

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VISION:

Our vision is for King county to be a place where everyone has equitable access to opportunities. To achieve this vision, the King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission (KCIRC) plays a significant role in engaging immigrant and refugee communities to establish long-lasting trust-based relationships with county offices and programs. KCIRC shall strive to leverage existing programs and funding, and advocate for increased dedicated resources necessary for immigrant refugee communities to thrive.

MISSION:

KCIRC will focus on understanding and addressing challenges facing immigrants and refugees within the diverse communities that make up King County. The Commission will work as a hub and central connecting place for building direct relationships with and supporting the vision for social justice for immigrant and refugee communities in King County. The Commission will enhance the integration of refugees and immigrants culturally, economically, and civically, in order to strengthen the communities where they live and will support refugees and immigrants to thrive and succeed while maintaining their own identities.

EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

KCIRC commits to using equity, racial justice, and social justice as a framework in all of our work, our relationships, our processes, and our model.

Racial and social justice includes full and equal participation of all members in our community. We hold one another accountable and build trusting relationships through committing to a process of working together and hearing one another and our communities because we believe that our liberation is wrapped up in the liberation of one another. Racial and social justice are both an outcome, and an on-going and evaluative process.

Equity is an ardent journey toward well-being as defined by the affected. Equity demands sacrifice and redistribution of power and resources in order to break systems of oppression, heal continuing wounds, and realize justice. To achieve equity and social justice, we must first root out deeply entrenched systems of racism. Equity proactively builds strong foundations of agency, is vigilant for unintended consequences, and boldly aspires to be restorative. Equity is disruptive and uncomfortable, and not voluntary. Equity is fundamental to the community we want to build.

GUIDING VALUES

The following values guide the work of the KCIRC. We will:

1. Build on community strengths, voices, priorities, and experiences;
2. Hear and learn directly from communities impacted by issues;
3. Prioritize racial equity, inclusiveness, and transparency;
4. Encourage innovation and challenge the status quo; and
5. Acknowledge when we are not successful, correct course, and celebrate success.

AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE COMMUNITY

We define community as people impacted by the issues. People with lived experiences who often have no voice and visibility and decision-making power. The focus of KCIRC is to connect with and hear from members of the immigrant and refugee communities who are impacted by the issues.

Community engagement is a two-way exchange of information, ideas, and resources. The Commission will offer opportunities for communities to express their views and have a meaningful role in decision-making. Our work will also consider the diversity of our communities, including culture and ethnicity, and seek to create an inclusive and accessible process

Effective engagement removes barriers for communities that may have previously prevented residents from successfully working with government. We acknowledge that the work is challenging and complex and that we might make mistakes, but the rewards are great and lead to better community-wide outcomes.

KCIRC will engage communities using principles of shared power: Paying careful attention to power relationships, advocating for power to be deliberately shared between the Commission and the community. The community will be our partners in the whole process, including selecting our focus areas and helping to determine the best course of action when facing challenges.