



**King County
Office of the
Executive**

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

AGENDA FOR JANUARY 22nd, 2026, SPECIAL MEETING

Date:	Thursday, January 22, 2026
Time:	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Virtual Meeting Link (TEAMS):	https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/21944915405405?p=Iz7wW5ZFpSJ9WZODgV
Meeting ID:	219 449 154 054 05
Password:	Sd93rW6W
On site location:	None (work-session for commissioners)

Meetings are open to the public. Meeting minutes will be made available on [King County's HCRC Website](#) once approved.

KING COUNTY STAFF

Senayet Negusse, King County Executive's Office Evelyn Chow, King County Executive's Office
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COMMISSIONERS

Position 1: Betelhem Michael	Position 2: Emily Huynh	Position 3: Allison Hastings	Position 4: Jacob Joens-Poulton	Position 5: VACANT
Position 6: Jennifer Karls	Position 7: Mona Jaber	Position 8: Steven Sawyer	Position 9: Daisy Wong	Position 10: Vanessa Sanchez-Mexicano
Position 11: VACANT				

AGENDA

TIME	ITEM	ACTION
6:00 PM (5 mins)	Call to Order	Administrative
6:05 PM (5 mins)	Public Comments	Administrative
6:10 PM (5 mins)	Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes for December 2025 and January 21, 2026 Meetings	Action Item



**King County
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6:15 PM (10 mins)	Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public Comment Review- Agenda Setting w/elected Chairs- County Email- SharePoint Access (Email Folder)	Discussion
6:25 PM (5 mins)	Break	Discussion
6:30 PM (60 mins)	Development of HCRC Work Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discuss developing Subcommittees<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Community Engagement / Stakeholder Planningo Policy Researcho Drafting report- Discuss future meetings & presentation topics including meeting cadence for subcommittees and regularly scheduled meetings	Discussion & Work Planning
7:30 PM (10 mins)	BREAK	
7:40 PM (10 mins)	Share Out & Recap Next Steps	Administrative
7:50 PM (10 mins)	King County HCRC Commissioner Closing Comments	Administrative
8:00 PM	Adjourn	



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**HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR JANUARY 22nd, 2026, SPECIAL MEETING**

Date:	Thursday, January 22, 2026
Time:	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Virtual Meeting Link:	https://kingcounty.zoom.us/j/89177684583
Meeting ID:	891 7768 4583
Password:	KCHCRC
On site location:	None (work-session for commissioners)

Meetings are open to the public. Meeting minutes will be made available on [King County's HCRC Website](#) once approved.

ATTENDANCE

KING COUNTY STAFF

Senayet Negusse, King County Executive's Office
Evelyn Chow, King County Executive's Office
Rosa Mai, New Boards and Commissions Liaison from the Executive Office.

KING COUNTY HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSIONERS

Emily Huynh, Commissioner
Allison Hastings, Commission Secretary/Historian
Jacob Joens-Poulton, Commissioner
Jennifer Karls, Commission Co-Chair
Mona Jaber, Commissioner
Daisy Wong, Commissioner Co-Chair
Vanessa Sanchez-Mexicano, Commissioner

Absent: Betelhem Michael (Commission Vice-Chair), Steven Sawyer (Commissioner)

COMMUNITY

None



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Jennifer, Commission Chair Facilitates.



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Public Comment: No observers or comments.

Meeting Minutes: Allison makes motion to approve minutes from December and January. Mona seconds. Minutes are approved by unanimous vote.

Logistics: Senayet introduces herself to the commissioners who weren't here last night.

She has created a public comment form, which is available in the shared drive/folder. She will also email it.

Senayet and her team can support us with agendas, but the agenda should be driven by the commissioners.

If we have any issues with access to email, resources, or the shared drive, let Senayet know. Rosa can also help administratively and help support the functions of the commission. Consider her a partner and resource.

Minutes, resources, onboarding documents are all available on the shared drive.

Once the minutes are approved, they will be made available on the HCRC website.

Recap of Last Night's Meeting: Jennifer provides a quick recap of what we did last night for those who were absent or had to leave early. Key points: we started with the work plan and started talking about potential subcommittees. Senayet talks briefly through the deliverables that we discussed last night (all the details are in the meeting minutes for 1/21/26 and the PPT that went along with that meeting).

Continuation of Work Plan Development:

1. Subcommittees:

Jacob reiterates his vision of creating a subcommittee that would focus on community engagement to create a channel for the public and nonprofits to access the commission. The idea is to create platforms for engagement and then tie in what we learn from this engagement into the reports we need to write.

Vanessa adds that she thought it would be helpful to think about internal engagement too—ways for us to connect with other King County boards and commissions and any other relevant groups and offices in the county that could help us understand needs and issues.

Jacob thinks this kind of delineation would be effective.

Daisy asks if we want to set up subcommittees now. Vanessa says we want to make sure we hear from the fuller commission about these ideas, other ideas, and how these types of subcommittees might feed into our deliverables (given that we were discussing these towards the end last night when there was a smaller group of commissioners).



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Emily has a clarifying question: On research and policy monitoring subcommittee idea, what do we have in mind for that?

Jacob says that since one of our key duties is monitoring policy impacts, that subcommittee could pay attention to legislation in the works and things that have been passed recently and how those things impact our work.

Emily asks about enforcement of policies. Daisy says it could probably be answered within the subcommittee. Might be too early to know now. Allison agrees.

Idea of the report drafting subcommittee: this group would be responsible for taking materials and drafting reports. Daisy says this seems like kind of a heavy lift. Wonders if this could be broken up. Allison agrees that there might be another way to think about this or divide up the work.

Allison asks Senayet how the IRC did this when she was on that commission. IRC has an annual report, but the HCRC has more specific/prescribed tasks outlined in the ordinance. Senayet says they did have subcommittees, and they were centered more around specific issues—e.g., businesses being displaced in South King County. Chairs and secretary took on the writing and worked with staff; it was a simpler process.. IRC also focused on issues coming out of the specific districts they represented. That was part of how they broke down community engagement efforts. Senayet says we should do whatever we thinks will work best for us.

Senayet says here are some questions/considerations:

What are the communities we need to engage?

What has changed since 2019 when the SU report was published?

How has COVID changed things?

There are also some antidiscrimination policies, changes to protected classes.

Daisy: What kind of assistance and resources can we get?

Senayet: Right now, I am your resource. I can help make connections and help you figure out where to look for research or data or county report. Or if you want help setting up meetings with other counties or groups. If we want to do a retreat, I could help set up time. If there's additional resources and support we need, she can make the ask.

Daisy says creating a subcommittee might be premature. We may need to discuss process more as a group. (Commission seems to table the idea of a drafting subcommittee for now.)



**King County
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Allison shares that it seems like we have both internal and external work. The internal work is a lot of what's required in the power and duties report; the external work seems more amorphous right now but is about community engagement, hearing from people on the ground, monitoring legislation.

Jennifer says "plus 1"; it would be helpful to understand the structures and landscape in the county, where services are located, who's doing the right work, where the ADA Coordinator situated.

Evelyn says the Council members and staff can also be a resource.

Daisy asks what we should have in mind to make the best use of the council staff and members' time.

Evelyn: Go in with clarity about how we're going to communicate what we're doing and what are requests are. How do we want to convey the work we're doing? How can they plug in and support it? How can we stay at the top of their minds?

Jennifer: There is probably an entity that already exists that's tracking proposed legislation, where things are in process, if there's legislation that the executive is supporting. Are they already looking at legislation that impacts people with disabilities, e.g.? I am wondering about that.

Evelyn: There is not one person or body tracking legislation. There wasn't really a policy team under the previous executive. A lot got tracked by different offices (e.g., protected classes legislation). On the Council side, they have specific committees. Those committees all have permanent staffers. There are a number of committees that are all broken down on the KC website with named chairs. Those chairs oversee that issue area on behalf of the Council.

(Mona has to leave early.)

Daisy asks if we should start with placement of the civil rights program. Allison says it would be helpful to understand the context and history of the program and part of that work or to help inform that work. Senayet seems to have a wealth of knowledge and experience that we could benefit from.

10-minute break.

Going back to the question of the placement of the civil rights program, Senayet says that between 2020 and 2022, COVID had a significant impact, as most focus was on COVID response. She says there's a bit of a gap, as a result. She could present and discuss 2024 until now, and the report was published in 2019. She could talk to us about the backlog and how they addressed that.

The 2019 SU report provides a good history of the office/program/movement.

Senayet can talk to us about 2024-2026. There are some data, though it's imperfect. She can provide information at the next meeting or whenever we'd like.



**King County
Office of the
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An investigator could share with us too. They also have three ADA Coordinators in the Executive's Office. There are also specific ADA Coordinators in various departments, including larger agencies like Public Health and King County Metro.

There are Council members interested in labor and wage issues; there's exploration of where that work might go too. They could share information on that as well. Senayet says they don't investigate and enforce under labor standards right now (i.e., wage theft).

Allison says it would be helpful to get the foundation down and then think about investigators, ADA Coordinators, and others we might want to learn from. Daisy agrees. Jennifer says let's use some time in February to learn about the civil rights program from 2024 to today.

Jennifer: Are we in agreement that we want to create a couple of subcommittees now, as we're thinking about reporting structures too?

Jacob: I think it would be useful because, inevitably, we will need to be reaching out to different groups. It could be helpful to have people to move into those roles and figure out what the subcommittees will entail together.

Vanessa agrees because time will move quickly.

Jennifer asks about process for establishing subcommittees. We will use a motion process.

Daisy makes a motion to establish subcommittees. Jacob seconds it. Unanimous votes to establish subcommittees.

Two subcommittees for now: External Community Engagement and Internal Community Engagement.

ACTION ITEM FOR ALL COMMISSIONERS: Email Jennifer and Daisy by COB, Tuesday, January 27, 2026 to indicate whether you're interested in joining the external community engagement subcommittee and/or the internal community engagement subcommittee. Or, you can express interest in the research and policy subcommittee, understanding that we haven't yet formed that one. It will come later.

Action Item for Jennifer: She will reach out to everyone by email with a reminder to contact the co-chairs about subcommittee interest.

Issue of vacancies: Senayet says they're going to see if we can proceed with existing applications for Position 5. She thinks we may not have the vacancies filled by the time our annual report is due in April. It's pretty common for commission membership to be rolling. Senayet says Positions 5 and 11 are somewhat connected. The person for Position 11 has been referred to the executive team for review, but that person hasn't been contacted or confirmed.



**King County
Office of the
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Evelyn: It might be helpful for everyone to go back and review the applicants and see who might have experience enforcing or investigating civil rights. Evelyn thinks there might be at least one yes. See who might be District 5 members. This could be helpful pre-work.

ACTION ITEM FOR ALL COMMISSIONERS: Go back and review the applicants and see who has experience enforcing or investigating civil rights. Evelyn thinks there might be at least one yes. See who might be District 5 members.

Allison asks if the internal engagement subcommittee will connect to powers and duties report and the question about where the civil rights program sits. Jacob thinks yes, that subcommittee would likely do the heavy lifting on the work of what the structures are and where the civil rights program should live.

Senayet: There are groups called out in the legislation: IRC, 504 Advisory Committee, Office of Law Enforcement. We could look at these and how they're structured, how they appoint an ED, how they've chosen language/terms, etc. Look at the ones identified in the legislation and that could help us. We could do outreach or bring them to a meeting. This could all go into how we make our recommendations.

Action Item for Senayet: Pull out the entities named in the legislation and email to the commissioners.

Daisy asks if there's an expectation for everyone to join a subcommittee. Allison shares concern about not everyone being here. Daisy says she's thinking about her capacity now vs later and what might work best. Jennifer says she thinks there's an expectation that everyone would serve on a subcommittee, but we don't know yet when we'd establish additional subcommittees. Everyone could share their interest in internal engagement, external engagement, and policy/research, even though the policy/research subcommittee hasn't been established yet.

ACTION ITEM FOR ALL COMMISSIONERS: Review the 2019 Seattle University report before the next meeting:

Seattle University's Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality's report entitled Research and Recommendations Regarding the King County Civil Rights Commission, Briefing 2019-B0149.

Senayet will present on 2024 to the present at our February meeting.

Next meeting date: February 18, 2026, 6-8pm. It will be a hybrid meeting like yesterday's meeting.