



Action Request

Invest in interpretation, translation, cultural navigation, and other language and cultural supports so all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families can access services in their language and culture.

Invest in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities

King County recognizes the need to co-create systemic changes that result in equitable outcomes for BIPOC residents, especially BIPOC people with I/DD or delays and their families. The County seeks the state's partnership to make direct investments for BIPOC communities to improve access to culturally relevant services and resources.¹

The intersection of disability and race

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, data shows that one in six children aged three through 17 years have at least one developmental disability.² People with I/DD have been shown to have poorer health and poorer access to health care.³ Similarly, multilingual people and families face barriers in accessing meaningful healthcare when navigating an English-dominant healthcare system.⁴ In King County, 28 percent of residents over age five speak a language other than English at home, and nearly 40 percent of these residents report they do not speak English very well or at all.⁵ Many residents with disabilities who are also BIPOC have reported to King County that they face barriers to getting their needs met from the developmental disabilities, healthcare, and K-12 education systems, and that they experience racial, cultural and language biases.

Promote BIPOC representation in service systems

People and families benefit from services received from providers whose traditions, histories, beliefs, and languages are like their own. Representation lifts the burden of needing to explain culture and racial experiences, and it allows for open dialogue that is relevant, relatable, supportive, and without implicit bias.

Fund strategies that increase language access

Language access is critically needed across all systems and programs, to ensure equitable access to services for multilingual and multicultural residents. Service providers lack the robust funding needed to move forward in language access equity on their own. It is crucial to invest in the translation of all necessary developmental disability services documents in each family's preferred language. For families accessing Medicaid, interpretation services may be funded through their insurance, but for families using private insurance, developmental disability services providers must provide interpretation at their own expense. Interpretation is a critical component for accessibility and requires robust funding, as requested by state agencies in their decision packages, to support equitable language access across services.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; CDC's Work on Developmental Disabilities

² Achievable Foundation; Statistics

³ King County; Understanding K.C.C. § 2.15; Immigrant, Refugee, and Language Access

⁴ Foundation for Healthcare Quality, Washington Patient Safety Coalition

⁵ King County; Understanding K.C.C. § 2.15 Immigrant, Refugee, and Language Access