

**BOARD OF REVISION OF TAXES**  
**LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN**  
**2019**

**PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY**

The Board of Revision of Taxes is dedicated to compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S.; 561 et sea. (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 for the Board of Revision of Taxes personnel to follow when providing services to Limited English Proficiency individuals.

**GENERAL POLICY**

The Board of Revision of Taxes recognizes that the population eligible for services includes people with Limited English Proficiency. This policy has been adopted to ensure that LEP individuals have equal access to The Board of Revision of Taxes services and applies to all Board of Revision of Taxes' departments and programs.

It is the policy of the City of Philadelphia to provide access to City services and programs to every individual, regardless of the person's ability to speak, understand, read or write English. The Board of Revision of Taxes is committed to taking reasonable steps to provide persons with LEP, with access to services and programs.

The Board of Revision of Taxes, rather than the individual with LEP, is responsible for the following:

- Provide language appropriate services.
- Identify and record language needs.
- Discourage the use of informal interpreters such as, other customers, friends and/or family of the individual seeking services.
- Prohibit using minor children as interpreters.
- Refrain from suggesting that an individual provide their own interpreter.

The preferred method of serving individuals with LEP is:

- Using bilingual staff, when appropriate, to directly provide services to the customer, without the need of an interpreter.
- Using the services of professional in-person or telephonic interpreters when the staff cannot meet the language needs.
- Recognizing that certain circumstances require specialized interpretation and translation services such as HIPPA, confidentiality, or anything that may have legal implications. In circumstances such as these, the staff must be authorized to provide language services, for effective communication, regardless of whether the individual with LEP requests an interpreter.

## **LANGUAGE ACCESS COMMITTEE**

### **Language Access Coordinator**

Sarah O'Connell

### **Language Access Committee**

Sarah O'Connell

Amanda Brown

Paige Pinkney

Linda Tucci

## **DIRECT CONTACT WITH LEP INDIVIDUALS**

The Board of Revision of Taxes as multiple point of contact with the public:

- *Office Walk-ins:* The Board of Revision of Taxes primarily encounters walk-in clients, looking for services connected to Market Value Appeals, Nunc Pro Tuncs, Tax Exemption and Abatements appeals. In these circumstances, if there is no bilingual staff to assist the client, then the staff will utilize telephonic interpretation services.
- *Telephone Calls:* The Board of Revision of Taxes, at times, receives telephone inquiries from individuals with LEP, and will use its bilingual staff to provide information. If a staff member is not available, or the individual requires assistance in a language that cannot be provided, telephonic interpreters will be utilized.

- *Mail or Email Correspondence:* Infrequently, the Board of Revision of Taxes receives correspondence in a language other than English. In these instances, bilingual staff will be utilized to translate general correspondence. If the correspondence is more detailed, the Board of Revision of Taxes will utilize a trained translator for the correspondence and the office's response.

## LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES AND PROTOCOLS

### A - INTERPRETATION

To ensure that an inability to communicate in English does not deprive the public of rights and privileges, the Board of Revision of Taxes will provide interpretation services, at no cost to the resident, for individuals with LEP.

- Bilingual staff will be utilized for basic interpretation.
- Telephonic interpretation will be utilized if a bilingual staff member is not available to assist an individual with LEP.
- If an individual with LEP requests interpretation for a meeting, legal hearing, senior expo, traveling service or any other service, telephonic interpretation or in-person interpretation may be utilized.
- In-person interpretation requests should be made 48 hours in advance of the needed service, to ensure availability. Requests may be made in person:

Board of Revision of Taxes  
601 Walnut Street, Suite 325 East  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
8:30 AM to 4:30 PM  
Monday to Friday, excluding City holidays and office closings  
OR

Through the BRT email:

[Appealinquiry@phila.gov](mailto:Appealinquiry@phila.gov)

\*Please reference In-Person Interpreter Request

- In an emergency situation, telephonic interpretation will be utilized in place of an in-person interpreter

- If the services of a pre-scheduled, in-person interpreter are no longer needed, 24-hour notice of cancellation must be given by the request or, in writing, via the office's email: [appealinquiry@phila.gov](mailto:appealinquiry@phila.gov)

Future Plans:

- Continue to utilize telephonic interpretation services, in-person interpretation service and bilingual staff.
- Post visible, multilingual signs informing individuals of the office's services.
- Train staff on the proper use of the telephonic interpretation system.

*B - TRANSLATION*

To ensure that the inability to communicate in English does not deprive the public of rights and privileges, the Board of Revision of Taxes will provide translation of certain documents, a frequently asked question form (FAQ), and signage in multiple languages.

Future Plans:

- The Board of Revision of Taxes will continue to translate our vital documents and information guides into multiple languages.
- Prominently post Language Identification Guides in all Board of Revision of Taxes departments.
- Advertise Language Access information in *Al Dia* or *El Sol* newspapers.
- Provide translated information at Senior Expos and community events.

*C - BILINGUAL STAFF*

The Board of Revision of Taxes has several staff members who are linguistically, culturally, or technically able to deliver basic services, in other languages such as:

-Mandarin

Future Plans

- Request "language preferred" when selecting employee new hires. Based on need, "language preferred" may be considered as a qualification for certain departments. Preferred languages are: Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, French, Creole or Russian.
- Continue to update our Language Access Program to meet the needs of the public.

#### *D - TRAINING STAFF ON POLICY, PLAN AND PROTOCOLS*

The Board of Revision of Taxes Language Access Plan will be posted on the BRT website, and provided to all current staff, immediately upon policy completion. All newly hired staff members will receive a copy of the policy during the on-boarding process.

All staff members will be provided a packet of information, which will include translated documents (upon completion), telephonic instructions and access number(s), instructions for obtaining in-person interpreters, and information about the legal requirements to provide language assistance.

Language Access Training will be provided for all new hired or newly promoted managers, supervisors, deputies, and their assistants, and staff providing assistance to the public. The training will include:

- Legal obligation to provide language assistance
- LEP plan and protocols
- Identifying and responding appropriately to individuals with LEP
- Documenting language preferences
- Obtaining interpreters (in-person and over the phone)
- Translating procedures
- Documenting language requests
- Using or not using bilingual staff as in-house interpreters

#### Future Plans:

- The Board of Revision of Taxes will schedule Language Access training, every three years, for senior level staff.
- Document all staff that are bilingual, and willing to assist with interpretation

### **LANGUAGE ACCESS COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Individuals may file a formal Language Access grievance with the Office of Immigrant Affairs, if you believe you have been wrongly denied the benefits of this Language Access Plan.

You must file your complaint within six months of the alleged denial. To file a formal complaint, you must fill out a Language Access Grievance Form and submit the form in person, by mail or email to:

Office of Immigrant Affairs

Orlando Almonte

Language Access Program Manager

Municipal Services Building

1401 JFK BLVD., 14th Floor, Suite 1430

Philadelphia, PA 19102

Email: [Orlando.almonte@phila.gov](mailto: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 it in person or by mail to:

Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations

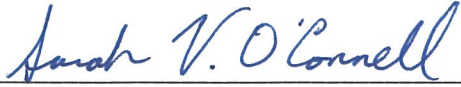
The Curtis Center

601 Walnut Street, Suite 300 South

Philadelphia, PA 19106

To access the form and for more information, please visit [www.Phila.gov/humanrelations](http://www.Phila.gov/humanrelations)

Signature Page



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Sarah O'Connell  
Language Access Program Coordinator



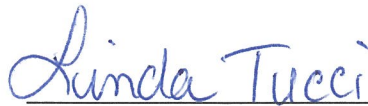
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Committee Member



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Committee Member



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Linda Tucci  
Committee Member

Carla E. Pagan

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Executive Director