

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

5:00 – 6:32 p.m.
November 6, 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 - excused
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
Thierry Ruboneka, At Large Member – present

Guests: Lee Sledd, Patti Kilpatrick

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 Stefanie Love	The meeting was called to order by Stefanie Love at 5:15 p.m. Members and staff introduced themselves. Roll was called per above; a quorum was present. Stefanie provided an icebreaker activity.	Wel-come, all!
Approval of October Minutes George Conzuelo	Erasmio moved to approve the October minutes. Alice seconded. Vote was taken; none opposed. Thierry would like a point of contact for Njeri, a member of the public who participated at the last meeting. Becki will check the meeting attendance.	The October minutes were approved.
Public Comment & Good of the Order George Conzuelo	Patti Kilpatrick heard from her friend, Councilmember Denson, that there’s a vacant position on the Commission. Patti serves on the Advocates for Immigrants in Detention NW (AIDNW) Board and Chairs their Outreach Committee. She asked what kind of people this Commission needs. George explained that there’s a formal process for appointing Board members, and if Patti applies, she’ll be considered. Commission members have had different experiences. George shared that the Commission has been tasked by County Council Chair Mello to explore how E-Verify affects immigrants and refugees. If you have any insight on that, it would be quite helpful. Stefanie added that we love a potluck! Per the Ordinance establishing this Commission, we need people with lived experience as immigrants or refugees. We currently lack membership representing the Middle East. Anika offered to send Patti the Ordinance.	Patti will text Stefanie her email so Stefanie can send her the Ordinance. It’s also on our website.

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>RFP Anika Moran</p>	<p>Anika requested input on the RFP that she shared with the group in advance of the meeting. Are there any services you see missing, or things we should be calling out re: types of services.</p> <p>Thierry asked if the funds are available to the Commission, or to Human Services? The RFP will be posted on the County’s Solicitations and Bids website. For-profit, non-profit, and jurisdictional agencies may apply, such as agencies that conduct case management, help immigrants get resettled, and learn English. The Commission is reviewing the RFP, and there will be some representation from the Commission reviewing the applications. Input on the RFP is due by tomorrow at Noon. The RFP will go to the Finance Department next. We want to get the funding out to the community as soon as possible.</p> <p>Alice pointed that a service that’s often missed is orientation. Incoming immigrants are bombarded with transactional things that need to happen. In ESL they sometimes discuss culture; that’s important. We need programs that allow for interaction among newly-arrived immigrants and immigrants who have been here a bit longer who can help them connect to the community.</p> <p>Thierry would like to review the welcome packet that refugees and immigrants receive. When he received his packet, he felt that they left out a lot about the diverse community in Pierce County. Can we write a recommendation to the City Council to add more inclusive materials, like links to resources to where they can receive extended help, organizations of color in the community, etc.? The packet came from the International Organization for Migration (IOM,) a branch of the United Nations, or Lutheran Immigration Services. It’s very white-leaning. This service could fall under the umbrella of connecting immigrants with community services. Regarding jobs, some people come to this country with a profession – a program that allows them to connect with a counterpart within that profession, so they can be connected to that community and have someone walk along with them while they await transferring/obtaining their credentials here. (Kind of like when transfer students come here for college and they have host families.) In this case it would be people welcoming and connecting them to their community, a piece currently missing. This is also a good way to engage people in the community to interact with the immigrant population.</p> <p>Jennifer shared a story about a family of Ukrainian refugees who moved in next door to her. They have a child the same age as her son, and they didn’t know where the school bus stop was. Thierry agreed; that brings back memories. Jennifer really liked the “walk along” language that Alice used. This is exactly what her son’s teacher asked her son to do to help his immigrant neighbor adapt to school here.</p>	<p>If you have edits or comments, please get them to Anika by Noon tomorrow.</p> <p>Anika thanked the group for their thoughtful input. She will share some draft wording with the group to be sure she captured the input.</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Outreach Materials Stefanie Love</p>	<p>Stefanie ordered reusable badges for Commissioners. She has some budget to spend by the end of the year that could be used for marketing materials, paid advertisements, etc. Any ideas? An internal resource guide? It can be posted online and translated. Thierry suggested welcome kits that include a resource list with community information. George asked if there's enough funds to host an event, perhaps at Tacoma Community House? Jennifer volunteered Lee to help Stefanie. Are there any table events coming up? Ethiopian New Year and Kwanzaa are coming soon.</p> <p>We could get some "swag" for agencies that serve immigrants and refugees, for them to have some awareness and hopefully connect with the Commission.</p> <p>George said putting together an event in a month is doable. We could host an end-of-year event at Tacoma Community House, maybe the week after our 12/4 meeting? Stefanie toured Tacoma Community House and would love to tour again with the Commission. They have job fairs and interpreters on site. If a quorum of the Commission is there it will need to be a public event. Jennifer suggested using the Asia Pacific Cultural Center. George has hosted events at Mi Centro. Stefanie has funds to use if there's a rental charge.</p> <p>Welcoming packets can be sent to people before they arrive. Tools to help them understand more about the community are very helpful. Stefanie reported that we have our first iteration of the County Welcome Guide and she'd like to expand it; she'll share it with the group.</p> <p>Please read Stefanie's email about the Community Needs Assessment and encourage people to respond to it; more community input is desired.</p> <p>Camila suggested translating materials into Portuguese. Stefanie has the top eight languages, including Vietnamese, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, and Samoan. She's considering French.</p> <p>Thierry asked we can collaborate with Tacoma – they're recommending training all the police officers and would like to have people who've had negative experiences with law enforcement participate.</p> <p>Jennifer conducted a training years ago due to an incident that took place in Hawaii in which there was no translator so they had to interact with a six-year-old child. That's not acceptable.</p>	<p>We'll reach out to venues to see if this is feasible.</p> <p>Stefanie will send out some ideas for a year-end event.</p> <p>Stefanie will share the Welcome Guide with the group.</p>

TOPIC/WHO	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Appreciation & Adjourn	Thanks to all for coming! The meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.	Thanks to all – you are appreciated!

The next CRIA meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 4 at 5:00 via Zoom and in the SV Muckleshoot Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Becki Foutz
Administrative Assistant