

Family Separation Rapid Response Team Meeting #10

Sep. 9, 2025 | 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. | HYBRID
1500 Jefferson St., Olympia

NOTES

Meeting Summary

- Resource flyer distribution updated
- OSPI led a collaborative discussion on upcoming policy discussions for Keep Washington Working off school campuses
- The Office of Equity provided an overview of language access statewide, including current research and needs
- Subject matter experts from kinship care, youth rights, and higher ed spoke on a panel about the needs of children after separation. Highlighted were the need for culturally competent care and support for better funding of family support centers.

Introductions and Task Force Updates

- Secretary Tana Senn reflected on the Supreme Court decision around LA racial profiling for Immigration Enforcement Agents, supporting WA AG Brown's statement
- Higher Ed policy draft in progress, 4-5 key areas. Advanced exemptions or guidance, easier for students who may come into the care of/ guardianship of a family member or need excused absences for immigration proceedings.
- Outreach [flyer](#) update:
 - 7 translations currently, please feel free to request more at the email listed on the flyer
 - [Reference the outreach map below]: Counties that are blank, if you know of organizations in those counties please concentrate outreach there, and fill out the [outreach log](#)

K-12 Policy and Improvements| Susan Lathrop, OSPI

OSPI representative Susan Lathrop presented on updates from Secretary Reykdahl, and drafted Immigration Enforcement Off Campus or Before/After Hours with the Rapid Response Team. The language is still in legal review and cannot yet be shared. This document will be updated when the language is finalized.

- GOV Policy Lead Nathan Bays was grateful for and praised OSPI's willingness to collaborate with this gubernatorial team.

Language Access in Agency Services| Perla Gamboa, EQUITY

Statewide Language Access Updates- Language Access Program Manager

- Federal changes: English as the official language of the US, and in July guidance from AG for Federal agencies of how to implement these changes.
- What is decided at the Fed level does not impact the information WA residents receive through WA State services.
- Large change in persons living in households other than language 21.2% in 2022. Over 600,000 people in WA state primary language other than English.

Initial Research:

- 1:1 meetings with community organizations, 16 around the state in 20+ languages. EQUITY provided services in many different languages, obtained their feedback on big issues and gaps in state government services.
- Results: Some languages better served, and others where there is not much information available.
- Goal to continue to provide language assistance at the state level even if Federal funding is cut, or if there are EOs coming from the Fed government.

Systemic Policy Challenges:

- Lack of standard processes and consistency- some larger agencies may have Language Access teams and resources and farther along in their services. Smaller agencies may not have those resources or plans yet. Every day person it does not make a difference whether it is one agency or another- they just think of this as an issue with Government writ large.
- Interpreter shortage, especially in medical field. Education too. Huge need. Something that is included in goals for future work.
- Lack of awareness and training on non-discrimination laws and regulations- some of the staff in agencies did not know what it was that they needed to do and provide language access. How people may be thinking because there are Federal changes, this may effect services for the state.
- Lack of statewide language data- many of the orgs Equity talked to did not receive services- did not incorporate population changes that happened recently.
- Inconsistent training of multilingual employees- not training employees to be able to provide support
- Procurement barriers- difficult for many organizations who would like to provide language access services to get into contract with the state. Especially vendors on the state master contract that may not be inclusive of some of the needed languages.
- Mistrust- want processes in place to hear what they are telling us. Workgroups address different barriers at the state level- produce reports or recs but they are not seeing much follow through.

Risks

- Diminished ability to access everyday needs- health care, workplace safety, communication with their children's teachers. A lot of issues around emergency situations and the pandemic is a good example.

- Safe Harbor Rule- people that speak a language in an area reach 1,000 people or 5% of the population. If they do, then have to provide services in their language. Because demographics have changed so much, safe harbor rule is no longer what we need, is the bare minimum. Many languages left behind if we are not more careful about accommodating the specific area where we are providing services.

Ongoing State CoP

- Language Access community of practice meets once a month, smaller workgroups on specific topics, including machine translation and AI- want them to be quality translations. Responsible use of AI and language translation.
- - Interpretation pipeline- a lot of community advocates working on solutions to recruit interpreters, working with local colleges and if the workforce could be part of the solution to this issue.

Future State

- Barrier free access to any gov services in any person's language
- State legislation
- Standard processes
- Certification process for interpreters, translators, and multilingual staff
- Efficient language access contracts- smaller orgs that can meet the needs that the big vendors that are in the state contract may not be able to do.
- Community-centered decisions, make sure have people with lived experience providing input. Paying those members for their work and feedback.

Post-Separation Care Panel | Shelly Willis, ED of Family Education Support Services, Luis Albizo Martinez of Mockingbird Society, Professor Vanessa Delgado of Washington State University

What Resources do you think are most useful in bringing a child to a new environment...?

- Professor Delgado- perspective from a researcher on mixed status families: Children who are separated from their parents are much more likely to have depression and PTSD, rewires the brain. Can lead to acting out, risky behaviors. Better outcomes if placed with kin, but also risk to family members with limited status.
- When a family separation happens many parents aren't clear on what is going to happen to the child. Making sure from the individual family perspective that there are safety plans put in place with legal documents. Understanding what happens to children, impact working with different districts if they are moving.
- Truancy laws- accommodations that could be put in place. K-12 a lot of policies around missing school- how can we account for that so children are not effected by missing school when they are trying to figure things out?
- Luis Albizo Martinez- Mockingbird Family- The youth whose parents got deported and detained should have a group of trusted adults who speak the language and understand their culture with practical and emotional health rights and trauma informed care.
- Shelly Willis- research indicated that kids do better when placed with someone they know. 53,000 kids in care and 46,000 kids in informal care, 6,000 in placement and that is changing in the right

direction. Heard from caregivers the use of language sets a tone- unlicensed caregiver suggests illegitimacy. Consider formal caregiver and informal caregiver language change in policy moving forward. **DCYF has a policy around this language use and will be notifying the relevant staff of the continued need to update language**

- There is a network of family support centers, often connected to more invisible resources and considered safe for populations they serve, if they do not provide those resources themselves.

What are the biggest challenges when bringing families to a new home?

- Professor Delgado- Transitioning. New found family dynamics often happen without a family knowing they are going to happen. May move with different family members before they find a stable place.
- There are administrative burdens, including how legal issues play into newfound guardian roles, including issues of public charge- fears around whether families will be effected or whether they can access services such as SNAP without getting effected later on. Particularly in this climate, families are hesitant to access services that they legally have the right to.
- Shelly Willis- Love does not pay the bills. Sometimes relative caregivers are also going through grief and loss. Sometimes they need to find child care, need immediate access to some resources and state moves slowly. Family resource centers can provide funding in the meantime and resources.
- Luis Albizo Martinez- greatest challenges are building trust- fear, grief, guilt. Expanding affordable access to legal aid, and train child welfare staff on immigration impacts.

What culturally sensitive modifications would you suggest for the populations you are serving? Trauma informed care- what does care look like in the many cultures that we encounter?

- Luis Albizo Martinez- cultural sensitivity honors human rights, what they see at home. Recruiting and supporting caregivers from diverse backgrounds so they can be placed with families who understand the culture. Immigrants and BIPOC youth- culturally relevant mental health resources, not after thoughts but present from the start.
- Shelly Willis- consistent environment, anything you can do to provide consistency- extracurriculars, whatever it is to keep them grounded. It's hard to find Spanish speaking counselors. Community connection- hard to keep them connected when experiencing loss.
- Professor Delgado - workbook for children experiencing loss in that way. For practitioners- thinking about as disseminating information, thinking through families who are being separated. Providing services widely to families, not just a Latino issue. Understanding how race and racism fuel discrimination. Even non immigrants are at risk, may experience separation even if they are not themselves immigrants. Supreme Court Decision shows that this will continue and have wide impacts.
- Have family support centers and kinship navigators across the state- include these local supports into policies. Have trust and support in communities.
- Families do not know what resources are available and are misinformed in this changing legal landscape. As we disseminate information and resources that the information actually gets to families and community partners. Concerted effort to get the information out there. Know your rights and aware of their resources. Disseminate as widely as possible.
- Recruiting and retaining caseworkers and ensuring equitable pay- there is a shortage, hold onto valuable people.

Discussion:

- Washington State Patrol Representative Patrick McGregor- There's such a high value in family support centers, resources pulled away from school districts and really lost the trust as people are afraid to access those resources. Make that a recommendation somewhere, extremely valuable, under resourced, and underpaid.
- What are we doing and how are we thinking about our incarcerated youth? Many in K-12 and disconnected from districts. In all of this work adds a layer in complexity and challenge. When incarcerated in state custody and have a family member detained.
- Deportation concerns in DOC- AA-NHPI cultural event, a vulnerable population event that is concerned about deportation especially to countries outside of their country of origin.
- Thank panelists- Shelly Willis and Vanessa Delgado reached out to Task Force on own volition. So many Washingtonians have found out about the team and have done advocacy and work behind the scenes.

Outreach map:

