

Annual Report on Implementation of Language Access

Department of Consumer Affairs

5/6/2020

This annual report provides an update on the agency's implementation of its Language Access Implementation Plan, as required by Local Law 30 (2017). The report covers activity during calendar year 2019.

This report also addresses updates for agencies covered by Local Law 73 (2003).

Section 1: Agency Information

Agency name	Department of Consumer Affairs
Name of the agency's Language Access Coordinator (LAC) and all office titles held by this individual.	Jade Acosta, Communications Assistant
Link to the agency's Language Access Implementation Plan (LAIP) posted on the agency's website.	https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dca/downloads/pdf/about/DCA-Language-Access-Plan.pdf
Year the LAIP was last updated	2020

Section 2: Agency language access policy and goals

Describe your agency's language access policy and how it is communicated to staff.

DCA believes that limited English proficiency (LEP) should not be a hindrance to accessing the services and information the Agency provides. Without interpretation and translation, consumers would not be able to file complaints or know their basic consumer rights; business owners would not be able to navigate the rules and regulations that govern commerce in New York City, nor would they be able to apply for a license on their own to run a compliant establishment; workers would not be able to make inquiries and file complaints; and employers would not understand their responsibilities under the law. DCA's language access implementation plan is intended to help staff provide excellent customer service to ensure meaningful access for LEP New Yorkers. It reinforces existing language access protocols within the Agency and operationalizes new protocols to improve the Agency's language-assisted services.

DCA's LAIP is available to staff on the agency intranet, on the Agency's website, and in hard copy by request.

Section 3: Provision of language services

(Refer to Administrative Code §23-1102 a.; §23-1102 b. (2, 5, 6, 7, 11); §23-1102 c.)

1.- Subcategory: Translation

(§23-1102 a.(1))

Describe the progress that the agency has made in translating its most commonly distributed documents into the 10 designated languages.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

Each year, the language access coordinator (LAC) will identify the MCD documents by first compiling a list of documents that were made available to the public by DCA in the previous year, and then calculating the total number of downloads from DCA's website and the total quantities printed for each document. The top five documents, in terms of combined total number of downloads and quantities printed, will be considered the MCD documents and translated into the DCL. Documents designated by the LAC as MCD will continue to be made available in the DCL on DCA's website, until they reach the end of their "shelf life."

2 - Subcategory: Telephonic Interpretation

(§23-1102 a.(2) and §23-1102 c.)

Describe the progress the agency has made providing telephonic interpretation during the previous calendar year.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

As stated in DCA's LAIP, over-the-phone interpretation in up to 170 languages is available at DCA locations where staff serves the public, including 42 Broadway in Manhattan, testing Station in Brooklyn, and NYC Small Business Support Center in Queens. Special dual handset telephones are available so staff and customers can communicate with the assistance of an interpreter. Telephonic interpretation is also available at NYC Financial Empowerment Centers, which the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) runs in partnership with contractors. In CY 2019, DCA provided over the phone interpretation via Language Line 3,228 times. The top 10 most requested languages, in order of requests received, were: Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Cantonese, Bengali, Korean, Russian, French, and Haitian Creole.

3 - Subcategory: In-Person Interpretation

(§23-1102 a.(2))

Describe the progress the agency has made providing in-person interpretation during the previous calendar year.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

DCA has contracted with Accurate Communication to provide sign language and in-person interpretation, however the majority of our language access interactions use Language Line.

4 - Subcategory: Posting of multilingual signage about the availability of free interpretation services

(§23-1102 a.(3))

Describe the progress the agency has made posting multilingual signage about free language services.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

DCA has language access wall posters and desktop signage posted in all public-facing areas. Signage generally includes large signs posted near the entrance to a space, such as the lobby of our Licensing Center, as well as smaller signs closer to service areas to assist customers to indicate their desired language.

5 - Subcategory: Emergency Preparedness and Language Access

(§23-1102 b.(5))

Describe the agency's progress to ensure that language access services are provided during an emergency response.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

Language access is even more vital during an emergency situation. As described in DCA's LAIP, DCA Senior Leadership assesses the situation and determines what information needs to be made available to the public. All important information is drafted by Communications & Marketing staff, reviewed for plain language, and sent out for translation to a professional vendor. DCA then makes translated information available as soon as possible on 311, the DCA website, social media, earned media, and outreach events.

6 - Subcategory: Language Access Considerations in Agency Communications
(§23-1102 b.(6))

Describe your agency's progress toward making other types of agency communications (such as emergency notifications, public hearings and events, press releases, website content, social media, and other communications to the public) accessible to individuals and/or communities with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

DCA advertises the availability of language access services on its website nyc.gov/dca, via social media, in press releases and public materials. Staff who conduct community outreach include general information about the availability of language access services at the Department. DCA public awareness campaigns and major initiatives are, and will continue to be, translated into multiple languages. DCA asks stakeholders and partners if translation or interpretation is needed to serve target populations. If DCA is hosting an event and interpretation is needed, DCA either makes multilingual staff available to deliver the presentation or procures professional interpretation services. If DCA is invited to co-host an event with an organization, DCA either makes multilingual staff available to deliver the presentation or procures professional interpretation services if the host organization is unable to provide interpretation. DCA will continue to distribute translated materials to support outreach efforts to target populations.

7 - Subcategory: Plain Language
(§23-1102 b.(7))

Describe the agency's progress in ensuring that communications with the public are in plain language.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

DCA Communications & Marketing staff have attended plain language trainings and apply these techniques to public communications. In addition, many public-facing information documents used by other divisions are designed or approved by plain language-trained Communications & Marketing staff who can make or suggest improvements.

8 - Subcategory: Licenses, Permits, and Registrations
(§23-1102 b.(12))

*Note: The deadline for this section of Local Law 30 is June 30, 2020. Provide updates as applicable.

If your agency issues licenses, permits, and registrations, describe its progress toward providing language access when issuing licenses, permits, and registrations.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

Each year, the Language Access Coordinator (LAC) will identify the the five DCA license categories with the highest volume of licenses issued and designate these five categories as the MCD licenses. Affixed to each DCA new and renewal license application is an application guide. Therefore, the MCD documents for purposes of issuing a DCA license are the applications guides. The LAC will ensure that the application guides for the MCD licenses are translated into the designated citywide languages (DCL) and made available on DCA's website. The application guides provide new and renewal applicants with step-by-step instructions on how to complete the subject license application. The application guides will inform applicants that free interpretation services are available upon request. As of May 6, 2020, DCA's top five license categories are: Home Improvement Contractor (14,033), Tobacco Retail Dealer (6,032), Secondhand Dealer – General (4,214), Sightseeing Guide (3,789), and Laundries—includes retail laundries, industrial laundries, and industrial laundry delivery (3,738). These five categories represent 40 percent of all licenses issued by DCA. Additionally, since the application process for all DCA licenses begins with the Basic License Application (BLA), LEP New Yorkers will be able to use our guides for assistance with completing the BLA for any DCA license. All document translations are completed by a professional translation vendor. All public-facing materials are reviewed by DCA's Communications & Marketing division for plain language before submitting files for translation.

Section 4: Training

(Refer to §23-1102 b.(8))

Describe the agency's progress in developing training on laws and agency policies and protocols on language access, and in training staff.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

Staff members are given the Language Line Quick Reference Guide by their division heads. Licensing and Enforcement divisions use language access services at a greater degree than other divisions and thus provide staff with subsequent training on these services. They are given hands-on training to familiarize them with the process for accessing Language Line and the list of languages available for telephonic interpretation through the service.

Section 5: Record keeping and evaluation

(Refer to §23-1102 b.(3) and §23-1102 b.(4))

Describe the progress your agency has made in record keeping of language services and monitoring the delivery and quality of language services. Include any considerations that may influence the agency's "four-factor analysis."

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

Requests for interpretation are noted on Language Line reports (invoices), including Call Detail (language, time, date, duration) and Call Detail Summary Report. Requests for professional document translation are in DCA's procurement database, including estimate and final invoice. In CY 2019, DCA received 3,228 requests for interpretation through Language Line. The top ten most requested languages, in order of requests received, were: Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, Cantonese, Bengali, Korean, Russian, French, and Haitian Creole.

Section 6: Resource analysis and planning

(Refer to §23-1102 b.(11))

Describe the progress your agency has made in managing its language access resources (including staff and contracted services) to facilitate and/or improve language access. Include any considerations that may influence the agency's "four-factor analysis."

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

DCA does not have a dedicated language access unit. Instead, language access functions are integrated into each division. The Language Access Coordinator (LAC) function is assigned to an existing staff member who performs other functions, rather than constituting its own position. Staff will bring any issues that arise to the attention of the LAC. DCA works with Accurate Communication, Language Line Services, Geneva Worldwide, and Erikson Translation Inc to provide services for American sign language interpretation, in-person interpretation, telephonic translation, document translation, and transcription.

Section 7: Outreach and public awareness of language access services

(Refer to §23-1102 b.(9))

Describe the progress your agency has made in implementing strategies and outreach activities that will create public awareness of your agency's language assistance services. Include any updates regarding public awareness of the 311 Language Access complaint system.

Identify any relevant goals from the agency's most recent LAIP, progress toward those goals, and any related accomplishments.

DCA integrates information about language access services into its general education and outreach efforts, both on the consumer and worker sides of the agency. In total, DCA conducted 540 outreach events last calendar year. Of these, approximately 149 events required in-person interpretation into a language other than English. DCA participated in several events to promote workers' rights information in the five indigenous languages, including Garifuna, K'iche, Kichwa, Mixteco, and Nahuatl.

Interpretation services were provided by multilingual DCA outreach staff, multilingual staff provided by our outreach partners, or professional interpreters procured by the agency.

Section 8: Language Access complaints

(Refer to §23-301 and §23-1102 b.(10))

1 - Describe how members of the public can submit language access complaints, questions and requests to the agency.

Members of the public may submit language access complaints, questions, and requests to DCA by calling 311 or emailing languageaccess@dca.nyc.gov, which will connect them to the Language Access Coordinator.

2 - How many *language access complaints* did the agency receive via 311 during the previous calendar year? How were they handled?

DCA did not receive any language access complaints in CY 2019.

3 - How many *requests for language access services did the agency receive through 311 during the previous calendar year? How were they handled?**

Requests are currently not tracked in any systems.

***NOTE: “Requests for additional language services”** refers to new ways in which the agency can make its services or information available to those who do not read or speak English well – e.g., translating a specific brochure into additional languages, or providing bilingual staff at a particular service facility. It does NOT refer to individual requests for interpretation.

Section 9: Language Access Goals

List your agency's language access goals for Calendar Year 2020.

1. Identify our most commonly distributed license and documents for 2020. 2. Translate our top five license categories into the DCL. 3. Complete updated document inventory and translation determinations of our most commonly distributed documents and licenses annually. 4. Update language access training materials for new hires. 5. Update roster of multilingual agency employees. 6. Review and clarify protocol within divisions for using volunteer translators and interpreters.