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WORKER RESTAURANT OWNER MOM  
SCIENTIST BUILDER BOARD MEMBER

SISTER RESIDENT WORKER  
INVENTOR POLICE OFFICER  
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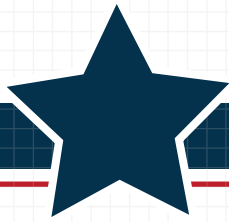
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# A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

PUBLIC BENEFITS





## A BLUEPRINT FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

# PUBLIC BENEFITS

**ISSUE AREAS:** Access to Services, Language Access, Public Benefits, Serving Immigrant Populations

### **SUMMARY:**

Thousands of immigrants come to New York City each year in search of economic opportunity and prosperity. Immigrants and their families are among the primary drivers of a vibrant and diverse New York City. However, like many native-born New Yorkers, some immigrants run into difficulties and can benefit from temporary governmental support for themselves and their families. Assisting these clients by facilitating access to public assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), public health insurance and other public benefits is an important way to help them get on a path to future self-sufficiency, yet doing so efficiently and effectively can be challenging: language barriers and complex legal regulations outlining eligibility often make the provision of these services at the local level a difficult task. In New York City, the Human Resources Administration (HRA) established the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (ORIA) as a way to centralize expertise in these areas and improve the agency's work with immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) populations. This office, which falls under the larger umbrella of the Office of Community Affairs and Immigrant Services, has become an essential component of HRA. In consultation with HRA's program areas and Office of Legal Affairs, it helps ensure that the agency complies with the law in providing public assistance. ORIA develops trainings for staff on how to provide language services to limited English speakers and streamlines best practices for serving immigrant and LEP clients throughout the agency.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- + Promote meaningful interactions with immigrant and LEP clients and awareness of public benefits and associated eligibility requirements
- + Ensure governmental compliance with legal mandates defining eligibility, requiring equal access and prohibiting discrimination against immigrants and LEP persons

# BACKGROUND

Economic opportunity has long been a driver of immigration to the United States, yet some of the 40 million immigrants who now call America home face challenges getting established or encounter temporary setbacks. According to the Pew Research Center, 19.5 percent of all foreign-born individuals residing in this country live in poverty.<sup>1</sup> For low-income Americans, native- and foreign-born, government-sponsored safety nets can make all the difference in keeping food on the table, roofs over heads and access to healthcare. In New York City, over 1 million noncitizens and their children receive public health insurance, 500,000 receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, and almost 100,000 receive temporary cash assistance. Estimates suggest that the City spends over \$2.1 billion each year in these benefit programs alone on noncitizens and their children.<sup>2</sup> As much as the City provides to low-income immigrants, eligibility guidelines, rules and regulations set by the Federal and State governments for certain programs are restrictive and can be difficult to navigate for immigrants.

Even when immigrant households are eligible for government assistance, they don't always apply for it. A recent study by the Cato Institute showed that low-income immigrants use public benefits at lower rates than low-income U.S.-born citizens and that the average per person value of the benefits non-citizen immigrants receive is lower than the value of benefits native-born Americans receive.<sup>3</sup> Some of these differences are because the eligibility requirements are restrictive for certain immigrants, but the Cato study suggests that even before these restrictions non-citizens utilized public benefits at a lower rate than their native-born counterparts. Immigrants may be unaware of the existence of such assistance, believe they are ineligible or not feel they need the benefits. They may also carry negative associations with government assistance, including mistrust, from their home countries. Language barriers can also make it difficult for immigrants to learn about and apply for public benefits.

Despite these hurdles and the barriers that emanate from federal or state requirements, there are still ways for municipal governments to positively engage immigrant and LEP communities. Ensuring that immigrants and their families are aware of the eligibility requirements associated with temporary supports that can help them through difficult times creates ripple effects that can help entire communities. HRA has a commitment to complying with the appropriate laws, helping immigrants in need of assistance find the help they need to become self sufficient and making their experience as customer friendly as possible.

*"Immigrants make vital contributions to the economic and social mosaic of New York City, and HRA is committed to ensuring that they have access to programs and services that can help them start fresh and work toward financial independence and prosperity."*

- ROBERT DOAR, COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK CITY HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

# NYC HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION – OFFICE OF REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

## HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

To address the unique needs of the immigrant population in New York City, HRA created ORIA in 2000. Prior to ORIA's formation, there were two HRA office locations opened to deal specifically with the large influx of Haitian and Cuban immigrants that started in the 1970s. When foreigners from other parts of the world arrived, staff at this center were often challenged to meet their needs, especially if these new clients didn't speak English.

Around the same time, President Clinton signed federal Executive Order 13166 in August of 2000. This law required all federal agencies, and any recipients of federal financial assistance, to provide meaningful access to services for clients with limited English proficiency (LEP). The law invoked Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and obligated these same bodies to ensure that any programs normally provided in English were accessible to LEP individuals. Failure to do so would constitute discrimination on the basis of national origin in violation of Title VI.

## MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

Thus, when ORIA was created, it was to be a centralized unit within HRA that would streamline the agency's efforts to improve language and immigrant access for immigrant and LEP New Yorkers. The mission of ORIA, in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs, is to ensure that the HRA is complying with all federal, state, and local laws around language access and benefits eligibility; to work with program areas to create policy and operational solutions to improve language and immigrant access; to provide training and tools to help HRA staff serve immigrant and LEP clients; and to be an internal agency advocate for the needs of immigrant and LEP clients. Staff from ORIA further help individuals navigate the HRA, implement best practices throughout the agency and share successes with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and other city agencies.

Since ORIA's creation, HRA now has one place that oversees requests for telephonic and in-person interpretation and translation and manages the contracts with outside vendors that provide these services. To ensure that clients receive timely, appropriate, and effective assistance, ORIA assists and monitors HRA offices across the city. When problems or challenges are identified, ORIA works with its partners across the agency to find solutions.

HRA's range of services include temporary cash assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), health insurance coverage, domestic violence services, adult protective services, child support enforcement, energy assistance, comprehensive HIV/AIDS services and long-term care. The Agency also has a strong focus on fraud, waste and abuse prevention to ensure that taxpayer dollars are used wisely and the integrity of these programs is upheld. HRA's 14,000 employees serve more than 3 million clients annually. In 2012, HRA served 1,224,943 limited English speaking clients and 1,278,444 non-U.S. citizen clients.

# FACILITATING MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS FOR IMMIGRANT AND LEP CLIENTS

## STEP ONE >

### DESIGNATE OR ASSIGN STAFF TO CENTRALLY OVERSEE AND SUPPORT AGENCY WORK WITH IMMIGRANTS

Helping immigrants and LEP clients access public benefits is good policy and it is required by the law. However, the legal guidelines around providing benefits to immigrants are complex, and it is therefore essential to have specially-trained staff with expertise in this area available to advise the entire agency on complicated compliance and eligibility requirements. With the assistance of these experts, staff can help clients more efficiently and effectively, they can provide better customer service and, in the process, they can ensure the best use of their time and agency resources.



### DEVELOP AND CENTRALIZE EXPERTISE AND BEST PRACTICES

- + **Designate a coordinating body or person.** The most productive way to manage the language needs and unique eligibility questions of immigrants and LEP clients is to enlist or designate one person, one central office or one coordinating body (depending on agency size) to develop expertise in immigration and language access laws and implement policy and operational responses that bring legal mandates to life. Ideally, this coordinating body is empowered to communicate issues as a priority for the agency and has access to critical decision-makers and resources. In other words, such a body must have the tools and authority necessary to mobilize all decision makers to move key legal changes through all levels of an agency.
- + **Understand the relevant regulations.** Legal expertise is required to correctly understand and follow the federal, state and local guidelines for assisting immigrants and LEP individuals with their social service needs. This expertise can come from in-house staff or outside contractors, but should guide the implementation of language access policies as well as training for caseworkers on immigrant eligibility.
- + **Develop clear communication channels.** One of the jobs of the point person (or office) on immigrant affairs should be to ensure that relevant information about immigrant and language services is shared throughout the agency and refreshed regularly. Identifying point people in different offices to regularly receive these communications and share them with their staff helps avoid miscommunications and lapses in information. It is also important to have a centralized place where staff can find immigrant and language access information and tools.
- + **Create specialized committees.** One way ORIA accomplished this in New York City was to create an Internal Language Access Committee. Comprised of staff representing all the different public-facing units within HRA, the committee meets a few times a year and provides ORIA with a consistent venue within which they can share policy updates, procedural changes, troubleshoot with the diverse units and discuss best practices.

- + **Create a centralized place to share information and expertise.** The designated body or staff person managing issues around immigrants and language access should share their expertise as much as possible. This can mean identifying best practices and supporting their implementation across the agency, as well as making sure policies developed internally are applied coherently, troubleshooting for staff and answering questions that come up from other units and employees. At HRA, ORIA has a dedicated page on the agency's intranet with resources for staff, from training materials to legal requirements. ORIA also works with MOIA, other city agencies and community-based organizations to share information and expertise citywide.



## IMPLEMENT TRAINING, MANAGE LANGUAGE SERVICE CONTRACTS AND MONITOR PROCESSES

- + **Conduct language access and immigrant eligibility training.** In New York City, all relevant staff undergo regular training on the agency's language access policy as well as the complex laws regulating eligibility for public benefits for foreign-born residents. HRA develops these trainings in consultation with lawyers and other legal experts so that they correctly and thoroughly explain to staff the intricate rules about eligibility and confidentiality, as well as the provision of translation and interpretation services. Trainings are conducted regularly (once or twice per year).
- + **Manage all translation and interpretation contracts.** HRA maintains one central office that manages in-person and telephonic interpretation contracts, which makes it easier to coordinate services across an agency; control the quality of interpretation provided; and creates simpler operational processes to improve efficiency. For municipalities smaller than New York this can be a single person's job if the agency is not large enough to require an entire office.
- + **Monitor data and compliance.** Collecting data about who is accessing the services your agency provides, where these clients are from, what languages they speak, how and when you get interpretation requests, what benefits most clients receive and other information can be a useful way to detect large scale trends and needs. ORIA works closely with HRA's Office of Evaluation and Research to interpret this data and these trends.



## SHAPE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

- + **Get buy-in from leadership.** Buy-in from agency leadership is essential to guide messaging about why an office or staff person devoted to the needs of immigrants and LEP clients matters. When leaders reinforce the message that providing robust language access and immigrant eligibility services is a crucial part of the agency's overall mission and goals, and that equal access to services is the law, it goes a long way to developing an institutional culture that integrates this work into daily functions. For example, HRA's Commissioner has sent a letter to all staff reinforcing the importance of appropriately serving LEP clients and reminding them of the correct procedures to follow. In the organizational structure of HRA, the Office of Community Affairs and Immigrant Services reports to the Chief Administrative Officer who is a direct report to the Commissioner.
- + **Emphasize a customer service framework.** One strategy employed within the HRA to accomplish this culture change involved emphasizing the need to provide excellent customer service to all clients no matter where they are from or what language they speak. Making the message more about customer service and a person's experience with the agency, rather than doing something special for a particular group of clients, clarified this goal.



## ENSURE INTERNAL COMPLIANCE WITH RELEVANT LAWS AND POLICIES REGARDING IMMIGRANT AND LEP ACCESS

One of the central functions of ORIA, in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs, is to routinely examine the challenges faced by HRA staff in working with immigrant and LEP clients. Such proactive troubleshooting helps ORIA assist staff with the challenges they encounter in a timely fashion. In response, ORIA can develop initiatives such as providing step-by-step instructions for certain procedures, conducting trainings, streamlining operations and enforcing accountability.



### DEVELOP TRAININGS FOR AGENCY STAFF

- + **Cover multiple subjects.** Trainings should focus on two main areas: language access and immigrant eligibility for public benefits.
  - + **Language access training.** This training program, developed internally by ORIA, is intended for all frontline HRA staff. The training outlines the language access legal mandates the agency is required to follow and explains how workers can access an interpreter. The training also includes information on the City's confidentiality policy, reminding staff that immigration status is confidential and is not to be shared outside of the agency.
  - + **Eligibility training.** Training on eligibility for cash assistance is a four-day intensive program. External lawyers, experts in this area of law—including ORIA staff and HRA's Family Independence Administration—developed the program. Training on SNAP benefits is shorter in length but still comprehensive. In-house experts created this course. Trainings cover eligibility for other benefits, like Medicaid, as well.
- + **Use internal and external expertise to create training courses.** ORIA has enlisted the assistance of both internal and external lawyers and experts to develop its training programs for HRA staff. In addition, each HRA office has its own training unit to develop specific rubrics for their area of responsibility. When needed, ORIA can help these units include elements in their trainings unique to working with immigrants and LEP individuals.





## PROVIDE TOOLS TO HELP STAFF COMPLY WITH REGULATIONS

- + **Simplify procedures as much as possible.** HRA staff are required to understand an immense range of procedures that emanate from the federal and state government. To ease their use of interpretation services and further ensure they always provide quality interpretation to clients, a crucial service, ORIA staff have created step-by-step instruction cards for frontline staff to follow to contact telephonic interpretation providers. Staff can keep these cards easily accessible at their desks for quick reference.
- + **Implement operational solutions.** Another tactic ORIA has used is to make easy infrastructural changes to HRA offices that simplify the job of serving immigrant and LEP clients.
  - + **Use dual handsets for telephonic interpretation.** ORIA was able to secure dual handsets to give to most of HRA's frontline staff for use during telephonic interpretation calls. This allows frontline staff and their clients to simultaneously be on the phone with the interpreter rather than having to pass the phone back and forth. There are two options for providing this equipment: Either purchasing or renting special dual handset telephones created for this purpose or purchasing additional handsets and plugging them into a second jack on a regular phone.
  - + **Upgrade technology.** Sometimes the best way to help staff manage their jobs is with technological solutions. Once HRA employees designate the language of choice for a particular client in the case management system, this triggers a technology which then automatically sends all HRA-generated documents to that client in the language specified (provided that it is one of the six specified languages in NYC's Local Law). This, of course, eases communication and helps avoid any misinterpretation of information. HRA also developed a system to track the type of language service provided to LEP cash assistance and SNAP clients.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS INSTRUCTION CARDS FOR FRONTLINE STAFF

To support the implementation of language access policies across a large agency, HRA issues instruction cards with step-by-step guidelines to frontline staff to help them better serve immigrant and LEP clients.

**IF A CLIENT NEEDS SERVICES FROM HRA, LANGUAGE SHOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM**  
HRA provides FREE interpretation services to all Limited-English speakers

**Can clients get help if they are not comfortable speaking or reading English?**  
 **YES, always.** Tell clients that interpreters are available for over 180 languages. Use the Language Card (W-194) to find the client's language. Interpretation services are available through a bilingual worker or instant telephone interpreter. For field visits there are on-site interpreters.


**Are documents available in other languages?**  
 **YES, HOWEVER, ALWAYS OFFER** the service of an HRA-provided interpreter to clients; minors should not interpret.

**Can clients bring their own interpreter, such as a friend or relative?**  
 **YES, HOWEVER, ALWAYS OFFER** the service of an HRA-provided interpreter to clients; minors should not interpret.

**Who can clients call for more information about HRA?**  
 If their questions cannot be answered on-site, tell them to call HRA's multi-lingual Infoline: 718-557-1399 Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm (except holidays) or 311, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

WHEN YOU MEET LIMITED-ENGLISH SPEAKERS OR PERSONS WHO DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH, HRA'S VALUES OF PROFESSIONALISM, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY MATTER: BE PROFESSIONAL, RESPECTFUL, AND COURTEOUS.  
YOUR GREETING SETS THE TONE!

For more information, please contact the LEP Liaison at your site or the HRA Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs at 212-331-4550.




Please See Reverse For Quick Telephone Interpretation Instructions\*

HRA-103 (E)  
7/2013

**HOW TO USE THE TELEPHONE INTERPRETATION SERVICE**

1. Ask your supervisor or LEP liaison for the telephone interpretation access code. To connect to the service, dial 1-877-756-4841.
2. Enter Access Code: \_\_\_\_\_ (same code as in the past)
3. Confirm access code. If this is correct press 1, otherwise press 2.
4. Say the language you need or, Press 1 for Spanish. Press 2 for Mandarin. Press 3 for Russian. Press 0 to select a language with a Client Services Representative.
5. An interpreter will be connected in less than 1 minute.  
Allow the interpreter to introduce themselves to you and the Limited English Speaker.
6. If you are using a speakerphone or a dual handset telephone, add the Limited English Speaker to the conversation. If you are using a single handset telephone without speakerphone, you must pass the handset back and forth with the Limited English Speaker.

**If you receive a call from a Limited English Speaker, use "Conference" or "Hold" to place the Limited English Speaker on hold, then begin from (1) above. If you need assistance at any point while placing the call, press 0 (zero) or say the word "help" to transfer to an operator.**



Please See Reverse\*

HRA-103 (E)  
7/2013



## BOOST EXPERTISE BEYOND THE CENTRAL OFFICE

- + **Designate site-based language access and immigrant eligibility liaisons.** While it's important to have a central office with expertise in issues affecting immigrants, it's also important to spread that knowledge to other office locations through specially trained staff. These individuals will be more readily available to assist caseworkers and answer questions immediately. To fill this role in New York City, all HRA offices throughout the city have language access liaisons and all Job Center and SNAP offices have immigrant eligibility liaisons.
  - + **Assign staff to serve as language and/or immigrant eligibility liaisons.** The liaisons are current staff members who work in HRA offices throughout New York's five boroughs and serve as liaison in addition to (and sometimes in place of some of) their regular duties. The position was first created in 2005 and can either be filled by one person who handles both language and eligibility issues or by two people. At the sites where they work, these liaisons are the in-house experts who can answer questions that arise and help make on-the-spot eligibility determinations when needed or elevate issues when further guidance is needed. They can often intervene and provide guidance before it becomes necessary to involve ORIA or other central agency staff.
- + **Hire more bilingual/multilingual staff.** A further cost-effective strategy for improving services is to hire more bilingual and multilingual staff and build the agency's internal human capital. ORIA has promoted this practice throughout the HRA informally, and formally, by encouraging use of civil service regulations which can prioritize streaming bilingual staff in certain circumstances. Staff hired through this special civil service stream called "selective certification" are tested to assess their language skills using a customized test developed and provided by an independent vendor contracted by HRA for this purpose. Once hired or identified (if they have already been working at HRA), these bilingual or multilingual staffers are encouraged to participate in NYCertified, a training program for city employees who want to gain translation and interpretation skills.



## PERFORM REGULAR SITE MONITORING

- + **Use the secret shopper model.** Routine monitoring of HRA offices across the city helps ORIA understand where staff are excelling in their service to immigrants and LEP clients and where they may need more training or support. To gather this information, ORIA uses the secret shopper model in which a staff member, intern, or volunteer visits a site speaking only a non-English language. Staff use a standardized survey instrument for each site and record whether or not the staff they spoke with followed the correct procedures. They also monitor the physical space checking to ensure that multilingual posters informing clients about interpretation and translation services are posted as required and whether they are posted in visible locations.
- + **Provide feedback on results.** After the secret shoppers complete their monitoring observations, ORIA shares the results with the site staff and provides commendations and suggestions for improvement. Ideally this is a uniform practice across offices and done on a regular basis to provide continual feedback. However, it may take some time to implement a system that appropriately captures services.


## ADVERTISING FREE INTERPRETER SERVICES

To promote awareness of language access policies, posters are placed in all HRA sites notifying clients of the availability of free interpreter services in multiple languages. "Secret shopper" staff make note of the physical space at HRA sites, reporting on the presence and visibility of such signage.

# If you need an interpreter

## we provide **free interpreter services** on request.

*Please go to the reception desk now and we will call someone to interpret for you.*

<b>Albanian</b> Shqip	Nëse keni nevojë për përkthyes... Ne sigurojmë shërbime përkthimi falas sipas kërkesës. Ju lutem shkoni tek banaku i regjistrimit dhe ne do të thërrasim dikë që të përkthejë për ju.
<b>Arabic</b> عربي	إذا كنتم بحاجة إلى مترجم فإننا نوفر لكم خدمات الترجمة مجاناً عند الطلب. يرجى الذهاب إلى مكتب الاستقبال الآن وسنقوم بالاتصال بمترجم لخدمتكم.
<b>Bengali</b> বাংলা	যদি আপনার দোভাষীর প্রয়োজন হয়... আমরা অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে বিনামূলীে দোভাষী পরিষেবা দিয়ে থাকি। অনুগ্রহ করে এখন অভ্যর্থনা ডেস্কে যান এবং আমরা আপনার হয়ে দোভাষীর কাজ করার জন্য কারও সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করব।
<b>Bosnian</b> Bosanski	Ako vam treba prevodioc... Mi omoguđujemo besplatne prevodilačke usluge prema vašoj želji. Molimo uputite se do recepcije, a mi ćemo pozvati službenu osobu da prevodi za vas.
<b>Chinese</b> 中文	如您提出要求，我們可為您提供免費翻譯服務。請去前臺接待處，我們會打電話為您尋找翻譯人員。 如您提出要求，我們可為您提供免費翻譯服務。請去前臺接待處，我們會打電話為您尋找翻譯人員。
<b>Farsi</b> فارسی	اگر شما در نیاز مترجم هستید... ما خدمات مجانی مترجم بر درخواست فراهم می کنیم. لطفاً اکنون به میز پذیرائی بروید و ما برای شما مترجم را احضار خواهیم کرد.
<b>French</b> Français	Si vous avez besoin d'un interprète... Nous fournissons des services d'interprète sur demande. Veuillez aller au bureau de réception, et nous vous appellerons un interprète.
<b>Haitian Creole</b> Kreyòl	Si w bezwen yon entèprèt... Nou bay sèvis entèprèt gratis si w mande. Tanpri ale nan biwo resepsyon an kounye an epi nou pral rele yon entèprèt pou ou.
<b>Hindi</b> हिन्दी	यदि आपको दुभाषिये (इन्टरप्रेटर) की जरूरत है... हम अनुरोध पर नि:शुल्क दुभाषिये की सेवा उपलब्ध कराते हैं। कृपया अब आप स्वागत डेस्क पर जाइये और हम आपको समझाने के लिए किसी दुभाषिये को कॉल करेंगे।
<b>Italian</b> Italiano	Se ha bisogno di un interprete... Offriamo servizi gratuiti di interpretariato dietro richiesta. Prego si rivolga alla reception desk e attenda mentre Le chiamo un interprete.
<b>Korean</b> 한국어	통역사가 필요하시면... 저희는 요청 시 통역사 서비스를 무료로 제공해 드리고 있습니다. 지금 접수처로 가지면 귀하를 위해 통역해드릴 사람을 불러드리겠습니다.
<b>Polish</b> Polski	Jeśli Pan/Pani potrzebuje tłumacza... Zapewniamy bezpłatnego tłumacza na żądanie. Prosimy zgłosić się do recepcji i zwołamy tłumacza.
<b>Russian</b> Русский	Если Вам нужен переводчик... Мы предоставляем бесплатные переводческие услуги по запросу. Обратитесь, пожалуйста, к секретарю, и Вам предоставят переводчика.
<b>Spanish</b> Español	Si necesita un intérprete, proporcionamos servicio de interpretación gratis. Para solicitarlo, diríjase a la recepción; llamaremos al intérprete.
<b>Tagalog</b> Tagalog	Kung kailan mo ng tagasalin... Nagbibigay kami ng libreng serbisyo ng tagasalin kung kailangan man. Pumunta ka sa reception desk at tatawag kami ng taong magsasalin para sa iyo.
<b>Ukrainian</b> Український	Якщо Вам потрібен перекладач... За проханням ми надаємо безкоштовні послуги з перекладу. Зверніться, будь ласка, до секретаря приймальної і для Вас запросять перекладача.
<b>Urdu</b> اردو	اگر آپ کو ترجمان (انٹریپرٹر) کی ضرورت ہے... درخواست کرنے پر ہم مفت میں ترجمان کی خدمت فراہم کرتے ہیں۔ برائے مہربانی اب آپ استقبال ڈیسک پر جائیں اور ہم آپ کو سمجھانے کے لیے کسی ترجمان کو کال کریں گے۔
<b>Vietnamese</b> Tiếng Việt	Nếu cần một thông dịch viên... Chúng tôi cung cấp dịch vụ thông dịch miễn phí khi quý vị yêu cầu. Xin đến quầy tiếp tân ngay và chúng tôi sẽ gọi một thông dịch viên cho quý vị.
<b>Yiddish</b> אַײַדיש	אויב איר דארפט א דאלמעטשער... מיר שטעלן צו אומזיסטע דאלמעטשער סערוויסעס אויפן פארלאנג. ביטע גייט יעצט צום אויפנאם טישל און מיר וועלן רופן עמיצן צו דאלמעטשן פאר איר.
 <b>Deaf/ Hearing Impaired</b>	If you need an interpreter... We provide free sign language interpreter services on request. Please go to the reception desk now and we will call someone to interpret for you.

POST-94

## EDUCATE ORGANIZATIONS AND RESIDENTS ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY TO SERVICES

While there is much agencies can do to prepare staff to provide quality assistance to clients, there are also ways to help those clients be better prepared to receive help themselves.



### GIVE INDIVIDUALS TOOLS AND EDUCATION

- + **Make language access information available to applicants.** Every cash assistance, Medicaid and SNAP application packet that HRA provides to clients seeking public benefits include a notification to the client about their right to and the availability of interpretation and translation services. Cash assistance and SNAP application packets also include an "I Speak" card. This card lists several languages with their English translations and asks individuals to point to their language in order to receive free interpretation services.
- + **Conduct workshops based in immigrant communities.** Workshops based in immigrant communities that explain eligibility requirements for public benefits, the application process, language access procedures, and other topics go a long way to giving clients the information they need when seeking public benefits. Partnering with other city agencies or community-based organizations to host and help run such events can make it easier to reach a large audience. HRA has collaborated with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to host Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Forums. These forums bring speakers from city agencies to community gatherings and provide information about topics of interest.

### I SPEAK CARDS IN BENEFIT APPLICATION PACKETS

To facilitate communication between HRA and its LEP clients, the agency sends out "I speak..." cards in applications for benefits, like cash assistance and SNAP, that enable clients to identify their preferred language.

NYC

I speak...

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Attention agency employee: Please call an interpreter, this customer requires language assistance. See reverse side for language.

- Cantonese** / 我需要免費的廣東話翻譯
- Haitian Creole** / Mwen bezwen you entèprèt Kreyòl gratis.
- Italian** / Io ho bisogno di interpretazione gratuita in Italiano.
- Korean** / 무료 한국어 통역이 필요합니다.
- Mandarin** / 我需要免費的國語翻譯.
- Russian** / Мне нужен бесплатный устный перевод на русский язык.
- Spanish** / Necesito servicios gratuitos de interpretación en español.

I need free interpretation in \_\_\_\_\_.

- + **Provide preliminary information on “public charge” issues.** While the issue of “public charge” is a federal one, localities must confront the myths and realities of this label among immigrant communities who fear seeking public benefits due to potential impacts on their immigration cases. HRA’s written guide and public presentations provide basic information about which public benefits are “safe” and which ones are more questionable for immigrants to use. However, the public and community-based organizations are always advised to consult immigration attorneys since individual circumstances vary.
- + **Create written guides for the public.** ORIA created a community guide translated into several languages that they distributed to community-based organizations throughout the city. The guide describes HRA’s services to immigrants in basic terms, outlines the general eligibility requirements for immigrants seeking public assistance based on their status, explains “public charge” issues (see above) and reiterates the City’s confidentiality policy.



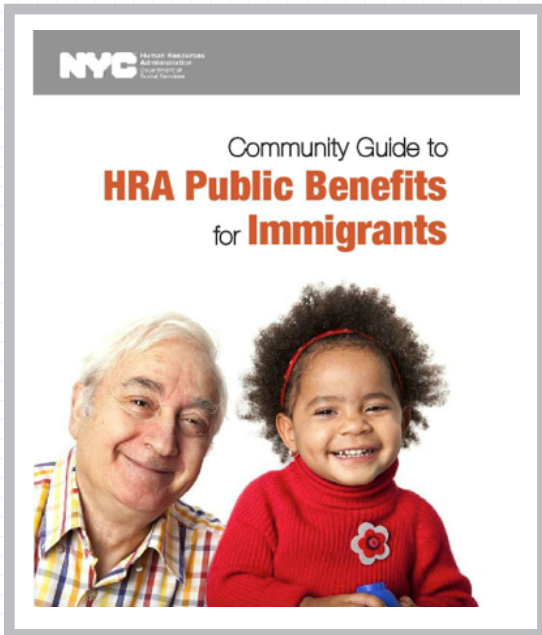
## BUILD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- + **Cultivate relationships with community leaders and community-based organizations.** The better an institution knows the population it serves, the better it can accomplish its goals. Along with data collection, fostering relationships with leaders from that community—whether they are political, social, or faith leaders—makes gaining this knowledge possible.
  - + **Turn to community leaders to fill information gaps and address community needs.** When people don’t interact with government at all, it is difficult, if not impossible, to know why or to learn what your agency could do better. This is where community leaders can be especially helpful, providing critical insights. Building relationships with community organizations and leaders helps agency staff proactively address needs and concerns that arise rather than reacting to someone’s challenging experience after the fact. Management and frontline staff can also learn from these leaders what specific needs community members have so that they are providing appropriate services. HRA utilizes and partners with hundreds of community-based organizations – many which serve immigrants and LEP individuals – to spread the word about the work of the Agency and in the case of SNAP, enroll New Yorkers in the program.
  - + **Spread awareness about interpretation services.** If LEP clients are not aware that interpretation is available, they may come to an HRA office and stumble through in English. When this happens caseworkers may mistakenly flag them as English speakers, triggering further communications to be in English as well. While it is critical to train caseworkers to try to identify and avoid these situations, it is also useful when clients already know interpretation is available and can easily request it, such as by using an “I speak…” card. To encourage use of this card, HRA has mailed nearly one million “I speak…” cards to community based organizations and the agency’s own most highly-trafficked locations.
  - + **Address specific community needs.** Building relationships with community insiders helps agency staff proactively address needs and concerns that arise rather than reacting to someone’s challenging experience after the fact. Management and frontline staff can also learn from these leaders what specific needs community members have so that they are providing appropriate services.



## COMMUNITY GUIDE TO PUBLIC BENEFITS

To better inform immigrant and LEP residents and community based organizations that serve them about public benefits that are accessible through HRA, the agency created a plain language guide in multiple languages that explains eligibility guidelines and other key points about accessing public benefits that are relevant to these communities. Because the rules and regulations are so complicated, HRA does advise within the brochure that HRA is not the Agency that determines whether receiving public benefits will affect an individual's immigration case but that USCIS decides this.



### MAKE RELEVANT INFORMATION CLEARLY VISIBLE AT AGENCY SITES

- + **Use signage and other written materials.** Perhaps the easiest way to share information about services specific to LEP and immigrant clients is through signage within agency offices describing the offerings. HRA offices are mandated to hang posters and signs describing the availability of free interpretation at the first point of entry. The HRA also shares information in guides that are available online and distributed to community-based organizations. As with all written materials for the public, these are translated into several languages.

## ENDNOTES

1. Pew Hispanic Center. (2013). Statistical Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 2011. Washington, DC: Seth Motel and Eileen Patten.
2. Based on an analysis by HRA's Office of Evaluation and Research, November 2011.
3. Cato Institute. (2013). Poor Immigrants Use Public Benefits at a Lower Rate than Poor Native-Born Citizens. Washington, DC: Leighton Ku and Brian Bruen.

**CITIES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION** aims to support the expansion of programs and policies that facilitate the economic, civic and cultural integration of immigrants across the United States. The NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) has provided and will continue to provide technical assistance and guidance to other municipalities in their efforts to support immigrant communities and encourages local governments to network and share best practices in this important field.

Blueprints for Immigrant Integration, as well as additional tools and resources, are available on [nyc.gov/integration](https://nyc.gov/integration) and will continue to grow over the coming months. Please feel free to write us and share feedback by contacting [integration@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:integration@cityhall.nyc.gov).

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Community Development



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