

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

General Meeting, January 13, 2026

Present 16 people in the room, 18 online.

The meeting began with introductions and an opening moment of silent reflection.

President Kevin Folkman shared an acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands and Peoples.

We acknowledge that we are on the Indigenous Land of Coast Salish peoples who have reserved treaty rights to this land, specifically the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. We thank these caretakers of this land who have lived and continue to live here since time immemorial.

Kevin thanked St. Margaret's for hosting the space we were meeting in and Unity of Bellevue for providing lunch today.

Brief Reports

- *Treasurer*. The financial statements are available at eiscc.net.
- *Secretary*. EISCC is very grateful for the support of member organizations for its modest budget. 2026 dues for organizational membership are due. The link is available at [this link](#).
- *Faith Action Network*. FAN's priorities are now available, on budget, food security, housing, criminal justice, and immigrant justice. FAN offers a new one-pager on advocacy from the viewpoint of diverse spiritual traditions. Elizabeth urges everyone to sign up for Interfaith Advocacy Day, February 12. All this information is available at fanwa.org.
- *Eastside Human Services Forum*. Linda Hillesheim shared a message from Barb de Michele, who has been convening a group to talk about re-organization involving the Forum.
 - "The talks about the merger of Eastside Human Services Forum and the Alliance of Eastside Agencies, under the umbrella of the Together Center, are going well. We are no longer calling it a merger, however, because we are hoping to create a new and better organization serving the entire community and environment of human services. We have a new name, Eastside Human Services Collaborative. The Collaborative also just received a 2-year, \$45,000 grant from King County that will support our efforts to create this new entity. Current discussions are now focused on a governance model that works, and we are hoping to host a community gathering in March or April to kick off the larger effort."
 - Linda expressed the view that this development would be very helpful to us. She offered to pass thoughts from anyone present or connections to the new Collaborative.
- *Congregations for Kids*. Shauna Backus, one of two new Co-Executive Directors, shared observations from the school district liaison. The liaison reports that stresses on families are high under the current situation. Many families are facing food insecurity, evictions, and exploding insurance costs. The gift cards from C4K are helping to meet important needs.
- *Kevin reported a small miracle* EISCC had produced at the Lake Washington Safe Parking program. A member of his congregation, following up on what he had learned through the EISCC network, had gathered clothing and toys for children at the program.

SPOTLIGHT. Star Lalario, Executive Director of Mamma's Hands, presented their work. Mamma's Hands started as a street mission, providing free phones for people to call home and transportation to reunite with families. It now provides shelter for eight women with children on a wooded property in North Bend. Full support for moving into housing and staying there is provided through case managers onsite. Mamma's

Hands collaborates with other nearby social service organizations and the Snoqualmie Tribe. Many kinds of volunteer effort and supplies are needed; see the link on their website: mammashands.org.

MAIN PRESENTATION. Joey Lopez (he/him), Co-Executive Director of the Church Council of Greater Seattle and Andrea Soroko Naar, Executive Director of the Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice Northwest shared the work of the Washington for All Coalition. Their slides are available [here](#).

- The Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice Northwest focuses on organizing accompaniment for immigrants. Requests for accompaniment have increased from about one per week in the spring of 2024 to fifteen per week now. Trained accompaniers attend court hearings with immigrants and help connect them with other services, such as bail bond support from WAISN (the Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network). Central values in the work include humility, respect for dignity and autonomy, maintaining information in confidence, avoiding probing questions, not acting in a legal capacity, and being dependable and trustworthy. In addition to providing essential personal support for immigrants, it gives eyes into the system.
- Joey indicated that individuals and faith communities can help migrants currently in a variety of ways: supporting and amplifying the Deportation Defense Hotline (1-844-724-3737), being trained to join a rapid response team or be an accompaniment volunteer; join efforts to prepare for large-scale raids and escalated enforcement; support advocacy efforts to expand protections and invest in the deportation defense infrastructure at the state and local level; and consider being a pop-up resource hub in the event of a large-scale raid in your area. Joey can speak individually with faith communities that want more information on the latter.
- Joey also pointed to bills currently the state legislature for which the Washington for All Coalition urges support: Banning Law Enforcement from Wearing Masks (SB 5855/ HB 2173); Protect Student Financial Aid Privacy (HB 2132); Sheriffs' Eligibility & Standards (SB 5874); and Immigrant Workers Protection Act (HB 2105). More information on each is available at leg.wa.gov.
- Individuals can sign up for mobilization alerts at bit.ly/wa4all. Joey urged everyone present to [sign up](#) for emails from the Church Council.

Announcements

- Advocacy
 - Essentials First is having their first ever [advocacy day](#) on January 26, focused on hygiene insecurity. Hygiene items are not covered by SNAP or TANF, so private action is critical in making them available. Register [here](#).
 - FAN's 2026 legislative priorities are now available on the FAN website in the [Advocacy](#) drop-down menu. You can [sign up](#) for weekly emails with advocacy opportunities here. FAN would love to have everyone at our Interfaith Advocacy Day on Thursday, Feb. 12, in Olympia. Sign up at the FAN website at fanwa.org.
 - Bellevue City Council will be looking at a draft around affordable housing on Feb. 3. More information is available from Elizabeth Maupin, eli410maupin@gmail.com.
- Volunteer opportunities
 - Unity of Bellevue answered the call from Porchlight for coats and urges others to do the same.

- [Little Free Pantries](#) are an excellent path for addressing current food needs. The Little Free Pantry at Unity of Bellevue needs donations.
- At the November EISCC meeting, we identified things volunteers could do to help families who are afraid to leave their homes. A coordinator is needed for food deliveries. Contact eastsideinterfaith@gmail.com to volunteer.
- Skill Sharing
 - Essentials First has started an Essentials Skills program. Sewing instructors and supplies are welcome. Volunteer at essentialsfirst.org.
 - [Mama's Hands](#) is looking for volunteers for after-school tutoring. Contact Star Lalario at star@mammashands.org or 206-719-0335.
 - The Jewish Coalition for Immigrant Justice needs volunteers for accompaniment, The Jewish Coalition can be reached through the WAISN Hotline (1-844-724-3737) or through Andrea Soroko Naar (andrea@jewishcoalition.org).
- Events
 - Nourishing Networks is having its spring Networkshop on March 21 at the Together Center, 9 am to 1 pm. Register [here](#).
 - Star Lalario can coordinate group visits to Mama's Hands. Contact her at star@mammashands.org or 206-719-0335.
- Other opportunities
 - Tammy Waddell brought news about East King Rise, a network supporting our immigrant neighbors. Learn more at linktr.ee/eastkingrise or by email at eastkingrapidresponse@gmail.com.
 - The hotline for reporting ICE activity in East King County is 425-361-0808.
 - The group is involved in four primary activities:
 - WAISN Rapid Response (documenting and bearing witness to ICE activity)
 - NDLOD Adopt a Day Labor Corner (supporting day laborers)
 - WA Whistles (whistles are a great tool for community defense)
 - WA Neighborhood Defense (know your rights canvassing for businesses)
 - A packet of support materials is available [here](#).
 - Elizabeth Maupin is looking for part-time help on the newsletter of the Issaquah Sammamish Interfaith Network. Contact her at eli410maupin@gmail.com.
 - The Ballard Community Task Force on Homelessness and Hunger has a presentation around changing the narrative on homelessness and hunger and also on accompaniment for the homeless. Contact Elizabeth Maupin (eli410maupin@gmail.com) if you are interested in seeing these materials.

Closing Prayer offered from the Baha'i tradition.