



WASHINGTON REFUGEES WELCOMING AND HEALING CENTER (SENATE RESOLUTION 8627)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Founded in 2016, Congolese Integration Network is a vital force in King County, supporting Congolese immigrants and refugees in their journey towards integration, healing, and resilience. Over six years, CIN has been unwavering in its commitment to addressing urgent issues, including homelessness, mental health concerns, and community building, through culturally sensitive services. CIN has earned trust as a reliable advocate and resource hub, especially crucial for immigrants and refugees from the DRC and has recently been approved to function as Private Sponsor organization for the Welcome Corps Program, which will enable us to connect with refugees from camps and resettle them here in the State of Washington. It functions as a cultural home, providing essential support and healing services.

REFUGEE HEALING CENTER PROJECT:

Currently, CIN is spearheading the development of a Refugee welcoming and Healing Center, aiming to serve hundreds of immigrants and refugees, from any nation. The center will be the arrival and ideal location to welcome refugees resettling to Washington through our Sponsorship program with Welcome Corps; offering them and local community members vital services, affordable housing, a community garden, Early Learning program, workforce development, and community event space as requested by the community. We term it a Healing Center because refugees and immigrants often carry trauma from our home countries, hindering success in this new land. We will address this by offering counseling and utilize our Healing Circles—a secure space for sharing, building resilience and receiving support.

PRE-DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS:

The pre-development phase is concluding, positioning CIN to lead an African immigrant-led capital campaign. This phase involved comprehensive community engagement, building internal capacity, gathering community needs and priority, assessing data collected, site tours to learn from others with similar projects and site research. Current phase includes: drafting a Site Control agreement and conducting funding feasibility studies.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT RECEIVED

- \$515,000 from Senator Karen Keiser's office
- \$500,000 from Congressman Adam Smith's office
- \$25,000 from 4Culture

Supporters: Mayor of Seatac Jake Simpson, Representative Mia Gregerson, Senator Keren Keiser, Representative David Hackney

CONCLUSION

The Refugee Welcoming and Healing Center not only meets immediate community needs but also serves as a replicable model for welcoming and responding to new arrivals nationwide. The recent influx in Tukwila underscores the vital role such a center plays. With strong community and stakeholder support, CIN is poised to turn this vision into reality, solidifying its crucial position for healing, community support, and seamless integration and empowering our generation.