

City of Seattle Immigrant & Refugee Commission

Commission Action Plan Overview 2019

Guiding principles

The Immigrant and Refugee Commission is committed to helping the city equitably serve immigrant & refugee populations living or working in Seattle.

We aim to:

- Apply an intersectional equity lens to strengthen City initiatives, programs, and projects supporting immigrant and refugee populations.
- Contribute our voice and leadership by continuously listening and lifting the voices of diverse immigrant and refugee communities, representing the interests of the whole rather than the individual, and engaging in due diligence and learning when there is a gap in our experiences and/or knowledge.
- Create and support solutions that honor and celebrate the rich diversity of immigrant and refugee communities.

Our goals & objectives

Goal 1. Ensure equal access to economic opportunities for immigrant & refugee communities, strengthening the narrative that immigrants & refugees contribute in unique ways to Seattle's economy by addressing three key areas:

- **Housing security:** Increase visibility of the lived experiences of immigrants & refugees at risk for homelessness and displacement by addressing housing security, such as affordable housing and rising rental costs.
- **Employment:** Support nonprofit organizations and city initiatives that increase career pathways for immigrant & refugee workers, particularly those who are underemployed or unemployed.
- **Small business & entrepreneurship:** Bring visibility to immigrant and refugee owned businesses. Incorporate a documented process for all City departments to use when hiring contractors that will ensure immigrant and refugee small businesses are considered.

Goal 2. Address key issues that disproportionately or uniquely affect immigrant & refugee women, recognizing and elevating their perspectives and lived experiences, which are often overlooked, by addressing two key areas:

- **Domestic workers & caregivers:** Protect the rights and conditions in which domestic workers & caregivers work, with a particular emphasis on wage equity, safety and well-being.
- **Gender based violence:** Address gender-based violence within immigrant and refugee communities through community education, economic empowerment, and increase cross-sector collaboration on increasing legal representation for survivors.

Goal 3. Ensure that policies and programs designed for Seattle's youth are intentionally inclusive of immigrant & refugee youth needs, including two key areas:

- **Education:** Ensure Seattle Levy is addressing the needs of immigrant communities and that these communities are able to access these services at the same rates as other populations. This objective includes advocating for increasing programs' language accessibility.
- **Youth Justice:** Improve youth community and diversion programs to be more geared towards immigrant & refugee communities. This objective includes supporting and investing in community spaces and after-school programs, as well as supporting community-generated restorative justice programs.

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Goal 4. Ensure that immigrant and refugee populations are safely and accurately counted as part of the national 2020 Census.

- Support City of Seattle and community organizers in outreach programs.
- Advise City of Seattle policy makers in their efforts to create and disseminate information about the 2020 Census to immigrant and refugee communities..

Partner with us

Please reach out to co-chairs Ankita Patel (patel.irc@gmail.com) and Maya Appiah (maya.seattle.irc@gmail.com) to start the discussion.