

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

5:00 – 6:35 p.m.
September 18, 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
Erasmio Ruiz, Representing Pierce County Council District 3 - present
George Conzuelo, Pierce County Council Representing Youth – present
Gloria Rodriguez, Pierce County Council Representing District 1 – absent
Jennifer Li Dotson, Pierce County Council Representing District 4 – present (partial)
Thierry Ruboneka, At Large Member – present

Guests: Maggie Davis, Kari Moore, Lashawnda Marquez

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

MINUTES

TOPIC/ WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Call to Order/Roll Call George Conzuelo	The meeting was called to order by Chair George Conzuelo at 5:05 p.m. Roll was called per above; a quorum was present. George provided an icebreaker activity.	Wel- come, all!
Approval of August Minutes Diana Bullen	Diana asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes. Erasmo moved to approve the August minutes; Thierry seconded. Vote was taken; none opposed.	The August minutes were ap- proved.
Public Comment & Good of the Order George Conzuelo & Lashawnda Marquez	George asked if members were willing to table the speaker scheduling item to make time for Thierry’s guest to speak. Yes! Lashawnda Marquez, founder of Shelter of Light, attended. Lashawnda provides shelter to the unhoused. She had a meeting today with the Tacoma Rescue Mission (TRM). They’re faced with an influx of refugees showing up at their shelters. Most of them working on their US residency and seeking asylum. There are many needs for this population, including translation services and case management for individuals. Stefanie asked what population – Angola. They speak Portuguese and French. Many are approaching their 90-day window at TRM, and they don’t have anywhere to go.	Discus- sion

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<p>Public Comment continued</p>	<p>Diana asked if Lashawnda’s requesting translation services. Yes. Most of them have expressed concern and protection for asylum. They need resources including translation, housing, and furniture. Diana noted that asylum is a government piece. Lashawnda added that she has an attorney friend who works with refugees. She’s asking if he can be a resource. They don’t house people based on whether they’re here legally or not. She’d like to assist them with case management, but TRM doesn’t offer that. Lashawnda doesn’t speak Portuguese or French and is not an attorney. She wants these individuals to be successful in this important life transition.</p> <p>Diana asked what they need translation for – shopping, legal, communicating with Lashawnda? All of the above. They will also need translation for case management, and landlord/tenant relations. Some may need BH services, and/or medical care.</p> <p>George said that this is also a need of our Ukrainian refugees. He suggested that we could check with them to see how they’re handling translation.</p> <p>Thierry asked if, as a Commission, do we have the right to ask/write the City to provide asylum for these people, so they’re not deported? Stefanie said that this Commission can write to the County Council for their awareness and in show of support. We can compile some resources for Lashawnda and partner with the Mission.</p>	<p>Stefanie will compile a resource list for Lashawnda in the next couple of business days.</p>
<p>E-Verify Presentation Maggie Davis</p>	<p>Maggie provided an informative PowerPoint. What is E-Verify? What’s an I-9? How does E-Verify work? Who does it apply to? How is it enforced? How can communities thrive in the context of E-Verify?</p> <p>Maggie worked for two years helping tech start-up companies with immigration. She’s currently with NW Immigrant Rights. She has worked on the employer side and with survivors of labor and sex trafficking on how to redress issues from being trafficked.</p> <p>The I-9 form is used to verify an individual’s ability to work. The law requiring I-9’s been in force since 1986. The top of the form lists acceptable documents employees are to provide within three days of being hired. HR determines whether they’re legally able to work in the US. A passport, legal resident card, or other document can authorize someone to work. HR/Employers often use E-Verify to authorize someone’s legality to work in the US.</p>	<p>I-9 Form</p>

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<p>E-Verify continued</p>	<p>US Employment Authorization cards are issued for two years and can cost up to \$500 to renew. Sometimes there's a delay in renewing the card (up to a year to process!) and E-Verify's not updated accordingly. This can cause people to be denied employment.</p> <p>E-Verify's meant to apply to all employers. Some states have their own additional requirements. Some states have a law that you can only search for someone in E-Verify if you've offered them employment.</p> <p>The law's difficult to enforce. There are over 33M small businesses that employ over 61M Americans. ICE sometimes audits businesses. In 2019, they conducted 6456 audits. If non-compliance is determined, ICE may issue employers fees ranging from \$272 to \$2701 per infraction.</p> <p>When employers assist people to apply for work-related visas, they may come under additional scrutiny.</p> <p>E-Verify creates additional hurdles that prevent single parents, young people, and others from being able to work. Tracking the work permit expiration date and saving up \$510 for its renewal can be a great hardship. The State of Oregon extends protection towards sexual assault survivors; however, they may have a lack of confidence in their labor rights.</p> <p>UC plans to hire undocumented students. People without access to work permits may start their own businesses in some instances.</p> <p>Maggie opened for questions. Thierry's happy to receive the information and said that Maggie's presentation was consistent with his experience. He asked about the fear behind E-Verify. Why is it a big conversation in immigrant spaces? It seems to provide simplicity around the legality of being in the US. Is it being misused to track illegal immigrants or to deny basic human rights, like medical care or benefits? He recently watched a movie at Tacoma Community House re: undocumented immigrants and refugees and how some can't attend school or gain employment.</p> <p>Maggie noted the sudden surge in enforcement (from 1360 audits in 2017 to 5981 audits in 2018). She feels that this might have been to turn employers against employees and stir up an environment of fear.</p>	<p>Employment Authorization Document</p> <p>Thierry shared this link about the movie: From Here</p>

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<p>E-Verify continued</p>	<p>Thierry’s thinking about the impact of this policy for the future. He noted that, regarding immigration documentation and legalization, there’s a very thin line between humanism and politics. This plays out in the media. Empathy is thrown out of the conversation in terms of undocumented immigrants. Some undocumented individuals were born in the US. Some are afraid of technology like E-Verify.</p> <p>Maggie added that undocumented people can be deprived of valuable scholarships.</p> <p>George added that undocumented workers pay taxes. If they’re not able to be hired, it pushes them into a narrative of not being productive. Not having a salary pushes them into unsafe living conditions and poverty. Why do we use E-Verify? Immigrants are here to work; what’s the issue?</p> <p>Thierry asked how E-Verify affects programs like DACA that protects young adults from being deported. Maggie explained that people with DACA receive a work permit that’s entered into E-Verify. They must renew it every two years, and the renewal fee can be a hardship.</p> <p>Diana thanked Maggie. She looked up the Immigration Forum; there’s some data about the errors in E-Verify. She sent it to Stefanie. This is something that definitely affects a lot of people.</p> <p>George thanked Maggie, Thierry, and Diana. Work authorizations cost money. With DACA, your lifeline’s on a string – you can still be deported. If you lose DACA, you cannot reapply. When DACA came out it wasn’t a robust form of status. It needs to be bolstered up. How much is it doing to serve the people it’s supposed to be serving?</p>	<p>Discus- sion</p> <p>Thank you, Maggie!</p>
<p>Check-in With Pierce County Human Services Communica- tions Kari Moore</p>	<p>Welcome, Kari! Kari works for Pierce County Communications and supports Human Services. HS has a lot of Boards! Kari can help with recruitment. She creates flyers, posters, and shares information on social media and list serves. She can also share info with County Council Communications staff, to share with their constituents. We have a “News Flash” option on our website. She can update the website, coordinate, and promote events, create registration forms, design legislative agendas, work plans, and more!</p> <p>Kari opened for questions. Thierry asked about the fee for design. Kari designs materials without a fee; it’s part of her job. She can’t do paid promotions.</p>	<p>Informa- tional</p>

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<p>Communications continued</p>	<p>Alice asked if the Commission could have business cards. Yes, Kari can design some so that each Commissioner can have a handful to start with.</p> <p>Thierry asked if there are grants the Commission could qualify for to use for projects. He feels it's weird that there's no budget for the Commission. Kari said that our Grants Coordinator might know; she can't think of any offhand.</p> <p>George feels that the Commission should write to the Council to request funds.</p> <p>Kari shared social media handles: Facebook: @PierceCounty Twitter: @PierceCo Instagram: @PierceCounty We also have accounts on LinkedIn and Next Door.</p> <p>Stefanie will explore whether she can use her Human Services Coordinator budget for CRIA nametags.</p> <p>Alice suggested crashing a Council meeting to request funding. They're public meetings and we don't need to be invited.</p>	<p>Thierry thanked Kari. He'd like the CRIA to use social media as a tool to reach out to the community.</p> <p>Email Kari Kari.Moore@piercecountywa.gov</p>
<p>Scheduling & Vision Statement George</p>	<p>What would the group like to do re: guest speakers and completing the Vision Statement. Thierry noted there's a lot going on, and offered to help.</p> <p>Any news to share from districts/communities? Diana shared that the YMCA's Bridge to Hope program promotes civil discourse and communications of divergent opinions. If you're interested in participating in any dialogs, or if you feel that your organization can make use of the program, it's a great way to promote civility during this interesting time.</p>	
<p>Next Meeting</p>	<p>George asked if Diana can help the Commission complete its Vision Statement next month? Can the group meet in person? Yes! George will email the group for any ideas or qualifiers for speakers in an effort to get a speaker for the November meeting. George will update the calendar accordingly.</p>	<p>George will update the calendar.</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Appreciation & Adjourn	George thanked everyone, especially Camila for bringing Maggie in to discuss E-Verify.	Thanks to all – you are appreciated!

The next CRIA meeting is Monday, October 2 at 5:00 in the SV Muckleshoot Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Becki Foutz
Administrative Assistant