

**Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission  
October 2 2018 (6:00-8:00 PM)  
Seattle City Hall, Room 370**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioners Present:** Maya Babla Appiah, Medhanit Abebe, Shelani Vanniasinkam, Gina Aaftaab, Maria Zepeda Flores, Farhiya Mohamed, Riddhi Mukhopadehyay, Ankita Patel, Johnson Nguyen

**Commissioners Absent:** Marilena Morales, Luis Ortega, Vanesa Gutierrez, Jennifer Calleja, Jessica Yu

**OIRA Staff Present:** Maha Jahshan

**Guests:** Sarah Domondon

**Call to Order:** 6:00 pm

### **Welcome (Co-Chairs)**

Ankita and Maya opened the meeting.

### **Protecting Families Coalition Presentation (Sarah Domondon)**

Sarah Domondon is part of a broad coalition working to address the impact of the [changes to the Public Charge rule](#). The coalition is made up of 50+ nonprofit, public, and private sector organizations called [Protecting Immigrant Families- Washington State](#).

### **Next Steps on Public Charge (All)**

The Commission decided to write a letter encouraging the Department Directors to submit a public comment on the federal register and also submit a statement on behalf of the commission.

### **Director 's Report (Maha)**

Maha gave the Director's Report in lieu of Cuc. She highlighted OIRA's upcoming body of work and included an update on the Immigrant Family Institute Strengthening Families Program.

The Strengthening Families Program 10-14 (SFP 10-14) was added as a pilot this year as a "step 2" for families that had completed the 8-week Immigrant Family Institute. SFP 10-14 was offered in response to an East African mother's immediate recognition after the first

session of the pilot IFI in 2017 that she needed parenting skills to help her son make good decisions and keep him out of the juvenile justice system. The request led to a “two step” IFI program using an inter-generational approach as its foundation. Whereas the 8-week IFI focuses on building relationship and trust between immigrant families and SPD officers as well as systems learning and navigation, including the juvenile courts and how to interact with Seattle police and ICE, the 7-week SFP 10-14 focuses on family skills: strengthening parenting skills, building family strengths, and preventing teen substance abuse and other behavior problems.

The result was an overwhelming success with both parents and youth demonstrating positive changes

### **Budget Discussion (Riddhi and Maha)**

The commissioners discussed the budget process and how commission has engaged in the past. The commission decided they will write a letter to Council with their thoughts on the Mayor’s 2019-2020 Budget Proposal and a timeline of the process to turn it in by 10/26.

**Moving the Commission Forward/Looking Ahead (All)**– The commission identified co-leads for priority issues and structure of meetings moving forward.

### **Adjourn**

The commission adjourned at 8:00 pm.