



January 20, 2026

Vancouver City Council Issues Public Declaration on Community Harm, Public Safety, and Human Dignity

The City of Vancouver, WA issues this declaration to formally denounce the actions of federal immigration enforcement agencies and affiliated federal law enforcement operating under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including **U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**, whose conduct within and around our community has caused demonstrable harm and destabilization.

These actions have generated widespread fear and a pervasive sense of terror among residents; fractured trust between community members and law enforcement; contributed to significant declines in mental and emotional well-being; disrupted families and educational stability; and produced negative economic consequences for workers, businesses, and essential services.

These harms reflect patterns of enforcement activity that include brutal reports of physical force and intimidation, lack of clear identification of federal law enforcement officers, limited or absence of transparency or due process, and actions that disproportionately impact individuals based on perceived race, language, occupation, or presence in certain public spaces.

Public safety depends on trust. When residents are afraid to leave their homes, attend school, seek medical care, report crimes, or go to work, public safety is actively undermined. Actions that blur authority, rely on intimidation and physical harm, or disregard collateral impacts on children, families and neighborhoods do not enhance safety, they erode it.

The City of Vancouver's position is grounded in constitutional principles, including the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable searches and seizures and the Tenth Amendment's prohibition against federal commandeering of local governments. Immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility. Local government exists to protect the health, safety, and dignity of the people who live and work here. We remain committed to our responsibility to provide a safe and welcoming community for our residents.

The City of Vancouver reaffirms full adherence to the **Keep Washington Working Act** and its clear limits on local participation in federal immigration enforcement. Absent a judicial

criminal warrant, or as otherwise required by law, City personnel will not provide access to non-public spaces, data, or facilities for civil immigration enforcement, nor will City property be used for federal enforcement staging or operations. At the same time, the City acknowledges gaps in existing law: the absence of direct accountability for federal actions that cause community-wide harm, the lack of remedies for destabilized families and businesses, and insufficient mechanisms to address trauma and economic disruption.

The City of Vancouver's response is guided by its adopted resolution on Equity and Inclusion, which recognizes the responsibility to address structural inequities, historical harms, and ongoing disparities affecting vulnerable and marginalized communities. Consistent with trauma-informed governance, the City of Vancouver recognizes that fear-based enforcement practices inflict lasting harm on mental health, family stability, educational access, and community well-being.

The impacts on this community are real and ongoing. Local businesses depend on a reliable workforce. Schools rely on consistent student attendance. Families rely on safety, routine, and predictability. Immigration is a source of labor, entrepreneurship, and community contribution that sustains the local economy. Policies that create fear and instability undermine these foundations and inflict avoidable economic harm on the entire community.

The City of Vancouver will continue to lead with clear boundaries between local services and federal immigration enforcement; community-led strategies for accountability, and transparency through regular public reporting on federal enforcement impacts within the City.

We reject actions that cause fear and harm. We reject practices that fracture families and communities. We will act to support our community with clarity, resolve, and partnership. The circumstances facing Vancouver have developed into a serious and ongoing crisis affecting the health, safety, education, and economic stability of our city. Everyone, regardless of immigration status, is encouraged to contact 911 for life-threatening emergencies or to report a crime.

The City of Vancouver will continue to respond to this crisis with the full force of our legal authority.

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