

Community Liaisons

Department of Neighborhoods

May 27, 2026

Department of Neighborhoods



City of Seattle

Community Liaisons Program - A Brief History

Began as a City program within DON in 2009 to provide language assistance and event support for a major transportation project in Southeast Seattle.

The program was initially established as the Public Outreach & Engagement Liaisons (POEL) Program and operated under that name through the mid-2010s. During this period, POEL focused on building partnerships across City departments and supporting a wide range of smaller, short-term City projects and initiatives.

The program later evolved into the Community Liaisons (CL) Program and celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2024. Today, the CL Program continues to grow, with an expanded roster of active Community Liaisons and ongoing work agreements with City departments including HSD, SCL, SDOT, and SPU.



Picture of Community Liaisons

Community Liaisons

Community Liaisons are independent contractors who bridge historically underserved communities with City government.

Their role is to ensure underrepresented groups have access to City information, resources, and decision-making power.

The program currently has 30+ Community Liaisons.

Community Liaisons are Community Navigators

- African American
- Arabic
- Cambodian (Khmer)
- Cham
- Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, Taishanese)
- Eritrean (Tigrinya)
- Ethiopian (Amharic and Oromo)
- Filipino (Tagalog, Ilocano)
- Korean
- Latinx (Spanish)
- LGBTQ+
- Low-Income
- Native American / Indigenous
- People Living with Disabilities
- Renters
- Seniors
- Somali
- Unhoused / Unsheltered
- Vietnamese



Picture of Community Liaisons

Community Liaisons Case Study: SCL Transportation Electrification Strategic Investment Plan Outreach

Project Summary: To help SCL to engage hard-to-reach language community members to develop community priorities for transportation electrification investment between 2025-2030.

Community Liaisons: A team of 12 CLs (Amharic, Arabic, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Mandarin, Oromo, Person with Disabilities, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese) conducted surveys, hosted focus groups, attended community outreach events, provided language services during electric car demonstrations and summarized engagement reports.

Impacts: Delivered 24 distinct language and cultural community engagements and spoke with 500+ SCL customers during the outreach process.



Picture of
Community
Liaisons at
EV event



Picture of
Community
Liaisons at
outreach
event

Community Liaisons Case Study: SPU Adopt A Street

Project Summary: SPU Adopt a Street is a grassroots litter removal program in Seattle that helps keep our streets clean.

Community Liaisons: Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, Somali, Amharic, Filipino, and Vietnamese liaisons engaged communities to encourage volunteer sign-ups in Lake City, University District, Columbia City, Delridge, Chinatown International District, South Park, and Rainier Beach.

Impacts:

- Liaisons helped collect program feedback, which later made the program more accessible, especially with hard-to-reach communities.
- Community Liaison efforts increased volunteer sign-ups by 1,000 community participants.



Picture of
Community
Liaisons at
Adopt-a-
Street event

Sample 2026 Project List: Community Liaisons Program

Seattle Department of Transportation

- ADA Transition Plan
- Aurora Ave North Engagement*
- Healthy Street
- RapidRide J Line *
- Regional Reduced Fare Permit Senior Program*
- Sound Transit 3*
- Vision Zero

Human Services Department

- Age Friendly Seattle*
- Caregivers Support
- WA Cares

Seattle Public Utilities

- Adopt a Drain*
- Adopt a Street*
- Side Sewer Assistance Program*
- Fats/Oils/Grease & What to Flush*
- Bitter Lake Reservoir Project*
- Water Conservation Advisory Group*
- Food Waste Prevention*

Department of Neighborhoods

- Historic Preservation*
- People's Academy for Community Engagement*
- Food Equity Fund*
- Leadership Development*

Seattle City Light

- Communications*
- Customer Participation*
- Transportation Electrification*
- Time of Use Rates
- Utility Assistance Program

Seattle Public Libraries

- High Point Programming*
- NewHolly Programming*
- Lake City Social Connection Club*
- Ducks in a Row*

** Projects continuing from 2025*



Thank you! Any questions?

