



**Seattle Immigrant and Refugee Commission
October 4, 2011, 6:00-8:00 PM
City Hall, Boards and Commissions Room-L280**

Meeting Minutes

- Commissioners Present:** Devon Alisa Abdallah, Ph.D., Jesus Rodriguez, Mohamed Sheikh Hassan, Michael Neguse, Andrea Caupain, Shree Ram Dahal, Magdaleno Rose-Avila, Ashraf Alazadi, Yasemin San, Bincy Jacob
- Commissioners Absent:** Pradeepta Upadhyay, Cherry Cayabyab, Tsegaba Woldehaimanot
- Commissioners by Phone:** N/A
- SOCR Staff Present:** Julie Nelson, Rosalinda Hoskins
- Guests:** Sheryl Shapiro
- Guest Speakers:** Erika Berg, Kellie Nakano, Toby Guevin
- Call to Order:** Call to order at 6:00 PM
- Approval of Minutes:** September Minutes approved by vote.

1. Welcome / Housekeeping / Announcements

Introduction

- September Minutes approved by vote
- Announcements:
 - * Teacher's Workshop on 10/15/11 9-4:30, St. Mark's Cathedral – Iraqi Refugees in our Schools
<http://teachersworkshop.org/index.htm>
 - * Seattle Center's Arab Festal 10/8-10/9
<http://www.seattlecenter.com/festal/detail.aspx?id=21>
 - * October 8th and 9th –Celebrate Arab Festival at Seattle Center's Fisher Pavilion
<http://www.seattlecenter.com/festal/detail.aspx?id=21>
 - * Rainier Community Center – Help us Plan Race and Social Justice for Seattle - 11/12/11 9:00-1:00
<http://inweb/rsji/>

2. SOCR Report

Julie sends out the full report via email.
For a copy of the full report, contact Rose or Julie.

3. Culturally-Sensitive Matched Foster Parents

Erika Berg presented to the Commission the need for foster parents who are culturally-matched with immigrant and refugee children. King County is the 2nd most diverse county in the nation but finding foster parents who can sponsor the children has been a challenge. Erika approached the Commission in hopes of spreading the word. There are unaccompanied children from Central America and Mexico, Muslim children, as well, who could benefit from even a weekend visit or an invite to a cultural event. The licensing period is 90 days, the children have full healthcare and a monthly stipend is provided to foster parents.

4. Integrated Job-Readiness Training for Immigrant and Refugee Youth and Families

Kellie Nakano from Human Services Department (HSD) presented a new pilot program designed to help immigrant and refugee families. HSD will be issuing an RFI by October 13th for 2011-12. The Commission had expressed a need for a job-readiness program. \$150K budget is set to serve immigrant and refugees in this family-based approach. The program is designed to move a number of youth and their families together thru self-sufficiency training, bi-lingual job readiness, career planning, and workshops focusing on living wage. The program will also provide parent education to close the gap between parents and youth, with the target population being immigrant and refugee youth between the ages of 15-20. The graduation rate for immigrant and refugee youth is currently 45%.

The program is to provide skills for better communications between family members and improved self-sufficiency training. Other agencies will be involved to provide a “one-stop” experience instead of traveling to the different agencies for the same services. The agencies will do outreach for applicants.

5. One America Proposal for an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Toby Guevin presented One America’s proposal for an office that is designed to coordinate policies across departments, providing visibility and engagement between the city and immigrant and refugee communities. One America met previously with different organizations throughout the community and has a meeting scheduled with the Mayor. The Commission was concerned about the steps taken by One America to include community input without seeking the Commission’s input. The Commission was not provided enough information to either agree or disagree with the proposal and agreed to hold a special meeting to further discuss the proposal.

6. Mayor’s Budget-Loss of 1 Full Time Employee for Commissions

The Commission will write a letter to Council and testify on Wednesday October 26th regarding the timing, budget implications, and community involvement of creating an Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) and the loss of a full time position to staff the Commissions in the Office for Civil Rights.

7. Retreat Update

The retreat date set is Saturday, October 29th at Central Area Motivation Project (CAMP). The Retreat Committee will be meeting with a facilitator to prioritize ideas and look toward rebuilding committees and sub-committees. As planning gets underway, the committee will forward information.

The Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 PM