UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

2022

A Needs Assessment for Ukrainian/Russian, Arabic and Pashto/Dari Speaking Communities | King County, WA

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LUTHERAN
**Community
Services**
NORTHWEST

Acknowledgements

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About Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW)

"At LCSNW, our work has always been about people. Our mission is to partner with others to provide health, justice and hope, and for 100 years we have sharpened that focus on opportunities to meet the diverse needs of the thousands of people we serve."
David Duea, CEO & President, LCSNW

Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW) is a community-based, non-profit organization serving the communities and peoples of Washington, Oregon and Idaho for more than 100 years. Our mission is grounded the ideals of inclusiveness and justice. We respect, serve and advocate for all no matter their religion, ethnicity, sexuality or other personal attributes.

When unimaginable crises threaten people's lives and futures, Lutheran Community Services Northwest offers healing, help and hope. We help vulnerable children, families, refugees and others meet life's most difficult challenges and thrive in communities that are healthy, just and hopeful.

LCSNW's King County services are diverse and constantly growing, with a strong history in providing community services through multiple resources centers, refugee, asylee and resettlement services, senior focused assistance, mental health and counseling services, child and youth services, housing and English as a second language classes. We are proud of the work we provide to those we serve and look forward to continuing in this honorable tradition for the next 100 years.

Executive Summary

"As Case Manager I enjoy my career. I get internal satisfaction when I serve the community and people, especially the immigrants and refugees, as they deserve assistance in many areas of life."

Hazrat Khan, Foreign-Born Elder Case Manager, LCSNW

LCSNW surveyed several populations and communities across King County for three major language groups, Ukrainian/Russian speakers (Slavic communities), Arabic speakers (primarily Iraqi communities) and Pashto/Dari speakers (primarily Afghan communities). With our strong connections to these language groups through a network of services and partnerships, our aim was to gather direct feedback on their needs, wants, success, challenges and hopes, to help prioritize future resources and services that align with these communities' voices and reflect local priorities and values.

Our surveys were developed with open-ended questions designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. We sought to identify demographic information to better understand the characteristics and backgrounds of our assessed participants as well as provide a survey which would allow them to speak freely about their accomplishments, support services received, information availability in their language and what they see as problems or barriers to having a successful life in the United States.

Our analysis of these surveys highlights and confirms issues we know these language groups face and point to possible culture differences in understanding where and how help can be made available in King County vs. country of origin. We saw a vast array of responses to all the questions though there were enough common answers and threads to help identify some correlations.

Ukrainian/Russian Speakers Top Barrier

THE MOST COMMONLY LISTED BARRIER OR CHALLENEGE FOR OUR UKRAINIAN/RUSSIAN LANGUAGE SPEAKERS WAS THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE AND A DESIRE TO IMPROVE THIS (47%).

Arabic Speakers Top Barrier

THE MOST COMMONLY LISTED BARRIER OR CHALLENGE FOR OUR ARABIC SPEAKING POPULATIONS WERE COST OF LIVING (48%).

Pashto/Dari Speakers Top Barrier

THE MOST COMMONLY LISTED BARRIER OR CHALLENEGE FOR OUR PASHTO/DARI LANGUAGE SPEAKERS WAS THEIR COST OF LIVING (33%).

A substantial proportion of respondents found language to be a barrier to successfully living in the United States and King County specifically. All groups identified language as a problem ranging from one fifth to over half of the group. The Arabic speaking group had the highest percentage of language listed as problem with 51% stating so. This can include not understanding the language, to difficulty with forms, to the scheduling of ESL classes.

The data points to the Arabic and Ukrainian/Russian groups having the greatest proportion of respondents identifying language as a major barrier. It is unclear why the Pashto/Dari group has a lower stated barrier involving language availability and language barriers, but they are also the group with the youngest respondents. Further efforts to untangle this important issue is needed.

We also noted that the Ukrainian/Russian language group emigrated from more than twice the number of countries compared to the other two groups. This presents concerns and challenges for both language and culture. It may be necessary to equip County personnel with a wider variety of language and cultural expertise with regards to our Slavic communities, especially geared towards older adult populations and services.

KEY RESULTS

Below are the summarized trends, variabilities, contrasting elements and conclusions across the surveyed language groups.

Demographics

1. We gathered responses from **100 respondents** from **17 different countries of origin.**
2. Of all respondents, **70% of our Arabic** speakers were female, **82% of our Ukrainian/Russian** speakers were female and **48% of our Pashto/Dari** speakers were female.
3. The mean age of our respondents across language groups were: **Arabic speakers = 52** years of age, **Ukrainian/Russian = 51** years of age, **Pashto/Dari = 46** years of age.

Accomplishments

4. The Pashto/Dari speakers stated that **education (33%)** and **finding employment (36%)** were their greatest accomplishments while living in King County.
5. The Ukrainian/Russian speakers listed **English language skill (26%)** and **gaining skills beneficial for employment (23%)** as their greatest accomplishments while living in King County.
6. Arabic speakers listed obtaining some type of **education degree (39%)** and obtaining **U.S. citizenship (18%)** as their noteworthy accomplishments.

Help Received from Organizations

7. Within the **Ukrainian/Russian speakers, 21%** stated they received **no help** from organizations, **35%** stated they had received **help with food** and **18%** said they received **help with health care.**
8. Within the **Arabic speakers, 15%** stated they received **no help** from organizations, **75%** stated they had received **help with food** and **54%** said they received **help with health care.**
9. Within the **Pashto/Dari speakers, 3**% stated they received **no help** from organizations, **75%** stated they had received **help with food** and **54%** said they received **help with health care.**

Stated Barriers

10. **Language** in some form was listed as a barrier to successfully living in King County at a rate of 51% for our Arabic speakers, 47% for our Ukrainian/Russian speakers and 21% for our Pashto/Dari speakers.
11. **Transportation** was listed by 30% of our Arabic speakers as a barrier while it was not mentioned at all by our Pashto/Dari speakers.
12. **Cost of living/basic necessities** was mentioned by 33% of our Pashto/Dari speakers and by 48% of our Arabic speakers.

Introduction

Background

In the first half of 2021, VSHSL and LCSNW worked together to develop a community-based needs assessment designed to gather the voices from communities in King County to inform future service design and to better understand needs, wants, barriers and success. This project was designed as a survey, distributed across our Iraqi, Slavic and Afghan communities in King County with a focus on elders (50+ years old), their families and caregivers.

The survey was designed to gather some basic demographic information as well as ask questions which would lend to qualitative and/or content analysis through anonymous feedback from participants across cohorts.

Working closely with internal service teams at LCSNW already serving these populations as well as with community partners including other community-based organizations (such as the Iraqi Community Center of Washington) and faith-based organizations, we were able to reach out to these communities to gain deeper insight into their daily lives here in King County.

Methods

"It is the obligation of every person born in a safer room to open the door when someone in danger knocks,"

Nadia Hashimi, second-generation Afghan American Author

The goal of this survey was to identify the strengths, barriers and needs of foreign-born elders, specifically those from Slavic, Iraqi, and Afghan communities, and their families who live in King County. Caregivers of elders were also qualified for participation in this assessment. The survey consisted of a small number of demographic questions, including age, gender, and country of origin.

Survey Design and Administration

The Senior Services Program at LCSNW designed a small number of open-ended questions in addition to demographic data, to identify the strengths, barriers, and needs of eligible elders while gathering narrative information on their experiences and views. The original design called for an iterative approach, building on outcomes from previous efforts and included focus group-based surveys and interviews, moving from LCSNW internal programs to community-based focus groups. This design had limitations due to the resurgent nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and obvious safety concerns around social gathering, especially where elders are concerned. We followed the original design and intent wherever possible and safe, however, extra effort was prioritized to make the survey as simple and accessible as possible to increase participation and safety. Final submissions from participants were closed for collation and analysis on October 31st, 2022.

The survey consisted of two sets of questions. The first section was demographic in nature and the second was open-ended by design. The complete survey questions are included below.

<div align="center">Demographic Questions</div>

1. What is your age?
2. What is your country of origin?
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your zip code?

<div align="center">Open Ended Questions</div>

5. What have you and your family accomplished since you have been in the United States?
6. What kind of support have your local government, private organizations and community provided?
7. Are there things that you don't know how to do in the United States that you would like to know how to do?
8. How easy is it for you to find information in a language that you can understand?
9. What do you see as some problems or barriers to having a successful life in the United States?

The survey was administered anonymously primarily through an online form made accessible across any web browser-based device, however other distribution strategies were utilized since many elders experience a technology barrier, a lack of interest and desire to participate in surveys. The survey was made available across mediums in Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, Pashto, Dari and English based on the participants' preferred languages. LCSNW Staff interviewed some participants via phone and recorded their answers in a response form. Additionally, the survey was shared during in-person activities and food distribution events. The Russian version of the survey was shared in some Slavic community Facebook groups with approximately 40-50% of Ukrainian/Russian responses having come through that social network group.

Data Analysis

Demographic data such as age, gender and country of origin was analyzed for frequency and when possible central tendency statistics were provided. For example, regarding age, we calculated the age range and mathematical mean for each language group. With data such as gender we determined the frequency of each category (male and female or country of origin) and reported that data in percentages. Data gathered with brief open-ended questions often cannot be considered as truly qualitative data. This is due to the potential of short, often closed ended answers. Such data can, however, lend itself to content analysis which involves identifying and counting words, phrases or concepts in various documents.

In this case, we used manifest content analysis to determine how often individual experiences are voiced in a particular communication (in this case the open-ended answers to survey questions). Thus, we could calculate views and experiences of barriers, strengths, language challenges and needs related to care. The agency utilized convenience and purposive sampling strategies for obtaining data from these communities.

One hundred individuals successfully completed the survey, including Arabic (n=33), Ukrainian/Russian (n=34) , Pashto/Dari (n=33) across 17 countries of origin.

RESPONDENTS BY LANGUAGE GROUP

Ukrainian/Russian Language Group	Arabic Language Group	Pashto/Dari Language Group
34 Responses	33 Responses	33 Responses
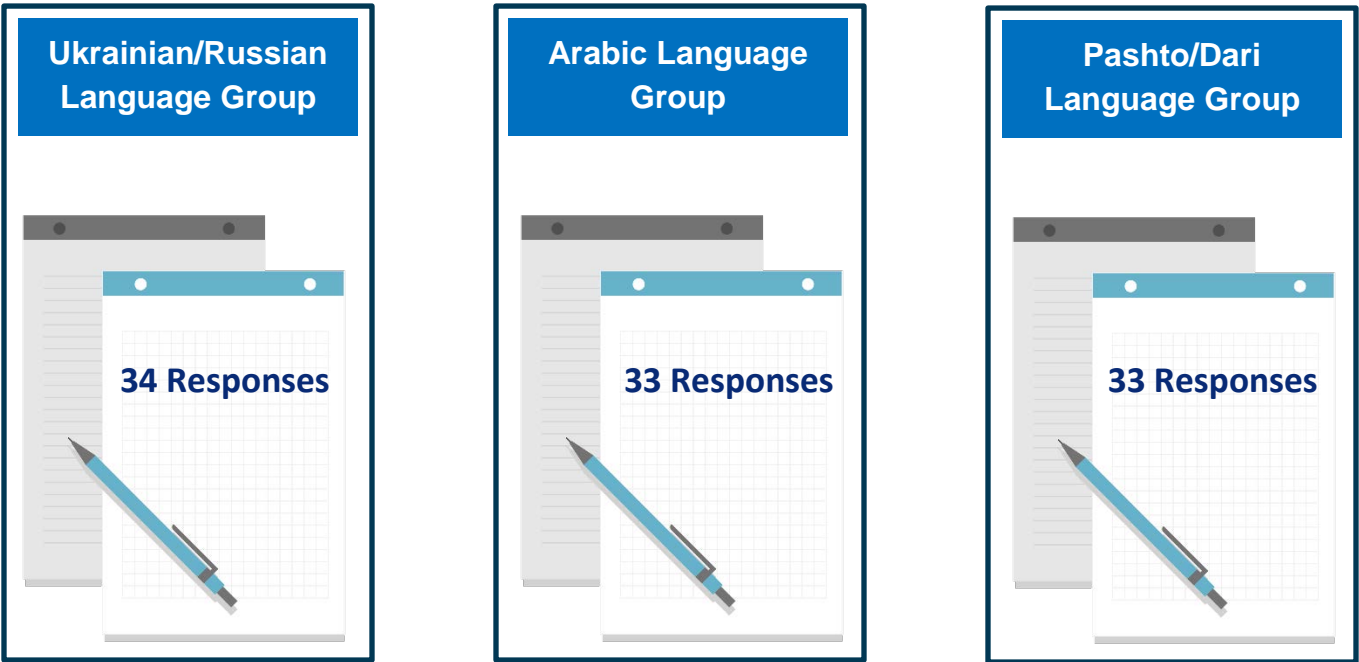
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN BY LANGUAGE GROUP

Ukrainian/Russian Language Group	Arabic Language Group	Pashto/Dari Language Group
9 Different Countries of Origin	4 Different Countries of Origin	4 Different Countries of Origin
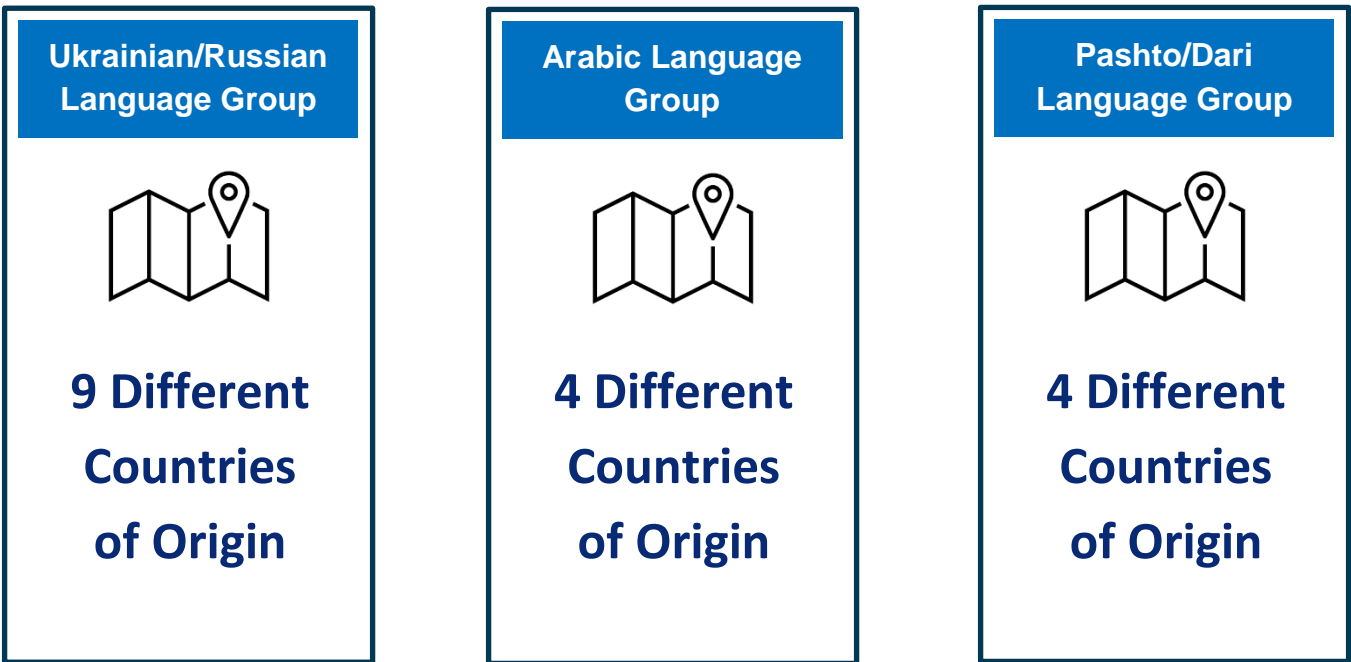
Survey Results

Ukrainian & Russian Language Speakers

This language group consisted of 34 individuals who emigrated from nine different countries. As you see in Figure 1, the vast majority of respondents emigrated from Ukraine (50%) followed by Russia (26%). Each of the other countries had one individual each. The age range for this group was 24-77 with a mean of 51.1 years (Figure 2).

Figure 1

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN SLAVIC COMMUNITY

UKRAINE 17, RUSSIA 10, KYRGYZSTAN 1, USSR 1, UZBEKISTAN 1, GEORGIA 1, KAZAKHSTAN 1, TURKMENISTAN 1, USA 1

Figure 2

AGE SLAVIC COMMUNITY

70-79 12%, 20-29 18%, 60-69 23%, 30-39 12%, 50-59 29%, 40-49 6%
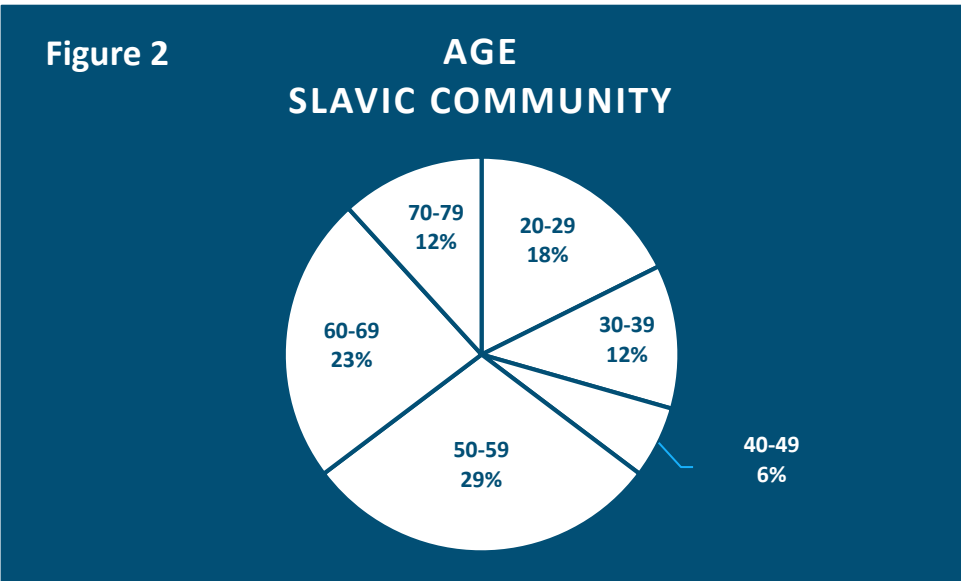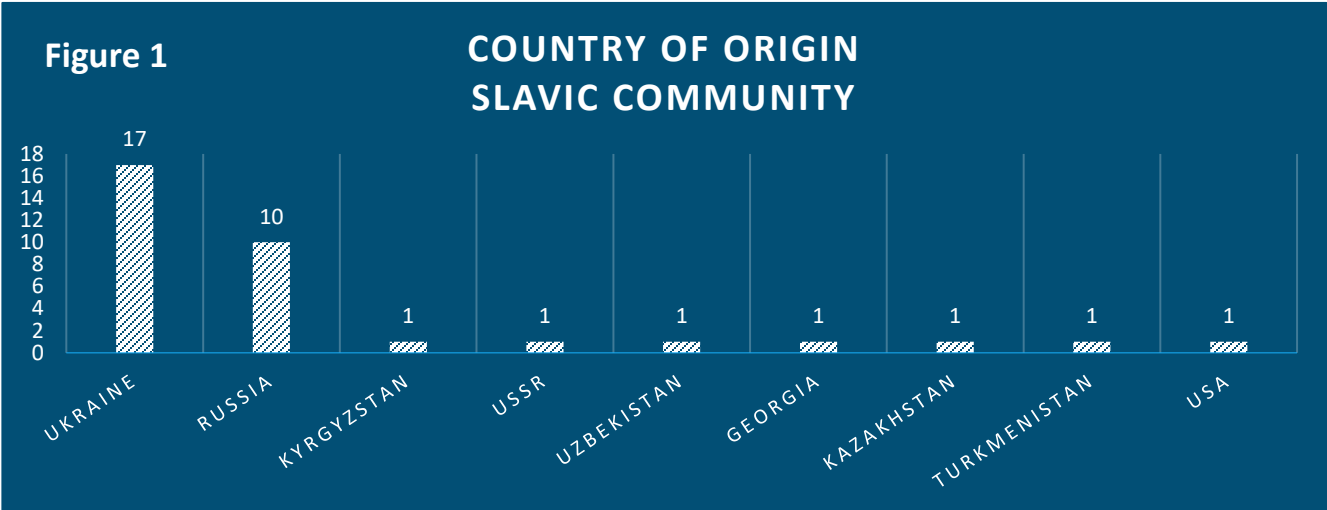
Figure 3 shows the breakdown of gender for this group which was females (82%), males (18%). Unlike those in the Arabic language community, 100% of respondents included their zip code. The respondents ranged widely in their residential zip codes across King County with the greatest concentration of participants residing in the Kent, Federal Way, Renton and Seattle zip codes.

The first set of responses from the survey asked about accomplishments they have achieved since coming to the United States. The responses to that question from the Slavic languages group focused a great deal on day to day

Figure 3

GENDER SLAVIC COMMUNITY

Male
6
18%

Female
28
82%
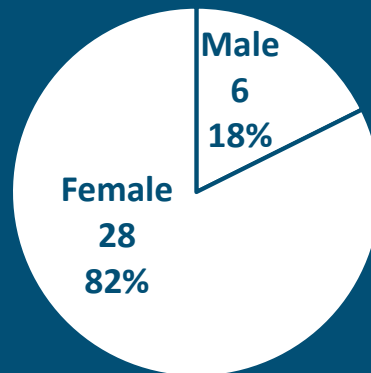
living. For example, 26% (duplicated count) identified gaining language skills (in English) as a significant accomplishment. As the respondents could list more than one item, these results are duplicated and will not equal 100%. Similarly, obtaining skills which allow the individual or family to get a job was also rated quite high (23%). Being able to attend school (15%) and obtaining a driver's license (or learning to drive) (15%) was also listed quite often. Nine percent listed getting a home (ownership or obtaining Section 8) as an important accomplishment.

From there the frequency of items dropped considerably but included: being financially stable (3%), volunteering (3%), independence (3%), ability to worship as they wish (3%) and activities at the local senior center (3%). Nine percent of the respondents in the Slavic language category stated they had not accomplished anything noteworthy since coming to the United States. It should be noted that they did not discuss how long they have been here or other factors that may impact their response. Finally, one response to accomplishments was listed as "being safe from war!"

The next question asked respondents to report on the help they had received from local organizations and programs. Thirty-five percent indicated they had received food stamps or other food related support from a variety of services including LCSNW. The second most frequently stated answer was "nothing." Twenty-one percent indicated they had received no help from any local service organization or program. Eighteen

percent of the 34 respondents indicated they had received Medicaid or some other form of health care coverage, while 15% stated they had received financial assistance. Twelve percent received cash or rental assistance and 9% had received psychological help. The remainder of the responses stated they had obtained housing (3%), gotten information regarding questions they had (3%), support from local churches (spiritual support) (3%). It is important to remember the answers to these questions are duplicative, so that tallies of percentages will not add to 100%.

The next inquiry in the survey was to ask respondents if there are things that they don't know how to do in the United States that they would like to know how to do. Without a doubt the most frequent answer to that question (41%) was improve their English language skills. This was far and away the most frequently itemized issue that respondents felt would help them in transition to living in the United States. From there, the frequency of various items dropped substantially. Remaining issues included: learning how to apply for benefits and student loans (9%), learning the internet (9%), learning to drive (6%), education (6%), and 6% responded they did not know what would help. A number of items were listed by only one individual during the survey and included: help with learning bookkeeping (3%), banking (3%), and applying for citizenship (3%). Finally, 9% responded that they could not think of anything that would help them with the transition to living in the United States.

The next question asked how easy is it for the respondent to find information in a language that they can understand. What is interesting about the answers to this question is that the majority of respondents responded with very positive (easy) or negative (hard) answers to this question. Fifty-five percent stated that finding information in a language they could understand was easy, no problem, or not necessary. Similarly, however, 45% of respondents that answered the question said that it was difficult to find the information they need. We wanted to determine if demographic variables may have been a factor. Analyzing the data by age, we found that the group that had difficulty with language were nearly a decade older (mean 56.7) than those who stated it was not a problem (46.7). In fact, the group that saw language as a problem included 4 individuals who were 70 years or older. The samples are too small to draw conclusions, but older age should be considered as a potential

barrier to the English language and the potential access to resources and help from organizations.

Twenty four percent stated they use some type of translation services, either via the internet or an interpreter (person). Six percent stated they used family to help with English, while 3% each stated that immigration processes and global politics created barriers.

The final question asked about what respondents see as problems or barriers to having a successful life in the United States. By far the most frequently cited issue or barrier was that of language, with 47% highlighting language as a major barrier to successful life in the United States. Eighteen percent of respondents stated they could not identify any barrier or impediment to successful life in the U. S. Other issues identified by respondents included lack of transportation (9%), low income (6%), problems with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (6%), lack of income (6%), employment (3%), slow response from institutions (3%), illiteracy (3%) and lack of education (3%).

Arabic Language Speakers

The 33 respondents in this language group emigrated from four countries including Iraq (23), Sudan (3), Kenya (5) and Ethiopia (2)(Figure 4). The age range of respondents was 19-79 years with a mean of 51.8 (Figure 5). In terms of gender, 27%

Figure 4 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN ARABIC SPEAKING COMMUNITY
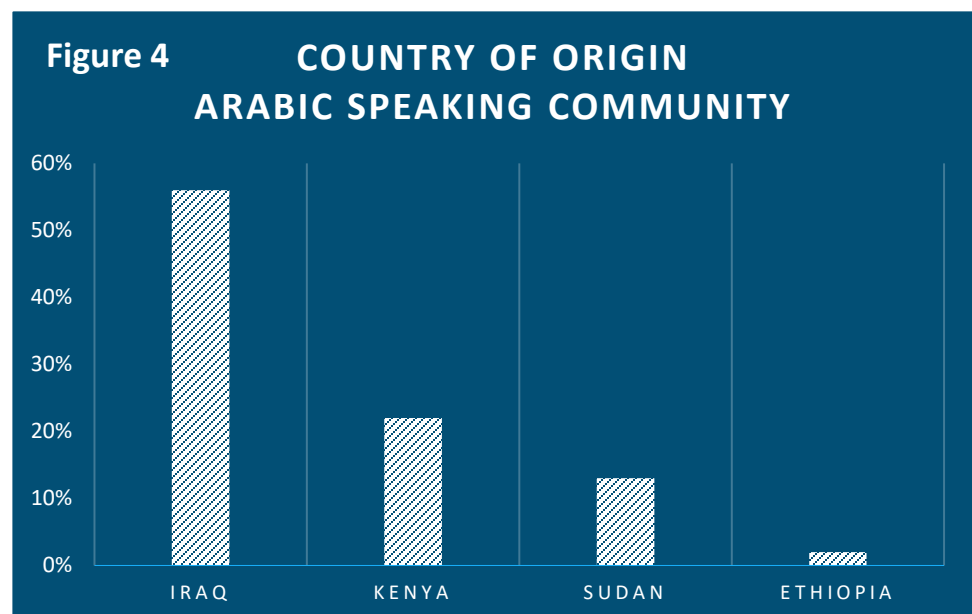
of the people responding were male while 70% were female (Figure 6). While respondents were asked to report their zip code, there was something (perhaps

language barrier or misunderstanding of the question) that prevented most respondents from doing so. The vast majority of people in this group did not respond to this questions or responded with their email address instead.

Figure 5
AGE
ARABIC SPEAKING COMMUNITY

70-79 6%
19-29 9%
30-39 12%
40-49 9%
50-59 34%
60-69 30%
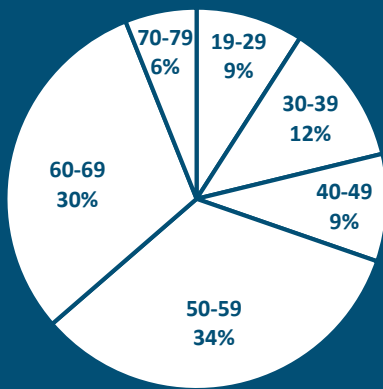
The first question on the survey asked what the respondents and their families have accomplished since they have been to the United States. There were no preordained categories for the responses. Four individuals (12%) listed learning English and the use of the internet as an accomplishment while 6 of them identified receiving United States citizenship (18%). Four respondents mentioned getting a physician and/or obtaining a diagnosis for an important medical condition. Thirty nine percent listed obtaining some type of educational degree as their major accomplishment while 15% mentioned career advancement.

The next questions asked what type of support their family had obtained from local government, private organizations, and communities. Fifteen percent indicated they had not received any help or support since

Figure 6
GENDER
ARABIC SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Male 10 30%
Female 23 70%
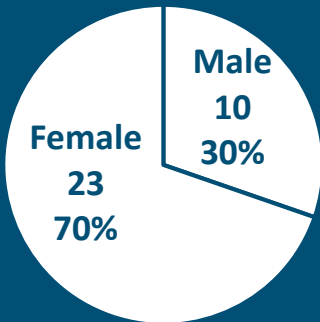
immigrating to the United States. Most did not say why they did not access or obtain services. Of the 85% that did, the majority stated they had received food from some source (75%), while the next highest category was health care (54%). Twenty-seven

percent stated they had received support in obtaining shelter, housing (including a rent subsidy) or other services related directly to housing. Two individuals (6%) mentioned education while three referred to receiving help with transportation and one mentioned emotional support.

The respondents were also asked about things they do not know how to do in the United States that they wished they knew. Four people mentioned a better understanding of the English language. One individual (3%) listed understanding the laws better and three people (9%) mentioned obtaining a better understanding of the health care system. One individual listed learning to drive and one, a better understanding of taxes (3% each).

The survey asked about language and how easy it was to find information in a language the household understood. Seventeen individuals (51%) responded that language was a big problem, one person calling it a "formidable barrier" while others stated it was "not very easy." Six individuals stated it was "okay" with some problems existing but nothing that could not be dealt with. Seven individuals (21%) suggested language was not a problem at all.

The final questions asked what barriers they feel exist, making it difficult to have a successful life in the United States. This was an open-ended question where people could list multiple items. Due to this, the data presented is a duplicated count and does not equal 100% or n of 33. Clearly the top two issues that emerged as barriers to a successful life in the United States comprise budget/cost of living and transportation. Forty eight percent of respondents identified budgeting or cost of living as a major barrier to successful transition. The second most common answer (identified by 30% of respondents) was transportation. This topic included not only difficulty with public transportation but the use of roads, driving distances, and difficulty understanding how to use public transportation. From there, the frequency of answers dropped considerably to include "the system" (9%), understanding and using health care (6%) and language, understanding medical bills and people not being respectful (3% each).

Pashto & Dari Language Speakers

Both Dari and Pashto are official languages spoken in Afghanistan. Dari is the native language of approximately 40-45% of the Afghan population. Pashto is spoken in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Due to the similarities and the

Figure 7 — COUNTRY OF ORIGIN PASHTO/DARI SPEAKING COMMUNITY
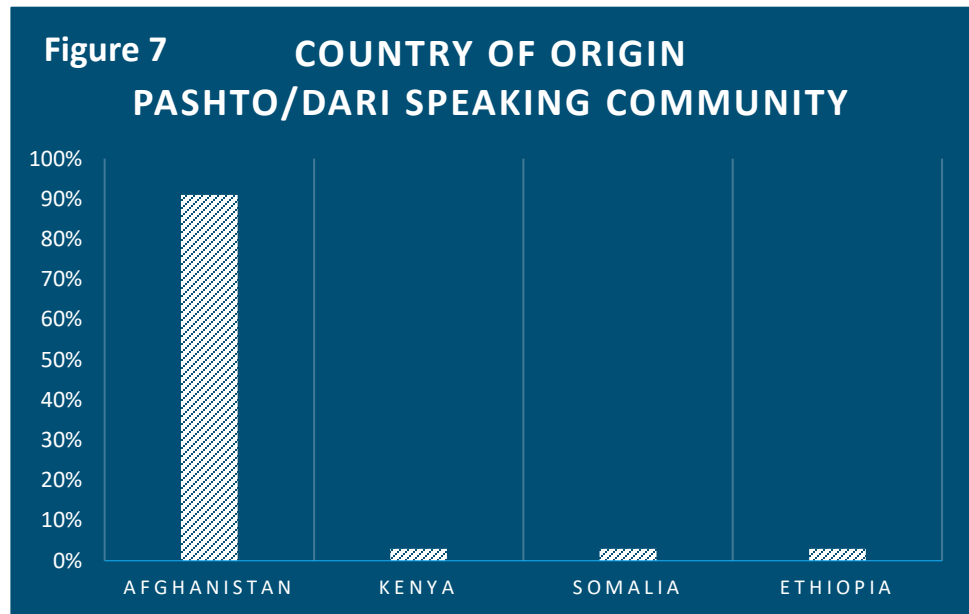
fact these are the two "official" languages of Afghanistan, the data on respondents of these two language groups are presented together. If there are any significant distinction in the findings between groups those are presented as well.

The respondents who spoke Dari consisted of 16 individuals, while those who spoke Pashto consisted of 17 individuals. Ninety one percent (n=30) of respondents to the survey from this language group emigrated from

Figure 8 — AGE PASHTO/DARI SPEAKING COMMUNITY
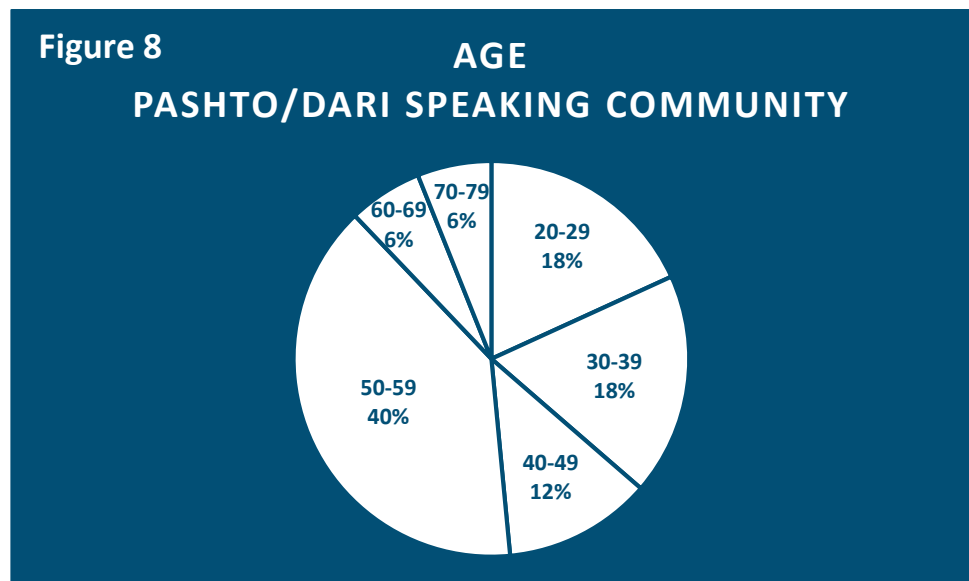
Afghanistan, while one person each emigrated from Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia who speak Pashto/Dari (Figure 7). The ages of the two groups ranged from 20-79, with the average age of all respondents being 46.2 (Figure 8). In terms of gender, the respondents were evenly split with 16 being male, 16, being female and 1 unknown (Figure 9). Thirty-one of the respondents currently live in King County with the

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remaining two not answering that question on the survey. The majority of those live near SeaTac, Des Moines and other South King County communities.

Both the Dari and Pashto speakers provided important information on their accomplishments since entering the United States. The highest percentage of responses were systemically important such as education (33%), finding employment (36%) and learning English (12%). It should be noted that "education" drew upon a wide range of issues form getting their children enrolled in primary or high school to

Figure 9
GENDER
PASHTO/DARI SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Unknown
1
3%

Female
16
48%

Male
16
49%
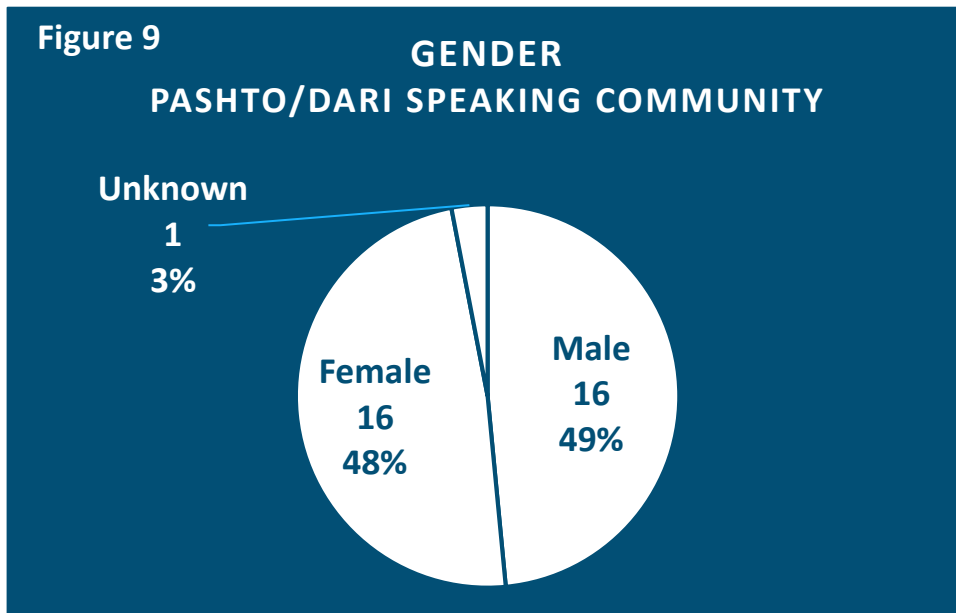
obtaining a college degree for themselves. Other accomplishments noted by this community consisted of obtaining health insurance (15%) and Green Cards (12%), and obtaining independent housing (12%). Smaller percentages of respondents listed obtaining a driver's license (6%), obtaining food stamps and other services (6%), volunteering (3%) and connecting to the Afghan community (3%). Fifteen percent of this group stated they had not accomplished anything since coming to the United States.

The next question on the survey asked, "What kind of support have your local government, private organizations, and community provided?" As the respondent themselves can define what they see as support, the range of answers can be quite varied. Still, we attempted to find patterns in the answers. Thirty-nine individuals listed getting health insurance, 36% listed SNAP (food stamp) benefits and 21% rental assistance. Eighteen percent listed education (of their children or themselves), while 15% listed a wide variety of general benefits. Three percent listed language support and counseling, each. Three percent stated they had not received any support from organizations.

Respondents were asked, "Are there things that you don't know how to do in the United States that you would like to know how to do?" While most individuals answering this question did so with some elaboration, ten individuals from the Dari group, (but no one from the Pashto group) provided one-word answers, including "yes," "no" and "don't know." This is an example of why we use content analysis instead of suggesting this is always qualitative data as the answers can be very short. The remaining answers were listed by a small number of respondents, including: understanding health insurance (3%), learning about memory problems with aging (3%), purchasing a home (3%), find and attend an Islamic school (3%), and understanding the immigration system more fully (3%).

The next survey question asked about the ability of respondents to find information in a language they can understand. Due to the fact that this is phrased as an open-ended question, the answers varied. To better understand the pattern, answers were grouped into positive answers, i.e., yes, easy, very understandable, and negative answers such as hard, difficult, not very easy. Seven of the respondents (21%) felt that finding information in a language they understand was on the positive side (easy or was understandable). Seven other respondents (21%) found language to be a barrier in finding information they needed. Thus, respondents were evenly split on this topic. We assessed the ages of the respondents in each group to see if this could be a contributing factor. Of those who answered positively, the mean age for that group was 43 years. The negative group (those who found language to be an issue) had a mean age of 49 years. While this is not conclusive data, it suggests the possibility of older age as a potential variable in language as a barrier similar to the Ukrainian/Russian languages group. Still the group was split in terms of the ease they were able to obtain information in a language they could understand.

Lastly our Pashto and Dari language speakers were asked what barriers they feel exist, making it difficult to have a successful life in the United States. Responses varied greatly in this with 36% mentioning some type of language barrier, 18% mentioned the ability to practice their religion or access to religious structures, 12% mentioned housing costs, 12% problems understanding U.S. lifestyle/culture and 3% mentioned access to ethnic foods and health care. This particular language group also had a high number of respondents put "nothing" or a similar word as an answer to this question with 24% responding in such a manner.

Impressions

Ukrainian & Russian Language Speakers

There are a number of notable patterns in the Slavic languages group that are important and worth noting. First, this group seems to be more geographically diverse than the other language groups we assessed, with respondents to the survey residing in a vast array of zip codes across King County. It is potentially reasonable that King County may want to share the relevant data with Pierce and Thurston counties as similar patterns may be present. The second pattern worth some discussion is the diversity of where people in this language group arrived from. Unlike the other language groups who came from four countries each, these individuals emigrated from nine countries, although the majority of them came from Ukraine and Russia. Still, there are likely language and cultural differences across these countries that should be considered.

Nearly half (47%) of the respondents identified language as a barrier to successful integration into the U.S., while 41% listed improving language knowledge in English as something they need to do. A sizable minority of respondents indicated that food was a major issue and utilized help in obtaining food. Across the board for this group, language (the lack of ability to communicate due to language differences) was a major issue for these respondents. Fifty percent of respondents stated that language was not easy to navigate. Whether or not this is associated with the diversity of countries is unclear. It is worth noting that 47% identified budgeting and cost of living as a barrier to success in the U.S. which may be exacerbated by language difficulties.

Arabic Language Speakers

It appears from the respondents that the people who speak Arabic, coming from Iraq, Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia experience some significant barriers. The vast majority of people in this category needed support in obtaining basic necessities including food and health care and over half felt language barriers were "not very easy" to overcome. Budgeting/income and transportation were identified as a substantial barrier to successful integration into the United States. Still many Iraqi community members have tackled barriers obtaining a college degree or obtaining housing. Six individuals

proudly mentioned obtaining U.S. citizenship. Focus areas of need emerged in the domains of language, budgeting and transportation and these areas should be strongly examined in the future for our Arabic speakers in King County.

Pashto & Dari Language Speakers

These respondents noted that basic services were highly important to their transition to living in the United States. Help with food (often via SNAP benefits), getting some type of health insurance and education for themselves and their children were rated as important by at least a third of the respondents. Ways to expand services to this population should be considered by King County. Information from the respondents indicated how various issues are tied together. One respondent stated the language barrier created problems getting a job. However, the availability of ESL classes (due to scheduling) was difficult for them which in turn compromised their ability to find work. So, while we think of these items categorically, it is important to understand that things such as education, language, employment and even health care are systemically connected.

Not all respondents have difficulty with the English language. In this language group approximately half stated they had no problem obtaining information they needed while half stated it was a "not too easy" or "hard." Overall people in the Dari and Pashto language group noted health conditions, affordable housing and language to be major barriers to successful life in the United States.

Conclusions and Recommendations

"I like that it's not much about theory, but more about practice and speaking. I can tell I made some progress in English and can apply what I learn in the meetings in real life situations: at medical appointments, stores, school, etc."

Mariia Yarmosiuk, Ukrainian Refugee attending ESL classes at LCSNW

The goal of this survey was to identify the strengths, barriers and needs of foreign-born elders, their families and caregivers, who emigrated from Ukrainian/Russian, Arabic, and Pashto/Dari speaking communities, residing in King County. Surveys were

distributed to those elders and family members through a variety of means yielding 100 completed surveys (N=100) from Arabic (n=33), Ukrainian/Russian (n=34) and Pashto/Dari (n=33) speaking individuals. Respondents answered demographic questions in addition to five open-ended questions concerning

accomplishments, support from local organizations, issues with language, and barriers to a successful life in the United States. Each language group was reported on individually in the main body of this report. It may, however, be useful to review the data across language groups to determine if there are differences or common trends in responses.

The table below seeks to highlight commonalities and differences across language groups and question types to further illustrate some of these key indicators.

Table 1. Comparison Across Language Groups for Key Indicators				
Variable	**Arabic Speakers**	**Ukrainian/Russian Speakers**	**Pashto/Dari Speakers**	**Comments**
Age	**51.8**	**51.1**	**46.2**	**Lower $\bar{x}$ for Afghan group.**
Immigration - # of Countries	**4**	**9**	**4**	
Gender (female)	**70%**	**82%**	**48%**	
Accomplishments				
Language (English)	**12%**	**26%**	**12%**	**Percent listing language as an accomplishment**
Education	**39%**	**15%**	**33%**	**Ukrainian/Russian group half as high as others**
Help from Organizations				
No help	**15%**	**21%**	**3%**	
Food	**75%**	**35%**	**36%**	**Includes help from SNAP, foodbanks etc.**
Health Care	**54%**	**18%**	**39%**	
Barriers				
Language	**51%**	**47%**	**21%**	
Transportation	**30%**	**9%**	**0%**	

Key Indicators and Factors of Note

Table 1, provides some important information between group differences. We chose to highlight some of the more important topics rather than re-discuss all the variables already assessed in the main report. As you can see, while the mean age of the first two language groups were very close, those of Pashto/Dari languages are considerably lower. It is important for services in King County to consider differences in age for some subgroups such as peoples here who are younger than 55.

1. **The Ukrainian/Russian language group emigrated from more than twice the number of countries compared to the other two groups**. This presents concerns for dialects, culture and the geographic distribution of immigrants. It may be necessary to equip county personnel with a wider variety of language and cultural expertise regarding Slavic older adults.

2. We must also bear in mind that the majority of survey respondents were female. **All groups had 48% or higher of respondents who were female**. This is worth noting with regard to their views in answering the survey questions. Note that groups speaking Arabic and Ukrainian/Russian had a much larger proportion of respondents who were female.

3. With regard to accomplishments, it should be noted that **twice as many respondents in the Ukrainian/Russian language group listed learning or improving their English as an accomplishment**. What remains a question is whether this is due to their view of the importance of English or perhaps access to ESL classes and help with language. For example, if a group does not have good access to English language skills, they are perhaps less likely to view English as an accomplishment. This issue of language needs further investigation. Please also note the difference in the view of education across groups. First education was self-defined by the respondents and could include the education of children all the way to respondents themselves obtaining a college degree. The Slavic languages group was less than half as likely to list education as an accomplishment. It is unclear whether this has to do with access to education or a more systemic or culture view of education.

4. When asked what type of help our surveyed groups had received from various local organizations and programs, **3 to 21% indicated they received no help**. Due to the short answers to many of these questions, it is not clear whether they did not need the help or whether access or other barriers prevented them from obtaining needed help. Further study is needed to determine if access to local organizational and governmental help is warranted. The majority of language groups used help to secure food. This could take the form of SNAP (food stamps), or other means of obtaining food. Note that the proportion of respondents that received help with food was more than twice as high in the Arabic group. It is unclear if the group is economically more disadvantaged or perhaps has better access to food related help. Further investigation may be needed to explore this issue.

5. From **20 to over 50%** of the respondents listed **help obtaining health insurance as a needed help from organizations**. The Ukrainian/Russian language group listed help with obtaining health care less often. It is unclear why. Are they going without access to health care because of some structural barriers or do they need less assistance? The answer to such questions cannot be answered through this survey.

6. A substantial proportion of respondents found language to be a barrier to successful immigration into the United States. **All groups identified language as a problem** ranging from one fifth to over half of the group. The Arabic group had the highest percentage of language as problem with 51% stating so. This can include not understanding the language, to difficulty with forms, to scheduling of ESL classes. This issue is clearly a problem for many of the respondents and further exploration of how it is a problem and ways to work with this issue is needed. It appears that the Arabic and Slavic groups have the greatest proportion of respondents identifying language as a major barrier. It is unclear why the Pashto/Dari group has a lower level of respondents listing language as a barrier but they are also the group with the youngest respondents. Further efforts to untangle this important issue is needed.

7. The remaining barrier from a number of these communities was **transportation**. This barrier took on many forms. It included difficulty understanding how to get

a driver's license, to language of the licensing exam, to understanding the system of public transportation. The Arabic speaking respondents have a much greater issue with transportation than the other two groups based on the survey results. This issue is worth following up on, perhaps by an additional survey or in-depth interview with respondents.

This survey of 100 older adults and family members provides primary data on the strengths, barriers and needs of these populations. The way data was gathered made sense considering the population but did not allow us to ground the data in the experiences of these individuals as a more complete, iterative and in-depth interview-based survey might have. Future studies of these language groups may want to include data that seeks to identify how long the respondents have lived in the U.S., as well as their immigration status as these answers may help point to acute needs and successes of new arrivals vs. more established individuals and their family's needs and successes. It is important to remember that many of the individuals who responded to this survey have come from countries and cultures where help from non-government organizations is uncommon or nonexistent. As such, feedback to the questions asking how organizations may have helped them might have been confusing or resulted in answers that point to the fact that the respondents didn't know such help was even available. We must do more to connect with these peoples and communities, so they know help is available, what that help looks like and who is offering it.

We would also like to point out that designing and executing a survey of this scope and reach requires some incredible partnerships and forethought. Professional consultation and experts in qualitative data and comparative analysis should always be fully included from the very beginning of these processes whenever possible. This is an added expense which must be considered when building these types of projects in the future.

We have much work to do as we continue to reach out, build trust and serve our Ukrainian/Russian, Arabic and Pashto/Dari language groups and communities but we have no doubt that as governments like King County continue to research needs, barriers and successes, support and fund activities designed to build resilient communities and facilitate trust and education, we can build a strong and stable network of diverse and interconnected peoples moving forward for the common good.