



Port of Seattle Commission

Welcoming Port Policy Directive

**As Adopted
October 28, 2025**

Document last updated October 28, 2025

SECTION 1. Purpose.

- A. The purpose of this policy directive is to reaffirm the Port of Seattle's (Port) commitment to the safety, inclusion, and engagement of immigrants, refugees, and international visitors who interact with our facilities or services.
- B. The Port Commission seeks to update and expand its strategies to respond to current events and shifting national policies that create new opportunities and challenges to fulfill the Port's Welcoming Port vision.
- C. The Port aims to foster a culture and environment that make it possible for our region to remain a vibrant and welcoming global gateway where our immigrant communities, refugee residents, and foreign visitors can fully participate in – and be integrated into – the social, civic, and economic fabric of our region.
- D. For the Port, this is not only a deeply held value, but also an economic imperative – given how much our facilities rely on both a workforce that includes immigrants as well as international cargo and international passengers.
- E. The Port first adopted its Welcoming Port Policy Directive as Resolution 3747 on May 8, 2018. Since that time, the Port has fully implemented this directive, and developed numerous deep partnerships with community groups and organizations to continue expanding the ways in which Port facilities can be welcoming to immigrants, refugees and foreign visitors. For example:
 - Commission Order 2023-05 (Language Access Policy);
 - Providing space for OneAmerica Citizenship Application Workshops; and
 - Collaborating with World Relief case workers on refugee arrivals at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA).
- F. In addition, in 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed the Keep Washington Working Act, which made numerous changes to state law for the stated purpose of “ensuring the state of Washington remains a place where the rights and dignity of all residents are maintained and protected in order to keep Washington working.” The Port has fully complied with these mandates, and is updating this Welcoming Port Policy accordingly.
- G. The Port values the work of our federal partners to keep our facilities safe, and nothing in this Policy Directive is intended to impede the travel facilitation work of federal personnel like U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Transportation Security Administration.

SECTION 2. Definitions.

When used in this policy directive, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given below unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Administrative warrant” means a noncriminal immigration warrant of arrest.

“Citizenship or immigration status” means a person’s recorded citizenship or immigration status, as such status is defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, at the time an agent or agency receives the information.

“Civil immigration enforcement operation” means an operation that has as one of its objectives the identification, apprehension or transport of a person or persons in order to investigate them for a violation of the immigration laws and subject them to one or more of the following:

1. Civil immigration detention;
2. Removal proceedings; or
3. Removal from the United States.

“Immigration detainer” means a request by ICE to a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency to provide notice of release or maintain custody of a person based on an alleged violation of a civil immigration law. “Immigration detainer” includes a detainer issued under Sections 236 or 287 of the Immigration and Nationality Act or 287.7 or 236.1 of Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations. “Immigration detainer” includes a detainer issued under DHS form I-274A entitled Immigration Detainer – Notice of Action, as well as predecessor and successor versions.

SECTION 3. Scope and Applicability.

- A. This policy directive pertains to the activities of Port employees; all policies in this directive are bounded by the parameters set by local, state and federal law, and the Port is expected to implement this directive in ways that are legally compliant.
- B. Nothing in this directive shall be interpreted to prohibit Port employees from engaging productively with federal agency personnel in the normal course of port-related business, including travel facilitation or participating with local or federal law enforcement authorities for other criminal law enforcement activities.
- C. In accordance with 8 U.S.C. Sec. 1373 nothing in this directive prohibits any Port agent or employee from sending to, or receiving from, federal immigration authorities, the citizenship or immigration status of a person when required by federal law. Also, nothing in this directive prohibits any Port agent or employee from sending to, receiving from, requesting from or exchanging with any federal, state or local government agency information regarding the immigration status of a person or from maintaining such information, when required by federal law.

SECTION 4. Responsibilities.

- A. The Executive Director shall ensure the policies and procedures in use by employees of the Port of Seattle are consistent with the principles of this policy directive and shall promulgate such additional policies and procedures as may be needed to operationalize the intent of this policy directive.

- B. The Executive Director shall ensure that Port employees are appropriately informed and trained on the provisions of these policies on a regular basis to ensure compliance with both the substance and intention of this document.

SECTION 5. Policy.

A. Limits on Port Data Collection

- 1) *Related to visitors to Port facilities, applicants for Port grants, and participants in Port programs:* All applications, questionnaires, and forms used in relation to the provision of Port opportunities or services shall not include required disclosure of information related to place of birth, citizenship or immigration status.
- 2) *Related to travelers through air and cruise gateways:* The Port is committed to non-discrimination, data privacy, and the dignity of all travelers, regardless of immigration status. Port employees are prohibited from collecting or sharing the immigration status of travelers.
- 3) *Related to Port law enforcement personnel:* Consistent with the Keep Washington Working Act, Port law enforcement is prohibited from collecting information about immigration or citizenship data unless there is a demonstrated connection between such information and an investigation into a violation of state or local criminal law. Port law enforcement is also prohibited from providing information pursuant to notification requests from federal immigration authorities for the purposes of civil immigration enforcement.

B. Interpretation and Translation:

- 1) Commission Order 2023-05 directs the creation of a Language Access Policy. This policy ensures access to translation and interpretation services, as both a value of the Port as well as an essential business requirement. Therefore, to ensure that everyone who engages with the Port feels welcome, the Port will strive to provide free interpretation and translation services for the most prevalent languages spoken in our region. This effort applies to Port employees, job seekers, participants in Port programs, and travelers through our facilities. In addition, the Port will offer access to its translation and interpretation services to federal agencies operating in our facilities, to ensure that their interactions are fully understood by all travelers.
- 2) The Port employs a large number of bilingual and multilingual staff members who assist travelers and members of the public with language interpretation needs on a regular basis, particularly related to travel through our facilities. Bilingual and multilingual staff members may assist travelers and members of the public with language interpretation needs related to basic immigration resources, while ensuring professional interpreters are engaged in issues related to civil immigration law or other sensitive topics beyond their professional expertise.

C. Compliance with Keep Washington Working and Prohibiting the Use of Port Resources for Immigration Enforcement:

- 1) The Port will continue to ensure that all employees – including Port law enforcement officers – are committed to welcoming and respectful treatment of immigrants, refugees, and foreign visitors. Consistent with the Keep Washington Working Act, Port law enforcement officers, including both Port Police officers and any law enforcement officers contracted by the Port, are prohibited from initiating police action based solely on an individual's place of birth, citizenship, or immigration status, or using stops for minor offenses or requests for voluntary information as a pretext for discovering a person's immigration status.
- 2) Furthermore, no Port employee shall expend time, money, or other resources on facilitating the civil enforcement of federal immigration law or participating in civil immigration enforcement operations, except where required by state or federal law, regulation, or a court order.

D. Detainees:

- 1) The Port will continue to defer immigration detainer requests from ICE or CBP to King County Jail or SCORE, as the Port does not manage a correctional facility. The Port will comply with the Keep Washington Working Act and will not enter into any contract, agreement, or arrangement that would grant federal civil immigration enforcement authority or power over the Port or its law enforcement officers; nor will Port law enforcement carry out a civil arrest based on an administrative warrant separately or in combination with an ICE or CBP detainer request.
- 2) The Port will continue to share its expectations that – when individuals are detained by CBP in the International Arrivals Facility or are being transported through our facilities by federal law enforcement officers– these individuals will have full access to their legal rights and are receiving all federally required and otherwise appropriate treatment.

E. Partnerships:

- 1) The Port will work in collaboration with local immigration services, refugee resettlement organizations, and community-based organizations to explore additional ways to use its facilities to support immigrant and refugee communities, including: providing access to information for travelers; potential partnerships on workforce development and economic development; and facilitating refugee arrivals through SEA. In addition, the Port will continue to partner with local organizations to support immigration and citizenship application efforts, including by providing a list of existing resources for individuals who need services that the Port cannot provide, such as access to legal resources.

F. Safe and Welcoming Workplace:

- 1) The Port remains steadfastly opposed to harassment and discrimination in our workplace. Port Policy CC-8 – Anti-Harassment prohibits harassment against any employee, including based on national origin or any related characteristic.

- 2) The Port's immigration-related policies and protocols shall be fully integrated into all relevant aspects of Port operations and administration – including the development of appropriate training programs for Port employees.

G. Employee Responses to Federal Immigration Policy and Enforcement:

- 1) The Port prohibits employees from providing federal immigration officials with information about individuals or any other non-public information, or assisting in accessing an area restricted to Port employees or tenants. However, Port employees should not interfere with immigration officials or immigration enforcement actions.
- 2) The Port has developed its *Employee Guidance on Immigration* training, which includes proper protocols to respond to requests from federal immigration enforcement and to travelers or other visitors to Port facilities seeking guidance related to immigration.

SECTION 6. Program Implementation & Evaluation.

A. Establishment of a Port Immigration Working Group:

- 1) The Port will formally establish an Immigration Working Group composed of key staff members from throughout the organization.
 - a. This Working Group will serve as a central point of contact for connecting a broad group of stakeholders to identify, elevate, and develop shared strategies and solutions; streamline and strengthen efforts; and address the most pressing issues related to this topic.
 - b. The Working Group will have oversight over relevant communications, new program development, and monitoring of this Policy Directive.
 - c. The Executive Director may disband the working group at their discretion when it is no longer needed.
 - d. The Working Group shall include the Commission President, or their delegate, as an ex officio member of the committee.
 - e. The Working Group shall receive reports in writing of any potential human rights, civil rights, discrimination, and other local, Washington state, or federal violations connected to federal immigration enforcement at the Port, so that these matters are on record with the elected officials who have oversight authority.

B. Tracking and Reporting

- 1) Within three (3) months of the passage of this policy, the Port will create a centralized tracking system to record immigration-related interactions with individuals or federal agencies. This data will be used to identify patterns, training needs, or compliance issues. A summary of these interactions, stripped of identifying details, shall be provided to the Commission no later than six months from the date this tracking system is implemented.
- 2) By December 31st, 2025, the Executive Director shall report to the Commission on the implementation and estimated cost of these policies, procedures, and programs.

- 3) Annually, the Executive Director shall empower key staff to conduct a review of Port actions to ensure that staff continue to comply fully with this directive.

SECTION 7. Findings.

- A. Engaging with people from around the world is essential to the success of the Port of Seattle – both morally and economically:
 - (1) We benefit from international travelers who use our airport and cruise terminals, and who drive the continued expansion of new direct international flights in and out of SEA – which we estimate to generate between \$80-100 million annually for each new route.
 - (2) We thrive when international goods are shipped through our container terminals or our air cargo facilities.
 - (3) We celebrate the 500,000 pounds of seafood shipped through Port facilities each year, caught by the hundreds of North Pacific fishing boats that homeport at Fishermen’s Terminal – including many foreign-born crew members.
 - (4) We know that immigrants are key to the creation of so many Washington goods and services – from Eastern Washington agricultural products that we ship via the seaport and airport to technology companies and global health organizations that utilize our airport to connect with customers, clients, and partners.
 - (5) We welcome the thousands of immigrants who work at the port itself, and those who work for other companies and at or around our facilities such as concessionaires, taxi, and rideshare drivers serving our airport and cruise terminals, truck drivers at the seaport, and the crews of cruise ships and container ships. We encourage their participation in the family-wage jobs that the Port helps create.
 - (6) We rely on our immigrant and refugee residents to foster both economic growth and cultural vibrancy, and we benefit tremendously from the large number of diverse immigrants and refugees who contribute to the development of a diverse and enriched community.
- B. As a global gateway, these issues are particularly relevant to our region and state. In King County, Washington, approximately 25% of all residents are foreign-born, as are approximately 43% of all public-school students in King County. Some of our most famous residents, entrepreneurs, elected officials, and business leaders are foreign born, all of which have created benefits for everyone in the Puget Sound region.
- C. In 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed the Keep Washington Working Act, which made numerous changes to state law for the stated purpose of “ensuring the state of

Washington remains a place where the rights and dignity of all residents are maintained and protected in order to keep Washington working.”

- D. Since January 20, 2025, the federal government has issued numerous Executive Orders, instituted new policies, and changed long-standing practices to significantly increase immigration enforcement, cease refugee admissions, and to deny benefits and opportunities to non-citizens.
- E. On July 1, 2025, the King County Council’s Health, Housing and Human Services Committee passed Proposed Substitute Motion 2025-0173.2, which expressed the Council's commitment to welcoming and actively supporting immigrants and refugees.

Revision History

October 28, 2025	Resolution No. 3838, establishing a Revised Welcoming Port Policy Directive, was adopted.
May 8, 2018	Resolution No. 3747, establishing the Welcoming Port Policy Directive, was adopted.