

Governance & Education Committee Meeting

City of Seattle Immigrant and Refugee
Commission

June 8, 2021

The 3 things we need for our communities

- **Effective language access--the overall theme**
- **Institutionalize what we have learned from the vax rollout**
- **Support small businesses: Education on funding process & assistance in navigating the systems**
- **Lower restriction on how recovery funds can be used**

Institutionalize what we have learned from the vax rollout

- Recognize our success:
 - City's focus on BIPOC communities for vaccination
 - Partnering with community organizations
 - Language access
- Future efforts:
 - Disaggregate BIPOC data
 - Address health inequalities from the ground up and bolster relationships with CBOs
 - Undocumented
 - Access to affordable health-care
 - Support and fund language access programs with the City

Testimonial

“...In a matter of days we had to learn how to impart preschool and prekindergarten classes in a virtual format. If this was difficult for many adults, now imagine the same for small children... the majority of our families decided to support us, and give it a try to online classes for their children. Some others after seeing things were not improving decided to cancel their participation which made an impact on my payroll budget...There was a lot of confusion from the government on how they could support us. The only clarity they had was when they demanded that our childcare needed to remain open as we were considered "essential workers"...To be honest, I felt that even my work was essential, I, IxChel, was not.”

Translated from Spanish by Karina San Juan, IRC
Commissioner

Support small businesses:
Education on funding process &
assistance in navigating the
systems

- Again, recognize our success
 - COVID Immigrant fund & Small Business Stabilization Fund
 - Rental support through United Way
 - Language access
- Future efforts
 - Digital access: Our communities do not know about about or cannot complete PPP and other resources-- can we replicate the pop-up vaccination clinics for similar programs
 - Financial literacy support
 - Mobile based application process
 - In person application opportunities

Testimonial

“My father is an immigrant, self-employed truck driver and had heard a lot about the Payment Protection Program. He reached out to me to ask for guidance and assistance, but even with a master’s in public administration, I found myself unsure about what to recommend, especially around it being a loan and not being clear on what parts of it could be forgivable. My father was thankfully able to connect with a financial advisor that knew more and gave sound information, but I can only imagine how challenging navigating this great program could be for other immigrants and refugees.” Anonymous

Lower restriction on access to funds & how recovery funds can be used by families & businesses

- Increase funding opportunities to vulnerable communities
- Limit restrictions on use, and who can apply
- Free internet access for lower income folk

Testimonial

“The lack of institutional and legal support as an undocumented immigrant during the global pandemic was extremely challenging. Learning how to navigate my education in the midst of a global pandemic with no support from the federal government made my reality unbearable.

This past new year, when diagnosed with the COVID virus, along with my family, I was more than terrified. Due to our status, we have never been able to qualify for health care insurance. The pandemic made it extremely difficult for me to fully put my focus on my education as I was faced with the tremendous obstacles of legal, financial and social barriers.”

Elrohi Shuge, IRC Commissioner