

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

- In Cooperation with the Mayor's Office, the Department of Commerce is committed to compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006), and the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter § 8-600 and § A-200, in ensuring meaningful access to City services and programs for individuals with limited English Proficiency ("LEP").
- The purpose of this document is to establish an effective plan and protocol for Department of Commerce personnel to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, individuals who have limited English proficiency (LEP). Following this plan and protocol is essential to the success of the mission of the Department of Commerce.
- The Department of Commerce is committed to creating economic opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds. Ensuring access for individuals with limited English proficiency is essential to creating employment, business and economic opportunities in general for all Philadelphians.

2. GENERAL POLICY

- The Department of Commerce recognizes that the population eligible for services includes individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). It is the policy of the Department of Commerce to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals. The Department of Commerce adopts the following policy to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to Department of Commerce services.
- It is the City's policy to grant access to services or programs to every person even when the person has a limited ability to speak, understand, read or write English. The Department of Commerce intends to take reasonable steps to provide LEP persons with meaningful access to services and programs. The Department of Commerce seeks to reduce barriers by increasing its capacity to deliver services and benefits to people in their primary language.
 - The Department of Commerce, rather than the LEP customer, bears the responsibility for providing language appropriate services.
 - Staff at the initial point of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs.
 - Use of informal interpreters such as family, friends of the person seeking service, or other customers must be discouraged.
 - Minor children are prohibited from acting as interpreters.
 - No staff may suggest or require that an LEP customer provide an interpreter in order to receive services
- The preferred method of serving LEP customers is by:

5. **Phone Calls or Email Correspondence** – LEP individuals may at times call staff members at their direct phone line or via email. If the staff member does not speak the language in which the correspondence is addressed, s/he shall either forward to a staff member who does or access telephonic interpretation in the case of a phone call. In the case of email, emails will only be translated if they appear to be urgent in nature. Routine emails will first be translated using Google Translate to determine the nature of the correspondence and followed up via phone call with interpretation.

5. LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES AND PROTOCOLS

Interpretation

Interpretation is the immediate oral rendering of the source language into the target language.

1) Services Provided

To ensure that the inability to communicate in English does not deprive the public of rights and privileges, our department will continue to provide an interpreter, at no cost to the resident, for LEP individuals. Services offered include telephonic interpretation and in person interpretation.

2) Protocols

Interpretation, by bilingual staff or interpretation services shall be provided when:

- An individual approaches an employee – in person or by phone - and appears to be asking for help but has difficulty communicating what he or she needs, and/or
- When a request for an interpreter is made either orally, in writing or by pointing to a language card.
- When addressing a group, such as business association meeting, where language needs are predicted to be necessary.

3) Procedures

- When bilingual staff is not available, the employee shall contact a telephone interpreter service to provide such services, the process to do so outlined below:
 - o Telephonic Interpretation
Staff can get an over-the-phone interpreter by calling the following vendor: Language Services Associates. This service is available 24/7.
 - o To access an interpreter, please call 866-592-XXXX and provide the following information when greeted by a coordinator:
 - When prompted, please enter your five-digit access code: XXXXX
 - Press 1 for Spanish, 2 Mandarin, 3 Cantonese, 4 Arabic, or 9 for all other languages.
 - For Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Arabic, the interpreted session may now begin.
 - For all other languages, when greeted by a coordinator, request the language needed or ask for assistance in identifying the language.
 - Hold momentarily while your interpreter is connected. Once on the line, you will be notified and provided with the interpreter's ID number.

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1) Services Provided

- To ensure that the inability to communicate in English does not deprive the public of rights and privileges, the Commerce Department will continue to provide translations, at no cost, for LEP individuals. This includes translations of vital documents, signage, and portions of our website.

2) Protocols

- The Commerce Department has developed a list of the documents that are vital to the access of LEP individuals to its programs and other resources. Commerce currently provides some documents in the following languages: Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and French.

High-Priority documents to be translated include:

- "City of Philadelphia Business Tax Basics"
- "Programs and Services for Small Businesses"
- "InStore Forgivable Loan Program"
- "Kiva Zip" (available in Spanish)
- "Business Security Camera Program"
- "Storefront Improvement Program"

Low-Priority documents to be translated include:

Business Development

- "Advanced Manufacturing in Philadelphia"
- "Smart Entrepreneurs Choose Philadelphia"
- "Jump Start Philadelphia"
- "Clean Technology in Philadelphia"
- "Hospitality in Philadelphia"
- "Financial Services in Philadelphia"
- "Logistics & Distribution in Philadelphia"
- "Creative Economy in Philadelphia"
- "Job Creation Tax Credit"
- "Keystone Opportunity Zones"
- "Keystone Innovation Zones"
- "Developer Services Program"
- "Smart City. Smart Financial Choice"

Office of Economic Opportunity

- "Economic Inclusion"

Office of Business Services

- "Office of Business Services"

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- o Currently, no information and materials are available on the website in languages other than English.
- The Business Services Managers page of the general Commerce website has a section regarding Multilingual Services.
 - o It states, "Philadelphia is increasingly diverse and we are committed to offering assistance in many languages. The Commerce Department has Business Service Managers that can assist businesses in Mandarin, Cambodian, Korean, and Spanish. Additionally, the City offers free interpretation services in 160 languages. Call 215.683.2100 for bilingual assistance."
- The new Business Services website (<https://business.phila.gov>) offers a Google Translation in 103 languages other than English. The Department is aware that this is not a permanent solution to translation.

5) Future Plans

- In FY 2017, Commerce will translate select documents (listed above) and make them available through the website, newsletter, and/or community engagement meetings and other events.
- Commerce will periodically review the department webpages with the goal of improving its accessibility to LEP individuals. This includes identifying the most important information to be translated and the best means for disseminating translations to LEP communities.
- Taglines will be included on the website that explain LEP individuals can obtain a translation of documents and that interpretation is available in our office.
- The Department of Commerce recently installed a monitor in the hallway outside of the main entrance to the office. Commerce plans to advertise languages spoken on the monitor to inform LEP individuals of interpretation services and bilingual staff.

Bilingual Staff

Existing bilingual staff who are competent to deliver services directly in a second language, or to serve as interpreters for other employees. Identify the language(s) each staff member speaks and their contact phone numbers and email addresses.

1) Current Staff

- The Department of Commerce will maintain list that identifies the languages spoken by staff who are linguistically, culturally, and technically able to deliver services in a language other than English and/or to serve as interpreters.
 - o The list will be updated on a rolling basis as new employees join the Department of Commerce and will be housed on the department's shared drive.
 - o Languages that have a current speaker in Commerce include:

Languages	Current speaker in Commerce	Willing to assist via phone call	Willing to interpret
Akan Ewe	x		
Cambodian	x		

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- o Competent and trained bilingual staff can also function as interpreters for other staff, when needs and staffing permits.
- Language Sensitive Assignments
- o Subject to any mandatory legal constraints, department staff should consider the options available to assign or configure employees in order to best communicate with LEP individuals served by or in contact with the department without imposing unfair burdens on bilingual staff.
- o Staff will assert their willingness to participate in the levels of activity identified in the chart above.

TRAINING STAFF ON POLICY, PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES

1) Protocols

- The Department of Commerce's Language Access Plan & Protocol is posted on the Commerce bulletin boards, and provided as a hard copy to all Commerce staff members during staff on-boarding.
- The Department of Commerce will distribute the LEP plan to all staff and will have a current electronic copy available on the shared drive so all staff will be knowledgeable of LEP policies and procedures.
- All staff providing technical assistance, training or receiving in-bound calls will receive LEP training. LEP training will be provided by the vendors that are used by Commerce (Language Line Solutions and Nationalities Services Center). LEP training will include information on the following topics:
 - o Legal obligation to provide language assistance
 - o LEP plan and protocols
 - o Identifying and responding appropriately to LEP individuals
 - o Documenting LEP individuals' language preference
 - o Obtaining interpreters (in-person and over-the-phone)
 - o Using and working with interpreters (in-person and over-the-phone)
 - o Translating procedures
 - o Documenting language requests
 - o Using or not using bilingual staff as in-house interpreters
- New staff training will be provided on the Commerce Language Access Plan and Protocol and provided guidance on how to effectively communicate with LEP residents.

2) Future Plans

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- Evaluation results and recommended changes will be shared by the Department of Commerce's Language Access Coordinator and incorporated into the **annual report which is required to be filed under Philadelphia Home Rule Charter § 8-600**. The Language Access Coordinator will also keep records of any language access services provided and will make this information available during the annual review process.

8. LANGUAGE ACCESS COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Commerce LEP clients may file a formal Language Access grievance with either the Office of Business Services (OBS) or the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) if the client believes the Commerce Department has wrongly denied the benefits of this Language Access Plan. The client must file his or her complaint within 2 months of the alleged denial. To file a formal complaint, you must fill out a Language Access Grievance Form provided by OIA and submit the form in person, by mail or e-mail to:

Department of Commerce
Office of Business Services
1515 Arch Street, 12th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
E-Mail: business@phila.gov

Office of Immigrant Affairs
Orlando Almonte
Language Access Program Manager
City Hall, Room 110
Philadelphia, PA 19107
E-Mail: orlando.almonte@phila.gov

Additionally, any person, regardless of immigration status, may submit a formal legal complaint through the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations. To do so, please complete a Public Accommodations Discrimination Intake Form and submit in person or by mail to:

Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations
The Curtis Center
601 Walnut Street., Suite 300 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106

To access the form and for more information, please visit www.phila.gov/humanrelations.

9. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

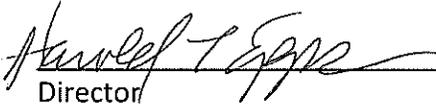
September 2016

- Create and submit the Agency Language Access Plan in accordance with the City's language access policy and submit the Plan to OIA.
- Begin consulting with stakeholders for language access planning and implementation.
- Identify and prioritize documents for translation into plain language and foreign languages.

10. SIGNATURE PAGE



Language Access Coordinator
Chief of Staff
(Department of Commerce)



Director
(Department of Commerce)