



**Office of the Mayor  
City of Seattle**

Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

**Executive Order 2023-01: Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families during crisis response relating to sudden, unexpected, and unnatural death.**

*An Executive Order directing the Seattle Police Department, Human Services Department, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, and other City departments' crisis response teams to coordinate and adopt practices and procedures which are culturally, linguistically, and religiously responsive under the law.*

WHEREAS, I, Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor of Seattle, reaffirm my commitment to strengthening the relationship between government and immigrant and refugee communities; and

WHEREAS, immigrant and refugee families have called for the Seattle Police Department and the King County Medical Examiner's Office to develop a culturally sensitive response in the event of sudden, unexpected, and unnatural deaths; and

WHEREAS, the resource constraints in criminal legal systems have left non-English-speaking families lacking adequate interpreter services and accessible informational materials required to navigate supportive services during the unexpected death of a loved one; and

WHEREAS, many rideshare, delivery workers, and Black immigrant youth are part of immigrant and refugee communities and are often victims of hate crimes, violence, and intimidation throughout the city and nation; and

WHEREAS, Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that "(n)o person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance," therefore requiring language access and translation services in the City of Seattle; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census 2014-2018 American Community Survey, 22.2% of Seattle households speak languages other than English, 8% speak English "less than very well," and 154 languages are spoken in Seattle Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 01-07, issued in 2007, commits the City of Seattle to ensuring all residents have equitable access to the City's services, information, civic processes, and guidelines on using interpretation and translation services by City departments; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle strives to ensure that immigrant families who experience violent crimes and unexplained death can access the protections available to them under federal, state, and local law in their best interest, law enforcement, and the entire community; and

WHEREAS, language access helps all immigrant and refugee residents have meaningful and equitable

access to City programs, services, and stakeholder engagement; and allows them to contribute to our City positively; and

WHEREAS, my administration will work closely with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Human Services Department, ethnic media, immigrant serving organizations, and community leaders to build safe and healthy communities and to support comprehensive responses to crises that include language and culturally appropriate services; and

WHEREAS, my administration will help families navigate grief support services, ensure departmental coordination on developing stronger response processes, and work closely with immigrant and refugee-serving organizations and Black-immigrant led organizations to better respond to the unique needs of immigrant communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor of Seattle, hereby direct the following actions:

- 1. An Interdepartmental Team (IDT) consisting of, but not limited to, the Seattle Police Department, the Human Services Department, and the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs shall be formed. Within 90 days of the execution of this Executive Order the IDT shall present the Mayor with a report that addresses the specific needs of immigrant and refugee communities as outlined below:**
  - i. Prepare a strategy for providing consistent and equitable access to grief support services, medical treatment, and protections for immigrant victims and family members who require language access.
  - ii. Prepare a strategy that enhances safety and access to information for immigrant and refugee families who have experienced a violent crime and/or experienced the murder or disappearance of a loved one, which shall be informed by multiple community stakeholder meetings with community leaders, impacted families, and faith-based organizations.
  - iii. Recommend ways to address gaps in the current crisis response. This could include improving cross-departmental collaboration among departments and outside entities.
  - iv. Define culturally and linguistically responsive trauma and equity informed frameworks that inform the strategies and opportunities to increase services through grants and funding.
- 2. The Seattle Police Department shall develop procedures with language access and culturally sensitive practices by:**
  - a. Publishing in-language information about the investigation process following a homicide, unexplained death, or critical incident investigation no later than June 2023. This will include the process for notifying family members and similarly situated people of their rights and provide them with updates related to the case and problems involved with the case.

- b. Coordinating with the Human Services Department and Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, in alignment with the Department of Neighborhoods, to designate culturally and linguistically skilled community liaisons to provide quality assurance for linguistic services and available to connect with immigrant and refugee communities at all hours during a crisis when communicating is necessary for support.
    - c. Creating and maintaining language access resources relating to investigation processes for non-English speakers to help immigrant and refugee families navigate the Seattle Police Department's resources and services. This includes the translation of all available resources, both digital and printed.
  - 3. The Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs shall coordinate with the King County Medical Examiner's Office to establish medically and legally appropriate linguistic and culturally responsive protocols agreeable to the Medical Examiner's Office and will develop and implement those final protocols by:**
    - a. Developing suggested linguistic and culturally responsive protocols, for review and approval by the Medical Examiner's Office, for crisis response and proactive outreach and communications, including translation of all available resources (in digital and printed formats, including but not limited to the investigative process, checklists for families, FAQs, and live 24-hour customer support with free interpretation, and providing final agreed resources and materials for the Medical Examiner's Office and other service providers for implementation no later than June 2023.
    - b. Designating, in alignment with the Department of Neighborhoods, culturally and linguistically skilled community liaisons who will provide quality assurance for services and are available to connect with immigrant and refugee communities at all hours during a crisis when communication is necessary for support.
    - c. Publishing guidance for linguistically, culturally, and religiously diverse immigrant and refugee communities and allow for request for accommodations to be honored that align with the needs of the respective community involved while following federal, state, and local guidelines and laws.
  - 4. The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs shall further:**
    - a. Utilize the Immigrant Safety and Access Network program to help increase support and resources for immigrant and refugee communities that are susceptible to or are victims of violent crime, domestic violence, and/or human trafficking.
    - b. Coordinate with ethnic media outlets to support communication efforts to increase access to multi-language information for immigrant and refugee communities.
    - c. Amplify the King County Medical Examiner's Office, Human Services Department, Seattle Police Department services, and in-language services and resources to reach immigrant and

refugee families.

**5. The Human Services Department and the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs shall:**

- a. Advise the Mayor's Office on how the City of Seattle can best provide short-term advocacy and resources to linguistically diverse families who are impacted by violent crimes.
- b. Invest in the evaluation of language needs, and existing budget for and implement language access activities to address those needs.
- c. Identify existing resources or recommend alternative approaches for establishing victim support hotlines in multiple languages. In addition, identify an outreach strategy and engagement plan that will help efficiently and effectively engage immigrant and refugee communities in need.

I hope this Executive Order will serve as a model for the state, local, and other governments to adopt so that immigrant and refugee families in grief seek support services and justice for their loved ones and themselves in a timely and linguistically appropriate matter.

Questions about the implementation of this Executive Order should be directed to Director of Policy, Dan Eder, Office of the Mayor at [Dan.Eder@seattle.gov](mailto:Dan.Eder@seattle.gov).

Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of February 2023.



Bruce A. Harrell  
Mayor of Seattle