

Refugees and Immigrants

In 7 months, Eastside Legal Assistance Program met with over **1,000 EKC residents** on immigration issues

Racial & ethnic discrimination reported



42% of Bellevue residents spoke a language other than English at home

Non-white people in Bellevue



Bellevue's foreign-born population



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 identified as a single race, White.¹ In 2015 this percentage declined to 49.996%, making Bellevue a majority non-White population city for the first time in its history.² 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% of the population.³ Many of the minority residents in Bellevue, 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, and providers to service community needs. The focus is to connect those in need to relevant resources and service providers in community.⁴
- The India Association of Western Washington (IAWW) is a non-profit, secular, volunteer run organization founded in 1983 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."⁵
- Bellevue's Neighborhood Outreach Program 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 discussion topics at the Cultural Conversations during the 2016/2017 season included Multi-Racial Identity, Culture and Perception; Becoming and Belonging; Welcoming America; and Can We Really Go Back Home Again.
- The Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN) is made up of a diverse group of twenty-one members who provide counsel to the city on how to better reach, serve, communicate and collaborate with Bellevue's diverse community. Formed in October 2016, BDAN acts in an advisory capacity to the City of Bellevue and meets monthly, with members appointed by the City Manager. BDAN has the following duties:
 - Collect community feedback to help assess city services from a cultural competency lens
 - Engage in cross cultural dialogue focused on diversity issues
 - Provide feedback and insight on issues relevant to communities in Bellevue
 - Support mobilization and coordination to diversity-related national and local events warranting a city response

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 2011-2015 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, 49.99% in 2015.** Bellevue's Asians and Hispanics are the fastest growing racial and ethnic groups in the city. The population for both these groups tripled between 1990 and 2015.
- Bellevue's Asian population is a substantial portion of the overall City population (34%), the highest percentage of any city in the State. While Chinese residents make up the largest portion of Bellevue's Asian population (44%), Asian Indians have had the fastest rate of growth since 1990, increasing in population by over 2,400% (36.8% of Asian population).
- In 2015, Hispanics or Latinos comprised 8.7% 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 population in Bellevue has remained level at 2% since 1990. According to the 2015 ACS, Black or African Americans still make up only 2.2% of the Bellevue population.

- **According to the 2011-2015 ACS, about 42% of Bellevue residents spoke a language other than English at home.** This is a higher percentage than King County (26%), Seattle (22%), and Washington State (19%). About 21% of Bellevue's non-English speakers speak an Asian or Pacific Island language, 12.3% speak an Indo-European language, and 5.6% Spanish). Other languages include Korean, Hindi and Russian.
- **According to the 2015 ACS, 39% of Bellevue's population was foreign-born, up from 13% in 1990.** This is higher than Seattle (17.5%), King County (21.7%), Washington state (13.7%), and the United States as a whole (13.5). 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, 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.⁶

World and National Refugee Trends

- According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), at the end of 2016 there were some 56.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide.⁷ This total includes 17.2 million refugees, 2.7 million asylum seekers, and 36.6 million people uprooted within their own countries. Turkey was the largest refugee-hosting country worldwide, with 2.87 million refugees. Turkey was followed by Lebanon (1.01 million), Pakistan (1.35 million), the Islamic Republic of Iran (979,435), Uganda (940,815), and Ethiopia (802,896) in 2016.⁸
- 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. Figure 1 indicates the shortfall between

how many refugees were authorized for admission compared to how many were actually admitted. As depicted in the Figure 1, numbers of refugees being legally admitted in the U.S. have fluctuated 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. The ceiling was reduced to 76,000 for 2012, and was further reduced to 70,000 for the years 2013 through 2015. The ceiling was raised to 85,000 in 2016 to address the worsening refugee crisis, including additional Syrian refugees. In 2015, 4.2 million Syrians fled their country due to violence and persecution.⁹

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
2015	70,000	69,933
2016	85,000	84,994

Figure 1. U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-Present. | Source: Migration Policy Institute

- 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%). The last three years for which data is available have had a steady number

of refugee admissions (2013 had 69,926 admissions, 2014 had 69,287 admissions, and 2015 had 69,933 refugees admitted. Over one-third of all refugee arrivals in 2015 (35.1%) came from the Near East/South Asia (a region that includes Iraq, Iran, Bhutan, and Afghanistan); another third (32.1%) came from Africa, and one-quarter (26.4%) came from East Asia (a region that includes China, Vietnam, and Indonesia).¹⁰

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 not entitled to medical and cash benefits for up to eight months after their arrival in the United States.¹² In 2015 there were 1,051,031 immigrants that obtained legal permanent resident status in the U.S., a 6.1% increase compared to 2013.¹³

Definition of Immigrant and Asylee

- 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 are forced to leave the country of their nationality due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. 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.¹¹

- The Bureau of Citizenship and Immigrant Services (BCIS), formerly the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization

- 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.¹⁴

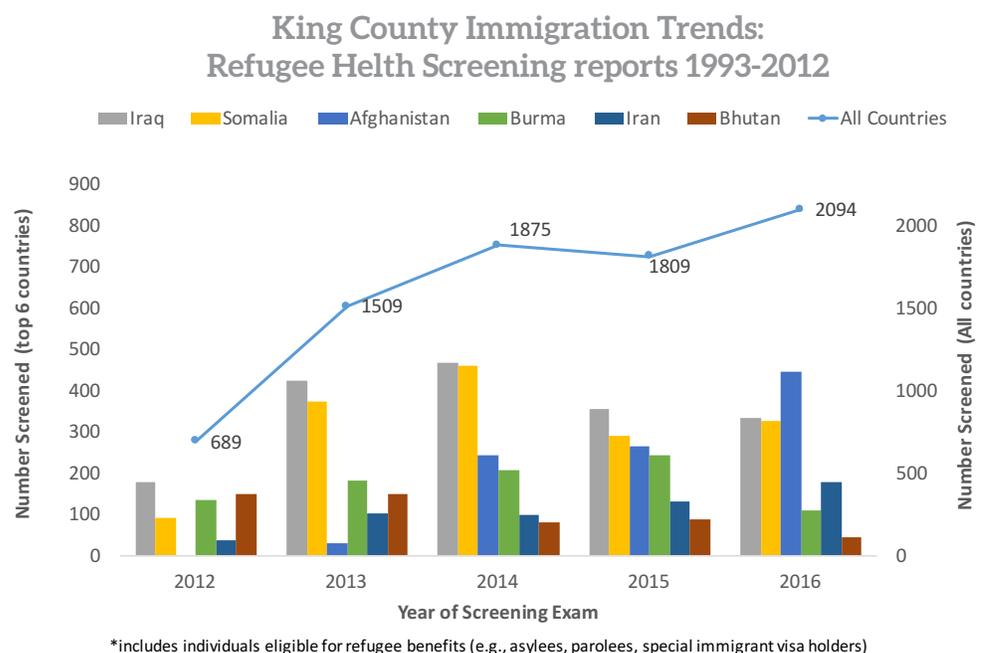


Figure 2. Source: Public Health – Seattle & King County
 (Note: This is the latest report, King County has changed its methods in how to extract immigration trends, however, the trends are consistent for 2013-2014 in which are discussed in the following).

“Families and our children live in fear of deportation. Children have been harassed at school.”

— Provider Survey

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 2015 ACS estimates that 937,571 of Washington State residents are foreign-born, with 82.2% speaking a language other than English at home.¹⁵ 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 2015, Washington ranked eleventh in the U.S., resettling 2,625 refugee arrivals, representing about 3.75% of total new refugee arrivals to the U.S. in 2015.¹⁶
- During 2016, Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGS) in Washington State resettled 4,537 refugees. Of that, approximately 2,101 settled in King County. The leading refugee groups in King County in 2016 were Afghanistan (448), Iraq (332), Somalia (331), Ukraine (244), and Iran (180). The growing demand for services puts a strain on existing community resources to meet basic needs including housing, employment, and health care.¹⁷
- 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 Figure 2 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.¹⁸ Further, the trends continue to increase for 2015-2016 with refugees mostly coming from Afghanistan (444), Iraq (333), Somalia (327), and Ukraine (249). In 2015 there were 1822 refugee arrivals and in 2016 there were 2094 arrivals. King County. King County now typically resettles approximately 50% 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 updates, within 90 days of their arrival in the USA.¹⁹

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 Asian. 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. Providers also note they are serving more people from East Asian countries.
- Jewish Family Service (JFS) reports that refugees arriving to King County in the next year will be primarily from Afghanistan and Ukraine. JFS plans to resettle 300 refugees in the next year, with most residing initially in South King County.²⁰

Service Trends

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

- As of 2016, there were 95 first languages spoken by Bellevue School District (BSD) students. The top two languages are Spanish and Mandarin Chinese with over 1,200 speakers each, followed by Korean, Russian, Telugu, Cantonese and Japanese.²¹
- 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. 13.7% 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.²²

- Hopelink's programs provide needed help and advocacy support to many low-income immigrants and refugees. About one-third (34%) of Hopelink clients report being an immigrant or refugee; and about one-fifth (22%) 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 gain skills that are important for success at work including technology skills, communication skills, teamwork, stress management, and time management. Classes include one-on-one advising and online learning. In 2016, almost 200 clients were served. A total of 32 different languages spoken by EFW clients, with the most common being: Chinese (20%), Spanish (16%), Korean (9%), and then Mandarin, Farsi, and Russian (7%).²³
- Jewish Family Service continues to provide vocational ESL classes, employment and immigration services to the Eastside refugee and immigrant community. Our ESL classes continue to be in-demand. In this strong economy, clients are returning to JFS to get support to advance to higher paying positions. Also, JFS has seen an increase in asylum seekers moving to the Eastside and in need of services.²⁴
- 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. 333 students attended the ESL classes in 2016, a 66% increase compared to 2013. 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.²⁵

- Bellevue College offers the Basic and Transitional Studies (previously known as Developmental Education) Department to provide students with high-quality basic and pre-college Math and English literacy education for academic, personal, family, work and community engagement while cultivating leadership potential within collaborative student, staff, and faculty learning communities. The program includes ESL, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) and Preparing for Work. These focus 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 support in their personal and professional goals.²⁶

Other Language-Related Needs

- Public Health Seattle-King County (PHSCK) clinics provided language interpretation for 29,521 visits in 2016. This is down from 39,019 visits in 2014. At the Eastgate Public

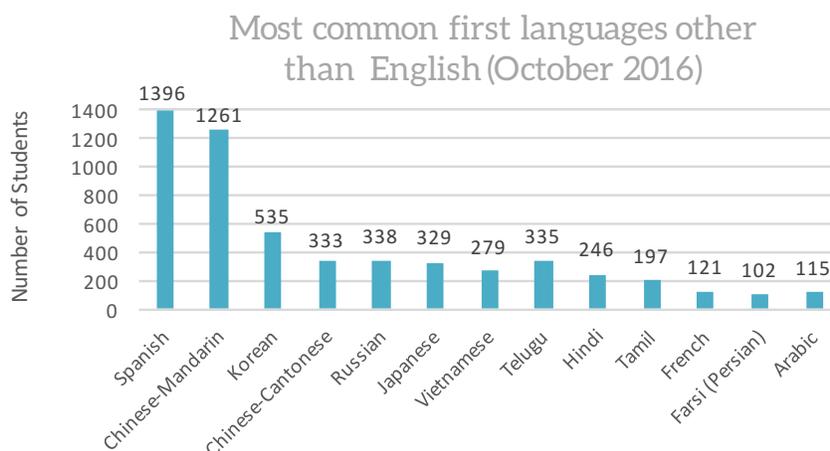


Figure 3. | Source: Bellevue School District, 2016.

Health Clinic, where many Bellevue residents go for services, 7,624 interpreted visits were provided in 2016. The largest percentage of interpreted visits were in Spanish (94%) as Figure 4 indicates.²⁷

2016 Interpreted Visits by Language at Eastgate Public Health

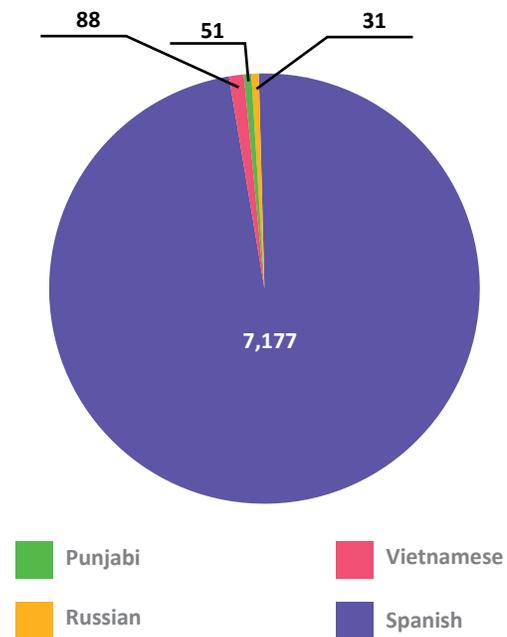


Figure 4. | Source: Public Health-Seattle & King County, 2016.

- 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. Between 1990 and 2013, the LEP population grew 80% from nearly 14 million to 25.1 million. About 1/2 of the nation’s 41.3 million immigrants ages 5 and older are LEP. In King County, about ten percent of the population five years and over, or 201,300 residents, spoke English less

than “very well” during 2011-2015. For King County’s foreign born population five and over, this percentage was much higher at about 42 percent or 180,000 residents. Spanish and Chinese were the leading languages spoken at home by people who speak English less than “very well” in King County during that time period.²⁸ In 2015, about 42% of Bellevue’s population spoke a language other than English at home, up from 38% in 2010. Chinese and Spanish are the top two languages spoken at home other than English followed by Korean, Hindi and Russian. Bellevue School District reported having 95 languages spoken by children enrolled during the 2016-2017 school year.

The initiative was developed to research and apply best practices for organizations and engage the community to learn from them on 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 is 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. Some of the recommendations that have been implemented include helping the community learn about resources, sponsoring forums on personal safety and immigration rights, and developing a training for residents from other cultures on the value of volunteering and how to access volunteer opportunities.

Need for Information about Resources

- The City of Bellevue makes an effort to ensure access to city services and facilities to residents learning English. Web pages focused on recreational opportunities, construction permits and economic development, jobs and community resources have been manually translated into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian and Korean. The city also has a telephone line with interpreters who speak more than 150 languages and dialects who can translate for customers speaking with city staff. The Bellevue Fire Department has created multiple outreach videos and public service announcements in Spanish, Russian and English, which appear on Bellevue Television and are presented at selected public events. In addition, educational posters that illustrate how to prepare for several hazards and emergencies are available on the city’s Emergency Management website in 15 languages. Annual water reports are also available in Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese. Lastly, Bellevue has multiple police officers and firefighters who are multilingual.²⁹
- In 2014, the City of Bellevue and its Council adopted the Diversity Advantage Initiative.
- The Eastside Cultural Navigator Program uses bilingual/bicultural staff stationed at several key sites around East King County, including Mini-City Hall and the Together Center in Redmond, to be liaisons and advocates. They help refugee and immigrant populations 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, and Russian. 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, sign up for energy assistance, or find housing resources. However, increasingly, the Navigators are helping immigrants with questions and resources related to legal services: they have found that there is much misinformation about immigration laws and the American system of law enforcement

in the community. This is creating fear and stress for many families and can prevent them from seeking services that they need.³⁰

- In 2016, the Crisis Clinic Community Information Line saw a decrease in foreign language calls from East King County. Of 6,623 calls from East King County, 279 foreign language calls were received compared to 534 in 2014. Of the 279 calls, 197 were received from people needing assistance in a language other than English; 77 were handled by a Spanish Language Specialist, 1 from 711 Relay, 1 from TTY and 3 from Video Relay.³¹

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

“Outreach is a hard thing to do to get immigrants engaged. The interest is there but they don’t know about opportunities and transportation is a barrier.”

— Key Informant Interview

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. Jewish Family

Service is one agency that provides these services in East King County as does Bellevue College.³²

“There are employment challenges for people with accents.”

— Community Conversation

- The Preparing for Work program at Bellevue College (BC) helps meet the refugee/immigrant community’s need for job and English skills training. Three classes are offered: Preparing for Work, On the Job Communication and Working in English. BC served 1,450 immigrant and refugee students in FY 2015-2016 and 1,319 in FY 2016-2017. English language learners focus on skills to choose a career pathway, find and keep a job.
- In 2016 ReWA helped 543 refugee and immigrant families with training and job placement assistance to find employment with livable wages and benefits.³³

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.³⁴ The Emergency Feeding Program offers several culturally-sensitive food bags designed specifically for Latino, Asian and East African families. They report they are seeing more undocumented immigrants who express fears about their immigration status.³⁵ In 2015, 417,696 meals were provided and 15,665 clients served, 57% of which were non-Caucasian.³⁶

- In 2016, 45% of the 3,822 Bellevue residents served in Hopelink’s Food Programs were immigrants or refugees representing 100 countries and 59 different languages. In addition, about one-third (1170 individuals; 31%) of the Bellevue residents served reported Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Hopelink continues to have Spanish (37%) and Russian (32%) as the main languages spoken among LEP clients in Bellevue. Chinese (7%), Farsi (5%) and Vietnamese (4%) are the next most common languages spoken among individuals that report limited English proficiency. This 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 clients than the overall Hopelink food program (45% v 35% I/R; 31% v 23% LEP).³⁷
- The Muslim Community Resource Center (MCRC) provides services to Muslims and non-Muslims throughout King County. The focus of MCRC is to connect those in need with relevant resources and service providers in the community. MCRC also provides direct services through volunteers, such as hot meals, and partners with other organizations to direct people in need to appropriate services. In 2016, MCRC began a partnership with the Together Center in Redmond which services all East King County. MCRC has office hours one day a week in the Advocate Office at the Center to provide resources and support.³⁸

some offering more than one language other than English spoken. In all, there were 500 (duplicated) that reported as such. 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, Farsi/Persian, 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 in multi-language offerings, there is still a gap for such services for parents who want their children to be cared for by people from their own cultures.³⁹

- Many families from diverse cultures prefer to have their children cared for by families, friends, or neighbors rather than in centers. Child Care Resources also supports a network of Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups, drop-in play groups specifically designed to provide culturally appropriate support to FFN caregivers and parents. More than 50 groups meet weekly throughout King County, holding sessions in multiple languages led

“I am very grateful for the help and support for the immigrant grants and new courses. Thank you so much for your concern for others.”

— Consumer Survey

Culturally Specific Child Care and Family Friend and Neighbor Care

- Child Care Resources (CCR) reported that as of July, 2017, of the 503 childcare providers in East King County, there was a large number that provided bilingual care, with

by trained facilitators; participants receive information about child development and community resources. In 2016 Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups reached over 4,000 King County children and their informal caregivers; and over 60% spoke a language

other than English at home. Kaleidoscope Play and Learn also gives young children cared for by family, friends, and neighbors a chance to develop socialization and early literacy skills which will increase their readiness for school. Two Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups are currently meeting in Bellevue, one conducted in Chinese and English at the Newport Way Library and one conducted in Spanish and English at the Lake Hills Library.⁴⁰

- 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 supporting and encouraging families early, and to increase the quality of early care in both home based and center based settings.⁴¹

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.

For more information, 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. Staff report that between November 2016 and May 2017 they met with over 1,000 East King County residents on immigration issues

, including forums and clinics. There are increasing reports of intimidation, harassment and mistreatment. The main barriers that their clients report are fear due to their immigration status, lack of transportation, and not being eligible for services.⁴² The Washington Supreme Court's Task Force on Civil Equal Justice Funding in a June 2015 Washington State Civil Legal Needs Study (CLNS) notes 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.⁴³

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. 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.⁴⁴
- 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.⁴⁵

For more information, see Goal #3: A Safe Haven from All Forms of Violence and Abuse

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*

“Immigration concerns are on the rise and legal advice is not affordable to the college students.”

— Community Conversation

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 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 18-24.⁴⁶

- The diversity of HealthPoint’s patient population continues to increase. In 2016, HealthPoint provided care in more than 55 languages and was the healthcare home for 58% of King County’s newly resettled refugee families. Sixteen percent of HealthPoint patients remain uninsured. HealthPoint continues to collaborate with Hopelink, Bastyr University, Northwest University, UW Bothell, and Bellevue College’s Nursing Program by providing shadowing opportunities for students interested in primary medical, dental, or mental health care in a community health center setting.⁴⁷
- 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 for Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS) is the demand for higher intensity and mental health services due to more high risk youth needing mental health care and more undocumented Latino youth. ACRS provides bilingual and bicultural mental health services.⁴⁸
- 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 goals is to hire bilingual 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.⁴⁹
- Staff from Eastern European Counseling

Center report their clients have increased and present with cultural barriers, domestic violence, financial difficulties, immigration and legal problems.⁵⁰

“While there are people feeling unsafe and unwelcome there is a balancing swell of people wanting to help and wanting to welcome others.”

— Key Informant Interview

- 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 a concern that potential new health care changes will present barriers to those needing insurance, such as older adults from other countries who are here to visit for long periods with their families may no longer be eligible.

Parent Support

- CISC offers Cultural Navigator Services to families in five languages to help with accessing 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. Kindering Center provides support groups and parenting

classes for parents who speak Spanish. Kindering 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 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 and school readiness Fiestas program for Latino families and children up to age five. The program is conducted in Spanish and goes for 6 weeks.

Community Perceptions

- Members of the Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN) identified the need for services such as legal aid regarding immigrant and tenant rights, services for older adults, many who come to live with their adult children and are isolated due to language, and having outreach workers hired from the community who know it well to provide information about resources.
- In a number of the community conversations, concerns were expressed about more need for legal services related to immigration rights for all immigrants, including those who are undocumented.

- **In the 2017 phone/online survey, although racial and ethnic discrimination did not rise to the level of a top-tier community or household problem, both saw substantial and statistically significant increases compared to 2015. As a community level**

problem, it increased from 17% to 24% and as a household level problem, it nearly doubled, from 4% to 7%. (Figure 5)

- Staff from Bellevue College brought up the need for more resources for practicing English for the students who are in their ESL classes and need additional support. There is a federal funding requirement that students in community colleges must make a certain amount of progress after three quarters, and sometimes they cannot make that progress without more practice.
- Eastside Pathways brought the Promotores project to Bellevue to address the need for authentically engaging the local Hispanic community. In a survey of 170 Latino residents conducted in 2017, respondents rated “community and culture” as the greatest need for their families to thrive; “information and communication” was the next highest rated.
- Over half of the providers who completed an online survey reported increased concerns by their participants about changes to immigration rules; some participants are fearful about applying for and accepting services that they need as they believe that doing so will put them at risk for deportation.

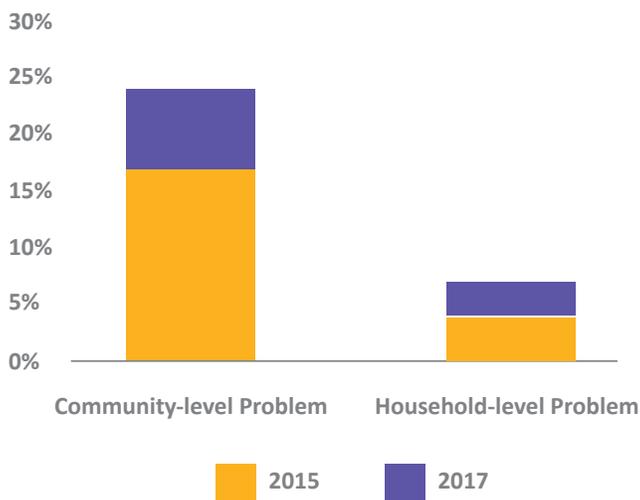


Figure 5: Percentage of Respondents to the Phone/Online Survey who reported racial/ethnic discrimination as a household and a community level problem | Source: City of Bellevue Human Services Needs Update Survey, 2015 and 2017

- In the consumer survey, which was predominately completed by refugee or immigrant residents of Bellevue, the top household problem was not being able to find work that supports themselves and their families (48%). The next highest rated problem was not being able to pay for dental bills (45%); third was not having enough money to pay for housing (28%). Almost 18% of those surveyed stated that experiencing racial or ethnic discrimination was a major or moderate problem.

Implications for Action

- The need for more culturally and linguistically responsive 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 in some cultures. Providing culturally responsive care which takes into account diverse backgrounds is essential.
- 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 better paying jobs as the cost of living rises. More opportunities for people to learn English, especially those that offer childcare and evening classes, are needed.
- Many parents for whom English is not their first language may 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 also help in developing language skills.

- More 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. This is especially important for the spouses and parents of workers in the high technological industry that reside here from other countries to provide social support and decrease their isolation.
- In a time of potential implementation of significant changes to federal immigration laws it is critical that the community help immigrants and refugees feel welcome and safe, whether it is applying for services, seeking employment, or taking their children to school or to participate in activities.

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