

NEWS FROM NYC MAYOR'S OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

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The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Operations Lead Efforts to Incorporate Community Organizations' Viewpoints into NYC's Comprehensive Language Access Strategy

Language Access is a key policy priority for the de Blasio administration that promotes the larger vision of the Mayor's **One New York, Rising Together** platform. Provision of services to NYC clients who do not speak, or are not fluent in English is essential to promote access and equity. In collaboration with customer-facing agencies, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and the Mayor's Office of Operations (OPS) are engaging in a multi-faceted strategy to ensure that language services are routinely and efficiently provided to those who need them.

During May, MOIA and OPS met with 15 community organizations to discuss concerns regarding language access. The conversation addressed issues around language access at specific City agencies or programs, best practices, and recommendations on how to improve language access for their communities. This was the first of ongoing quarterly meetings with language access advocates. Concerns shared at these meetings will be relayed to the appropriate City agencies to make sure language access services are constantly being improved with community feedback. In addition to the quarterly meetings, MOIA and OPS have met with select City agencies' leadership on language access to generate new ideas and obtain feedback on agencies' capacity to deliver such services.

To better assess how City agencies provide language access services to the public, MOIA and OPS will create a Language Access Agency Assessment tool that consolidates each agency's language access work into one document. The assessment will inform individual agency meetings to review gaps in services and to share best practices. The agency assessments will be available in the late summer or early fall.

As a reminder, City employees can request translation or interpretation services from bilingual/multilingual City employees through the Volunteer Language Bank (VLB) in languages not found among immediate staff. The VLB is primarily used for interpretation at community meetings or for the translation of short documents, such as brochures, flyers and postcards. For additional information on the VLB, click [here](#).



For questions and concerns on the VLB, please email langbank@cityhall.nyc.gov.

NYC Department of Sanitation holds SAFE (Solvents, Automotive, Flammable, Electronics) Disposal Events in each Borough

Each year, the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) holds five [SAFE Disposal Events](#) (Solvents, Automotive, Flammable, Electronics) in each borough to provide NYC residents with a one-stop method to get rid of potentially harmful household products. This year, the five events were attended by more than 9,000 New Yorkers and DSNY collected an estimated 393,000 pounds of harmful household products, 302,000 pounds of electronics, and more than 2,600 pounds of pharmaceuticals.

These events are an important resource for the city as commonly used household products can be harmful to people, pets, and the environment if improperly stored, used, or discarded. Materials accepted include common residential items such as auto fluids, batteries, electronics, glues, medications, paint products, and more!

Depending on the product, materials collected will be recycled, blended for fuel, or sent to licensed hazardous waste treatment facilities for safe disposal. Electronics will be responsibly recycled or refurbished for reuse through the [e-cycleNYC](#) program. Cell phones will be donated to the [Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence](#), through Hopeline® from Verizon. Unwanted medications will be managed by DSNY's environmental police and incinerated to prevent accidental poisonings or entry into the water supply.

For more information about these events, visit: nyc.gov/safedisposal



DSNY Commissioner Kathryn Garcia at the Queens SAFE Disposal event at Cunningham Park on April 26th, 2014

NYC 311's New Kid on the Block – Chat program Makes Headways.

311, the largest municipal call center in the United States, is known for innovation and staying a step ahead in satisfying customer needs. With this in mind, 311 launched a Live Chat Program to support online customer relations last year. In January 2014, after consultation and feedback, the chat platform was revamped. Customer experience Manager Jason Thompson highlighted the improvement saying, “We wanted to expand the services we offered to our customers. At the beginning of the program we provided five services, now we offer 21.”

Online chat allows customers to learn more about the wide range of services offered by 311. Available from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday, online chat makes services more accessible and improves the online experience for customers. By simply connecting to 311 online, customers can chat with live agents about information on topics like affordable housing or what to do about a noisy neighbor, for example. “We are able to provide our online customers with services close to what we provide our call center customers and they are engaging with chat more,” Thompson added. “The customers have it easier because the “chatters” are navigating 311 Online and getting the customers the answers they want faster,” Chat supervisor Joseph Dixon said.

Services Available on 311 Chat

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Affordable Housing Information | 2. Birth Certificate |
| 3. Bulk Items | 4. Child Care |
| 5. Civil Service Exam | 6. Cooling Centers |
| 7. Find a Public Pool | 8. Find a Public Beach |
| 9. Fire Hydrant Complaint | 10. Fire Hydrant Leaking or Running |
| 11. Fireworks Complaint | 12. Fireworks Display Information |
| 13. Home-base Program | 14. Inmate Info |
| 15. NYS Smoker's Assistance | 16. Noise from Neighbor |
| 17. Parking Meter Info & Complaint | 18. Pay a Parking Ticket |
| 19. Public Assistance/Welfare Info | 20. Recycling/Trash Schedule |
| 21. Sewer Back-up | |

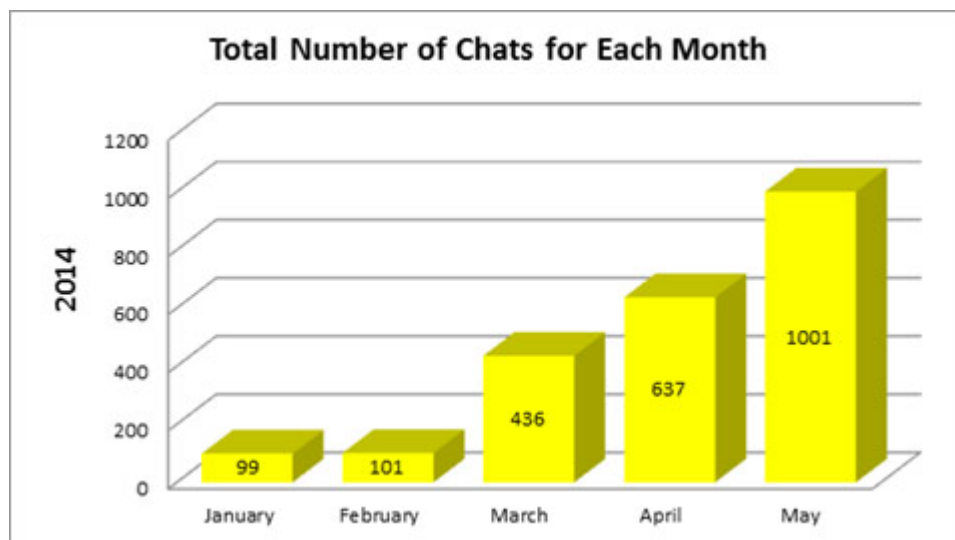
Chat facts:

The largest chat driver is birth certificate (In April 272 chats on that subject)

On average an operator uses 65.56 words during a chat interaction (April 2014)

On average a customer uses 44.61 words during a chat interaction (April 2014)

To experience the 311 Live Chat Program, simply log on to 311 Online, select a topic and after 20 seconds a pop up will appear asking if you would like to chat. The agent will then assist you with your request. On average, agents handle about 30 requests a day, a number Dixon expects to grow, "I believe chat is going to continue to expand and grow into its own entity. The further we go into technology the more people will want to have access to chat."



Administration for Children's Services Staff Help Children and Families in Difficult Situations

The Office of Advocacy (OOA), within the Administration for Children's Services, responds to concerns of parents, youth, foster parents and the general public about child welfare and juvenile justice cases. OOA's mission is to support the safety, permanence and well-being of all children and families involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In order to help resolve disputes between families and different agencies, OOA provides information to the public about child welfare and juvenile justice policies and procedures so that parents, foster parents and youth are aware of their rights and responsibilities and are treated fairly.

In 2013, the office received about 2,500 inquiries including help line calls, correspondence, walk-ins and other child welfare and juvenile justice related requests. Below are some success stories that reflect OOA staff's commitment to and passion for youth and families in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

In September 2013, Ms. A., a mother of three children in foster care was experiencing difficulty in communicating with the foster care agencies involved with her children. Ms. A. came to OOA for assistance and expressed her need for additional support. She was assigned a Child Welfare Specialist to accompany her to an upcoming Family Team Conference. Family Team Conferences are meetings held with all relevant stakeholders at critical points in a child welfare case. They are intended to ensure that the best possible decisions are made to promote the child's safety, permanency and well-being.

At the start of the conference, there were varying opinions about the timing of when Ms. A.'s children would be returned. With the support of OOA, all parties were able to come to an agreement by the end of the conference. In April 2014, the Child Welfare Specialist saw Ms. A., who looked happy and rejuvenated, in the community. Ms. A. said "The kids are home; I got them back!" Ms. A. repeatedly thanked the advocate for all of her hard work.

- Faryce Moore, Child Welfare Specialist



From the left, Jim St. Germain, Faryce Moore, Christian Claudio and the Executive Director of the Office of Advocacy, Michael Arsham

The new Residential Care Advocate Program was designed to provide an additional avenue for youth in non-secure placement to voice their concerns, advocate for their rights and ensure a fair and just system. The Residential Care Advocate (RCA) serves as the main point of contact for youth and families who have questions or who file grievances.

At the beginning of March 2014, resident J.V. was placed at a Non-Secure Placement (NSP) residence, where he struggled during his first few weeks. J.V. was having a difficult time transitioning to the residence and contacted the Residential Care Advocate Program for assistance. The RCA visited J.V. at the residence, assessed his placement and ultimately advocated for J.V.'s transfer. As a result, J.V. was moved to a different residence where he continues to flourish. J.V. has become a peer leader and has improved in the classroom. Most importantly, his parents are much more involved now because he has been moved to a residence that is easier for them to visit. "During the past two months, J.V. has not missed an opportunity to express his gratitude towards the Residential Care Advocate Program." We anticipate that he will transition smoothly back into the community and move on to accomplish greater things.

- Jim St. Germain, Residential Care Advocate

Recently a RCA had the pleasure to interact with another youth in a NSP residence. Initially, the youth was not receptive to engaging with the RCA. "He reminded me of me in my youth and I didn't want to give up on him." As the advocate shared his background, the youth became engaged. The youth opened up and they were able to work through some of his issues together. As a result, he committed to improving his relationship

with staff and his peers.

“When I left and said good-bye to him he got up from where he was sitting and walked over to me and hugged me. I literally had to fight back the tears. That moment was my reality check. It was the reason why I decided to work for what I believe is the greatest agency in New York. I came on board to help our youth address their problems and turn their lives around to become positive and productive members of society. I am glad I was there at the right time and right place to help one of our many youths in our care.

- Christian Claudio, Residential Care Advocate

For more information about our Office of Advocacy, please call 212-676-9421 or visit www.nyc.gov/acs.

NYC Parks & Recreation Improves Ballfield Permit Renewal System

Each year, NYC Parks & Recreation receives thousands of permit applications from youth and adult sports leagues requesting field time. NYC Parks makes every effort to review permit applications and distribute permits equitably. Youth and school leagues get priority, followed by returning customers, applicants who are applying within the optimal season request period, and then all other requests.

It has been historically difficult for both customers and staff to navigate through the paperwork needed to ensure this process is followed. The revised online system has made it easier for both customers and staff to go through the permit renewal process. The revised online system has taken a complicated set of rules and made it easier for the public to follow. The online system provides structure for customers to navigate through instead of having handwritten forms and paper manuals. Where in the past there was confusion over when to apply for the special event permit (for a field day, game tournament, birthday party or any other type of event that includes activities beyond the use of a field or court), the revised online system directs people to the correct form.

For returning customers, once they log in, much of the same information gets preloaded into the application, so it saves them time and effort. For staff, it has made it easier for the approval process since fewer mistakes are made with data entry and everything is pre-formatted when the staff receives the completed application.

The screenshot shows the official website of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. The page is titled "Field and Court Request - Before You Begin" and is part of the "Permits > Field and Court Permits" section. The user is logged in as "Ian Lefkowitz". The form contains several questions with radio button options:

- Will you be using amplified sound?
 No
 Yes
- Will there be Vendors at the event?
 No
 Yes
- Will there be any Items or Food for sale?
 No
 Yes
- Will this request also include a non-athletic component? (i.e. picnics, field day, day camps, etc.)
 No
 Yes

At the bottom of the form is a green button labeled "Start Your Request".

DSNY Parks Department web page to begin the online permit application

More information about NYC Parks' online permit system can be found at <https://www.nycgovparks.org/permits/field-and-court/request/priorities>.

Cool Relief from the Summer Heat

As temperatures rise in New York City, the FDNY and DEP remind everyone to take extra steps to stay safe. Each summer, the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) work together to educate the public about illegally open fire hydrants in New York City, including how to obtain spray caps for the hydrants to help keep City residents cool on the hot summer streets.

Called the Hydrant Education Action Team (HEAT), the program employs young people as educators, who visit neighborhoods in teams to inform residents that opening fire hydrants is not only wasteful, it also is illegal and can be quite dangerous. Illegally opened fire hydrants significantly reduce local water pressure, potentially impairing firefighting operations. And, without a spray cap to control the powerful force of the water pressure, anyone walking or playing near an opened hydrant can be seriously injured. A fully opened hydrant can release more than 1,000 gallons of water per minute, while a hydrant with a spray cap releases far less -- only 20 to 25 gallons per minute -- but its spray can still cool New Yorkers on a hot day.



Children at play enjoying the cool stream of water from a fire hydrant with sprinkler cap

The HEAT teams' message is safety and water conservation, and they urge New Yorkers to obtain spray caps from their local firehouses. Anyone over 18 can do so, for free. For more information, go to <http://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/events/2013/071713a.shtml>.

The Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Partners with Law Firms to Provide Free Legal Services for Young Adults in Shelters

DHS, in partnership with APBCO – The Association of Pro Bono Counsel – has embarked upon a new venture of providing legal guidance and support to homeless young adults, ages 18-25, in the DHS shelter system. Utilizing an extensive and well developed training and clinical manual, attorneys from law firms such as Strook & Strook & Lavan LLP, Shriver & Jacobson LLP, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, Urban Justice Center and White & Case LLP visit DHS shelters periodically to meet with, and assess, the needs of our clients and work intensively to assist them.



Doe Fund Porter Avenue Shelter

The cases that the attorneys are involved with vary widely ranging from education, special needs, family law, custody/visitation, foster care/guardian issues, sex trafficking, housing, immigration, personal finances, identity theft and traffic tickets. This pilot project was launched at two young adult shelters – Turning Point, a 37-bed shelter for women in Red Hook, and Create Young Adult, a 50-bed shelter for men in Harlem. Due to the early success of the project, we have expanded it to include The Porter Avenue Shelter and are in the process of expanding it further.

Early successful outcomes include: assisting a transgender client with a name change; assisting a victim of domestic violence to obtain a divorce; helping clients to obtain permanent residence; assisting with power of attorney forms and social security applications.

Department of Consumer Affairs Encourages New Yorkers to Get Financial Counseling at the City's Financial Empowerment Centers

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) has launched "You Can..." a public awareness campaign that highlights the City's Financial Empowerment Centers, which offer free, one-on-one, professional financial counseling. Since 2009, counselors at the City's Financial Empowerment Centers have helped more than 28,400 New Yorkers pay down more than \$17.7 million in debt and build more than \$2.8 million in savings.

The campaign features five clients and their stories about how counselors at the City's Financial Empowerment Centers helped them take control of their debt, save for the future, improve their credit score and open a bank account. Advertisements are running in the City's subway cars, stations, and buses, as well as online and in a dozen community newspapers in every borough. These advertisements are also provided in Spanish.



DCA Poster with Sheila, a successful Financial Empowerment Center client

These ads can also be found on DCA's website, along with video testimonials of eight other New Yorkers who highlight how the free, one-on-one financial counseling services at the City's Financial Empowerment Center helped them. A video about the Financial Empowerment Centers' services is also posted on DCA's [YouTube](#) channel. All New Yorkers are encouraged to share their stories on DCA's social media sites, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#), using the hashtag #YouCan.

New Yorkers can call 311 to schedule an appointment or visit nyc.gov/consumers for more information about the City's Financial Empowerment Centers.

Translation's Best Practices: NYCDOT hosts "Partners in Process Lunch and Learn"

On May 20th, DOT's Language Access Unit hosted a Lunch and Learn session for DOT and other agency translation partners at 55 Water Street. The session included a presentation from Language Line Solutions, DOT's translation vendor. Language Line is one of a number of vendors that contracts with City agencies to provide translation and interpretation services. Other vendors include Accurate Communications, Inc., Geneva World Wide, Inc., Interpreters Unlimited, Inc. and Voiance Language Services, LLC.

The main objective of the session was to invite open discussion about the translation process and to emphasize the importance of document reviews before and after translation. Language Line highlighted the value of reviewing translated documents particularly for localized style and intended meanings and for providing feedback on translations to make the necessary refinements. The discussion was frank, and some participants aired concerns about final products. These concerns highlighted the need for understanding about translation requirements from both the client and vendor perspective.

Thirty-two partners who attended the session included individuals with roles in setting language access policy or providing services: Mayor's Office of Operations staff; Hunter College Professor Maria Cornelio and her students who major in translation; representatives from HRA responsible for high volumes of translations; Language Bank Volunteers; and various members of DOT staff.



Participants at DOT “lunch and Learn” session discuss the realities and challenges of translating documents

Some important translation industry best-practices suggestions discussed during the meeting included:

- Translations require multiple reviews just as English (source documents) require multiple reviews
- Glossary development is essential to ensure consistency of translated words and phrases
- More time is needed in the translation process from document planning to finalizing to ensure a quality product

One of the major takeaways from the session was the need for building in time for translation whenever any public-facing project is undertaken. Simply stated, as translation planners, if we spend months producing the best English (source document) possible, we must allow the same time for the translation process.

For more information contact:
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CORE Inspections Find Improvements in Facility Conditions and Customer Service for NYC Clients over the Past Five Years

The Customers Observing and Reporting Experience (CORE) program is an inspection program that rates facility conditions and customer service at over 300 of the City’s walk-in service centers. Street Condition Observation Unit (SCOUT) inspectors from the Mayor’s Office of Operations arrive unannounced at service centers, conduct observations and rate 11 physical conditions and four customer service elements. Using specific criteria, inspectors rate each condition Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor. Agencies receive scores for Cleaning & Maintenance, Facility Operations and an Overall score combining the first two.

2010-2014 Scores and Trends

- The five year citywide trend shows improvements in Cleaning & Maintenance and Facility Operations scores.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Cleaning & Maintenance	84	87	85	89	92
Operations	82	83	82	87	92
Overall Score	83	85	84	88	92

- The percentage of combined Excellent and Good ratings rose from 85% in 2010 to 97% in 2014; conversely, the percentage of combined Fair and Poor ratings dropped from 15% in 2010 to 3% in 2014.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Combined Excellent/Good	85%	90%	89%	97%	97%

- The number of sites receiving perfect scores of 100 for Cleaning and Maintenance and for Facility Operations increased from 7 in 2010 to 59 in 2014.

2010-2014 CORE Sites with Perfect Scores				
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
7	18	38	50	59

- Language Access services provision has improved significantly with the total citywide score increasing from 57 in 2010 to 85 in 2014.

2010-2014 CORE LEP Scores				
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
57	75	76	76	85

These improvements found by CORE inspectors indicate that NYC clients will almost always receive services in clean and well-maintained facilities with courteous, friendly and professional employees.


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