DENVER
MAYOR'S OFFICE

MEMORANDUM – DENVER IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE COMMISSION

TO:	**Mayor Mike Johnston**
FROM:	**Office of Boards & Commissions**
DATE:	**December 1, 2025**
PURPOSE:	**Appointments for Denver Immigrant & Refugee Commission (DIRC)**
PROCESS:	**Mayor's Approval and City Council Confirmation**

Board Function:
The Denver Immigrant and Refugee Commission advocates for the immigrant and refugee communities of the City of Denver, connects them with allies, stakeholders and resources available to them in Denver, engaging these communities in an integrative/meaningful way, and educates the immigrant and refugee community: by raising awareness and with access to resources that will make their integration to the Denver community constructive.

Qualifications:
Preferred applicants should have background, a history of involvement, interest and access to the diverse Immigrant and Refugee communities of Denver. The membership of the Commission shall make a good faith effort to represent the ethnic, gender, racial, age distribution, sexual orientation, geographic distribution, and political viewpoints and affiliations of the Denver Immigrant and Refugee Community.

21 Members/Mayoral Appointees

Appointment Candidates
Term: 1/1/2026-12/31/2028 or until a successor is duly appointed

 Amanda Blaurock (Pronouns) (Female, Caucasian) ***Executive Director**, Village Exchange Center*	**BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:** Amanda is exceptionally qualified as Co-Founder and Executive Director of Village Exchange Center, a nonprofit specifically designed to empower immigrant and refugee communities through programs celebrating religious and cultural diversity. Her proven leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, when she managed a $13.6 million budget to serve over 10,000 immigrants and refugees, demonstrates her ability to mobilize resources and deliver critical services during crisis situations. Her legal background as an attorney, combined with hands-on experience in integration programming and capital campaign management, provides both advocacy skills and practical implementation expertise.

Maria Jose Torres Ariceaga Chavez
(She/Ella) (Female, Hispanic)

***Community Impact Officer**, Rose Community Foundation*

BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:
Maria Jose brings authentic lived experience as a Mexican immigrant and professional expertise as Community Impact Officer at Rose Community Foundation, where she manages over $5 million in grant portfolios specifically focused on immigrant and refugee services. Her master's degree in international development and direct oversight of the Newcomers Fund and Refugee Integration Fund provide deep understanding of both policy frameworks and practical service delivery. Her bilingual capabilities and established philanthropic relationships position her to leverage resources and build strategic partnerships that expand services for immigrant and refugee populations.

Samantha Dolan
(No Pronouns Listed)
(Female, Caucasian)

***Enterprise Customer Success Manager**, Cirrus Insight*

BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:
Samantha's extensive experience in customer success management and enterprise client relationships, including managing portfolios totaling millions in revenue, demonstrates strong relationship-building and program management skills that translate effectively to community engagement. Her economics background and proven track record developing scalable processes and training materials will be valuable in creating systematic approaches to immigrant and refugee support services. Her experience conducting training sessions and managing complex stakeholder relationships will benefit the commission's community outreach and education initiatives.

Michael Hughes (He/Him/His) (Male, African American) ***Business Director – Maleic Anhydride**, Huntsman LLC*	**BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:** Michael's extensive Fortune 500 corporate leadership experience, including global operations management and strategic planning, brings valuable organizational expertise to help the commission develop scalable programs and build effective community partnerships. His background in relationship management, team building, and strategic initiatives will strengthen the commission's ability to create comprehensive support systems for immigrant and refugee communities. As an African American professional, he provides important intersectional perspective on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues affecting multiple marginalized communities.

  Yerson Padilla (No Listed Pronouns) (Non-Binary, Hispanic) ***Family Preservation Services Specialist**, Colorado Department of Human Services*	**BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:** Yerson brings both lived experience as a Hispanic individual and exceptional professional qualifications as a Family Preservation Specialist at the Colorado Department of Human Services, where they oversee more than $55 million in annual allocations supporting family permanency across all 64 counties. With a Master's degree in Latin American Studies and bilingual capabilities, Yerson possesses deep cultural competency and direct experience navigating state systems that immigrant and refugee families often encounter. Their expertise in policy development at state and federal levels will be invaluable for the commission's advocacy and systems change work.

  Stephanie Simons	**BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:** Stephanie combines Hispanic heritage with entrepreneurial experience as a business owner and native Spanish-speaking abilities, providing cultural competency and practical business insights that support immigrant economic integration. Her political science background and community service experience with Court Appointed Special Advocate Denver demonstrates her understanding of legal systems and advocacy work essential for immigrant families. Her bilingual capabilities and business acumen position her to help develop programs supporting entrepreneurship within immigrant communities.

(No Pronouns Listed) (Female, Hispanic) ***Owner**, Aire Master Co.*	

  Jaclyn Valentine (She/Her/Hers) (Female, Caucasian) ***Nursing Extern**, Denver Health*	**BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:** Jaclyn brings valuable healthcare perspective as a nursing student and apprentice at Denver Health, where she works directly with underrepresented populations and gains firsthand insight into systemic barriers affecting health equity and access for vulnerable communities. Her diverse background spanning healthcare, public service including work with former Congressman Cory Gardner, and community advocacy provides comprehensive understanding of how policy, healthcare, and community engagement intersect to serve marginalized populations. Her commitment to amplifying marginalized voices and building community-driven solutions, combined with her focus on mental health and equitable healthcare access, will strengthen the commission's ability to address the holistic needs of immigrant and refugee families.

  Anthony Mendoza Rengel (He/Him/His) (Male, Hispanic) ***High School English Language Development Teacher**, Denver Public Schools*	**BIOGRAPHY & STATEMENT OF SUPPORT:** As a Colombian immigrant and ELD teacher at Denver Public Schools, Antony offers authentic lived experience combined with professional expertise supporting multilingual students in developing academic language skills. His extensive credentials include master's degrees in applied Linguistics, International Relations, and Foreign Trade, and he is fluent in Spanish, English, and French. Through his role as Director of Communications at Forward Foundation International, he leads community initiatives across the U.S. and Latin America, demonstrating his commitment to empowering immigrant communities through education and leadership development.

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CURRENT BOARD

	Board Member: Board Mem...	Current Term	Current Term E...	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic or...	Email
1	Tony Lemus	2	4/15/2026	Male	Hispanic		tlemus@centrohumanitario.org
2	Victoria Ballerini	1	5/14/2027	Prefer not to answer	Hispanic	Yes	victoria.ballerini@gmail.com
3	Rosine Bouobda	1	5/31/2027	Female	African American	No	rosineb@generationheritage.com
4	Michaely Rosas	1	5/14/2027	Female	Caucasian	No	michaelyrosas@gmail.com
5	Alejandra Peralta	1	5/14/2027	Female	Hispanic	Yes	aperalta0414@gmail.com
6	Mazza FarajAllah	1	5/14/2027	Female	African American	No	mafarajallah@gmail.com
7	Ola Kukoyi	1	4/15/2026	Female	African American	No	ola.kukoyi@denvergov.org
8	Theresa Vogel	1	5/31/2027	Female	Caucasian		tvogel_00@yahoo.com
9	Tyler Jensen	1	5/31/2027	Male	Caucasian	No	tylerlewis.jensen@gmail.com

CURRENT BOARD DEMOGRAPHICS: 9/21 Total Mayoral Appointees

GENDER	
Male	2
Female	6
Non-Binary	1

HISPANIC ORIGIN
3

RACE/ETHNICITY	
Black/African American	3
Asian American, Native Hawaiian, pacific Islander	0
Latino/ Hispanic	3
Native American	0
Two or more	0
White	3
Other	