

MEMORANDUM – IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE COMMISSION

TO:	City Council
CC:	
FROM:	Esther Lee Leach
DATE:	4/23/2024
PURPOSE:	Appointments for Immigrant & Refugee Commission
PROCESS:	City Council Confirmation
PROJECT:	N/A
NEXT STEPS:	City Council Confirmation

CURRENT BOARD STATUS

Staff Liaison: Tsigereda Feseha, HRCP Community Integration Coordinator

Scope of Board/Commission:

The Denver Immigrant and Refugee Commission (DIRC) advocates for the immigrant and refugee communities of the City of Denver. They connect communities with allies, stakeholders and resources in Denver; providing valuable community context and input to policy makers. The Commission engages communities in an integrative and meaningful way, providing education by raising awareness about resources that will make their integration into the Denver community easier. The role of the commission is to develop collaboration and partnership between Denver’s immigrant and refugee communities and the City & County of Denver.

Appointment Process:

The Mayor appoints up to 21 members and City Council confirms appointments for a term of 3 years.

Mayor Mike Johnston has approved the appointments of Dr. Victoria Ballerini, Mazza FarajAllah, Alejandra Peralta, and Michaely Rosas

Appointment Candidates



Dr. Victoria Ballerini (Female, Hispanic)

Bio: Director, Strong Start to Finish, Education Commission of the States, (2022-Present), former high school teacher, government official, university professor, and higher ed & immigration policy research strategist focusing on to immigration challenges that prevents access to higher education and the workforce. Member of TheDream.US Scholarship Selection Committee. Member of the Education & Immigration Working Group convened by FWD.US Invited to serve in the College Affordability Subcommittee of the Education Policy Committee for the Biden-Harris Campaign.

Term: Tentatively 05/15/2024 - 05/14/2027 or until a successor is duly appointed



Mazza FarajAllah (Female, Two or More Races)

Bio: Donor Engagement and Fundraising Senior Specialist, Western Union Foundation (2021-Present), Impact Denver – Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce (2023), Urban Leadership Foundation of Colorado (2022). Engages with Western Union Foundation non-profit partners globally

Term: Tentatively 05/15/2024 - 05/14/2027 or until a successor is duly appointed



Alejandra Peralta (Female, Hispanic)

Bio: Mi Casa Resource Center, (2023-Present), previously Lutheran Family Services and Mile High United Way. Peralta has exhibited at Denver Fashion Week, Latin Fashion Week Colorado, Denver's Museo de Las Americas and the History Colorado Center. She most recently has been in service in the nonprofit sector working in the realm of refugee resettlement and other community facing organizations.

Term: Tentatively 05/15/2024 - 05/14/2027 or until a successor is duly appointed



Michaely Rosas (Female, Caucasian)

Bio: Adult Education Director, Aurora Mental Health & Recovery - formerly Asian Pacific Development Center, (2006-Present), Board Member Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (2023-Present), President Project KARE (2012-Present). Extensive experience in grant management and leadership, specializing in educational services for immigrant and refugee communities.

Term: Tentatively 05/15/2024 - 05/14/2027 or until a successor is duly appointed

Nhu Minh Le (Female, Asian)	04-15-24
Marianna del Hierro (Female, Native American)	04-15-24
Wafa Saeed, Denver (Female, African American)	04-15-25
Conor Gleason, Denver (Male, Caucasian)	04-15-25
Deena Duwaik, Denver (Female, Palestinian)	04-15-25
Ola Kukoyi, Aurora (Female, African American)	04-15-26
Tony Lemus Littleton (Male, Two or more races)	04-15-26
M. Karimme Quintan (Female, Hispanic)	04-15-26
Deborah Yi (Female, Asian)	04-15-26