

PROCLAMATION

- WHEREAS,** Welcoming Week has been celebrated in solidarity on the Eastside since 2016, with the cities of Bellevue, Issaquah, Kirkland, Redmond, and Sammamish seeing this as an opportunity to honor the history, achievements, experiences, struggles, and contributions of immigrant and refugee people to the social, economic, educational, artistic, and civic life of our country; and
- WHEREAS,** we recognize that many immigrants and refugees continue to face systemic barriers, shifting policies, and discrimination, and we commit to fostering a community where all community members can feel safe, supported, and fully included; and
- WHEREAS,** East King County is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse regions in Washington State, with 37% of our residents coming from places outside of the United States and 40% of residents speaking a language other than English at home; and
- WHEREAS,** immigrant and refugee community members have historically faced significant challenges in building a new life in the United States, often navigating limited resources and systemic barriers along the way; and
- WHEREAS,** immigrant and refugee community members are especially impacted by the current federal regulatory environment, facing fear, harassment, uncertainty, and trauma regardless of their legal status; and
- WHEREAS,** federal policy changes are also affecting many human services programs, limiting vital resources to immigrant and refugee community members and many other people in need, impacting their education, employment, income, food supply, housing, and wellbeing; and
- WHEREAS,** it is important to counter many of the negative stereotypes regarding the contributions of immigrants, and highlight that 36% of new businesses are immigrant owned, that American agriculture relies heavily on immigrant labor, and that undocumented immigrants paid over \$96 billion in federal state and local taxes in 2022 alone; and
- WHEREAS,** despite the ongoing challenges, Eastside Welcoming Week will continue as part of the region's annual celebration, honoring the contributions of immigrants and refugees and highlighting the vital role communities play in fostering equity, inclusion, belonging, and a sense of welcoming; and
- WHEREAS,** there are many ways to celebrate Eastside Welcoming Week, including amplifying the voices and experiences of immigrant people, uplifting them to share their stories, or attending Welcoming Week events – visit Eastside For All for a list of all regional events.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, THE MAYORS OF BELLEVUE, ISSAQUAH, KIRKLAND, REDMOND, AND SAMMAMISH, WASHINGTON, jointly proclaim September 12-21, 2025, as
EASTSIDE WELCOMING WEEK

and invite the community to engage in opportunities during Eastside Welcoming Week and beyond to learn, connect across differences, and take joint action to achieve a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive community.

Lynne Robinson, Mayor
City of Bellevue

Mary Lou Pauly, Mayor
City of Issaquah

Kelli Curtis, Mayor
City of Kirkland

Angela Birney, Mayor
City of Redmond

Karen Howe, Mayor
City of Sammamish

