



## LANGUAGE ACCESS

The Language Access Program's goal is to increase the City's capacity and competence in serving limited English proficient immigrant and refugee residents. The program's foundation is a Language Access Plan with five components. Below is a summary. The complete plan is available upon request.

# Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

## About Us

Our mission is to improve the lives of Seattle's immigrant and refugee families.

We work to strengthen immigrant and refugee communities by engaging them in decisions about the City of Seattle's future, and improving the City's programs and services to meet the needs of all constituents.

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### BE WELCOMING

Create a more welcoming environment in the City's public spaces and enhance City resources so employees can improve community interactions.

- Make City spaces more linguistically accessible for limited English proficient visitors/residents.
- Train frontline and customer service staff to be responsive to limited English proficient visitors/residents.
- Promote free language assistance services to the community.

### BE PREPARED

A Language Access Toolkit that helps City departments plan ahead to ensure Language Access is an essential component of all programs and services.

- Each city department will have Language Access Plans and Language Access Liaisons to oversee creation of the plan and to monitor progress.
- OIRA will train staff on how to embed Language Access best practices in all of their work, with a focus on outward facing programs and projects.

### PROVIDE INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION

Builds capacity to provide interpretation/translation services for those who need them.

- Ensure City's preferred interpretation/translation provider list is regularly updated.
- The Language Access Toolkit will include FAQs, guidelines, and tips for when to use interpreters or translators.
- Identify bilingual staff who are qualified to translate for their departments.

### COMMUNICATE

Enhance the capacity of communications staff and public information officers (PIOs) to effectively communicate with limited English proficient residents.

- Train PIO's and other staff in cutting out jargon in communications.
- Develop a glossary of frequently used terms in multiple languages to be utilized in rapid response situations.
- Work with city departments to gather pertinent data on what services immigrant and refugee residents utilize.

### SIMPLIFY ACCESS

Improve the experience of limited English proficient residents seeking access to City programs and services.

- Utilize an "interpretation graphic" to visually inform residents when interpretation/translation is available upon request, which will make it easier to find programs, services, rules, and regulations.