



October 30, 2023

Executive Dow Constantine

RE: Regional Asylee Crisis  
***Riverton Park United Methodist Church***

Dear Executive Constantine:

In 2017 elected leaders throughout King County signed the *King County Inclusive Communities Pledge*. As part of the Pledge, with our collective voice said that we will, “...promote safe, welcoming, and inclusive communities—regardless of a person’s immigration or refugee status, race, religion, national origin, age sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, housing status, veteran status, political ideology, ancestry, or any other social identity.”

Let us honor the pledge we made to immigrants and refugees, specifically asylum seekers in King County. The undersigned King County cities are formally requesting that you, as the King County Executive, direct the King County Office of Emergency Management to activate the King County Emergency Operation Center to coordinate the response to the growing asylee need in the region, including the asylum seekers at Riverton Park United Methodist Church (Tukwila), Highline United Methodist Church (Burien) and other parts of King County.

For the past few months, hundreds of asylum seekers have arrived in Tukwila to temporarily stay at the Riverton Park United Methodist Church until their asylum status is decided. More than 300 people are residing on the church property with additional individual families arriving daily. The City of Tukwila and the diverse and generous Tukwila community have provided blankets, tents and pallets for the asylum seekers. Despite significant efforts and investment to date, the City of Tukwila alone is unable to manage the site or the myriad needs of the asylum seekers. The Tukwila site has already started to spill out to a church in the City of Burien and other cities have started to see asylum seekers in their communities as well.

To help address the growing problem, on Friday, October 6, 2023, the City of Tukwila issued an Emergency Proclamation. While Tukwila and other cities are on the front line of this growing humanitarian crisis, this is truly a regional issue that is beyond the capabilities of Tukwila or anyone city to address alone. King County and the greater Seattle area, by virtue of their proximity to the site in

Tukwila, freeways, and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, recognize that it is only a matter of time before the growing population of asylum seekers arrive on their doorsteps.

The Seattle and Puget Sound region have a long history of welcoming asylum seekers as they seek a better life in the United States. We the undersigned are hopeful you will activate the King County Emergency Operations Center so the region can organize a coordinated, humanitarian response to the needs of the newest members of our shared communities. Regional leadership from King County is needed for this regional humanitarian crisis and for the region to honor the collective pledge we made in 2017.

Sincerely,



Allan Ekberg  
City of Tukwila  
Mayor

Carl Cole  
City of SeaTac  
City Manager

Matt Mahoney  
City of Des Moines  
Mayor

Adolfo Bailon  
City of Burien  
City Manager

City of Federal Way  
Mayor

City of Redmond  
Mayor

City of Bellevue?

cc. The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
The Honorable Jay Inslee  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
The Honorable Pramila Jayapal  
King County Council