

Governor Ferguson signs Executive Order reaffirming Washington’s commitment to protecting immigrant rights

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— WASHINGTON GOVERNOR —
BOB FERGUSON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Ferguson signs Executive Order reaffirming Washington’s commitment to protecting immigrant rights

Executive Order 25-09 creates Immigration Sub-Cabinet to promote statewide coordination on immigration issues

OLYMPIA – Today Governor Bob Ferguson announced an executive order that reaffirms Washington’s commitment to protecting immigrant communities and their rights, including protecting their data. [Executive Order 25-09](#) creates the Immigration Sub-Cabinet, which promotes coordination among state agencies on issues related to immigration. This builds on and formalizes existing coordination and work to support immigrant families, including the Governor’s [Family Separation Rapid Response Team](#).

The Immigration Sub-Cabinet will meet regularly and be led in partnership by the state Office of Equity, the Governor’s Office and the Office of Financial Management.

Governor Ferguson’s order also directs state agencies to review their data collection, sharing and retention policies to ensure they are protecting the privacy and safety of all residents consistent with Washington’s values and the law.

“Washington is a welcoming community that values immigrants’ and refugees’ contributions to our economy and our cultural fabric,” Governor Ferguson said. “While the federal government engages in cruel attacks on immigrant communities, we are taking action to protect the rights and interests of all Washingtonians. This executive order ensures every agency across our state is working together to defend immigrant rights.”

The Immigration Sub-Cabinet is tasked with coordinating on immigration and related issues such as data privacy, health care, the bipartisan Keep Washington Working Act, and other programs or services concerning immigrant rights and interests. It will be comprised of representatives from each of the state’s cabinet agencies.

The Immigration Sub-Cabinet will also engage in open communication with community and stakeholder groups, including relevant state commissions, to amplify and incorporate the voices of those who are directly affected by these issues. The sub-cabinet will meet regularly with these community groups to discuss pressing issues facing immigrant communities and help develop statewide standards, guidance and expectations.

Moreover, the Immigration Sub-Cabinet will provide quarterly reports to the Governor that include any recommendations for changes in state policy or practices to further the state’s core values.

If you would like to receive updates about the Immigration Sub-Cabinet, email subcabinet@equity.wa.gov.

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR BOB FERGUSON —

EXECUTIVE ORDER 25-09

**REAFFIRMING WASHINGTON'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING THE RIGHTS
AND INTERESTS OF IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, Washington is stronger culturally, economically, educationally, artistically, and socially because of our residents' many diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives; and

WHEREAS, Washington is proud to be an inclusive and supportive state that values the safety, security, and rights of all people, including our many immigrant and refugee residents; and

WHEREAS, the federal government's assault on our immigrant communities is contrary to the values of Washington state; and

WHEREAS, in Washington, all our residents should be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect, with state government supporting their efforts to live safely in an equitable and inclusive environment; and

WHEREAS, Washington works hard to build strong, inclusive, and welcoming communities for all residents, reflecting many of our state's most important and fundamental values; and

WHEREAS, Washington benefits immeasurably from the diversity, richness, and strength of our varied communities and the many ways they all contribute to our culture as a state; and

WHEREAS, all Washingtonians—from tribal citizens and their families whose inherent sovereignty long predates the state, to individuals whose families have lived in Washington for generations, to newly arrived immigrants and their families—play equally vital and critical roles in our state's cultural fabric and shared prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Washington has long been a national leader in protecting the rights and interests of all our residents, including by passing the bipartisan Keep Washington Working Act in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Washington has repeatedly expressed, through its laws, actions, and public policies, the importance of protecting the rights and privacy interests of all Washingtonians, including all members of our immigrant and refugee communities; and

WHEREAS, Washington has a long and proud tradition of welcoming and supporting vulnerable individuals to our state, including those fleeing violence, persecution, or danger from abroad in pursuit of a better life for their families; and

WHEREAS, Washington strives to ensure that all people, including the members of our many immigrant communities, feel that their state government values and prioritizes their safety and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, all residents, including immigrants and refugees, are often required to provide their personal information to participate in government programs and receive the many public benefits of living in our state; and

WHEREAS, there is growing public concern over threats regarding data breaches, mishandling of personal information, access by bad-faith actors, and other information-related security risks; and

WHEREAS, personal information must be handled with the highest level of care, and data privacy and security must be treated as a matter of public interest and safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Ferguson, Governor of the state of Washington, by the power vested in me by the Constitution and the statutes of the state of Washington, do hereby order and direct as follows:

1. Welcoming Jurisdiction

Washington shall continue to be a welcoming jurisdiction that embraces the diversity of all its residents with courage and compassion, while openly honoring the innumerable valuable contributions all Washingtonians have made and continue to make to our state, our culture, our communities, our workforce, and our public discourse.

As cabinet agencies, boards, and commissions engage in the performance of their official duties, they should be guided by the following core values and principles:

- Treat all Washingtonians with dignity and fairness, taking proactive steps to support their ability to live safely and achieve their goals.
- Handle the protection of our residents' personal and private information—as well as decisions about whether and how to collect, store, or share that information—as a matter of public interest and safety.
- Ensure full compliance with and enforcement of laws such as the Washington Law Against Discrimination (WLAD), which prohibits discriminatory practices based on factors including race, creed, color, and national origin; and the bipartisan Keep Washington Working Act, which strikes an appropriate balance in state and federal relations while providing important protections for Washingtonians and their families.
- Establish and maintain public trust through transparency, accountability, and open communication with residents and communities, including by promoting meaningful access to state services, resources, and protections for all Washingtonians.

2. Data Privacy and Security

- Effective immediately, and consistent with the values set forth above, all cabinet agencies shall continue to review their data collection, sharing, and retention policies to ensure they are treating the protection of residents' personal and private information as a matter of public interest and safety.
- All cabinet agencies, boards, and commissions shall continue to follow closely any guidance from the Attorney General's Office and the Office of Privacy and Data Protection regarding their data collection, sharing, and retention practices.
- Cabinet agencies shall continue to consult with the Attorney General's Office and the Office of Privacy and Data Protection to ensure that the benefits and potential risks of any data collection, sharing, or retention not strictly required by law or critical to state interests are carefully considered with the goal of protecting residents' privacy and safety.
- Consistent with any guidance received from the Attorney General's Office and the Office of Privacy and Data Protection, and in accordance with state and federal law, cabinet agencies, boards, and commissions shall continue to consider and make any changes to their data collection, sharing, and retention practices that may be appropriate to ensure they are treating the protection of residents' personal information as a matter of public interest and safety.
- In accordance with the above guidance and the processes set forth in this Executive Order, cabinet agencies should work to communicate any potential risks to residents' data quickly, proactively, and in a format and language that is accessible for the recipient.
- In the performance of the above duties, cabinet agencies should remain mindful and respectful of the principles of tribal and indigenous data sovereignty in connection with the collection, storage, and sharing of any information regarding tribal citizens and nations.

3. Creation of the Governor's Immigration Sub-Cabinet

- Effective immediately, cabinet agencies shall coordinate through the creation of an Immigration Sub-Cabinet, which will meet regularly to address immigration-related issues facing the people of our state.
- Representatives from other state entities, including entities led by separately elected officials, independent boards, and institutions of higher education, are welcome and encouraged to attend.
- The Immigration Sub-Cabinet shall be led by the Office of Equity in coordination with the Governor's Office and the Office of Financial Management.

- All cabinet agencies participating in the Immigration Sub-Cabinet should designate an individual within the agency to serve as the agency’s representative for sub-cabinet-related work, meetings, and communications.

A. Coordination between State Agencies and Entities

- The Immigration Sub-Cabinet will be charged with promoting coordination between state agencies in their responses to immigration issues facing Washingtonians, including data privacy, healthcare, and related issues.
- The Office of Equity shall support cross-agency coordination between executive branch agencies responsible for implementing programs related to services and access for immigrant communities. Such coordination should include, but is not limited to, issues regarding:
 - 1) the bipartisan Keep Washington Working Act;
 - 2) services provided by the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA);
 - 3) services related to the New Americans and Legal Assistance programs delivered by the Department of Commerce (COM); and
 - 4) any other programs or services concerning immigrant entrepreneurship, language access, licensing, workforce training, education, housing, healthcare, human services, and quality of life.
- The Office of Equity shall provide information and assistance related to immigration-related issues to all agencies participating in the Immigration Sub-Cabinet, serving as a conduit for information received from executive branch agencies, other branches of government, community partners, other states, and the federal government.
- The Immigration Sub-Cabinet shall also promote coordination with other branches of state government, including by welcoming members of the legislative and judicial branches to meetings in furtherance of the goals and fundamental values set forth above.

B. Enhanced Access to Resources

- The Immigration Sub-Cabinet shall offer recommendations for integrating immigrant- and refugee-serving programs (i.e., naturalization, legal services, housing assistance, healthcare, and other human services) into the development of state agency budgets.
- The Immigration Sub-Cabinet shall also coordinate with the Governor’s Office, the Office of Financial Management, and the Office of the Attorney General to examine the effects of changes in federal legislation and policy on Washington residents. Relevant changes include, but are not limited to, the

recent passage of H.R.1; recent changes in the interpretation of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA); and changes in federal grant terms and conditions.

- The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), including ORIA, is directed to expand the scope of the Washington Migrant and Asylum-Seeker Support Project (WA MASS) to include providing accurate and reliable information and resources to Washington's immigrant communities through a trusted community partner.
- Cabinet agencies are directed to work with the Office of Financial Management to explore potential expanded funding opportunities for community partners, including organizations providing legal advocacy and defense, housing, or direct community support.

C. Open Conversation with Community Stakeholders and Community Members

- As cabinet agencies and the Immigration Sub-Cabinet pursue the goals set forth in this Executive Order, it will be important to receive and incorporate feedback, suggestions, and proposals from stakeholder groups, advocacy organizations, and community members.
- Representatives of the Immigration Sub-Cabinet shall meet regularly with stakeholder and community advocacy groups to discuss issues facing Washington's immigrant communities and shall incorporate the substance of those discussions into the Sub-Cabinet's work.
- To support meaningful engagement with organizations and community members who may wish to contribute their voice and perspective, the Office of Equity shall coordinate with the Commission on Hispanic Affairs (CHA), the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), the Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA), Washington's Business Resource Groups (BRGs), the LGBTQ Commission, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), and other relevant state commissions and entities. These entities should work collaboratively with the shared goal of elevating and amplifying community voices in the development of statewide standards, guidance, and expectations regarding immigration-related issues.

D. Reports to Governor's Office

- The Immigration Sub-Cabinet shall report to the Governor on state agency practices and any recommendations for changes in state policy or practices that will further the core values identified in this Executive Order. These reports should be provided quarterly—or more often as necessary—and should address the directives set forth above, including:

- 1) coordination between state entities;
- 2) access to resources; and
- 3) communication with the community.

This Executive Order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law. Provisions of this Order are not intended to alter any existing collective bargaining agreements. This Order is not intended to confer and does not confer any legal right or entitlement and shall not be used as a basis for legal challenges to any rule or any other action or inaction of the governmental entities and employees subject to it.

This Order shall take effect immediately.

Signed and sealed with the official seal of the state of Washington on this 25th day of September AD, Two Thousand and Twenty-Five, at Olympia, Washington.

By:

/s/

Bob Ferguson
Governor

BY THE GOVERNOR

/s/

Secretary of State