

Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship

Tuesday, October 28

Virtual Public Meeting

Present: Chair Felipe Lobo Koerich, Commissioners Anne Odera, Vanessa Ruget, Karin Lin, Karim Razzaz, Raul Ripoll, Sarah Figge Hussain, Tsamchoe Dolma, Subandha Karmacharya

City Staff: Executive Director Carolina Almonte, Director of Operations Sarah Binney, Immigrant Services Liaison Tagesech Wabeto

Catiana Jean Pierre – Haitian Outreach Worker with the Community Engagement Team

Absent: Chair Shubhan Nagendra, Commissioners Ana Mejia

1. Call to Order

- a. ED Almonte called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

2. Public Comments

- a. Catiana Jean-Pierre, Outreach Worker with the Community Engagement Team, joined to learn information that can be reported to the Haitian community.

3. Review and approval of September 2025 Minutes

- a. The Commission reviewed the minutes from the meeting in September 2025. Commissioner Ruget moved to approve the minutes; Commissioner Razzaz seconded. All voted in favor of approving the minutes.

4. Staff Reports

- a. ED Almonte
 - o The Department of Equity and Inclusion hosted an Open House in the new office space where staff from other departments could come by and learn about the work of the different departments.
 - o ED Almonte provided a report from the council meeting. The city cannot directly pay SNAP backfill but is working to figure out how it can provide support to organizations that distribute food. The City is supporting the Margaret Fuller House in their Thanksgiving Food Distribution by providing interpretation. ED Almonte will share more about how to volunteer or donate food

with Commissioners.

b. DOO Binney

- o CIRC staff are working with the Central Square Library to schedule a Know Your Rights Training specifically geared towards immigrants with TPS. The training will be put on by De Novo and will have interpretation in Haitian Creole and Spanish. DOO Binney will send out more information when the date is solidified.
- o CIRC and the LGBTQ+ Commission are collaborating with the City of Somerville to put on a virtual Know Your Rights series about issues that affect LGBTQ+ Immigrant Communities.
- o DOO Binney attended the Boston Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) Forum on Friday, October 24. MOIA shared results from a community needs assessment that emphasized the overwhelming need for housing among immigrants in all types of communities. Commissioner Ripoll expressed interest in continued collaboration across municipal immigration responses.

c. ISL Wabeto

- o ISL Wabeto met with family engagement office at Cambridge public schools to discuss how schools can support immigrant families with food assistance.
- o ISL Wabeto has been doing outreach about the Bystander Intervention Trainings, Preventing Child Abuse workshop, the Monthly Legal Clinic, the Pathways for Immigrant Workers clinic, and the Reasonable Accommodation Housing Workshop. She has also been sharing resources for winter clothing distribution.

5. Old Business

- a. [Bystander Intervention Training](#) – **Wednesday, October 29 and Wednesday, November 5**—CIRC is partnering with the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants for two virtual Bystander Intervention trainings. These will be free virtual workshops with practical tools for bystanders to intervene and de-escalate situations. With information about ICE enforcement basics, community support roles, and what to do if detention occurs. Commissioners can join the workshops and help spread the word to their networks.
- b. Volunteer Attorneys—The monthly legal immigration clinic has had low volunteer rates. ED Almonte is considering if the clinic is the best model. CIRC is hoping to consider different ways to provide legal help

to Cambridge residents considering the shortage of immigration attorneys. ED Almonte noted that De Novo does not file Habeas Petitions, but Greater Boston Legal Services does.

6. New Business

a. Resources for detained immigrants

- o DOO Binney has created a new page for the city website, “Detention Defense Resources.” Commissioners can provide feedback about the resources and share additional resources to be added. ED Almonte will be meeting with LUCE and BIJAN to learn more about existing detention defense resources.

b. Food resource brainstorm

- o Commissioners suggested compiling free food resources into one document and sharing this document in the daily update email and on the city website’s home page.
- o Commissioners suggested a gift card drive, which has happened in the past. Community members and businesses donated gift cards, and they were provided to nonprofit organizations such as the Margaret Fuller House and CEOC. Commissioner Razzaz suggested involving places of worship. CPS families have received a request for gift card donations from the school system. Commissioner Razzaz suggested reaching out to School Liaisons to support with food distribution coordination. Commissioner Figge Hussain shared that CPS used to provide grocery gift cards but lost funding, and the School Board is trying to fundraise.
- o DOO Binney expressed desire to not duplicate work happening across the city, and coordinate with other departments.
- o Commissioner Razzaz shared that Aldi has a thanksgiving meal for 40 dollars.

c. November and December Meetings—DOO Binney will send out a poll for November and December meeting times to avoid conflict with holidays.

d. Commissioner Razzaz shared that the City of Somerville will be providing a Know Your Rights session for High Schoolers and could collaborate with the City of Cambridge.

- e. Commissioner Figge Hussain suggested Family Preparedness trainings at the Community Learning Center.

7. Adjournment

- a. Commissioner Ruget moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm. Commissioner Figge Hussain seconded.