



IMMIGRANT FAMILY INSTITUTE

Launched in 2017, the Immigrant Family Institute (IFI) is an innovative yearly program designed to help immigrant youth of color (ages 10-14), their parents/guardians, and Seattle Police Department officers all learn from each other and build trust.



Seattle
Office of Immigrant
and Refugee Affairs

About Us

Our mission is to improve the lives of Seattle's immigrant and refugee families.

We work to strengthen immigrant and refugee communities, by engaging them in decisions about the City of Seattle's future and improving the City's programs and services to meet the needs of all constituents.

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About IFI

IFI is a community-building program that aims to bring together immigrant youth of color, their parents, and Seattle Police Department (SPD) officers to learn from each other. IFI is based on the award-winning 2015 Refugee Women's Institute, recognized by the U.S. Conference of Mayors for Outstanding Achievement in Innovation.

How IFI Was Designed

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) designed the IFI program with extensive input from a community advisory committee that included King County judges, immigrant and refugee youth, as well as professionals and advocates from the juvenile justice system.

How IFI Works

Participants meet over 8 weeks on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm to build community and participate in interactive sessions on pertinent topics such as how to interact with law enforcement and how to navigate the juvenile justice system. The program educators honor the wisdom that families and officers bring to IFI and provide participants with many opportunities for self-awareness and group learning.

To ensure full participation, OIRA provides these resources to participating families:

- Breakfast and lunch
- ORCA transit passes
- On-site child care for children (ages 3 to 9)
- Interpretation services

2018 Participants

- 18 immigrant families with youth of color (ages 10 to 14)
- 16 SPD officers from Patrol, Investigation, and Administration

Results

The 2017 program was successful in building leadership skills for the immigrant youth participants who have been or could be impacted by the juvenile justice system. It also taught their caregivers to self-advocate and how to better navigate City, legal, and education systems.

The SPD officers reported gaining more culturally responsive skills to serve immigrant youth of color and their families, which changed the officers' assumptions and improved their knowledge of immigrant youth and their families. OIRA is piloting the evidence-based Strengthening Families Program in response to requests by IFI participants for parenting skills.