

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**#16-16****NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT EXPANDS NOTIFY NYC PROGRAM WITH
NEW MULTILINGUAL MESSAGING**

May 2, 2016 – New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito today announced that Notify NYC – the city’s free, official source for information about emergency events and important City services – has expanded to offer common notifications in 13 languages, American Sign Language (ASL), and audio formats. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 29% of New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home. To provide important information to even more New Yorkers, pre-scripted translations of Notify NYC messages will now be available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Yiddish.

“The best way to learn about emergencies – the city’s Notify NYC program – just got better with the ability to reach New Yorkers who speak languages other than English,” said NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito. “In an emergency, getting up-to-date and accurate information to New Yorkers is critical. The new multilingual messages will help more New Yorkers to stay safe and informed.”

“Today’s announcement is instrumental in connecting immigrants more easily to the city and its resources,” said Commissioner Nisha Agarwal of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. “The de Blasio administration is committed to speak the language of New Yorkers and Notify NYC’s language expansion exemplifies its ongoing commitment to serve immigrant communities. Language access is a necessary component of any emergency response, crucial to ensuring the well-being and safety of all who live in our city.”

Notify NYC started as a pilot program in December of 2007 as a means to communicate localized emergency information quickly to city residents. Since its inception, Notify NYC has sent out more than 6,500 notifications about local emergencies; today, more than 380,000 New Yorkers receive alert notifications from Notify NYC. New Yorkers can sign up for emergency alerts by visiting the Notify NYC website, nyc.gov/notifynyc or by calling 311.

Subscribers can receive alerts in seven ways: phone, email, SMS, fax, BlackBerry PIN, Instant Messenger, and Twitter. Non-English speaking subscribers who receive any of the above digital formats will be given an option to follow a link in which the same message is listed in 13 different languages, audio format, and ASL.

The new multilingual messages span a variety of emergency situations, including pre-scripted mass transit alerts, Fire Department activity, missing person(s) alerts, public health and safety notifications, utility alerts, weather alerts, drills and exercises, alternate side parking updates, downed trees notifications, and Combined Sewer Overflow advisories.

Notify NYC is just one way the City of New York seeks to communicate urgent information to city residents. In addition to sending e-mails, text messages, tweets, and phone calls, NYC Emergency Management has the ability to activate NYC's Emergency Alert System (EAS), which sends information immediately via television and radio, and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), which send critical emergency updates to all equipped cell phones in NYC. To learn more about the Notify NYC program or to sign up, visit nyc.gov/notifynyc or call 311.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Silvestri/Omar Bourne (718) 422-4888

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