



**Department of Finance**

**LANGUAGE  
ACCESS  
IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAN**

May 1

**2018**

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**Commissioner Jacques Jiha, Ph.D.**

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## **I. Message from Commissioner Jacques Jiha**

New York City is home to over eight million people who represent cultures and countries from around the globe. Our diversity is our strength, and we honor these cultures by offering city services in a variety of languages. This report reflects the Department of Finance's latest efforts to serve all New Yorkers, including those with limited English proficiency.

We provide interpretation and translation services in all of our units that interact or correspond with the general public. The DOF offices with direct customer service responsibilities have received language access training, and we offer many of our core services in a wide range of languages—for example, we will accept parking ticket and camera violation defenses in any language, and we offer multilingual in-person assistance at public outreach events in all five boroughs throughout the year.

The Department of Finance has been working for some time to implement Local Law 30. We have translated our most important and most frequently requested documents into the additional designated languages since the beginning of fiscal year 2018, a year ahead of the law's enactment. We are currently providing telephonic interpretation in 299 languages through our contracted service provider, Voiance. The department's website is accessible in many languages, and we continue to collect data from web analytics, 311 requests, and other customer interactions to determine how best to use our translation resources.

The Department of Finance believes that it is critically important to communicate clearly with the public and meet the diverse language needs of this great city. As the demand for language access shifts and demographics change, we remain committed to providing the best possible service to all New Yorkers, regardless of their primary language.

Sincerely,

Jacques Jiha, Ph.D.  
Commissioner, New York City Department of Finance

## II. Agency mission and background

The New York City Department of Finance (DOF) administers the tax and revenue laws of the City fairly, efficiently, and transparently to instill public confidence and encourage compliance while providing exceptional customer service. Through this work, our employees interface with the public in a variety of ways on a wide range of topics. DOF collects approximately \$36 billion in revenue for the City and values more than one million properties worth a total market value of more than \$1 trillion. The department also:

- records and maintains public property records related to ownership, deeds, and mortgages
- administers exemption and abatement programs that provide \$3.6 billion in tax relief to property owners and renters
- adjudicates and collects parking tickets and provides time-saving programs to eligible drivers and businesses
- manages the City's treasury, with operating cash balances of more than \$14 billion
- acts as the City's chief civil law enforcer, through the Office of the Sheriff
- advises the mayor's administration on the City's \$160 billion pension system and \$16 billion deferred compensation plan

The **City Register** records and maintains all official documents related to real estate, including deeds, mortgages, and leases, and has offices in every borough except Staten Island, where the Office of the County Clerk provides these functions. City Register records from 1966 onward are maintained online in the Automated City Register Information System (ACRIS). The City Register also collects mortgage recording and real property transfer taxes.

DOF employees **bill and collect property, business, and excise taxes**; the state administers New York City's income and sales taxes. Tax payments are accepted online, by mail, or in person at any of DOF's five business centers, one of which is located in each borough. Our business centers offer a variety of services, including payment processing, information desk services, parking ticket adjudications, and City Register staff. These centers serve as the most common venue of customer interaction, with over two million transactions a year totaling over \$1 billion.

For all taxes other than property taxes, our auditors monitor tax collections to prevent under-payments and non-payments. DOF employees collect unpaid taxes and other debt owed to the City through correspondence, phone calls, court actions, and other enforcement mechanisms.

DOF **administers personal and commercial exemption and abatement programs**. Our Rent Freeze program helps eligible seniors and people with disabilities to continue to live in the homes of their choice. Veterans, seniors, people with disabilities, and other eligible property owners can apply for exemptions to reduce their tax liability. Commercial property owners can benefit from the City's various tax abatement programs.

**Parking tickets** are one of DOF's chief sources of customer interactions. Vehicle owners can pay or dispute their parking or camera violations online, by mail, via our Pay or Dispute app, or in person at any of our five business centers, 7-Eleven, and CVS. Our administrative law judges hear appeals of parking and camera violations, and the Adjudication Division employs a special unit for commercial vehicles.

DOF **values all property in the city**—more than one million parcels each year—to produce the assessment roll. The City's property tax rates are applied to a property's assessed value to calculate the tax its owner must pay. After the City's property tax rates are set each year by the mayor and city council, DOF employees calculate, bill, and collect property taxes and other property-related charges. When property owners do not pay their taxes or other charges, DOF administers a property tax lien sale to transfer their debts to a private lienholder. DOF also maintains the official tax maps of New York City.

As the chief civil enforcement agency for the New York State Unified Court System, the **Office of the Sheriff** enforces mandates, orders, warrants, and decrees. The enforcement tools available to the sheriff include evictions, property seizures, and the booting or towing of vehicles for judgment debt. The Sheriff's Office auctions its seized properties and regularly conducts tax fraud investigations, with a particular focus on the enforcement of cigarette tax and traffic regulations.

The **Treasury Division** administers the City's network of bank accounts and manages its cash flow. Treasury employees manage the City's banking relationships and ensure that funds are deposited only in approved banks with appropriate collateral. The division holds all cash bail and court-ordered funds in trust until the funds are directed by the courts to be released. Members of the public interact with the cash bail process when a customer pays a deposit for the release of a person who has been arrested (also known as a defendant). The Department of Finance holds the money to help guarantee that the defendant will return to court for their trial. The Cash Bail is held in a bank account until the court closes the case and issues a court order to refund the Cash Bail to the person who paid it.

The **Office of the Taxpayer Advocate** is an independent office within the Department of Finance. The Taxpayer Advocate reports directly to the commissioner and is able to assist taxpayers with issues they have been unable to resolve through normal DOF channels. The Office of the Taxpayer Advocate can recommend policy changes and request that the Department of Finance take action on behalf of taxpayers.

### **III. Agency language access policy and goals**

The goal of the Department of Finance's Language Access Plan is to ensure that all members of the public, regardless of their English proficiency, have access to our information, programs, and services. This goal supports the four pillars of DOF's mission statement: transparency, fairness, efficiency, and customer service.

Beyond this, our policy comports with the intent of Local Law 30: New Yorkers with limited English proficiency (LEP) must be provided with meaningful access to DOF services free of charge. From online forms to in-person interactions with staff, the agency will not only offer free interpretation and translation, but will actively publicize and advertise these services.

We will meet this goal by:

- identifying the LEP population and its needs
- providing essential interpretation and translation services
- training and educating our staff to identify and serve LEPs
- monitoring trends and the needs of LEPs

DOF has a variety of avenues through which we will accomplish this work, including public outreach events, customer interactions at our business centers, online resources, and an array of social media channels. Our modus operandi will center on providing interpretation and translation services throughout all public-facing components of the agency.

The Department of Finance has a clear definition of success for this plan: regardless of the type of interaction (letter, email, in-person, etc.), all efforts will be made to serve New Yorkers with limited English proficiency in their language of choice.

#### IV. LEP population assessment

Before developing our implementation plan, the agency conducted an assessment to determine who needs our services, and in which languages. The Department of Finance's LEP population assessment is grounded in the “four factor analysis” defined by the U.S. Department of Justice and prescribed by LL30 §23-1102b, Item #3. These factors are as follows:

- **Factor 1:** the number or proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service population, determined by demographic analysis
- **Factor 2:** the frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the agency
- **Factor 3:** the importance of the benefit, service, information, or encounter to the customer
- **Factor 4:** the resources available to the agency and the cost of providing various types of language services

Because we serve all New York City taxpayers, we use survey data that reflect the city’s ever-growing and ever-changing population. The following sources provide the foundation of our LEP population assessment:

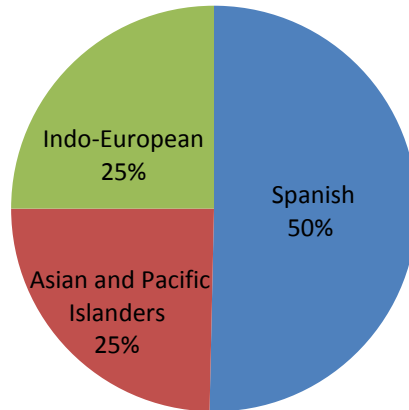
- The U.S. Census Bureau’s 2000 and 2007 American Community Surveys
- NYC Department of City Planning data and analysis

To ensure that the LAIP keeps pace with the needs of our customers, the Department of Finance will continue to review the American Community Survey for the City of New York as future editions are released.

According to the 2016 American Community Survey, New York City has a population of 8,461,961. The data below describe the language access needs of city residents:

- 3.2 million New Yorkers are foreign-born.
- Approximately half of all New Yorkers speak only English at home.
- Of the four million residents who speak another language in the home, 1.9 million speak Spanish as their primary language.
- Approximately 719,000 speak Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.
- Twenty-one percent, or 1.8 million residents, speak English “less than very well.”
- The Indo-European languages of Hindustani (Hindi-Urdu), Portuguese, Bengali, Punjabi, Russian, German, French, and Persian are spoken by 437,901. Several of these are among the fastest growing languages within the LEP community.

## Breakdown of New Yorkers who speak English "less than very well"



According to the NYC Department of Planning, the city's immigrant population stood at 3.21 million in 2015, up 12% from 2.87 million in 2000. For scale, the city's foreign-born population is larger than the entire population of Chicago. Immigrants account for 38% of the city's population and 46% of its resident labor force.

In addition to these broad studies, DOF analyzes language requests from our customers to determine their needs. The agency utilizes data collected from interpretation and translation requests made over the phone (including 311), online, from our community partners and other City agencies, and via DOF's customer case record management system. In FY17, we received a total of 7,699 requests for interpretation assistance, an increase of 41.5% over FY16 (5,441 requests).

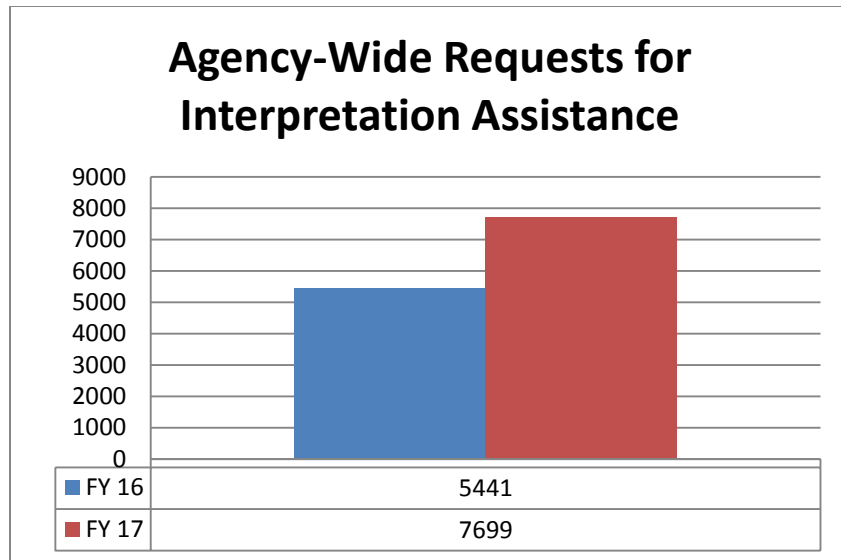
These statistics represent only direct requests received by the agency. They do not account for the additional materials that are distributed through our community partners, including elected officials, community organizations, and other agencies that request, copy, and maintain translated documents and applications at their various locations.



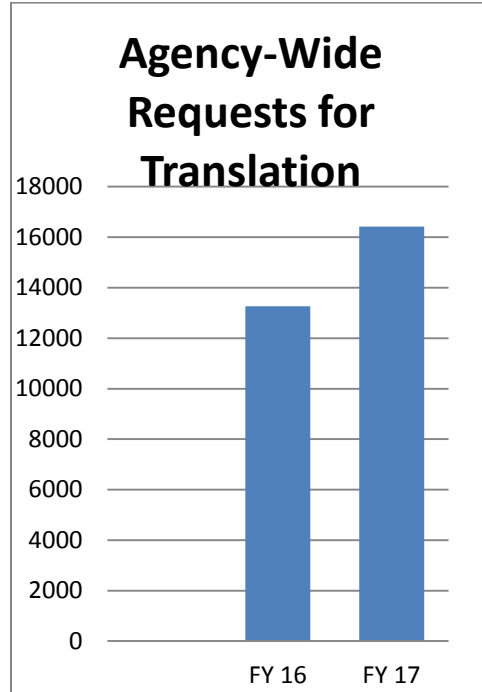
Our most recent review indicated that the vast majority of requests (97%) were comprised of the ten citywide languages mandated by Local Law 30.

<b>Spanish</b>	<b>66.1%</b>
<b>Mandarin</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
<b>Russian</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>Bengali</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Cantonese</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Arabic</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
<b>Korean</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
<b>Haitian Creole</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>French</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Urdu</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Polish</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

We have seen increased demand for Hindi, Punjabi, Turkish, Albanian, Greek, Italian, and Hebrew translation and interpretation. Although these languages comprise less than 1% of all requests, we will continue to monitor their frequency and adjust our plan as necessary.



Translation requests for FY17 totaled 16,416, a 23.7% increase from FY16 (13,267).



In 2017, we received more than 800 requests for translation via 311. A majority of these requests were for information about social service programs that help New Yorkers remain in their homes. As shown in the table below, the forms most frequently requested for translation via 311 are our Spanish-language Rent Freeze program applications. The provision of translation and interpretation services increases participation in these important programs and helps individuals address significant (and in some cases, life-altering) challenges with more information and a greater degree of confidence.

<b>Form/Language request</b>	<b># of Service Requests</b>
SCRIE - Application for Seniors Not Enrolled - Spanish	289
SCRIE Initial Application - Spanish	138
Application for Disability Rent Increase Exemption - Spanish	78
Property Tax Exemption App - English	44
SCHE Renewal Application - Spanish	43
SCRIE - Application for Seniors Not Enrolled - Russian	29
DRIE Initial Application - Spanish	28
SCHE Renewal Application - Chinese	21
Property Tax Exemption Application - Spanish	15
SCHE Renewal Application - Russian	15
SCRIE - Application for Seniors Not Enrolled - Bengali	15
Property Tax Exemption Application - Chinese	14
SCRIE - Application for Seniors Not Enrolled - Chinese	11
SCHE Renewal Application - Korean	10
SCRIE Initial Application - Russian	10
Application for Disability Rent Increase Exemption - Russian	7
SCRIE - Application for Seniors Not Enrolled - Korean	7
DHE Renewal Application - Chinese	6
DHE Renewal Application - Spanish	6
SCRIE - Application for Seniors Not Enrolled - Haitian	6
DRIE Initial Application - Russian	5
Property Tax Exemption App - Chinese	4
Property Tax Exemption Application - Korean	4
DHE Renewal Application - Russian	3
Parking Ticket Hearing Guide - Chinese	3
Application for Disability Rent Increase Exemption - Bengali	2
Parking Ticket Hearing Guide - Spanish	2
Property Tax Exemption Application - Russian	2
90 Day Notice of Intention to Sell Liens - Russian	1
Application for Disability Rent Increase Exemption - Creole	1
Parking and Camera Violation General Information Brochure Chinese	1
Parking and Camera Violation General Information Brochure Spanish	1
Property Tax Exemption App - Russian	1
Property Tax Exemption App - Spanish	1
Property Tax Exemption Application - Bengali	1
Property Tax Exemption Application for Owners - Chinese	1
SCHE Renewal Application - French	1
SCRIE Initial Application - Chinese	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>827</b>

## V. Provision of language access services

The Department of Finance provides language access services to the LEP community in a variety of ways through staffing and vendors. Per Local Law 30, we provide translated documents in the ten prescribed citywide languages:

- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese
- French
- Haitian Creole
- Korean
- Polish
- Russian
- Spanish
- Urdu

We contract with Geneva Worldwide for translation and Voiance for telephonic interpretation. Absent these contracts, we would not be able to provide the breadth of languages or the high level of accessibility that we currently offer. The agency has designated two employees in the External Affairs Division to lead this work. These employees serve in the roles of language access coordinator and language access liaison in addition to their regular responsibilities.

Additionally, our contract with Geneva also includes the ability to procure in-person interpretation for large-scale public events.

Our language access services are provided whenever and wherever DOF is open for business. In the event that a natural disaster or other city-wide emergency should necessitate the closure of our offices or affect our ability to serve customers by phone, translatable notice will be posted on our website.

The Department of Finance makes great efforts to incorporate plain language principles into our public communications before they are translated. We have developed an agency style guide around several key principles, including:

- **Clarity:** Communicate in simple, plain language, without sounding cold or abrupt. Avoid jargon, acronyms, and legalese. Use active voice to create a sense of immediacy and to encourage understanding and compliance.
- **Simplicity:** Keep language simple. Break up long sentences. Do not write “utilize” when “use” will do.
- **Relevance:** Tell readers what they need to know, not what our internal process is.
- **Tone:** Engage in human rather than institutional communication. Show empathy, demonstrate flexibility and transparency, and, when necessary, admit mistakes.

As much of our language is, by its nature, technical and complex, we employ a full-time editor to help our subject matter experts communicate plainly. The editor is responsible for enforcing the conventions of the style guide and working with our webmaster and graphic designer to present

information in an eye-catching and easy-to-follow format. Our aim is to simplify the language to the greatest degree possible before translation.

Several members of the External Affairs Division regularly attend trainings and meetings on the subject of plain language. Most recently, the editor and 311 liaison attended the DCAS “Writing in Plain Language” course and clinic, and they are currently developing an internal plain language training for DOF staff.

When a public-facing document has been finalized, the editor, the assistant commissioner for External Affairs, the 311 liaison, the webmaster, and appropriate staff members from the Correspondence unit determine whether it should be translated. The following criteria are considered:

- **Reach:** How many people will receive or need to read the material?
- **Relevance:** How important is the information that is provided in the document?
- **Sunset date:** For how long will this information remain relevant? Some materials are time-limited in nature, while others have greater longevity.

Documents are then prioritized by deadline. For example, some forms, such as the Senior Citizen Homeowners’ Exemption application, must be submitted by a certain date, while other documents, such as our guide to parking ticket hearings, are general and informational in nature and not subject to any particular deadline.

The annual tax lien sale process exemplifies our procedure. This process is a last resort tool that DOF uses after taxpayers fail to respond to multiple notices informing owners that they are behind on their taxes. While the audience for this mailing is relatively small (approximately 20,000 properties), the content of the notices is very important: for many owners, inclusion in the tax lien sale process is a step toward foreclosure. As such, the notice is available in ten languages via 311 and our website:

## Notice of Property Value (NOPV)

Every January, the Department of Finance mails New York City property owners a Notice of Property Value (NOPV). This important notice has information about your property’s market and assessed values. The Department of Finance determines your property’s value every year, according to State law. The City’s property tax rates are applied to the assessed value to calculate your property taxes for the next tax year. You get your first tax bill for the year in June. If you believe the values or property descriptions on the NOPV are not correct, click [here](#) for information on what you can do.

[Access Your Notice of Property Value](#)

What is your Notice of Property Value?

اللغة العربية | বাংলা | 中文 | français | kreyòl ayisyen | 한국어 | Polski | русский |  
español | اردو

<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/taxes/notice-of-property-value.page>



Another example is the notice of property value, or NOPV, sent each January to every property owner in New York City. This important notice, with information about a property's market and assessed values, is sent to approximately 1.2 million property owners. We provide a translated information sheet that explains what the NOPV is and how property owners can get help if they do not understand the information it contains.

## Lien Sales

When you do not pay your property taxes, water bills, and other charges against your property, these unpaid charges become tax liens that may be sold in a tax lien sale.

Each year, the Department of Finance sells tax liens. If your property has unpaid debt that qualifies for a lien sale, we will sell your lien debt (the amount owed) to an authorized buyer. A lien servicing company, on behalf of the buyer, adds more fees and interest to your debt, so it is much better to take care of your debt before we sell the lien.

We send you at least four (4) notices before your lien is sold telling you about the sale and advising you to pay your debt(s) so that your property's lien does not get sold.

Depending on your type of property, there can be as many as four conditions that make your property eligible for the sale. Use [this table](#) to understand the rules that apply to your property.

**90-day Notice of Intention to Sell Liens** - Includes detailed information and frequently asked questions about lien sales.

اللغة العربية | বাংলা | 中文 | français | kreyòl ayisyen  
한국어 | Polski | русский | español | اردو

<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/taxes/property-lien-sales.page>

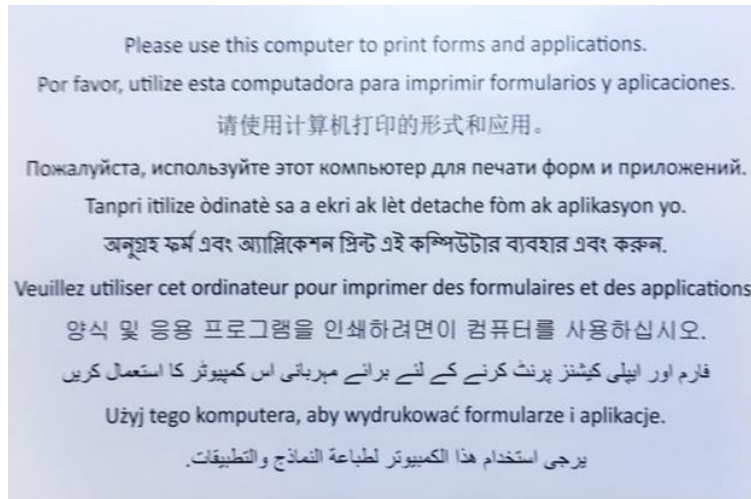
While the Department of Finance has prioritized language access in terms of breadth, we are also seeking to improve the quality of translations to ensure readability. The agency's language access coordinator is working with the budget office to seek a new contract with companies who can review our translations for clarity and comprehensibility, to ensure that our more technical language can be understood by an LEP audience.

To routinize the translation of the agency's most important documents, we have incorporated translations into our standard operating procedure for forms that are updated annually. As previously mentioned, when a form is newly created, we determine whether translation is necessary. When a previously translated form is updated, the file is sent immediately to Geneva for translation. There is sometimes a lag between the publication of our English and translated forms, and a priority for the agency going forward is to reduce the amount of time that it takes to produce and post translated documents.


The following section illustrates how the Department of Finance provides and advertises the telephonic interpretation services that it procures from Voiance. While access is at the core of

Local Law 30, the agency also strives to meet high standards of quality. Voiance quality-checks its product by having supervisors monitor interpreters as they assist customers, and DOF’s various business units submit monthly reports to the language access liaison to document and address any problems they have experienced with the service.

**In-person:** Signs advertising DOF’s free interpretation services are posted prominently throughout our public service areas. In addition, our business centers, located in each of the five boroughs, offer computer kiosks at which members of the public can download translated forms, notices, applications, and other documents. Signage is also displayed at the kiosks:



DOF employees who serve the public in these locations present “I Speak” cards to customers with limited English proficiency. The cards allow customers to point to the language in which they would like to communicate.



**I speak...**  
 Attention agency employee: Please call an interpreter,  
 This customer requires language assistance.  
 See reverse side for language.

- Polish/ Potrzebuję darmowej pomocy w polskiej interpretacji.
- Arabic/ أحتاج إلى مساعدة الترجمة الفورية باللغة العربية
- Urdu/ مجھے اردو زبان میں مفت مدد کی ضرورت ہے
- Bengali / আমি বাংলা বলতে আমি বিবামূল্যে সহায়তা প্রয়োজন.
- French / Je parle français. Je besoin d'aide gratuitement dans l'interprétation.
- Haitian Creole / Mwen bezwen you entèprèt Kreyòl gratis.
- Korean / 무료 한국어 통역이 필요합니다.
- Chinese / 我需免費的圖語翻譯。
- Russian / Мне нужен бесплатный устный перевод на русский язык.
- Spanish / Necesito servicios gratuitos de interpretación en español.
- Other / \_\_\_\_\_

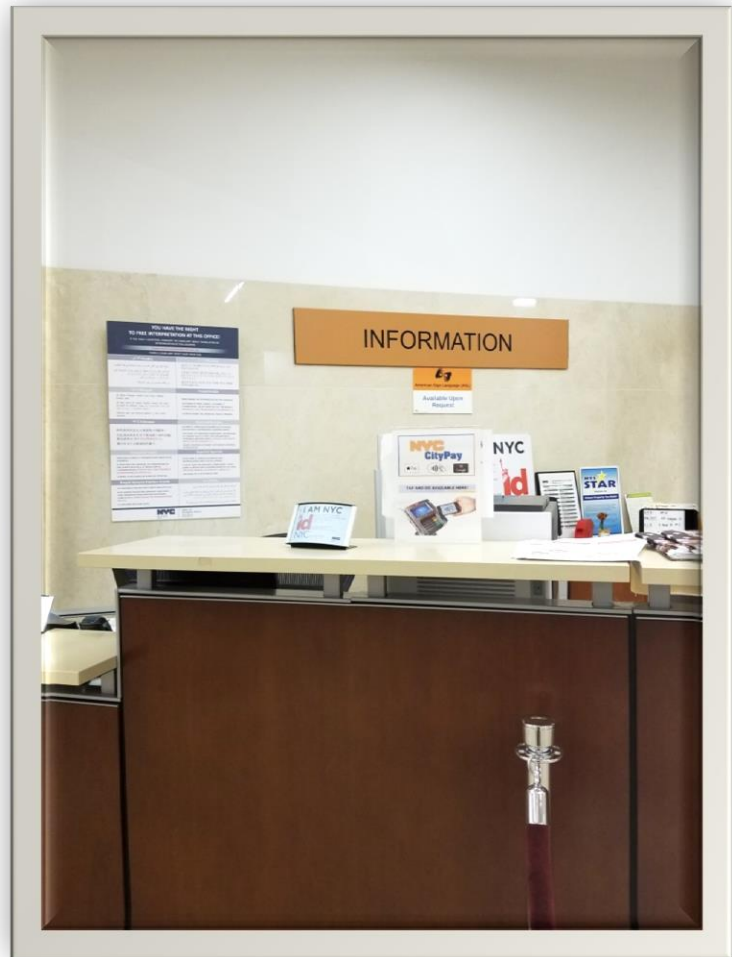


Given that many DOF employees speak more than one language, they are often able to assist constituents with limited English proficiency. (This is not a formalized offering to customers, nor is it a job requirement of staff.) If no multilingual employee is available, we utilize the over-the-phone interpretation system. As of April 2018, more than 375 employees have been trained on the program. The vendor, Voiance, employs interpreters who can determine the language needed when a DOF employee is unable to ascertain this information.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE INTERPRETATION AT THIS OFFICE!</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, COMMENT OR COMPLAINT ABOUT TRANSLATION OR INTERPRETATION AT THIS LOCATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PLEASE TALK TO A MANAGER OR CALL 311</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FILING A COMPLAINT WON'T HURT YOUR CASE</p>	
<b>عربي/Arabic</b>	<b>한국의/Korean</b>
<p>لديك الحق في تلقي خدمات ترجمة مجانية في هذا المكتب!</p> <p>إذا كان لديك سؤال أو تعليق أو شكوى بصدد الترجمة التي تلقيتها في هذا المكان، يرجى التحدث مع أحد المسؤولين أو الإتصال بـ 311.</p> <p>إن التقدم بشكوى لن يضر قضيتك.</p>	<p>당신은 이 사무실에서 무료로 통역 받으실 수 있는 권리가 있습니다!</p> <p>이곳에서 번역이나 통역에 관하여 질문, 의견, 또는 불만사항이 있으시면 매니저에게 말씀하시거나 311로 전화 주십시오.</p> <p>불만사항 접수는 당신의 의뢰 사항에 아무런 영향을 끼치지 않습니다.</p>
<b>বাংলা/Bengali</b>	<b>Polski/Polish</b>
<p>এই অফিসে বিনামূল্যে অনুবাদ সেবা পাবার অধিকার আপনার আছে!</p> <p>এই স্থানে বাথ্যা বা অনুবাদ বিষয়ক আপনার যদি কোন প্রশ্ন, মন্তব্য বা অভিযোগ থাকে, তবে ব্যবস্থাপকের সাথে কথা বলুন বা 311 এ যোগাযোগ করুন।</p> <p>অভিযোগ জমা দান আপনার আবেদন এ কোন প্রভাব ফেলবেনা।</p>	<p>MASZ PRAWO DO INTERPRETACJI W TYM URZĘDZIE!</p> <p>JEŚLI MASZ PYTANIE, UWAGI LUB SKARGI O TŁUMACZENIU LUB INTERPRETACJI W TYM MIEJSCU, SKONSULTUJ SIĘ Z PRZEŁOŻONYM LUB ZADZWOŃ 311.</p> <p>ZŁOŻENIE SKARGI NIE ZASZKODZI TWOJEJ SPRAWIE.</p>
<b>中文/Chinese</b>	<b>Русский/Russian</b>
<p>你有权利在这办公室获取口译职务!</p> <p>在这里如果你有关于笔译或口译的问题, 意见或投诉, 请告诉经理或拨打311.</p> <p>提出申诉不会影响你的案子。</p>	<p>ВЫ ИМЕЕТЕ ПРАВО ВОСПОЛЬЗОВАТЬСЯ УСЛУГАМИ БЕСПЛАТНОГО ПЕРЕВОДЧИКА В ДАННОМ ОФИСЕ!</p> <p>ЕСЛИ У ВАС ЕСТЬ ВОПРОСЫ, ЗАМЕЧАНИЯ, ИЛИ ЖАЛОБЫ ПО ПОВОДУ УСЛУГ УСТНОГО ИЛИ ПИСЬМЕННОГО ПЕРЕВОДА В ДАННОМ ОФИСЕ, СООБЩИТЕ МЕНЕДЖЕРУ ОФИСА ИЛИ ПО ТЕЛЕФОНУ 311.</p> <p>ПОДАЧА ЖАЛОБЫ НЕ ОКАЖЕТ НЕГАТИВНОГО ВЛИЯНИЯ НА ВАШЕ ДЕЛО.</p>
<b>Français/French</b>	<b>Español/Spanish</b>
<p>VOUS AVEZ LE DROIT A L'INTERPRETATION GRATUITE EN CE BUREAU!</p> <p>SI VOUS AVEZ UNE QUESTION, UN COMMENTAIRE OU UNE PLAINTE RELATIVE A LA TRADUCTION OU L'INTERPRETATION, N'HESETEZ PAS A VOUS ADRESSER A UN RESPONSABLE OU APPELEZ 311.</p> <p>LE DEPOT D'UNE PLAINTE NE NUIRA PAS VOTRE CAS.</p>	<p>USTED TIENE EL DERECHO DE OBTENER UNA INTERPRETACIÓN GRATIS EN ESTA OFICINA!</p> <p>SI USTED TIENE UNA PREGUNTA, COMENTARIO O QUEJA SOBRE LA TRADUCCIÓN O INTERPRETACIÓN EN ESTE LOCAL, POR FAVOR DIRÍJASE A UN GERENTE O LLAME AL 311.</p> <p>UNA QUEJA NO LE AFECTARA SU CASO.</p>
<b>Kreyòl Ayisyen/Haitian Creole</b>	<b>اردو/Urdu</b>
<p>OU GEN DWA A YON ENTEPWET GRATIS NAN OFIS SA AI!</p> <p>SI OU GENYEN YON KESYON, KOMANTE OSWA PLENT OSJE TRADIKSYON OSWA ENTEPWETASYON NAN LOKALITE SA A, TANPRI PALE AK YON RESPONSAB OSWA RELE 311.</p> <p>FE YON PLENT PAP BLESE KA OU.</p>	<p>آپ کو اس دفتر میں مفت ترجمانی کا حق حاصل ہے!</p> <p>اگر آپ کے ذہن میں کوئی سوال ہے، کوئی بات کہنا چاہتے ہیں یا اس مقام پر ترجمے یا ترجمانی کے بارے میں کوئی شکایت ہے تو، کسی مینیجر سے رابطہ کریں یا 311 پر کال کریں۔</p> <p>شکایت درج کرانے سے آپ کے کسی کو کوئی نقصان نہیں پہنچے گا۔</p>

Brooklyn Business Center:

210 Joralemon St



SCRIE/DRIE Walk-in Center:

66 John St, Manhattan



Sheriff's Office:

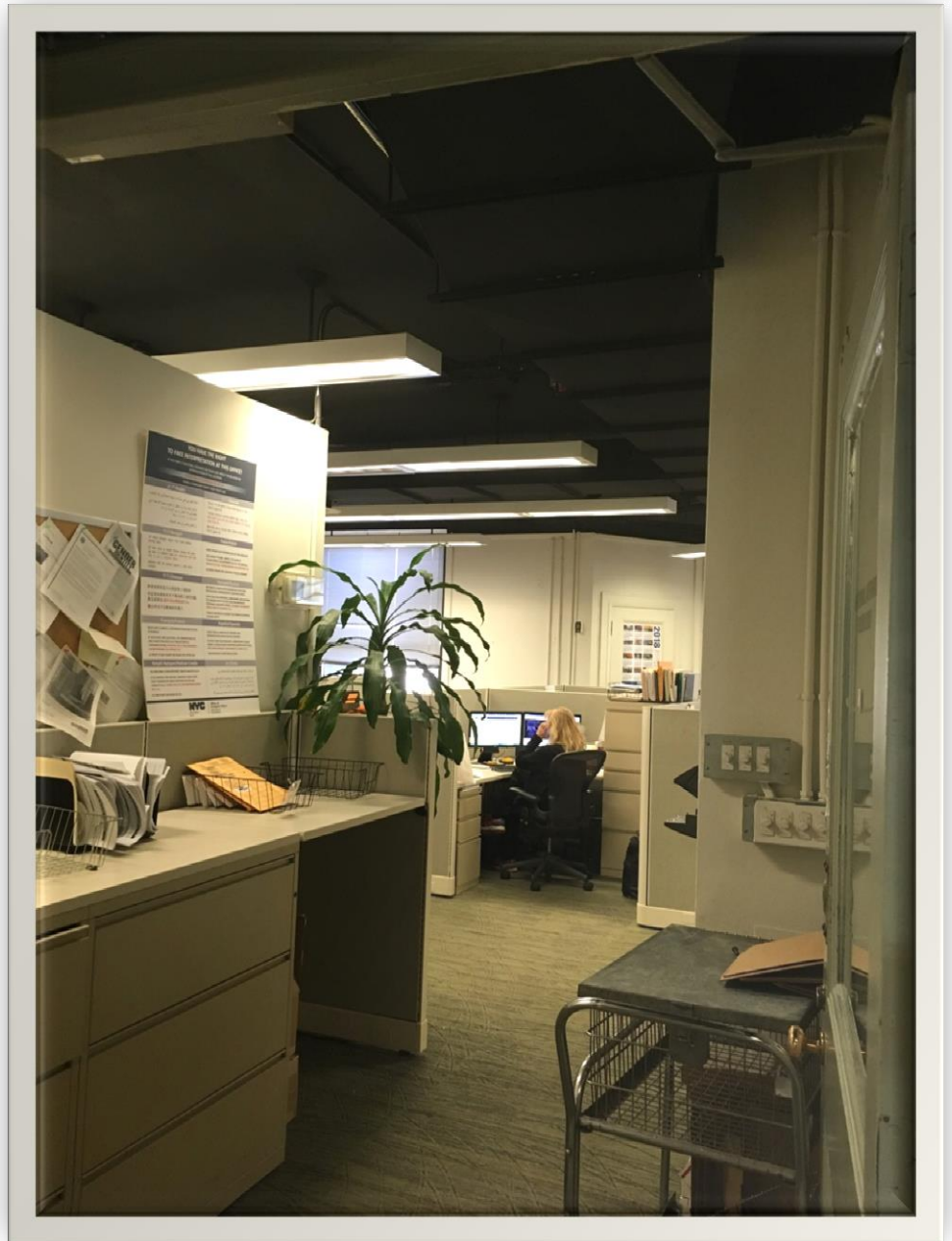
144-06 94th Ave, Queens



External Affairs

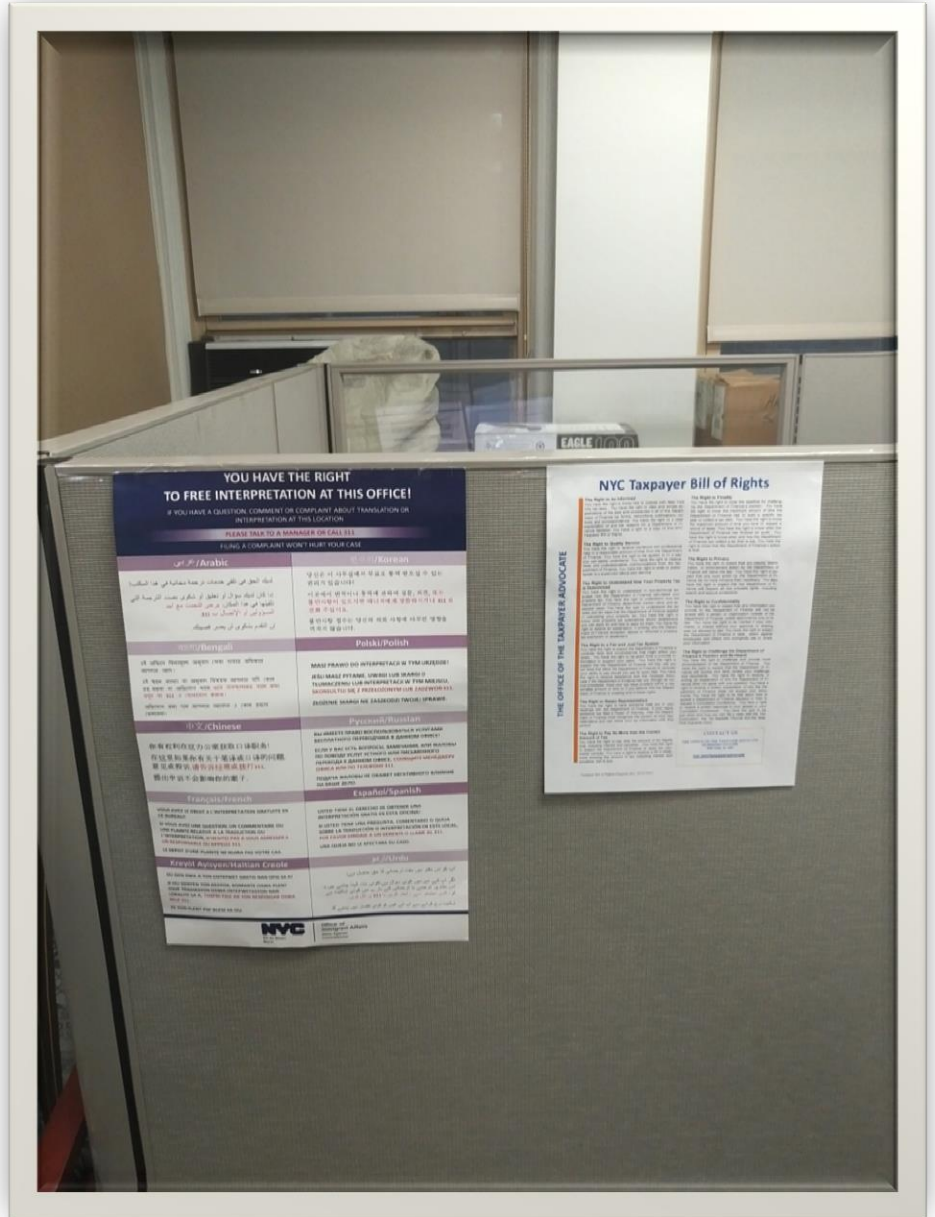
Division:

1 Centre St, Manhattan



Office of the  
Taxpayer Advocate:

253 Broadway, Manhattan





Phone: Units that communicate with the public over the phone have been trained to use the interpretation system. Staff members are able to engage an interpreter via the same system available to in-person customers. This contracted service provides interpretation assistance in 299 languages, a full list of which is available in the [appendix](#).

Mail: Correspondence written in a language other than English is submitted to DOF's language access coordinator, who can either request assistance from a bilingual employee or submit a request for translation to our contracted vendor. Due to demand, some DOF business units have direct access to the vendor and may submit their requests for translation, which can generally be completed within 24 hours. On the whole, the agency receives very little correspondence in languages other than English.

Email and 311 service requests: Electronic communications come to the agency through a direct email form on our website or via the customer case record management program used in conjunction with 311. Depending upon the service requested, DOF may respond with a phone call using our telephonic interpretation system or via a written response in the language of the LEP customer.

In addition to one-on-one customer interactions, we also have a communications shop whose role is to share news stories and other information with the public. Our social media and press strategy incorporates languages other than English. Some examples include:

- When advertising the ECB Forgiving Fines program in October 2016, we posted in Spanish and Chinese on our Twitter feed, @NYCFinance.
- As part of our marketing campaign around the new Pay or Dispute parking app in 2017, we shared posts on Facebook and Twitter in both English and Spanish.
- We posted YouTube videos featuring Commissioner Jiha speaking in Haitian Creole about our Rent Freeze program.
- On Twitter, we advised the public that our tax class 1 property tax guide is available in 10 languages.

Social media isn't just about posting information, but about providing good customer service. In 2018, we received a tweet from a follower who asked if we would have a Mandarin translator at one of our NOPV outreach events, and as a result, we made sure to have someone there who could assist the customer.

We work with ethnic press across the city to publicize DOF programs and services, incorporating press opportunities (both earned and paid) in a range of languages. Our campaigns have included ads in *Chinese World Journal*, *Sing Tao*, *La Voz Hispana*, *Diario de Mexico*, and *Queens Latino*. In addition:

- We conducted an editorial board to develop relationships with ten prominent members of the Chinese press and introduce them to the agency's leadership.
- Our SCRIE/DRIE events have been featured in the *Korea Times*, *Korea Daily*, Univision, *Sing Tao*, *China Press*, *El Diario*, *World Journal*, and others.

- Commissioner Jiha has appeared on the Russian radio program *Davidzon Radio* and the Haitian Creole station *Radio Soleil*. He has also been featured on several Chinese television news shows, including *SinoVision TV*.
- Taxpayer Advocate Eunkyong Choi has been featured in the *Korea Daily*.
- The sheriff's chief of staff, Peter Sammarco, has appeared on *CCTV*, a Chinese television network operated by Reuters, and an *Univision* story featured one of our deputy sheriffs.



## **VI. Training**

DOF understands the importance of training in the execution of Local Law 30, but also recognizes the importance of staff awareness agency-wide. All new Department of Finance employees attend a mandatory orientation as part of their on-boarding process. The language access plan and associated policies are presented and discussed at this orientation, along with background on the importance of language access and an overview of the city's demographics. Employees are informed that more information can be found on DOF's intranet.

Employees who work in public-facing business units attend the Voiance training with the language access liaison. To date, more than 375 employees have been trained, an increase of 25% since the beginning of FY17. These business units include:

- External Affairs
- Treasury/Court Assets
- SCRIE/DRIE Walk-in Center
- Office of the Taxpayer Advocate
- Collections
- City Register/Land Records
- Assessors
- Office of the Sheriff
- Tax Enforcement
- Parking Enforcement
- Business center staff

The training provides information on:

- identifying a customer's primary language
- reporting requests for language services
- how to use dual handsets
- best practices for telephonic interpretation
- plain language, cultural competency, and disability communications

Once a year, the language access coordinator, in conjunction with HR, sends an agency-wide email that includes an overview of our language access work and its importance. This email ensures that each employee, regardless of division, is aware of our interpretation and translation services.



## **VII. Record keeping and evaluation**

The Department of Finance uses internally and externally collected data to monitor trends in the LEP community. The language access coordinator receives monthly reports on interpretation and website translation requests from Voiance and the DOF webmaster. This makes it possible to regularly review the types of requests we are receiving and increase our translation efforts as demand grows.

On-site surveys help DOF determine where to post translated signs in public areas. The language access coordinator makes routine visits to our public-facing business units to make certain that language access signage is posted where required and that “I Speak” cards are plentiful. The public-facing units all have posters that inform the limited-English proficient community how to provide feedback on our customer service.

The language access coordinator is the first point of contact for business units that require assistance or clarification in the provision of these services. Complaints, comments, and requests for assistance received via phone (including 311), the web, email, and other channels are forwarded to the coordinator for research and resolution.

The language access coordinator is also involved in the review and assessment of the vendors that provide DOF with document translation and over-the-phone interpretation. The coordinator is the contact person for these vendors and provides them with end user feedback, which ultimately provides for better products and more efficient service.

The language access coordinator attends regular meetings scheduled by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. At these meetings, language access coordinators from all of the various City agencies share ideas, discuss service contracting options, review survey findings, discuss policy and procedures, and make recommendations for changes and improvements in the provision of language access services.

### **VIII. Resource analysis and planning**

As previously mentioned, DOF has both a language access coordinator and a language access liaison. These individuals are staff members in the External Affairs Division and perform this work in addition to their regular responsibilities.

Our interpretation and translation vendors are critical partners in implementing language access. In FY17, DOF spent approximately \$175,000 on these two contracts, and we expect this amount to rise with the passage of LL30. The agency is also looking into an additional “reviewer” contract that would help ensure the quality of our translated documents.

## IX. Outreach and public awareness of language access services

Pursuant to LL30 §23-1102b, Item #9, DOF’s strategy for creating public awareness is multi-pronged and encompasses all public communications and interactions produced and sponsored by the agency. Our outreach and public awareness efforts are referenced in the previous section on “Provision of language access services.”

**Mail:** DOF sends millions of pieces of mail per year. Mailings for which translation is available include a standard insert that reads, “This is an important notice from the New York City Department of Finance. Please read it carefully. This notice is available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu upon request. Call 311 for assistance.” (See below.)

This is an important notice from the New York City Department of Finance. Please read it carefully. This notice is available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu upon request. Call 311 for assistance.

هذا إخطار هام من New York City Department of Finance. يرجى قرائته بعناية. لا يتوفر هذا الإخطار باللغة العربية إلا عند الطلب. اتصل على رقم 311 للمساعدة.

নিউইয়র্ক শহরের অর্থ বিভাগের থেকে এটি একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি। অনুগ্রহ করে এটি মন দিয়ে পড়ুন। এই বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি অনুবোধের ভিত্তিতে বাংলাতে উপলভ্য। সহায়তার জন্য 311 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Un avis important de la part du Ministère des Finances de la Ville de New York. Veuillez le lire attentivement. Cet avis est disponible en français sur demande. Appelez le 311 pour demander de l'aide.

Sa a se yon avi Depatman Finans Vil New York (New York City Department of Finance) voye pou ou. Tanpri pran san ou pou w li l. W ap ka jwenn avi sa a an kreyòl ayisyen depi ou mande. Rele 311 pou jwenn asistans.

본 문서는 뉴욕시 재무부(NYC DOF)의 중요한 통지 사항을 담고 있으므로 찬찬히 읽어 보시기 바랍니다. 이 통지서는 한국어로 요청하실 수 있습니다. 지원 문의는 311 번으로 전화하십시오.

Ważne powiadomienie od Departamentu Finansów w Nowym Jorku. Należy je uważnie przeczytać. Powiadomienie jest dostępne w języku polskim na żądanie. Pomoc można uzyskać dzwoniąc pod 311.

Это важное уведомление от Департамента финансов города Нью Йорка. Внимательно ознакомьтесь в нем. По запросу уведомление предоставляется на русском языке. Если вам необходима поддержка, позвоните по номеру 311.

这是来自紐約市財政局 (New York City Department of Finance) 的重要通知。請仔細閱讀。本通知可按要求提供中文版。致電 311 可獲取協助。

Este es un aviso importante del Departamento de Finanzas de la Ciudad de Nueva York. Léalo con atención. El presente aviso está disponible en español si lo solicita. Llame al 311 para recibir asistencia.

یہ نیویارک شہر کے شعبہ مالیات (Department of Finance) کی جانب سے ایک اہم اطلاع نامہ ہے۔ براہ کرم اسے غور سے پڑھیں۔ درخواست کرنے پر یہ اطلاع نامہ اردو زبان میں بھی دستیاب ہے۔ معاونت کے لیے 311 پر کال کریں۔

**Website:** On the top right of the Department of Finance home page ([www.nyc.gov/finance](http://www.nyc.gov/finance)) is a translation link that customers can click for a dropdown list of available languages. When translations are available for a particular document, links are displayed below or beside it.

Examples:

Español ▶ Translate | ▼

বাংলা ▶ Translate | ▼

Kreyòl Ayisyen ▶ Translate | ▼

한국어 ▶ Translate | ▼

The screenshot shows the NYC Department of Finance website. At the top right, there is a search bar and a '311 Search all NYC.gov websites' button. Below the navigation bar, a large dropdown menu is open, listing 50 languages for selection. Below the menu, there are four promotional tiles:

- Do Not Lose Your House Or Property:** Features a woman looking thoughtful with a house icon and the text 'ANNUAL PROPERTY LIEN SALE!'.
- Tentative Assessment Roll Published:** Features a street scene with a building and an American flag.
- Pay Parking Tickets in Cash at 7-Eleven Stores:** Features a hand using a card reader on a smartphone.
- Pay or Dispute Parking Ticket App Now Available!:** Features a hand holding a smartphone displaying an app interface.

At the bottom of the page, there are three columns of links:

- News and Updates:**
  - Get Lien Sale Help
  - Get Help With Your NOPV
  - FY19 Tentative Assessment Roll
  - Download Pay or Dispute App
  - More...
- Business:**
  - Business Tax
  - Tax Professionals
  - File & Pay Taxes Online
  - Ways to Save
  - Doing Business in NYC
- Property:**
  - Bills & Payments
  - Data and Lot Information
  - Property Tax Search & Pay
  - Borough-Block-Lot (BBL)
  - Ways to Save



<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/taxes/property-reports.page>

**Business centers:** Signs advertising DOF’s free interpretation services are posted prominently in our five business centers. In addition, each center offers computer kiosks at which members of the public can download translated forms, notices, applications, and other documents. Signage is displayed at the kiosks, as well. Staff members present “I Speak” cards to customers with limited English proficiency. The cards allow customers to point to the language in which they would like to communicate.

**Office of the Taxpayer Advocate:** Since its founding in 2015, the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate, an independent office within the Department of Finance, has fielded over 2,000 inquiries from members of the public. The office’s caseload more than doubled from 2015 to 2017, and it continues to rise. Like the rest of the agency, the Taxpayer Advocate publicizes its translation and interpretation services.

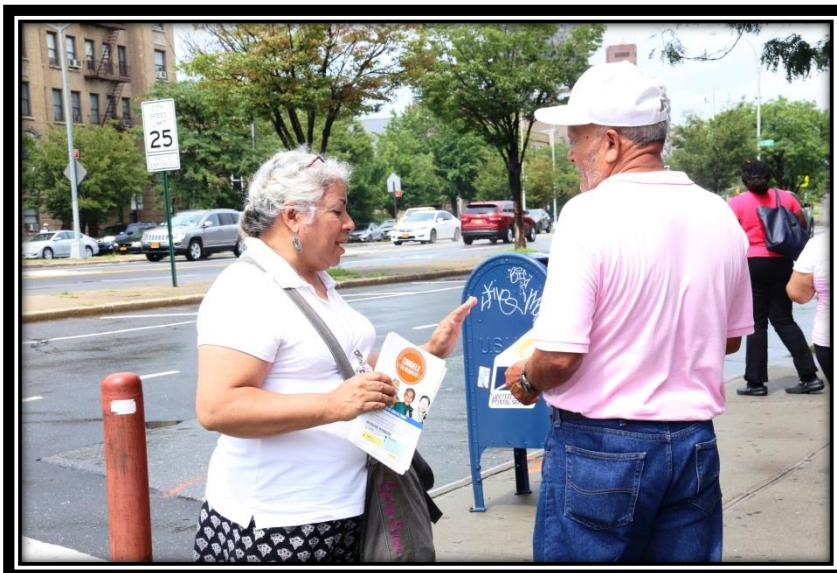
**Community events:** The purpose of DOF’s public events is not merely to publicize our work, but also to provide on-the-spot assistance to customers in a variety of languages.

The DOF Outreach unit serves the public in libraries, community centers, parks, and other locations throughout the city. In 2017 alone, the unit participated in more than 400 events and served over 36,000 New Yorkers. These events feature palm-sized interpretation cards, access to over-the-phone interpretation services, and, when appropriate, translated materials. Additionally, members of the Outreach team speak French, Haitian Creole, Italian, and Spanish. For larger events, we maintain the ability to procure a professional in-person interpreter through Geneva.

In addition to the work of the Outreach unit, the Community Assistance Program in DOF’s Property Exemptions Administration works closely with over 100 community-based organizations, offering visits, conducting presentations, and organizing staff trainings. In 2017, they held approximately 150 of these partnered events, helping DOF reach a wide range of customers.

Examples of our events include:

- Tax lien sale process events
- NOPV notice events
- Councilmember town halls
- Rent Freeze enrollment events
- Senior living facility visits
- Homeowner clinics
- Housing resource fairs



**X. Language access complaints**

Through a partnership with 311, the Department of Finance has established a process to monitor and respond in a timely fashion to public complaints regarding language access. In 2017, as in 2016, the agency received only one such complaint. When 311 receives a complaint directed at the Department of Finance, our language access coordinator is notified. The complaint is then addressed through the appropriate business unit. DOF employs a similar process for complaints reported directly to the agency. The employee receiving the complaint will forward it to the language access coordinator for resolution. If the volume of complaints should increase in the coming years, DOF will develop a process to address them systemically.

How members of public can submit language access complaints, questions, and requests	Agency 311 Data (CY 2017)	Description of how complaints/requests were addressed
The public can submit requests, questions or complaints via email, phone calls, regular mail, in person at our business centers, or at outreach events attended by DOF staff. Submissions through 311 are handled by MOIA and forwarded to DOF.	<i># of language access complaints received via 311: 1</i>	Complaints via 311 are forwarded to the Language Access Liaison, who, under the direction of the Language Access Coordinator, responds accordingly.
	<i># of requests for language access services via 311: 827</i>	The requests for translated literature were either emailed by 311 operators or mailed by the DOF warehouse.



**XI. Implementation plan logistics**

As per LL30 §23-1102b, Item #1, External Affairs Assistant Commissioner Stina Skewes-Cox Trainor will serve as the Department of Finance’s language access coordinator. She and the External Affairs Division are committed to updating this plan every three years, or sooner should she deem it necessary and/or prudent, as per §23-1102d. This plan will be made available on the public-facing Department of Finance website, [www.nyc.gov/finance](http://www.nyc.gov/finance).

<b>Language Access Goal</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Responsible Staff</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Send agency-wide email on Local Law 30 annually	Draft email; Process through HR for approval; Send agency-wide	Language Access Coordinator	5/31/2018
Present to DOF Cabinet Meetings annually	Create PowerPoint deck to present at bimonthly cabinet meeting	Language Access Coordinator	5/31/2018
Schedule recurring monthly Language Access meetings		Language Access Coordinator	5/31/2018
Expand translations for "Property Brochure Tax Class 2" to include Arabic, Bengali, French, Haitian Creole, Polish and Urdu	Obtain quote from vendor; obtain approval from unit head	Language Access Liaison; 311 Liaison	7/1/2018
Expand translations for "Notice by Mail of Recorded Document" to include Arabic, Polish, and Urdu	Obtain quote from vendor; obtain approval from unit head	Language Access Liaison; 311 Liaison	7/1/2018
Expand translations for "Notice by Mail of Recorded Document" FAQ to include Arabic, Polish, and Urdu	Obtain quote from vendor; obtain approval from unit head	Language Access Liaison; 311 Liaison	7/1/2018
Expand translations for "Taxpayer Bill of Rights" to include Arabic, Polish, and Urdu	Obtain quote from vendor; obtain approval from unit head	Language Access Liaison; 311 Liaison	7/1/2018
Expand translations for "Deed Fruad Brochure" to include Arabic, Polish, and Urdu	Obtain quote from vendor; obtain approval from unit head	Language Access Liaison; 311 Liaison	7/1/2018
Assess and update DOF website to make translated forms easy to find		Web & Forms unit; Language Access Coordinator; Language Access Liaison; 311 Liaison; Editor	2/1/2019



Finalize new contract with "reviewer" vendor to ensure quality of translations	Seek vendors; Select Vendor; Process Budget Request	Budget Office; Language Access Coordinator; Language Access Liaison	6/30/2019
Expand most commonly used documents from ten to 15	Gather inputs from business units across the agency; Select five new documents to translate; Process documents through Geneva for translation; Post online, offer in public-facing units, advertise through comms shop	Language Access Coordinator; Language Access Liaison; 311 Liason; Web & Forms unit	7/1/2019

Name of form	Date last updated in English	Arabic	Bengali	Chinese	French	Haitian-Creole	Korean	Polish	Russian	Spanish	Urdu
What is Your Notice of Property Value (NOPV)?	Jan-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18
Homeowner's Exemption applications	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18
Rent Freeze applications	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18	Apr-18
Rent Freeze Guide for Tenants	Feb-15	*Jul-18	Feb-15	Feb-15	Feb-15	Feb-15	Feb-15	*Jul-18	Feb-15	Feb-15	*Jul-18
Property Brochure Tax Class 1	Jan-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18	Mar-18
Property Brochure Tax Class 2	Sep-17	*Jul-18	*Jul-18	Jan-17	*Jul-18	*Jul-18	Jan-17	*Jul-18	Jan-17	Jan-17	*Jul-18
Notice by Mail of Recorded Document	May-16	*Jul-18	June-16	June-16	June-16	June-16	June-16	*Jul-18	June-16	June-16	*Jul-18
Got a Parking Ticket or Camera Violation?	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17	Sep-17
90-Day Lien Sale Notice	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18	Feb-18
Taxpayer Bill of Rights	Nov-15	*Jul-18	Nov-15	Nov-15	Nov-15	Nov-15	Nov-15	*Jul-18	Nov-15	Nov-15	*Jul-18
Notice by Mail of Recorded Document FAQ	May-16	*Jul-18	May-16	May-16	May-16	May-16	May-16	*Jul-18	May-16	May-16	*Jul-18
Deed Fraud Brochure	Mar-17	*Jul-18	Mar-17	Mar-17	Mar-17	Mar-17	Mar-17	*Jul-18	Mar-17	Mar-17	*Jul-18

## Appendix

Acholi (Sudan-Uganda) 264	Gujarati 083	Navajo 144
Afghan 265	Gulf Arabic 401	Ndebele 374
Afrikaans 224	Gwa 284	Neapolitan 249
Akan 016	Haitian Creole 129	Nepali 081
Akateko 418	Hakka 039	Nigerian Pidgin English 363
Aklan 120	Hamer-Bana 396	Norwegian 054
Albanian 070	Hausa 022	Nuer (Sudan) 294
Amharic (Ethiopia) 027	Hawaii Creole 285	Oromo (Ethiopia) 251
Apache 323	Hebrew 106	Paluan 296
Arabic 090	Hindi 082	Pampango 116
Armenian 072	Hindko 351	Pangasinan 114
Armenian (Eastern) 420	Hindustani 319	Papiamento 253
Armenian (Western) 421	Hmong 046	Pashto (Afghanistan) 110
Ashanti 365	Hokkien 286	Persian 297
Assyrian 139	Huizhou 352	Pidgin English 254
Azerbaijani 109	Hunanese 147	Pohnpeian 331
Bahasa/Brunei 343	Hungarian 065	Polish 062
Baluchi 394	Ibanag 234	Polynesian 073
Bambara 019	Ibo 218	Portuguese 061
Banda 267	Icelandic 133	Portuguese Creole 141
Bangi 268	Ilocano 113	Pothohari 358
Basque 136	Ilonggo 121	Pulaar 409
Bassa 314	Indonesian 050	Punjabi 080
Belorussian 225	Inupiaq 018	Purepecha/Tarasco 332
Bemba (Zambia) 324	Iraqi Arabic 399	Quechua 145
Bengali 084	Italian 059	Quiche 317
Berber 269	Jakartanese 235	Rohingya 430
Bhutanese/Dzongkha 391	Jamican English	Romani 298
Bicol 118	Creole(Patois) 357	Romanian 066
Borana 382	Japanese 040	Russian 078
Bosnian 263	Jarai 411	Samoan 126
Brazil-Portuguese 270	Javanese 236	Saudi Arabic 400
Bulgarian 069	Jula 328	Senegalese 255
Burmese 042	Kachchi 371	Serbian 148
Cakchiquel 325	Kamba 412	Serbo-Croatian 299
Cambodian 048	Kanjobal 288	Shanghainese 037
Cantonese 031	Kannada 289	Sichuan/Szechuan 333
Cape Verdean 013	Karen 369	Sicilian 256
Catalan 132	Karenni/Kayah 384	Sindi 257
Cebuano 122	Kazakh 238	Sinhala 089

Chaldean 138	Khamu 044	Slovak 064
Chamorro 403	Khmer 023	Slovakian 301
Chao Chow 038	Kikuyu 239	Slovenian 134
Chavacano 226	Kinya/Rwanda 366	Somali 142
Cherokee 344	Kirghiz 240	Soninke 312
Chichewa 025	Kirundi 338	Soninke (Sarahuleh) 337
Chin 378	Kiswahili 424	Soninke (Sarakole) 419
Chin (Falam) 405	Kizigua 425	Spanish 060
Chin (Hakha) 406	Kongo 376	Suchown 258
Chin (Matu) 426	Korean 041	Sudanese Arabic 311
Chin (Tedim) 408	Krahn 320	Susu/Soso 368
Chin (Zophei) 407	Krio 241	Swahili 026
Chui Chow 346	Kru/Krumen 364	Swahili (Kibajuni) 422
Chungshan 034	Kunama 370	Swedish 053
Chuukese 316	Kurdish 140	Sylheti 377
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