

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

MINUTES FOR THE MAY 19, 2026 REGULAR MEETING

Date:	Tuesday, May 19 th
Time:	6:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting Link (TEAMS):	https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/27351786571119?p=JHK9tT59u2W4YaX0UA
Meeting ID:	273 517 865 711 19
Password:	YU7Ha3uv
On site location:	Chinook Building, Executive Room (1 st Floor)

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

KING COUNTY STAFF LIAISON

Senayet Negusse, King County Executive's Office

Scarleth Lever Ortiz, King County Executive's Office

COMMISSIONERS

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

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

AGENDA

TIME	ITEM	PRESENTER & ACTION
6:00 PM (5 mins)	Call to Order Called to order: 6:07pm	HCRC CO-CHAIRS Administrative
6:05 PM (5 mins)	Public Comments Shiuli Saha: There are a lot of groups organizing around ICE activities. How is HCRC connecting with those groups? Is HCRC doing investigations? There have been detentions that have happened, and she'd like to know how the commission is connecting with the community. ICE has been staging a lot of activity. UW has done a study on racial profiling by ICE. She is encouraging the commission to get out in the community and establish trust. NW Immigration Project (https://www.nwirp.org) WAISN (https://waisn.org) https://ndlon.org https://www.shorelinewa.gov/our-city/equity-social-justice/immigrants-and-refugees Daisy: We are new and are in the process of figuring out our outreach and how we'll engage with the public. We haven't formed a process yet for how we'll move forward. Emily: Emily works with UW Center for Human Rights. She is letting Ms. Saha know that there is also a King County Immigrant and Refugee Commission.	HCRC CO-CHAIRS Administrative
6:10 PM (5 mins)	Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes for April 21st 2026, meeting Approval of Meeting Minutes: Yes Votes: 7 votes (all who are present)	HCRC CO-CHAIRS Action Item
6:15 PM (10 mins)	HCRC Updates - Commission Appointments Update - o Vacancy for District 5: There's been a review of applications. The goal is to conduct some interviews before the June meeting. Senayet and her team will put transmittal materials together. - Annual Report Press Release on 5/12 - o This got a lot of traction for some media.	STAFF LIASION Senayet Negusse & Scarleth Lever Ortiz

	○ Commissioners are free to speak on our own on behalf of the commission. Senayet's process has been to forward the communications to the co-chairs. ○ Daisy opens a conversation about how to respond to media inquiries and how to speak with one voice. ○ Steven suggests that the external subcommittee could handle inquiries and work with the executive team to craft responses on the commission's behalf. He is noting that we need to make sure we are responsive to community members in order to maintain trust with the community. ○ Senayet says the commission got a request that was about the commission's input on what the county's doing around ICE raids and detention. We can make suggestions about how the county responds. The commission might be more limited in authority regarding the Sheriff's Office (King County Code 215) and the provision that prohibits discrimination based on whether a person is detained. The commission can also make recommendations regarding timeframes for filing complaints. ○ Steven notes that the county doesn't have authority when the federal government comes in, but we (HCRC) are independent, so we can have a voice even if it's different from the county. Same is true if we have a voice or opinion different from the federal government. ○ Jacob agrees and says our body serves as a point of accountability for the council, so it's incumbent upon us to use our voice. - Tech Support for HCRC	
6:25 PM	King County ADA and Disability Equity Team Presentation - Overview of the Program ○ PPT presentation—overview of language, program, goals (Senayet will share the PPT with the commission) ○ Letter from 2020 that helped shape the current ADA program is in the appendix of this document: https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/executive/equity-racial-social-justice/affinity-groups/files/disability-equity-action-plan.pdf?rev=db7b62716a68408f84461acdf3df7636&hash=A083F04FB921FE63D7AFC2CA809552ED ○ https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/executive/governance-leadership/equity-social-justice/office-of-equity-racial-social-justice/ada-program (description of the program)	Presentation by King County Executive Office ADA and Disability Equity Team Dariya Farivar Action Item: Share PowerPoint with commissioners

	○ kcada@kingcounty.gov is an email that can be used to ask for resources or to refer someone to regarding accommodations. - Strengths & Areas of Opportunity - Q&A for HCRC	Person Responsible: Senayet
7:10 PM (5 mins)	BREAK	BREAK
7:15-7:35 PM	Discussion of SharePoint and Return to Discussion about Handling Media Inquiries - Internal HCRC SharePoint Overview ○ Everyone should have access to the SharePoint now. If not, they can send a request, and Senayet or Scarleth can approve. ○ Commissioners do not have access to Teams to schedule meetings because commissioners have email accounts but not Microsoft licenses that enable access to other applications. We are able to access the SharePoint with our email account credentials. ○ Commissioners should use this space for collaboration, content, and resources, so we don't have to sift through emails for everything. ○ There's a page/site that staff are building based on what commissioners want; it is TBD for now. ○ There's a performance and accountability page where Senayet has put some reports and key documents. - Handling Media Inquiries ○ Vanessa suggests that we might want to take some time to figure out different types of responses we want to issue, based on inquiry types. ○ Mona notes that protecting communities is key, and we need to be careful about messages that are hateful or inflammatory. ○ Steven notes that we can have some generic messages for certain types of inquiries that come in. It can reiterate our values and what we stand for, particularly if we get inflammatory messages. It can help redirect people. We can add language at the end that says "we uphold these values and decline to comment." Jacob and Allison add some comments. We can reference the UN Charter and possibly some of our bylaws language or website.	Action Item: Discuss process for handling inquiries at next executive team meeting. Person responsible: Senayet will add to the agenda. Deadline: Next executive meeting.

	○ For other types of inquiries from the community, we can handle them on a case-by-case basis.	
6:30 PM (20 mins)	Subcommittee Report Outs (We didn't do this) - Internal Subcommittee - External Subcommittee (Community) - External Subcommittee (Government & Systems)	ACTION ITEMS HCRC Subcommittee Chairs or Representatives
6:50 PM (5 mins)	Future Agenda Topics (We didn't do this, but commissioners could send emails) - Ideas for presentations that would be relevant for Commission	HCRC Co-Chairs hear from Commission on future agenda topics
7:35 PM (5 mins)	King County HCRC Commissioner Closing Comments - Opportunity to share events, news, opportunities to engage, etc.	Administrative
7:40 PM	Adjourn Adjourned at 7:41pm.	

ADA & Disability Equity Team

Darya Farivar

ADA & Disability Equity Specialist

King County Executive's Office

Language matters

We use identity and people first language

- Disabled is NOT a bad word!
- Identity First vs People First
 - + Identity first = Autistic person, disabled person
 - + People first = person with Autism, person with disabilities
 - + Both are valid!
- Nothing "special" about disability or accommodations
- People are not "bound" to their wheelchair
- The opposite of disabled is NOT normal
- Learn more by reviewing our **Disability and Culture** guide

disability
is not a
bad word

Team Structure

- Program established in 2022 after receiving feedback from the disability community that the County was not meeting their needs
- Structure and goals have changed significantly in four years
- TODAY
 - + Three FTE specialists
 - + In the Executives Office in Performance and Accountability Team*
 - + Specialists are meant to serve as a conduit between departments, community members, and the Executive's office.
 - + Focus on internal support and compliance with Title II of the ADA

Core Functions

- Develop Countywide accessibility plans and policies (i.e. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines);
- Provide guidance and support to departments trying to achieve or maintain compliance with all county services, programs, communications, and infrastructure;
- Support departments trying to move beyond compliance and into disability equity;
- Help the public and employees connect with the appropriate individual to discuss accommodations;
- Centralize compliance and equity resources across the County;
- Assist the King County Executive in identifying challenges, adapting systems, and establishing evaluation and accountability mechanisms.
- Support the policy and communications teams in being responsive to community needs.

Collaboration

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Host Disability Pride Day to celebrate the anniversary of the ADA and Disability Pride Month
- Participate in the King County Disability Consortium
- Update and restart the disability advisory council

INTERNAL CONNECTIONS

- Facilitate a monthly ADA and Disability Equity Community of Practice
- Collaborate with the King County Disability Equity Network
- Coordinate with the Civil Rights and Language Access teams to address intersections and complaints

Our Philosophy



- When making decisions about a community that community must be a meaningful part of that decision making
 - + Meaningful means: individuals are voting members, have access needs addressed, and have their voices heard and respected.
- Allies, professionals, friends, and family are NOT a substitute for people with direct lived experience.
 - + Direct lived experience means personal first-hand experience with the subject at hand.

2026 Goals

- Establish a WCAG Executive Policy
 - + Implementation workgroup
- Launch a SharePoint Resource Page
- Introduce legislation to establish a Disability Equity Commission
- Update Title II Executive Policy
- Host Disability Pride Month & ADA Anniversary event



Future Goals

- Stay in the Executive's Office under the Performance and Accountability Team
- Restructure team to add one more FTE
 - + 1 FTE Manager
 - + 1 FTE Policy
 - + 1 FTE WCAG technical expert
 - + 1 FTE Department assistance
- Funding for ADA coordinator in every department
- Funding for remediation to achieve WCAG compliance



**We have a
responsibility to
press forward.**