

King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission

By Laws

Article I. NAME

King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission (KCIRC)

ARTICLE II — PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATION

King County proudly upholds the fundamental, self-evident truth announced at our nation's founding: that all are created equal. We embrace the basic American value that we are a nation of opportunity for all. Immigrants and refugees are welcome here, and our region has acted decisively to become more inclusive, removing barriers to affordable housing, transit, health, economic opportunity and strong childhood development. We continue to uphold the same values and move forward with a strategy that sets our region apart as a leader in protecting the rights of all people in our diverse communities. The King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission is established by Ordinance 18653.

ARTICLE III — Membership

SECTION 1:

Composition of the Commission is established in King County Ordinance 18653. The King County Commission seeks to achieve broad representation by recommending thirteen candidates with the following qualities:

1. A diversity of members reflecting a range of ethnicities, professional backgrounds, socioeconomic status and places of origin to reflect the diversity of the county's immigrant and refugee communities;
2. All members must be residents of King County;
3. All members shall demonstrate active and engaged civic participation in one or more immigrant and refugee communities and be well versed on the issues affecting those communities;
4. Membership shall reflect gender and sexual orientation diversity;
5. At least six members shall be from suburban cities or unincorporated areas;
6. At least three members shall have had personal experiences as a refugee or asylee or non-citizen from any location worldwide;
7. Membership shall represent all age groups, including persons representing youth issues;
8. At least five members shall represent and be appointed by an immigrant-led organization serving immigrant communities and of these representatives at least three members shall represent and be appointed by a small grassroots community-based organization that has an annual budget of less than two-hundred fifty thousand dollars, that supports the needs of distinct immigrant and refugee communities and is composed predominantly of members of those communities;
9. At least one member should have familiarity with King County government, systems and agencies; and
10. Persons representing faith-based organizations are encouraged to apply.

SECTION 2:

Members of the commission shall be appointed by the King County Executive and confirmed by the council.

In accordance with King County Code 2.28.001 - All members of county boards and commissions shall be appointed, hold office, be confirmed or rejected according to the provisions of this chapter; provided, however, that this chapter shall not affect boards and commissions to the extent that they are expressly dealt with under state law, county charter or ordinance in a manner different than that set forth herein. (Ord. 11319 § 1, 1994). King County Code 2.28 also states that appointments are made by the King County Executive are subject to Council Confirmation.

ARTICLE IV — Expectations and Duties

SECTION 1: Expectations

Thirteen representatives who are selected to serve the commission are expected to, at minimum, participate in the following:

- Maintain consistent participation by attending scheduled monthly meetings;
- Attend and participate in community meetings, forums, and other events sponsored by the commission;
- Serve on sub-committees and serve as the chair of advisory committees and ad-hoc groups;
- Plan and conduct general meetings in collaboration with other committee members; and
- Exercise the right to vote on topics brought forward by commission and community at large.
- Produce an annual report by February of each year for previous year's activities to our immigrant and refugee communities and the King County leadership
- Board members are held accountable by our actions and by upholding the values and principles we have committed to.

SECTION 2: Duties

1. Assist and advise the council, council administration and independent offices of the legislative branch, the executive branch, including departments, divisions and offices, the sheriff, the assessor, the department of elections, the prosecuting attorney, superior court, district court, and the office of economic and financial analysis on issues, programs, and policies impacting immigrant and refugee communities;
2. Collaborate with all levels of government to ensure effective outreach to and engagement of immigrant and refugee communities and advise on the county's role with other government entities;
3. Coordinate with the office of equity and social justice to develop and review core principles and strategies on equity as they relate to immigrant and refugee communities in the context of county services, programs and policies;
4. Assist with the development and implementation of county services, programs and policies that impact immigrant and refugee communities;
5. Evaluate county services, programs and policies from the perspective of immigrant and refugee communities;

6. Assist with the development and review of major county plans to ensure that the interests and priorities of immigrants and refugees are incorporated in those plans;
7. Promote civic participation and government representation, which shall include, but not be limited to, encouraging application for employment within the county workforce by immigrant and refugee residents and representation of immigrant and refugee residents on boards and commissions;
8. Promote naturalization as a path toward civic and economic integration;
9. Collaborate with organizations that implement programs to enhance integration, naturalization and English-language learning;
10. Increase public awareness of immigrants and refugees and their contributions to our community;
11. Collaborate with all levels of government to invest in the capacity of organizations that serve the immigrant and refugee communities;
12. Continually review the need for appropriate resourcing and support for issues affecting immigrant and refugee communities;
13. Recommend and advocate for increased funding, identify new funding sources and leverage existing funding that include county funds to address the needs of the immigrant and refugee communities and support the commission's activities; and
14. Convene workgroups made up of stakeholders serving and engaging immigrant and refugee communities to build a shared countywide strategy to address the top issues surfaced through community input and work with the appropriate programs boards/commissions and task forces such as in housing and homelessness, employment and small business, barriers to accessing services, human trafficking and criminal justice and safety;

Regional Outreach:

15. Advocating for the county to act as a regional partner with cities to investigate the need for increased investment in the development of neighborhood centers or meeting hubs for youth and families, with an emphasis on serving the needs of immigrant and refugee populations;
16. Working with county departments, cities, service providers and the Sound Cities Association, to create a strategic plan, to be adopted by the commission, for addressing immigrant and refugee issues in suburban cities and unincorporated areas;
17. Investigating whether immigrants and refugees are able to adequately access county services such as district courts, public health clinics, parks, transit in suburban cities, and exploring the potential and need for opening a multilingual, culturally- responsive satellite office in a suburban city if it is determined by the commission that a satellite office would help to increase access;
18. Working with county departments to collaborate with businesses to increase economic opportunities for immigrants and refugees living in unincorporated areas to have access to living wage jobs; and
19. Working with county departments to gather, share and disaggregate data related to immigrants and refugees in unincorporated areas to determine unmet needs, such as the number of substandard houses, and prevalence of income gaps to understand intersections between place-based challenges for immigrants and refugees.

ARTICLE V- Terms of Office

Commission members shall have three-year, staggered terms, with a two-term limit (each member can potentially serve four to six years total).

A. Upon completion of terms: The staff liaison must notify the King County Executive's Office in writing via the Vacancy Notification Form that a member's term is coming to an end. In addition, the member must complete a "Reappointment Request Form." This form can be obtained from the staff liaison or by contacting the King County Executive Office Liaison for Boards and Commissions.

B. Reappointment: Upon successfully completed their initial term, members can seek reappointment to their second term following the steps listed above. Reappointments are not guaranteed and are based on successful completion of their first term.

C. Board members will be limited to serving two (2) consecutive terms on the Commission. The initial 1, 2, or 3 year term is considered a full term. The board member who served an initial term will only be eligible to serve one additional full 3-year term as they have will have completed two full term.

D. In accordance with King County Code 2.28.003 C Powers of Appointees, any Board member whose term has expired shall continue to serve until his or her successor is appointed and either is confirmed by the Council, or is authorized to exercise official power under the provisions of paragraph B of the code.

ARTICLE VI — Officers

SECTION 1:

A. The elected officers of the KCIRC shall be two Co-Chairs, Secretary

B. The Executive Committee shall consist of these three officers.

C. Officer elections shall be held annually at the regularly-scheduled KCIRC meeting in December with one Co-Chair elected each year for a one year term. Co-Chairs terms will stagger.

D. Officers shall serve no more than two consecutive terms in the same office. This rule may be suspended by majority vote of the board if necessary to accommodate any situation where a chair may step into a term because of a vacancy or during the first year of implementation.

SECTION 2I:

Vacancies in Office:

F. In the event that a Co-Chair is unable to fulfill his/her duties, is removed from office by a vote of no-confidence by 2/3 members of the Commission or resigns in the middle of the term, the remaining Co-Chair will assume all Co-Chair duties below. Within 60 days, elections for an additional Co-Chair will be held.

2. If the KCIRC finds itself without any Co-Chairs, designated support staff will assume the Board Co-Chairs' duties until the next regularly-scheduled KCIRC meeting at which time new officer(s) will be elected.

SECTION 3:

Together, the Co-Chair shall:

1. Convene, plan agendas for, and conduct the meetings of the KCIRC and Executive Committee meetings including filtering requests to be on the agenda.

2. Propose committees and appoint committee leads annually during the month of December, or as necessary when a new committee is formed and/or if a committee chair resigns their position midterm. All committee chair appointments expire annually on the last day of December but are eligible for re-appointment.
3. Draft, garner input, and finalize procedural and operational processes of the KCIRC
4. Filter requests for KCIRC Statements.
5. Act as spokespersons for the KCIRC
6. Perform other duties as designated by the KCIRC
7. Engage and strengthen relationships between and among KCIRC members.
8. Hold the Commission accountable to the KCIRC equity statement and encourage ongoing racial equity and diversity learning among Commission members.
9. Both Co-Chairs serve on the Executive Committee and share the leadership of that committee.
10. Both Co-Chairs are responsible for planning and providing Executive Committee agenda via email and physical document at least 48 hours in advance.

SECTION 4:

The Secretary/Historian shall:

- A. Keep all records, minutes, and files.
- B. Maintain membership information (i.e. name, address, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and membership status of all members).
- C. Record RSVP's for events and programs.
- D. Ensure the maintenance of minutes at all meetings.
- E. Record general body attendance at each monthly meeting.
- F. Maintain KCIRC's Bylaws.
- G. Ensure the public has access to meeting minutes and agendas in a timely manner.
- H. Create and distribute membership package materials.
- I. Responsible for ensuring all special events and projects are recorded and documented via video, audio, photography, etc.
- J. create and manage an internal communication drive such as a google drive

SECTION 5:

Executive committee is made up of the officers of the Commission and their duties are to:

- A. Communication in between meetings
- B. Commission Development
- C. Managing High-Level Issues in between meetings
- D. Providing Organizational Oversight
- E. Providing Organizational Direction and Acting on Behalf of the Commission
- F. Preparation of the Agenda
- G. Evaluating performance of the Commission members and the entire Commission
- H. Ensuring the King County Executive and Council remain informed of about the work

SECTION 6:

All Commission Members Shall:

- I. Create a mechanism for regular consultation with immigrant and refugee communities, and facilitation of meaningful involvement in planning and decision-making processes

- J. Notify community about meetings, events and activities.
- K. Recruit community members for Ad-Hoc committees and advisory boards
- L. Bring forth any major issues and information.
- M. Notify co-chairs and/or another committee member in advance that they are not able to attend a meeting or event.
- N. Arrive at each meeting prepared to discuss the issues on the agenda, meeting summaries, and documents distributed in advance.
- O. Fully participate in meetings and articulate views in a respectful, constructive dialogue with other members of the group.
- P. Stay in contact with relevant stakeholders and Commissioners.

ARTICLE VII -ATTENDANCE

A. The Executive Committee will annually review the attendance of KCIRC members and determine whether it deems a letter of resignation should be requested when a member has three (3) consecutive absences from regularly-scheduled Commission meetings or a total of four absences within a 12-month period. If a member needs to be removed, the staff liaison must contact the Liaison for Boards and Commissions in writing and state the reasons for requesting removal of a board member. The staff liaison must show they attempted to contact the board member without a response. The County Executive will then send a letter to the board member relieving them of their duties as a board member.

B. Leave of Absence: A leave of absence may be granted by Co-Chairs upon petition by the member due to extraordinary circumstances. If granted, the member's term will continue to run and the member relinquishes all privileges and obligations during the leave. The member's position will remain vacant during the period of the leave.

C. Participation by Phone: Commission members can only participate by phone into regular meetings for two meetings per year unless the meeting has been scheduled as a phone meeting and everyone participates by phone.

ARTICLE VIII- Removal of officers:

- A. Any officer planning to resign must submit a typed letter of resignation thirty days prior to withdrawal.
- B. Any officer found negligent during their term will be voted out by the full Commission.
 - a. Negligence includes
 - i. Missing three (3) consecutive absences from regularly-scheduled Commission meetings or a total of four absences within a 12-month period.
 - ii. Not adhering to the KCIRC's vision and mission;
 - iii. Not adhering to deadlines or agreed upon responsibilities;
 - iv. Verbal, physical, and/or emotional abuse King County has a zero tolerance policy regarding harassment or abuse by a board member, resulting in immediate removal.
- C. Removal process based on negligence is as follows:
 - a. Verbal Warning from staff liaison and co-chairs
 - b. Written notice of removal from staff liaison and co-chairs to relieve the commission member of their duties follows if the situation remains unchanged.

Once resignation is accepted officer must relinquish all rights and access to the KCIRC's files, website, email, etc.

ARTICLE IX —MEMBERSHIP

There are three types of membership:

A. Commission (13): Member serves on Commission and participate in general meetings and events; membership with voting rights.

B. Ex-Officio members: The immigrant and refugee commission may also include four non-voting members who shall be community leaders that are actively engaged with local government, business or philanthropic organizations, and add value to the commission and raise its visibility and capacity through their expertise, relationships, and networks. These members are not appointed but are invited to join and asked to commit to attending the meetings for a period of one year.

B. Community Partners: Businesses and Community Based Organizations or who have exemplified outstanding accomplishments which align with the KCIRC vision and mission are invited to serve on committees to offer their advice and expertise on particular issue areas. These individuals are non-voting members who commit to serving the commission and King County for the duration of the committee's work. These members are not appointed but are invited to join and asked to commit to attending the meetings for a period of one year.

ARTICLE X — OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. The regular meetings of the KCIRC shall be held monthly unless deemed unnecessary by the Co-Chairs due to the lack of agenda items or proximity of the regular meeting date to legal holidays.

B. All meetings are open to the public.

C. Meetings are to be scheduled and announced in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) to encourage attendance and participation by interested parties of King County.

D. Quorum: A constituted quorum of the KCIRC shall be fifty percent of the membership plus one of the current membership.

E. Decision Making: When a decision needs to be made, the KCIRC will work towards consensus. At the request of any Commission member, a vote may be taken. Robert's Rules of order will be used when a vote is requested.

F. Minutes: The designated staff will ensure that minutes are taken at the meetings and that that they are accurate. The minutes will be reviewed by the Secretary and distributed to all commission members. The minutes, agendas and other materials of the Commission meetings, Executive Committee and other committee meetings shall be posted on the Commission website within two weeks and notices of future meetings are kept up to date.

G. Public Comment: A public comment period will take place during all regular KCIRC meetings. Individuals providing public comment are invited to speak for up to three (3) minutes. At their discretion, the Co-Chairs may grant a speaker latitude to speak longer than three minutes. The chairs can ask members of public to leave if they are disruptive or disrespectful in meetings.

ARTICLE XI — liability Insurance

County officers, employees and agents are provided legal representation (by the Prosecuting Attorney Office) and indemnification (by the County) for actions taken within the scope of their service to the County, as long as their actions were taken in good faith with no reasonable cause to believe the actions were unlawful. This is provided in King County Code section 4.13.010.

ARTICLE XII — Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the KCIRC without prior notice by two-thirds affirmative votes of those present or with prior notice by a simple majority of those voting.