; integration of this material into school system more broadly) • Need awareness raising for mainstream about immigrant and refugee communities to reduce negative stereotypes and improve outreach and relations

Top Solutions Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
Increasing government responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be included, engaged, welcomed, invited, and respected • Want better, more meaningful connections to government. Officials and County staff should be more present in communities and should attend community meetings and events. County at all levels should intentionally seek community voices/input • Lack of representation of communities in government workforce, and decision-making bodies like Council; need to increase visibility of immigrant and refugee issues and communities in policy arena • Improve government to meet needs – cultural competency, flexibility, seeking input and taking action, appropriate outreach through established channels (community-based organizations, ethnic broadcasters, community newspapers/newsletters) • Develop training program for new County staff on immigrant and refugee issues, communities, and cultures • Foster more opportunities to attend city council meetings • Create a central database of translators and interpreters across the County, share with community-based organizations; increase contracting these services with community-based organizations • Develop research capacity on immigrant and refugee issues and communities of color • Improve data on immigrant and refugee communities -- particularly issues with undercounting and lack of disaggregation

Top Solutions Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
Addressing issues related to immigration status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for immigration reform to allow undocumented people to come out of shadows, afford them protections, and reduce fears of deportation • Undocumented people face barriers without SSN, so there is need for a creative solution (like a municipal ID) that will help with access to services regardless of immigration status • Need to review programs that tie eligibility to immigration status (health insurance was specifically noted) to weigh costs of exclusion and possible workarounds • Undocumented people need citizenship pathways for adults and college tracks for youth • Raise awareness of the naturalization fee waiver program introduced by the Obama administration to ensure high application costs don't deter eligible long term residents from becoming citizens • Refugees arrive in the U.S. owing the government money for airfare costs -- assistance should be provided to help them repay this debt and/or advocacy with the government to reduce or eliminate repayment for low-income debtors • Refugees face specific housing issues, including being settled into unaffordable or inappropriate housing, making housing unsustainable. Settlement programs should be reviewed to ensure quality and suitability of housing. • Refugees and asylum seekers face homelessness vulnerabilities but are not visible in system or accessing services (not counted as they aren't technically homeless -- staying with friends, doubling up with other families, etc.). Need to raise visibility of issue and work with homelessness service providers to strategize appropriate outreach and programs for insecure populations. • Resettlement programs and services should be evaluated and reformed to address gaps and coordination issues • Research and address inequities in pay and access to jobs/internships for people without US citizenship through employer education and advocacy • Review services and programs to reduce barriers to access for asylum seekers

Top Solutions Identified by Communities (in order of frequency, highest to lowest)	Summary of Community Input
King County task force and commission input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities not convinced government is committed and will take action on their issues • Selection process for Commission should be transparent, and open to community input (suggested communities elect Commission members) • Communities should feel they are consulted and adequately represented by Commission • Communities need to be heard and part of the process, need information on criteria for selecting members • Concerned about the fact that they weren't consulted on task force membership, and want better understanding of how information gathered in task force process will be used

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The King County Immigrant & Refugee Commission

On Feb 27th, 2018 King County Executive Dow Constantine and members of the County Council signed legislation creating an Immigrant and Refugee Commission, a permanent body committed to integrating, strengthening and valuing immigrant and refugee communities and upholding the county's commitment as a welcoming community.

Andrew Kritovich, Ukrainian Community Center of Washington



Andrew was born in Lviv, Ukraine and came to the USA as a refugee in 1999 together with his family. He holds a Master degree in Counseling Psychology from Northwest University.

Andrew has more than 25 years of experience working in a variety of settings focusing on counseling, client advocacy and community empowerment for refugees, immigrants, minority populations, inmates of the penitentiary system, individuals without permanent housing, victims of domestic violence, people struggling with substance abuse, and other vulnerable populations. Currently, he holds a position of Deputy Executive director at Ukrainian Community Center of Washington.

Working for many years with clients of different ethnic, religious and racial backgrounds, Andrew has developed a sensitive multicultural approach in addressing needs of refugee and immigrant communities. He is fluent in Ukrainian, Russian and English.

Fo-Ching Lu, SYL Foundation



Fo-Ching Lu is President of SYL Foundation, a nonprofit organization she formed in 2008 that combines compassion and philanthropy with strategic grant-making to advance quality health care and education for all. The Foundation prioritizes funding for immigrant and refugee-serving organizations and operates the Lotus Scholarship program supporting immigrant and refugee students through college. Prior to SYL Foundation, Fo-Ching was Intellectual Property Counsel for the French luxury company, Chanel, first in New York City, and then in Geneva, Switzerland, where she established a new in-house legal department. Fo-Ching began her career with Greenberg Traurig LLP's Intellectual Property group and worked for nonprofits in New York City. She has served as Vice President and board member of the Asian Bar Association of

Washington (ABAW) and helps to lead a Seattle-area funder collaborative around immigrant and refugee issues. Fo-Ching immigrated to the U.S. as a child and remains active in the local Buddhist community within which she was raised.

Hamdi Mohamed, Office of Congresswoman Jayapal



Hamdi was born the youngest of ten siblings in Mogadishu Somalia. A year later, she fled Somalia with her family as the civil war broke. She came to America when she was three years old. Today, Mohamed is a graduate of the University of Washington with a degree in Law, Societies, and Justice. She splits her work between Congresswoman Jayapal's district office and campaign office. In the district office, Mohamed is the Manager of Constituent Services where she helps people navigate the everyday impacts of public policy and addresses constituents' issues relating to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Department of State. She is often writing letters of Stay of Removal for those facing deportation and request expedited adjudications on immigration applications. Part of her job is educating and acting as a conduit between citizens and federal agencies. She is also Congresswoman Jayapal's Campaign Manager and is responsible for overseeing all aspect of the campaign, the management of staff, the coordination and implementation of all fundraising operations. She also worked for the Refugee Women Alliance where she helped prepare low-income residents for job search and employment attainment. In 2012, Mohamed worked with CARE International in Hargeisa, where she researched and wrote interest-stories on discrimination and food security crisis and assisted with the global 'Do No Harm' training that helps prevent NGOs from causing unintentional harm through their humanitarian interventions and peace operations.

Issa Ndiaye, West African Community Council



Issa's professional career and personal life have been focused on education, leadership, and public service. Issa is one of the co-founders and Executive Director of the West African Community Council (WACC). As a dedicated public servant, advocate, and leader, Issa co-founded the WACC, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide social services and immigration assistance to the West African, immigrant, and refugee communities. As a fluent speaker of French, Wolof, and English, he has personally served hundreds of immigrants, refugees, and asylees apply for visas, green cards, work permits, and naturalization with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

As an immigrant having grown up in Senegal, West Africa and later immigrating to the United States, Issa believes that success is not solely measured financially, but also through relentlessly giving a helping hand to others -- family members, friends, neighbors and community members -- so they, too, can achieve similar educational and/or professional momentum. Issa first received his Associates degree from North Seattle Community College. He then went on to receive his Bachelor of Science in Economics from the University of Puget Sound. He later received his Master's in Public Administration from the University of Washington. He has served for nine years as Senior Management Analyst at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – Office of Inspector General. In the many years that he has lived in Washington State, Issa has built a home and support system here and is dedicated to serving the immigrant and refugee communities in King County.

Lalita Uppala, India Association of Western Washington



Lalita is a resident of Bellevue WA is an immigrant of India. Ms. Uppala serves as Interim President and Director, Community Program for the India Association of Western Washington (www.iaww.org), CAPAA Commissioner (Washington State Commission on Asian and Pacific American Affairs) and a trustee for the King County Library System. Ms. Uppala has been a passionate advocate for the community for over fifteen years working on a wide range of issues from youth and women empowerment to addressing isolation among seniors, driving civic engagement and organizing community conversations. She strives each day to find innovative ways to engage and include under-represented communities and has centered her efforts on equity and social justice.

Medard Ngueita, World Relief



Born and raised in Chad, Medard moved to the US in 2006. He worked in the corporate world right after coming to the United States and joined the World Relief team in 2012. Medard loves to serve in particular the immigrants and the refugees. He is an advocate, inspiration and motivation to the refugee and immigrant community. Medard worked with Refugee State Coordinator and others to organize the Refugee Housing Summit to address refugees housing crisis. Medard holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Geography from the University of Ngaoundere in Cameroon and a Certificate in High Performance Leadership from Cornell University. As Resettlement Manager at World Relief. Medard oversees the initial programs of refugees and asylees placement, supports the casework team, and addresses

refugees' and immigrants' needs in the community. Medard is currently pursuing a Master in International Community Development at Northwest University.

Miguel Angel Duncan-Galvez Bravo, YWCA Seattle, King County, Snohomish County



Miguel Angel Duncan-Galvez Bravo was born in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico in 1988. At the age of 2, he and his family migrated to Southern California where he began his journey. As a youth, Miguel was admitted into Future Leaders of America and the Young Senators programs. While a Young Senator, he was elected Minority leaders. While in the program, he was recognized by Senator Richard Alarcon and his city's councilmember for his work with the community. After completing his high school degree from San Fernando Math/ Science/ Technology High School, Miguel enrolled into California State University Northridge as a Project Grad Scholar and majored in Political Science. In 2012, Miguel was granted DACA and continued to pursue his

academic dreams. He was accepted into Hawaii Pacific University's Diplomacy and Military Studies Master's program, being the first undocumented student in the program's history. He earned the Holomua Scholarship and was recognized with HPU's Master of Diplomacy and Military Services' Perseverance in the Face of Adversity

Award. He has worked on state-wide campaigns in 2013, helping in the legalization of same-sex marriage in Hawaii; contracted through Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and ACLU Hawaii.

Minal Kode Ghassemieh, Immigration Attorney



Minal is a mom, immigration attorney, and community organizer dedicated to serving immigrants and refugees. The daughter of a first generation immigrant from India, Minal feels privileged to have been born and raised in Washington State and has learned to leverage that privilege for public service. She earned her Bachelors Degree in Business Administration from the University of Washington and her Juris Doctor from Gonzaga University School of Law. Minal is a childhood survivor of domestic violence, which triggered her involvement in the antiviolence movement. She served as Board Chair of API Chaya, a local non-profit providing culturally relevant support and services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. For the last 10 years, Minal has focused her immigration practice on family based immigration and humanitarian relief. Minal has joined the effort to resist discriminatory immigration policies and provide increased support and representation to the immigrant and refugee community. Minal provides pro bono legal counsel to women who fear calling the police or attending their protection order hearings out of fear of detention and deportation. She also joins her colleagues in assisting low-income individuals and families prepare applications for naturalization. At this very unfortunate time in our nation's history, Minal believes in the power of community to stand with and protect immigrants and refugees.

Mohamed Bakr, Muslim Community and Neighborhood Association



Mohamed Bakr is an Eastside resident and a first generation immigrant from Sudan. Mohamed is an Advocate for underrepresented and marginalized communities, passionate about community engagement, equity in education, empowering immigrants and social justice. He is a technical professional skilled in digital marketing for non-profit organizations. In addition, he is a trainer in Islamic culture, cultural competency and Islamophobia for law enforcement agencies, school districts and nonprofit organizations.

Mohamed is a member of BDAN (Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network) in the City of Bellevue. Mohammed is a founder of the MCNA (Muslim Community & Neighborhood Association). MCNA reached more than 6000 Muslims and Non Muslims in community engagement activities in 2 year period. Mohamed is a founder of the Immigrant PTA (The first PTA in the US, to directly offer support and education for Immigrant families and students), and the "Muslim Parent group" in the Eastside school districts. He is also working on establishing a certificate of "Adaptive Leadership for Muslims".

Mohamed holds a BSC in Computer Engineering and MBA in Marketing. He is certified in CERT/FEMA TOT and CPR/First Aid/EAD trainer.

Mohammad Jan Ofuq, International Rescue Committee



Mohammad Jan Ofuq was born in Afghanistan and was a refugee for about 19 years living outside Afghanistan. He returned back to his country in 2004, completed Bachelors of LAW at Balkh University school of law in 2008. He worked with US department of State's rule of law projects and GIZ German International Cooperation Agency for 7 years, managing corporation of police-prosecutors training in Afghanistan. He participated in Youth International Conferences and Trainings in India, Sri Lanka, UAE, Thailand, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Sierra Leone and Thailand.

He had to leave his home country and was resettled in Seattle area in 2016, He started working with IRC International Rescue Committee as Refugee Resettlement Case-Worker in July 2016. He is currently completing his Masters of Law LLM degree at Seattle University and will sit for the Bar Exam in July 2019. He is currently an Immigration Case-Worker at the International Rescue Committee providing Immigration services to Refugees and immigrants from different countries. He is married and has two sons and a daughter. He speaks FARSI, PASHTO, English, Urdu and is working on his Arabic.

Monserrat Padilla, Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network



Monserrat Padilla has been organizing LGBTQ, immigrant and communities of color on the ground for over 10 years to build collective movement power. She was a co-founder of the Washington Dream Coalition and has led national & statewide campaigns, including the victory on the Washington State Dream Act to expand eligibility for state aid in higher education.

Monserrat worked as a the National Program Coordinator for the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project, a program of United We Dream, where she worked across the country building a national network of LGBTQ immigrant community leaders, advocates and organizers to develop policies and advocate addressing the needs of LGBTQ immigrant communities.

Monserrat was born in Tonalá, Jalisco, Mexico. At the age of 2 she migrated to the U.S. with her mother and two older siblings. She grew up in East Los Angeles, CA where she became part of the 11 million undocumented families living in the U.S. At the age of 15 she moved to Seattle, Washington, graduating from Chief Sealth International High School in 2010 and attending the University of Washington in Seattle.

Nimco Bulale, OneAmerica



Nimco Bulale is an Education Program Manager at OneAmerica. She has extensive experience working with community-based organizations and coalitions that work to strengthen the voices of disenfranchised communities to promote a more just society. Nimco was born in Mogadishu, Somalia and raised in Seattle. Nimco is fluent in Somali and proficient in Spanish. She received her Master's in Public Administration with a focus on nonprofit leadership and local government administration from Seattle University. Previously, Nimco attended the University of Washington where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a focus on foreign policy, diplomacy, peace and security. Nimco volunteers with various community-based organizations and coalitions that work to strengthen the voices of disenfranchised communities to promote a more just society. She is a Board Member of the Southeast Seattle Education Coalition and is a Brainerd Fellow with Social Venture Partners. She also serves on the "Our Best" Advisory Council, the City of Seattle's first ever initiative specifically aimed at expanding opportunity and improving life outcomes for young black men and boys in education, health, employment, safety and positive connections to caring adults.

Nimco is passionate about closing the achievement gap in education, empowering refugee and immigrant communities, and breaking down the systemic barriers to opportunity. Moreover, Nimco is committed to working to address the root causes of injustice, building power, and creating equitable change in her community. During her free time Nimco enjoys traveling, discovering new coffee shops, spending time with her family, as well as enjoying Seattle's impressive selection of restaurants.

Senayet Negusse, Puget Sound Education Service District (PSESD)



Senayet Negusse is an educator, advocate and Dual Language Coach serving immigrant and refugee communities across King and Pierce County. As the daughter of Ethiopian Refugees, Senayet witnessed the struggles her parents encountered, as they did their best to raise their children in a world with which they were unfamiliar. It was her parents' strength that inspired Senayet to serve alongside and advocate for historically underserved communities. Senayet's personal experiences as a bicultural and bilingual student encouraged her to pursue a double degree in Speech & Hearing Sciences and Early Childhood and Family Studies from the University of Washington. Her experience as a first-generation college student revealed the injustices that occur in educational institutions and led her to complete her Master's in Education Policy and Leadership from the University of Washington.

As a master's Student, Senayet collaborated with the United Way of King County to research the impact of ethnic-based youth programming on academic outcomes. Currently, she works for the Puget Sound Education Service District (PSESD) as an Early Learning Coach. As a Coach, Senayet provides differentiated, equity-based coaching and training to Head Start and ECEAP teachers around effective supports for Dual Language Learners and their families. In her spare time, she serves as the Assistant Coordinator for the East African Senior Meal Program, volunteers with One America as a Community Language Organizer and serves as a board member for

the Seattle Neighborhood Group. Her passion lies in improving the public-school experience at all levels for historically underrepresented students and their families through the implementation of culturally responsive instruction, effective professional development and connecting community needs with school services by collaborating with trusted ethnic based community organizations. Through this commission, Senayet hopes to empower and work alongside immigrants, refugees and allies to create a lasting and meaningful change in which immigrant and refugee groups are protected and able to thrive.

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King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission

By Laws

Article I. NAME

King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission (KCIRC)

ARTICLE II — PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATION

King County proudly upholds the fundamental, self-evident truth announced at our nation's founding: that all are created equal. We embrace the basic American value that we are a nation of opportunity for all. Immigrants and refugees are welcome here, and our region has acted decisively to become more inclusive, removing barriers to affordable housing, transit, health, economic opportunity and strong childhood development. We continue to uphold the same values and move forward with a strategy that sets our region apart as a leader in protecting the rights of all people in our diverse communities. The King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission is established by Ordinance 18653.

ARTICLE III — Membership

SECTION 1:

Composition of the Commission is established in King County Ordinance 18653. The King County Commission seeks to achieve broad representation by recommending thirteen candidates with the following qualities:

1. A diversity of members reflecting a range of ethnicities, professional backgrounds, socioeconomic status and places of origin to reflect the diversity of the county's immigrant and refugee communities;
2. All members must be residents of King County;
3. All members shall demonstrate active and engaged civic participation in one or more immigrant and refugee communities and be well versed on the issues affecting those communities;
4. Membership shall reflect gender and sexual orientation diversity;
5. At least six members shall be from suburban cities or unincorporated areas;
6. At least three members shall have had personal experiences as a refugee or asylee or non-citizen from any location worldwide;
7. Membership shall represent all age groups, including persons representing youth issues;
8. At least five members shall represent and be appointed by an immigrant-led organization serving immigrant communities and of these representatives at least three members shall represent and be appointed by a small grassroots community-based organization that has an annual budget of less than two-hundred fifty thousand dollars, that supports the needs of distinct immigrant and refugee communities and is composed predominantly of members of those communities;
9. At least one member should have familiarity with King County government, systems and agencies; and
10. Persons representing faith-based organizations are encouraged to apply.

SECTION 2:

Members of the commission shall be appointed by the King County Executive and confirmed by the council.

In accordance with King County Code 2.28.001 - All members of county boards and commissions shall be appointed, hold office, be confirmed or rejected according to the provisions of this chapter; provided, however, that this chapter shall not affect boards and commissions to the extent that they are expressly dealt with under state law, county charter or ordinance in a manner different than that set forth herein. (Ord. 11319 § 1, 1994). King County Code 2.28 also states that appointments are made by the King County Executive are subject to Council Confirmation.

ARTICLE IV — Expectations and Duties

SECTION 1: Expectations

Thirteen representatives who are selected to serve the commission are expected to, at minimum, participate in the following:

- Maintain consistent participation by attending scheduled monthly meetings;
- Attend and participate in community meetings, forums, and other events sponsored by the commission;
- Serve on sub-committees and serve as the chair of advisory committees and ad-hoc groups;
- Plan and conduct general meetings in collaboration with other committee members; and
- Exercise the right to vote on topics brought forward by commission and community at large.
- Produce an annual report by February of each year for previous year's activities to our immigrant and refugee communities and the King County leadership
- Board members are held accountable by our actions and by upholding the values and principles we have committed to.

SECTION 2: Duties

1. Assist and advise the council, council administration and independent offices of the legislative branch, the executive branch, including departments, divisions and offices, the sheriff, the assessor, the department of elections, the prosecuting attorney, superior court, district court, and the office of economic and financial analysis on issues, programs, and policies impacting immigrant and refugee communities;
2. Collaborate with all levels of government to ensure effective outreach to and engagement of immigrant and refugee communities and advise on the county's role with other government entities;
3. Coordinate with the office of equity and social justice to develop and review core principles and strategies on equity as they relate to immigrant and refugee communities in the context of county services, programs and policies;
4. Assist with the development and implementation of county services, programs and policies that impact immigrant and refugee communities;
5. Evaluate county services, programs and policies from the perspective of immigrant and refugee communities;

6. Assist with the development and review of major county plans to ensure that the interests and priorities of immigrants and refugees are incorporated in those plans;
7. Promote civic participation and government representation, which shall include, but not be limited to, encouraging application for employment within the county workforce by immigrant and refugee residents and representation of immigrant and refugee residents on boards and commissions;
8. Promote naturalization as a path toward civic and economic integration;
9. Collaborate with organizations that implement programs to enhance integration, naturalization and English-language learning;
10. Increase public awareness of immigrants and refugees and their contributions to our community;
11. Collaborate with all levels of government to invest in the capacity of organizations that serve the immigrant and refugee communities;
12. Continually review the need for appropriate resourcing and support for issues affecting immigrant and refugee communities;
13. Recommend and advocate for increased funding, identify new funding sources and leverage existing funding that include county funds to address the needs of the immigrant and refugee communities and support the commission's activities; and
14. Convene workgroups made up of stakeholders serving and engaging immigrant and refugee communities to build a shared countywide strategy to address the top issues surfaced through community input and work with the appropriate programs boards/commissions and task forces such as in housing and homelessness, employment and small business, barriers to accessing services, human trafficking and criminal justice and safety;

Regional Outreach:

15. Advocating for the county to act as a regional partner with cities to investigate the need for increased investment in the development of neighborhood centers or meeting hubs for youth and families, with an emphasis on serving the needs of immigrant and refugee populations;
16. Working with county departments, cities, service providers and the Sound Cities Association, to create a strategic plan, to be adopted by the commission, for addressing immigrant and refugee issues in suburban cities and unincorporated areas;
17. Investigating whether immigrants and refugees are able to adequately access county services such as district courts, public health clinics, parks, transit in suburban cities, and exploring the potential and need for opening a multilingual, culturally- responsive satellite office in a suburban city if it is determined by the commission that a satellite office would help to increase access;
18. Working with county departments to collaborate with businesses to increase economic opportunities for immigrants and refugees living in unincorporated areas to have access to living wage jobs; and
19. Working with county departments to gather, share and disaggregate data related to immigrants and refugees in unincorporated areas to determine unmet needs, such as the number of substandard houses, and prevalence of income gaps to understand intersections between place-based challenges for immigrants and refugees.

ARTICLE V- Terms of Office

Commission members shall have three-year, staggered terms, with a two-term limit (each member can potentially serve four to six years total).

A. Upon completion of terms: The staff liaison must notify the King County Executive's Office in writing via the Vacancy Notification Form that a member's term is coming to an end. In addition, the member must complete a "Reappointment Request Form." This form can be obtained from the staff liaison or by contacting the King County Executive Office Liaison for Boards and Commissions.

B. Reappointment: Upon successfully completed their initial term, members can seek reappointment to their second term following the steps listed above. Reappointments are not guaranteed and are based on successful completion of their first term.

C. Board members will be limited to serving two (2) consecutive terms on the Commission. The initial 1, 2, or 3 year term is considered a full term. The board member who served an initial term will only be eligible to serve one additional full 3-year term as they have will have completed two full term.

D. In accordance with King County Code 2.28.003 C Powers of Appointees, any Board member whose term has expired shall continue to serve until his or her successor is appointed and either is confirmed by the Council, or is authorized to exercise official power under the provisions of paragraph B of the code.

ARTICLE VI — Officers

SECTION 1:

A. The elected officers of the KCIRC shall be two Co-Chairs, Secretary

B. The Executive Committee shall consist of these three officers.

C. Officer elections shall be held annually at the regularly-scheduled KCIRC meeting in December with one Co-Chair elected each year for a one year term. Co-Chairs terms will stagger.

D. Officers shall serve no more than two consecutive terms in the same office. This rule may be suspended by majority vote of the board if necessary to accommodate any situation where a chair may step into a term because of a vacancy or during the first year of implementation.

SECTION 2I:

Vacancies in Office:

F. In the event that a Co-Chair is unable to fulfill his/her duties, is removed from office by a vote of no-confidence by 2/3 members of the Commission or resigns in the middle of the term, the remaining Co-Chair will assume all Co-Chair duties below. Within 60 days, elections for an additional Co-Chair will be held.

2. If the KCIRC finds itself without any Co-Chairs, designated support staff will assume the Board Co-Chairs' duties until the next regularly-scheduled KCIRC meeting at which time new officer(s) will be elected.

SECTION 3:

Together, the Co-Chair shall:

1. Convene, plan agendas for, and conduct the meetings of the KCIRC and Executive Committee meetings including filtering requests to be on the agenda.

2. Propose committees and appoint committee leads annually during the month of December, or as necessary when a new committee is formed and/or if a committee chair resigns their position midterm. All committee chair appointments expire annually on the last day of December but are eligible for re-appointment.
3. Draft, garner input, and finalize procedural and operational processes of the KCIRC
4. Filter requests for KCIRC Statements.
5. Act as spokespersons for the KCIRC
6. Perform other duties as designated by the KCIRC
7. Engage and strengthen relationships between and among KCIRC members.
8. Hold the Commission accountable to the KCIRC equity statement and encourage ongoing racial equity and diversity learning among Commission members.
9. Both Co-Chairs serve on the Executive Committee and share the leadership of that committee.
10. Both Co-Chairs are responsible for planning and providing Executive Committee agenda via email and physical document at least 48 hours in advance.

SECTION 4:

The Secretary/Historian shall:

- A. Record meeting minutes and submit the final draft to the designated staff for review and posting on the KCIRC website.
- B. Ensure that attendance is recorded at each monthly meeting and provide the attendance record to the designated staff no later than the end of the meeting
- C. Be very familiar with KCIRC's Bylaws, the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act, and the King County Records and Retention Act.
- D. Follow up with designated staff to ensure the public has access to meeting minutes and agendas in a timely manner.
- E. Ensure special events and projects are recorded and documented via video, audio, photography, etc., and then submit them to the designated staff for filing, maintenance, or posting for public access.
- F. Record RSVP's for events and programs.
- G. Create and distribute membership package materials – designated staff must okay any package material to be distributed to KCIRC membership or members of the public.
- H. Create and manage an internal communication drive such as a google drive. Designated staff must have access to the internal communication drive at all times.
- I. Ensure that the designated staff maintains all KCIRC records, minutes, and files.
- J. Collect membership information (i.e. name, address, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and membership status of all members) and provide final document to designated staff for filing. Any time a change occurs in membership status or contact information, ensure the designated staff is provided the most recent information.
- K. In the event the Secretary/Historian resigns from her post or resigns from the KCIRC, all records in their possession must be turned over immediately to the designated staff.

SECTION 5:

Executive committee is made up of the officers of the Commission and their duties are to:

- A. Communication in between meetings

- B. Commission Development
- C. Managing High-Level Issues in between meetings
- D. Providing Organizational Oversight
- E. Providing Organizational Direction and Acting on Behalf of the Commission
- F. Preparation of the Agenda
- G. Evaluating performance of the Commission members and the entire Commission
- H. Ensuring the King County Executive and Council remain informed of about the work

SECTION 6:

All Commission Members Shall:

- I. Create a mechanism for regular consultation with immigrant and refugee communities, and facilitation of meaningful involvement in planning and decision-making processes
- J. Notify community about meetings, events and activities.
- K. Recruit community members for Ad-Hoc committees and advisory boards
- L. Bring forth any major issues and information.
- M. Notify co-chairs and/or another committee member in advance that they are not able to attend a meeting or event.
- N. Arrive at each meeting prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda, meeting summaries, and documents distributed in advance.
- O. Fully participate in meetings and articulate views in a respectful, constructive dialogue with other members of the group.
- P. Stay in contact with relevant stakeholders and Commissioners.

ARTICLE VII -ATTENDANCE

A. The Executive Committee will annually review the attendance of KCIRC members and determine whether it deems a letter of resignation should be requested when a member has three (3) consecutive absences from regularly-scheduled Commission meetings or a total of four absences within a 12-month period. If a member needs to be removed, the staff liaison must contact the Liaison for Boards and Commissions in writing and state the reasons for requesting removal of a board member. The staff liaison must show they attempted to contact the board member without a response. The County Executive will then send a letter to the board member relieving them of their duties as a board member.

B. Leave of Absence: A leave of absence may be granted by Co-Chairs upon petition by the member due to extraordinary circumstances. If granted, the member's term will continue to run and the member relinquishes all privileges and obligations during the leave. The member's position will remain vacant during the period of the leave.

C. Participation by Phone: Commission members can only participate by phone into regular meetings for two meetings per year unless the meeting has been scheduled as a phone meeting and everyone participates by phone.

ARTICLE VIII- Removal of officers:

- A. Any officer planning to resign must submit a typed letter of resignation thirty days prior to withdrawal.
- B. Any officer found negligent during their term will be voted out by the full Commission.

- a. Negligence includes
 - i. Missing three (3) consecutive absences from regularly-scheduled Commission meetings or a total of four absences within a 12-month period.
 - ii. Not adhering to the KCIRC's vision and mission;
 - iii. Not adhering to deadlines or agreed upon responsibilities;
 - iv. Verbal, physical, and/or emotional abuse King County has a zero tolerance policy regarding harassment or abuse by a board member, resulting in immediate removal.
- C. Removal process based on negligence is as follows:
 - a. Verbal Warning from staff liaison and co-chairs
 - b. Written notice of removal from staff liaison and co-chairs to relieve the commission member of their duties follows if the situation remains unchanged. Once resignation is accepted officer must relinquish all rights and access to the KCIRC's files, website, email, etc.

ARTICLE IX —MEMBERSHIP

There are three types of membership:

A. Commission (13): Member serves on Commission and participate in general meetings and events; membership with voting rights.

B. Ex-Officio members: The immigrant and refugee commission may also include four non-voting members who shall be community leaders that are actively engaged with local government, business or philanthropic organizations, and add value to the commission and raise its visibility and capacity through their expertise, relationships, and networks. These members are not appointed but are invited to join and asked to commit to attending the meetings for a period of one year.

B. Community Partners: Businesses and Community Based Organizations or who have exemplified outstanding accomplishments which align with the KCIRC vision and mission are invited to serve on committees to offer their advice and expertise on particular issue areas. These individuals are non-voting members who commit to serving the commission and King County for the duration of the committee's work. These members are not appointed but are invited to join and asked to commit to attending the meetings for a period of one year.

ARTICLE X — OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. The regular meetings of the KCIRC shall be held monthly unless deemed unnecessary by the Co-Chairs due to the lack of agenda items or proximity of the regular meeting date to legal holidays.

B. All meetings are open to the public.

C. Meetings are to be scheduled and announced in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) to encourage attendance and participation by interested parties of King County.

D. Quorum: A constituted quorum of the KCIRC shall be fifty percent of the membership plus one of the current membership.

E. Decision Making: When a decision needs to be made, the KCIRC will work towards consensus. At the request of any Commission member, a vote may be taken. Robert's Rules of order will be used when a vote is requested.

F. Minutes: The designated staff will ensure that minutes are taken at the meetings and that that they are accurate. The minutes will be reviewed by the Secretary and distributed to all commission members. The minutes, agendas and other materials of the Commission meetings, Executive Committee and other committee meetings shall be posted on the Commission website within two weeks and notices of future meetings are kept up to date.

G. Public Comment: A public comment period will take place during all regular KCIRC meetings. Individuals providing public comment are invited to speak for up to three (3) minutes. At their discretion, the Co-Chairs may grant a speaker latitude to speak longer than three minutes. The chairs can ask members of public to leave if they are disruptive or disrespectful in meetings.

ARTICLE XI — liability Insurance

County officers, employees and agents are provided legal representation (by the Prosecuting Attorney Office) and indemnification (by the County) for actions taken within the scope of their service to the County, as long as their actions were taken in good faith with no reasonable cause to believe the actions were unlawful. This is provided in King County Code section 4.13.010.

ARTICLE XII — Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the KCIRC without prior notice by two-thirds affirmative votes of those present or with prior notice by a simple majority of those voting.

Adopting Commission members:

Minal Kode Ghassemieh, Co-Chair

Date Signed

Nimco Bulale, Co-Chair

Date Signed

King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission

2019-2020 work plan subcommittee structure

<p>Subcommittee 1→ Equitable Community Development</p> <p><i>Major areas of focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement of small businesses (start with SeaTac) • Housing (begin by focusing on evictions) • Workforce development: immigrant communities integration into workforce and innovations on new practices (begin with Somali health board on their model) • New dept of KC getting started- Dept of Local services- meet with John Taylor and possibly consider involvement on Skyway issues 	<p>Subcommittee 2→ Immigrant Rights and Social Justice</p> <p><i>Major areas of focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Census 2020 • Immigration ordinance • Legal defense fund • Charter Review Commission • Policy and Advocacy • Public Charge • Police and community relationship • Language access
<p>Subcommittee 3→ Capacity Building: Building a regional resource hub for IR communities to be a critical and unified force</p> <p><i>Major areas of focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-building with key constituencies (local government, elected officials, philanthropy, labor, law enforcement, academics, etc.) and have a plan for co-creating a strategy for building buy-in among non-immigrant and refugee stakeholders. • Leadership development in IR communities: trainings for being on boards and commissions, how to testify in public hearings, how to meet with public officials, running for office • Determine needs i.e. a dept. or office for immigrant rights, a hotline 	<p>Subcommittee 4→ Priority population services and opportunities- leverage and support and inform existing strategies</p> <p><i>Major areas of focus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer relations for KC with IR communities around the pipeline work • Connect with and engage all other commissions and boards • Sound Transit 3/ Childcare centers/early childhood • Homeless populations • Behavioral health involved populations • Children and youth • Elderly • Youth Justice system • Zero Youth Detention • Family safety- ICE and DHS • schools and education