



LANGUAGE ACCESS PROGRAM

On October 2, 2017, Seattle Mayor Tim Burgess signed a Language Access Executive Order to ensure that every city resident, especially immigrants and refugees, can access City of Seattle services and information, regardless of their language proficiency. Following the Executive Order, the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) expanded their existing Language Access Program.



Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

About Us

The mission of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) is to improve the lives of Seattle's immigrant and refugee communities through policies, programs, services, and community engagement.

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Citywide Language Access Goals

We seek to help all immigrant and refugee residents, regardless of their English proficiency, experience meaningful and equitable access to City information, programs, services, and civic engagement. The Language Access Program (LAP) and City departments' language access efforts are guided by these goals:

- **Welcoming City.** Foster a welcoming environment through culturally responsive communications from City departments and staff so that immigrant and refugee residents truly feel represented.
- **Seamless Integration.** Support immigrant and refugee community members in successfully integrating into and participating in Seattle's civic, economic, and cultural life by providing in-language communication and outreach.
- **Resilience and Emergency Preparedness.** Ensure the City's alert messaging system has in-language capabilities and prepare community members to effectively respond to future emergencies.
- **Trust and Relationship.** Establish meaningful two-way communication for residents to receive information and provide feedback.

Program Strategy

The strategies listed below help the LAP to achieve citywide language access goals:

- **Establish policies and standards.**
 - Oversee the development of City departments' language access plans.
 - Ensure that departments properly budget for language access.
- **Provide technical assistance and guidance.**
 - [Centralize the City's translation processes](#) and create glossaries and translation memories to ensure consistency.
 - Create language access resources and offer training.
- **Change culture and form allies.**
 - Convene a network of Language Access Liaisons from all City departments and host monthly meetings to share language access resources and best practices.
 - Build close relationships with different jurisdictions to exchange language access information and industry standards.