



CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033
425-587-3000

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 27, 2026

Subject: **Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month Proclamation**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, proclaims September 15 through October 15, 2026, as "Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month" in Kirkland.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month is observed annually in the United States from September 15 through October 15 to celebrate the vibrant cultures, histories, languages, traditions, and contributions of people with heritage from Hispanic and Latin countries.
- 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:

National Hispanic Heritage Month commemorates the histories, cultures, contributions, and influence on American society by those whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Twenty-three countries consider themselves Hispanic, Latinx/o/a/e,¹ or both. This commemoration is an education opportunity for historical accuracy and inclusion of civil rights struggles, noting that such narratives are often absent from public education, but vital for the understanding Hispanic and Latinx/o/a/e contributions to U.S. society.

The observation, which began in 1968, as Hispanic Heritage Week was a push to recognize the contributions the Hispanic and Latinx community had made during the Civil Rights Movement and the growing awareness of the United States' multicultural identities in the 1960s. That same year, President Lyndon Johnson was the first president to recognize this observation, and it was

¹ <https://hispanicexecutive.com/latinx-latine-explainer/>

later expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover 30 days starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988, with the approval of Public Law 100-402.

September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for the Latin American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and 18, respectively.

Previously, the City has issued this proclamation as “Hispanic Heritage Month.” After routine review of various terms and naming conventions of City documents, City staff recognized that the reference to “Hispanic Heritage Month” is not entirely inclusive to the terms Latino, Latina, Latinx, Latine, Chicano, Chicana, and Chicanx. “Hispanic” refers to people of Spanish culture or origin, primarily from Spanish-speaking countries while “Latino” refers to people with ancestry from Latin America, including Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Chicano refers to people of Mexican-American heritage born or living in the U.S.

The term Hispanic emerged largely due to the U.S. Census Bureau’s need to classify and count diverse Latino populations, especially during the 1970 and 1980 censuses. Prior to this, Latinos were often miscategorized, including a period in the 1930s when all were labeled as “Mexican,” regardless of country of origin.

Efforts to address underrepresentation led to the formation of advisory committees, which considered labels like “Brown,” “Latin American,” and “Latino.” Hispanic was ultimately chosen for its broader institutional and political acceptance, despite mixed reactions within the community. Some critics argued that Hispanic centered Spanish colonial heritage versus Indigenous and Afro-Latino identities. For example, Brazil is a Latin American country that predominantly speaks Portuguese and not Spanish and, therefore, many Brazilians do not identify as Hispanic.

Recently, “Latinx” and “Latine” are commonly used as gender neutral terms. Latinx is predominant among English speakers in the U.S., and Latine is predominant in the Spanish language. Therefore, City staff recommended updating the City’s proclamation title to “Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month” to be inclusive of Latino, Latina, Latinx, Latine, Chicano, Chicana, and Chicanx while also choosing a term that acknowledges the proclamation will be read in English.

The Hispanic population makes up close to 19% of the U.S. population, and only accounts for about 2% of the country’s elected and appointed officials. Community members of Hispanic origin represent an estimated 7.7% of the population in Kirkland.² The City of Kirkland is working to increase civic engagement among Hispanic and Latinx community members and to encourage their participation on local boards, commissions, and elected bodies, as outlined in the objectives of the DEIB 5-Year Roadmap.

² https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/2/planning-amp-building/kirkland-2044-comp-plan/k2044-basics/pdfs/2023kirklandcommunityprofile_finalsept2024.pdf

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

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.

Community members are invited to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month at the following events in Kirkland and region:

- **Outdoor Movie: Coco en Español**³ at Juanita Beach Park on Saturday, September 5 from 5-8 p.m.
- **Hojalata - Mexican Folk Art Mirror Craft**⁴ at Snoqualmie Library on Tuesday, September 15 from 5:30-7 p.m.
- **Día de los Muertos**⁵ at Peter Kirk Community Center on Saturday, October 24 from 1-4 p.m.
- **Centro Cultural Mexicano Events**⁶

NEXT STEPS:

The person accepting this proclamation will be announced at the Council meeting. The proclamation will also be read at City Hall for All on Saturday, September 19 at 12 p.m. at Kirkland City Hall.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – 2026 Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month Proclamation

³ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Whats-Happening/Community-Events/Parks-and-Community-Services/Coco-en-Espa%C3%B1ol>

⁴ <https://kcls.bibliocommons.com/v2/events/6a4bfcd42b1039d03a24b93>

⁵ <https://www.kirklandwa.gov/Whats-Happening/Community-Events/Parks-and-Community-Services/D%C3%ADa-de-los-Muertos>

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/centroculturalmexicano/posts/pfbid0vL1AQ2YC34NBceAfWyseGk8Wh6gVZJcxHAcfGSd9EzzM6YHXQkLBKwg5Zm2uAa8ul>



A PROCLAMATION OF THE CITY OF KIRKLAND

Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month September 15 – October 15, 2026

WHEREAS, Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month celebrates the vibrant cultures, histories, languages, and traditions of those whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America; and

WHEREAS, Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month commemorates the anniversaries of independence in mid-September for the Latin American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile; and

WHEREAS, the Hispanic, Latinx, and Chicanx community has significantly contributed to the social, economic, educational, artistic, and civic life of the United States and, more locally, of the City; and

WHEREAS, celebrating Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month aligns with Kirkland's values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and it reflects the City's commitment to fostering a welcoming and respectful environment for everyone in the community; and

WHEREAS, community members are encouraged to learn more about Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month by visiting local resources such as Centro Cultural Mexicano in Redmond, the King County Library website, and attending events like Día de los Muertos at Peter Kirk Community Center.

NOW, THEREFORE, Mayor Kelli Curtis, on behalf of the City Council, proclaims September 15 – October 15, 2026, as Hispanic and Latinx Heritage Month in Kirkland, and encourages all community members to learn about, engage with, and celebrate the rich cultural legacies and contributions of the Hispanic, Latinx, and Chicanx communities as part of Kirkland's diverse and inclusive community.

Signed this 15th day of September, 2026

Kelli Curtis, Mayor