



**TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Council Member Catherine Ushka  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution - Expanding Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Membership to Thirteen Positions - October 26, 2021  
**DATE:** 10/20/2021

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**SUMMARY & PURPOSE:**

A resolution to increase the Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs membership from 11 to 13.  
[Council Member Catherine Ushka]

**COUNCIL SPONSORS:**

Council Members John Hines, Lillian Hunter, and Catherine Ushka.

**BACKGROUND:**

**This Council Member's Recommendation is Based On:**

On December 12, 2017, The Tacoma City Council adopted Resolution 39892, a resolution establishing a Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (CIRA), to be composed of eleven members and an alternate, for the purpose of better engaging immigrant and refugee communities, and to work with community partners and staff to identify and advance positive outcomes related to removing barriers for said communities

On September 23, 2021, CIRA presented their annual report to the Community, Vitality and Safety Council Committee. One item highlighted in the presentation is that CIRA is an active commission with work being done in multiple subcommittees. Currently, some Commissioners serve on more than one subcommittee and it creates capacity limitations for CIRA's work. CIRA requested the Council expand CIRA's membership by two members in order to better distribute the work of the Commission.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ (CUSTOMER RESEARCH):**

This resolution is at the request of CIRA members.

**2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

**Equity and Accessibility:**

CIRA was established for the purpose of better engaging Tacoma's immigrant and refugee communities; and to work with community partners, City departments, and within the City's Equity and Empowerment framework to identify and advance positive outcomes for members of refugee and immigrant communities related to access to and participation in Tacoma's economic, cultural and civic life and to employment, economic development, public health, student achievement, citizenship, public safety, criminal justice, civic engagement, language access, and protection of civil rights.

**Civic Engagement:** *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Elected officials, boards, commissions, and volunteer leadership will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community.

Increase the percentage of residents who believe they are able to have a positive impact on the community and express trust in the public institutions in Tacoma.

Representation at public meetings will reflect the diversity of the Tacoma community



Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s)?

Expanding CIRA membership will increase civic participation and elevate voices of immigrants and refugees in the City of Tacoma.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Presumably your recommendation is not the only potential course of action; please discuss other alternatives actions for council or staff to take. Please use table below.

| Alternative        | Positive Impacts  | Negative Impacts   |
|--------------------|---|--|
| 1. Take no action. | Minimize staff and committee time needed for appointment process. | Prevent CIRA from bringing on volunteers to meet their capacity needs. |

**EVALUATIONS AND FOLLOW UP:**

Resolution No. 39892, which established CIRA, calls on CIRA to develop an Annual Workplan and an Annual Report of each previous year’s work. The Annual Report shall include a summary of Commission accomplishments and challenges, as well as recommendations on how the City can continue to develop and implement programs, services, and practices specific to the purpose of furthering immigrant and refugee access to and participation in Tacoma’s economic, cultural, and civic life. The Commission shall brief the assigned City Council Committee on its Annual Workplan and Annual Report. This practice shall continue.

**COUNCIL MEMBER RECOMMENDATION:**

Sponsors recommend passing this resolution in order to increase CIRA membership in order to allow them to build needed capacity to complete the Commission’s goals.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No fiscal impact.