



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**  
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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** Jim Lopez, Deputy City Manager for External Affairs  
Erika Mascorro, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager  
Daniel Lazo, Senior Community Engagement Coordinator

**Date:** March 5, 2026

**Subject:** **2026 Language Access Month Proclamation**

### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Mayor, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims April 2026 as “Language Access Month” in Kirkland.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Language Access Month is an opportunity to raise awareness of language equity; to celebrate the work of interpreters, translators, and advocates; and to reaffirm the City’s commitment to linguistic inclusivity and equity for all.
- This proclamation aligns with Kirkland’s City values and strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB).
- This proclamation is part of the City Council’s adopted 2026 proclamation schedule.

### BACKGROUND:

Language Access Month is an opportunity to raise awareness of language equity, celebrate the work of interpreters, translators, and advocates, and reaffirm the City’s commitment to linguistic inclusivity and equity for all.

Language is a bridge to opportunity, civic participation, and equitable access to essential services for all residents. According to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects Limited English Proficient (LEP) Americans and longstanding federal guidance has helped to ensure equitable access to government services and federally funded programs for all Americans, including LEP persons. The Commission reported that 25.7 million or 8% of people ages five or older living in the United States are LEP.

## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The City of Kirkland is home to a diverse population with speakers of many languages, reflecting a rich cultural heritage that strengthens our community. The LEP population in Kirkland is 10.4% and the top languages requested for interpretation from City staff other than English are Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Russian, Arabic, Ukrainian, Farsi, Vietnamese, Romanian, and Khmer.

Individuals with limited English proficiency face barriers to accessing vital information, services, and opportunities, underscoring the importance of effective language access policies and practices. Equitable language access promotes dignity, safety, inclusion, and belonging by ensuring that all residents, regardless of their language background, can engage fully in civic life and access critical services such as healthcare, emergency response, education, and public safety.

Acknowledging the importance of language access, Objective 13.1 of the City's 5-Year DEIB Roadmap<sup>1</sup> states:

Kirkland, like other communities in East King County, has experienced a shift in demographics over the last several years, including an increase in English language learners. The City values the contributions of all members of the community and makes every effort to ensure that language is not a barrier to engagement with the City. As such, staff will increase City-wide language access and interpretation resources through standardized processes and creation of a City Language Access Plan, including training to all departments on use.

In support of this objective, staff has increased citywide language access and interpretation resources through standardized processes and the creation of a City Language Access Plan in 2025. Training to all departments on use of the plan will be initiated in early 2026.

This proclamation aligns with Kirkland's City values and strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). Council has adopted legislation supporting these values, including:

- **Resolution R-5240** (2017) declaring Kirkland a safe, inclusive, welcoming community for all people;
- **Resolution R-5434** (2020) expressing commitments to improving the safety and respect of Black people and approving the framework to create a community committed to examining and dismantling interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism in Kirkland;
- **Resolution R-5548** (2022) adopting the City's DEIB 5-Year Roadmap;
- **Resolution R-5686** (2025) declaring Kirkland as a welcoming, inclusive, and safe city for the Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual Plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people and recognizing their human rights and well-being; and
- **Resolution R-5693** (2025) reaffirming the City's commitment to being a safe, inclusive, and welcoming community where all people belong.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-managers-office/roadmap-as-adopted\\_1.pdf](https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-managers-office/roadmap-as-adopted_1.pdf)

**NEXT STEPS:**

The person accepting this proclamation will be announced at the Council meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 – 2026 Language Access Month Proclamation



# A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

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## Language Access Month April 2026

**WHEREAS**, language is a bridge to opportunity, civic participation, and equitable access to essential services for all residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects Limited English Proficient (LEP) Americans, and longstanding federal guidance has helped to ensure equitable access to government services and federally funded programs for all Americans, including LEP persons; and

**WHEREAS**, Kirkland is home to a diverse population with speakers of many languages, and over 13,000 people in Kirkland speak languages other than English, including Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic, and Farsi, reflecting a rich cultural heritage that strengthens our community; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of the DEIB 5-Year Roadmap, the City of Kirkland has increased citywide language access and interpretation resources through standardized processes and the creation of a City Language Access Plan, including training to all departments on use; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals with limited English proficiency face barriers to accessing vital information, services, and opportunities, but equitable language access promotes dignity, safety, inclusion, and belonging by ensuring that individuals have the opportunity to engage fully in civic life and access critical services such as healthcare, emergency response, education, and public safety; and

**WHEREAS**, Language Access Month is an opportunity to raise awareness of language equity; to celebrate the work of interpreters, translators, and advocates; and to reaffirm our City's commitment to linguistic inclusivity and equity for all.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims April 2026 as Language Access Month in Kirkland, and encourages our community to celebrate the importance of language access, support efforts to enhance multilingual communication, and work toward a more inclusive, equitable future for everyone.

Signed this 21st day of April, 2026

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Kelli Curtis, Mayor