CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

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

Date: September 1, 2026

Subject: **Disability Awareness Month Proclamation**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, proclaims the month of October as "Disability Awareness Month" in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Disability Awareness Month celebrates the inclusivity of people with all forms of disabilities, bringing cultural and social awareness around what disability is, destigmatizing conversations around disability, and encouraging people to learn more about how disability plays a role in our everyday lives.
- 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:

The first federal public policy that focused on the needs of disabled people occurred with the passage of Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.[1] Some states had prohibited discrimination in some forms prior to passage. This policy marked a pivotal moment in United States history as it banned discrimination based on disability. The policy was modeled by previous civil rights laws that banned race, ethnic origin, and sex-based discrimination by federal fund recipients. This act made the exclusion and segregation of people with disabilities be viewed as discrimination based on federal law for the first time in United States history. Prior to Section 504, issues such as unemployment and lack of education were seen by many as inevitable consequences of the physical, mental, intellectual, or developmental disability itself, but this public policy recognized that these issues are due to societal barriers and social

[1] https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/civilrights/resources/factsheets/504.pdf

prejudices preventing individuals with disabilities from the same liberties and freedoms as other citizens.

Nearly two decades after Section 504 had passed, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush on July 26, 1990. Since the ADA was signed into law, it has helped to make society more accessible for individuals with disabilities across education, employment, medical care, and access to physical spaces. The ADA expanded federal civil rights protections for people with disabilities, prohibiting disability discrimination in areas including employment, state and local government services, and public accommodations.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 1 in 4 adults (28.7%) in the United States are living with a disability.[2] Even though the percentage of individuals with disabilities is high, often disability is not discussed outside of medical, educational, or legal contexts.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

There are several ways to celebrate Disability Awareness Month by amplifying the voices and experiences of people with disabilities, uplifting them to share their story, or attending a Disability Awareness event. One way to celebrate and expand inclusivity is to talk to your family about disability as an important and ongoing conversation that will help foster inclusion for the next generation.

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.

NEXT STEPS:

The proclamation recipient will be announced at the Council meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Disability Awareness Month Proclamation

[2] https://www.cdc.gov/disability-and-health/articles-documents/disability-impacts-all-of-us-infographic.html

A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Disability Awareness Month Proclamation
October 2026

WHEREAS, Disability Awareness Month is about celebrating and being inclusive of people with all forms of disabilities, bringing cultural and social awareness around what disability is, destigmatizing conversations around disability, and encouraging people to learn more about how disability plays a role in our everyday lives; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the United States 28.7% of adults—approximately 1 in 4—are living with a disability and, despite this high percentage, disability is often not discussed outside of medical, educational, or legal contexts; and

WHEREAS, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits disability discrimination in federally funded programs and activities, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) expanded civil rights protections for people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the ADA has helped to make society more accessible in education, employment, medical care, and access to physical spaces for individuals with disabilities and aims to provide guidance and resources about people with disabilities' rights and applicable laws and regulations; and

WHEREAS, organizations like the National Organization on Disability, American Association of People with Disabilities, and International Disability Alliance, to name a few, have resource pages on the internet, work tirelessly to support people with disabilities, and bring the conversation of disability to a larger audience.

NOW, THEREFORE, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims October 2026 as Disability Awareness Month in Kirkland and calls upon the people of Kirkland to learn ways to be inclusive of people with disabilities, to volunteer in support of accessibility, and to engage in community dialogue that fosters understanding.

Signed this 6th day of October, 2026

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Kelli Curtis, Mayor