



The Office of Immigrant
and Refugee Affairs

Regional Partnerships

for Immigrant Integration
and Workforce Development
in the City of Seattle
and King County



**Prepared for the City of Seattle,
Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA)**

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MESSAGE FROM OIRA

In 2012, following advocacy from leaders of various community organizations representing Seattle's diverse immigrant communities, the Seattle City Council established the Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA). Over the past decade, OIRA has been instrumental in supporting key city policy development and public investments. This includes providing essential programs and services such as pathways to citizenship, English language acquisition, education access, legal services, workforce development programs, social capital, and cash assistance distribution for Seattle-based immigrant and refugee residents.

Aligned with the City of Seattle's commitment to racial and social justice, OIRA collaborates closely with the Mayor's Office, City Council, other city departments, and key stakeholders. Together, we engage in immigration policy development, community outreach, resource coordination, research and analysis, and public awareness and outreach efforts.

OIRA is steadfast in its commitment to recognizing and leveraging the substantial contributions of our diverse populations. These contributions extend beyond cultural and economic realms, playing a pivotal role in driving innovation and fostering growth. The recent New American Economy report underscored this significance, revealing that immigrants in the Seattle Metropolitan Area contributed \$12.7 billion in taxes in 2019, with 51,452 immigrant entrepreneurs thriving during the same period.

Despite global transitions into a post-pandemic landscape, challenges persist, particularly for immigrants, refugees, and migrants. These communities, integral to the fabric of our city, encounter unique barriers in accessing the labor market, ranging from language obstacles to credential recognition and legal complexities. Discrimination based on ethnicity, race, or immigration status further compounds their employment prospects.

In response to these realities, OIRA initiated the *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County* report. This comprehensive initiative aims to pinpoint and address these challenges head-on, crafting tailored strategies to enhance our support programs, policies, and engagement efforts specifically for immigrants, refugees, and migrants.

This initiative aims to deepen our collective understanding of immigration in our region and offer actionable ways for Seattle, employers, neighboring cities, King County, workforce agencies, education stakeholders, labor unions, and community organizations to collaborate in partnership. The goal is to improve workforce conditions and enhance economic stability for all residents, regardless of their immigrant or U.S.-born status. Immigrants and refugees bring unique skills, experiences, and perspectives that drive innovation, fill essential roles, and contribute to economic growth.

We trust this report will serve as a valuable educational and practical resource, supporting your crucial work. Together, we can ensure that all immigrant and refugee communities not only survive but thrive. I eagerly anticipate ongoing dialogue with you in the coming weeks and months.

Hamdi Mohamed, Director

City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About the Author

Glenn Scott Davis is the founder and principal of *Progressive Workforce Strategies*, a consulting firm that supports government and workforce development agencies, labor unions, community organizations, and training and education providers in providing workforce development programs and services to job seekers, workers, and professionals across industry sectors. Glenn is the former Workforce Policy Specialist in the City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) and held various director and leadership positions in joint labor-management programs supported by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in the Northeast.

Author's Acknowledgements of Contributors

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- **Rich Stolz** (Just Solutions and the Democracy Fund and former Executive Director of OneAmerica) wrote the Forward to *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County*, provided peer review, and helped to shape the report's recommendations.
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- **Marisol Tappia Hooper** and **Shelan Aldridge** (Workforce Development Council of Seattle/King County) through several discussions over the past year generously shared their deep knowledge of the gaps, best practices, and policy and systems reforms needed to improve workforce conditions for immigrant and refugee job seekers, workers and professionals.
- **Rachel Erstad** (Harry Bridges Labor Center, University of Washington) and **Muhammad Javid** (Washington State Labor Education and Research Center) developed and conducted interviews with the leaders of labor unions, apprentice programs, and joint labor-management trust funds to gain their perspectives on gaps and best practices in providing programs and services to incumbent workers.
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- **Allyson Skikas** (Editing Consultant) provided superb work in improving the report through her editing skills and feedback.
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List of Individuals Interviewed or Consulted for the Report

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	ANEW	Karen Dove	Executive Director
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FOREWORD BY RICH STOLZ

Immigration policy in our nation – who comes, how they come, and where they arrive – is set at the federal level, but the success of immigrants in our communities, our economy, and our society is determined by what happens in cities, and increasingly in metropolitan regions. This report is timely because in the current political context, it puts forward a necessary, intentional, longer-term vision for immigrant integration in this region.

Today, cities are grappling with increasing number of newcomers, many of whom are asylum seekers waiting for their day in court and living in a kind of limbo trying to make the best of their situation. Some major cities, like New York, Chicago, and Denver are also grappling with the cruel and opportunistic actions of politicians scoring political points among rightwing constituents by targeting selected cities and busing and flying tens of thousands of migrants there without warning. While Seattle has not yet been targeted, thousands of new arrivals are finding their way to our region to be reunited with loved ones, for opportunities to work, and to prove their claims for asylum.

These events are symptomatic of deeper problems in our democracy and our planet. Globally, more people are in motion than at any time in human history. They are driven by conflict, increasingly intense natural disasters, and the accelerating impacts of climate change. In the United States, anti-immigrant political leaders seek to grind to a halt any meaningful action on reforming our immigration system, because they believe that images of chaos at the southern border and in American cities strengthen their hand in domestic politics. We should understand the situation for what it is, because increasing migration is not a short-term situation, it will be a continuing, long-term reality.

This reveals two fundamental truths. First, migration is a tried-and-true adaptation to struggle and change and is built into who we are as human beings – doing what we can to create better lives for our families. Second, our region and our nation need immigrants to sustain our population, for the functioning of our economy, and for the renewal of our civic infrastructure. This will remain true irrespective of who wins the 2024 presidential election. And if anti-immigrant politicians win at the national level, Seattle and King County will once again be called upon to lead in how it supports all our communities.

Over the last 20 years, Seattle has solidified its reputation as a city that welcomes immigrants, and perhaps the strongest manifestation of this is the city's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. Yet Seattle must be clear-eyed about the work still to be done. As this report meticulously lays out, there are broad systemic issues our region continues to struggle with – historic discrimination impacting people of color, increasing income inequality, the hollowing out of middle-income jobs, lack of affordable housing and the increasing cost of living, and factors pushing lower-income communities to suburban areas that often have less access to social service infrastructure. Into this mix, diverse new arrivals come with unique barriers with respect to language, literacy, culture, digital access, and trauma.

This report offers unique strategies that will make a tremendous difference for new arrivals and immigrant communities. Policymakers and stakeholders implementing these recommendations will strengthen and improve how our region's workforce development system serves all our communities, immigrants and the U.S.-born residents alike. By reducing fragmentation, centering equity, and amplifying the voices of those most impacted in our workforce system, our region will continue to serve as a national leader in what it means to create the thriving, diverse, and inter-connected communities we all deserve.

Solidarity works!

Rich Stolz is a Senior Fellow, Just Solutions and the Democracy Fund and the former Executive Director of OneAmerica



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (“OIRA”) commissioned this report to deepen our collective understanding of immigration in our region and offer ways that the City of Seattle and neighboring cities, King County, workforce agencies and education stakeholders, labor unions, employers, and community organizations can work together in solidarity to improve the workforce conditions and economic stability of all our residents – immigrant and native born alike.

What is Immigrant Integration?

The process of “immigrant integration” in our nation is a permanent feature of American life and an ongoing driver of economic development and social progress. The ongoing movement of immigrants and refugees into our region continues to accelerate population and economic growth; enrich our neighborhoods, culture, and civic institutions in new ways; and create and regenerate greater ethnic, racial, and religious diversification. King County’s immigrants and refugees are both newcomers and long-time residents and live in every community in King County. Answering the call of persistent labor market demand, immigrant workers and professionals work in and earn income at all levels of wages and salaries in a range of essential occupations in every industry and sector in our regional economy. Immigrant small businesses owners play a vital role in cities and towns across King County boosting our regional economy as entrepreneurs, innovators, and job creators.

Immigrant integration unfolds as an ongoing cross-generational process in which immigrant individuals and groups become engaged in the social, political, and economic life of their new communities while maintaining and expressing their varied and multi-faceted identities. Outmoded notions of integration as assimilation in a “melting pot” are giving way to a more modern, nuanced understanding that accounts for the expression of both individual and group identities while recognizing the diversity and differences within and across immigrant groups and various groups of US-born residents.

Role of Workforce Development in Improving Workforce Conditions of Immigrants and Refugees

While the City of Seattle, King County, Washington State, and their workforce stakeholders have made significant progress in recent years in supporting immigrant integration, our findings indicate that much more can be done in our region to increase the positive impact of these efforts in the arena of workforce and economic development.

We conducted interviews and discussions with over forty workforce development leaders from labor unions, community organizations, government and workforce agencies, educational institutions, research entities, immigrant organizations, and workforce training and apprenticeship providers. These interviews and discussions helped us to better understand, document, and identify gaps in programs and services in our workforce and education systems and to highlight the best practices within our workforce systems that are expanding access and pathways to quality jobs and improving the quality of existing jobs. The report proposes a regional strategy and recommendations for how OIRA can partner with policy makers, other City of Seattle departments, King County government, neighboring cities, and community, labor, and workforce



stakeholders to leverage public investments, programs, and services to measurably improve workforce conditions of immigrant and refugee job seekers, workers, and professionals. OIRA can play a unique role in partnership with the key institutional players profiled in this report to support workforce development, employment, education, and training program and service models that work in advancing the process of immigrant integration.

This scope of this report extends beyond the boundaries of the City of Seattle (the ‘county seat’) to include all of King County’s immigrants and refugees. Nearly 75% of the 541,000 immigrants and refugees residing in King County live outside of the City of Seattle.¹ We live and work in a highly integrated regional economy and workforce and the problems highlighted throughout this report require regional strategies, approaches, and leadership. We assessed the economic, social, and workforce conditions of immigrants and refugees in the City of Seattle, King County, and Washington State utilizing economic and social measures such as cost of living, wages, income, educational attainment, unemployment and under-employment, poverty and income insufficiency, and language proficiency. Our findings indicate that overall Washington’s residents who were born in another country are doing better in our state and county – across a range of measures compared to their counterparts in most other states. This positive outcome is a result of several political and economic factors including city, regional, and state-level public policies including:

- A vibrant and integrated regional economy with strong international inter-connections and thriving high-wage, high-skill sectors, and employers.
- The large-scale integration and representation of immigrants and refugees in the regional workforce in a range of occupations and in political and civic life.
- Progressive city, regional, and state-wide public policies supporting immigrants and refugees in the process of integration.
- Strong networks of public agencies, labor unions, and community organizations providing essential human and workforce services and advocacy for immigrant job seekers, workers, and professionals.
- High levels of unionization, worker advocacy, and enforced labor standards that protect worker rights and benefits under state, county, and municipal law.
- Legal protections in municipal and state laws protecting the constitutional rights of immigrant residents.



Despite these progressive measures in Washington state, in the continuing absence of comprehensive federal immigration reform ongoing efforts at the municipal and state-level to advance integration will be hampered by Congress's failure to create safe and legal pathways to citizenship and expand capacity for refugee resettlement, and other related reforms. Conflicting political visions of which groups should be granted pathways to U.S. citizenship leaves unresolved the plight of deserving asylum seekers and millions of unauthorized low wage workers in sectors such as personal services, construction, agriculture, food services and processing, hospitality, and building and maintenance services.

Advancing Workforce Equity, Economic Stability and Job Quality for All

Immigrants and refugees have increased their representation in a range of occupations in our regional workforce and play a vital role in the production and distribution of goods and services and wealth creation in our economy and communities. Our region remains one of the wealthiest and most immigrant-friendly in the United States. But such comparisons to other states have their limitations and only tell part of the immigrant integration story in the City of Seattle and King County. When we looked closer into the actual workforce and social conditions of specific immigrant, racial, and gender groups, including native born residents, a different story emerges – one of persistent structural inequities.

We focused on the representation of various groups of immigrants and refugees in occupations across industry sectors in proportion to their representation in the general population. Our research then identified the occupations in which immigrant workers are either under-represented or over-represented as well as those in which they have achieved relative occupational parity. While making gains into middle-wage and high-wage jobs, specific groups of immigrants, people of color, women, and residents of all backgrounds living in economically distressed communities, disproportionately remain congregated in clusters of low-wage, low-quality jobs.

Certain groups of immigrants and refugees in the workforce continue to face a variety of social and institutional barriers that slow and undermine their full integration into our communities and workforce. These obstacles include financial and language barriers; lack of access to immigrant-specific career and employment services; explicit and implicit bias in educational institutions and employer hiring practices; limited access to professional networks and social capital; professional licensure restrictions; and ineffective program models for beginning English Language Learners. The recommendations of this report suggest that OIRA, the City of Seattle, other municipalities, King County, and workforce stakeholders collaborate to design and implement a regional “occupation by occupation” strategy to measurably increase the representation of immigrants in good, quality jobs in targeted occupations in which they are currently underrepresented.



The Big Picture

While focusing on the workforce and social conditions of immigrants and refugees, our report also calls out the deep racial and gender disparities in our workforce and the income inadequacy among our U.S.-born residents living in economically distressed communities. Decades of political and economic policies and forces have reshaped a global and a regional economy that reproduces great wealth and a permanent class of working families – including U.S.-born and immigrants - who live in conditions of constant economic instability resulting from a long list of problems. These include rising living costs (such as childcare, food, housing, health insurance); deeply regressive state and local taxation; income and wage inadequacy; a lack of quality jobs in the labor market; constricted social mobility; medical, student, and household debt; suburban poverty; and under-funded public education. While policymakers cannot solve many of these persistent problems in our region without a larger transformation of federal economic and labor market policies, there is still much more work to be done at the state and regional level that can improve the workforce and social conditions of all our region's working families as our recommendations suggest.

As we face the many challenges confronting our region including housing affordability and homelessness; policing and crime; public health and safety; and transportation and infrastructure; we should also prioritize our region's commitment to workforce equity and racial and social justice and renew our belief in and commitment to welcoming immigrants and refugees in our communities. Such an outcome will require persistent advocacy and solidarity between community organizations, labor unions, workforce and immigrant stakeholders, and visionary leadership from policymakers.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1 OIRA Convene Regional and Statewide Stakeholders to Present Findings of *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County Report*

OIRA disseminate this report and host an Immigrant and Refugee Summit with key stakeholders: public sector agencies, community and labor organizations, joint labor-management and apprenticeship programs, other King County municipalities, and other entities to present the findings of the *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County Report*:

- Facilitate an open discussion about the intersection of immigrant integration and workforce development in our region to cultivate a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities, foster connections, share knowledge and insight, and identify shared policy goals.
- Partner with Office of Economic Development (OED) to host an internal meeting of all City of Seattle departments that provide workforce development investments and/or programs to present the findings of the *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County Report* and to align the cities' workforce efforts with immigrant and refugee workforce issues.
- Partner with the King County Office of Equity, Racial, and Social Justice (ERSJ) to provide coordination and support to King County departments and other municipal government entities within King County.
- Work with key workforce stakeholders to discuss the research and findings of the *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County Report* through presentations and dialogue, supporting the use of the report as a professional development tool and resource for organizations providing programs and services for immigrant and refugees.

2 OIRA Support Efforts to Improve the Management, Coordination, and Alignment of City of Seattle and King County Workforce Investments Including the WDC, Port of Seattle and Sound Transit

OIRA work with the Mayor's office, the OED, King County, the Port of Seattle, Sound Transit, and the Workforce Development Council (WDC) to improve the management, coordination, and alignment of workforce investments (funders), programs, and services at various levels of our workforce ecosystem:

- Explore with the Mayor's office the feasibility of creating new workforce development positions within the Mayor's Office and King County Executive's office to provide leadership and convening authority in the coordination of City and County workforce efforts, maximizing the return on public investments in this arena.



- Work with the WDC and the State Workforce Board’s staff and leadership to complete a useful and comprehensive stakeholder map of organizations engaged in immigrant and refugee services.
- Work with both agencies to revise the State Workforce Board’s current annual matrix of programs to include services for immigrant and refugee job seekers.
- Advocate for the expansion of WDC’s Economic Security for All Program funded by Washington State Department of Commerce.
- Gather data and development metrics to measure equity outcomes – including disaggregated data and metrics meaningful to immigrant and refugee populations – that can be applied to workforce programs across the region.

3 OIRA Provide Immigrant and Refugee Services and Programs Throughout King County

OIRA work with the City of Seattle and King County to provide expanded workforce programs and services to immigrant and refugee residents throughout King County:

- Create an agreement between the city and county to pool resources, expertise, and infrastructure to provide a more comprehensive regional approach to immigrant and refugee programs and services through extending OIRA’s reach beyond Seattle’s borders to ensure that immigrants and refugees across the entire region have equitable access to vital resources.
- Develop partnerships with other cities in King County to expand programs and services to immigrant and refugees. Prioritize the cities of Kent, Renton, Tukwila, Burien, Federal Way, and White Center (unincorporated King County).
- Collaborate and partner with the WDC and the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) to set regional strategies to support immigrants and refugees, including investing and scaling workforce development models that create bridges to vocational training and paid work-based learning opportunities.



4 OIRA Support and Serve as a Resource to Other City Departments and County Agencies Engaged In Workforce Development, Programs, and Services

OIRA serve as a resource to other City departments in their strategic planning, outreach, and partnership building with immigrant and refugee organizations through:

- Prioritize work with the Office of Economic Development (OED); Financial and Administrative Services (FAS) Labor Equity/Priority Hire Program, the Department of Neighborhoods Intergenerational Wealth Initiative, and the Office of Labor Standards (OLS).

OIRA prioritize support in the following areas of work with The Labor Equity Team by:

- Collaborating with the City of Seattle's Priority Hire Program to support their efforts in apprenticeship.
- Exploring with the Labor Equity Team the feasibility of a "Bridge Program into Pre-Apprenticeship" in the construction trades. Such a program would adequately prepare building trades oriented qualified candidates to meet the admissions requirements and enroll in and complete pre-apprenticeship programs successfully.
- Working with the Labor Equity Team to support the efforts and work of the Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaborative (RPAC) to grow and strengthen systems and structures to establish a sustainable pathway into and through family-wage construction careers.
- Supporting the development of new, non-construction apprenticeship programs with large concentrations of immigrant and refugee workers such as the emerging Teamsters Local 174 Pre-Apprenticeship program for union trucking jobs across multiple industries.

5 OIRA Continue and Expand the Ready to Work (RTW) Program and Support the Expansion of Best Practice English Language Acquisition Programs

OIRA replicate and expand the Ready to Work Program and other English Language Programs (Vocational ESL) with King County, community, labor, and workforce partners to identify opportunities in areas of Seattle and King County that are underserved by these effective models:

- Present findings and recommendations of *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County Report* to the State Board of Community and Technical Board proposing a joint demonstration project to expand the number and locations of Vocational-ESL programs in regional colleges and communities through partnerships with providers such as Literacy Source.
- Continue to fund and operate the existing Ready to Work Program in partnership with the City of Seattle's Human Services Department (HSD) and contracted partners as this model has demonstrated its success in serving English Language Learners and job seekers, through quality job placement, improving English language skills, and offering ongoing career development and continuing education.



- Formally endorse English Language Acquisition programs that include best practices: hybrid, contextual language learning, iterative and engaging pedagogy, and wrap-around work readiness and placement services.

6 OIRA Support Expanded Employment Pathways and Licensing Reform for Underemployed Immigrant and Refugee Professionals In Healthcare and STEM Fields

OIRA assist in the expansion of pathways to careers for immigrants and refugees with backgrounds in STEM and healthcare by:

- Reviving previous efforts of OIRA, the Welcome Back Center, and the Seattle Human Resources Department, to create a paid internship program focused on creating pathways into STEM and other professions within the City Departments to measurably increase the proportion of new hires who are multi-lingual, immigrant community members.
- Developing a strategy and plan with key community and employer partners to expand pathways to specific IT occupations in which specific groups living in economically distressed communities are under-represented.
- Utilizing the WDC's extensive experience with work-based learning models, braided funding mechanisms, and its existing partnership with Seattle IT and regional employers to effectively scale up paid internships within City Departments, ensuring a robust and sustainable pathway for immigrant and refugee residents to access meaningful employment opportunities.

7 OIRA Establish an Annual Immigrant Workforce Development Policy Agenda In Alignment with Broader Department-Wide Priorities and Goals

- Coordinate with key stakeholders, such as OneAmerica, the WDC, Tri-County Refugee Planning Committee, and other advocacy entities to develop an annual list of policy priorities at the city, county, and state level that support improvements to workforce conditions for immigrants and refugees in consultation with community stakeholders.



Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?

Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?

Well, they're the people that you meet
When you're walking down the street
They're the people that you meet each day.

Oh, the postman always brings the mail
Through rain or snow or sleet or hail
I'll work and work the whole day through
To get your letters safe to you

Oh, a fireman is brave it's said
His engine is a shiny red
If there's a fire anywhere about
Well, I'll be sure to put it out

The baker is the one who makes
Your bread and rolls and pies and cakes
If you want something sweet to eat, go see
The baker in the bakery

A teacher works the whole day through
To teach important things to you
He'll teach you things you won't forget
Like numbers and the alphabet

The bus driver drives fast or slow
To take you where you want to go
When you get in and pay your fare
She will drive you anywhere

A dentist cares for all your teeth
The top ones and the ones beneath
So if you have an aching tooth
He'll fix it quick, and that's the truth

The doctor makes you well real quick
If by chance you're feeling sick
She works and works the whole day long
To help you feel well and strong

The grocer sells the things you eat
Like bread and eggs, cheese and meat
No matter what you're looking for
You'll find it at the grocery store

The trash collector works each day
He'll always take your trash away
He drives the biggest truck you've seen
To keep the city streets all clean

— from *Sesame Street*

INTRODUCTION:

Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development

This introduction describes the inter-connected processes of immigrant integration and workforce development in the City of Seattle and King County and details why improving the workforce conditions, job quality, and economic stability of immigrants and refugees should be a long-term high priority public policy and investment in our region. We explore why the goal of supporting the pace of immigrant integration matters to our city, county, nation, our democracy, and to the future of immigration reform. We include a Glossary of Key Terms used in the report.

Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development

“The People in Your Neighborhood” is a song from the children’s public television series Sesame Street that teaches children about various occupations and the importance of community, exploring the interconnections we have with the diverse individuals around us. The sentiments expressed in this song amplify a recurring theme and resonate in this report – the ways in which we all – immigrants and U.S.-born - depend on the labor of others for our well-being. This report, commissioned by the City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA), is about the interconnected and dynamic processes of immigrant integration and the essential role of migration in economic and social development. We hope to increase understanding of the various dimensions of immigration among policymakers and the public by providing a fact-based, objective review of the history and current state of immigration in our region.

Conflicting Visions and Narratives of U.S. Citizenship and Democracy

The United States is often called a “Nation of Immigrants”, an expression popularized by President Kennedy in 1958. The phrase “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free”, etched on the Statue of Liberty, is deeply embedded in our national identity as a core American value.

Yet, for most of our history, this familiar narrative represented a hollow promise as most adult residents born in the United States were by law denied access to full citizenship, including political rights, solely because of their race, ethnicity, and gender. In 1790, our first citizenship laws assigned to “free White persons,” and White-male property owners, exclusive pathways to citizenship through naturalization thus excluding Indigenous Americans, indentured servants, and enslaved and free Black people. During the 1880s, our earliest immigration laws were shaped by such values and beliefs that identified and classified the categories of persons considered “unsuitable” for U.S. citizenship.²

Since our founding as a nation, which racial, national, and ethnic groups were legally considered to be “fully American” by the Federal government - and thus eligible for U.S. citizenship - was determined by



the outcomes of ongoing political struggles between opposing traditions and values: liberal, democratic traditions and values on one hand and undemocratic traditions and values that reflected the beliefs and practices of White and male supremacy on the other. Over time, these conflicting traditions and values were deeply woven into the fabric of our economic, political, social life, and public policies. Today, the conflicts over immigration policy unfolding in the 2024 Presidential election, the halls of state legislatures, the U.S. Congress, the courts, and our communities reflect this deep historical divide.

What is at Stake? The Impact of Anti-Immigrant Policies in the U.S.

In 2024, media reports, public discussion, and policy debates about immigration are characterized by an ongoing flow of disinformation, mythological stories about the evils of immigration, and deep political divides. With no real evidence, political propaganda and false narratives blame immigrants for the problems of crime and the economic insecurity and insufficient incomes of native-born workers. Labels are often used to describe and portray various immigrant and refugee groups. In our public discourse, the labeling of entire immigrant groups often occurs as a neutral, well-intended descriptor, but is increasingly being manipulated in our current politics to promote various false narratives, negative associations, ethnic stereotypes, racist sentiments, and political agendas. Recently, the presumed candidate of the Republican Party for the U.S. Presidency publicly declared that “Illegal immigration is poisoning the blood of our nation.

The assignment of negative group traits to specific immigrant groups frames and influences public opinions and beliefs and is then used to justify anti-immigrant and undemocratic policies while ignoring the real root causes of crime, poor job quality, and the economic distress of working-class families. As a result, several states in recent years – with public support - have passed harsh anti-immigrant laws that have slowed the process of immigrant integration, worsened economic and workforce conditions for immigrants and refugees, undermined economic growth, and weakened our democracy. At the level of the Federal government, the Trump Presidency successfully dismantled and reconstructed many elements of the U.S. immigration system.³

Public Policies on Immigration in the City of Seattle, King County, and Washington State

What we do in Washington State matters to the nation. In contrast to anti-immigrant policy agendas and narratives, state legislatures and municipalities across the nation in recent years have passed progressive and inclusive measures to support the process of immigrant integration; support refugee resettlement; promote the voice and participation of immigrants in civic life; and improve the workforce conditions for immigrant and refugee job seekers, workers, and professionals.⁴ The City of Seattle is part of a growing number of cities across the U.S. enacting such measures. Policymakers and public sentiment in these regions understand that immigrant integration is an essential public good and necessary for our economy's health and development. While most Americans agree, anti-immigrant public policy and actions have advanced into law in several other states such as Texas and Florida.

In contrast, our state's 2019 Keep Washington Working (KWW) Act and 2020's Courts Open to All Act (COTA)⁵ placed Washington state at the forefront of national efforts to protect immigrant rights through state law and expand investments in immigrant integration. During the Trump administration, Washington state and its Attorney General challenged many anti-immigrant measures in federal courts.⁶ In 2024, the



Washington state legislature passed important new measures to improve workforce conditions of immigrants and refugees including:

- Expanded licensure and credentialing reform of immigrant professionals
- Career pathways to civil service jobs for DACA recipients
- Seeking revenue streams for a wage replacement program for unauthorized workers
- Expanded eligibility of newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers for Washington state social and human services

Beyond the Numbers: Diversification, Variation, and Complexity of Immigrant Integration

Throughout *Regional Partnerships for Immigrant Integration and Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County*, we rely primarily on U.S. government data in our effort to demonstrate and understand the scope and extent of immigrant integration and to assess the workforce, economic, and social conditions of immigrants and refugees. The Census data that we utilize for this report necessarily categorizes immigrant groups by race, nation of origin, ethnicity, and gender. This categorization provides baseline data to inform our understanding of the scope and diversity of immigrant integration in our region and offers a snapshot of how well various immigrant groups are doing in terms of education, income, language, and other important measures of well-being and the pace and depth of integration. But what else do these numbers tell us about immigrant integration?

We live in an era in which the ongoing cross-generational process of immigrant integration is accelerating a widespread diversification across and within various immigrant groups and in our communities and workplaces. We find a widening and growing diversification and variation of wealth, status, occupations, income, education, residency, cultural identities, immigration status, and social class both within and across different immigrant groups and U.S.-born groups. Another significant feature of this growing diversification in our nation is the variety and multiplicity of “group” identities including racial, gender, language, religious, cultural, and political. This is sometimes referred to as “super-diversity” and belies the stereotypical monolithic images and behaviors attached to members of various immigrant groups. One’s “identity” beyond their identity as an immigrant or refugee shapes and influences the choices that individuals make regarding work, education, residence, values, beliefs, and political opinions.

The traditional “categories” into which various groups are classified by the US Census Bureau fails to explain this growing reality and expression of multiple identities. One significant example is the rapidly increasing number of King County residents (immigrant and US-born) who identify as being of “more than one race” or “mixed race”.



GLOSSARY:

Key Terms Used in the Report

Words indeed matter. Yet another aspect of the diversification and complexity of immigrant integration is the confusing array of immigration statuses and terms assigned to various groups and individuals. We have included a glossary of several key terms used in the report to serve as a handy reference to clarify their actual and legal meanings.

Simply click on the buttons below to review the definition of these terms detailed in Appendix A.

Alien	Asylee and Asylum Seeker	Citizenship and Naturalization	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
Ethnicity	Foreign-Born	Immigrant	Immigrant Groups
Internally Displaced Persons (“Internal Migrants”)		Legal Permanent Residents (LPR)	
Nativity, Native-Born, Native American	Non-immigrant Foreign-Born Temporary Guest Workers and Students		Public Charge Rule
Race	Refugees	Special Immigrant Visa Recipients (SIV)	Unauthorized Migrants

PART ONE:

Immigrants and Refugees in Seattle and King County

Part One of the report begins with an overview of past and current immigration patterns in our region and the political, economic, and social forces that drove and shaped immigration and public policy over time. We then present a current, comprehensive, and data-rich demographic and social profile of today's immigrant and refugee groups addressing population numbers, place of birth, place of residence in King County, educational attainment, language proficiency, immigration status, income, sectoral employment, and their representation in major occupational groups in the workforce.

Introduction: People on the Move

“As a global community, we face a choice. Do we want migration to be a source of prosperity and international solidarity, or a byword for inhumanity and social friction?”

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Global Migration

Worldwide, more people now live in a country other than their country of origin than at any previous point in modern history.⁷ While experts differ on the precise numbers, the United Nations places the global number of international migrants to be over 281 million (over 3.5% of the world's population), including over 3.5 million refugees and 5.4 million asylum seekers. In addition to those people designated internationally as immigrants and refugees, at the end of 2022, over 71.1 million people across the world were internally displaced because of conflict, violence, and disasters.⁸ The term “internal” migrant is often used to describe people who move from one part of their country to another. The largest regions of recent “forced” internal migration include Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the Sudan); the Middle East (Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen); South and Central America (Columbia); and in Europe (Ukraine). In China and India, large populations are on the move due to rapid urbanization and economic development.

Migration to the United States, the City of Seattle, and King County

In 2021, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that over 46 million people comprising over 14% of the U.S. population were born in another country. By 2022, over 17.6 million children under the age of 18 lived with at least one immigrant parent. The United States is home to the largest number of immigrants of any nation.⁹



Today, one in four residents in King County were born outside the United States.¹⁰ Immigrants and refugees moved to Seattle and King County from every continent and dozens of countries for a multiplicity of reasons. Some have migrated here by choice and others by necessity. Some immigrants have moved here in search of work, economic opportunity, education, or career advancement. Many immigrants transfer a portion of their income to family and community members in their countries of origin. Well over half of King County's immigrants migrated to permanently join their families who previously emigrated to the U.S. Some moved to escape famine, war, civil conflict, persecution, gang violence, or large-scale human rights violations. Still others moved to our region in response to natural disasters such as earthquakes and climate change driven disasters including floods and drought.¹¹ A significant number of foreign-born King County residents are here temporarily as "guest" students and workers – officially considered "non-immigrants" and authorized to live in King County for a fixed period. The very large majority of King County's immigrants have received official "authorization" by the federal government to reside in the U.S. and nearly half of our State's immigrants have become U.S. citizens.

Origins and Evolution of Immigration in Seattle and King County

This section of our report provides an overview of the origins and evolution of past immigration patterns in our region and then focuses on the recent and current state of immigration in our region.

Early European Migration to Washington State

King County was initially part of the Oregon Territory and was officially established by White European and American settlers in 1852 on the land of several indigenous tribes "granted" to them by Federal law, including the lands of the Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, and Duwamish peoples. Indigenous and immigrant labor played a crucial role in our regional economy dating back to Puget Sound's colonial past.^{12,13} Early European settlers were at first dependent on the knowledge and skills of the people whose land they occupied, but they eventually forcibly relocated and removed the Duwamish people by first segregating them into the southern areas of Seattle followed by years of forced displacement.¹⁴

Whites from the upper Midwest and from Northern and Western Europe settled in growing numbers in Washington State. Initially, the top six countries of origin of these European settlers included Germany, England, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, and Scotland. Many were farmers who turned open prairie into farmland. Others were laborers, working in the coal and copper mines or on the transcontinental railroads. White Europeans were allowed (by law) exclusive access to generous federal land grants a move that provided some with initial access to federally supported capital accumulation, land ownership, and political power in Seattle and King County. The City of Seattle was incorporated in 1869, with nearly 1,000 total residents, including 33 Chinese. By 1876, King County was home to about 200 Chinese residents. Japanese immigrants started arriving in the 1890s. Early migrant workers also included Filipinos and Japanese, along with increasing numbers of European laborers. Starting in the 1890s, the countries of origin of White European immigrants changed as large numbers of southern and eastern Europeans emigrated. The population of our region would remain 98 percent White until World War II.^{15,16}



Early Immigrants from China, Japan, and the Philippines

The first period of large-scale Chinese immigration began with the California Gold Rush and ended with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882: the first significant law created to prevent members of a specific national group from immigrating to the United States. The law suspended Chinese immigration to the United States for 10 years denying Chinese persons eligibility for naturalization.^{17, 18}

Large-scale Japanese immigration to the mainland U.S. from Hawaii and Japan began in the 1890s and continued until 1924.¹⁹ As the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 cut off the supply of Chinese workers to the U.S. west coast, Japanese immigrant workers filled a significant portion of the ensuing labor shortages in vital west coast industries. Large-scale Japanese immigration to the mainland U.S. from Hawaii and Japan began in the 1890s and continued until 1924.²⁰ According to the 1900 U.S. Census, 24,326 Japanese were living in America, primarily on the West Coast. By 1910, the total population of Japanese residents in America had grown to 72,157. The Immigration Act of 1924 (aka the Japanese Exclusion Act and the National Origins Act) virtually ended the immigration of Asians to the United States and severely restricted the immigration of Jews and Catholics from Southern and Eastern Europe²¹ *effectively reducing the U.S. immigrant population for the next four decades from 15% to only 4.7% in 1970, two-thirds of whom emigrated from Britain, Germany, and Ireland.*

Beyond restricting Asian immigration, during World War II, over 125,000 persons of Japanese ancestry — by order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt — were forcibly relocated and incarcerated in 75 identified incarceration sites. Two-thirds of these were American citizens. At the time, over 16,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans lived in Washington state: 9,600 in King County and 7,000 in Seattle. A total of 12,892 persons of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated with the full support of the Seattle Mayor and the Governor of Washington.²²

Migration from the Philippines to the United States began in the late 19th century and was driven in large part by the political, military, and educational ties between the two countries, resulting from the decades-long period of U.S. colonization. Although the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924 severely curtailed immigration of Chinese and Japanese to the United States, it did not affect Filipinos in the same manner because the Philippines was a territory of the United States. Filipinos were designated the unique status of being "foreign nationals," rather than "aliens" and were not required to carry a passport and could enter the country without legal restrictions. Filipinos soon became the fastest growing Asian population in Washington state, filling the labor shortages created by the barring of Chinese and Japanese in the regional workforce, working on railroads, in canneries, and on farms. The pace of Filipino migration escalated towards the end of the 20th century.^{23, 24}

Mexico and The United States: War, Land, Labor, and Migration

For most of the 16th and 17th centuries, Mexico, first as a colony of Spain and later as an independent nation, established and maintained its "northern territories" on lands which included areas that were to later become the states of Texas, Arizona, California, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. During this period, Mexican cowboys, workers, farmers, and shopkeepers lived and worked in these Northern territories. The U.S.-Mexican War of 1848 resulted in the forcible acquisition of these territories by the United States - a move that ended Mexican control and temporarily curbed the northern movement of Mexicans to these regions. By the 1860s, as U.S. residents moved in increasing numbers into these regions, the rapid growth of farming, ranching, and railroad construction created an ongoing need for Mexican agricultural laborers and rail workers to fill unmet workforce needs that could not be met by new arrivals.



During the 19th century, while immigrants from Central and South America did not settle permanently in Washington in large numbers, Mexican immigrants did move to our state to work as miners, ranchers, fur trappers, and as mule-packing commercial transportation workers. The agricultural development of Washington influenced many Mexicans to settle in the state during a time when their labor was in high demand. The demand for agricultural labor in the state and the subsequent internment of Japanese Americans during World War II in areas such as the Yakima Valley created a labor crisis in the agricultural regions of the state.

For decades, American farmers and ranchers relied heavily on Mexican labor to fill its growing needs until the Great Depression of the 1930s, when once again U.S. immigration policy reversed course as our nation deported Mexican workers in large numbers and severely restricted their return until World War II when severe shortages of U.S. agricultural workers again necessitated their large-scale recruitment and northward movement. The eventual policy solution was to legalize the contracting of Mexican labor through the Bracero program. The Bracero program authorized the contracting of Mexican workers in agriculture and later in the railroad industry from 1942-1947 in Washington state though it lasted from 1942-1964 nationally.²⁵ During this 20-year period, over 4.8 million “Braceros” legally entered the United States to work while at the same time large numbers of Mexicans were recruited by employers to fill ongoing labor shortages without the legal authorization of the U.S. government. Mexican immigration increased during the 1990s in communities of the Yakima Valley and Eastern Washington, with others moving to King County. Today, roughly one in five Washington residents born outside the U.S. emigrated from Mexico.²⁶

Slavery: The Forced Relocation of African People to the Americas

During most of the 17th and 18th centuries, slavery was the law in the 13 colonies. The forced relocation of captives for enslavement was provided for in the U.S. Constitution and continued to take place on a large scale. With the end of the Civil War, the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution ended the institution of legal slavery in America. In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified, which guaranteed all males the right to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Within a few years, every Southern state legislature included African American members, and 11 African Americans won election to the U.S. Congress by 1875. Under reconstruction African Americans actively participated in the political process, acquired the land of former owners, played a key role in a range of skilled professions, and used public accommodations. With the end of reconstruction, many of the worst aspects of the slave system returned to the former Confederacy as statutes backed by subsequent Federal court decisions rescinded African American voting and invalidated a range of civil rights, ushering in the long era of segregation.²⁷

African American “Internal” Migration to Seattle and King County (1910s-1970s)

In the 1870s, African American families began moving North and West from Southern states in increasing numbers. In the 1890s, the number of African Americans moving to the Northeast and the Midwest was double that of the previous decade. Between the 1910s and 1970s, 6 million Black people moved from the American South to Northern, Midwestern, and Western states as part of the “Great Migration”. As African Americans moved out of the Southeast states, job availability and housing segregation caused them to gravitate to central cities, including Seattle’s central district. The African American population in Seattle



increased from 400 people in 1900 to 2,300 in 1910, and 2,900 in 1920. African Americans began to move to the Northwest in substantial numbers after 1940.²⁸

Most of the Black workers in West Coast production plants came from rural areas of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Arkansas. By war's end, 45,000 Black workers and their families had migrated to the Pacific Northwest.²⁹ Seattle's African American population increased dramatically between 1940 and 1960, making the community the city's largest minority group. As Black residents moved north and west during and after World War II in search of employment, their numbers overtook those of Asian groups, which together historically had formed Seattle's largest minority population. By 1970, Black people comprised three of every four (75%) Central District residents and by 1980, 10% of Seattle residents. Today, the percentage of Black Seattleites is at its lowest point in 50 years. In 1970, the Central District neighborhood was nearly 75% Black. Today, after decades of gentrification, it is closer to 15%.³⁰

Persistent Racial Discrimination in Seattle and King County

Most of the City of Seattle's people of color – whether US-born or born outside the U.S –experienced various forms of structural racial discrimination including redlining, gentrification, geographic segregation, employment discrimination, and housing discrimination. Historically, redlining in the City of Seattle limited where people of color could settle, and is why the Central Area neighborhood became home to African Americans. Federal, state, and local public policies drove and shaped the stratification of US-born people of color into specific occupations, schools, and neighborhoods in Seattle and King County, reinforcing the social structures that restricted career opportunities and health and wealth outcomes – a cross-generational legacy that resulted in the deep and persistent structural inequities that this report addresses. In recent years, while King County became increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, much of this diversity is concentrated in South Seattle and Southwest King County. The percentage of White residents in King County as a whole decreased between 2000 and 2018 compared to Seattle in which the proportion of White residents increased.

Gentrification is the outcome of decades of segregation, redlining, and urban renewal policies that exploited the large gap between existing and potential property values, which in turn encourages an influx of wealthier residents. Young professionals and more affluent people move back into the urban core, often into neighborhoods that have historically been home to people of color; this new wealth quickly changes the look and feel of neighborhoods, increases the cost of living, and displaces the original residents.

The Nationality Act of 1952: The City of Seattle and King County Opens to the World

Until the 1960s, the very large majority of immigrants in the United States emigrated from White, European countries by design to limit the number of Africans, Asians, Pacific-Islanders, and Latin-Americans.

In 1952, two years after the Civil Rights Act of 1954, the passage of a new Immigration and Nationality Act opened a new era of immigrant integration that would lead to the transformation of the racial and ethnic composition of America.



Under the new Act, Chinese immigration was finally put on an equal basis with all other countries as two categories of Chinese immigrants were allowed to enter the U.S. The first consisted of well-educated Chinese. The second were those who escaped political instability, repression, or economic hardship.³¹ The number of immigrants from China residing in the United States nearly doubled from 1980 to 1990 and doubled again by 2000. *The 1965 law also lifted tight restrictions on other immigrant groups and allowed much broader immigration attracting in subsequent decades a diverse and large population of newcomers from Mexico, the Philippines, India, Vietnam, and Korea. East Africans have also been a significant part of migration to the U.S. since 1965.*³²

Prior to the passage of the 1965 Nationality Act, migration to the United States from Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa remained low. The new law repealed nationality quotas leading to a substantial increase in the number of immigrants from developing countries, particularly from Africa and Asia. This act also provided a separate category for refugees and provided greater opportunity for family reunification. As a result, African migration grew slowly in the late 1960s through the 1970s, but steadily increased through the 1980s and 1990s and rapidly accelerated in the 2000s.

Current Demographic and Social Profile of Immigrant and Refugee Groups in Our Region

Through the dynamic process of immigrant integration, our region has redefined traditional notions of diversity and equity and is transforming how the genuine differences between groups are organized in our economy, politics, institutions, and everyday life from our neighborhoods to our workplaces.

This section of our report provides a profile of today's immigrant and refugee communities in our region. Government statistics designate immigrant and refugee individuals into different categories based in their country of birth, race, group, and ethnicity. While the answers to these questions are useful in providing a baseline understanding of the scope size and pace of immigrant integration, data alone cannot capture the myriad ways that immigrant integration is reshaping and transforming Washington State, King County, and the City of Seattle.

Population Growth and Residency of Foreign-Born Residents

In the United States there are 387 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) - geographical regions with a relatively high population density at its core and close economic ties across its cities and towns. *The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue MSA ranks as the 14th largest in the number of its residents who were born outside the United States.*³³



**EXHIBIT 1 Foreign and US-Born Population
(Washington, King County, and Seattle, 2021)³⁴**

Location	Total	US-Born	Foreign-Born	% Foreign-Born
WA State	7,617,364	6,500,835	1,116,529	15%
King County	2,240,876	1,699,483	541,393	24%
King County (Minus - Seattle)	1,514,822	1,113,531	401,291	26%
Seattle	726,054	585,952	140,102	19%

As King County's population has boomed in recent years, much of the increase has been due to the increase of residents born in another country. In 2000, 15.4% of King County residents were born in another country growing to 23.5% in 2018 and 24% by 2022. Between 2000 and 2018, King County's total population increased by around 496,000 residents including about 255,000 residents born outside the U.S., accounting for 52% of the total population growth.³⁵ In 2022 alone, King County welcomed 23,346 new residents born outside the United States, the highest level since 2000.

Where Do Our Region's Immigrants and Refugees Live?

Over 15% of our state's population was born outside the U.S. comprising 1,116,529 individuals, nearly half of whom (541,393) live in King County. Within King County, nearly 75% of its foreign-born residents live in its 10 largest cities as depicted in Exhibit Two below. It is important for City and County policymakers to note that a significant majority of immigrants and refugees in King County, 74%, reside in cities, towns, and unincorporated areas outside of the City of Seattle. In Seattle, over 19% of the city's residents were born outside the U.S., (over 140,102 people) while in the rest of King County, the foreign-born comprise over (26% of the area's residents, or 401,291 people).³⁶ The chart below demonstrates the diversity of where immigrant families live in King County and the wide range of incomes they earn.



EXHIBIT 2 Population and Median Income of U.S. and Foreign-Born Residents in King County's Ten Largest Cities (Rounded, 2021)³⁷

Rank	City	Total Population	Foreign-Born	% of Total Population	Median Income
1	Seattle	726,000	140,000	19%	\$105,391
2	Bellevue	149,000	60,000	40%	\$140,052
3	Kent	135,000	43,000	32%	\$79,781
4	Renton	105,000	30,000	29%	\$84,374
5	Federal Way	100,000	26,000	26%	\$72,969
6	Kirkland	92,000	22,000	24%	\$121,998
7	Redmond	72,000	31,000	43%	\$147,006
8	Sammamish	67,000	22,000	33%	\$195,648
9	Shoreline	58,000	13,000	22%	\$95,623
10	Burien	52,000	13,000	25%	\$79,797

Among the 10 largest cities in King County, Sammamish, Redmond, and Bellevue are the wealthiest. In these three cities, residents born outside the U.S. comprise a very high percentage of the local population and earn incomes that far exceed their foreign-born counterparts in other cities in the region. This reflects their high concentration in professional-technical jobs primarily but not exclusively in the tech sector.

By contrast, in the three cities with the lowest median family incomes and highest poverty rates, foreign-born residents in Kent, Renton, and Federal Way are more concentrated in a wide range of low- and middle-wage jobs throughout the region. In Washington State, 25% of foreign-born residents were low-income, meaning that their family's income was below 200 percent of the federal official poverty level (a partial and unreliable measure of economic instability in our region with its high living costs).

EXHIBIT 3 Top Seven Countries/Regions of Birth: Washington's Foreign-Born

City	Population	Percentage of Total Foreign-Born (Rounded)
Mexico	228,246	20%
China	112,961	10%
India	109,734	10%
Philippines	73,307	6%
Vietnam	64,171	6%
Eastern African Nations	46,173	4%
Korea	45,743	4%

Immigrant Groups: Latin American, Asian, and African Immigrants (2000-2020)

During the past two decades, nearly every category of immigrants grew, particularly from Asia and Latin America (South America, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean) and from East African countries. Over 70% of Washingtonians who moved here from outside the U.S. were born in an Asian country: 517,510 (45.3%); or in a Latin American country: 307,854 (26.9%). In King County, the largest countries of origin are China, including Taiwan and Hong Kong, (80,165); India (67,842); and Mexico (52,327).³⁸ Asian immigrants accounted for 18% of the population of King County in 2018, up significantly from 10.8% in 2000.³⁹

In 2020, the highest percentages of Latino residents lived in Central Washington with Adams (69.2%), Franklin (55.9%), and Yakima (51.9%) counties with the highest numbers. Although representing lower shares of the total county population, significant numbers of persons of Latino origin lived in Western Washington's largest metropolitan counties, notably King (233,923), Pierce (100,817), and Snohomish (90,576) counties. Latin American immigrants grew to 9.8% in King County in 2018, up from 5.5% in 2000.⁴⁰

A total of 72,573 Washington residents emigrated from an African nation with 6,700 from a Northern African Nation. The Seattle Metro Area is home to over 53,000 residents who emigrated from a Sub-Saharan African nation including Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Congo, and Kenya.⁴¹



City of Seattle Close-Up: Top Ten Home Countries of Seattle Residents ⁴²

Between 2000 and 2020, Seattle's immigrant population grew 47% compared to 30% for the national population. The top ten home countries of Seattle's foreign-born residents are detailed below:

EXHIBIT 4 Top Ten Countries of Origin: Seattle's Foreign-Born Residents ⁴³

Country of Origin	Percentage of Total Foreign-Born	Country of Origin	Percentage of Total Foreign-Born
China	15.3%	Canada	5.3%
India	9.0%	Ethiopia	4.5%
Vietnam	7.3%	South Korea	4.5%
Mexico	6.7%	Taiwan	4.4%
Philippines	6.3%	Japan	2.3%

Asian Immigrant Groups

Compared to all the 384 Metropolitan Areas in the U.S., our region is home to a very large concentration of immigrants (and non-immigrant temporary visa holders) from an Asian country.

EXHIBIT 5 Top Five Foreign-Born Immigrant Groups by Home County in Metropolitan Seattle

Nation of Origin	Number of Residents	Seattle Metro Region Ranking Compared to All of the Metropolitan Regions in the U.S.
China	136,000	4th
India	71,400	5th
Philippines	53,000	10th
Vietnam	48,000	6th
Korea	39,000	4th



The Migration Policy Institute has documented that large-scale Indian immigration to the United States is relatively recent, following the move by Congress in 1965 to abolish national-origin quotas that largely limited immigration to Europeans. The pace of arrivals from India and China and other non-European countries in subsequent decades has been rapid. Today, Indians represent the second largest U.S. immigrant group, after Mexicans and ahead of Chinese and Filipinos. The 2.7 million Indian immigrants living in the United States as of 2021 made up 6 percent of the total foreign-born population, and their numbers continue to grow. The Metropolitan Seattle region is home to the 5th largest U.S. County population of its residents born in India.

People from China make up one of the largest immigrant groups in the United States. Despite the recent declines, Chinese immigrants still represent the third largest origin group among U.S. immigrants (after those from Mexico and India), accounting for 5 percent of the 45.3 million immigrants in the United States as of 2021. The Metropolitan Seattle region is home to the 6th largest U.S. County population of its residents born in China. China and India are the main source of foreign students enrolled in U.S. higher education, and its nationals received the first and second largest number of employer-sponsored H-1B temporary visas in fiscal year 2021. Foreign nationals who receive a visa to travel to the United States temporarily for a specific purpose, such as tourists, international students, temporary workers, and short-term business travelers are broadly classified as non-immigrant visa holders.

African Immigrant Groups

Washington State is home to 71,700 immigrants from Africa. King County is home to the largest population of African immigrants 45,300 of all other counties in the United States, 24,800 of whom hail from three nations - Ethiopia, Somalia, and Eritrea.

EXHIBIT 6 Top Three African Immigrant Groups by Home Country in King County⁴⁴

Nation of Origin	Number of Residents	King County Ranking Compared to All Counties in the U.S.
Ethiopia	13,100	3rd
Somalia	8,000	3rd
Eritrea	3,700	1st



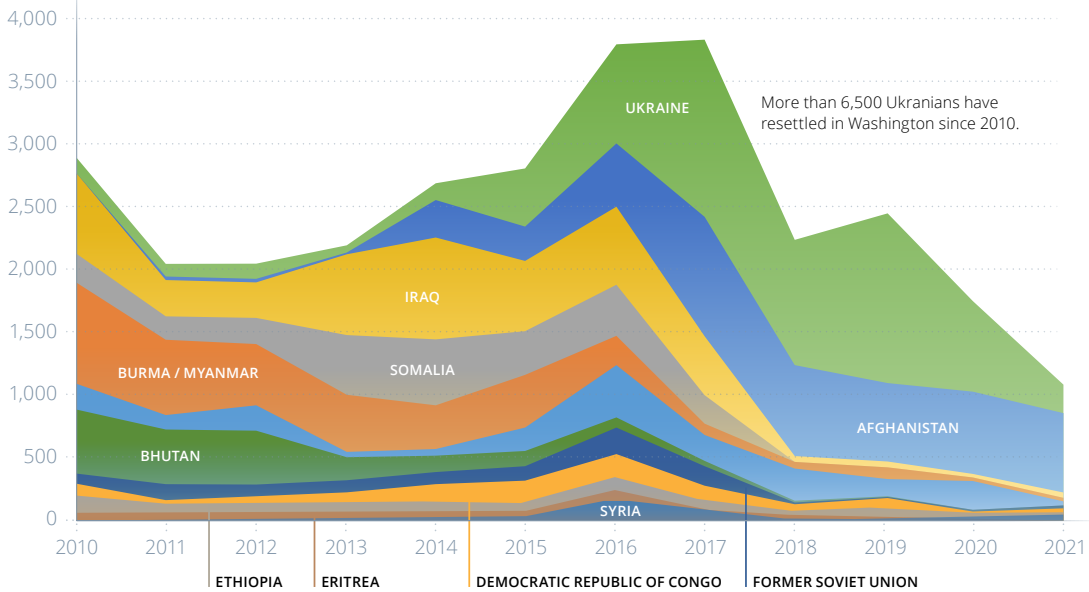
Refugee Resettlement in Washington State

According to the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, over the last decade, more than 30,000 refugees from over 70 countries have resettled in Washington state through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. Over 6,500 Ukrainians who have resettled in our local communities since 2010, including 121 newly arrived individuals since October 2021.

EXHIBIT 7 Washington State Refugee Arrivals by Country of Origin, Federal 2010-2012

Washington welcomes more than 30 different nationalities annually.

Washington State Refugee Arrivals by Country of Origin, Federal Fiscal Year, 2010-2021



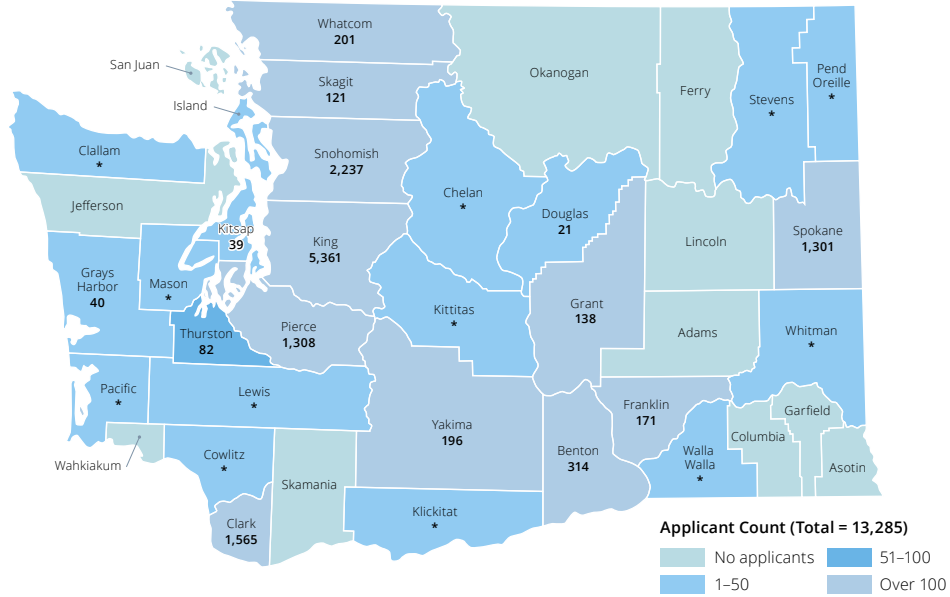
Source: Data from the Department of State, Refugee Processing Center. www.wrapsnet.org

About half of Washington's refugees resettled in King County, according to a 2021 report from the state Department of Social and Health Services. Refugees also tended to reside in Clark (11%), Pierce (10%), Snohomish (9%), Spokane (7%) and Benton-Franklin (3%) counties. Between October 2022 and August 2023, 5,361 of all newly arrived refugees and humanitarian immigrant applicants settled in King County, 40% of a total of 13,285 state-wide.⁴⁵ This includes 7,884 refugees from the Ukraine and 2,106 from Afghanistan.⁴⁶ The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue area is now the third largest metropolitan region that is home to Ukrainians in the United States.



EXHIBIT 8 Newly Arrived Refugee and Humanitarian Immigrant Applicants

Newly Arrived Refugee and Humanitarian Immigrant Applicants for DSHS Services
by Residential County in Washington State: October 2022 – August 2023



Source: Barcode Data Provided by DSHS/ESA/OAS/EMAPS – September 2023

When necessary, values less than 10 (but greater than zero) are not displayed in order to help protect client confidentiality. These counties are denoted with an asterisk ().

State of Emergency in Tukwila as Asylum Seekers Move to King County

In the Fall of 2023, in tandem with a growing national trend of asylum seekers arriving in the United States, Riverton Park United Methodist Church (RPUMC) became the center of a regional humanitarian crisis. Initially, RPUMC offered support to a small group of asylum seekers. As the number of asylum seekers at the church grew from 50 to over 400, the city of Tukwila declared a state of emergency on October 6, 2023. The new arrivals are part of the estimated 12,000 asylum seeking migrants in our state. About half come from Venezuela with most others arriving from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Cameroon.

The rapid increase in the number of asylum seekers who recently crossed the Southern U.S. border in a short time span quickly outgrew the community's capacity to cope with the demand for shelter and essential services, reflecting the challenges faced by cities across the nation grappling with asylum seekers. As of late-February 2024, the encampment at the church facilities was housing nearly 400 asylum seekers.

Many of these newcomers do not qualify for federal public benefits, don't have access to immediate state benefits and they don't have immediate access to work authorization, which is resulting in challenges in accessing shelter and meeting basic needs for the migrant families. Local jurisdictions are facing many hurdles in assisting asylum seekers including limited city resources, and federal policy restrictions that hinder asylum seekers from accessing basic benefits. These challenges compound, making it difficult for local



communities to provide effective support. A task Force was created with representatives of Congressional Offices, King County, and the Cities of Tukwila and Seattle and co-chaired by the Directors of Seattle’s Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) and Washington’s Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA).

OIRA has focused on regional coordination, wrap-around services, and legislative advocacy. During the 2024 Washington State Legislature session, Mayor Bruce Harrell and OIRA advocated for funding to support migrant families and asylum seekers. Successful advocacy efforts have resulted in over \$32 million in aid being approved for asylum seekers including more than \$25 million for the state’s Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA); \$5 million for King County; and \$2.5 million for the city of Tukwila.

The Asylum Process

While the right to apply for asylum is internationally recognized, the process is complex and challenging. Asylum-seekers, most having crossed the U.S.-Mexico border, often face detention, and must navigate a convoluted application process in English. Asylum seekers are not granted refugee status until their claims are evaluated and approved. The process of seeking asylum involves providing evidence and undergoing assessments to determine if they meet the criteria for refugee status under international and national laws. Until their claims are validated through this process, they are considered asylum seekers rather than recognized refugees. The recent extension of Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for Venezuelan asylum-seekers stands as a rare exception, providing a temporary respite but not a comprehensive solution. While TPS allows asylum-seekers to work and protects them from deportation, it does not automatically provide for basic needs like housing, nutrition, and healthcare.

The longer-term challenge is the need to protect the legal constitutional rights of asylum seekers as they navigate the complexities of the asylum process and to determine what level of support services and assistance our State and local governments can provide.

EXHIBIT 9 Foreign-Born Naturalized Citizens and Non-Citizens, Washington State, 2022

Nation of Origin	Number of Residents
Naturalized citizens	560,282
Non-citizens	583,029
Total Foreign-born Washington State	1,143,311



Immigrant Integration and the Children of Foreign-Born Parents in Washington

The children of immigrants are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. child population, representing 24% of all U.S. children. The Migration Policy Institute reports that in Washington state, 68.9% of children under the age of 18 (1,100,113) have US-born parents and 31.1% (496,698) have at least one foreign-born parent. Of the children with at least one foreign-born parent, 437,560 are US-born and 59,138 were born outside the U.S. The children of immigrant parents born in the U.S. have birth-right citizenship with many having at least one parent who is a non-citizen.⁴⁷

EXHIBIT 10 Children of Immigrant Parents in Washington State
(Migration Policy Institute, 2022)

Children of Foreign-Born	Population	Percentage
Total Number of Children Under 18	1,596,811	100%
Have US-Born Parents	1,100,113	68.9%
Have One or More Foreign-Born Parents	496,698	31.1%
Have US-Born Child	437,560	27.4%
Have Foreign-Born Child	59,138	3.7%

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Recipients of the DACA program have grown up in America, formed deep ties in their communities, and made significant footholds in a range of professional occupations and in middle-wage jobs. As of March 2023, there are 579,000 active DACA recipients nation-wide, and over 16,000 call Washington State home.⁴⁸ Since the federal government is no longer processing new DACA applications – even for those eligible – increasing numbers of young adults who are the children of Mexican immigrants are now entering the informal labor market and workforce as their pathway to regular employment is blocked by federal inaction.

Foreign-Born Residents in Washington State and King County Without Official Authorization

Based on 2019 data from the US Census Bureau, 246,00 unauthorized immigrants lived in Washington state with 93,000 residing in King County.⁴⁹ Over 60% of Washington’s immigrants who do not have an official immigration status are long-time residents who have lived in the state for 10 years or more.⁵⁰

According to Pew Research Center research, a rising share of U.S. unauthorized immigrants arrived in the country legally (with authorization) but overstayed their visas.⁵¹ The top countries of birth of unauthorized immigrants includes Mexico, India, China/Hong Kong, the Philippines, and El Salvador. Washington State estimates there are a total of 166,00 unauthorized workers in the state labor force.



Pathways to Permanent Residency and Citizenship for Unauthorized Residents

The process of obtaining official authorization by applying for legal permanent residency, (i.e. green cards) is fraught with obstacles for most unauthorized immigrants. Barriers include the eligibility rules requiring family ties or connections with employers needed to apply for temporary guest worker status. The limited number of green card approvals issued creates waits of many years with backlogs of pending applications.

Economic Contributions of Unauthorized Immigrants

Over 60% of Washington State's immigrants who do not have an official immigration status are long-time residents who have lived in the state for 10 years or more. As long-time residents of our communities, unauthorized workers have paid taxes yet remain with little access to public benefits. Unauthorized immigrants are important contributors to our State economy and workforce and paid an estimated \$678.7 million in federal taxes and \$367.9 million in state and local taxes in 2018. They demonstrate high levels of entrepreneurship, operate a range of small businesses, work as day laborers, and perform informal labor for cash wages in several occupations as independent contractors.

Labor Standards for Unauthorized Immigrants

The City of Seattle has legislated a set of labor standard ordinances (workers rights laws) that include all workers regardless of their immigration status. These include minimum wage, paid sick time, and wage-theft protections.

Law Enforcement and Immigration in Washington State

In May 2019, Washington lawmakers passed Senate Bill 5497 establishing a statewide policy to support immigrants and refugees. Included in the bill are the following provisions:

- Prohibits the local authorities from complying with voluntary immigration holds, especially those requested by the Federal government.
- Prohibits State authorities from giving Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal authorities nonpublic personal data about people.
- Prohibits immigration authorities from interviewing people within their custody.
- Prohibits local authorities from asking about peoples' immigration status or place of birth, with an exception for information relevant to a violation of state law or an investigation.



Employment of Unauthorized Immigrants in the Workforce in Washington State and King County (Top Industries)

Based on 2019 data, the Migration Policy Institute reported that in Washington there were an estimated 166,000 unauthorized immigrant workers in the state labor force.⁵²

EXHIBIT 11
Top Five Countries of Birth of Immigrants Without Authorization
 (King County, 2018, Migration Policy Institute)

Country of Origin
Mexico
India
China/Hong Kong
Philippines
El Salvador

EXHIBIT 12
Top Industries of Employment of Immigrants Without Authorization
 (Washington State, Migration Policy Institute)

Industry of Employment
Agriculture
Accommodation and Food Services, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, Waste Mgmt. Services
Construction
Retail Trade

English Proficiency

The level of English proficiency is a determining factor in the type of jobs available to immigrant and refugee job seekers. Those who speak English less than very well cannot compete in the labor market on an even-footing, particularly in quality, middle-wage jobs that have a wide range of educational requirements – including on the job training, apprenticeship training, and vocational school training. Other middle-wage jobs require an associate degree and, in a few cases, a bachelor’s. Nearly all middle-wage jobs also require a level of English proficiency adequate to the job duties, including proficiency in the technical vocabulary of specific jobs. Even those middle-wage occupations that have few educational requirements such as customer service require significant levels of English proficiency.

In Washington State, of residents five years of age and older born outside the U.S., over 80% spoke a language other than English with approximately over 58% speaking English “very well” and 42%, (over 466,000) foreign-born residents, speaking “less than very well”. In King County overall, over 80% spoke a language other than English with over 61% speaking English “very well” and 39% (206,861), speaking English “less than very well.”⁵³ In the City of Seattle, as of 2021 nearly a third of Seattle public school students spoke English less than very well. In total, 154 different languages are spoken in Seattle’s public schools with the top five being Somali, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Amharic, and Oromo.



Educational Disparities

In comparing educational attainment across Washington State, King County, and the City of Seattle, we found significant educational disparities in outcomes with a higher proportion of US-born students graduating with associate and bachelor’s degrees than their foreign-born counterparts. This explains – in part – the workforce-wide over-representation and concentration of immigrants and refugees in lower-wage, poorer-quality jobs.

When we compared the achievement rates of graduate and professional degree attainment between foreign-born and U.S.-born as depicted in Exhibit 14, we initially found that native-born residents at the master’s and professional levels had achieved their degrees at a lower rate than their foreign-born counterparts. **We concluded that the inclusion of non-immigrant guest workers and students in the Census Data contributes to a false impression that actual immigrants and refugees are doing better in terms of both educational attainment and income from salaries than is the reality.** This is due to the Census Bureau’s definition of “foreign-born”, which includes immigrants, refugees, and temporary and non-immigrant (H-1B) high-wage, high-degree attainment workers and international students with bachelor’s degrees.^{56 57}

EXHIBIT 13 U.S.-Born and Foreign-Born Levels of Educational Attainment (King County and Seattle), 2021 ^{54 55}

Level of Attainment	King County		City of Seattle	
	U.S.-Born	Foreign-Born	U.S.-Born	Foreign-Born
High School or Equivalency	14.7%	15.1%	9.1%	11.8%
Associate Degrees or Some College	27.7%	17.8%	21.3%	15.3%
Bachelor’s Degrees	34.6%	25.5%	40.3%	26.6%
Graduate and Professional Degrees	20%	7.9%	27.3%	3.3%

Our research indicates there are close to 13,000 temporary international college students residing in King County (a large portion of whom have bachelor’s degrees) and over 65,000 guest (H1-B) workers with 60% estimated to hold graduate degrees.⁵⁸ **This strongly indicates that the actual rate of educational attainment for immigrants and refugees is lower than the government data suggests because of the inclusion of non-immigrant guest workers and students in the Census data.**

More research is needed to develop a more accurate picture of the actual educational attainment levels of immigrants and refugees who are residents in King County.



Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity

- About 45% of White adults and 55% of Asian or Pacific Islander adults in the Seattle metro area have a bachelor's degree or higher. In contrast, just 14% of immigrant Latino adults, 29% of U.S.-born Latino adults, and 25% of Black adults in the Seattle region have a bachelor's degree.⁵⁹
- White workers in Seattle with no high school diploma earn the same median hourly wage as Black workers with an associate degree (\$20 per hour) and only one dollar less than Latino workers with an associate degree (\$21 per hour).
- White workers earn more than people of color across educational cohorts, except among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, where Asian or Pacific Islander workers have the highest median wage.⁶⁰
- White and Asian residents of King County hold college degrees at rates of 59.2% and 67.2% respectively, while only 28.5% of Black and 30.7% of Latino residents hold a college degree.



PART TWO:

Our Regional Economy and Workforce

Part Two of the report provides an analysis of our regional economy, the occupational structure of our workforce, summarizes regional labor market dynamics and outlook, and profiles immigrant and refugee workers and professionals in the workforce and the extent to which they are represented in a range of sectors and occupations.

The vibrancy and growth of our regional economy and the great wealth it produces are inextricably linked to immigrant integration as the flow and movement of capital in and out our region cannot be separated from the movement of people. Immigration remains a major and essential component of economic growth and development across all sectors in our region.

Introduction: Our Regional Economy and Key Sectors

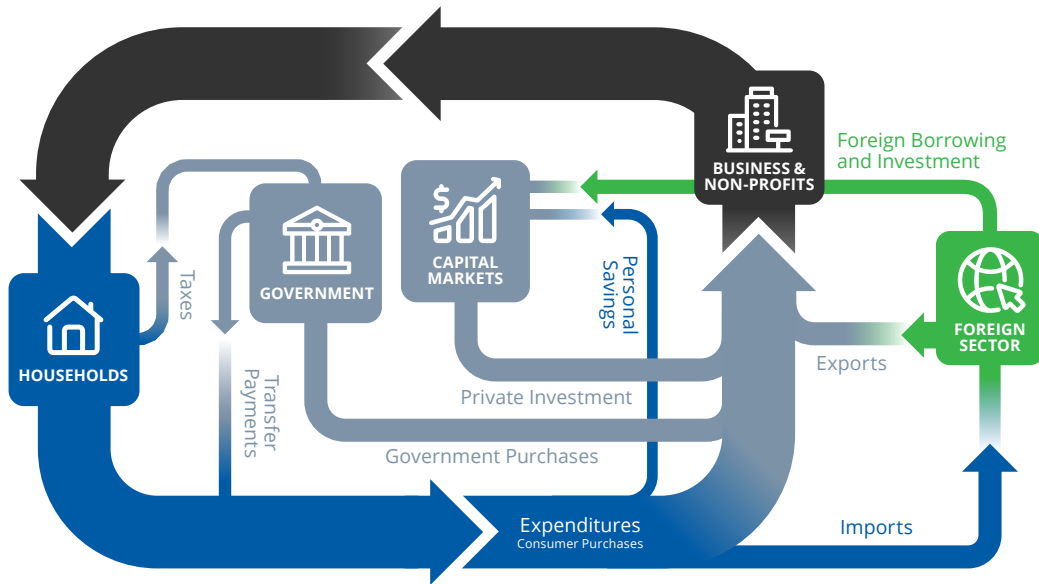
The foundation of a healthy, regional economy and ongoing economic development consists of several elements including the business climate, an educated and trained workforce, adequate public infrastructure, land supply, research and advancing technology, affordable housing, available capital, recreational and cultural opportunities, and a healthy natural environment.

Traditional economists distinguish activities that generate income flows from outside a region and those that depend on the flow of capital throughout and among various industry segments within it. In regional economies, the main sources of capital inflow come from outside investments, such as bank loans and direct investments, income earned from outside the region, and the selling of exports—goods and services—to both other parts of the U.S. and foreign markets.

This income is then distributed to workers and households, who then spend a share of these earnings on local goods and services, including groceries, gasoline, housing, transportation, and recreation-oriented activities. These businesses allocate a share of these earnings to their workers in the form of wages, a share of which is further spent within the local economy. A portion of household savings is channeled into local and regional banks, which lend a share of these deposits to local businesses for various uses. Governments depend on the velocity and volume of transactions within the region as an important source of tax revenue, which can be re-invested in various government spending obligations and critical public goods and services, such as infrastructure and local government operations.



EXHIBIT 14 The Flow of Capital in a Regional Economy



Our dynamic state-wide economy is driven by several sectors, including healthcare, life sciences and global health, manufacturing, aerospace, agriculture and food manufacturing, clean technology, information and communication technology, forest products, maritime, military and defense, and tourism. These high-wage sectors—all prominent in our regional economy—have seen robust wage growth in recent years.

The information-communications technology (ICT) and aerospace industries continue as major drivers of our regional economy, wealth creation, and rising levels of median income. Major firms such as Boeing, Microsoft, and Amazon are the most visible high-wage employers, supported by significant networks of subcontractors and contract agencies, and continue to provide a large supply of quality, high-wage jobs. Washington’s ICT sector intersects with many of the state’s other crucial industries such as maritime, clean technology, life sciences, and aerospace. Washington’s aerospace sector is becoming increasingly diversified with more than 1,300 companies working in composites, unpiloted aerial systems, electric propulsion, clean fuels, and commercial space exploration.⁶¹

Washington State is one of our nation’s top export hubs with over \$60 billion in exports annually. We rank among the top five state exporters in 16 industries, including first in aerospace products and parts, in timber and logs, in prepared seafood products, and in cement and concrete products. Our State is also America’s seventh largest exporter of agricultural products. Washington’s 15 million acres of farmland produce 300

crop commodities which are exported to markets all around the world. Washington's food manufacturing industry is the State's second-largest manufacturing industry after aerospace.⁶²

The construction sector, trade, transportation, logistics, financial and business services, and utilities are all vital components of our regional economy and infrastructure, supporting overall economic activity. In King County, public sector employers like the University of Washington, and the City of Seattle and King County governments also serve as major employers. The total economic impact of these industry sectors is often depicted as a job multiplier. For example, in 2019, the estimated jobs multiplier in the tech sector in Washington state was 3.7, meaning that every one job in the tech sector was associated with a total of 3.7 jobs across the economy, such as in restaurants, retail, and other businesses. By comparison, according to the Washington State Office of Financial Management, the aerospace sector is associated with a jobs multiplier in Washington State of 2.4, while ship and boat building (including naval shipyard operations) and crop production (including apple orchards) have multipliers of 3.2 and 1.5, respectively.⁶³

The Economic Contribution of "Non-Market" Essential Service Work

While multiplier effects serve as an important measure for economic developers, policymakers, and economists to consider, the actual economic and social value produced by non-market human and social sector workers and private sector service industries are less understood and recognized.⁶⁴ While these service sectors do not produce the high multiplier effects of job-creating industries such as information technology and aerospace, they nonetheless play a vital role in providing essential services that are crucial to the functioning of the economy, infrastructure, and success of high-profit, high-wage industries. During the COVID-19 crisis, the value of service occupations to our economy gained greater attention and appreciation from both the public and policymakers as workforce system stakeholders increasingly prioritized improving job quality and labor standards as higher priority outcomes of public investments.

Essential Occupations in Private Sector Service Industries

In March 2020, nearly 71% of all workers were declared by Governor Inslee as being essential occupations.⁶⁵ Included in this list were many private sector service occupations, all vital parts of our economy.

Examples of Service Occupations Declared Essential During the COVID Pandemic

- Retail Salespersons
- Information and Records Clerks
- Fast Food and Counter Workers
- Warehouse Workers
- General Office Workers/Clerks
- Motor Vehicle Operators
- Grocery Workers and Cashiers
- Construction Laborers
- Customer Service Representatives
- Building and Maintenance Workers
- Waiters and Waitresses

The Value of Essential Occupations in the Caring, Health, Social and Human Services Sectors

Another example of essential jobs is the family of occupations that provide public goods (vital services) of high social value but generally pay at the low end of the wage scale. A partial list includes teacher's aides, homecare and healthcare paraprofessionals, nursing assistants, childcare providers, early learning educators, and social, human, and community service workers.

Human service work is a type of caring labor – work that nurtures the well-being of others. Examples of human services organizations are those operating early childhood learning centers, special education programs, teen programs focused on behavioral health, job training and employment supports for job seekers, and supports for elders such as home healthcare. Human services workers also provide essential services to support the well-being and health of individuals, families and communities experiencing crises such as crime, domestic violence, homelessness, food insecurity, or environmental and natural disasters.

Labor Market Outlook

A Washington State Employment Security Department 2022 Economic Report issued in August of 2023 provides a comprehensive summary of our state-wide labor market and economy.⁶⁶ As this report documented, Washington's labor market continued to recover from the COVID-19 recession. In 2022, unemployment fell to near-historic lows. Job openings were at high levels, hiring was strong, and layoffs were at very low levels. Quit rates were also high as workers switched jobs. Most major sectors had topped their pre-pandemic employment levels by the end of the year.

Over the course of the pandemic, job growth was strongest in professional services, corporate offices, information services, warehousing, and private educational services. Lagging sectors included accommodations, public educational services, manufacturing (primarily due to cuts in aerospace staffing), arts, entertainment and recreation services, residential nursing facilities, and other services.

Urgently needed public investments in our regional infrastructure are boosting our economy and workforce due to Federal spending through the City of Seattle, King County, Port of Seattle, Sound Transit, and the Washington State Department of Transportation. These publicly funded agencies are in the process of



While Washington state continues to rank among the best states in the nation for both business and workers – large segments of King County residents including various immigrant groups are not reaping the benefits of our robust economy and labor market. As unemployment rates remain at record lows, a large segment of King County employed residents continue to lack sufficient income to meet the basic costs of living in our region.

spending about \$10.3 billion on construction projects over the next three years, significantly contributing to sustained job growth in quality jobs in the construction sector.

Reports in May of 2023 from the King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis indicate that the regional economy is generally doing well, albeit with some indicators of slowing. King County employment overall has recovered from the Covid recession and employment has continued to climb. Low levels of unemployment and projections of job growth seem to indicate that the economy of Washington State and King County is and will continue to be one of the healthiest and wealthiest in the United States. A recent U.S. News and World Report ranks Washington #2 overall in its 2023 Best States rankings.⁶⁷ WalletHub ranks Washington's economy best in the nation.⁶⁸ King County and Washington State economists agree that most sectors of our economy and workforce will continue to grow in the near-term, with continued growth in King County in 2023 and into 2024 and beyond.

Immigrants and Refugees in the Workforce: How Well Represented are Immigrants and Refugees in Various Industries, Sectors, and Occupations?

According to the most recent U.S. Census, foreign-born residents account for over 24% of the population and nearly 29% of the workforce in King County. Immigration is clearly an economic necessity in our regional economy.

We compared the number of US-born and foreign-born workers and professionals relative to each group's share of the overall adult working population. We found that there were some industry sectors in which foreign-born workers and professionals are over-represented, others in which they are under-represented, and others in which they are nearly equally represented.



Representation by the "Class" of Workers

U.S. Census Bureau tracks three broad, primary categories of workers. The "class of worker" category includes:

- Wage and salaried employees in the private sector (for-profit and non-profit)
- Public sector workers (government agencies and public institutions, i.e. colleges and universities)
- The self-employed (owners of incorporated and unincorporated businesses)

EXHIBIT 15 U.S. and Foreign-Born Workers by Class of Worker in King County⁶⁹ (2002)

Class of Workers	All Workers		U.S.-Born		Foreign-Born	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Private wage and salary workers	82.6%	1,014,739	81.5%	714,669	85.3%	299,918
Government and Public Sector workers	11.4%	140,049	12.8%	112,242	7.9%	27,777
Self-employed workers in own business ⁷⁰	5.8%	71,253	5.5%	48,229	6.6%	23,206

Representation of Foreign-Born Workers by Major Occupational Categories

We found that in King County, foreign-born workers and professionals are under-represented in public sector employment and over-represented in the private sector jobs. We then focused on how well-represented foreign-born workers and professionals are in jobs in five broad occupational categories tracked by the Census Bureau. Not surprisingly, we found that in King County, the foreign-born are overrepresented in three of these five broad occupational categories – service occupations and natural resources, construction and maintenance and production, and transportation and material moving occupations.

EXHIBIT 16 U.S. and Foreign-Born by Major Occupational Category, King County (2002) (MPI)

Occupational Category	Overall	U.S.-Born	Foreign-Born
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	675,674	493,691 (56%)	181,779 (52%)
Service Occupations	169,533	105,227 (12%)	64,344 (18%)
Sales and Office Occupations	211,302	168,364 (19%)	42,544 (12%)
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	63,882	42,968 (5%)	21,448 (6%)
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	108,108	66,644 (8%)	41,489 (12%)
Total	1,228,498	876,894	351,604



Over-Represented

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining
- Transportation, warehousing, and utilities
- Professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services
- Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services
- Information Technology
- Construction

Under-Represented

- Finance, insurance, and real estate and rental leasing
- Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance
- Public administration

Nearly-Equally Represented

- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade

Occupational Crowding: Sectors with the Highest Share of Foreign-Born (2019)⁷¹

- Crop production 56.9%
- Taxi and limousine service 49.9%
- Internet publishing, broadcasting, and web search portals 47.7%
- Services to buildings and dwellings 44.3%
- Nursing care facilities (skilled nursing facilities) 41.7%

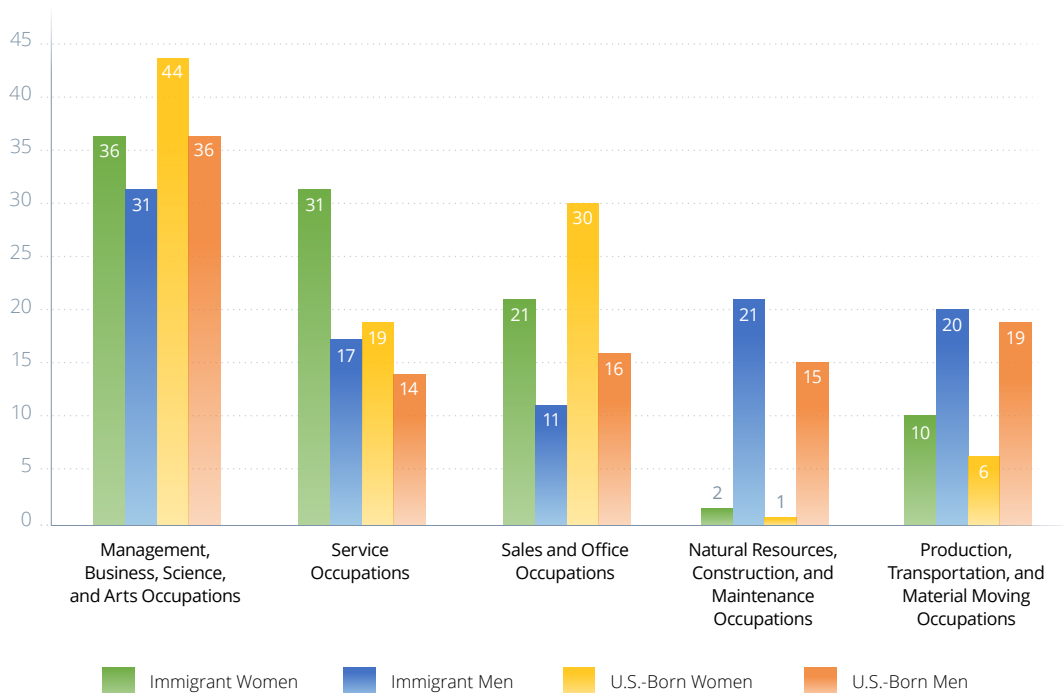
Occupational Crowding: Jobs with the Highest Share of Foreign-Born Workers (2019)⁷²

- Other agricultural workers 74.5%
- Maids and housekeeping cleaners 56.3%
- Packers and packagers 55.2%
- Software developers 54.4%
- Physical scientists, all other 39.0%



Representation of Immigrant Women in Major Occupational Groups (U.S.)⁷³

Women and girls made up slightly more than half of the 44.7 million immigrants residing in the United States in 2018. The female share of the foreign-born population is higher in the United States (52%) than it is globally, where women and girls account for about (48%) of all international migrants. Although immigrants ages 16 and older participated in the workforce at higher rates than native-born individuals (66% versus 62%), immigrant women had a slightly lower rate of workforce participation than their native-born counterparts (57% versus 59%).



As of 2018, there were more than 11.9 million workers who were immigrant women ages 16 and older, comprising 16% of all female workers and 8% of all U.S. civilian workers. Thirty-six percent of immigrant women were employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations (which includes education and higher skilled health-care occupations); followed by 31% employed in service occupations (such as hospitality). Immigrant women were as likely as US-born men to be employed in management, business, science, and related occupations but much less likely than U.S.-born women. At the same time, immigrant women were much more likely to be employed in service occupations than the US-born.⁷⁴



Comparison of Earnings Among Full-Time Workers in King County (U.S.-Born and Foreign-Born)

Our review of the immigrant and refugee workforce then turned to the earnings for full-time, year-round workers. The U.S. Census data we examined showed that in King County, among 874,887 full-time workers – both U.S.-born and foreign-born:

- 12.7% earned less than \$35,000
- 26.25% earned less than \$50,000
- 20.1% earned between \$50,000 and \$74,599
- 53.3% of the entire workforce earned over \$75,000

By Comparison, Among Foreign-Born Workers in King County:

- 15.9% earned less than \$35,000
- 24.4% earned less than \$50,000
- 15.9% earned between \$50,000 and \$74,599
- 53.2% earned over \$75,000

Snapshot of Earnings of Male and Female Full-Time Workers

One of the most striking findings in our review of the U.S. Census data was the continuing differences in earnings between male and female full-time workers as depicted in the chart below:

EXHIBIT 17 Earnings of King County Full-Time Workers by Gender, U.S.-Born and Foreign-Born			
Gender	All Full Time Workers	U.S.-Born	Foreign-Born
Male	\$ 90,281	\$ 88,679	\$ 96,649
Female	\$ 68,742	\$ 69,546	\$ 65,950



Scope of Foreign-Born Workers in Fulfilling Labor Demand Needs in Healthcare and IT Sectors

The Healthcare Sector

As millions of baby boomers become elderly, the U.S. healthcare system is facing unprecedented demand, adding jobs faster than any other segment of the economy. Many healthcare businesses and providers are struggling to find enough workers, and in some rural areas, the shortages are particularly acute.

In 2023, The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) published a report on immigrants in the healthcare workforce. MPI reported that nationally, nearly 2.8 million immigrants were employed as healthcare workers in 2021, accounting for more than 18% of the 15.2 million people in the United States in a healthcare occupation. This is slightly higher than immigrants’ share of the overall U.S. civilian workforce (17 %). Immigrant health professionals and workers are over-represented in some healthcare occupations such as physicians and surgeons (26 %) as well as home health aides (nearly 40%). Approximately 1.6 million immigrants were working as doctors, registered nurses, dentists, pharmacists, or dental hygienists. Part Four of this report discusses the problem of the under-employment and under-utilization of internationally trained medical doctors and healthcare professionals in Washington’s healthcare system. The chart below details the representation of foreign-born healthcare workers in Washington State across the major occupational groups in the sector.

EXHIBIT 18 Share of Foreign-Born: Healthcare Occupational Groups (Washington and U.S., 2021)

Location	Total Workforce	Healthcare Workforce	Practitioners & Technicians	Physicians & Surgeons	Registered Nurses	Support Workers	Home Aides	Personal Care Aides	Nursing Assistants
USA	17.2%	18.2%	15.7%	26.5%	16.0%	23.1%	39.8%	28.1%	21.4%
WA	19.1%	20.5%	18.4%	24.1%	19.9%	23.8%	18.0%	33.8%	22.7%

The MPI report pointed out that immigrants in the healthcare sector hold a variety of legal statuses; among them are naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents, temporary workers, and recipients of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programs. Female immigrants were more likely than US-born women to work in direct healthcare lower-wage occupations such as home health aides and nursing assistants. In contrast, immigrant men were more likely than their US-born counterparts to be physicians and surgeons, occupations that are well compensated. Compared to all immigrant workers, those employed in the healthcare field were more likely to speak English fluently, be naturalized citizens, and hold health insurance coverage.



The Tech Sector

A 2021 OneAmerica report, *Creating Quality Jobs for All in Washington's Tech Sector*, provided a detailed profile of foreign-born tech workers. Immigrants, refugees, and temporary guest workers are employed across a range of occupations in the tech sector and have varied pathways to U.S. citizenship. In 2019, an estimated 63% of all workers in the tech sector identified as “White alone,” followed by “Asian Indian Alone” (14%); and Chinese (8%) (excluding Taiwanese). Chinese and Indian tech workers have much higher shares of tech sector employment relative to each group’s share of the overall statewide population (2%). In 2019, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 51.1% of all software developers in Washington State were foreign-born. (This share includes naturalized U.S. citizens, immigrants, refugees, and H-1B workers.) Foreign-born workers represented an estimated 35.5% of all the workers in Washington State employed in computer and software occupations.⁷⁵

EXHIBIT 19 Employment Shares in the Tech Industry by Ethnicity, 2019, Washington State

Ethnicity	Industry Share	Population Share
White Alone	63%	75%
Asian Indian Alone	14%	2%
Chinese, Except Taiwanese, Alone	8%	2%
Two or More Races	4%	6%
Black or African American Alone	2%	4%
Korean Alone	2%	1%
Other Race, Alone	1%	5%
All Others	5%	6%
Total	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - Public Use Microdata Sample 2019 (2020).

Recruiting Highly Educated and Skilled Professionals from Other States and Internationally

King County and the City of Seattle remain one of the most educated regions in the United States. Added to this existing “pool” of “homegrown talent” are the significant numbers of professionals moving to Seattle because of the high demand for specific educational credentials, degrees, and skill sets. Continuing previous trends, King County imports educated workers from elsewhere in the U.S. and the world at a high rate. Essentially, King County is “importing” highly educated professionals with in-demand skills in very high numbers. *This structural trend of importing and recruiting temporary guest workers and out-of-state IT talent will continue so long as our systems of higher education cannot keep pace with the demand for labor particularly in the STEM professions.*⁷⁶



Temporary Guest Workers in the Tech Sector

Washington's leading technology companies actively recruit H-1B workers to fill its ranks of employees. While the H-1B program was initially designed for U.S. companies to be able to hire the best and the brightest from other countries to fill labor shortages, segments of the tech industry have come to use the system to hire entry-level positions from abroad without advertising or recruiting for such positions from within the U.S. labor pool. Nearly 70% of H-1B workers are hired in computer-related occupations by tech companies and various outsourcing firms who supply contractors to the tech industry. The workers are tied to their specific employer and must leave the country if they lose their job, giving employers a great deal of control over their pay, work hours, and working conditions. Another intended purpose of this program is to provide a pathway to citizenship by allowing these workers to apply for Legal Permanent Residency (LPR) through their employers.

In 2023, the most rigorous methodology and research available from U.S. Government sourced data places the estimated total number of H-1B workers nationally to be 583,420. The same analysis places the number of H-1B workers in King County to be 66,419.⁷⁷ This is an astounding finding indicating that over 11.37% of all the H-1B workers in the entire United States work in King County. Based on the most recent data on the size of the working population from the Federal Reserve Board of St. Louis, we can roughly estimate that the population of H-1B workers in the United States comprises less than 1% of the total working population in contrast to King County in which these workers comprise 5.13% of our total regional workforce of 1,294,460.

How Can We Lower the Reliance of the Tech Industry on Temporary Guest Workers?

How can Washington State increase the supply of “home grown” talent thus significantly increasing the numbers of qualified U.S.-born and immigrant candidates for the large number of positions currently being filled through the H-1B program?

We can lower the dependence of tech companies on Temporary Guest H1B workers by expanding pathways to tech jobs for residents of King County and the City of Seattle. This can be achieved by expanding and scaling existing best practice training models in our region with a proven track record of filling needed positions in the Tech sector. Such an initiative would require public-private partnerships and new funding – including employer contributions – to resource this effort.



PART THREE:

The Persistent Structures of Economic, Workforce, and Social Inequity

In Part Three, we review several ground-breaking studies to establish a baseline understanding of the forces in our region that reproduce constricted social mobility: insufficient incomes; racial, gender, geographic, and educational disparities; workforce stratification; underemployment; and wage inequities in the human and social service sectors.

“We cannot address the exploitation of migrant workers if we don’t also ensure that all workers can earn a decent wage...We cannot decouple immigration debates from debates about economic policy, labour standards, inequality, welfare, education and how we treat the sick and elderly. Any real debate on migration will therefore inevitably be a debate on the type of society we want to live in.”

Hein De Haas, How Migration Really Works

MOBILITY FOR WHOM? RACE, ORIGIN, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF OPPORTUNITY

The Economic Opportunity Institute, (EOI), a Seattle-based research organization, published two papers in 2014 and 2015: *Chutes and Ladders: How Economic Mobility is Changing in an Inequality Society* and *Uneven Ground, How Race and Origin Impact Economic Opportunity in Washington State*. These studies examined the inter-related issues of economic instability, income inequality, and disparities in outcomes for people of color and specific immigrant groups in our local and regional economy.⁷⁸

The EOI reports describes “economic mobility” as one way to measure a society’s level of success in ensuring equal opportunity for all its people. Economic mobility measures how likely a person is to move up or down the income ladder over time. If opportunity is broadly available to demographically different segments of the population, each would be expected to show similar degrees of mobility. However, if one or more groups consistently receive more opportunity, their mobility outcomes will differ markedly from those with less opportunity. Absolute mobility compares a person’s income to another in the past to that of their parents at the same age. Relative mobility compares a person’s income relative to their peers, based on the income bracket into which they were born. Americans generally experience high absolute mobility (generally higher



incomes than their parents had at the same age) and low relative mobility (unlikely to move significantly up or down the income ladder in their lifetime). Only 4% of those born in the bottom income quintile make it to the top. In general, people born at the bottom and top of the income ladder tend to stay there. A full 70% of Americans born at the bottom of the income ladder never make it to the middle primarily due to insufficient incomes. While educational attainment and employment are unquestionably key factors that promote economic security, a college degree is one of the strongest indicators of upward economic mobility in our country. However, one's family's economic status at birth, and their race, ethnicity, nativity, and gender also play a significant role in their chances of income and social mobility. The structure of the labor market does not create an even playing field.

A wide variety of measures of economic security and indicators of upward mobility show that on average, Whites consistently experience better outcomes than people of color, and the native-born population consistently experiences better outcomes than specific groups of the foreign-born.

ECONOMIC INSTABILITY AND INSUFFICIENT INCOMES

In 2019, 63% of U.S. adults reported that they were able to cover a hypothetical expense of \$400 using cash, savings, or a credit card paid off at the next statement. Another 37% would have to resort to borrowing to meet the expense, and 12% said they would be unable to come up with \$400 by any means.⁷⁹ We define “economic stability” as consistency and security in employment, income, and financial well-being over time, resiliency in the face of unintentional or unpredictable events, and the ability to withstand a financial shock. The term “instability” captures the experience of a pattern of multiple changes that contribute to stress, hardship, and the disruption of family routines.

In October 2023, the Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington School of Social Work, and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County published a report, *Overlooked and Undercounted: Struggling to Make Ends Meet in Washington State*.⁸⁰ Using Washington's Self-Sufficiency Standard, the report found there are many more people in Washington State who struggle to meet their basic needs than the government's official poverty statistics capture.

The UW report revealed that in Washington state, 669,138 working-age households are struggling to “make ends meet” indicating that 28% of Washington's working-age households do not have do not have earnings adequate to meet the standard of “self-sufficiency” income needed to cover the minimum cost of living in our State.

The Center for Women's Welfare Self-Sufficiency Standard defines the income working families need to meet a minimum yet adequate level, considering family composition, ages of children, and geographic differences in costs. The Standard is an affordability and living wage economic security measure that provides a more accurate measure of economic stability than official poverty rates.



Among households with at least one full-time worker, income inadequacy rates are still very high (22% versus 81%) for households with no workers earning income. The high workforce participation levels among households below the Standard indicate that inadequate wages, and not lack of work hours, are the cause of income inadequacy in many households.

Geographic Differences of Income Inadequacy in King County and Washington State

The impacts of economic instability on family well-being differ based on residence —where one lives in Washington. Today, we find striking differences between the City of Seattle and South King County, as more than two-thirds of all people at or below the federal poverty level in King County live in the suburbs, many concentrated in South King County. Policies dictating where transit goes and where social services are located determine to a great degree how well our region works for people of all income levels. In our region where opportunities and resources are significantly concentrated in certain areas and neighborhoods, housing and transportation are significant determinants of economic and workforce outcomes. In the Seattle metropolitan region, both housing affordability and access to transportation are marked by deep inequities, impacting the ability of low-income residents to access economic opportunities.

The UW Report indicated that in Washington State, King County has the lowest percentage of struggling households (24%), while Ferry, Okanogan, Stevens, and Pend Oreille Counties have 40% of their households unable to cover the cost of basic needs. The highest rates occur in eastern Washington and the Olympic Peninsula. While King County has the lowest percentage of households struggling to make ends meet, it also holds the largest population in the State and the largest number of households with incomes below the Standard. Over 27% of the state's households with inadequate incomes live in King County (182,309 households).

King County also has the highest cost of living in the state: in 2021, two parents and a preschooler need \$90,727 per year to cover their basic needs in East King County and \$84,478 in Seattle. The Migration Policy Institute reported that in 2021, of year-round full-time workers living in King County nearly one in four earned less than \$50,000. The Southwestern region of King County, encompassing areas such as Federal Way, Des Moines Cities, and Vashon Island, has the highest concentration of households where earnings fail to match the rising cost of basic needs, with approximately 38% of households having earnings below the Standard. On the other hand, 12% of households in Sammamish, Issaquah, Mercer Island and Newcastle Cities struggle to cover costs, half the rate of King County overall.

Economic Instability of Washington Residents Born Outside of the United States

Immigration status is also a determining factor in wage adequacy. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of non-citizen householders in Washington State do not have incomes that meet their basic needs compared to twenty-eight percent (28%) of naturalized householders. Foreign-born householders have higher income inadequacy rates than U.S.-born householders, especially when Latino, and especially if they are not citizens.

Gaps in Income in King County by Race

Economists in King County track and report on racial gaps in income. Median incomes for White and Asian households exceed those of Black or Latino households. While this is true across all peer counties, the gap



between White and Black incomes in King County is among the widest in the group. In 2020, the median household income for a Black household was \$53,961 – or 52% that of a White household’s median income of \$103,793. Nationally among peer counties, only two had a wider gap between Black and White households (New York and Cook Counties).⁸¹

“Washington State households with inadequate income reflect the state’s diversity: they come from every racial and ethnic group, reflect every household composition, and overwhelmingly work.”⁸³

From 2000 to 2020, King County reports that White households experienced steadily increasing incomes while the median income for Black households have experienced far slower growth. This trend finally reversed between 2015 and 2020, with White households experiencing 20% growth in median income compared to a 28% increase for Black households. The gap between Latino and White households also widened from 2000 to 2015 before reversing in the last five years. However, for both Black households and Latino households, the gap is still wider than it was in 2000.⁸² **More people of color struggle to make ends meet in Washington State than White households. Latino, Black, and Indigenous households are particularly impacted. In Washington State, 45% of Latino, 44% of American Indian households, 45% of Black, and 36% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander households struggle to make ends meet. White and Asian households have an income inadequacy rate of 24%.**

WORKFORCE STRATIFICATION OF IMMIGRANT GROUPS, PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND WOMEN

Workforce stratification is a term and concept increasingly used to describe the ways in which the labor market is segmented by race, ethnicity, gender, class, and place of residence. Historically, people of color, immigrants, women, and workers from economically depressed locales disproportionately occupy low-paying, unstable occupations with few opportunities for mobility or access to benefits. *This “stratification” shows up in the concentration of various groups in specific job clusters. This is sometimes referred to as occupational “segregation” or “crowding”.* According to the Workforce Development Council (WDC) of Seattle-King County, our region suffers from a shortfall of good jobs. Overall, only 44% of workers are in good jobs (stable, automation-resilient jobs with family-sustaining wages). But the share drops to 13% among workers in jobs that require no more than a high school diploma. This good-jobs gap has significant racial equity implications, considering that 36% of Black adults, 32% of US-born Latino adults, and 68% of immigrant Latino adults have not achieved post-secondary education.



In 2021, the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County commissioned a study titled *Advancing Workforce Equity In Seattle: A Blueprint For Action*.⁸⁴ This report was produced by the National Equity Atlas, a research partnership between Policy Link and the USC Equity Research Institute. This report found that the workforce in our region is characterized by what it terms “occupational segregation” in which US-born people of color and immigrants and refugees are over-represented in low-wage jobs.

In Seattle and King County, foreign-born workers and professionals are generally “underrepresented” in jobs in management, business, science, and the arts and are “overrepresented” in occupations in the service sectors, construction, natural resources, maintenance, production, transportation, and material moving.

Below are key highlights of this important report:

Latino Workers

Latino workers have high rates of labor force participation, concentrated in a handful of occupations. While they represent 9% of the workforce, Latino workers are overrepresented in the following industries:

- Farming, fishing, and forestry (47%)
- Building, grounds cleaning, and maintenance (32%)
- Construction (24%)
- Food service and preparation (22%)

Conversely, Latinos are significantly underrepresented in higher wage occupations, such as:

- Finance (3%)
- Computers and mathematics (4%)
- Life, physical and social sciences (4%)
- Healthcare practitioners and technical (4%)



Asian/Pacific Islander Workers

The region's workforce is roughly 15% Asian/Pacific Islander, with three-quarters of that being foreign-born. While these workers in Seattle tend to fare better than their Latino, Black, and Native American peers in employment and wage outcomes, about 6% of all Asian/Pacific Islander workers are considered working poor (economically insecure, despite working full-time). This rate is nearly three times as high among Pacific Islanders and workers of Cambodian ancestry. In the Seattle region, while Asian/Pacific Islander immigrants are most over-represented among high-wage computer and mathematical jobs (27%), they are also over-represented in low-wage occupations such as:

- Personal care and service (17%)
- Production (17%)

Black Workers

Black workers make up roughly 6% of the workforce in the region, with nearly one-third born in another country.

- Healthcare support (17%, or more than triple the share)
- Transportation and material moving (12%, or double or more the share)
- Protective service (10%)

Immigrants comprise about 60% of all Black healthcare support workers and over 40% of Black protective service workers. Black workers are most deeply under-represented in computer and mathematical jobs and construction trades (2%).

- This gap is narrowest among public services workers, but Black workers in that industry are still paid an average of just \$0.80 for every dollar paid to their White coworkers.
- The racial wage gap is most pronounced in professional services: the median wage for White workers is 54% higher than that of Black workers.

Wage Disparities: Women Workers (Washington State, King County, and The City of Seattle)

A recent report from the National Women's Law Center reports that women in Washington State typically make \$0.78 for every dollar paid to men.⁸⁵ The national figure is \$0.84. Black women in Washington typically make \$0.61 for every dollar paid to White men. The national figure is \$0.63. Latina women in Washington typically make \$0.46 for every dollar paid to White men, with the national figure at \$0.54. One of the most striking findings in our review of the Census data was the continuing differences in earnings between male and female full-time workers as depicted in the chart below.



EXHIBIT 20 Earnings: Full Time Workers by Gender, US-Born and Foreign-Born (King County), MPI⁸⁶

Gender	All Full Time Workers	U.S.-Born	Foreign-Born
Male	\$ 90,281	\$ 88,679	\$ 96,649
Female	\$ 68,742	\$ 69,546	\$ 65,950

EXHIBIT 21 Earnings: Male and Female U.S. and Foreign-Born Full Time Workers (King County and Seattle), MPI⁸⁷

Gender	King County		Seattle	
	U.S.-Born	Foreign-Born	U.S.-Born	Foreign-Born
Male	\$88,679	\$96,649	\$91,710	\$108,438
Female	\$69,546	\$65,950	\$76,806	\$74,680

EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES

Educational Attainment in King County by Race and Ethnicity

In King County, significant gaps in educational attainment by race and ethnicity persist. These gaps in educational attainment contribute to the “uneven playing field” in the labor market and go a long way in explaining workforce inequities. Higher educational attainment is associated with higher median wages across all racial/ethnic groups, but racial gaps are also evident at each level of education.

The racial and ethnic disparity in educational attainment begins early, as is reflected in local high school dropout rates. For the King County Class of 2020, 10.8% of Black and 14.6% of Latino students dropped out during their high school years, compared to 5.7% of White students.

According to Washington STEM, King County is home to some of Washington’s largest STEM industries. By 2030, 87% of high-demand, family-sustaining wage jobs available in our region will require a postsecondary degree or credential (all forms of postsecondary education and training, including registered apprenticeships, 1-year certificates, 2-year degrees, and 4-year); 67% of those jobs will be STEM or STEM literacy-based occupations.

King County’s economy is growing rapidly in two areas: well-paying sectors requiring college degrees and very low-paying sectors requiring little education. King County economists predict that the need for educated workers in the county will continue to grow into the next decade. With local employment rapidly growing in



well-paying sectors, higher educational attainment is increasingly necessary for King County residents to participate and prosper in the changing economy.

UNDEREMPLOYMENT OF SKILLED IMMIGRANTS

“A foreign-trained brain surgeon taking a job as an Uber driver to make ends meet is but one example of the “brain waste” often seen among high-skilled immigrants in the United States. The underutilization of immigrant —and indeed U.S.-born —professionals’ skills is a phenomenon that comes at a substantial cost to individual workers, their families, and the broader society.”

Migration Policy Institute

Traditional economic analysis and official government employment measures focus on the official unemployment rate as a measure of the overall strength and health of the labor market. The rate of unemployment counts the number and percentage of the civilian labor force at a given time who had no employment. Unemployment rates, while an important indicator, provide only a partial picture of the health of our regional labor market. To develop a more complete assessment of the health of our regional labor market, a 2017 report, *Building Barriers and Building Bridges*, the City of Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) examined the scope and impacts of underemployment on workers and professionals in the workforce – both US-born and foreign-born. In that report, OIRA considered the two forms of underemployment, what we refer to as “workhours” and “educational” underemployment.

- Work-Hours Underemployment (sometimes termed “involuntary part-time work”) refers to a circumstance in which a worker is willing and able to work full-time but can only obtain part-time work, is compelled to work one or more part-time jobs, or has given-up actively pursuing full-time work.⁸⁸
- Educational Underemployment refers to a circumstance in which someone is working in a job for which the educational requirements are lower than their demonstrated level of educational and/or skill achievement. Put another way, the level of education and skill of an educationally underemployed worker remains under-utilized in the labor market. For example, bachelor’s or graduate degree holders who work in middle and low skill jobs we considered to be educationally underemployed.



Scope of Under-Employment in the City of Seattle and King County

The 2017 OIRA report found there were nearly 70,000 under-employed individuals working in the City of Seattle. In King County as a whole, over 162,000 individuals were deemed educationally under-employed. This number represents nearly 27% of college degree holders and 16% of the total workforce. Nearly 40% of King County’s associate degree and 25% of its bachelor’s degree holders were determined to be educationally underemployed. The report found that more than 36,000 individuals born outside the United States, including more than 10,000 in Seattle, were educationally underemployed.⁸⁹

Disparate Under-Employment Rates Among Immigrants and Refugees and People of Color

A national study by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) *Leaving Money on the Table: The Persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants* (2021) confirmed the findings of OIRA’s 2017 Report – that underemployment is concentrated among racial and ethnic minorities across both foreign-born and US-born college graduates.⁹⁰ MPI found that regardless of place of birth, college-educated Blacks and Latinos are more likely to be under-employed than their White counterparts, even when other sociodemographic and educational characteristics are considered.

The odds of underemployment for Black immigrants are 54% higher compared to their White counterparts; for Latinos they are 40% higher. The regression results also reveal that highly-skilled Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) were 12% less likely than White immigrants to face underemployment. However, because AAPIs account for almost half of the 9.6 million college-educated immigrants, numerically speaking they also make up larger shares of the 2 million under-employed immigrants (37%, or 738,000).

Under-Employment in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Professions

Immigrants with degrees in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and health are less likely to be under-employed than those in other fields. These lower under-employment levels held for both foreign and U.S. educated immigrant professionals. For example, less than 17% of internationally trained immigrants with STEM and health-related bachelor’s degrees were underemployed in 2019, compared to 35% or more of those with degrees in law, education, or business. Nonetheless, brain waste levels for immigrants with both healthcare degrees and degrees in architecture or engineering were almost twice as high as for their US-born counterparts.

EXHIBIT 22 MPI: Skills Underutilization College-Educated Workers and Professionals in Washington State⁹¹

Underutilization of Education and Skills in King County	Foreign-Born	U.S.-Born
College Educated Workforce	319,900	1,178,400
Number Underutilized Workers	56,300	186,100



Under-Employment in Healthcare: The Case of Internationally Trained Medical Doctors

Many highly skilled doctors find themselves working in unconventional roles such as nursing assistants, home health aides, warehouse laborers, or taxi drivers. This diverse group, primarily composed of immigrants and refugees from conflict-ridden nations such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine, constitutes most internationally trained medical doctors (IMGs) in Washington State. Their unique backgrounds contribute to the complexity of the healthcare system in the region, emphasizing the risk of losing innovative perspectives within the local context.

SECTOR CLOSE-UP: WAGE DISPARITIES IN THE HUMAN SERVICES SECTOR

Throughout Seattle and King County, numerous community-based and human service organizations play a vital role in providing human services to immigrant and refugee communities, job seekers, workers, and professionals. Non-profit human services workers, many of whom come from the very communities they serve, are critical to building and maintaining the human, social, and institutional strengths of communities. Networks of community-based organizations, under contracts with the City of Seattle, King County, Washington State, and the regional Workforce Development Council to provide vital workforce development programs and services across King County. While tasked with assisting clients to find quality jobs, these workers are systematically paid lower compared with comparable work in other sectors and industries. Sub-standard wages, lack of access to professional development, and high workloads contribute to high turnover rates. In the fall and winter of 2022-2023, researchers at the UW School of Social Work assembled and collaborated with a group of national and international scholars to conduct a rigorous study, *Wage Equity for Non-Profit Human Services Workers in Seattle and King County* and investigated the extent of wage inequity among human service workers compared with other public and private sector jobs.⁹²



What is Comparable Worth?

Comparable worth, the principle of equal pay for equivalent work, guided this examination of wage inequity facing non-profit human services workers in Seattle and King County. This approach acknowledges that various forces have shaped employment patterns and suppressed wages in the non-profit human services sector over time, including race and gender discrimination, wage penalties for caring labor, and decisions made by federal and local policymakers in how they fund. These factors continue to affect current wages for the local human services workforce, which is overwhelmingly female (roughly 80%) and in which workers of color are over-represented.

Key findings from that analysis demonstrated that human services workers are paid less than workers in other care industries (education and healthcare) and at least 30% less than workers in non-care industries. For human services workers in the non-profit sector, median annual pay is 37% lower than in non-care industries. Women are over-represented, making up almost 80% of workers in the industry, and Black/African American workers are almost three times as likely to work in human services as they are to work in non-care industries.

Human Services Workers are:

- 1. Paid less than workers in non-care industries, with estimated pay gaps of 30% or more across different econometric models.*
- 2. Paid less than workers in other industries or sectors where tasks are rated as comparable through a systematic job evaluation process.*

Role of Our Workforce Development Eco-System in Addressing Structural Inequities

Policymakers in the City of Seattle, King County, and Washington state cannot solve many of the persistent structural inequities addressed in this report without a larger transformation of federal economic and labor market policies. Still, there is much more work to be done at the state and regional level by government, workforce agencies, nonprofit organizations, labor unions, and employers to improve the workforce and social conditions of all our region's working families. The next section of the report focuses on the essential role of our workforce development "eco-system" in this effort and highlights unmet needs and profiles replicable best practice program and service models that are contributing to improving the workforce conditions of immigrant and refugee jobseekers, workers, and professionals.



PART FOUR:

Our Workforce Development Eco-System

- *Who are the major institutional players in our regional workforce ecosystem?*
- *To what degree are workforce development programs and services mitigating the negative impacts of the persistent structural inequities outlined in Part Three of this report?*
- *How are public investments in workforce development helping to increase the number of immigrants and refugees in the many occupations in which they are still underrepresented?*
- *What types of workforce policies, programs, and services can increase cross-generational wealth for communities of color, immigrants and refugees, and Washingtonians earning insufficient incomes?*

Introduction: The Purposes and Uses of Workforce Development

Before addressing these questions, we provide a broad picture of Washington’s “Workforce Development Eco-System” by profiling the key institutional players in this complex “eco-system” and their respective roles in funding and operating a range of programs and services.

In most basic terms, “workforce development” is generally understood by policymakers and the public as an essential component of economic development and consists of a wide range of activities, policies, and programs used to create, sustain, and retain a viable workforce. Beyond this general usage, it is difficult to gain a consensus among stakeholders on a single definition of workforce development, because each of the major interest groups engaged in workforce development approach it from their respective institutional perspectives, interests, and needs.

The phrase “Workforce Development Eco-System” used in this report refers to the “official” publicly-funded workforce system, government agencies, public authorities, private and non-profit employers, trade and professional associations, apprenticeship programs, labor unions, joint union-employer trust funds, non-profit institutions, community-based organizations, immigrant and refugee service organizations, adult education providers, colleges and universities, and private training and employment service providers.



The Limits and Possibilities of Workforce Development

Beginning with the Federal Job Training Act of 1962, federal workforce policies and investments were focused on securing employment (job placement) and providing training programs and were not legislated or designed to improve workforce conditions such as job quality or correct broader racial and gender inequities in the private labor market or as part of a national economic strategy. Federal economic policies since 1946 were thus designed to promote, not assure, full employment and never assumed the responsibility of assuring it.

As a result, U.S. labor market policies and workforce development systems have been separated from broader economic policy ever since their inception creating an institutional divide between active labor market policy and the health of the economy as a whole and between state-level economic and workforce development systems. Traditionally, the issues of job quality, workforce inequities, and occupational stratification equity remained outside of the vision and mission of public and private workforce investments.

Job Quality and Equity: Re-envisioning Workforce Development in Seattle and King County

Over the past five years, as part of a national trend, our regional workforce eco-system has undergone a process of transformation - driven by forces such as the Covid pandemic and the increased focus of policymakers and workforce development funders on issues of racial and gender inequities, income inequality, immigrant integration, and job quality. In our region, key to this process is the role of the City of Seattle, King County, Washington State agencies, the Workforce Development Council, numerous community organizations, labor unions and employers, and apprenticeship programs.

Regional Transformation of Workforce Development in the City of Seattle and King County

In our region, the Workforce Development Council (WDC) Board of Directors, in partnership with the Seattle Mayor and King County Executive and many stakeholders, set a new vision for a region-wide workforce development system and role of the WDC to catalyze and support an equity-centered and industry-driven approach. The strategic goals of these efforts are to:

- Leverage federal and other workforce resources to increase scale and maximize investment impact. This will improve system structure, efficiency, and delivery through collaboration and coordination.
- Remove barriers and racial disparities and provide equitable opportunities for all residents to obtain and grow into living wage opportunities. This includes a mandate to implement the Priority of Service provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a mandate to provide services to priority-of-service populations with barriers to employment.
- Coordinate and centralize industry engagement to inform workforce development system partners and strengthen partnerships.
- Engage and partner with community and workforce training and system stakeholders to create innovative programs and practices to serve job seekers and businesses.



Institutional Landscape: The Role of Key Entities in Our Workforce Eco-System

This section of our report provides a profile of some of the key institutional players in our regional workforce eco-system with whom OIRA can partner to support the improvement of workforce conditions for immigrant workers and professionals. These brief profiles are intended to delineate the roles of these various institutional players in workforce development and to highlight how their varied programs and services are contributing to the improvement of workforce conditions for immigrant and refugee job seekers and incumbent workers and professionals. This is not intended as a complete list of agencies and organizations engaged in our regional workforce eco-system.

Simply click on the category below or scroll down for the full text of this section of the report.

Major Entities in Our Regional Workforce Ecosystem (Selected)

City of Seattle and King County	Workforce Development Council of Seattle/King County
Port Of Seattle	Washington State Agencies (ORIA, Dept. of Commerce and State Workforce Board)
Regional Apprenticeship Programs	Regional Public Owners (RPO) Group
Puget Sound Welcome Back Center, Highline College	Labor-Management Partnerships and Trust Funds in Aerospace and Healthcare
Sector-Based Organizations in Homecare, Early Learning/Child Care, Grocery Retail, and IT	Labor Studies and Research Centers Based in Colleges and Universities
Labor Unions, Labor Councils, and Workers Centers	Adult Education/ESL Providers (Community-Based)
Community and Technical College System	Community-Based Organizations Providing Workforce Services





PHOTO BY BRUCE W – UNSPLASH

1: CITY OF SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY

[◀ BACK](#)

OFFICES OF CITY OF SEATTLE MAYOR AND KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE

The Mayor of Seattle and the King County Executive serve as the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) of the Workforce Development Council (WDC). The City of Seattle and King County play a leading role in the governance of the organization and the appointment of its Board of community, labor, and employer directors. The City and County serve as the conduit of federal, state, and local funds to our Workforce Development Council (WDC).

The City and County also contract with numerous community and workforce development organizations with various funding sources including general funds and private, state, and federal sources. The purpose of these grants is to support targeted workforce development initiatives and services including training, education, career development, and job placement. The Mayor and King County Executive oversee and approve the budgets of individual city and county departments engaged in both internal and external workforce development programs. The City and County also serve as major employers in our region, directly employing over 23,000 workers and professionals.



SELECTED CITY OF SEATTLE DEPARTMENTS ENGAGED IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A 2022 report prepared for the Office of Economic Development reported that the City of Seattle funded employment and training programs and workforce development capacity-building grants. Most of these programs focused on career preparation and entry-level employment with the largest share allocated to programs serving youth, people of color, immigrants and refugees, and residents of economically distressed communities.

The majority of City of Seattle funded employment and training programs focus on providing training and support for pre-employment or entry-level employment.

CITY OF SEATTLE, OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (OED)

The City of Seattle Office of Economic Development (OED) supports small and micro-businesses; partners with neighborhood business districts; supports business sectors and workers; partners with key industries that drive innovation, job growth and global competitiveness; and invests in our local workforce with an emphasis on young people, low-income, as well as unemployed and under-employed adults. OED partners with the regional Workforce Development Council.

In 2022, the OED facilitated a stakeholder engagement process to develop a community-driven investment agenda –the *Future of Seattle Economy (FSE)*.⁹³ Over 80 organizations and government offices helped create the FSE investment agenda, to promote inclusive economic growth especially for communities systemically excluded from such opportunities. Further, the agenda serves as a guiding document for OED, the City, and aligned partners who will make further investments in pursuit of the vision developed by community stakeholders.

The Seattle Jobs Initiative

The work of the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) is supported through funding from the OED and other funding agencies. The SJI combines skills training, wraparound services, and business involvement to connect low-income individuals with living-wage jobs. Today, the SJI supports immigrant and refugee communities through three major strategies:

- Supporting programs leading to career pathways to sustainable wage careers
- Addressing digital equity challenges that disproportionately impact immigrants and refugees
- Supporting the capacity of CBOs to provide workforce services in their communities.

SJI provides “on-ramp” programs in healthcare and manufacturing/transportation that enroll growing numbers of immigrant and refugee job seekers. SJI partners with the SEIU 1199/Multi-Employer Training Fund and the Machinist Institute (manufacturing/transportation).



CITY OF SEATTLE LABOR EQUITY TEAM: EXPANDING PATHWAYS IN CONSTRUCTION TRADES

Priority Hire Program

Housed in the Purchasing and Contracting Division of the City's Financial and Administrative Services Department, the Labor Equity Team leads the effort to expand access to construction careers for women, people of color, and others with social and economic disadvantages.

In 2015, the City created a Priority Hire Program for City public works construction projects of \$5 million or more and, in 2017, expanded the program to public/private partnership projects with significant City investment. Using City-funded and public/private partnership projects, the Priority Hire Program prioritizes the hiring of residents that live in economically distressed areas, particularly in Seattle and King County. In addition, City projects and public/private partnership projects have apprentice utilization requirements and women and people of color aspirational goals.

The Priority Hire program is supported by an Advisory Committee of key stakeholders dating back to its start in late 2013. Since then, construction workers living in economically distressed communities, most of whom are people of color, women, and those just starting their careers, have earned \$77.8 million in wages. We estimate this is \$36.7 million more than they would have earned without Priority Hire.⁹⁴ *See appendix B for a list of organizations partnering with Seattle's Labor Equity Team.*

CITY OF SEATTLE, OFFICE OF LABOR STANDARDS (OLS)

The Seattle Office of Labor Standards (OLS) plays an important role in serving all of Seattle's workers and businesses by legislating and enforcing labor standards in the City of Seattle. Wage theft among immigrant and refugee workers is widespread and largely unreported. OLS offers free services to all people regardless of their immigration status. These services include investigating potential violations of labor standards, conducting outreach to workers and businesses, and providing resources and referrals. OLS protects workers to ensure workers make at least the minimum wage, receive wages for every hour worked, and get sick time. Further, OLS works to protect the worker from all forms of retaliation, including threats to inform immigration authorities that a worker or a worker's family member is undocumented.

Community Outreach and Education Fund

The goal of the Labor Standards Community Outreach and Education Fund (COEF) is to foster collaboration between OLS and the community by providing funds to a large network of community-based organizations



to develop awareness and understanding of worker rights provided by Seattle's labor standards. The COEF is designed to build a culture of employer compliance by:

- Increasing worker's knowledge and understanding of the rights provided by Seattle's labor standards through methods that are community-centered, culturally-relevant and accessible, and language-specific.
- Expanding workers' access to resources to enforce labor standards and ensure their rights are protected.
- Building capacity among community organizations to provide labor standards services and information to a diverse range of workers.

CITY OF SEATTLE, OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE AFFAIRS (OIRA)

OIRA is an Office of the Mayor created in 2013 to improve the lives of Seattle's immigrant and refugee communities through policies, programs, services, and community engagement in the areas of citizenship, language acquisition and access, legal services, workforce development, and cash assistance distribution. OIRA also plays an important role in advising the Mayor and City Council on immigrant and refugee policy issues, convening stakeholders, and supporting the efforts of other city departments and regional stakeholders.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: THE READY TO WORK PROGRAM

The nationally recognized Ready to Work (RTW) program is an OIRA partnership with several community-based organizations such as Literary Source, the Asian Counseling and Referral Service, HomeSight, Neighborhood House, and Somali Community Services of Seattle. It is a classroom-based program for adult immigrants with low English language proficiency where participants improve their English skills, receive culturally competent case management and partake in other employment training with the goal of attaining better, more well-paying jobs. Hundreds of participants have moved on to full-time jobs and/or advanced English classes at local community colleges. Most importantly, these RTW participants have become motivated to be life-long learners, accelerating the process of immigrant integration and civic engagement.





PHOTO BY SAM BATTAGLIERI – UNSPLASH

2: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF SEATTLE-KING COUNTY (WDC)

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The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County is an integral institutional player in our region and holds a leading role in transforming our regional workforce development efforts. The WDC is one of twelve regional workforce areas in Washington State monitored by the Washington State Workforce, Training and Education Coordinating Board (State Workforce Board).

Programs and Services

The WDC's range of programs and services are resourced by a mix of federal, state, and regional sources including the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), other government grants, and from private funders and foundations. The WDC Board consists of a majority of private sector members, as well as leaders from labor organizations, youth and adult education entities, and state and local government agencies.



Key Role of Community Based Organizations

Numerous community-based organizations throughout our region provide essential workforce development programs and services, many to immigrant and refugee participants. The Workforce Development Council funds and oversees an extensive regional network of community-based organizations, workforce providers, labor unions, and employers. [A list of WDC partners is detailed here.](#)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR ALL PROGRAM

The Economic Security for All Program (ECSA) is a Washington State program aimed at reducing poverty and expanding job opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Launched in 2019, it now covers the entire state and includes additional funds to promote innovative local program design. In Seattle-King County, a pilot program providing a \$500 monthly stipend (with funding from JP Morgan Chase) to help participants navigate the benefits cliff and achieve financial self-sufficiency, piloting a financial benefits model in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. In collaboration with statewide partners, a proposal for a \$13.8 million fund to expand ECSA using state funds was introduced, with the goal of broadening eligibility, increasing post-employment support, and enhancing business navigation assistance within one-stop career centers.

WorkSource: Seattle-King County

In partnership with business leaders as well as state and local partners, the WDC leads, directs and oversees the Seattle-King County public WorkSource system as a part of the American One-Stop Job Center Network. WorkSource Seattle-King County provides employment and skills training services to a wide variety of youth, adults, and businesses through interagency partnerships, leveraged resources, and the delivery of services through a network of geographically targeted one-stop locations. Services are free and can be accessed at any WorkSource location.

Enhanced Language and Digital Access Services for Immigrant and Refugee Job Seekers

Through the efforts of the WDC, our regional workforce system has now integrated into their intake process improved services by implementing assessments of jobseeker's language learning needs and digital access. This means that greater numbers of immigrant job seekers will be directed to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs and to resources to improve their access to technology.





PHOTO BY DOCUMERICA – UNSPLASH

3: PORT OF SEATTLE

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The Port of Seattle (The Port) is a crucial driver and key component of regional economic development in the City of Seattle and King County and has made significant commitments to expand its involvement in regional workforce development efforts. The Port was one of the first public agencies to directly support investments in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. The Port Commission has continued to affirm its commitment by authorizing financial and people resources dedicated to supporting regional workforce development. The Port was a founding member of the non-profit organization Port Jobs, which has been providing training to incumbent workers since 1992, and access to job seekers into Port-related jobs, with outreach efforts in under-represented communities. The current Port of Seattle Workforce Development Strategic Plan continues the Port sector strategies, which allows for specific activities in Port industries and activities in aviation, maritime, construction trades, and green careers. The Port is also implementing programs and services designed to build employment pathways for immigrant and refugee workers and professionals.





PHOTO BY MARIO MENDEZ - UNSPLASH

4: KEY WASHINGTON STATE AGENCIES

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WASHINGTON STATE OFFICE OF REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE (ORIA, DSHS)

The Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA) is located within the State of Washington, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Economic Services Administration (ESA), and Community Services Division (CSD). ORIA's goal is for refugee and immigrant families and individuals to succeed and thrive in Washington State. When refugees and immigrants arrive in Washington, ORIA works with community-based partners and resettlement agencies to connect people with vital, culturally-responsive, and linguistically-appropriate services. ORIA has provided these supports to refugees from more than 70 nations.

The Washington State Basic Food Employment and Training program provides job search, job search training, self-directed job search, educational services, skills training, and other employment opportunities to Basic Food (SNAP) recipients who are not participating in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Work First work program. Services are provided through community or technical colleges and/or community-based organizations.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: ORIA'S LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PATHWAY (LEP)

The Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathway, which provides specialized culturally appropriate services to refugees and other WorkFirst participants with limited English proficiency, is funded and overseen by ORIA. The goal of the LEP Pathway is to increase participants' employability and economic stability. Using bilingual and culturally appropriate services, English language instruction, and specialized employment services such as job readiness training and placement assistance, the Pathway assists immigrants and refugees in securing and maintaining employment. ORIA partners state-wide with an extensive network of community-based organizations, refugee resettlement agencies, community colleges and others to offer the Pathway program.

A full list of ORIA's LEP Pathways partner organizations.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE: KEEP WASHINGTON WORKING WORK GROUP

After the passage of the 2019 Keep Washington Working Act Work Group was formed by the Washington Department of Commerce to address statewide policy on the economy and immigrants' role in the workplace. This workgroup provides annual reports to the legislature and is focused on:

- Developing strategies with private sector businesses, labor, and immigrant advocacy organizations.
- Conducting research on methods to strengthen career pathways for immigrants and create and enhance partnerships with projected growth industries.
- Supporting business and agriculture leadership, civic groups, government, and immigrant advocacy organizations in a statewide effort to provide predictability and stability to the workforce in the agriculture industry.
- Recommending approaches to improve Washington's ability to attract and retain immigrant business owners that provide new business and trade opportunities.

WASHINGTON STATE WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Purpose and Governance Structure

At the statewide level, the State Workforce Board advises the Governor on workforce policies and coordinates 16 programs administered by seven State agencies. The Board also monitors and evaluates the State's 12 largest workforce programs and publishes those results in an annual report. At the regional level, Washington's 12 Workforce Development Councils direct federal activities centered on the Workforce



Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), connect with local employers, and oversee the state's employment center system, WorkSource.

The Board is also tasked with making annual policy recommendation the Governor of Washington and is governed by a board consists of nine Governor-appointed voting members from business, labor, and government. Non-voting members also participate. The Board advises the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy, ensures the state's workforce services and programs work together, and evaluates the performance of Washington's key workforce programs.

THE MATRIX: A TOOL FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

The Washington State Workforce Training and Education coordinating Board publishes an annual index of Washington's key workforce development programs titled the "The Matrix". It provides a bird's eye reference and map detailing how federal and state workforce dollars are allocated and spent. It highlights Washington state departments, workforce development agencies, and public education systems including the types of programs and services they fund, and the constituencies served by these public investments. This annual Matrix does not include specific workforce programs targeted for immigrant and refugee populations (like ORIA and OIRA). We recommend that the Workforce Board work with key stakeholders to revise future versions to include immigrant and refugee specific programs and services.

WASHINGTON STATE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Washington State's Centers of Excellence link business, industry, labor, and the state's educational systems to create a highly skilled and readily available workforce critical to the state's economic success. Each center is funded through the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and is housed at a community or technical college. Centers of Excellence serve as statewide resources representing the needs and interests of a specific industry sector. Through an ongoing investment, Centers are charged with narrowing the gap between employer workforce needs and the colleges' supply of work-ready graduates. They are a critical component of the State's strategy of sustaining an innovative and vibrant economy. While Centers of Excellence are hosted at individual college campuses, they serve the sector needs of the entire state.





PHOTO BY ANTHONY FOMIN - UNSPLASH

5: REGIONAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

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The U.S. Department of Labor defines registered apprenticeship (RA) as a combination of paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction to prepare workers for highly skilled careers. The American Institute for Innovative Apprenticeship further defines it as a system in which workers train on-the-job – earning wages and doing productive work while also taking courses. Successful apprentices gain valuable work experience and a recognized industry credential that allows them to continue in the field and advance their career over time. Frequently, these registered apprenticeship programs (RAP) can also lead to college credits, degrees and/or certificates.

Registered apprenticeships in Washington State must be approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council. Registration of programs ensures accountability by requiring wage progression program standards and quality instruction. Apprenticeships generally vary in length from one to four years, though apprentices work full-time and must be paid at least minimum wage. As the apprentice advances through the program, his or her wages increase according to a predetermined schedule agreed to between the sponsor (employer) and the apprentice.



Registered apprenticeships are available in hundreds of occupations in different fields of work. Some apprenticeships are in traditional trades, such as plumbers and ironworkers, but many are offered in less traditional areas, including high-tech and healthcare sectors. Several of apprenticeship programs operate in conjunction with community and technical colleges. This can be a key resource to immigrants and refugees, since the system also provides access to ESL/ELL, vocational ESL/ELL, and I-BEST (integrated basic skills training) in our region's community and technical colleges. Thus, an English language learner can access both apprenticeship programs and ESOL programs at the same institution. See Appendix C for the occupations with approved RAPs and Appendix D for a list of apprenticeship organizations in our region.

What is Pre-Apprenticeship?

Washington State has begun to use the term Recognized Apprenticeship Preparation Programs (RAPP) instead of the term Pre-Apprenticeship, which is also widely used. RAPPs are defined as education and training programs that maintain formal articulation agreement(s) with one or more registered apprenticeship program sponsors. The purpose of the RAPP is to prepare participants for successful entry into registered apprenticeship programs. Preparatory programs are designed to increase the participation of under-represented populations in registered apprenticeships. These programs are ideal points of entry for immigrants and refugees with limited English language skills.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: THE REGIONAL PRE-APPRENTICESHIP COLLABORATIVE

The Regional Pre-Apprenticeship Collaborative (The Collaborative) is supported by the City of Seattle Labor Equity Team and was established in 2016. One goal of The Collaborative is to eliminate existing silos to build a unified, state of the art preparatory pathway for communities of color and women across Puget Sound to enter and succeed in construction careers. The Collaborative provides coordinated outreach, the sharing of resources amongst partners, a centralized website, the tracking of participant outcomes, and other interventions integral to the success of pre-apprentices.

The Collaborative consists of community-based organizations, public agencies, pre-apprenticeship programs, apprenticeship programs, unions, and school districts. For a full list of partner organizations funded by the City of Seattle to support priority hire and labor equity programs, see *Appendix B*.





PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER BURNS – UNSPLASH

6: REGIONAL PUBLIC OWNERS (RPO) GROUP

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The Regional Public Owner (RPO) Group⁹⁵ includes the City of Seattle, King County, Port of Seattle, Sound Transit, and the Washington State Department of Transportation. The RPO agencies are projected to spend about \$10.3 billion on construction projects over the period from 2022 to 2026. During the same timeframe, RPO construction projects are expected to require substantial numbers of construction workers: an average of 5,400 workers per year.

Apprenticeship demand for RPO construction occupations is projected at about 1,000 apprentices per year on average between 2022 and 2026. This is roughly a 19% apprentice utilization rate. Among all occupations, carpenters, laborers, and construction electricians represent the largest number of projected apprenticeship completions in the tri-county region: approximately 42% of all projected completions.





PHOTO BY HIGHLINE COLLEGE

7: PUGET SOUND WELCOME BACK CENTER, HIGHLINE COLLEGE

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The Puget Sound Welcome Back Center builds bridges between the pool of internationally trained professionals living in Washington and the need for linguistically and culturally competent professional services. Its goal is to assist these professionals to make the best use of their professional skills through respectful and innovative career services, such as: case management; planning of educational paths that build on skills, experience and previous education; resume assistance; help in obtaining professional credentials and licenses when required; workshops and classes; guidance and instruction on alternative healthcare careers; referrals to professional resources; and opportunities for networking.

The Skilled Immigrant and Refugee Engagement Network (SIREN)

The Skilled Immigrant and Refugee Engagement Network (SIREN), coordinated by the Welcome Back Center, is a network of many organizations in Washington State that provide education, training, career development, and job placement services and other supports to immigrants and refugees with college degrees who are pursuing gainful employment in their chosen fields. The SIREN network includes colleges, training programs, resettlement agencies, municipalities, and other entities that serve the needs of internationally educated professionals in Washington State as they work to regain their careers instead of restarting them.





PHOTO BY NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE – UNSPLASH

8: SELECTED JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS (TRAINING FUNDS)

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A joint labor-management educational program is a non-profit trust created through the collective bargaining process to provide workforce development programs and services to eligible employees covered by the union contract. Employers contribute funding and the benefits are considered part of the workers' total compensation package. These entities are dually overseen by a Board of Trustees equally representing labor and management. Regionally, such programs operate within several sectors. In this report, we highlight the aerospace sector and the healthcare sector.

These trust funds generally offer a multitude of services to incumbent workers including career planning, apprenticeships, tuition assistance, adult education, and technical training. Such programs are instituted by multiple employers and their union or by a single employer and their union.

Aerospace Sector

The Boeing company and several supply-chain employers have partnered with two unions to offer an array of workforce development initiatives that serve incumbent workers and professionals in the industry. The Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA) and the International Association



of Machinists (IAM) partner with industry leaders to provide such services through the Ed Wells Training Partnership and the Boeing - IAM Joint Programs, respectively.

Healthcare Sector: SEIU Healthcare 1199NW Multi-Employer Training Fund

The Training Fund is a non-profit, labor-management partnership between fourteen hospitals employers across seven healthcare systems and the largest healthcare union in Washington State, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW. Established in 2008, the Training Fund was created to develop a statewide program for addressing the workforce needs of participating employers and to support the career, knowledge, and skill aspirations of SEIU Healthcare 1199NW members. It is designed to leverage the healthcare industry's greatest strengths – its people and institutions – to collectively keep pace with this rapidly-changing, ever-expanding, and highly-complex industry.

Close to 17,000 Washington State healthcare workers are currently eligible for Training Fund education benefits. As a Labor-Management trust, which is funded by collectively bargained employer contributions, the Training Fund provides services and benefits at no cost to eligible members. Benefits include funding for professional development activities, a tuition assistance program to cover college and university enrollment costs, and a wide variety of educational support services.

In addition to collective bargaining funds, the Training Fund attracts significant grant monies to expand member services and services to the broader community.

SEIU 1199 Training Fund Employer Partners include:

- Kaiser Permanente of Washington
- MultiCare Health System (Auburn Medical Center, Deaconess Hospital, Good Samaritan Hospital, Valley Hospital)
- NeighborCare Health
- PeaceHealth (St. Joseph Medical Center)
- Providence (St. Peter Hospital, Kadlec Regional Medical Center)
- Swedish (Providence) Swedish Medical Center Swedish Medical Center Edmonds
- UW Medicine: UW Medical Center, Northwest Hospital, Valley Medical Center
- Virginia Mason Franciscan Health: St. Anne Hospital St. Clare Hospital St. Joseph Medical Center





PHOTO BY JONATHAN BORBA - UNSPLASH

9: SECTOR-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN HOME CARE, EARLY LEARNING/CHILDCARE, GROCERY RETAIL AND IT

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Transforming job quality and workforce conditions in the helping professions: homecare and child care/early learning.

Home Healthcare Sector: SEIU 775 Benefits Group

SEIU 775 Benefits Group (Benefits Group), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, improves the skills, health, and stability of the caregiving workforce through innovation and high-quality benefits and programs. The Benefits Group collaborates with the caregivers' union (SEIU 775), employers, the State Department of Social and Health Services, and the Department of Health to build a world of dignity in which caregivers receive training, health, retirement, and job-matching benefits. These benefits ensure caregivers provide superior care for their clients and are commensurate with their vital – and increasingly needed – role as essential healthcare professionals.

SEIU 775 Benefits Group's Training Partnership was founded as a labor-management partnership in 2007. Today, their training programs and services serve more than 50,000 caregivers annually, making it the second



largest educational institution in Washington state by enrollment. Of these learners, 20% speak a primary language other than English: the top languages spoken are Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Ukrainian, Arabic and Khmer. To support diverse learners, training – from classroom instruction to course materials – is fully offered in as many as 16 languages. And for those who speak an additional language, in-person, simultaneous classroom translation is provided, ensuring everyone can access caregiver training, regardless of which language they speak.

Caregivers' employers compensate them for training they receive through SEIU 775 Benefits Group, making this educational pathway particularly accessible for those with limited finances. And as they prepare for state Home Care Aide certification, the peer mentor program supports learners by providing in-language support from experienced caregivers.

This Partnership's equity-focused approach to training provides a clear pathway for immigrants and refugees to become professional caregivers. This credentialing leads to additional benefits that support caregivers' economic stability, including:

- High-quality health coverage for caregivers and their children for a low monthly premium.
- Retirement benefits through employer contributions in a first-of-its-kind retirement program.
- Job-matching through our free online platform, Carina, that connects caregivers and clients. It is offered in Spanish with plans to expand to other languages.
- Continuing Education, including advanced training with pathways to higher wages and professional advancement opportunities.

Retail Grocery Sector: WeTrain Washington

WeTrain Washington is a 501(c)(3) non-profit training and education provider serving UFCW 3000 members, Teamsters 38 members, and union grocery employers. It provides high-quality programs and services to improve job quality, economic security, career pathways, and workforce equity in the retail grocery industry. WeTrain Washington operates and administers the Seattle – Puget Sound Meatcutters Apprenticeship program, a two-year registered apprenticeship serving apprentices in King and Snohomish counties and offers a six-week Meatcutter Pre-Apprenticeship Program, preparing workers for apprentice meatcutter positions. They partner with community organizations and are planning to offer a Community Pathways to Grocery Careers program training immigrant and refugee workers for grocery careers, and are preparing to launch a first-in-the-nation Fishmonger Registered Apprenticeship Program in 2024. WeTrain Washington has received public grants and is supported by the nation's first Taft-Hartley trust for the retail grocery industry, funded by contributions from union grocery store employers and overseen by trustees from UFCW 3000 and Allied Employers.

Childcare and Early Learning Sector: The Imagine Institute

The Imagine Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed through collective bargaining between SEIU Local 925 and the Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Their mission is to create community relationships and innovative early learning programs. The Imagine Institute supports the creation of new licensed family home childcare business owners and provides training and professional development services statewide for owners and staff. In Fiscal Year 2023, the Institute supported nearly 140 childcare providers to become licensed business owners.





THE IMAGINE INSTITUTE

Fiscal Year 2022

AT A GLANCE

STABILIZING THE EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

CHILD CARE STABILIZATION GRANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



In 2021, Imagine was selected by DCYF to provide technical assistance and language support in distributing Child Care Stabilization Grant funding to all eligible child care providers in Washington State to help stabilize the early learning workforce.



Helped distribute over \$270 million grant funding into the early learning field



Delivered assistance to **37 counties** throughout Washington State



11,861 hours of outreach and technical support



4,900+ calls and voicemails fielded by technical assistants



7 languages spoken offered to support providers:
English, Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Korean, Amharic, and Tigrinya



Expanded support to include Child Care Small Renovation Grant, DCYFs Complex Needs Fund, and DCYFs Early Childhood Equity Grant



TRAINING

Provided nearly **20,000** training hours to **882** licensed family child care providers (LFCCP) and family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) providers

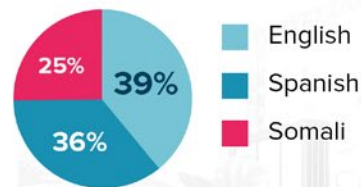
304 classes offered to LFCCP and FFN, doubling the amount of classes from FY21

Delivered **60** hours of **Dual Language Learning** to **81** LFCCP, assistants, and center workers

Expanded our Anti-Racist & Trauma-Informed curriculum with **3** new trainings, delivering **7** modules and more than **4,700** training hours to LFCCP and FFN providers

Trainer Pathways added **16** apprentice trainers speaking **6** languages, including Arabic, Mandarin and Russian

Classes offered and delivered in:



Taught **Enhancing Quality Early Learning (EQEL)** Year 1 to **168** LFCCP to help them meet the 2025 Education Mandate

SHARED SERVICES



In partnership with DCYF, **Imagine launched the Shared Services Hub** to provide business support for all Washington State licensed child care providers

First Hub in the nation to be designed, led, and managed by child care providers

Over **900** child care businesses joined the Hub

130 providers are on the wait list to join **Connect track** which places them in a **Community of Care** where they meet monthly and receive comprehensive business support



Communities of Care offered in **Arabic, English, Somali, and Spanish** to reduce isolation



Launched Mentor Pathways to support Mentors in cultivating relationships while developing their skills

SUBSTITUTE POOL

FY22 had the **highest level of engagement** from substitutes and providers since the launch of the program!

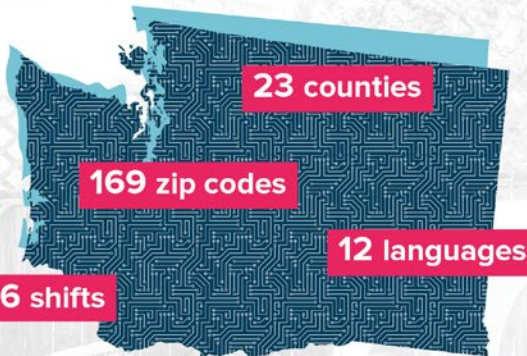
Delivered **9,395** hours of training to **818** substitutes in FY22

835 providers received substitute time across all funding streams - **40%** increase in providers accessing sub pool in FY21

747 individual substitutes worked at least 1 shift, a **21%** increase from FY21

We disbursed **69,612** hours of substitute time across...

8,676 shifts



IMAGINE U

23,000+ hours worked by Interns at their Mentor's child care facilities statewide – more than doubled from last year

Opened **129** new child care businesses statewide serving at least one child on state subsidy

8,500+ assignments completed – more than double FY21



Created **1,548** new child care slots, providing more access to child care (compared to 900 slots in FY21)

400% increase in Mentor and Intern training attendance



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: SKILLSPIRE

Building Pathways from Bootcamp to Careers in Information Technology

Skillspire is a short term and affordable career focused tech skill bootcamp that prepares students for careers in information technology. This program breaks down barriers that preclude women, people of color, and individuals from low-income backgrounds who struggle to enter the tech workforce. Skillspire’s design and structure is based on best practice in adult education and training field.

Their model is centered on hands-on, project-based learning ensuring that students not only grasp theoretical concepts but also gain the practical skills necessary to excel in their chosen field. Students learn the basics of web development coding, software engineering, data analytics, and cyber-security. Classes are offered in person in Renton and Bellevue as well as online and services include job placement assistance. Actively recruit instructors and staff from diverse backgrounds to ensure that our students have access to role models who reflect their own experiences and aspirations. Through a curriculum carefully crafted by industry experts, students experience real-world scenarios, work on projects that simulate the challenges they will encounter in their future careers. This approach not only solidifies their understanding of key concepts but also equips them with the problem-solving abilities and confidence needed to tackle complex tasks in the workplace.

Skillspire partners with local employers to offer mentorship opportunities and internships for students who complete software engineering courses. Graduates of Skillspire have obtained job in a top tech companies, launched their own startups, and have contributed to open-source projects. Companies that have hired graduates including Amazon, Microsoft, Accutive, Expedia, Children’s Hospital, Zoom, WIPRO and several others.

In addition to partnerships with employers, Skillspire works with several key workforce development institutions, government agencies, community organizations including TRAC Associates, Highline College, Puget Sound Welcome Back Center, the State of Washington’s Worksource and Career Bridge initiatives, Neighborhood House, and the Miracle Project funded by the Washington Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA).

Key Takeaway

Model programs based on the design and structure of programs like Skillspire, if brought to a larger scale, would provide policymakers and employers a viable alternative to the tech sector’s over-reliance on the Temporary Guest Workers (H1B) program to fill many of its hiring needs. Such a workforce development strategy would expand the talent “pipeline” of local residents of Seattle and King County and would increase the representation of immigrants and refugees in the information technology workforce.





PHOTO BY MARIO MENDEZ – UNSPLASH

10: UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE LABOR STUDIES, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTERS

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Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, University of Washington

The Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies supports students and faculty at the University of Washington in the study of labor in all of its facets. Through education and research, their mission is to develop labor studies - broadly conceived to include working people everywhere - as a central concern in higher education. The center cultivates connections with labor communities locally and around the world and inform policymakers about issues confronting workers.

Washington State Labor Education and Research Center (LERC), Georgetown Campus, South Seattle College

LERC is located at South Seattle Community College, works with unions and community-based organizations throughout Washington State to provide trainings and classes for and about working people. Their mission is to collaborate with unions and community members in designing programs that will develop the skills, confidence, and knowledge to become more effective leaders, staff, and rank-and-file activists. LERC offers specific skills-development classes such as Steward Training, Collective Bargaining, and Meeting Facilitation, as well as broader informational programs, including Labor History or Economics for Working Families. LERC's teaching is based on a popular education model which draws heavily on the experiences of workshop participants. They organize conferences and workshops open to the public. The Center houses a variety of resources, such as book and film libraries, that are available for public use and staff is available as guest speakers or presenters.



11: LABOR UNIONS, LABOR COUNCILS, AND WORKERS' CENTERS

◀ BACK

Labor unions play an essential role in our state-wide and regional workforce eco-system. Labor unions negotiate collective bargaining agreements with employers to provide educational benefits, such as tuition assistance to their members as part of their compensation package. Labor representatives work with employers to jointly govern registered apprenticeship programs and joint labor-management trust funds. These programs provide education and training programs and services to new entrants into the workforce and to current workers. Labor representatives serve on the governing boards of the WA State Workforce Board; the Washington Community and Technical Board; and all the Regional Workforce Development Councils on our State.

Washington State Labor Council (WSLC)

The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO Workforce Development Department leads and coordinates the efforts of the state-wide labor federation in workforce development. In this role, they serve as labor liaisons to the State Workforce and Community College System and other agencies. The department advocates for public policy and public investment decisions that align with education, training, and career development needs of workers across industry sectors and occupations by:

- Developing local and regional workforce strategies including grant applications.
- Training union representatives on best practices when serving on local workforce boards and county and city commissions.
- Increasing the capacity of joint labor-management apprenticeship programs.
- Building and growing apprenticeship into new sectors.
- Promoting incumbent worker training programs that upskill the existing workforce.

A workforce development director from this department currently serves as Board Chair on the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and on the U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Information Advisory Council.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council

MLK Labor represents more than 150 unions and 100,000 workers in King County. The council focuses on:

- Enacting and defending groundbreaking pro-worker policies.
- Electing pro-worker candidates to public office.
- Raising the bar for all workers to live a dignified life.
- Bringing the labor community together to share best practices.
- Support for new worker organizing campaigns to improve livelihoods.



Casa Latina

Casa Latina's mission is to advance the power of Latino immigrants through employment, education, and community organizing. Their vision is that the Latino community participate fully in the economy and democracy of this country. Their purpose is to help Latino immigrants empower themselves with education, employment, and leadership opportunities. By providing employment opportunities and community support to Latino immigrants, these immigrants increase their financial stability and social ties so that they can pursue education and leadership opportunities that helps them become fully participating members of our communities.

Casa Latina's employment program connects their members with day labor and domestic work and allows them to collectively set wages and control working conditions. These short-term but fair wage jobs act as steppingstones to more stable employment. Their education program provides low wage Latino immigrants with job skills trainings, financial literacy workshops, workplace health and safety trainings, and daily English (ESL) classes. ESL classes are essential to prepare members to participate fully in their communities. Health and safety classes teach members to stay safe on the job. Job skills trainings help workers develop expertise in fields where they can find employment.

Fair Work Center

The Fair Work Center conducts community-based know-your-rights workshops about workplace rights; provides resources outlining working rights and protections, and helps workers navigate city, state, and federal government agencies to enforce those rights.

- The Fair Work legal clinic is a free civil legal aid clinic. The clinic provides free individual consultations, pro se assistance, representation in administrative enforcement processes, and conduct state litigation regarding employment law, including wage and hour, discrimination, and retaliation. The Center ensures that workers know their rights under city, state, and federal law and that employers are held accountable to labor standards.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:
VIRTUAL HIRING HALL COMMUNITY-LABOR PARTNERSHIP
(Partners in Employment and the King County Labor Council)

The MLK Labor Council, in conjunction with Partner in Employment (PIE), has created the Virtual Hiring Hall, a community-labor partnership that functions as a clearinghouse of jobs for the labor movement in King County. Partner in Employment (PIE), a 501(c)3 community-based organization, provides services aiming to address the unique employment challenges of immigrants and refugees. They provide client-centered, wrap-around services including in-language and culturally competent programs to create sustainable self-reliance in the immigrant community. PIE, in conjunction with the MLK Labor Council, has created the Virtual Hiring Hall.

These union positions have a clear path of upward mobility and allow for long-term career development rather than short-term job access. The Virtual Hiring Hall seeks to change hiring practices and workplace culture in King County to ensure that women, BIPOC, immigrants, and refugees are informed and have access to good union jobs. Through this program, PIE and MLK Labor establishes partnerships with Union-Affiliated Programs such as short-term job trainings, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships with meaningful partners to provide culturally relevant guidance on program development and on-going evaluation.



12: LITERACY SOURCE: REGIONAL COMMUNITY-BASED ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL ESL PROVIDERS

◀ BACK

Literacy Source is the largest (non-college based) community provider of adult education programs and services in the City of Seattle and King County. Literacy Source teaches immigrants, refugees, and US-born adult learners to read, write, and do basic math. For immigrants and refugees, Literacy Source provides a suite of programs offering an “on-ramp” non-college entry point onto a pathway to continuing education, English language learning, job readiness, skills training, high-school completion, college preparation, U.S. citizenship, and stable employment. The adult students who attend Literacy Source Programs speak forty-six (46) languages and represent over fifty (50) nationalities.

13: COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

◀ BACK

The Washington Community and Technical College system consists of 34 public, two-year institutions of higher education which specialize in vocational, technical, worker retraining, and university transfer programs. Most of the member colleges award associate degrees and certificates, although some also offer specialized bachelor's degrees. The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, along with administering the Community and Technical College Act, coordinates, along with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the development of educational and workforce training opportunities.

Regional Community and Technical Colleges with ELL Programs Connected to Workforce Preparation

- Bellevue College: Infant and Toddler care; Allied Health (6 occupations)
- Green River: Residential and Light Commercial Carpentry; Nurse Assistant
- Highline: Business Technologies (they also house the Puget Sound Welcome Back Center)
- Lake Washington Technical Institute: I-BEST in all the colleges workforce programs
- North Seattle: Early Childhood Education; Accounting
- Renton (Puget Sound Training Center): Several ESL/ELL for immigrants and refugees connected to employment
- Shoreline: Auto Technician; Manufacturing; CAN
- Seattle Central: Nursing Assistant
- South Seattle: Apprenticeship programs in the trades and Early Childhood Education



14: COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

◀ BACK

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) throughout both Seattle and the wider King County provide vital workforce services to immigrants and refugees. In this section of our report, we have highlighted several workforce funders such as the City of Seattle, King County, the state Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, and the WDC, who fund and contract with these CBOs. Workforce funders rely on this vast network of organizations to engage immigrants and refugees in various employment pathways and workforce services. Nonprofits that offer direct services to immigrants and refugees are vital to workforce development initiatives because they have established legitimacy and trust with the communities they serve. As an example of the vital role community organizations play in our region, see the chart below that list all the organizations the Seattle King County Workforce Development Council partners with:



One of the recommendations of this report is for OIRA to collaborate with efforts by the State Workforce Board and the WDC to complete a useful and comprehensive stakeholder map of organizations engaged in immigrant and refugee services.



PART FIVE:

Stakeholder Perspectives

Findings from Interviews and Discussions with a Varied Group of Key Stakeholders

For this report, we conducted interviews and discussions with over 40 workforce professionals and stakeholders representing a diverse cross-section of funders and leaders on the frontlines of providing workforce services and programs in our region. (See the Acknowledgements page for a list of workforce leaders interviewed or consulted for this report.) The interviews and discussions were supplemented by a comprehensive literature review of recent reports and findings issued by a cross-section of regional workforce organizations.

We asked these leaders to identify priorities, identify unmet needs, and address the core issue of this report: improving the workforce conditions of immigrant and refugee workers and professionals in our regional workforce. We conducted interviews and discussions with two groups of stakeholders:

Stakeholder Group 1:

Leaders and staff of several community organizations providing services and programs to immigrant and refugees, the Workforce Development Council, five City of Seattle departments, two Washington state agencies, and educational institutions.

Stakeholder Group 2:

Leaders of joint labor-management trust funds, labor unions and organizations, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, and non-profit institutions providing sector-based professional development and related services. These organizations represented sectors including hospitals/health systems; home healthcare; child-care and early learning; retail grocery, transportation, aerospace, and construction.

We found across-the-board agreement on the importance of improving workforce conditions for immigrant and refugee job seekers and incumbent workers. In our summary of these discussions, we only included those suggestions and comments that were repeated by several participants.

Several conversations focused on the need for improved coordination and alignment between various City of Seattle departments and the City of Seattle, King County, and Workforce Development Council.



ISSUE 1: REGIONAL LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, COORDINATION, AND ALIGNMENT

Participants uniformly identified several action-oriented items that they needed from OIRA and other governmental agencies related to regional leadership, management, coordination, and alignment:

- Improve management, coordination, and alignment of workforce investments (funders) at various levels of the workforce eco-system.
- Dismantle institutional silos between the City of Seattle, King County, and City and County departments.
- Integrate and collaborate with the 11 community colleges in King County and the workforce system.
- Create systemic relationships with colleges, which are currently interpersonal in nature.

ISSUE 2: SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN MEETING UNMET NEEDS

Community partners have unmet organizational needs and need various organizational supports, including assistance to:

- Improve their own working conditions including retention, wages and wage equality, and professional development for staff providing workforce services for job seekers.
- Collaborate with other workforce partners including the development of a centralized referral system.
- Diversify staff and board composition to reflect the communities they serve.
- Offer staff culturally appropriate mentorship.
- Create cross-organization communication methods and partnerships to learn about best practices in supporting immigrant and refugee services.
- Identify ways to best engage job seekers in improving program quality.

ISSUE 3: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Interviewed leaders from workforce organizations identified a need for OIRA's support to:

- Map the services of various institutions and organizations engaged in providing workforce services including to support future partnership opportunities, cross-organizational learning, and align services across organizational silos.



ISSUE 4: EXPANDING RESOURCES FOR JOB SEEKERS

Services for job seekers were a top priority, including assistance to:

- Expand resources for paid internships, pre-apprenticeship, and other pathways to apprenticeship and paid work experience.
- Create access to devices and digital skills training which includes basic digital literacy and college-ready digital literacy including file management, using an LMS, and user-level security skills required in post-secondary training and of the workforce.
- Expand support of programs such as the WDC Economic Security for All Program.
- Support wraparound services and facilitate connections between CBOs and programs that offer such services (which include housing, food, childcare, and transportation).

ISSUE 5: ELL PROGRAMS AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

As there is a shortage of programs for English Language Learners in King County, discussion participants requested assistance to:

- Expand accessible programs for beginning English language learners.
- Enhance language access services.
- Recruit and retain bilingual staff and managers of community partners.
- Support translation and interpretation services in King County's first and second tier.
- Increase levels of English proficiency required by training programs, such as IBEST.
- Provide contextualized English skills, which would accelerate individuals' abilities to engage in last mile programs.



ISSUE 6: ENHANCING PATHWAYS INTO SELECTED AND TARGETED OCCUPATIONS

Interviewees consistently voiced the need for enhanced pathways into selected occupations through OIRA's support to:

- Continue to support City and County efforts to support diversity in apprenticeship programs in construction, healthcare, and other sectors.
- Develop new Pre-apprenticeship programs in occupations with a concentration of immigrant and refugee workers such as transportation and supporting the efforts of Teamsters Union Local 174 to launch new programs for drivers.
- Expand pathways for existing non-traditional workforce development pathways such as in the retail grocery sector.
- Create navigational resources for certifying credentials, such as expanded pathways for underemployed immigrants and refugees with both U.S. and international college degrees into STEM and IT sectors.
- Create new internship programs for professional programs in the City of Seattle and King County.

ISSUE 7: EXPANDING COMMUNITY-LABOR-PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Across the board, interviewees acknowledged a need for creating working partnerships between their organizations and community organizations serving immigrant and refugee job seekers, including support to:

- Focus on the myriad needs of job seekers and current workers including job placement, retention services, access and enrollment in support services, language access services, and ESOL programs.
- Allow for more transformational relationships between labor, CBOs, and the public sector through the inclusion of CBOs at the commencement of program development.
- Create greater access to workforce opportunities for immigrants and refugees through CBOs and the labor community creating tighter-knit partnerships.
- Harness the CBO's trust with job seekers and the labor community's relationships with employers.
- Establish partnerships of CBOs and labor that are mutually beneficial.
- Convene CBOs and labor by OIRA/City of Seattle and the WDC to facilitate new partnerships and create safe spaces for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and networking.
- Develop a new role for cross-sector collaboration for professional development and advocacy.
- Provide technical support for newly established labor-management training trusts in new sectors.



ISSUE 8: CREDENTIALING FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES (IMGS)

Although credentialing of internationally trained and educated professionals is complicated due to a myriad of issues, our stakeholders worked through the complexities of this issue and offered several concrete solutions to support these individuals, which would in turn support Seattle's and King County's workforce needs:

- Recognize degrees and other credentials from international sources for employment in public sector jobs, as the current system is governed by regulatory regimes outside of local control. Local governments could partner with the State of Washington to examine if there are solutions that would fall under local domain.
- Provide options for individuals to demonstrate competency through innovative approaches such as credit for prior learning, badging/micro-credentials, and acceleration of licensing to move workers forward in career pathways.
- Alleviate the stringent licensure obstacles, which remain a significant hurdle for IMGs. These current hurdles include the requirements of extensive exams, clinical evaluations, and prolonged residency programs. These challenges could be alleviated by implementing solutions such as a streamlined licensure process and addressing the financial constraints that hinder advancement.
- Provide financial assistance to IMGs so that they can focus on their professional development without economic constraints.
- Recognize, support, and fund local non-profit organizations that support IMGs so that they can offer valuable resources such as mentorship programs and assistance in guiding IMGs to integrate into the local healthcare workforce. These organizations play a pivotal role in supporting IMGs to navigate the healthcare system and its plethora of complexities. A holistic approach such as this would support IMGs to bring valuable skills and perspectives to the healthcare sector.
- Establish mentorship programs, targeted residencies, and transitional positions which would provide structured pathways for IMGs to leverage expertise while fulfilling local requirements. This would facilitate integration of IMGs and their contribution to the overall diversity and richness of perspectives with healthcare.



CONCLUSION

The migration of people born outside the United States to our region was and is driven by the persistent economic demand for labor and the pursuit of immigrants for a better life in America. This report has demonstrated the various ways that immigrant groups have contributed to economic, social, and cultural development in our region. Our report has documented the vital role that immigrant workers, professionals, entrepreneurs, and small business owners have played in wealth creation and in the evolution of our vibrant regional economy. As a result, immigration has become a permanent and ongoing feature of life in our region and an urgent economic necessity.

Like many other "Welcoming Cities" in our nation, Seattle embraces a policy and public investment framework that supports the process of immigrant integration, protection of immigrant's constitutional and workplace rights, and racial and social justice. Nationally, the ongoing failure of comprehensive immigration reform places pressures and constraints of what state and local government can do in the absence of safe and legal pathways for migration, adequate capacity for refugee resettlement, reform of the Asylee process and the extension of amnesty for groups of unauthorized immigrants.

As our report details, in Seattle and King County, a wide range of community organizations, labor unions, employers, colleges and universities, government agencies, and workforce organizations are providing essential programs and services that contribute to improving workforce conditions for immigrant and refugee job seekers, workers, and professionals. But as our report findings indicated, there is much more that can still be done by policymakers and workforce stakeholders to improve and programs and services and leverage workforce development investments to generate greater impacts on those immigrant groups (and native-born residents) who are not benefiting from our robust regional economy.

This report calls for the adoption of a regional occupational strategy that would increase the representation of immigrant workers and professionals in quality jobs throughout our workforce in various sectors. The many organizations and stakeholders highlighted in this report have demonstrated they possess the needed expertise, experience, and program models to transform our workforce system in ways that will improve workforce outcomes for all those groups who continue to suffer from the persistent educational and economic structural inequities identified in our report. These groups include specific groups of immigrants and refugees, communities of color, women, and King County residents of all backgrounds who live in economically distressed neighborhoods.

Our report calls on City and County leaders to provide leadership and coordination of our siloed and bureaucratic regional workforce development eco-system. We also recommend the City and County make available to King County immigrants living outside of Seattle the suite of programs and services that OIRA provides to Seattle residents. These and the other goals suggested in this report can be achieved but such an outcome will require higher levels of advocacy and solidarity between community organizations, labor unions, workforce and immigrant stakeholders, and visionary leadership from policymakers.

Solidarity Works!



APPENDIX A:

Glossary of Key Terms

ALIEN

◀ BACK

We do not use this term in the report. The term “alien” was first introduced into California’s legislature in 1937 regarding the employment of people who were not born or fully naturalized U.S. citizens, specifically about the order of employment under public works contracts — “first to citizens of the United States, second to citizens of other States in the United States, and third to aliens.” The federal government’s use of the word dates to 1798 when it was used in the Alien and Sedition Acts. “Alien’ is now commonly considered a derogatory term for a person born outside the U.S. and has very negative and racist connotations and use.

ASYLEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER

◀ BACK

An asylee is a non-U.S. citizen who fled their home country seeking protection because they have suffered persecution or fear that they will suffer persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group and/or their political opinions. An asylee is a person who meets the definition of refugee and is already present in the United States or is seeking admission at a port of entry. Refugees are required to apply for Lawful Permanent Resident (“green card”) status one year after being admitted, and asylees may apply for green card status one year after their grant of asylum.

CITIZENSHIP AND NATURALIZATION

◀ BACK

Naturalization is the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a lawful permanent resident after meeting the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

DACA (DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS)

◀ BACK

Established in 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a policy that provides work authorization and protection from deportation to immigrants who arrived in the U.S. at a young age. DACA recipients are generally eligible for various workforce development programs and educational opportunities available to residents and authorized workers such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Presently, those who currently have DACA or had it within the last year can file for renewals of their DACA and work permits. The federal government is currently accepting, but not granting or even processing, applications from first-time applicants and anyone whose DACA expired more than one year ago.



ETHNICITY (AS DEFINED BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU)

◀ BACK

The U.S. Census findings on race and ethnicity are invaluable for understanding who we are as a region and how we're changing over time. Changes on the Census questionnaire on the question of ethnicity have led to confusion for immigrants in completing the Census and to misleading findings.

The census's race and ethnicity questions do not reflect how some people think about identity, and the ethnicity question doesn't allow people to select both Latino and non-Latino lineage.

FOREIGN-BORN

◀ BACK

Foreign-born is a term used by the Census Bureau to refer to a U.S. resident who is not a citizen at birth. This includes naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (immigrants), temporary migrants such as foreign students and temporary quest workers, (i.e. H1-B), humanitarian migrants (such as refugees and asylees), and unauthorized migrants. One problem with the term "foreign-born" is the word's pejorative and racist history, uses, and associations often is used to describe a person who "does not belong" in our country.

IMMIGRANT

◀ BACK

An immigrant is a person who lives in the U.S. but was born in another country. Immigrants generally come to the U.S. for several reasons but primarily to join family members who already live in this country, or they are "economic immigrants" seeking work and a better life for themselves and their families.

IMMIGRANT GROUPS

◀ BACK

Throughout this report, we provide relevant demographic, economic, and occupational data, and information about specific "groups" of immigrants and refugees presented by their country of origin (i.e. Mexican, Ukrainian, Canadian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Ethiopian, etc.) and by race (as defined by and reported to the US Census Bureau).

INTERNAL MIGRANT (INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON)

◀ BACK

The term "internal" migrant is often used to describe people who move from one part of their country to another. This includes those who relocate for personal reasons such as family and work or by forced displacement. The United Nations defines "displacement" as the movement of persons forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes to avoid the effects of armed conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. A crucial requirement to be considered a "refugee" is crossing an international border. Persons forcibly displaced from their homes who cannot or choose not to



cross a border, therefore, are not considered refugees, even if they share many of the same circumstances and challenges as those who do. Unlike refugees, internally displaced people do not have a special status in international law with rights specific to their situation. The term "internally displaced person" is merely descriptive.

LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT (LPR)

◀ BACK

Lawful permanent residents (LPRs), also known as "green card" holders, are non-citizens who are lawfully authorized to live permanently within the United States. LPRs may accept an offer of employment without special restrictions, own property, receive financial assistance at public colleges and universities, and join the Armed Forces. They also may apply to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain eligibility requirements. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides several broad classes of admission for foreign nationals to gain LPR status, the largest of which focuses on admitting immigrants for the purpose of family reunification. Other major categories include economic and humanitarian immigrants, as well as immigrants from countries with relatively low levels of immigration to the United States.

"NATIVITY", "NATIVE-BORN", AND "NATIVE-AMERICAN"

◀ BACK

The Census Bureau uses the terms native and native-born to refer to anyone born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the U.S. Virgin Islands), or abroad of a U.S. citizen parent or parents. In this report we do not use the term "native-born" but instead use the term "US-born" to refer to anyone born in the U.S. We also avoid the term "Native-American" and instead use the term "Indigenous".⁹⁶



NON-IMMIGRANT FOREIGN-BORN TEMPORARY GUEST WORKERS AND STUDENTS

◀ BACK

A “non-immigrant” are citizens of other countries born outside the U.S. who are admitted for residency for a specific temporary period with conditions on their stay. There are a large variety of non-immigrant categories, and each exists for a specific purpose and has specific terms and conditions. The largest number of non-immigrants are temporary guest workers and students. Most non-immigrants can be accompanied or joined by spouses and unmarried minor (dependent) children. There are two types of “non-immigrants”:

■ ***Non-Immigrant Temporary Guest Workers (H-1B and H-2A Programs)***

Temporary Guest Workers are born outside the U.S. and are hired by U.S. employers under the foreign labor certification program. Guest worker visas such as H-1B are used widely in the Tech sector allowing non-immigrant workers to live and work in the U.S. for a fixed period with their work permit tied to their employer. Guest workers can also apply for Legal Permanent Residency (LPR) through their employers, which serves as a pathway to citizenship. Section 218 of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the lawful admission into the United States of temporary, non-immigrant workers (H-2A workers) to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature.

■ ***Non-Immigrant Foreign-Born Students***

A non-immigrant student is admitted to the United States as a full-time academic student at an accredited college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, or other academic institution, or in a language training program. The student must be enrolled in a program or course of study that culminates in a degree diploma or certificate and the school must be authorized by the U.S. government to accept international students. Additionally, non-immigrants may be admitted to participate in vocational or other nonacademic programs, excluding language training.

PUBLIC CHARGE RULE

◀ BACK

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is amending its regulations to prescribe how it determines whether non-citizens are inadmissible to the United States because they are likely at any time to become a public charge. Non-citizens who are applicants for visas, admission, and adjustment of status must establish that they are not likely at any time to become a public charge unless Congress has expressly exempted them from this ground of inadmissibility or has otherwise permitted them to seek a waiver of inadmissibility. Under this rule, DHS would determine that a non-citizen is likely at any time to become a public charge if the non-citizen is likely at any time to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence, as demonstrated by either the receipt of public cash assistance for income maintenance or long-term institutionalization at government expense.



RACE (AS DEFINED BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU)

◀ BACK

Much of the data and demographic information used in this report is based on US Census Data including the category of race. The U.S. Census Bureau uses the following definitions in classifying individuals written responses to the race question during the conduct of the census. Respondents can report more than one race. An individual's response to the race question is based upon self-identification.

- **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
- **American Indian or Alaska Native** (Indigenous North, Central and South American): A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

The census's race and ethnicity questions do not reflect how some people think about identity, and the ethnicity question doesn't allow people to select both Latino and non-Latino lineage.

- Researchers too often subtract the racial identity of people with Latino ethnicity.
- Judgment calls by the Census Bureau in 2020 are leading to artificially low single-race-alone totals (and, therefore, artificially high multiracial totals).

In 2024, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget announced revisions to the way the government will ask the race and ethnicity questions on government forms and on the census. This will enable respondents to select multiple race categories. For example, a person of Middle eastern and Northern African descent will no longer be automatically considered white but will have the option of identifying as being of another race.

REFUGEE

◀ BACK

A refugee is a person who was forced to leave their home countries because of war, environmental disasters, political persecution and/or religious or ethnic intolerance. Refugees come to the United States with a special immigration status that gives them automatic admission into the country and helps them connect with family members who are already in the country. This status also provides them with the opportunity to apply for a "green card" or a permit to work. Refugees are "invited" to live in the United States to start a new life.



SPECIAL IMMIGRANT VISA RECIPIENTS (SIV)

◀ BACK

Special Immigrant Visa (SIV), is a State Department program created to bring Afghans and Iraqis endangered by their work with U.S. military units, government partners, and contractors to the United States. Grantees, or SIVs as they've come to be known, are awarded Lawful Permanent Resident status prior to arrival to the U.S. Many of these individuals worked as translators, interpreters, and other essential functions within U.S. Military Bases and Embassies in Iraq or Afghanistan, under the authority of the Chief of Mission or with the U.S. Armed Forces. SIVs frequently possess valuable language skills and cultural familiarity when they enter the U.S. job market.

TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS)

◀ BACK

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a program that grants migrants from countries facing unsafe conditions, such as natural disasters, prolonged civil unrest, or conflict, the opportunity to reside and work in the United States for a limited period, which can be extended. TPS beneficiaries are not considered lawful permanent residents or U.S. citizens. There are currently sixteen countries under TPS designations. As of March 2023, approximately 610,000 foreign nationals from the following countries who were living in the United States were protected by TPS: Afghanistan, Burma, Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

UNAUTHORIZED MIGRANTS

◀ BACK

An unauthorized migrant is a person who resides in the United States without official immigration authorization. The Census Bureau collects data from all foreign-born people who participate in its censuses and surveys, regardless of immigration status. Thus, unauthorized migrants are included in Census Bureau estimates of the total foreign-born population. While the government does not publicly report separate estimates of unauthorized migrants or any other legal status category, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) provides estimates that distinguish between authorized and unauthorized migration.



APPENDIX B:

List of Organization Partnering with Seattle's Labor Equity Team

- **Northwest Carpenter's Institute of Washington (NWCi):** Northwest Carpenter's Institute of Washington Northwest Carpenter's Institute of Washington (nwc.org)
- **Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training (PACT):** Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Training | Wood Technology Programs (seattlecentral.edu)
- **Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (ULMS):** Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle
- **YouthCare's YouthBuild:** YouthCare
- **Rainier Beach Action Coalition (RBAC):** Rainier Beach Action Coalition | Neighborhood implementation partner for Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth (rbcoalition.org)
- **Cassandra Banks Foundation:** Cassandra Banks Foundation
- **Pacific NW Ironworkers:** Local86 (local86.org)
- **Sphere Solar Energy:** About Us - Sphere Solar Energy
- **Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC):** Emerald Cities Collaborative Official Website | [Emeraldcities.org](http://emeraldcities.org)
- **Apprenticeship and Nontraditional Employment for Women (ANEW):** Pre-apprenticeship Trades Rotation Program (Training) - ANEW (anewcareer.org)
- **Legacy of Equality, Leadership, and Organizing:** LELO Re-licensing Program | Seattle and King County (lelorelicensing.org)



APPENDIX C:

List of Occupations with Approved Registered Apprenticeship Programs

AEROSPACE

- Composite Manufacturing
- Machinist
- Model Maker
- Aircraft Airframe Mechanic
- Precision Metal Fabricator

MEDICAL

- Dental Assistant
- Dispensing Optician
- Behavioral Health Coordinator
- Medical Assistant
- Mental Health Professional
- Peer Counselor
- School Health Technician

OTHER TRADES

- Automotive Service Technician
- Cosmetology
- Culinary Workers
- Butcher / Meat Cutter
- Esthetician
- Firefighter
- Manufacturing Technician

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

- Cloud Operations Specialist
- Electronic Systems Technician
- IT Business Analyst
- IT Support Professional
- Network Operations Developer
- Network Security Administrator
- Software Developer
- Systems Administrator
- Web Developer

CONSTRUCTION TRADES

- Bricklayer
- Carpenter
- Cement Mason
- Electrician
- Elevator Mechanic
- Heating and Cooling Technician
- Laborer
- Ironworker
- Painter and Decorator
- Plumber
- Powerline Worker



APPENDIX D:

Selected List of Apprenticeship Preparation Programs in King County

- *Washington State Dept. of Labor and Industries*
- *AJAC - Manufacturing Academy*
- *ANEW Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Education (PACE)*
- *ANEW Trades Rotation Program (TRP)*
- *Cement Masons and Plasterers Apprenticeship Preparation Program*
- *Computing For All Pre-Apprenticeship Program*
- *Direct Access to Laborers Education and Careers (Olympia)*
- *FTINW Painters and Allied Trades Veterans Program*
- *Green River Community College Carpentry Technology Program*
- *Highline Pre-Apprenticeship Program (HPP-Highline School District)*
- *Iron Workers #86 Pre-Apprenticeship Program*
- *Lindbergh High School Construction Program*
- *Machinists Institute Career Accelerator (MICA)*
- *Northwest Carpenters Institute Pre-Apprenticeship Program*
- *Nursing Assistant Apprenticeship*
- *Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry Training – PACT*
- *Seattle Conservation Corps*
- *Sno-Isle TECH Skills Center Aerospace Apprenticeship Preparation Program (Bellevue)*
- *TLG Learning IT Pre-Apprenticeship Program*
- *Western Washington Masonry Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program*
- *Youthbuild – Seattle*



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ENDNOTES

- 1 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 2 Americans encouraged relatively free and open immigration during the 18th and early 19th centuries, and rarely questioned that policy until the late 1800s. After certain states passed immigration laws following the Civil War, the Supreme Court in 1875 declared regulation of immigration a federal responsibility. Thus, as the number of immigrants rose in the 1880s and economic conditions in some areas worsened, Congress began to pass immigration legislation. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and Alien Contract Labor laws of 1885 and 1887 prohibited certain laborers from immigrating to the United States. The general Immigration Act of 1882 levied a head tax of fifty cents on each immigrant and blocked (or excluded) the entry of idiots, lunatics, convicts, and persons likely to become a public charge. <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/our-history/explore-agency-history/overview-of-agency-history/early-american-immigration-policies>
- 3 Humanitarian protections were severely diminished. The U.S.-Mexico border became more closed off than perhaps any time in U.S. history. Immigration enforcement appeared more random. And legal immigration became out of reach for many, with benefits adjudication increasingly tied to enforcement. All of this was accomplished nearly exclusively by the executive branch, with sweeping presidential proclamations and executive orders, departmental policy guidance, and hundreds of small, technical adjustments. Congress, which has been deadlocked on immigration legislation for years, largely sidelined itself during this period of incredibly dynamic policy change. And the federal judiciary, from individual district courts through the U.S. Supreme Court, at times blocked administration actions and at other times offered a green light. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-trump-at-4-report-final.pdf>
- 4 <https://immigrationimpact.com/2023/07/31/2023-review-immigration-state-legislation/>
- 6 <https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-ferguson-some-cases-against-federal-government-will-continue-despite-president#>
- 8 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
- 9 <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/migration>
- 10 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 11 <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/migration>
- 12 Prior to the arrival of European-American settlers, the economy and culture of the region were sustained by hunting, fresh and saltwater fishing, and the gathering of plants for food and medicine.
- 13 The Donation Claims Act of 1850 granted 320 acres to each adult U.S. citizen (640 acres to married couples) who arrived in Oregon Territory before December 1850, and resided on their claim for four years. (Oregon Territory extended over land that became the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and far western Montana.) Congress amended the Donation Claims Act to allow settlers who arrived in Oregon Territory between December 1850 and December 1855 to make smaller Donation Land Claims (up to 160 acres for single men and 320 acres for married couples). <https://www.historylink.org/file/1660>. Indigenous tribes helped settlers survive by selling them ducks and game, working at the sawmills, building houses, laboring as cooks and washerwomen, and in other occupations. The primary means of transportation was provided by waterways. Natural resources – especially timber – played a major role in King County's early history. Maritime trade spurred the development and growth of Seattle, which became an important stopping point for those hoping to prospect for gold in Alaska and the Yukon Territory.
- 14 <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/county-profiles/king>
- 15 Ibid.



- 16 Sources: Walt Crowley, *National Trust Guide Seattle* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1998); Art Chin, *Golden Tassels: A History of the Chinese in Washington, 1857-1977* (Seattle: n.p., 1977), 2-4. Also see *The Readers Companion to American History* ed. by Eric Foner and John A. Garraty (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991).
- 17 After 1882, only a specified number of diplomats, merchants, and students and their dependents were allowed to travel to the United States. By 1885, the population of Seattle residents who migrated from China grew to an estimated 950. During the 1880s, a growing racist movement of anti-Chinese Seattleites resulted in the Seattle Riot of 1886 in which mobs of White workers attempted to forcibly remove Chinese residents from the city. White workers, including recent German and Scandinavian immigrants, came to view the low-paid Chinese as unfair competitors for scant jobs during the depression of the mid-1880s. Local organizers of the Knights of Labor and other early unions excoriated them as potential strikebreakers. In the aftermath, few Chinese residents remained. Political, economic, and legal developments in both countries during subsequent decades made it difficult for Chinese nationals either to leave China or to obtain a U.S. Visa.
- 18 The Chinese Exclusion Acts were repealed during World War II, and thousands of young Chinese men joined the U.S. military.
- 19 During the 1860s, Japanese migrant contract workers started moving to Hawaii and by the mid-1880's their emigration to accelerated. Beginning in 1890, with the completion of their contracts at sugar cane plantations, many Japanese laborers chose to permanently live in Hawaii and established communities in cities starting a range of small businesses and initiating a process of integration into Hawaiian culture, civic life, and local economy. In Japan, the transformation and modernization of the society led to the economic dispossession of thousands of farmers and peasants who lost their homes and land. Immigration seemed an attractive option to many rural Japanese. Japanese immigrants worked in the labor-intensive industries of railroad construction, logging, mining, fish processing, and agriculture. <https://www.historylink.org/File/300>
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the forced evacuation. Both Seattle Mayor Earl Millikan and Governor Arthur Langlie (1900-1966) declared their support of the removal. Concentration camp residents, beginning in January 1945, were permitted to return to the U.S. West Coast.
- 23 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/filipino-immigrants-united-states-2020>
- 24 <https://www.historylink.org/File/409>
- 25 <https://www.historylink.org/File/7901>
- 26 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/WA>
- 27 <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/african/africans-in-america/>
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/data/percentage-of-Blacks-living-in-seattle-at-lowest-point-in-50-years/>
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 https://www2.hawaii.edu/~sford/alternatv/s05/articles/qin_history.html
- 32 <https://depts.washington.edu/moving1/Washington.shtml>
- 33 <https://www.bushcenter.org/publications/ranking-of-metros-where-immigrants-are-thriving>
- 34 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute
- 35 <https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/demographics>
- 36 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/WA>



- 37 <https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/depts/health/data/community-health-indicators/american-community-survey.aspx>
- 38 <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/county-profiles/king>
- 39 Migration Policy Institute, 2021 US Census Pooled American Community Survey, (2017-2021), Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 40 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute
- 41 In keeping with the definition used by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and the US Census bureau defines the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region as including: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco (and Western Sahara), Occupied Palestinian Territories, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The US Census Bureau reported nation-wide that more than 440,000 residents emigrated from a country in the Middle-East including Iraq (250,000); Lebanon (120,000); Syria (93,000); Jordan (90,000); Saudi Arabia (77,000); Yemen (59,000); and Kuwait (31,000)
- 42 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 43 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute
- 44 Migration Policy Institute, 2021 US Census Pooled American Community Survey, (2017-2021), Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 45 Washington Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, Refugee Forum of King County, September 21, 2023
- 46 <https://medium.com/wagovernor/refugees-welcome-washingtons-commitment-to-help-people-escaping-violence-and-deprivation-cf6dd446b5f8>
- 47 Migration Policy Institute. "Washington State Demographics." Migration Policy Institute. Accessed January 9, 2024. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/WA>
- 48 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute
- 49 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/authorized-immigrant-population/state/WA> Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Nearly all people apprehended while attempting to enter the country illegally at the U.S.-Mexico border are from either Mexico or Central America. This stands in contrast to the origins of visa overstays. In recent years, immigrants from countries outside of Mexico and Central America accounted for almost 90% of overstays, and in 2017, there were more than 30 overstays for every border apprehension for these countries. Although the Census Bureau data Pew Research Center uses to estimate the size of the unauthorized immigrant population does not indicate directly whether someone arrived with legal status, the origin countries of immigrants in these sources provide indirect evidence. From 2007 to 2017, the share of newly arrived unauthorized immigrants (those in the U.S. five years or less) from regions other than Central America and Mexico – the vast majority of whom are overstays – increased from 37% to 63%. At the same time, the share of new unauthorized immigrants from Mexico fell from 52% to 20%. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/16/what-we-know-about-unauthorized-immigrants-living-in-the-us/>
- 52 <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-washington>
- 53 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.



- 55 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/WA>
- 56 There is no readily available data source on the number of actual H-1B workers in the tech sector by state —this data is only available nationally by employer. However, on average, roughly one third of new applications each year are successfully approved. Based on this, and assuming all renewals are accepted, we can estimate that more than 20,000 H-1B workers were admitted or renewed in Washington State in federal fiscal year 2019. Other estimates indicate a number closer to 40,000.
- 57 The total number of international students in 2020 in our region included 8,799 (UW); 1,414 (Green River); 1,317 (Seattle Colleges); and 1,176 (Bellevue College). <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/sevisBTN2020.pdf>
- 58 <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/reports/USCIS%20H-1B%20Authorized%20to%20Work%20Report.pdf>
- 59 <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/county-profiles/king> Washington State, Employment Security Division
- 60 Advancing Workforce Equity In Seattle A Blueprint For Action. This report was produced by the National Equity Atlas, a research partnership between Policy Link and the USC Equity Research Institute.
- 61 Washington State Department of Commerce, “Key Industry Focus, <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/key-sectors/>
- 62 Ibid
- 63 Creating Quality Jobs in the Tech Sector, https://www.progressiveworkforcestrategies.com/uploads/9/0/0/9/9009417/creating_quality_jobs_210623a.pdf
- 64 The national income and product accounts that underlie gross domestic product (GDP), together with other key economic data – price and employment statistics – are widely used as indicators of how well the nation is doing. GDP, however, is focused on the production of goods and services sold in markets and reveals relatively little about important production in the home and other areas outside of markets. A set of satellite accounts – in areas such as health, education, volunteer and home production, and environmental improvement or pollution – would contribute to a better understanding of major issues related to economic growth and societal well-being. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2005. Beyond the Market: Designing Nonmarket Accounts for the United States. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/11181>
- 65 <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/inslee-updates-list-of-essential-businesses-workers-for-stay-home-order-to-stem-spread-of-coronavirus/>
- 66 <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/annual-report> Washington State, Employment Security Division
- 67 <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/washington>
- 68 <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-with-the-best-economies/21697>
- 69 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/WA>
- 70 The U.S. Census Bureau produces a wealth of data on self-employed Americans. This information is useful to a host of people, from policy makers, to researchers, to marketers, to people who simply want to be educated. However, understanding the data requires those using them to be aware that they discuss two different types of self-employment:
- Incorporated self-employment: Refers to people who work for themselves in corporate entities.
 - Unincorporated self-employment: Refers to people who work for themselves in other legal entities.

The most important difference between incorporated and unincorporated self-employment lies in their commonality. Many more Americans are unincorporated self-employed (6.1 percent of the labor force) than incorporated self-employed (3.5 percent of the labor force). This difference in frequency means that any discussion of all self-employed workers requires properly weighting the two groups of self-employed.

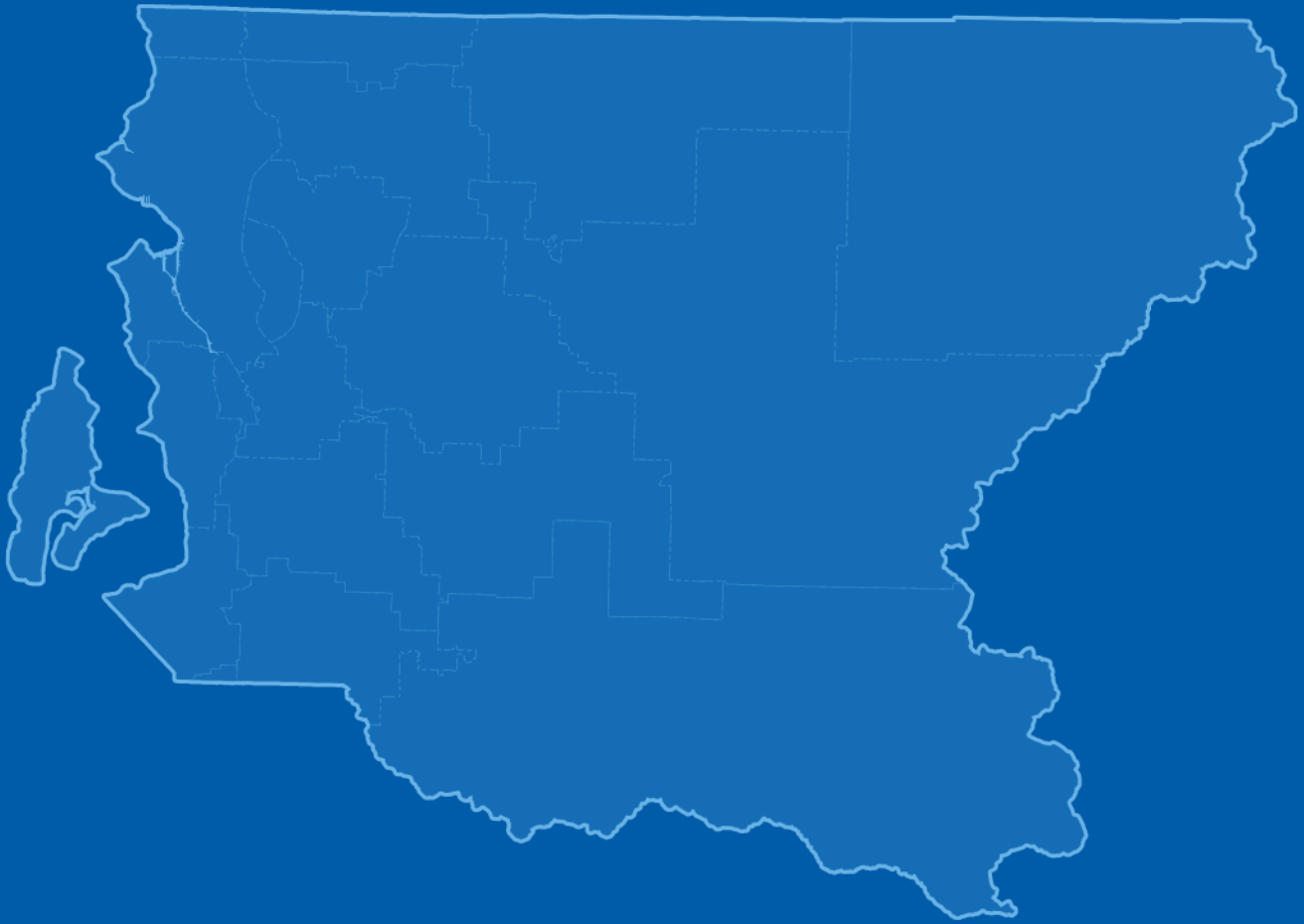


- 71 "New Americans in Washington", American Migration Council, Unless otherwise specified, data comes from the American Immigration Council analysis of microdata from the 1-year sample of the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), downloaded from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), <https://www.ipums.org/>
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Migration Policy Institute, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/immigrant-health-care-workers-united-states#Number_Share
Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 74 Migration Policy Institute. 2023. "Custom Washington State County and City Demographic Dataset Based on U.S. American Community Survey Data." Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 75 For this report define the technology sector as consisting of businesses and organizations primarily engaged in one of four main subsectors: business services, electronic retail, internet services, and software publishing. For example, our definition of the sector includes all workers directly employed by the big four tech companies in the Seattle area: Amazon (including warehouse workers), Microsoft, Google, Facebook, as well as startup companies, but excludes other sectors such as manufacturing and telecommunications included in other studies of the tech sector.
- 76 Washington Technology Industry Association Technology Sector Role In Economic Recovery, Spencer Cohen
- 77 USCIS national estimate of H-1B population: 583,420 in 2019. SOURCE: Page1: <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/reports/USCIS%20H-1B%20Authorized%20to%20Work%20Report.pdf> Then I used the Department of Labor H-1B Labor Condition Application (LCA) disclosure data for 2023 to estimate the King County share of the overall H-1B population. The LCA data includes the worksite city and county.
- 78 Chutes and Ladders: How Economic Mobility is Changing in an Inequality Society, 2014 and Uneven Ground, How Race and Origin Impact Economic Opportunity in Washington State, 2015
- 79 Federal Reserve Board of Governors, 2020.
- 80 Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington School of Social Work and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County published a report, Overlooked and Undercounted Struggling to Make Ends Meet in Washington State
<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/depts/health/data/community-health-indicators/american-community-survey.aspx>
- 81 <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/annual-report> Washington State, Employment Security Division.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 Advancing Workforce Equity In Seattle A Blueprint For Action. This report was produced by the National Equity Atlas, a research partnership between Policy Link and the USC Equity Research Institute.
- 84 Source: Figures for women overall by state are based on 2021 American Community Survey 1-year estimates. Figures for Black women and Latinas by state are based on 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 The federal government calculates the "U-6" unemployment rate that measures not only traditional unemployment (individuals who are out of work and actively seeking employment), but also "all persons marginally attached to the labor force, plus total employed part time for economic reasons." Marginally attached workers are those who are neither working nor actively seeking employment, but who remain willing and able to work or have looked for work within the past year. Those employed part-time for economic reasons are workers who work part-time but would prefer to work full time.



- 89 https://www.progressiveworkforcestrategies.com/uploads/9/0/0/9/9009417/breaking_barriers_and_building_bridges_.pdf
- 90 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/brain-waste-college-educated-immigrants> Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
- 91 Migration Policy Institute tabulations of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and Decennial Census. Unless stated otherwise, 2021 data are from the one-year ACS file. Estimates from 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census data as well as ACS microdata are from Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Megan Schouweiler and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V12.0>
- 92 <https://socialwork.uw.edu/wageequitystudy> "Wage Equity for Non-Profit Human Services Workers: A study of work and pay in Seattle and King County" FEBRUARY 2023, University of Washington School of Social Work
- 93 https://bottomline.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2023/08/Future-of-Seattle-Economy_Investment-Recommendations_Final-221201-1.pdf
- 95 <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/FAS/PurchasingAndContracting/Labor/FAS-PC-CAI-RPO-Construction-Workforce-Forecast-Update.pdf>
- 96 Generally, Indigenous refers to those peoples with pre-existing sovereignty who were living together as a community prior to contact with settler populations, most often – though not exclusively – Europeans. Indigenous is the most inclusive term, as there are Indigenous peoples on every continent throughout the world – such as the Sami in Sweden, the First Nations in Canada, Mayas in Mexico and Guatemala, and the Ainu in Japan – fighting to remain culturally intact on their land bases. Indigenous Peoples refers to a group of Indigenous peoples with a shared national identity, such as "Navajo" or "Sami," and is the equivalent of saying "the American people." Native American and American Indian are terms used to refer to peoples living within what is now the United States prior to European contact. American Indian has a specific legal context because the branch of law, Federal Indian Law, uses this terminology. American Indian is also used by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget through the U.S. Census Bureau. Whenever possible, it is best to use the name of an individual's particular Indigenous community or nation of people; for example, "Tongva," "Tataviam" and "Chumash" are the Indigenous Peoples of the Los Angeles area, and they are also "American Indian," "Native American," and "Indigenous." <https://equity.ucla.edu/known/resources-on-native-american-and-indigenous-affairs/native-american-and-indigenous-peoples-faqs/#whoareind>





**The Office of Immigrant
and Refugee Affairs**

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