



Legislation Text

File #: 2017-0481, **Version:** 1

Clerk 11/02/2017

AN ORDINANCE related to the establishment of a King County immigrant and refugee commission; and adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 2.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. On November 10, 2009, the council committed to provide county services to all residents, irrespective of immigrant status by adopting Ordinance 16692, prohibiting the county's office, department, employee, agency or agent to use citizenship or immigration status of any individual from conditioning provision of county services and also prohibiting the sheriff's office from requesting specific documents relating to a person's civil immigration status for the sole purpose of determining whether the individual has violated federal civil immigration laws.
2. On October 11, 2010, Ordinance 16948, also referred to as the "Equity and Social Justice Ordinance," was enacted establishing equity and social justice from an initiative to an integrated effort that intentionally applies the countywide strategic plan's principle of "fair and just" in all the county does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities.
3. On June 30, 2014, the executive transmitted a report that included analysis, recommendations, and an action plan to increase access to Limited English Proficiency ("LEP") populations as required by the council through a 2014 budget proviso, in Ordinance 17695, Section 18, Proviso P3. The report evaluated outreach strategies that can be used to engage LEP populations, pros and cons for developing centralized resources and strategies to coordinate translation efforts and other service categories across all departments, agencies and offices.

4. On July 21, 2015, Ordinance 18085 was enacted directing the executive to convene a task force to develop a final report with recommendations on the creation of an immigrant and refugee commission.
5. The members of the task force were appointed in October 2015 and, as required by Ordinance 18085, as amended, the task force was comprised of thirteen representatives from organizations and entities with deep roots in immigrant and refugee communities and who possess significant expertise in issues facing these populations in the county. Task force members represented a range of sectors, experiences and perspectives reflecting the diversity of the communities, organizations including faith-based organizations, businesses and government agencies actively engaged with immigrants and refugees.
6. As required by Ordinance 18085, as amended, the task force was tasked with the following:
 - a. to provide recommendation on commission's membership, mission and scope of duties;
 - b. to provide recommendation on commission's alignment with other regional and local efforts, and relationship with the county's office of equity and social justice;
 - c. to evaluate how the county's current provision of services addresses immigrant and refugee resident needs, helps to move low-income immigrant and refugee populations towards economic success, what gaps currently exist in the provision of county services for immigrants and refugees that create barriers to success, and a commission's potential role in addressing gaps;
 - d. to consult with county agencies to learn how different agencies address equity and social justice in the delivery of their services to immigrants and refugees;
 - e. to consider how needs of immigrant and refugee populations differ in high density urban area, lower density suburban areas, and lowest density rural unincorporated areas and develop recommendations for how a commission can address those differences within the commission's mission and scope of duties;

f. to provide recommendation on the role of the commission on implementation of the recommendations as provided in the 2014 Adopted Budget Proviso Report on Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations; and

g. to conduct outreach activities including open public forums and actively soliciting written, electronic, or oral community comments to obtain community input.

7. As required by Ordinance 18085, as amended, the task force met from October 2015 through June 2016, and was supported by a project team of county staff as well as two external consultants. The task force divided into three subgroups to address major requirements outlined in the ordinance, and conducted more than twenty community meetings with feedback and input from over five hundred community members of immigrant and refugee communities to gather input on challenges faced by immigrants and refugees and their thoughts on possible solutions.

8. On July 8, 2016, the task force presented its final report, entitled Advancing Equity and Opportunity for King County Immigrants and Refugees: A Report from the King County Immigrant and Refugee Task Force (Report 2016-RPT0107), to the council.

9. Based on the findings and recommendation of the task force, it is in the public interest that an immigrant and refugee commission be formed to enhance the integration of immigrants and refugees culturally, economically and civically, in order to strengthen the communities where they live and to support them to become part of the fabric of society, by having the tools they need to thrive and succeed while maintaining their own identities.

10. On April 28, 2017, Ordinance 18499 was enacted appropriating \$750,000 to address issues affecting the immigrant and refugee communities, which included: providing culturally specific support services; shoring up funding for the Resilience Fund, which is a collaborative with the Seattle Foundation, the city of Seattle and other organizations to provide timely, flexible funding to address urgent needs of immigrant and refugee populations; and funding legal defense for

immigrants with limited financial resources. On July 6, 2017, Ordinance 18544 was enacted to appropriate an additional \$250,000 to support legal defense for immigrants with limited financial resources.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. Sections 2 through 8 of this ordinance should constitute a new chapter in K.C.C. Title 2.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 2. The King County immigrant and refugee commission is hereby established and shall be referred to as "the commission" throughout this chapter.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 3. The commission shall:

A. Act as a central point of contact, communication and coordination to encourage coordination and efficient intersection of the work of stakeholders serving and engaging immigrant and refugee residents to achieve greater impact. As the hub, the commission shall act as the focal point for connecting a broad group of stakeholders to identify, elevate and develop shared strategies and solutions, streamline and strengthen efforts, and bring more resources to the most pressing issues affecting immigrant and refugee communities. To achieve this purpose, the commission's duties shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

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/or 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;

B. Focus on understanding and addressing challenges faced by immigrant and refugee communities living in suburban cities and unincorporated areas of the county. The commission should complement the work engaged by the city of Seattle but with emphasis on communities outside of the city of Seattle. To achieve this purpose, the commission's duties shall include, but not be limited to:

1. 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;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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
5. 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; and

C. Adopt goals directed towards the purposes and responsibilities of this section.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 4.

A. The immigrant and refugee commission shall be composed of thirteen members with the following requirements:

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 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 from any location worldwide;
 7. Membership shall represent a range of 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 grass-roots 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.
- B. No more than three members of the immigrant and refugee task force shall be appointed to the immigrant and refugee commission during the first term of the thirteen membership positions.
- C. The immigrant and refugee commission may also include four nonvoting 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.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 5.

A. The council and the executive shall jointly announce a call for applications to seek candidates for appointment. The council and the executive shall work collaboratively to ensure that the announcement be publicized widely to the immigrant and refugee communities. Publicity methods shall include, but not be limited to, non-English language newspapers and periodicals, community-based organizations and community leaders with expertise and focus on immigrant and refugee communities and the county's website.

B. Candidates seeking appointment must submit two letters of recommendation, each from an immigrant and refugee community member, one letter of recommendation from a nonprofit organization serving immigrant and refugee communities and ten endorsement signatures from persons who are immigrants or refugees.

C. A final list of candidates for recommended appointment shall be determined by a committee comprised of two council representatives appointed by the council chair, two executive representatives and three former members of the commission recommended by the chair of the commission. For initial term appointments, the final list of candidates for recommended appointment shall be determined by a committee comprised of two council representatives appointed by the council chair, two executive representatives, and three members of the immigrant and refugee task force who are not seeking appointment to the commission. The committee shall also ensure that the final list of candidates for appointment meet the requirements as outlined in section 3 of this ordinance and seek public input from the immigrant and refugee communities.

D. Members of the commission shall be appointed by the executive and confirmed by the council.

E. The commission shall establish initial terms of appointment by lot, following completion of the initial appointment and confirmation process. Five positions shall have initial terms of three years, four positions shall have initial terms of two years and the remainder of the positions shall have initial terms of one year.

F. At the conclusion of the initial term of each appointment, all subsequent terms of each position shall

be for three years. A commission member whose term has expired may continue to serve into the following term until a successor has been appointed to complete the term. A member shall not serve more than two consecutive terms. A vacancy for an unexpired term shall be filled by the appointment process provided for in this section.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 6.

A. The commission shall issue and deliver an annual report to the council that outlines the work of the commission during the prior calendar year as well as its anticipated work program for the following calendar year. The report shall be filed in the form of a hard copy and an electronic copy with the executive and the clerk of the council by February 15 of each year.

B. The commission shall make the annual report available on the county website, distribute it widely to the immigrant and refugee communities, and share it with the press with emphasis on progress towards goals of the commission provided for in section 3 of this ordinance.

C. The commission shall provide annual briefings to the press and elected officials representing cities, county and state to ensure that the commission's lessons learned, processes and progress towards goals provided for in section 3 of this ordinance are shared with the public and policy makers.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 7.

A. The commission shall elect a chair and a vice chair annually, who shall each serve a one-year term.

B. The commission may adopt bylaws and other rules for its own conduct.

C. The commission shall convene as necessary, but at least monthly, to perform the duties outlined in section 3 of this ordinance. The commission chair may consider and approve requests for absence from meetings; the chair may remove any member who is absent without excuse from three consecutive commission meetings.

D. At least four commission meetings each year shall be held in suburban cities or unincorporated areas and may include site visits and informational sessions with residents.

E. The commission shall hold at least one large community briefings each year to solicit input from community on top priorities, progress towards goals provided for in section 3 of this ordinance and evaluation of the commission's work and role.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 8. An employee from the office of equity and social justice and one council employee shall staff the commission.

NEW SECTION. SECTION 9.

A. The executive shall reimburse commission members for mileage at the standard county reimbursement rate for travel to and from scheduled commission meetings, workgroup meetings, and community meetings and for parking at meetings outside of county facilities. Members attending meetings or conducting business related to the commission at county facilities shall have parking in the county garage paid by the executive.