



Law Department Language Access Implementation Plan

I. Agency Mission and Background

a. What is the mission of your agency?

The Law Department represents the City and its employees in affirmative and defensive civil litigation, prosecutes juvenile delinquency matters and certain Administrative Code enforcement proceedings, provides legal advice to City agencies, and reviews and drafts local and State legislation, administrative rules, procurement contracts, and financial instruments for the sale of municipal bonds, among other things.

b. What direct services are offered by your agency?

The Law Department's Family Court Division works with victims in juvenile delinquency matters and their family members in order to prosecute juvenile cases and to arrange for appropriate services. Division staff also may have limited direct contact with respondents in juvenile cases and their family members before counsel is assigned. Additionally, the Division's Interstate Child Support Unit ("ICSU") assists custodial parents in obtaining, modifying and enforcing child support orders in cases where one parent lives in New York and the other parent lives out-of-state.

The Law Department's Administrative Law Division works with street vendors who seek to reclaim property which was seized by the NYPD for forfeiture, and complainants in unlawful eviction proceedings who serve as witnesses in Administrative Code prosecutions. The Division also has limited contact with pro se criminal defendants; in this context, when an interpreter is needed, it is generally provided by the Court.

Other divisions may provide "direct public services" as defined in Executive Order No. 120 on an occasional basis.

II. Agency Language Access Goals

a. What is the goal of your agency's language access plan?

The goal is to ensure that Limited English Proficient ("LEP") individuals are able to communicate with Law Department staff and to receive appropriate assistance and services in the circumstances described in I(b) above.

b. How will your agency know if it has successfully implemented its plan?

Please see sections IV and VII below for discussion of who will oversee implementation and their roles, and monitoring of implementation. The persons identified in section IV will confer to review the success of implementation at least twice annually.



III. LEP Population Assessment

a. How will you execute the Federal Department of Justice “Four-factor Analysis”?

(i) The number or proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service population

The Family Court Division’s juvenile prosecution units estimate that they interact with more than a thousand LEP individuals over the course of a year. Most of the LEP individuals speak Spanish; other languages include Mandarin, Cantonese, French, and Russian.

The ICSU estimates that approximately 20 percent of the custodial parents it interacts with are LEP. Most of these individuals speak Spanish.

Administrative Law works with street vendors who are LEP several times a month.

(ii) The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the agency

The Family Court Division’s juvenile prosecution units have determined that interpretation services may be needed for 15 hours a week, on average. This figure was arrived at by asking attorneys in each borough to track their communications with LEP individuals over the course of a four-week period.

The ICSU determined through recordkeeping by staff, that over the course of 19 weeks, it interacted with approximately 45 individuals who needed a Spanish language interpreter; one individual who needed a Russian language interpreter; and one individual who needed a Chinese language interpreter.

The Administrative Law Division works with street vendors who are LEP several times a month on average.

(iii) The importance of the benefit, service, information, or encounter to the LEP person (including consequences of lack of language services or inadequate interpretation/translation); and

The Law Department has determined that oral interpreter services should be provided in the circumstances described in section I(b) above. Additionally, a number of standard forms used to convey information to, request information from, or schedule appointments with LEP individuals should be translated (as discussed in section V(b) below).

(iv) The resources available to the agency and the costs of providing various types of language services.

The Law Department currently has contracts for telephone and in-person interpretation and written translation with the following agencies: University Language Services (in-person services in more than 30 languages), and Languages Services Associates (telephone interpretation services in more than 20 languages). Additionally, the Law Department has some bilingual staff who are willing to communicate with LEP individuals in their own language.



Depending on the usage and effectiveness of these services, the Law Department may explore in the future whether other interpreter resources would be appropriate (such as a volunteer language bank).

b. Will you utilize the top 6 citywide LEP languages in your plan?

All languages covered by the contract interpretation agencies will be covered for oral interpretation (more than 20 languages, including the top 6 citywide LEP languages). Documents will be translated into Spanish as appropriate (see section V(b) below). At this time the Law Department does not perceive a need for written translation in other languages. Instead, essential public documents will be distributed with a single-page document advising individuals (in multiple languages) that oral interpretation services are available. We will monitor whether written translation into additional languages would be appropriate, and consider this issue when reviewing the success of plan implementation.

IV. Implementation Plan Logistics

a. What is the timeline for implementing your language access plan?

Expanded access to telephone interpretation contract – February 1, 2009. The Law Department currently has a telephone interpretation contract that is used by Family Court Division staff for juvenile delinquency matters on the weekends. Access to this contract will be expanded so that Family Court Division staff and Administrative Law Division staff may use this service on weekdays.

Translation of documents -- June 1, 2009

Training staff in language access requirements, and in how to use interpretation contracts – within 90 days of approval of Language Access Plan

Reviews of plan implementation – 6 months and 1 year after approval of Language Access Plan

b. What are the major milestones in your plan?

See above

c. Who in your agency will be involved in implementing the language access plan?

Family Court Division – The Chief of the Family Court Division and the five Borough Chiefs will be generally responsible for the success of implementation in that Division, including ensuring that staff are trained (see section VI below) and that services are provided to LEP individuals. In addition:

ICSU: The Director of the ICSU will be responsible for ensuring that training is provided to ICSU staff who have contact with members of the public, and that interpreter services are provided for LEP individuals who have contact with ICSU in accordance with this Plan.



Juvenile prosecutions: The Chief of the Family Court Division will name a Family Court Language Access Coordinator who will be responsible for coordinating training, disseminating materials and providing assistance to Division staff.

Administrative Law Division – The Chief of the Administrative Law Division will be generally responsible for the success of implementation in that Division, and will assign a Division Language Access Coordinator who will be responsible for coordinating training, disseminating materials and providing assistance to Division staff.

Office Language Access Coordinator: The Law Department Language Access Coordinator will be responsible for preparing and coordinating review of the Law Department's Language Access Plan, assisting with training, coordinating with the Mayor's Office and other City agencies as appropriate, and arranging for outside resources where appropriate.

V. Service Provision Plan

a. Interpretation Services

1. How will you provide interpretation – both over the phone and at service centers?

Interpretation will generally be provided using the telephone or in-person interpretation contracts or by bilingual staff.

i. Will you use the DOITT citywide contract for Language Line and/or other vendors? Will you use existing bilingual staff?

The Law Department has existing interpretation contracts, as discussed at section III(a)(iv) above. The interpretation contracts provide services in more than 20 languages. Subject to funding, we may also use the DOITT citywide contract for Language Line.

Bilingual staff who are willing to communicate with LEP individuals in their language will do so where appropriate.

ii. How will you identify the primary language of your customers?

Language identification cards will be distributed to appropriate staff members, and staff will receive training in how to use the cards (and where needed, the telephone interpretation service) in order to identify the language spoken by an LEP individual.

For juvenile delinquency matters, Family Court Division attorneys will usually receive this information from the Department of Probation or the Police Department before they have contact with the victim.

Once contact has been made with an individual, staff will record the language spoken by LEP individuals receiving the services described in section I(b) above in the case file.



**2. What is your predicted volume of interpretations?
Measures should include: languages; calls per day broken down by language; hours of interpretation per month.**

(See also section III(a)(ii) above.) The Family Court Division's juvenile prosecution units anticipate needing interpretation services for 15 hours a week, on average, primarily in Spanish.

The ICSU anticipates needing interpretation services for approximately 10 hours a week, on average, mostly in Spanish.

The Administrative Law Division anticipates needing interpreter services several times a month.

b. Translation of written material

Essential public documents will be translated into Spanish by a contract agency.

1. How will you identify essential public documents?

The Family Court and Administrative Law Divisions have limited numbers of form documents that are distributed to members of the public. They have identified those documents that convey important information, request information, or are used to schedule appointments. These documents are rarely changed, so once they are translated, new translations will probably not be needed on a regular basis.

We anticipate translating approximately 25 documents for Family Court/juvenile prosecutions, or about 3,000 words; and about 20 for ICSU, or about 1,500 words. A list of documents is attached as Exhibit A.

2. To what extent will you use plain language guidelines and standards?

The forms described above were written with the targeted audience in mind, consistent with plain language principles.

3. Do you have a plan for translating your website?

No. The documents described above are distributed in hard copy; the Law Department does not make essential public documents available on its website.

4. How will you ensure that your contractor provides quality services?

Volunteer bilingual Law Department staff will be recruited to review written translations for accuracy. Additionally, the Law Department will provide a "glossary" of legal and other specialized terminology translated into Spanish in order to ensure that these terms are translated consistently and accurately.

c. Signage at public service centers

1. How will you produce and post public notices regarding your agency's provision of free language assistance?



Notices of free language assistance will be posted in central publicly accessible locations in each Family Court Division borough office, and by the security desk at 100 Church Street. Signage will be posted within 90 days of approval of the Language Access Plan.

2. How will you translate directional signage in service centers?

Any signs needing translation would be translated using the written translation contract.

d. Outreach

The Law Department's Language Access Plan will be made publicly available on its website and signage will be posted within 90 days of approval of the Language Access Plan.

VI. Training (for front-line, supervisory, and managerial staff)

a. How will you provide training on your language access plan?

Training will be provided for all current staff in the Divisions identified above who interact with the public within 90 days of approval of the Language Access Plan. We will arrange for training to be provided by a contract interpretation agency, to the extent this training is available, in addition to training by Division staff. The Language Access Plan and written training materials will be provided to staff and will be available on the Law Department's Intranet system.

For the Family Court Division, language access training will also be incorporated into the annual orientation training program for new attorneys. For other new attorneys, training will be provided by Division supervisors on an individual basis.

Training sessions will cover both the Law Department's policy concerning when interpreter services should be provided, as well as procedural issues concerning identifying an LEP individual's language, arranging for interpreter services, using contract interpretation services, and recordkeeping.

b. How will you provide training on identifying a customer's primary language; use of dual hand-sets; and the use of telephonic interpreters?

See above

c. How will you provide cultural competency training?

See above



VII. Record Keeping and Evaluation

a. How will you ensure quality of your language access services?

The persons identified in IV(c) will be responsible for overseeing and reviewing Plan implementation as described above.

Additionally, we will monitor usage of the interpretation contracts to determine frequency of use and evaluate whether other oral interpretation services should be provided.

As noted in V(b)(4) above, volunteer bilingual staff will review the quality of written translations provided by the contract agency.

b. How will you maintain records of the language services your agency provides?

The divisions will maintain information about the language spoken by LEP individuals in the files for those cases. Also, the office will monitor usage of the interpretation contracts.

c. How will you ensure compliance with the Executive Order?

Division management (as identified in IV(c) above) will be responsible for ensuring compliance through their supervision and oversight of Division staff. The divisions are relatively small – the Family Court Division has approximately 90 attorneys and 57 support staff divided among five borough offices. The Administrative Law Division has approximately 27 attorneys and 14 support staff.

Additionally, the Plan will be reviewed twice annually by the persons identified in IV(c) above.

VIII. Resource Analysis and Planning

a. How will you leverage current agency resources to implement your plan?

The Law Department will continue to use existing interpretation contracts, and bilingual staff who are willing to communicate with LEP clients in their language.

1. Will you use existing contracts for services or training?

We anticipate using existing contracts for interpreter services and training, in addition to developing our own training materials.

2. Will you create a volunteer language bank?

Not at this time – we may revisit this issue based on our experience with the interpretation contracts.

b. How will you take advantage of citywide resources?

We will use the language identification cards and other resources developed by the Mayor's office. Subject to funding, we may also use the DOITT Language Line contract.



Law Department Language Access Plan – Exhibit A

The following Family Court Division documents will be translated into Spanish:

Juvenile prosecutions:

Rescheduling Notice
Address Verification Form
Notice of Declination to Prosecute
Notice of Intent to File a Petition
Initial Witness Contact Letter (including a request for phone number)
Witness Scheduling Appointment Letter
Victim Impact Statement
HIPAA Release Form
Letter to Witness Explaining HIPAA Release and Request for Signature
"Final Notice" Letter
Letter to Explain and Accompany TOPs
Pre-filing Subpoena to Appear
Letter to Explain and Accompany Pre-filing Subpoena to Appear
Safe Horizon Form

Interstate Child Support Unit:

Registration Petition instructions, Petitioner's Agreement, and forms
Modification Petition instructions, Petitioner's Agreement, and forms
Petition to Establish Support or to Establish Paternity and Support instructions, Petitioner's Agreement, and forms
"Please fill out" letter
Order entered information letter
Additional information letter
Missing papers letter
Initial status letter – Petition forwarded to Responding Jurisdiction letter
Petitioner Status update letter
Petitioner call inquiry letter