

King County Equity and Social Justice401 5th Ave, Suite 1300

Seattle, WA 98104

www.kingcounty.gov/equity**IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE TASK FORCE**

PROGRESS REPORT

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

OVERVIEW

On July 20, 2015, the King County Council directed the Executive to convene a task force to devise recommendations on creating a King County immigrant and refugee commission (Ordinance 18085). By September, 13 individuals were appointed to the Immigrant and Refugee Task Force (a listing of members and their organizational affiliations is appended as an attachment) based on their leadership within immigrant and refugee communities, expertise on immigrant or refugee issues, and the ability to engage relevant communities in identifying desirable characteristics of the commission's membership, mission and scope of duties, as required by the ordinance.

The task force is supported by an internal project team consisting of King County Executive and King County Council staff, and two external consultants hired to facilitate the task force, and provide research and writing support.

This progress report summarizes the task force's mandate and deliverables; work accomplished through January 2016; and plans for accomplishing remaining work; and includes a number of appended attachments providing additional relevant details. Task force members are also available to meet with Councilmembers to provide an update if needed.

TASK FORCE MANDATE & MILESTONESMandate

To develop recommendations for King County on the creation of an immigrant and refugee commission that works effectively to achieve fair and equitable access to county services for immigrant and refugee communities, and improved opportunities for civic engagement.

Milestones

- February 1, 2016 - Progress report to the Council focused on what the task force has accomplished to begin developing recommendations that will comprise the final report.
- May 31, 2016 - Final report to the Council focused on recommendations to King County for creation of an immigrant and refugee commission, addressing mission, membership and scope of duties for a commission (required by ordinance), and considering a number of other key issues including alignment with other efforts, King County's existing efforts, and differing needs of communities in urban, suburban and unincorporated areas of King County (suggested by ordinance).

MEETINGS AND WORK TO DATE

The task force has met three times, with a first meeting held October 1, 2015 before the consultants were hired, a second meeting held November 19, 2015 with the consultants on board, and a half-day retreat held January 8, 2016. Agendas for all meetings are appended to this report as attachments.

The first meeting in October focused on orientation of the task force to their mandate under the ordinance, providing the task force with information about working with King County, data and resources available on relevant populations, and an overview of the process to secure consultant support.

The second meeting in November focused on introducing consultants hired to support the task force, and beginning discussion on how to accomplish the task force's mandate by breaking down the work and laying out a proposed work plan.

The half-day retreat in January focused on finalizing the task force's approach to their work (roadmap and work plan appended as attachment), establishing a common vision, reviewing preliminary research to support the work of sub-groups (available upon request), beginning planning for community forums (overview and outreach plan appended as attachments), and breaking into sub-groups to define sub-group leadership, next meeting dates, and delegation of work (sub-group descriptions appended as attachment).

SUMMARY OF PLAN FOR REMAINING WORK

Sub-groups

Sub-groups, with support from consultants and the County team, meet separately to plan and carry out public meetings, solicitation of additional community input (electronic, written or oral community comments), and other meetings/consultations as needed to develop recommendations on the key elements for the report. There are three sub-groups focused on:

- Alignment with other efforts & County's current efforts
- Differing needs of urban, suburban, and unincorporated areas
- Defining mission, membership and scope of duties for Commission including power, effectiveness, and voice for the commission. How can this commission build on successes and best practices of other similar efforts?

Community Forums and Community engagement

The members of the Task Force will collaborate with consultants and King County staff to plan and host up to five community forums in February, March and April to get input and feedback for sub-group and Task Force's considerations. We will also be engaging some existing networks, forums, meetings, and nonprofit organizations working with immigrant and refugee communities to help us reach our target audience to get input and feedback for sub-group and Task Force's considerations. Some of these community engagement opportunities may be with smaller audiences but will be targeted to specific language and ethnic groups i.e. working with El Centro to host a meeting of some of the families they are working with. These community forums will be geographically spread throughout King County, but held in areas with large concentrations of immigrant and refugee communities. At this time the task force has recommended for us to explore forums in: Kent/Tukwila/Seatac, Federal Way, South Seattle, East Side, White Center, and North Seattle.

Outreach will be coordinated through relevant community organizations to assist with effective dissemination. The Task Force has identified our target audience as members of the community who do not have access to services, and are not engaged civically.

The Task Force has also discussed the critical need for reporting back to the community about the outcomes of the discussions they are a part of. We will collect info about who comes to meetings and will report back after each meeting as well as upon completion of the project with the final report.

Some broad questions for the forums have been identified by the Task Force, including:

1. What are the needs of your community that are not being met?
2. What has kept you from getting assistance?
3. What are your concerns? What should we focus on?
4. What do you want the County to do for your community?
5. What would it take for you to feel successful/engaged in this County?

Sub-groups report back to task force & suggest relevant recommendations

Beginning in February, sub-groups will report back to the full task force on input received from public meetings, community comments, and other meetings and consultations related to their topic, as well as preliminary recommendations for the County. Another half-day retreat in April, 2016 will facilitate discussion and decision-making on recommendations for the final report to the Council.

Task Force review of draft reports

Task force members will review drafts of the progress and final reports prepared by the consultants, as well as any additional research needed to augment the report(s).

ATTACHMENTS:

1. LIST OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS AND AFFILIATIONS
2. MEETING AGENDAS
3. ROADMAP AND WORK PLAN
4. SUB-GROUP DESCRIPTIONS
5. CONSULTANTS