

**PIERCE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES  
COMMISSION ON REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS MEETING**

5:00 – 6:42 p.m.

August 7, 2023

**Members:** Alice Fong, Representing Pierce County Council District 6 – present  
 Camila Maturana, Representing Pierce County Council District 5 - present  
 Diana Bullen, Representing Pierce County Council District 2 - present  
 Erasmo Ruiz, Representing Pierce County Council District 3 - present  
 George Conzuelo, Pierce County Council Representing Youth – present  
 Gloria Rodriguez, Pierce County Council Representing District 1 – excused  
 Jennifer Li Dotson, Pierce County Council Representing District 4 – present  
 Thierry Ruboneka, At Large Member – present

**Guests:** Jani Hitchen, Raeshawna Ware

**Staff:** Anika Moran, Special Advisor to the Director, Pierce County Human Services  
 Becki Foutz, Administrative Assistant, Pierce County Human Services

**MINUTES**

TOPIC/ WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p><b>Call to Order/Roll Call</b> George Conzuelo</p>	<p>The meeting was called to order by Chair George Conzuelo. Roll was called per above; a quorum was present.</p>	<p>Welcome, all!</p>
<p><b>Approval of July Minutes</b> Diana Bullen</p>	<p>Alice moved to approve the July minutes; Diana seconded. Vote was taken; none opposed.</p>	<p>The July minutes were approved.</p>
<p><b>Public Comment &amp; Good of the Order</b> George Conzuelo</p>	<p>George invited the public to comment. Raeshawna Ware, staff liaison to the City of Tacoma’s Commission on Immigrant and Refugees Affairs, asked if our Commission is planning to celebrate Welcoming Week, September 10-16? Tacoma’s Commission, in collaboration with Tacoma Community House, will be hosting an event, and Raeshawna will share the information. Councilmember Hitchen emailed Raeshawna to see if they will be making a proclamation. If the County does a proclamation, she may need someone from our Commission to attend the Council meeting to accept it.</p> <p>What’s the schedule for Welcoming Week? Annually, the Tacoma Commission provides input toward the City’s proclamation, and they help decide what welcoming activities the City will host. On September 10 there will be a fair at Tacoma Community House with Amazon and the City sponsoring. Would the County like to participate? Be a speaker, simply attend? Thank you, Raeshawna!!</p>	<p><a href="mailto:rware@cityoftacoma.org">rware@cityoftacoma.org</a></p> <p>Raeshawna will email Jani and Stefanie the information.</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p><b>Public Comment &amp; Good of the Order</b> continued</p>	<p>Is Welcoming Week for people new to the County? Welcoming Week is about inclusivity and valuing diversity. It's for everyone, including new and not so new immigrants, for all to learn about each other. Diversity is our strength!</p> <p>George is excited to work with the City on this event, and maybe next year our Commission can help host an event for Pierce County. Councilmember Hitchen can probably get a Proclamation done in time. She suggested that our Commission attend this year and consider having one for Pierce County next year.</p> <p>George asked the group to please send him their availability for applicant interviews for the District 7 seat.</p> <p>George received a handful of organizations for recommended speakers from Camila, Erasmo, and Alice.</p> <p>Thierry provided an update on Gloria. She's engaged in a demanding project that she'll finish this month and plans to return to the Commission in September.</p>	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Thank you, Thierry!</p>
<p><b>Bylaw Update &amp; Vote</b></p>	<p>Alice asked if everyone had a chance to read the latest draft of the Bylaws. Yes, great job, Alice! Not too much jargon.</p> <p>Any comments on the Bylaws? Councilmember Hitchen explained that removing a Board member for cause goes through the Council.</p> <p>Alice moved to approve the Bylaws; Erasmo seconded. Vote was taken; none opposed.</p>	<p>The Bylaws were approved!</p>
<p><b>Community Outreach Speakers/ Presenters</b> George Conzuelo</p>	<p>What speakers should we try to connect with? Chair Mello has requested that we become knowledgeable with E-Verify and see how it affects our community. Camila has contacts re: E-Verify. Her colleague used to advise businesses on E-Verify and she can come explain it to the Commission. Camila suggested giving her some questions beforehand, so she can tailor the discussion.</p> <p>Speakers will be part of Commission monthly meetings. We can advertise about the speaker and discussion, in order to engage the public. Twenty-five minutes for the presentation and Q&amp;A, and time for the Commission to discuss afterward.</p>	<p>George will put the speaker list into a spreadsheet.</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p><b>Community Outreach Speakers/ Presenters</b> continued</p>	<p>Pierce County Human Services has a Facebook page and Kari Moore can advertise/promote events for the CRIA on it. Anika suggested inviting Kari as a guest to a future Commission meeting. If members choose to promote Commission events on their own social media, please just know that the account will be subject to public records requests.</p> <p>Alice asked if County HR staff might have something to share about using E-Verify. There are very specific reasons why some businesses originally wanted E-Verify. Having different perspectives would be valuable. Diana said her big question is how it affects someone who's undocumented or has a green card. That's probably the most important thing for the Commission to learn about. Councilmember Hitchen suggested the Commission look at the County policy on E-Verify. The County uses it because any government-funded programs is required to use it. E-Verify flags some women, Latinx and LGBTQ+ individuals and some fear it. Simple things like name changes can cause red flags.</p> <p>Erasmus has personally experienced hassles via E-Verify, and he's a U.S. citizen. He's getting married next month!</p> <p>Thierry asked if he should send his speaker suggestions to George. Everyone will have access to a shared document and can enter suggested speakers. They will be invited according to what specialist can contribute to the task at hand, not in the order they're recommended. Speakers will be heard in conjunction with the three focus areas. We're doing employment first. When we do education and civic engagement, we'll have speakers for those topics as well.</p>	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Anika shared the County's E-Verify policy in an email on 8/8.</p> <p>Congratulations, Erasmo!</p>
<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>The September meeting's regular date falls on Labor Day. It will be rescheduled to 9/11 and 9/18. Camila's associate will be invited to speak on 9/18 and that meeting will be virtual. The 9/11 meeting will be in person and will be used to complete the Vision exercise begun tonight. Mondays are difficult for Jennifer; she takes the bus everywhere. George volunteered to carpool with Jennifer.</p>	<p>Thank you, George!</p>
<p><b>Vision Statement Workshop</b> Diana Bullen</p>	<p><b>Mission:</b> We are community advocates with lived experiences, collaborating with PC leadership, refugees, and immigrants to create a thriving and inclusive society.</p> <p><b>Core Values:</b> Interconnectedness, Equity, Compassion, and Open-mindedness.</p>	

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p><b>Vision Statement Workshop</b> continued</p>	<p>Our vision statement should be a short phrase that encompasses our vision of who we are, and what our mission and values are. It must be short and powerful, no more than three to five words, that way it will be engraved in our minds and in our hearts. The group came up with the following statements and Commission members voted on which ones they liked best:</p> <p>Hand in hand, we thrive                      Together, we make tomorrow                      Diversity is our strength!                      Welcoming All into community                      Facilitating the joy of Belonging                      Making a difference                      Providing guidance                      Turning hopes into reality                      An interconnected &amp; thriving county                      Standing in solidarity to welcome all                      Building bridges and an equitable community                      Engaged &amp; equitable communities                      Empowering everyone in our community</p> <p>Jennifer explained that since English is her second language, she takes things quite literally, so we need to keep that in mind. Some terms need to be defined. That’s food for thought. Alice wondered, are vision statements cultural? Are they more of a Western concept? She likes some of the words in various statements and would like to have more time to wordsmith.</p>	<p>The 9/11 meeting will be used to continue the vision statement workshop</p>
<p><b>Appreciation &amp; Adjourn</b></p>	<p>George thanked everyone who attended, both in-person and virtually. Lots on our plate for September. Thanks to Councilmember Hitchen for her support.</p>	<p>Thanks to all – you are appreciated!</p>

The next CRIA meeting is Monday, September 11 at 5:00 via Zoom and in the SV Muckleshoot Conference Room. Please attend in person if possible, to continue the Vision Workshop. There will be another meeting on Monday, September 18 at 5:00 via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Becki Foutz  
 Administrative Assistant