



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Council Member Kristina Walker and Christina Caan, Policy Analyst, City Manager's Office
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution – Sponsorship of Tacoma Refugee Choir's first annual symposium, "From Welcoming to Cooperation" – March 19, 2024
DATE: March 6, 2024

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

A resolution authorizing a Council contingency fund expenditure of \$10,000 to sponsor the Tacoma Refugee Choir's first annual symposium, "From Welcoming to Cooperation."

COUNCIL SPONSORS

Mayor Victoria Woodards, Council Member Catherine Ushka, Council Member Kristina Walker, and Council Member Joe Bushnell

BACKGROUND

This Council contingency fund expenditure would enable the City to sponsor the Tacoma Refugee Choir's (TRC) first annual symposium, "From Welcoming to Cooperation." This day-long symposium is open to all and aims to expand TRC's work in the community by bringing together people in Tacoma working in the space of arts programming, nonprofit, community-building, mental health research, public health, and any kind of institutional decision-making. Participants will learn about TRC's journey creating a welcoming community in Tacoma, while also discussing and sharing ideas that build on TRC's experiences to further foster a welcoming community and move toward expanding multicultural cooperation. Participants will produce a relationship-building toolkit that will assist with identifying practices for our community that will enhance a spirit of welcoming and engender belonging. The toolkit will include guide sheets and diagnostic tools to help practitioners carry forward the symposium's discussions and apply the lessons to their work where practicable.

This Council contingency fund request would provide funding for the symposium venue, audio and visual resources, food and drink for participants, and participant materials to co-create the toolkit that will be shared widely with practitioners. TRC hopes to welcome 80-100 attendees and the symposium will include a breakfast and lunch, as well as group discussions regarding welcoming, multicultural cooperation, arts, and leadership. This event is designed to be interactive and participatory. TRC will include the City logo on all publicity and participant materials. TRC is also offering complimentary tickets for City Council Members and a limited number of City staff members.

TRC launched in 2016 in partnership with Tacoma Community House and has since grown to create a welcoming and affirmative learning experience for over 700 participants from 65 nations, along with diverse members from the United States. TRC's efforts have focused on community building and education, as well as emphasizing the power of individuals to welcome and support others and use their voice to make a difference through their choir program. The choir program meets every Tuesday night and is designed to quickly help people make friends, overcome barriers, and engage in a communal experience of music, food, and dance. The group believes that singing together offers the opportunity to empower participants to be leaders and recognize the value of all members of the community. Community members can join the choir for free and without audition, ensuring broad accessibility and inclusion.



- The symposium is an opportunity for TRC to expand their role in the community beyond the choir and to help drive broader community building and resources. TRC has received \$1,000 from Tacoma Special Events to help support the symposium and additional funding is needed. Tacoma Special Events funding fell short of the need because it had to be divided among a high volume of applicants this year.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH

TRC is focused on outreach with the refugee and immigrant community in Tacoma and creating a space of love, hope, and belonging for all. The symposium will provide an opportunity for participants to learn about TRC's journey creating a welcoming community for their "choir family" and hear about the experiences of others in the community seeking to promote multicultural cooperation. The symposium is open to all who enjoy what TRC does and want to learn how they carry out their mission. Council Member Kristina Walker has also shared this Council contingency fund request with the City's Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Equity and Accessibility

Washington has historically ranked as one of the top ten resettlement states in the United States and about twelve percent of Tacoma's population is foreign born.¹² Tacoma has been a member of the Welcoming Cities and Counties Initiative for nearly a decade, with the aim of creating a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly environment that maximizes opportunities for economic growth and cultural vitality.³ This symposium will help advance efforts to learn how to intentionally create a cross-cultural and multicultural community through the arts and to codify those learnings in the hopes of sharing them with like-minded partners. This work seeks to help creatively break down barriers—particularly around isolation and polarization—and encourage connection among diverse community members.

Civic Engagement: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

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.

Livability: *Equity Index Score:* Moderate Opportunity

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

This contingency fund request would help advance Tacoma's goal of becoming a welcoming city and ensuring that the refugee and immigrant community have local support. The symposium will also help increase the quality of life for refugees and immigrants by providing a forum to identify and codify tools for bolstering practices that create a welcoming and collaborative community.

¹ [Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance | DSHS \(wa.gov\)](#).

² [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Tacoma city, Washington; United States](#)

³ [RES39116 - Resolution No. 39116 \(cityoftacoma.org\)](#).



ALTERNATIVES

Alternative	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Provide less funding	Preserve some additional contingency funds for other Council priorities.	Tacoma Refugee Choir would need to find alternative sponsors or limit resources for the event, minimizing the value to the community.
Provide more funding	Enable Tacoma Refugee Choir to expand the symposium, providing additional community benefit.	Tacoma Refugee Choir has not requested additional funds.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP

These contingency funds are intended as a one-time funding source for TRC’s first annual symposium, “From Welcoming to Cooperation.” Event organizers will be provided with information on how to apply for future grants and funding opportunities at the City of Tacoma during standard application cycles.

SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION

Sponsors recommend providing \$10,000 for TRC’s first annual symposium, “From Welcoming to Cooperation.”

FISCAL IMPACT

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1. 1030 – Council Contingency Fund	660000		\$10,000
TOTAL			\$10,000

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

Council Contingency Funds

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium’s current budget?

The Council Contingency Fund provides an established amount of funding each year for unbudgeted Council sponsored initiatives.

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

NO

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

NO

Will the legislation change the City’s FTE/personnel counts?

NO



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

ATTACHMENTS:

None