



Southside Communities,

As an organization that represents one of the most diverse and economically dynamic regions in Washington State, the Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce remains committed to supporting our businesses, workers, and the communities they serve.

Recent executive actions related to immigration policy, workforce development funding, and federal support programs have raised significant concerns for our region. These policies, which include stricter visa regulations, reductions in refugee admissions, and funding cuts to critical social and workforce programs, create new barriers for businesses and workers alike. These actions do not just disrupt lives—they widen the gap between surviving and thriving for many in our community.

Southwest King County has long been a place of opportunity and resilience, welcoming and employing thousands of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Many of our local businesses are owned, operated, and staffed by individuals who came to this country seeking safety, stability, and opportunity. I, myself, am a Vietnamese refugee. I know firsthand the challenges that come with rebuilding a life in a new country. Policies that restrict opportunities for immigrants and asylum seekers do not just harm individuals—they harm our entire economy, limiting access to skilled labor, slowing business growth, and creating uncertainty for employers and employees alike.

The data is clear: immigrants are a vital part of our workforce. Since 2020, nearly all U.S. labor force growth has come from immigrants, while the participation of native-born workers has remained mostly stagnant. The foreign-born labor force has grown by approximately 15%, ensuring that businesses have the workers they need to operate and thrive. Without this growth, industries ranging from hospitality to healthcare would face even greater labor shortages.

These policies are not just impacting businesses—they are devastating the nonprofit organizations that provide essential services to our communities. Many of these organizations are now facing federal funding cuts, forcing them to make difficult decisions about staffing, programming, and the level of support they can provide. With resources already stretched thin, the demand for services continues to rise, leaving many at risk of losing access to food, shelter,

legal assistance, and job training.

Over the past few days, I have heard directly from business owners, community leaders, and families who are deeply concerned about what these changes mean for their future. The small business owner unsure if their employees will be able to renew work permits. The nonprofit leader questioning how long they can continue operating under increased financial strain. The working individual who fear they may lose access to crucial support programs. These concerns are real, and they demand urgent attention.

We believe in an economy that works for everyone—where businesses can grow, workers have opportunities, and no one lives in fear of what tomorrow will bring. Whether you live, work, or play in Seattle Southside, you deserve to feel secure in your future and have access to foundational support. As a nation of immigrants, our strength lies in our diversity, resilience, and ability to uplift one another.

The Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce stands in solidarity with our community and will continue advocating for policies that support all businesses, nonprofits, and workers, regardless of where they come from. We also recognize that action is needed. In the coming times, we will be sharing updates through our newsletters, including information on partnerships with community organizations that can provide resources, guidance, and support to help business owners, workers, and families stay informed and prepared. We encourage our community to stay engaged, stay informed, and stand together as we navigate these challenges.

Samantha Le

President & CEO

Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce