
For Immediate Release

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**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS LANGUAGE ACCESS PROGRAM
DURING IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH**

June is Immigrant Heritage Month

June 18, 2019 — Every June government municipalities, organizations, and communities nationwide recognize the diversity and contributions of the immigrant community during Immigrant Heritage Month. The month of recognition is also an opportunity to understand the unique needs of immigrant populations, specifically pertaining to language access. New York City Emergency Management helps New Yorkers before, during, and after emergencies through preparedness, education, and response. The agency works closely with immigrant populations throughout the year to make sure they are prepared. During emergencies, the agency also adheres to the City’s language access protocol to ensure that all New Yorkers are receiving critical information.

“New York City is one of the most diverse cities in the world. Immigrant Heritage Month is an opportunity to educate the public on how NYC Emergency Management works to prepare immigrant populations in New York City for emergencies,” **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito** said.

“As an immigrant, I’ve experienced firsthand how disorienting it can be to go through an emergency when you are away from your community. Add to that a language barrier, and things can get very confusing and scary,” **NYC Emergency Management Director of Community Education and Language Access Iskra Killgore** said. “That is why we’re dedicated to addressing language access and cultural considerations that come up during emergencies. We have a flexible and scalable structure to quickly bring language access to the forefront of any emergency in a city where more than 200 different languages are spoken.”

Language Access Protocol

During an emergency, City agencies provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and language access services to affected residents who speak languages other than English. Language access services may include, but are not limited to, telephonic or in-person interpretation, sign language interpretation, translation of documents and flyers, case management services, and provision of culturally appropriate information through ethnic media.

The Language Access Protocol coordinates the planning and provision of language access services, and provide agencies and organizations that have language access responsibilities with strategies to address the language access needs of affected populations.

New York City Emergency Management coordinates the Language Access Lead team, which is convened by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, made up of several City agencies including NYC Mayor’s Office of Community Affairs, NYC Department of Social Services, and others who play a role in the emergency response. The lead team is responsible for coordinating language access needs when an emergency affects 75 or more households, a service center is opened, and/or when language access needs exceed the responding agencies’ ability to provide services.

Notify NYC

Notify NYC, New York City's official emergency communications program, also provides multilingual messaging in 13 languages, American Sign Language (ASL), and audio formats. Notify NYC started as a pilot program in December of 2007 as a means to communicate localized emergency information quickly to city residents. The program went citywide in 2009. Since its inception, Notify NYC has sent out more than 13,000 notifications about local emergencies, and its subscribership has grown to more than 750,000 users.

Non-English speaking subscribers have access to a link that lists the same message in 12 different languages, audio format, and American Sign Language (ASL). Notify NYC's multilingual messages span a variety of emergencies including pre-scripted mass transit alerts, fire department activity, missing person(s) alerts, public health and safety notifications, utility alerts, weather alerts, drills and exercises, alternate side parking updates, downed trees notifications, and combined sewage overflow (CSO) advisories. To learn more about the Notify NYC program or to sign up, visit nyc.gov/NotifyNYC, call 311, download the [free mobile application](#), or follow @NotifyNYC on Twitter.

Ready New York Program

The Atlantic Hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30. To ensure New Yorkers are prepared, NYC Emergency Management recently updated the [Ready New York: My Emergency Plan](#) workbook to include the city's hurricane evacuation zones map. My Emergency Plan is a workbook designed to help New Yorkers create an emergency plan. The workbook guides users through establishing a support network, capturing important health information, evacuation planning, and gathering emergency supplies. The new feature includes information about the city's hurricane evacuation centers and the six hurricane evacuation zones. Ready New York guides are available in 13 languages including English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, French, Polish, Urdu, and Yiddish.

In 2018, NYC Emergency Management's [Ready New York](#) program hosted more than 900 events throughout New York City and trained more than 100,000 individuals in preparedness. Through the program, individuals learn about the hazards they may face in New York City and prepare for all types of emergencies by writing an emergency plan, choosing a meeting place, gathering supplies for your home, and preparing a Go Bag in case you need to leave your home.

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