

Refugees and Immigrants

The City of Bellevue's population continues to grow and diversify. In 1990, the U.S. Census reported 86.5% of Bellevue residents indicated as a single race, White.¹ In the 2013 American Community Survey, this percentage declined to 66%, a higher level of diversity than in King County.² In 2011-2013, Bellevue's population accounts for 42% of minorities.³ Specifically, Bellevue's Asian and Hispanic/Latino populations have been the fastest growing populations. The latest American Community Survey (ACS) indicates that Asians account for 31% and Hispanic/Latinos account for 6%.⁴ Many of the minority residents in Bellevue, Washington are from diverse groups that consist of immigrants and refugees.

What's Working?

- The Muslim Community Resource Center (MCRC) is a non-profit service organization led by a group of community volunteers founded in 2011. MCRC provides support throughout King County, but has a significant presence in East King County. MCRC provides a common platform for Muslim community services engagement and partners with like-minded faith based organizations (Muslim and non-Muslim), city and local services, assistance providers to service community needs. The focus is to connect to those in need with relevant resources and service providers in community.⁵
- The India Association of Western Washington (IAWW) is a non-profit, secular, volunteer run organization founded 32 years ago whose mission is "To provide a common identity to the Indian community and facilitate cultural, social and educational services and opportunities for cultural integration from young to old of the community; as well as to foster those activities that enhance mutual understanding and appreciation between the Indo-American community and mainstream American community."⁶
- Bellevue's Neighborhood Outreach Pro-

gram sponsors a bi-monthly group for women at Crossroads Community Center called Cultural Conversations. This networking and discussion group began in response to requests from women from diverse cultural backgrounds who wanted to be more connected in their community. Some of the activities at Cultural Conversations in 2015 included exploring probing questions about the American dream, identity, genealogy, and rituals.

Prevalence Specific Race and Ethnicity Characteristics in Bellevue

The City of Bellevue Department of Planning and Community Development provided the following analysis from the 2010 Census and 2009-2013 ACS, the most recent data available:

- Since 1990, the proportion of Non-White people in Bellevue has more than quadrupled from about 15 % of the population in 1990 to 28% in 2000, and finally, 38% in 2013. Bellevue's Asians and Hispanics are the fastest growing racial and ethnic groups in the city. The population for both these groups more than doubled between 1990 and 2013.
- Bellevue's Asian population is a substantial portion of the overall City population (31%), the highest percentage of any city in the State. While Chinese residents make up the largest portion of Bellevue's Asian population (11%), Asian Indians have had the fastest rate of growth since 1990, increasing in population by over 1,400%.
- In 2013, Hispanics or Latinos comprised 6% of Bellevue's population, up from 5% in 2000. Crossroads and West Lake Hills had the highest proportion of Hispanics with almost 15% each. The largest group of Hispanic/Latino residents is from Mexico (67%).
- The Black or African American community in Bellevue grew at a rate faster than that of the City as a whole. While the Bellevue

population grew more than 11% since 2000, the Black or African American community increased 28%. According to the 2013 ACS, Black or African Americans still make up only 3% of the Bellevue population.

- According to the 2011-2013 ACS, nearly 40% of Bellevue residents spoke a language other than English at home. This is a higher percentage than King County (26%), Seattle (21%), and Washington State (18%). About 20% of Bellevue’s non-English speakers speak an Asian language; the next highest percentages speak either an Indo-European language (12%) or Spanish (5%).
- During 2009-2013, Bellevue had the second highest estimated number and 16th highest percentage (33%) of foreign born residents out of Washington State’s 281 incorporated cities. Tukwila and SeaTac were the only cities in King County with higher percentages.
- In 2009-2013, about 16% of Bellevue’s households had no one over the age of 14 who spoke English “very well”. This is an increase from about 6% in 2000. These households are considered linguistically isolated. Crossroads and West Lake Hills have the highest percentages of linguistically isolated households.

Definition of Refugee

- Refugees are people who, based on a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, leave their native country and apply to another country for residency. A refugee is granted legal status and protection before entry into the U.S. In some cases when the President can allow some countries to process refugees in their country of origin. In 2014, nationals of Cuba, the republics of the former Soviet Union and Iraq were processed in this manner.⁷

World and National Refugee Trends

- According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), at the end of 2014 there were some 59.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.⁸ This

total includes 19.5 million refugees, 1.8 million asylum seekers, and 38.2 million people uprooted within their own countries. For the first time, Turkey became the largest refugee-hosting country worldwide, with 1.59 million refugees. Turkey was followed by Pakistan (1.5 million), Lebanon (1.15 million), the Islamic Republic of Iran (982,000), Ethiopia (659,500), and Jordan (654,100) in 2014.⁹

- At the beginning of each fiscal year, the President works with Congress to establish the number of refugees who may be admitted in the coming year, with a quota from each of the regions of the world. The figure below indicates the shortfall between how many refugees were authorized for admission compared to how many were actually admitted. As depicted in the figure below, numbers of refugees being legally admitted in the U.S. have generally declined over the past fifteen years, reaching an all-time low of 27,029 in FY 2002, subsequent to the 9/11 attack. Between 2002 and 2007 refugee admissions ceilings were set at 70,000/year, yet much lower numbers were actually admitted. In federal fiscal year 2008, the refugee admissions ceiling was increased to 80,000, due to the expected resettlement of Iraqi, Bhutanese, and Iranian refugees in the Near East/South Asia region. Further

Year	Ceiling	Number of Refugees Admitted
2002	70,000	27,029
2003	70,000	28,422
2004	70,000	52,868
2005	70,000	53,813
2006	70,000	41,150
2007	70,000	48,218
2008	80,000	60,108
2009	80,000	74,602
2010	80,000	73,293
2011	80,000	56,424
2012	76,000	58,238
2013	70,000	69,926
2014	70,000	69,987

Figure 1. Refugee Ceilings and admitted Refugees in the U.S., 2002-2014.

Source: Immigration Policy Center.

the ceiling for 2012 was at 76,000. For the years of 2013 through 2015 the ceiling has been set at 70,000. President Obama and his administration have proposed that the ceiling be increased by 10,000 for 2016 to include more Syrian refugees. Currently, there are 4 million Syrians who have fled their country due to violence and persecution. The refugee ceiling increase is pending on bureaucratic, legal, and statutory issues.¹⁰

- The annual average number of refugee arrivals declined from approximately 100,000 during the 1990s to 50,000 during the 2000 to 2006 period. This decline is partly due to changes in security procedures after 9/11 and admission requirements resulting from the USA Patriot Act of 2001 and the Real ID Act of 2005. Following this decline, the total number of refugees admitted to the United States increased by 25% from 48,218 in 2007 to 60,104 in 2008, and 74,602 in 2009. In 2010, there was a decrease of 1.8% from 2009, to 73,293. In 2012 there was a further decrease of 20% to 58,238. In 2012, the leading countries of nationality for refugee admissions were Bhutan (26%), Burma (24%), and Iraq (21%). Approximately 71% of refugees were from these 3 countries. Other leading countries include Somalia (8%), Cuba (3%), Iran (3%), Democratic Republic of Congo (3%), and Eritrea (2%). Moving forward, the last two years have had a sharp increase of refugee admissions. For 2013 it was 69,926, a 20% increase from 2012. In 2014, 69,287 refugees were granted admissions. A record high of nearly 1.7 million individuals submitted applications for asylum or refugee status.¹¹ The leading countries continue to be near East/South Asia specifically Iraq (27.9%), Iran (23.3%), and Bhutan (13.1%) account for most of refugee arrivals.¹² The large increase

in the number of refugees admitted to the United States reflects better synchronization of security and medical checks for refugee families as well staffing increases.¹³

Definition of Immigrant, Asylee and Refugee

- Immigrants are people who have petitioned to enter the United States to become lawful permanent residents from countries that have not been designated by the U.S. as having refugee eligibility. Immigrants have chosen for a variety of reasons to leave their homes to go to another country. By comparison, refugees are those who feel forced to leave their homes due to persecution. Asylees are foreign nationals currently residing in the U.S. who have the same fear of persecution and death as refugees if they return to their country of origin. Different application processes and rules apply to those who are seeking asylum in the U.S.¹⁴
- The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigrant Services (BCIS), formerly the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, under the Department of Homeland Security, implements immigration policy passed by Congress, including establishing quotas by country for the number of new immigrants allowed to settle in the U.S. annually as well as rules regarding their treatment and benefits. Unlike refugees, immigrants are

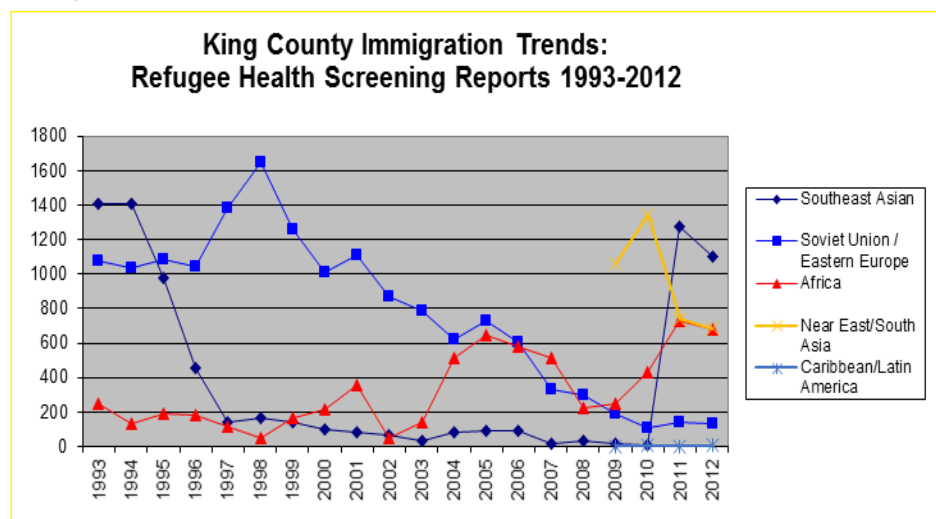


Figure 2. Source: Public Health – Seattle & King County
(Note: This is the latest report, King County has changed its methods in how to extract immigration trends, however, the trends are consistent for 2013-2014 in which are discussed in the following).

not entitled to medical and cash benefits for up to eight months after their arrival in the United States.¹⁵ In 2012, the U.S. admitted 1,031,631 immigrants obtaining legal permanent resident status, a 2% decrease compared to 2010.¹⁶ Furthermore in 2013 there were 990,553 immigrants that obtained legal permanent resident status in the U.S., a 1% decrease compared to 2012.¹⁷

- The Personal Responsibility Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) passed by Congress in 1996 reformed the federal welfare system. It also drastically reduced or eliminated entitlements such as Social Security and food stamps for all immigrants who entered the country after August 22, 1996. The ongoing cuts of benefits on both the state and federal level has continued to deeply impact human services agencies as they struggle to find other sources of funding to serve immigrants.¹⁸

Washington State and King County Trends

- Exact figures on the total population of both immigrants and refugees are generally unavailable, since most sources do not account for the high levels of internal migration. The 2013 ACS estimates that 898,091 of Washington State residents are foreign-born, with 81.5% speaking a language other than English at home.¹⁹ Both refugee and immigrant numbers are probably higher as language barriers, cultural considerations, and other factors make both groups more difficult to quantify than U.S.-born citizens. In 2014, Washington ranked eleventh in the U.S., resettling 2,483 refugee arrivals, representing about 3.5% of total new refugee arrivals to the U.S. in 2014.²⁰
- Between 2012-2013, Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGS) in Washington State assisted an average of 2,000-3,000 new refugees with their physical, social, cultural and economic needs.²¹ Washington's largest arrivals have shifted to more diverse groups from Southeast Asian, such as Burmese and Bhutanese. Refugees from the former Soviet Union and Somali are still a large portion of the total. Larger numbers of Iranians and Iraqis are also arriving.²² In 2014, the leading refu-

gee groups were Iraq (704), Somalia (534), Burma (334), Ukraine (134), Democratic Republic of the Congo (131), Bhutan (122), and Iran (108). This growing demand for services puts a strain on existing community resources to meet basic needs including housing, employment, and health care.²³

- For those refugees arriving directly in King County, Public Health-Seattle & King County provides figures based on initial health screenings required of all refugees. As the Figure 2 on the previous page shows, data from 1995 through 2008 indicate a declining trend of arrivals, particularly during 2002 and 2003, when totals were barely over 1,000, less than half compared to the mid-1990s. In 2003, the largest group of refugees continued to be from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with 795 arrivals. The next largest group came from Africa, primarily from Somalia. The last were arrivals from the Near East/South Asia, which includes Burma, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq. In 2004, the total number of refugees screened increased to 1,264. The most dramatic individual increase in 2004 is the number of refugees from African countries, with 510 arrivals, just slightly less than the traditional leaders, those from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe who had 619. Between 2003 and 2004, the number of refugees from Africa resettling in King County increased by 210%. In 2005, there were 1,538 people screened, with the largest number from the former Soviet Union, and in 2006, 1,383. In 2007 and 2008, there was a slight decrease overall, with 1,159 and 1,194, respectively. In 2007, the largest groups were from the former Soviet Union, Somalia, and Burma. In 2008, 196 Bhutanese refugees were resettled here coming from camps in Nepal. The other large groups were from the former Soviet Union, and Burma. In 2009, 1,526 refugees were screened, in 2010, 1,894, the largest increase since 1998, in King County. The largest group was from Iraq (452) followed by people from Burma. In 2012 the numbers went up again to 2,608, with the largest group of refugees coming from Bhutan and Burma.²⁴ Further the trends continues to increase for 2013-2014 with refugees mostly

coming from Iraq (647), Somalia (476), and Burma (301). The trends continue to increase for 2013-2014 with refugees mostly coming from Iraq (647), Somalia (476), and Burma (301). In 2013 there was 2,596 refugee arrivals and in 2014 there was 3,190 arrivals. King County typically resettles approximately 66% of all refugee arrivals to Washington State, and all those settling in King County come to the Public Health Center in Seattle for basic health screening and immunization update, within 90 days of their arrival in the USA.²⁵

Refugee and Immigrant Groups in Bellevue

- In Bellevue, anecdotal information from providers' surveys and key informant interviews indicate that the largest groups of refugees encountered for human services are Asia. The largest group of immigrants in Bellevue using services tends to be Hispanic/Latino, primarily from Mexico, followed by Chinese, Koreans and people from East Indian countries. Also, staff from Crossroads mini-city hall vocalized that there is a slight increase of immigrants from Africa.
- Jewish Family Service (JFS) reports that new refugees arriving to King County in the next year will be primarily from Burma, Iraq, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The largest groups resettling in East King County remain Iranians and Iraqis. The overall number of refugee arrivals is forecast to increase to 2,400 refugees for Washington State, with approximately 2,000 resettling in Western Washington. JFS plans to resettle 300 refugees in the next year, with most residing initially in South King County.²⁶

"We want people from India to know their roots, but also give back to the community."
Key Informant Interview, India Association of Western Washington volunteers

Service Trends Need for English Language Learners (ELL) Classes for Children and Adults

- As of 2015, there are 87 languages and dialects being spoken by Bellevue School District (BSD) students. The top languages are Spanish, Chinese-Mandarin, Korean, Chinese-Cantonese, Russian, Japanese, Vietnamese, Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, French, Farsi (Persian), and Arabic.²⁷
- Many children of refugees and immigrants are not enrolled in the schools' English Language Learners programs because they are bilingual, so the number of children from families whose first language is not English is probably much higher than the ELL enrollment numbers indicate. 33% of Bellevue School District students speak a language other than English (either the "home" language or "first language)." A student might be considered "bilingual" but still might be in ELL, depending on his/her level of English proficiency-as determined by ELL screening assessments.²⁸

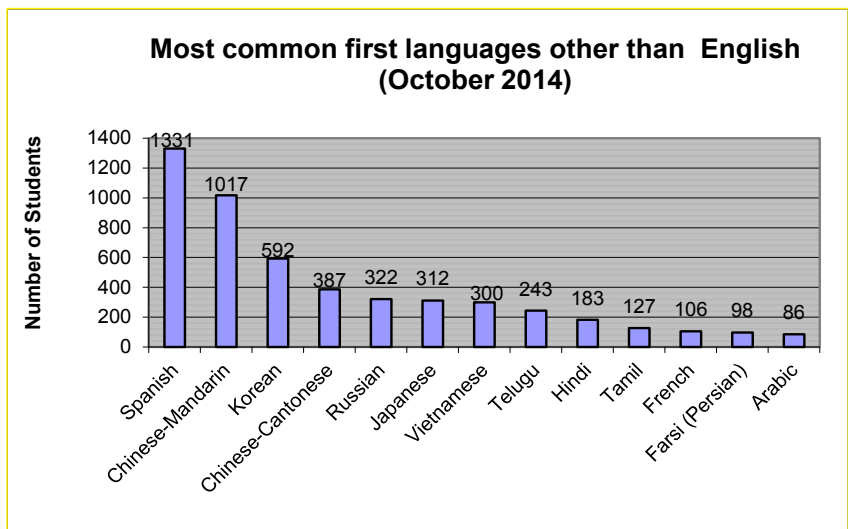


Figure 3. Source: Bellevue School District, 2014.

- Hopelink's programs provide needed help and advocacy support to many low-income immigrants and refugees. About one-third (30%) of Hopelink clients report being an immigrant or refugee; and about one-fifth

(21%) report limited English Language proficiency. To address language barriers, adult clients may be referred to Hopelink's English for Work (EFW) program. The EFW program teaches English language learners how to search for jobs and speak about their skills and experience. Students also receive individualized job coaching to reinforce what they learn in the class. Hopelink's Adult Education ESL program is currently providing ESL in 3 levels in work-contextualized classes for job search. They provide one-on-one coaching and work closely with the Employment program to support needed English skills. This program has expanded over the last two years to best meet the demand of our clients. In 2014, more than 200 clients were served, there were a total of 29 different languages spoken by EFW clients, with the most common being: Chinese (26%), Spanish (16%), Russian (8%), Korean (5%), and Vietnamese and Hindi (4% each).²⁹

- Jewish Family Service (JFS) also provides vocational ESL classes. JFS reports a significant increase in the number of clients seeking employment referral services. Social service programs such as employment counseling, and job placement programs are also in high demand.³⁰
- Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) report they expect to see more Arabic speaking

"We are experiencing more request for services, yet there is lack of bilingual/bicultural professionals who are willing to work with the current level of salary. The current level of funding will not sustain ongoing increase of salary scale."

Provider Survey, Asian Counseling and Referral Service

clients as well as Congolese clients. ReWA reports increases in undocumented immigrants. They highlighted that they have a waiting list for their housing and ESL classes. ReWA provides ESL programs and employment support with career training. Within the ESL classes, ReWA offers six levels of ESL classes, ranging from basic to intermediate.³¹

"Many of the people who come to our ESL class for people who do not know any English are Chinese seniors who are here for 3 months to help care for their grandchildren then go back to China. Here they develop a sense of community, sit and make new friends."

Key informant Interview, Jubilee REACH staff

- Jubilee REACH, a family center in the Lake Hills neighborhood, offers free ESL classes and Talk Time with child care provided, alleviating one barrier frequently mentioned by parents. 171 students attended the ESL classes in 2012, a 70% increase over the previous year. In 2013, 200 students attended the ESL classes, which appears that every year the demand is higher. They also offer a number of programs that are welcoming to people new to this culture, such as International Luncheons, and the Golden Age Social Club for Chinese elders.³²
- Bellevue College offers developmental education to the community. The program is called the Volunteer Literacy Program, which focuses on assisting immigrants and refugees with English as their second language. Within the developmental education, immigrants and refugees have the opportunity to help improve their English literacy skills, earn a GED (high-school equivalency) and seek for support in their personal and professional goals.³³ They report the program also assists with connections to other resources and networking opportunities around Bellevue to improve the needs of immigrants and refugees. They collaborate with employers to provide internships, part-time, seasonal and full-time jobs. Currently, they have partnered with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) associations and funders to provide support to clients interested in STEM careers.³⁴

Other Language-Related Needs

- Beginning in 1998, Public Health-Seattle and King County noted a dramatic increase in the need for interpreters for its clinics. Although this may be partly attributed to newly arrived refugees and immigrants, Public Health cites internal (within the

“We are moving from translation to transcreation.”

Eastside Human Services Forum June Education Event

U.S.) migration as the primary source of this increase. In 1998, county-wide, over 38,000 encounters with clients (not including the Women, Infants & Children - WIC Program) required interpreter services. By 2006, this number grew to over 71,000. In 2008, there were almost 77,000 interpreted visits. In 2009 and 2010, however, the number of interpreted visits declined (75,543 and 64,353, respectively) due to a number of factors, but largely due to budget cuts to Public Health programs, including immunization and Maternity Support Services. Another drop occurred, with 47,219 visits requiring interpretation, in King County in 2012. In 2012-2014, the decline continued due in part to deeper cuts to the Public-Health services and to the fact that two of the primary care sites partnered with Neighborcare and as a result, retained only WIC, Maternity Support Services and Dental services. As expected the number of visits requiring language assistance dropped further.³⁵

- At the Eastgate Public Health Clinic, where many Bellevue residents go for services, 12,947 interpreted visits were provided in 2008, similar to 2006. In 2009, the visits dropped 8% to 11,913, and in 2010, the number fell another 10% to 10,772. In 2012 the rate further dropped 18% to 8,854 interpreted visits. The decline continued with visits requiring language assistance

for 2013-2014. For 2013, it was reported that 42,454 visits needed language assistance (Note: In December 2013, Public Health Clinics started to move over to an electronic health care record system). In 2014, it was 39,019. The largest percentage of interpreted visits were in Spanish as Figure 4 indicates.³⁶

- In 2013, the Migration Policy Institute reported there were 25.1 million US residents, or 8% of the total US population ages 5 and older, who were Limited English Proficient (LEP). LEP refers to anyone above the age of 5 who reported speaking English less than “very well,” as classified by the U.S. Census Bureau.³⁷ Between 1990 and 2013, the LEP population grew 80% from nearly 14 million to 25.1 million.³⁸ About 1/2 of the nation’s 41.3 million immigrants ages 5 and older are LEP.³⁹ In King County, 11 % of the population in King County (1,851,600) is considered LEP and 1/3 of the 83,000 immigrants are LEP.⁴⁰ Although most LEP individuals nationwide are foreign born, a large share (about 19%) of this population is native born. On the Eastside it is 12%.⁴¹ Furthermore, Spanish (53,600 residents) and Chinese (30,700 residents) are the leading languages spoken by LEP individuals in King County.⁴²

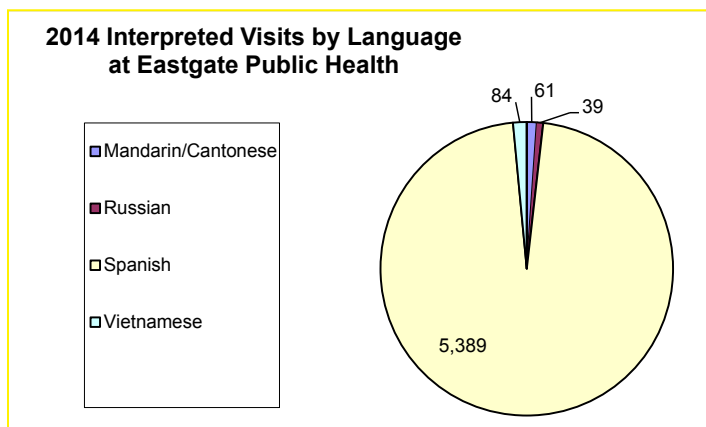


Figure 4. Source: Public Health-Seattle & King County, 2014.

Need for Information about Resources

- The City of Bellevue makes an effort to ensure access to city services and facilities to English Language Learner residents. The web pages focus on police, fire, and health and human services in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian and Korean. The telephone line with interpreters speak more than 150 languages and dialects who can translate for customers speaking with city staff. The Bellevue Fire Department created and released multiple outreach videos and public service announcements (PSA) in Spanish, Russian, and English. The PSAs are not just for television; for example, videos in Spanish giving information about the City, are also used at public events. In the case of an emergency, handouts with general information are distributed about

what to do during and immediately after is available in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian. In addition, annual water reports are in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese. Lastly, Bellevue has multiple Policer officers and Firefighters that are multilingual.⁴³

- In 2014, the City of Bellevue and its Council adopted a Diversity Initiative. The initiative was form to research and apply best practices for organizations and engage the community to learn from them in how to unlock the positive power of diversity in Bellevue. Further, the diversity initiative embraces the notion of, “Bellevue welcomes the world. Our diversity is our strength.” The purpose of the initiative for the City of Bellevue to enact and uphold equitable policies and practices, train and hire culturally competent staff and provide programs that are responsive and accessible to all. (Note: For more information, see the Diversity Initiative section in this report.)
- The Eastside Cultural Navigator Program uses bilingual/bicultural staff stationed at several key sites around East King County, including Crossroads Mini-City Hall and the Together Center, formerly known as the Family Resource Center in Redmond, to be liaisons and advocates, helping refugee and immigrant populations to better navigate complex systems, such as healthcare and publicly funded social services, to better utilize existing resources. Chinese Information and Service Center is the lead agency for this program which began in December 2006, with staff available who speak Spanish, Mandarin and Cantonese, Russian and several East Indian dialects. They serve many low-income residents of the city who have difficulty accessing other services because of language and cultural barriers. Some of the ways Navigators assist include helping a new resident register their child for school, signing up for energy assistance, or finding housing resources.⁴⁴

“Volunteering is like a bridge from isolation to the community.”

Key Informant Interview, Chinese volunteer, Bellevue Mini-City Hall

- Over the past 15 years the Crisis Clinic Community Information Line 2-1-1 has seen a significant increase in foreign language calls. In East King County in 2001, 273 calls were received from people needing assistance in a language other than English; 175 were handled by a Spanish Language Specialist, and 98 were helped by the Interpreter Service. In 2012, the number rose, to 378 calls; 266 were handled by a Spanish Language Specialist, and 112 were helped by the Tele-Interpreter Service. In 2014, the phone calls rose to 534 calls, a 71% increase from 2012. Of the 534 calls, 118 were received from people needing assistance in a language other than English; 186 were handled by a Spanish Language Specialist, and 118 were helped by the Tele-Interpreter Service.⁴⁵

Employment

- Even as the economy continues to grow gradually, refugee and immigrant communities continue to be one of the hardest hit, according to feedback obtained from a number of Community Conversations and key informant interviews. People who do not speak English as their first language are still competing with the native born unemployed workforce even though jobs are more available.
- The goal of the Washington State Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA), which began in 1975 to help refugees successfully resettle here, is to promote economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. It provides funds to non-profit agencies and community colleges for English Language Learner instruction, employment services and job placement.⁴⁶ During the 2015 State Legislative Session, funding for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Naturalization was held flat in the final budget. In addition, the 2015 budget included for the State Food Assistance rose from 50% of the federal amount to 100% when in 2010-2011 the State Food Assistance and Medical Interpretation for immigrant and refugees was cut in half.⁴⁷
- The Preparing for Work program at Bellevue College (BC) helps meet the refugee

and immigrant community's needs for job and English skills training. They report serving an increase in the number of Asians overall. In 2009-2010, 47% of the students were Asians and in 2014-2015, 62% were Asians. Furthermore, BC offers three classes: Preparing for Work, On the Job Communication and Working in English. BC served around 1,000 immigrants and refugee students in 2014. English Language Learners focus on skills to find and keep a job like oral and written communication, cross-cultural barriers to job searches and networking skills. Students write resumes, practice interviewing and get small group coaching from business professionals.⁴⁸

“ I don't see the economy is getting much better. Many people get short term jobs that pay minimum wage, and if they don't speak English well, it is even harder. They need 2-3 jobs to make a living.”
Key Informant Interview, Russian Cultural Navigator

- Cultural Navigators report that more of their clients are having a hard time finding work if English is their second language. The biggest needs initially are for English language skills, job training and jobs that pay a living wage.⁴⁹
- In 2014, ReWA helped 677 refugee and immigrant families with job placement assistance to find employment with livable wages and benefits, with 304 clients placed successfully in jobs.⁵⁰

Culturally Specific Nutrition

- Refugee Women's Alliance provides outreach to English Language Learners who may be eligible for the Basic Food Plan, formerly known as food stamps. Staff provides information in Russian/Ukrainian, Somali and Spanish to people who did not know they could receive this State benefit.⁵¹ The Emergency Feeding Program offers several culturally-sensitive food bags designed specifically for Latino, Asian and East African families.⁵² In 2013, 19,405 food packs were delivered, 116,430 meals were provided and 26,510 clients served.⁵³

- In 2014, 46% of the Bellevue clients served in Hopelink's Food Programs were immigrants or refugees representing 92 countries and 52 different languages. In addition, about one-third (31%) of the Bellevue residents served in Hopelink Food Programs reported Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and needed an interpreter. Hopelink continues to have Spanish (37%) and Russian (34%) as the main languages spoken among LEP clients in Bellevue. Chinese (6%), Farsi (5%), and Vietnamese (4%) are the next most common languages. The percentage of immigrants and refugees, and limited English proficiency has not significantly changed in the last five years and Hopelink continues to support culturally appropriate services. Bellevue continues to have a greater percentage of Immigrant/Refugee and LEP than overall Hopelink food program (46% v 34% I/R; 31% v 23% LEP).⁵⁴
- The Muslim Community Resource Center (MCRC) provides services to Muslims throughout King County. Among their many programs and activities is a food drive three times a year to help stock their own and other local food banks. In Bellevue, MCRC provides meat and other foods prepared in a specific way that is permissible for Muslims to eat under Muslim Shari'ah law to Hopelink so that Muslims can use this community resource.⁵⁵

Culturally Specific Child Care and Family Friend and Neighbor Care

- In 2000, Child Care Resources (CCR) reported that there were 118 bilingual providers on the Eastside out of the 443 listed in their database. Due to increased support and training efforts, as of July 2015, the number has grown to 243 providers offering bilingual care, out of a total of 493. Among child care providers listing one language in addition to or other than English, the largest groups were: Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Russian, French, American Sign Language, Urdu, Japanese, Arabic and Other (a combination of East African Languages, Fijian, Romanian, Hebrew). CCR also has a Child Care Careers Program which helps refugee and immigrant women develop

skills to work in the field of early childhood development. Even with this increase, there still seems to be a gap for such services for parents who want their children to be cared for by people from their own cultures.⁵⁶

- Many families from diverse cultures prefer to have their children cared for by Families, Friends, or Neighbors. Kaleidoscope Play & Learn groups, a program of Child Care Resources, are organized play groups for young children and the people who take care of them – grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters, other family members, friends and parents. At Kaleidoscope Play & Learn, young children and their caregivers participate in fun, educational play activities and get to know other people in their neighborhood. In East King County, there are five Play and Learn groups, two are in Bellevue where one is conducted in English/Spanish and one is conducted in English/Mandarin.⁵⁷
- An Early Childhood longitudinal study revealed that disparities based on factors such as race and income do have a measurable effect on child outcomes as early as nine months of age. Infants and toddlers from racial/ethnic minority groups, whose home language was not English, and/or who had mothers with low maternal education scored lower on cognitive and positive behavior ratings. One of the implications suggested from this study was to start early supporting and encouraging families, and to increase the quality of early care in both home based and center based settings.⁵⁸

Issues for School-Aged Children and Youth from Diverse Communities

- In Community Conversations and interviews with leaders in diverse communities in Bellevue, it was frequently mentioned that young adults and teens from these communities are faced with identity problems, caught between two or more cultures. They may live in traditional homes, but do not always identify with their parents and cultural traditions. (Note: For more informa-

tion, see the School-Aged Children and Youth section in this report.)

Legal Issues

- The need for free or low-cost legal assistance for immigration and family law issues provided in languages other than English continues to grow. Eastside Legal Assistance Program (ELAP) reports an increased demand for services in languages other than English. ELAP has two specialized clinics for this population—the immigration clinic that deals with immigration law issues and the multilingual clinic that provides assistance on any civil legal issue through the use of Ethnic Bridge Language line staff and volunteer attorneys are able to access interpreters in a broad range of languages, thereby expanding the ability to serve more clients. ELAP also provides Spanish intake screening interpreters. The Washington Supreme Court’s Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding in June of 2015 Washington State Civil Legal Needs Study (CLNS) notes (pg. 35) that of their respondents, 29.3% of immigration-related problems experienced issues related to their immigration status itself, 20.7% involved denial of housing, employment, credit, health or other services due to their immigration status, 13.0% involved immigration-related on-the-job harassment, etc.⁵⁹

Human Trafficking

- Human Trafficking, which includes labor and sex trafficking, is a modern day form of slavery. Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders and include women, men and children. Some victims are native born U.S. citizens, as well. Victims are coerced to prostitute or to work without pay and often subjected to physical and psychological dangers, such as severe beatings, rape, drug addiction and other forms of violence.⁶⁰
- In Washington State, which is one of the top human trafficking destinations in the U.S. due to the easily accessed public ports and proximity to Asia, the Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN) provides a 24-hour urgent response hotline,

and access to safe housing and immigration advocacy and legal assistance.⁶¹

- In January 2013 King County launched a campaign to raise awareness about human trafficking. The campaign included ads in six languages posted on Metro buses as well as forming partnerships with non-profits that provide resources such as legal services and safe housing. Washington Anti-Trafficking Response Network (WARN) is a coalition of organizations in Washington State that provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking. In January 2014, King County declared January Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness month and created the King County Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Task Force.

Health and Mental Health Services

- Disparities exist and continue to broaden the divide between many minorities and Whites in King County. According to *Communities Count, Social and Health Indicators across King County, in East King County* there was a significant increase in the average frequent mental distress score in 2013, as measured by asking people four questions on a survey about how often they have experienced certain symptoms of stress. The frequent mental distress score for King County was 11% compared to Washington State's 12%. The last report from King County indicates that the stress score for native born residents was 8.5 on a scale of 5 (low) to 20 (high), while in for foreign born residents reported average stress levels of 9.2. The survey countywide showed that some of the groups who experienced higher stress levels overall include: people of color, people whose primary language is not English, people with incomes less than \$50,000, people with less than a college degree, and people age 18-24.⁶²
- HealthPoint reports an increasing number of clients in the last two years who need uncompensated care. They also report decrease in funding from Eastside cities in King County. They have collaborated with Hopelink, AmeriCorps, Bastyr University, Northwest University, UW Bothell, and Bellevue College's Nursing Program by providing shadowing opportunities for students interested in mental health to fund some of the mental health service provided by HealthPoint.⁶³
- Mental health services are becoming less accessible to many consumers, but especially those in minority communities at a time when more people are reporting more stress and anxiety. One of the pressing needs is the demand for higher intensity and mental health services due to observing more acute mentally ill (suicide attempt & ideations) youth discharged from inpatient hospitalizations. Further, ACRS provides bilingual and bicultural mental health services for clients who would prefer them.⁶⁴
- International Community Health Services (ICHS) is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that provides health services, including dental and behavioral health, to underserved populations in King County. Their services are open to all races and ethnicities, but they particularly serve the Asian, Native Hawaiian and the Pacific Islander communities. ICHS opened a clinic in the Crossroads neighborhood in Bellevue in 2014. They have staff that speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Korean, Somali, Russian and Spanish. One of their mission goal is to hire bi-lingual and bi-cultural staff to reflect the communities they serve. They have reported since the expansion to Bellevue an increase Latino populations compared to their other clinics.⁶⁵
- Participants in a number of community conversations and key informant interviews identified problems in access to healthcare for many immigrants, even those who qualify for Medicaid or other insurance through private companies. For example, some cannot afford the co-pays or deductibles for their insurance, or their plan does not cover what they need. Another issue that was mentioned is the confusing nature of the health care system in this country, especially when English is not the person's first language.

Parent Support

- CISC offers Cultural Navigator Services to families in five languages to help with ac-

cessing appropriate services and navigating systems. CISC also has parent education classes to help parents raise bicultural children. Classes emphasize communication across the generations to promote understanding within the family.

- Local agencies and organizations are addressing the need for families who want additional assistance and support when parenting in this culture. CISC provides Play and Learn Groups. Kinderling Center provides support groups and parenting classes for parents who speak Spanish. Kinderling also has a home visiting program, the Parent Child/Home Program that is funded by the United Way of King County. The program provides services to primarily Latino families. In addition, through collaborations with a number of local providers, the Healthy Start program offers home visiting, parent education and support to young, first-time parents with children prenatal through age three; because over half of the young parents in this program are Latino, a number of staff speaks Spanish.
- The King County Library System (KCLS) in Bellevue provides a literacy program for Latino families and children up to age five. The program is conducted in Spanish and goes for 6 weeks.

Community Perceptions

- In the 2015 phone/online survey, Bellevue's recent (immigrated within the last 10 years) immigrant population is significantly more likely than those who haven't immigrated in the last ten years to rate community issues as major or moderate.
- In the phone/online survey, a question was added in 2001 asking if the respondent had experienced racial or ethnic discrimination. The percentage who rated this as a major or moderate problem fluctuated from 4% in 2001, to almost 7% in 2003, back to almost 5% in 2005 and 2007, 6.58% in 2009 than 5% in 2011. In the 2013 phone/online survey the rate shot up, 16% rated it as such. In 2015, it was similar to 2013 at about 17%.
- Among respondents to the 2015 Consumer Survey, 43% cited *not being able to speak, read or write in the English language* as a major

or moderate problem about the same as in 2013. About 80% of the respondents to this survey responded that they spoke a language other than English at home. Another key item in the 2015 Consumer Survey was almost 80% of the participants (56) marked that they earn less than \$20,000 annually.

- Community Conversations with various multi-cultural community groups in 2015 revealed that there is a continued, high need for human service organizations, schools, and municipalities to provide interpretation for those who do not speak English. Another common concern was unemployment. There continues to be intense competition for many of the low-wage jobs that immigrants once were able to get easily; even in a better economy, non-immigrants with higher education and training are getting these jobs.
- Affordable housing was a recurring theme among Community Conversations participants. Waiting lists are long and often difficult to get on.
- Another need expressed frequently in discussions with key informants and providers within the immigrant and refugee was services for survivors of domestic violence. Gaps included multilingual advocates, legal services and shelters that are culturally sensitive.
- Some immigrants and refugees report in Community Conversations that they believe they have experienced housing or job discrimination, such as receiving notice to leave without cause, not having housing repairs made by landlords or not getting wage increases. Due to fear of deportation, some immigrants will not report these incidents.
- Staff from the Goodwill at Bellevue Job Training and Education Center report that 91% of their clients are immigrants and 5% are refugees. The dominant ethnicities are Asian (48%), Caucasian (24%) and Hispanic (11%). The top languages spoken are Cantonese, Spanish, Mandarin and Korean. One of the biggest barriers for their clients is language, transportation, and not knowing where to find resources especially since they are new to this country.⁶⁶

- Latino parents participating in the Fiestas Early Literacy Program at Stevenson Elementary School listed their top needs as more affordable housing, more interpreters in human services agencies especially in the local hospitals, and help with immigration issues, including learning how to become legal residents. The need for more interpreters in human services agencies was echoed by several providers meeting to share resources at the Provider's Network.⁶⁷
- Neighborhood Outreach Staff noted that they see many spouses of workers from other countries, primarily women, who are here to work in the high tech companies in East King County experience isolation and depression as they themselves do not have work visas and have difficulty adjusting to the new culture and country. This is also true for spouses of people working here who are undocumented.⁶⁸
- Non-English speaking parents need assistance helping their children in school. This can include having more bilingual staff, materials for parents translated in their native languages, and events to educate parents about the school system and culture in the U.S. Opportunities to practice English in social situations would help in developing language skills.
- Increased opportunities are needed for people to have cultural events and activities to increase awareness in the community about the richness of these cultures and engage new Americans in meaningful dialogue. There are more ways yet untapped to utilize the strengths and assets that the many immigrant and refugee groups have brought here with them, to enrich and strengthen the whole community. Specifically for the immigrant and refugee spouses and parents of workers in the high technological industry that reside here from other countries to provide social support and decrease their isolation.

Implications for Action

- The need for more culturally and linguistically competent human services staff grows each year. Throughout the community, there is a need for information to be available in languages other than English, such as that provided through the Cultural Navigator program, and other culturally and linguistically specific non-profit organizations.
- There is a lack of culturally appropriate mental health counseling and medical care for recent immigrants or refugees. Use of mental health care can be unfamiliar and unacceptable. Providing culturally acceptable care which takes into account diverse backgrounds is essential for these new arrivals.
- Requests for English-as-a-Second-Language and citizenship classes at all levels for adults are increasing significantly, a result of larger numbers of refugees and immigrants living in Bellevue as well as a greater demand for better language skills to secure jobs in this era of high unemployment. More opportunities for people to learn English, especially those that offer childcare, are needed.

Endnotes

1. American Fact Finder. (2013). *2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*.
2. American Fact Finder. (2013).
3. American Fact Finder. (2013).
4. American Fact Finder. (2013).
5. Khizer & Nickhaith Sherriff, MCRC. City of Bellevue Presentation, (2015).
6. Lalita Uppala & Rita Badh, IAWW. City of Bellevue Presentation, (2015).
7. Martin, D.C. (2013). *Refugees and Asylees: 2013*. Retrieved from U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Office of Immigration Statistics: http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_rfa_fr_2013.pdf
8. United Nations High Commission on Refugees. (2014). *UNHCR Population Statistics*. As retrieved from: http://popstats.unhcr.org/PSQ_TMS.aspx
9. United Nations High Commission on Refugees. (2014). *UNHCR Population Statistics*. As retrieved from: http://popstats.unhcr.org/PSQ_TMS.aspx
10. Immigration Policy Center. (2014). *Refugee: A Fact Sheet*. As retrieved from: <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/refugees-fact-sheet>.

11. United Nations High Commission on Refugees. (2014).
12. United Nations High Commission on Refugees. (2014).
13. United Nations High Commission on Refugees. (2014).
14. Martin, D.C. (2013).
15. Martin, D.C. (2011).
16. Monger & Yankay. (2013). *U.S. Legal Permanent Residents 2012*.
17. Johnson. (2013). *2013 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. As retrieved from: http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_yb_2013_0.pdf.
18. Library of Congress. (1996). H.B. 3734. As retrieved from: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c104:H.R.3734.ENR>:
19. American Fact Finder. (2013). *2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*.
20. Office of Refugee Resettlement. (2014). *Fiscal Year 2013 Refugee Arrivals*.
21. VOLAGS are national organization affiliates funded by the U.S. State Department responsible for providing initial resettlement services to new refugee arrivals.
22. A. Holland. (King County Public Health). Personal Communication, (2013).
23. Office of Refugee Resettlement. (2014). *Fiscal Year 2014 Refugee Arrivals*.
24. A. Holland. (King County Public Health). Personal Communication, (2015).
25. T. Duong. (Jewish Family Service). Personal Communication, (2015).
26. T. Duong. (Jewish Family Service). Personal Communication, (2015).
27. Bellevue School District. (2015).
28. Bellevue School District. (2015).
29. J. Faast. (Hopelink). Provider Survey, (2015).
30. T. Duong. (Jewish Family Service). Personal Communication, (2015).
31. Amina Ahmed. Refugee Women's Alliance. (ReWA). Provider Survey, (2015).
32. Jubilee REACH. (2013). *Jubilee REACH Quarterly Report*. As retrieved from: http://cdn2.assets.sites.launchrocketship.com/b13007c8-cf88-41df-a5ed-c232fc791c55/files/4914048e-b06f-4f23-9a73-a3cac363c5ad/master_copy_quarterlyreport_final.pdf
33. Bellevue College. (2015). *Volunteer Literacy Program*. As retrieved from: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/deved/volunteer-literacy-program>
34. Bellevue College. (2015).
35. A. Holland. (King County Public Health). Personal Communication, (2013).
36. A. Holland. (King County Public Health). Personal Communication, (2013).
37. Migration Policy Institute Source. (2015). *Limited English Proficient Population of the United States*. As retrieved from: <http://migrationinformation.org/>.
38. Migration Policy Institute. (2015).
39. Migration Policy Institute. (2015).
40. Migration Policy Institute. (2015).
41. Migration Policy Institute. (2015).
42. Migration Policy Institute. (2015).
43. C. Iosso. City of Bellevue. Personal Communication, (July 23, 2015).
44. City of Bellevue. (2013). *Multicultural Outreach*. As retrieved from: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/neighborhood-multicultural.htm>
45. S. Gemmel. (Crisis Clinic). Personal Communication, (August, 2013, April, 2015).
46. Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. (2012). *Refugee Assistance Program*. As retrieved from: http://www.wtb.wa.gov/RefugeeAssistance_Dir..asp
47. United Way of King County. (2014). *At last – A State Budget*. As retrieved from: <http://www.uwkcblog.org/2013/07/03/at-last-a-state-budget/>
48. J. Pauley. (Bellevue College). Personal Communication, (2015).
49. Cultural Navigators, Community Conversations, (2015).
50. ReWA. (2014). *Outcomes*. Retrieved from: <http://rewa.org/index.php?q=node/4>
51. Refugee Women's Alliance. (2015).
52. The Emergency Feeding Program. (2013). Annual Report. Retrieved from: http://resources.razorplanet.com/516172-6477/616526_Annual_Report_2013.pdf
53. The Emergency Feeding Program. (2013).
54. S. Bliesner (Hopelink). Personal Communication, (2015).
55. N. Sheriff, Key Informant Interview, (2015).
56. L. Person. (Child Care Resources). Personal Communication, (2015).
57. Child Care Resources. Family, Friend and Neighbor Care. (2015). As retrieved from: <https://www.childcare.org/family-services/find-care-ffn.aspx>

58. Halle, T., et al. (2009). *Disparities in early learning and development: Lessons from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study*. Retrieved from Child Trends: http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_07_10_ES_DisparitiesEL.pdf
59. J. Monson. Eastside Legal Assistance Program, Personal Communication, (July 28, 2015).
60. Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2012). *Crime Statistics*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/crimestats>
61. Campaign to End Human Trafficking (2011). *Human Trafficking* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/fact_human.html
62. A. Holland. Personal Communication. King County Public Health, *Communities Count*. (2015).
63. B. Church (HealthPoint), Provider Survey, (2015).
64. J. Eng (Asian Counseling and Referral Service). Provider Survey, (2015).
65. M. McKee (International Community Health Services). Provider Survey, (2015).
66. Goodwill Industries Staff. Community Conversation, (2015).
67. Stevenson Elementary School and Providers Network. Community Conversations, (2015).
68. City of Bellevue Neighborhood Outreach Staff. Key Informant Interview, (2015).