



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

KING COUNTY IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE COMMISSION

PREPARED BY:

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CHAIR

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VICE CHAIR

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*INTERIM LANGUAGE EQUITY
PROGRAM MANAGER*



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OUR 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 strives to leverage existing programs and funding, while advocating for increased dedicated resources necessary to ensure immigrant and refugee communities thrive.



OUR MISSION

The Commission 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.

2021 COMMISSION BOARD

BOARD MEMBER

Andrew Kritovich
Fo-Ching Lu
Bilan Aden
Jena Yang
Juanita Salinas-Aguila
Huma Zarif
Kwadwo Oware
Lalita Uppala
Minal Kode Ghassemieh
Mohamed Bakr
Nimco Bulale
Jacob Taylor-Mosquera

DISTRICT

District 7
District 6
District 8
District 8
District 5
District 3
District 4
District 9
District 3
District 6
District 2
District 5

STAFF LIAISON

Hamdi Mohamed
Senayet Negusse
Reeni Nair
Cheryse Ishii

DEPARTMENT

OESJ
OESJ
King County Council
OESJ

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Held 13+ public meetings on a virtual platform as per King County COVID-19 protocol for Commission meetings.
- Operated King County Immigrant & Refugee Commission Facebook page that is independently managed by commissioners with nearly 1000 followers and over 800 likes. The page provides up-to-date late breaking information and resources for immigrants and refugees communities across King County.
- Conducted a survey of immigrant/refugee led and serving CBOs to help identify the most pressing needs in our communities. Received over 100 responses and reported on those findings at a public KCIRC meeting; used that information to inform the work plan and priorities of the commission. Provided \$100 gift cards to survey participants for their time and input.
- Created several subcommittees to address pressing needs: Vaccine/Public Health subcommittee, budget subcommittee, community engagement subcommittee, KC Regional Planning subcommittee, etc.
- Updated several foundational documents including KCIRC Bylaws, Guiding Principles, and Communications Plan (in-progress).
- Provided direction to OESJ as it pertains to COVID7 grants and language access/KCC 2.15.
- Provided input on the draft Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) resulting in more equitable policy solutions.
- Participated in a number of KC Committees and efforts: Racism as a Public Health Crisis (RPHC), Pandemic and Racism Community Advisory Group, Washington State Department of Health COVID Vaccine Collaborative, King County Public Health efforts, etc.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Participated in a number of KC Committees and efforts: Racism as a Public Health Crisis (RPHC), Pandemic and Racism Community Advisory Group, Washington State Department of Health COVID Vaccine Collaborative, King County Public Health efforts, etc.
- Met with the King County Executive team to advocate for Countywide healthcare access which resulted in the Executive proposing \$1.5M in the mid-biennial budget for a free dental care pilot program implemented through contracts with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) dental clinics and Public Health Seattle-King County (PHSKC) dental clinics. This pilot will fund 4,000 to 5,000 dental visits at community health centers, a more than 20 percent increase in dental visits now provided to low-income residents from safety net providers.
- Proposed funding in the Executive's budget to identify programmatic approaches and establish next steps to further expand access to health services for low-income adults, regardless of their citizenship status.
- Held a community regional public health briefing on COVID-19.
- Issued statements on pressing issues impacting immigrants and refugees.
- Held meetings with County councilmembers and the King County Executive to advise on the resource needs of immigrant and refugee community.
- Facilitated meetings to address the King County immigrant and refugee ordinance, K.C.C. 2.15.
- Submitted a letter to county leaders requesting \$10 million for language access and COVID-19 relief benefits for the immigrant community, particularly for those communities left out of the federal stimulus package.

ADVOCACY

The Commission met with Dow Constantine's Office, King County Executive, to discuss KCIRC's work on key issue areas such as community safety and protection, health equity, small business displacement, and other 2021 priorities.

- In 2021, in lieu of hosting an in-person public convening keeping in mind the COVID-19 protocols, the KCIRC conducted a community survey identifying the most pressing needs in our communities. Received over 100 responses and reported on those findings to KCIRC; used that information to inform the work plan and priorities of the commission. Each participant was awarded a small stipend for participation and the Commission learned from our community.
- In December of 2021, the KCIRC held a virtual public meeting with over 35 community members who participated and identified immigrant-refugee community needs highlighting the income impact on our small business community as well as increased anxiety and stress for families losing employment, struggling with long term impact from COVID-19 and their inability to proceed further with immigration status.
- As part of the public outreach for the 2021 update of the Countywide Planning Policies, King County Regional Planning staff met with representatives of three equity-focused, community-based groups to seek their comments on the draft policies:
 - Metro Mobility Equity Cabinet
 - King County Climate Equity Community Task Force
 - King County Immigrant and Refugee

ADVOCACY

- KCIRC provided the following comments:
 - Language access and community involvement are vitally important to members of the commission.
 - Enable culturally and linguistically appropriate equitable access to programs and services and help connect residents to service options, particularly for those most disproportionately cost-burdened or historically excluded.
 - Develop and use an equity impact review tool when developing plans and policies to test for outcomes that might adversely impact Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and other communities. Regularly assess impact of policies and programs to identify actual outcomes and adapt as needed to achieve intended goals.
 - Involve community groups especially Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and other communities continuously in planning processes to promote civic engagement, government accountability, transparency, and personal agency.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

All KCIRC meetings in 2021 were held on a virtual platform in accordance with the COVID-19 protocol for King County.

KING COUNTY IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMISSION

**PUBLIC
MEETING**



WE INVITE YOU TO A
**VIRTUAL
MEETING**

ACCESSIBILITY AND LANGUAGE ACCESS
AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST AT NO CHARGE.

STANDING AGENDA
PUBLIC COMMENTS
COMMISSION ELECTIONS
COVID-19 UPDATES / Q&A

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021
5:30 PM - 6:45 PM

ZOOM LINK:

[HTTPS://KINGCOUNTY.ZOOM.US/J/94035838876](https://kingcounty.zoom.us/j/94035838876)

ZOOM CALL-IN: +1 253 215 8782 US

MEETING ID: 940 3583 8876

For questions or accommodations, please email
kcirc@kingcounty.gov



STATEMENTS

In April of 2021, the King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission (KCIRC) condemned the heinous murders of eight people in three spas in Atlanta, Georgia. The Commission released a public statement calling for accountability on such attacks against the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community and efforts to help stop anti-Asian hate.



The King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission (KCIRC) strongly condemns the heinous murders in Atlanta along with the sharp uptick in anti-Asian hate crimes. Our thoughts are with Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities across the country and locally who recently have been the repeated target of violence and racism. The model minority myth divides communities of color and undermines the struggles of all AAPI communities.

Anti-Asian violence and hate crimes are not new to our community or our country, but attacks are on the rise. The number of anti-Asian hate crimes has increased 150% in the last year primarily because of the intent to scapegoat Asians for the COVID-19 pandemic. AAPI women -- especially service workers in massage parlors and nail salons are at an even greater risk of experiencing hate-based violence, reporting hate incidents 2.3 times more often than men.

We will not be silent. Working to end racism and misogyny in our BIPOC and AAPI communities, KCIRC commits to showing up for our communities as strong allies and spreading awareness about the history of anti-Asian hate crimes as well as supporting and engaging with Asian and BIPOC businesses and organizations.

KCIRC supports efforts to address prevention of hate crimes and will work to educate our communities about responding to hate crimes as bystanders and survivors.

Here are some ways you can help stop anti-Asian hate:

- 1) Learn about the history and experiences of Asian Americans;
- 2) Use your voice and speak out against anti-Asian hate;
- 3) Talk to your kids and other family members about xenophobia and the importance of multi-racial solidarity;
- 4) Report incidents of hate and/or bias ([here](#), [here](#), or [here](#)); and
- 5) Support Asian-owned businesses and nonprofits serving AAPI communities.

BECOME A COMMISSIONER

Interested in Applying to The Immigrant and Refugee Commission?

Commissioners from across King County work together to identify, elevate and develop shared strategies and solutions; streamline and strengthen efforts; and bring more resources to the most pressing issues affecting immigrant and refugee communities. It is important that applicants:

Are immersed in one or more immigrant/refugee communities and represent immigrant-led and/or faith-based organizations, when possible; have had personal experiences as immigrants, refugees or asylees

Reflect the racial, ethnic, religious/spiritual, professional, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation, age and geographic diversity of King County communities

Are well-versed on the issues affecting immigrant and refugee communities locally as well as nationally. Applications will be accepted until all positions are filled.

Additional information and all required materials are listed below:

[King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission - King County](#)

[King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission's Guiding Principles](#)

[King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission's Application](#)

If you have any questions please email us at kcirc@kingcounty.gov