

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Application



Submitted on	15 February 2025, 9:08PM
Receipt number	104
Related form version	10

I am interested in serving on the Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. By checking this box I am affirming that I understand this appointment will be a 2-3 year commitment.	Yes, I understand
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I understand that this document will be a public record and any information I provide could be subject to release upon request.	Yes, I understand
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Date of application	02/15/2025
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Contact Information

Full name	Shahwar Ali
Phonetic pronunciation	SHEH-waar AHL-ee
Gender	Female
Pronouns	She/Her/Hers
Email address	shahwarali999@gmail.com
Phone number	6146963288
Indicate home, work, mobile for primary number	Mobile
Secondary phone number	
Indicate home, work, mobile for secondary number	
If you have a social media presence (Instagram, Facebook, X, Tiktok, LinkedIn, etc.) please share the best way to find you	Not Applicable
Residential street address	136 W Woodruff Ave
City	Columbus
Zip code	43210

How many years have you lived in the City of Columbus?	8
What district of the City of Columbus do you live in? (1-9 or outside of city limits)	3
Age	26-35

Personal Information

Country of origin (or country of origin of your parents, if applicable)	Pakistan
How long have you lived in the US? (date of arrival)	07/01/2012
What immigrant group or groups do you represent?	Asian
What languages do you speak and rate your fluency in each (basic, conversational, fluent, or proficient)	English (fluent) Urdu (fluent) Hindi (conversational) Punjabi (conversational)
Do you identify as one of the following: Immigrant (a person who has come to a country that is not their own in order to live there permanently), Refugee (a person who has come to a country that is not their own to avoid persecution in their country of origin), First-Generation (children of foreign-born parents)	Yes
Ethnicity and race (please check all that apply)	Asian (Chinese, Vietnamese, Bhutanese, etc.)
Occupation (if retired, please share former occupation)	Project Manager
Do you identify with any of the following affinity groups?	Not applicable

Questionnaire

Why are you interested in serving on this commission? (maximum 250 words)	<p>I am deeply interested in serving on the Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs because I believe in the power of inclusivity and the strength that diverse communities bring to society. Having witnessed firsthand the challenges that immigrants and refugees face in adapting to a new life, I feel compelled to contribute to initiatives that ensure their successful integration into the community. My background in public policy and health equity has equipped me with a strong foundation in advocacy, resource navigation, and cultural competency, which I hope to use to further the Commission's mission.</p> <p>I am particularly passionate about providing a platform for underrepresented voices and working towards policies that ensure equitable access to services and opportunities for all individuals. By serving on the Commission, I hope to collaborate with others to create a welcoming environment for immigrants and refugees in Columbus, helping them to not only adapt but thrive.</p> <p>Ultimately, my commitment to fostering a more inclusive and just community drives my desire to be involved in the Commission. I am excited about the opportunity to work with others who share this vision and to make meaningful contributions toward positive change.</p>
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What do you hope the commission will accomplish in the short term and long term? (maximum 250 words)

In the short term, I hope the Commission will focus on ensuring that immigrants and refugees have access to the immediate resources and support they need, such as legal assistance, language services, healthcare, and housing. Streamlining these services and connecting individuals with local community resources can help them adapt and settle into their new lives with dignity. Additionally, fostering strong community partnerships and improving communication between local government and immigrant populations will be crucial for building trust and making services more accessible.

In the long term, I envision the Commission working toward structural changes that lead to greater inclusion and equality for immigrants and refugees. This includes advocating for policies that reduce barriers to employment, education, and civic participation, allowing these communities to fully contribute to and benefit from the city's growth. I hope the Commission will play a leading role in shifting public perceptions, promoting awareness, and ensuring that Columbus remains a welcoming city where immigrants and refugees are not just supported but celebrated for their contributions.

Ultimately, I hope the Commission will leave a lasting legacy of inclusion, helping to create a society where people from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to thrive.

Please describe and share relevant activities and accomplishments that relate to the community that you represent (maximum 250 words)

Over the years, I have been actively involved in supporting immigrant and refugee communities through both professional and volunteer efforts. I have worked with various Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community organizations, where I helped community members navigate the complexities of the immigration process, offering assistance with paperwork, translation services, and connecting them with essential resources. This role allowed me to witness firsthand the unique challenges immigrants and refugees face and deepen my commitment to supporting their integration.

In addition, I have volunteered with local advocacy groups focused on immigrant rights, participating in campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of equitable policies and access to services. Through these efforts, I've helped organize community meetings and workshops aimed at informing immigrant families about available legal protections and social services.

One of my proudest accomplishments was working with the Yokoso Center in Columbus to bring together diverse community members, leaders, healthcare professionals, researchers, public health experts, and policymakers. The goal was to provide guidance on the impact of existing and emerging healthcare gaps affecting the AAPI communities across the country. This program not only supported individuals working with the AAPI communities but also fostered a sense of belonging within the larger community to seek additional resources in advancing health equity for underserved communities.

These experiences have deepened my understanding of the immigrant experience and strengthened my desire to continue advocating for policies and initiatives that benefit the community I represent.

List any experience that would assist you in serving on this commission (maximum 250 words)

I bring a variety of experiences that would assist me in serving on the Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. For the past few years I have worked as a Community Outreach Analyst, where I supported immigrant families by assisting them with accessing healthcare resources such as free clinics, vaccinations, cancer preventative care, and healthy living and aging. This hands-on experience has given me a deep understanding of the practical challenges immigrants face and the importance of providing effective, culturally competent support.

Additionally, I have been involved in organizing community events that promote cultural exchange and raise awareness about immigrant issues.

I've worked directly with community leaders, local organizations, and government agencies to address the needs of refugees and immigrants, ensuring that their voices are heard in policy discussions.

My background in public policy has equipped me with strong skills in problem-solving, advocacy, and collaboration. I am adept at building partnerships across diverse stakeholders, a crucial skill for working with the Commission to create positive change.

I also have experience in data collection and analysis, which would be valuable in assessing the effectiveness of Commission initiatives and identifying areas for improvement. These combined experiences give me the knowledge, skills, and passion to contribute effectively to the Commission's work.

Are you related to any elected City official or city staff member? If yes, please explain.

No

Do you or any of your family members work for or serve on the board of directors of any organization which has contracted with or applied for funding from the City of Columbus? Do you anticipate any involvement of this kind in the future? If yes, please describe the relationship.

No

Please indicate any activities you are involved with that may present a conflict of interest with the commission applying for.

Not applicable

References

Reference #1

Dr. Steven Ing

Relation #1

Colleague

Phone number #1

6146853333

Email #1

steven.ing@osumc.edu

Reference #2

Dr. Iyaad Hasan

Relation #2

Community Partner

Phone number #2

6142732843

Email #2

iyaad.hasan@breathingassociation.org

By filling out the reference section, I hereby authorize the City of Columbus to conduct a reference check by contacting the individuals listed above. As a reminder, this document is subject to public records requests.

Yes

Resume & Letters of Reference

Optional: Please attach your resume and any letters of reference here. If you plan on mailing this form please remember to attach a copy of your resume and any letters of reference.

[Commission_Resume.docx](#)

