

# NYC Department of Finance

## Language Access Implementation Plan

January 2009

<b>I. Agency Mission and Background .....</b>	<b>4</b>
- Finance’s Mission	
- Direct Services Offered by Finance	
<b>II. Agency Language Access Goals.....</b>	<b>8</b>
- Goal of Finance’s Language Access Plan	
- Successful Implementation of Plan	
<b>III. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Population Assessment .....</b>	<b>9</b>
- Finance Customers’ Primary Languages	
- Finance Customer and LEP Population	
<b>IV. Implementation Plan Logistics .....</b>	<b>17</b>
- Plan Timeline	
- Plan Milestones	
<b>V. Service Provision Plan.....</b>	<b>21</b>
- Interpretation Services	
- Translation of Written Material	
- Signage at Customer Service Centers	
<b>VI. Training.....</b>	<b>27</b>
- Language Access Policy	
- LA Training for Employees	
<b>VII. Record Keeping and Evaluation.....</b>	<b>28</b>
- Ensuring Quality of Language Access Services	
- Maintaining Records	
- Ensuring Compliance with the Executive Order	
<b>VIII. Resource Analysis and Planning.....</b>	<b>30</b>
- Existing Agency Resources to Implement Plan	
- Leveraging Citywide Resources	
<b>IX. Public Awareness and Outreach Strategy.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>33</b>
- Finance Schedule of Documents for Translation	34
- Business Center Customer Survey on Language Preference	35
- Call Center Customer Survey on Language Preference	36
- Employee Survey on Language Access Needs	37
- Summary of LEP Population and Survey Data	40
- Draft Language Access Request and Tracking Forms	42

## A Message from the Finance Commissioner

I am so pleased that Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed Executive Order 120 earlier this year requiring all City agencies to develop a language access plan. This is a major and important step toward ensuring that all New Yorkers, particularly those who do not speak English as their first language, can take full advantage of City services.

Finance serves many New Yorkers and visitors alike. Improving language access will help us fulfill our mission to help people pay the right amount on time. We cannot help you pay a bill, fight a parking ticket, or get a tax refund unless you understand our rules and procedures. That's why language access is so important.

That is also why I appointed a team of senior managers from across the agency to develop this plan to ensure all Finance customers, regardless of their ability to speak English, have meaningful access to our information and services. In the coming year, we look forward to making these services more accessible to you and we welcome your feedback on how we can better meet the needs of all New Yorkers in the future.

Sincerely,

Martha E. Stark  
Finance Commissioner

### I. AGENCY MISSION AND BACKGROUND

The Department of Finance's mission is to help people pay the right amount on time. Finance collects City revenues fairly and efficiently, increases compliance with City tax and other revenue laws, values all NYC property, maintains property records, and provides an independent forum for the public to dispute tax and parking violation liability.

#### Direct Services Offered by Finance

##### *Collects City revenues fairly and efficiently*

- **Payment Operations** quickly and accurately processes all payments, business tax returns, exemptions and business tax refunds, while providing our customers with convenient options to pay and file. Specifically, this division collects and processes all NYC business income and excise taxes, property taxes, and parking tickets and is responsible for maintaining up-to-date account information. Payments can be made in person, at our borough Business Centers, through the mail, or online. Payment Operations also manages a variety of individual, commercial and construction property tax exemption programs (including STAR, Senior Citizens, Veterans, the Industrial & Commercial Abatement Program, etc.), providing tax reductions for qualified property owners.
- **Collections** helps people timely resolve their debt by collecting outstanding business taxes as well as Environmental Control Board (ECB), Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) and parking fines, while encouraging voluntary compliance. The Division performs a wide range of collections functions, including dunning, docketing, asset research, field visits and execution processing, among others. The Collections Division shows its commitment to fairness by providing customers with flexible payment plans and an opportunity to dispute questionable charges.
- **Treasury** manages and safeguards the City's money by administering the City's network of bank accounts and managing the cash flow of our banking and investment system. Treasury also holds all cash bail and court-ordered funds in trust until the court directs their release. In addition, Treasury disburses payments to all City contractors and vendors and administers the vendor Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) payment program.

### *Increases compliance with City tax and other revenue laws*

- **Audit** provides timely feedback to taxpayers about the accuracy of their filed returns. Tax auditors conduct in-depth field and desk audits of business tax returns to ensure that all companies and individuals that are required to pay New York City taxes - from the largest multinational corporations to the smallest, unincorporated businesses - pay the right amount on time. In addition, this Division oversees the Voluntary Disclosure Program, a way for taxpayers who discover that they have not filed or properly reported past tax liability to come forward and resolve a past liability without penalties and often with a reduction in the number of years of returns required to be filed. Audit also supervises the Metro Unit, which conducts New York State and City Sales Tax and Personal Income Tax audits as part of an arrangement with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance.
- **Enforcement** investigators and auditors are focused on identifying individuals and businesses that do not pay their fair share of taxes. The Division also licenses wholesale cigarette vendors and works closely with the State to identify online vendors who advertise “tax free” cigarettes.
- The **Sheriff** is the chief civil law enforcement office for the City of New York. Deputies enforce court orders and judgments, including the service of process, property and income executions, evictions, and arrests while promoting public safety. The Sheriff’s deputies also arrest individuals who violate cigarette tax laws and commit other crimes. They provide enforcement for additional City agencies and the deputies in their Warrants Unit serve Family Court summonses to parents who are delinquent in child support payments.

### *Values all property in the City*

- **Property** ensures New York City’s one million residential and commercial properties are valued fairly, accurately and consistently each year. The Division produces an annual Tentative Property Assessment Roll in January, and a Final Roll in May. Once assessors determine the fair market value of a property, the Property Assessment Administration System, which is programmed to reflect city and state property tax laws, automatically calculates the assessed value and applies any exemption to compute the taxable value of the property. In June the tax rate is applied to the taxable value to determine the tax due for the fiscal year that begins on July 1.

### *Maintains property records*

- The **Land Records Division** protects property interests by timely and accurately examining documents presented for recording. The office maintains all official records of real and personal property transfers such as deeds, mortgages, and leases. In Staten Island, property records are recorded and maintained at the Office of the County Clerk. These records are used to provide land title ownership ("title search") information that proves clear title for property in the City. Personal property records (Uniform Commercial Code filings and Federal liens) are also used to establish creditworthiness. With offices in Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, the Land Records Division records are maintained in an electronic format in the Automated City Register Information System (ACRIS). ACRIS allows anyone to view property-related ownership documents online, going back to 1966, without the need to go to the Land Records Division's Office. The Land Records Division also oversees the Tax Map Unit, which is responsible for maintaining and updating the official tax map of the City of New York.

### *Provides an independent forum for the public to dispute tax and parking violation liability*

- The **Adjudication Division** provides a fair and efficient forum for motorists to challenge their parking and red light tickets. Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) conduct hearings for drivers to contest parking tickets over the Internet, by mail, and in person in all five boroughs. In addition, judges hear appeals of parking ticket hearing decisions. The Division also includes a special unit for commercial adjudications, which conducts hearings and appeals on tickets issued to commercial vehicles. The Red Light Camera Unit handles hearings and appeals for tickets issued at selected, photographed traffic light locations throughout the City.
- The **Conciliations Bureau**, in our Legal Affairs Division, provides an informal administrative appeals process within Finance where taxpayers can contest Departmental decisions including business income and excise tax-related determinations of additional assessments or refund disallowances.

### *Responds quickly to customer needs*

Finance's operating divisions are supported by several centralized points of public contact. These **Customer Service** areas focus on quickly and efficiently responding to customers' needs, whether by providing a service or up to date information (on parking, property or business taxes), answering questions, or resolving customer issues. Finance's primary points of public contact providing customer service are:

- Five Borough Business Centers - managed by Payment Operations Division.  
The Bronx -- 3030 Third Avenue, 10455  
Brooklyn -- 210 Joralemon Street, 11201  
Manhattan - 66 John Street, 10038  
Queens -- 144-06 94<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 11435  
Staten Island -- 350 St. Marks Place, 10301
- Customer Assistance Helpline: Finance's main call center, managed by the Customer Relations Division.
- Correspondence Unit: 66 John Street, 3rd Floor, NYC 10038 - a centralized customer service unit that oversees written inquiries received via email and US mail, reporting directly to the Executive Office.
- Communications - This unit produces and maintains all agency forms, publications, as well as the agency's website, and is managed as part of the Communications & Government Affairs (CGA) Division.
- Business & Community Outreach - This unit develops and implements all of Finance's outreach initiatives and programs, and is also managed by CGA.

### II. LANGUAGE ACCESS GOAL

The goal of Finance's Language Access Plan is to ensure that the public has timely and easy access to our information and services, regardless of their ability to speak English.

#### Successful Implementation of Plan

Finance will monitor the effectiveness of this plan's implementation at the supervisory, management and executive levels:

- *Clearly Defined Measures* - Concurrent with implementation of the plan, by April 2009, Finance will develop specific performance metrics to measure the agency's success in providing timely and accessible language access services.
- *Routine Data Collection* - Staff and supervisors will routinely collect and report data on requests for language services to monitor and ensure the agency is able to meet the demand for language services.
- *Periodic Quality Control Checks* - The Office of Performance Management, working in concert with Internal Audit, will initiate a "mystery customer" program for quality assurance.
- *Executive Review and Oversight* - The Commissioner created a Language Access Planning Team (See Section IV for team member roles and responsibilities) to develop this plan and oversee its implementation. The Language Access Planning Team will continue to meet regularly to coordinate implementation, track progress, reassess customer needs, and modify our plans accordingly. The team will update this plan annually.

### III. LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) POPULATION ASSESSMENT

To assess the needs of our LEP customers and plan for the provision of translation and interpretation services, Finance conducted a four-factor analysis using the Department of Justice's model. Our goals were: 1) *to determine the primary languages other than English that our customers speak;* 2) *to assess the size of the LEP customer group, the frequency of interaction, the importance of Finance's services and the resources available to Finance;* and 3) *to provide a data-driven analytical framework for the design and implementation of this language access plan.*

#### Finance Customers' Primary Languages

Based on the data that we collected through five different sources, we learned that **Spanish, Chinese and Russian**, the top three languages other than English spoken by the City's LEP population, are also spoken and preferred by Finance customers. Specifically, they are spoken by:

- 47% of LEP homeowners in New York,
- 68% of Finance's Business Center and Customer Assistance Helpline customers who, when surveyed, said they prefer Finance provide services in a language other than English,
- 97% of 311 LEP callers who accessed Finance's services in the last 11 months.

**Haitian Creole and Korean** are the next top two languages commonly spoken among our customers.

The five data sources that helped us determine these primary languages are: the U.S. Census Bureau's Census 2000 and 2007 American Community Survey, the Department of Finance's Employee Survey on Language Access Needs and our Customer Survey on Language Preference, and 311 data on language access requests.

In the **Census 2000** data, provided by the Mayor's Office of Operations' Customer Service Group (CSG), we looked at the New York City population (5 years of age and older) who speak a language other than English at home and who consider themselves a person with limited English proficiency (LEP). Of the 1,829,928 New Yorkers identified with LEP, 52% speak Spanish. Below are the top six languages other than English that these 1.83 million New Yorkers use at home and the percentage of them who speak each of the languages:

### III. LEP Population Assessment

Rank	Language other than English Spoken	% of LEP New Yorkers (n=1.8 mil)
1	Spanish	52.12%
2	Chinese	12.46%
3	Russian	6.88%
4	Korean	2.89%
5	Italian	2.79%
6	Polish	2.59%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, provided by Customer Service Group*

In the American Community Survey 2007 data, provided by the NYC Department of City Planning, we looked at the New York City homeowners and the percentage of those who consider themselves as having LEP. Of the total 1,019,300 homeowners in New York, 160,487 identified themselves as having limited English proficiency. Among these, Spanish is also the most widely spoken language, reported by 25% of LEP homeowners. Below are the top six languages (other than English) that these 160,487 homeowners speak and the percentage of them who speak each of the languages:

Rank	Language other than English Spoken	% of LEP Homeowners (n=160,487)
1	Spanish	25.49%
2	Chinese	13.88%
3	Italian	8.67%
4	Russian	7.23%
5	Cantonese	6.80%
6	Polish	4.39%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2007, provided by Department of City Planning*

In addition to census data, Finance conducted two surveys from November 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> to collect information from both employees and customers regarding customers' language access needs. The Employee Survey was administered online and sent to 1,499 employees, primarily to those that directly interact with the public. We received responses from 791 employees. The survey, which is included in the Appendix, asked respondents to indicate if they have been approached by a customer who has LEP and, if so, which language he or she spoke or wanted to speak. The respondents were asked to select five to ten most common languages other than English that they've encountered while serving customers. Spanish came in at the top of the list. This was selected by 93% of respondents as the most commonly heard language. Below are the top six languages (other than English) that our employees have encountered and the percentage of staff that selected each of the languages:

### III. LEP Population Assessment

Rank	Language other than English Spoken	% of Respondents Selected (n=791)
1	Spanish	92.62%
2	Cantonese	54.33%
3	Russian	39.57%
4	Mandarin	39.29%
5	Haitian Creole	20.99%
6	Korean	19.29%

*Source: NYC Department of Finance Employee Survey on Language Access Needs, November 5-14, 2008*

During the same period, we conducted a paper-based survey of customers in our Business Centers and customers who called the Customer Assistance Helpline. The survey was handed out to every customer who entered our Business Center and a few other customer service locations throughout five boroughs. Completed surveys were collected and tabulated by our staff. On the phone lines, we asked the customers to answer the survey questions while our agents took down their answers. In all, we collected completed surveys from 3,204 customers.

In this survey, we asked the customers the purpose of their visit that day, how often they interact with Finance, and if they prefer that we communicate with them in a language other than English. If they answered "yes", we asked them what services they preferred we provide in another language and what language they would select. Of the 3,204 customers who responded to the survey, 32% said they would prefer Finance to communicate with them in a language other than English. Among these customers, 59% indicated that their preferred language is Spanish, the most frequently cited of any languages. Below are the top six languages preferred by our customers and the percentage of survey respondents who selected each of those languages:

Rank	Language other than English Preferred	% of Respondents Selected (n=3,204)
1	Spanish	58.81%
2	Arabic	6.15%
3	Russian	5.84%
4	Haitian Creole	5.43%
5	French	5.43%
6	Chinese/Cantonese	5.12%

*Source: NYC Department of Finance Customer Survey on Language Preference, November 5-14, 2008*

Apart from these surveys, we also obtained data on the language access requests the City received through its 311 customer service helpline, which currently provides interpretation services to callers who don't speak English. We wanted to find out which languages are most frequently requested by Finance customers who called with a question about a parking ticket, property tax, cash bail, etc. Of the 8,706 Finance-related calls from January 1<sup>st</sup> to November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008, where the caller requested a translator, 80% requested Spanish. The top five languages are in the table below along with the percentage of requests for each language:

Rank	Language other than English Requested	% of Callers Requested
1	Spanish	79.99%
2	Mandarin	10.22%
3	Cantonese	3.34%
4	Russian	3.46%
5	Other	2.99%

*Source: NYC 311 Language Line requests from January 1<sup>st</sup> to November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

Data on Vehicle Owners

More than 59% of customers who responded to our Customer Survey were users of parking ticket related services, and 92% of the 311 callers who requested language access services were calling about parking tickets or towed vehicles. Even though we could not obtain language usage data for the LEP population among vehicle owners in New York City, we believe the information from our Customer Survey and the 311 calls provided a good assessment of the language preference of vehicle owners.

Four-factor Analysis

**Factor 1: Demographics of Finance’s Customers**

Since Finance administers property, business income and excise taxes and collects parking and other fines, our customers include both individuals and corporations. In the analysis of whom among our customers and how many of them are likely to be persons with limited English proficiency, we primarily looked at individual customers rather than corporations. Our rationale was that corporations may have more resources at their disposal to hire a translator or bilingual representative to facilitate their business operations in the U.S. Individual customers with LEP are therefore the primary focus of our language access plan.

In 2007, New York City had 1,019,300 homeowners who are expected to pay property taxes. And in the year between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, the City issued parking fines to 3,033,016 unique license plates. Although not every

plate is owned by one unique vehicle owner, this is the “ballpark” size of our parking fine customer population. In fiscal year 2008, which ran from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, we served 1.5 million customers in our five Business Centers in billing and payment services related to property, business income and excise taxes, parking fines and various other fees. In the parking ticket adjudication area, which also operates in the Business Centers, we served approximately 600,000 vehicle owners, who were there to contest their tickets. On our Customer Assistance Helpline, we answered 451,098 customer calls during the same period. These numbers include repeat customers.

#### **Factor 2: Finance’s LEP Customers and the Frequency with which they Use or May Use Finance’s Language Assistance Services**

The American Community Survey 2007 found that 160,487, or 16%, of the 1,019,300 homeowners in New York City considered themselves limited English proficient. According to our Employee Survey on Language Access Needs, 83% of our employees estimated that the percentage of our customers that is LEP is as high as 15%.

Our Customer Survey of Language Preference found that 33% of Business Center respondents and 13% of Customer Assistance Helpline respondents said they prefer Finance to provide services in a language other than English. The number of those who have actually requested an interpreter, though, is much smaller. When we looked at 313,470 calls that 311 received concerning major Finance-related services between January 1 and November 17, only 8,706 were from LEP customers who requested a translator. That is 2.7%. So the current take-up rate on the 311 helpline is rather low compared to our estimated LEP population and the percentage of our customers who prefer language access services.

However, we believe once Finance starts providing translation and interpretation services, more of our LEP customers will start using our services directly rather than asking their family members to help; or perhaps not contacting Finance at all. So to plan for adequate language assistance services, we estimate from 5% to 15% of our customers will either need or prefer to use translation/interpretation services when they interact with Finance to fulfill their tax and fine obligations to the City.

Based on our Employee Survey, 67% of our Business Center employees said that, on average, they are approached by an LEP customer from one to six times a month. Based on our Customer Survey, 33% of customers surveyed said they would like language access services and these customers interact with Finance 1 to 2 times a month on average.

#### **Factor 3: The Nature and Importance of Finance’s Services**

Finance is New York City’s principal revenue collection agency and our mission is to help people pay the right amount on time. As such, we provide general tax

### III. LEP Population Assessment

and revenue related information, billing, payment and adjudication services that are important to helping New York City residents, businesses and visitors fulfill their obligations and comply with applicable tax and revenue laws. Without full access to Finance's information and services, taxpayers and vehicle owners may inadvertently be delinquent on their obligations, which could result in financial costs and potential civil or criminal charges. We consider our information and services important to our customers' ability to understand and comply with their obligations to the City.

The specific services that Finance provides are outlined on pages 4 to 6 of this plan. In prioritizing where to provide our customers with language assistance services, given the resources available, we asked the following questions:

1. Is this an essential service or information in relation to Finance's mission?
2. What's the LEP customer population for this service?
3. Would the LEP customers have an alternative way to access this information or service if Finance doesn't provide language assistance measures?

Finance identified our Customer Assistance Helpline and five Borough Business Centers as key points of public contact, particularly for LEP customers, and will make interpretation services available through these locations. We will also go forward to translate the documents indicated below:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Document Name</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Timetable</u>
Parking Ticket Hearings	Got Ticket Brochure. (Guide to parking ticket hearings)	Adjudication	December 2008
Property Tax Assessment	Notice of Property Value Brochure	Property	February 2009
Exemptions and Abatements	Exemption and Abatement Application for Owners	Payment Operations	February 2009
Lien Sale	Lien Sale Brochure (already translated into Chinese, Korean, Russian, Creole, Spanish)	Collections	February 2009
Bail Refunds	Bail Assignment Application	Treasury	March 2009
" "	Change of Address Notice	" "	March 2009
" "	Lost Bail Receipt Affidavit	" "	March 2009
" "	Stop Payment Affidavit	" "	March 2009
" "	"What you should know about bail" brochure	" "	March 2009
Finance Website	Homepage notation on the availability of translation services	CGA	July 2009
Statement of Account & Billing	Quarterly Statement of Account Brochure for property tax.	Payment Operations	September and December 2009

#### Factor 4: The Resources Available to Finance to Implement our LA Plan

In developing this plan, we relied on the availability of the following resources for implementation of the plan:

##### Human Resources:

- Coordination and Management: Finance has appointed the Department's Chief of Staff to coordinate planning, resources and executive support of language access services, and the agency's Director of Business & Community Outreach, to coordinate timely and effective implementation of the plan. In addition, the Commissioner has appointed an agencywide Language Access Planning and Implementation team.
- Language Bank Volunteers: Finance has access to volunteers in the Citywide Language Bank (of which 31 are Finance employees) who speak in approximately 80 languages. We plan to tap into this group for language assistance services.
- Bilingual Employees: Finance is fortunate to have many bilingual employees who are fluent in a second language -- Arabic, Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese, Farsi, French Creole, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian French, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Malayalam, Nigerian, Punjabi, Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese. In 2009, Finance Employee Services Division will survey all employees to determine the number of bilingual employees in the agency and the languages they speak, as we do not currently maintain such data in employee records. We expect to be able to tap into this group for language assistance services and to recruit additional Finance volunteers for the Citywide Language Bank.

**External Support:** We anticipate that we will be able to take advantage of support from the Mayor's Office of Immigration Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Operations' Customer Service Group to leverage citywide language access initiatives on training, signage, data collection and reporting, and bilingual employee certification.

**Funding:** Finance has limited funding available through the remainder of Fiscal Year 2009 to provide interpretation services and translate a small number of widely-used essential documents and educational materials.

#### Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the size of our LEP customer population, the frequency with which they interact with Finance, and the nature of our services, we conclude that providing interpretation services at our Borough Business Centers and on our Customer Assistance Helpline, along with translation of a limited number of written documents, is necessary to ensure our customers have timely and easy access to Finance information and services. For customers who visit us in person or call our helpline, we will provide interpretation using on-site bilingual staff whenever possible, and a selected vendor for limited translation/interpretation services. All languages will be available through the selected vendor. When customers access our information and services otherwise, we will provide a limited number of forms and brochures in **Spanish, Chinese and Russian**. Due to the limited resources available within the next two years, we will focus on these top three languages in the implementation of our plan.

### IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN LOGISTICS

#### Roles and Responsibilities for Language Access Staff

##### **Language Access Coordinator, Planning & Executive Support**

Chief of Staff, Executive Office

- Oversees the development and completion of Finance's Language Access Plan.
- On behalf of the Commissioner and First Deputy, provides executive oversight and support for the implementation of Language Access Plan.
- Plans and secures resources.
- Reviews data and reports to ensure compliance with policies and procedures.
- Advises the Mayor's Offices of Operations and Immigrant Affairs and Finance's Leadership Team on the planning and results of the agency's Language Access Program.

##### **Language Access Co-Coordinator, Implementation**

Director of Business & Community Outreach, CGA

- Oversees all aspects of implementation of this plan to ensure key milestones are met and goals are achieved by target timeframes.
- Coordinates with Finance's operational managers to implement, monitor and annually update all components of the agency's Language Access Plan.
- Develops and implements a public awareness and outreach campaign.

##### **Language Access Planning & Implementation Team**

- Senior Director for Borough Center Operations, Payment Operations, oversees the delivery of interpretation services in all of Finance Business Centers.
- Director, Performance Measurement, develops and oversees data collection, reporting and analysis on language access services.
- Supervisor, Customer Relations, plans for and implements the delivery of interpretation services through Finance's Customer Assistance Helplines.
- Assistant Commissioner, Employee Services, develops language access and bilingual employee policies, and coordinates all aspects (development, delivery, etc.) of employee training Language Access policies and procedures.
- Executive Office intern, provides administrative support and data analysis to the team.
- EEO Officer, Language Bank Liaison, coordinates requests for Language Bank volunteers, and tracks and reports data on all Language Bank activities.
- Director of Communications, Communications & Governmental Affairs, develops and implements an internal communication plan to promote language access policies and procedures among Finance employees and oversees the translation of selected documents.
- Deputy City Register, Land Records Division, works with the Volunteer Language Bank Liaison and Employee Services Division to maintain up-to-date records on Finance's Language Bank volunteers and bilingual employees.

**Language Access Planning Timeline**

**LEP Population Assessment**

- Nov '08 Collect and analyze data, review the results and conduct four-factor analysis
- Dec '08 Recommend primary languages for translation
- Jan '09 Review data and validate primary languages for translation

**Service Provision Plan**

- Nov '08 Review inventory of services
  
- Dec '08 Research translation/interpretation service vendors contracted by other City agencies  
Identify essential documents for translation
  
- Jan '09 Validate list of essential documents for translation and prioritize areas for language access services  
Assess and plan for space configurations and equipment needs (telephone sets and technical software)  
Identify signage requirements and locations  
Obtain quotes for special signs, space configurations and equipment purchases
  
- Feb '09 Select vendors  
Begin procurement process, preparing paperwork and securing approvals  
Begin Drafting Language Access Policy and Procedures, including procedure for accessing Language Line services, and utilizing bilingual staff and Language Bank volunteers  
Submit procurement paperwork for necessary equipment and space requirements  
Issue Agency Document Translation Guide
  
- Mar '09 Secure funds  
Begin using data collection and reporting procedures  
Finalize Language Access Policy and Procedures, including procedure for accessing Language Line services, and utilizing bilingual staff and Language Bank volunteers  
Begin developing Employee Training Program for Customer Service Employees
  
- Apr '09 Finalize Language Line contract for services  
Finalize Employee Training Program and develop schedule of all customer service participants  
Produce signs, finalize purchasing equipment and configuring work spaces  
Begin reporting data to Operations  
Develop internal communications plan

## IV. Implementation Plan Logistics

- May '09      Initiate and deliver Language Access training for all Customer Service staff  
Continue translating essential documents  
Develop outreach materials
- Jun '09      Implement internal communication plan for all employees (i.e., Commissioner's agency wide - email, update FinanceNet, article in ReveNews)  
Approval and Prepare Installation for IVR message, equipment, signage and space in Business Centers  
Complete training for customer service staff, bilingual employees and language bank volunteers  
Post signage, update website and send reminder to staff by COB on June 26, 2009
- July '09      Begin offering LA services in Call Center and Business Centers on July 6th  
Continue collecting and reporting data from all points of public contact  
Post new LA page on website with translated documents and advise that interpretation services are available by phone or in Business Centers
- Aug-Sept '09      Develop quality control program to assess Language Line and Customer Service delivery
- Oct-Dec '09      Continue to translate documents, deliver services and collect data  
Administer a "mystery customer" program to assess service delivery  
Analyze data and reassess customer demand and agency resource allocation  
Modify procedures, as necessary, to assure quality of customer service
- Jan '10      Analyze and report data collected in past six months  
Resources permitting, update plan for any additional language access services

### **Volunteer Language Bank**

- Dec '08      Validate current list of Citywide Language Bank volunteers
- Jan '09      Research options for certifying bilingual employees and additional Language Bank volunteers
- Feb '09      Develop Employee Survey to identify bilingual employees and recruit new volunteers for the Language Bank to support customer service

## IV. Implementation Plan Logistics

- Mar '09 Tabulate results of employee survey to identify bilingual employees and recruit new volunteers for the Language Bank to support customer service
- Apr '09 Commissioner and FDC Recognition Breakfast for current Citywide Language Bank Volunteers  
Administer Employee Self-assessment to those interested in serving as bilingual employees or citywide language bank volunteers  
Hold Follow up meeting(s) with survey respondents

### Major Implementation Milestones

- Jan '09 Validate list of essential documents and prioritize areas for language access services
- Feb '09 Begin procurement process to contract for services  
Begin Drafting Language Access Policy and Procedures, including procedure for accessing Language Line services, and utilizing bilingual staff and Language Bank volunteers
- Mar '09 Finalize Language Access Policy for distribution to staff in training
- Apr '09 Finalize Language Line contract for services  
Begin reporting data to Operations  
Develop agency signage
- May '09 Continue translating essential documents  
Start training Customer Service staff
- Jun '09 Implement Internal Communications Plan - Commissioner's agency wide email, update FinanceNet, article in ReveNEWS
- Jul '09 Post agency signage  
Begin offering interpretation services in Call Center and Business Centers  
Continue collecting and reporting data from all points of public contact
- Aug-Sep '09 Implement Public Awareness and Outreach Campaign
- Oct-Dec '09 Continue to translate documents, deliver services and collect data  
Analyze data, reassess demand and resource commitments

## V. SERVICE PROVISION PLAN

### Interpretation Services at Borough Business Centers:

- *How Finance Currently Serves LEP Customers:* We rely on our Spanish-speaking employees in the Business Centers to serve customers who request services in Spanish. For customers who request service in all other languages, we ask the customers to bring their own interpreters, and most have been able to do so. This holds true for parking ticket hearings as well.
- *How Finance Plans to Serve LEP Customers:* We will continue to rely on our bilingual employees in the Business Centers but will also provide telephonic interpretation services for any customers that request services in another language other than English, including Spanish when our bilingual employees are not available to translate.
- *How Finance Will Identify the Primary Language of LEP Customers:* We will provide tools and signs so that LEP customers know that we provide interpretation and can indicate to us the language they speak. For example, we will have signs in major languages, directional signage with pictograms, and "I Speak" cards will also be available.
- *How Finance Will Provide the Service:* Once we know which language the customer speaks, we will find out if any of our bilingual employees can translate. If not, we will arrange for interpretation services from our contract vendor.
- *Where Finance Will Provide the Service:* We will make both in-person and telephonic interpretation services available in all five borough Business Centers. To accommodate telephonic interpretation, we will equip one Payment Operations service window and one parking ticket hearing room with a dual-handset phone or a speakerphone.
- *How Finance Anticipates the Volume of Requests:* We expect that 75,000, or 5%, of the approximate 1.5 million customers who visit Finance's Business Centers each year will need an interpreter. Based on the data provided by 311, 80% of callers who requested interpretation services so far this year have asked for a Spanish interpreter. We therefore expect that our bilingual staff will be able to serve many of these customers. We believe these estimates are conservative, however, because once people know that Finance provides interpretation services the demand for these services is likely to increase.
- *How Finance Will Collect Data on LA Services:* Business Centers will use a "Language Access Request Tracking Form" (See sample draft in Appendix) to collect data on volume of requests, service provision, and outcomes in order to evaluate the effectiveness of our program.

### Interpretation Services at the Customer Assistance Helpline:

- ***How Finance Currently Serves LEP Customers:*** We have two Spanish-speaking agents and a Cantonese-speaking supervisor who handle calls from customers who request service in these languages.
- ***How Finance Plans to Serve LEP Customers:*** Finance plans to continue utilizing existing and recruit additional bilingual employees to serve LEP customers. We would like to provide standardized training and certification for these employees and are working with the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs and the Mayor's Office of Operations' Customer Service Group on citywide initiatives. We will work with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), which provides technical support for us, to configure our phone system so that callers can press a number that takes them directly to Spanish-speaking agents. Rotary phone users who are in the English queue by default will be transferred to the Spanish queue. We will provide telephonic interpretation services for any customers that request services in a language other than English, including Spanish when our bilingual employees are not available to interpret. When a caller requests a language other than Spanish, agents will conference in an interpreter from our telephonic service provider. We will offer all LEP customers interpretation services, but if the customer prefers using his/her own interpreter, Finance will honor that request.
- ***Where Finance Will Provide the Service:*** We will implement this plan on our main Customer Assistance helplines
- ***How Finance Will Identify the Primary Language of LEP Customers:*** We will design our phone messages to allow Spanish-speaking customers to select a queue for Spanish. For other languages, our agents will work with the customers to identify the language they speak. If our agents cannot determine which language or dialect (e.g., Mandarin or Cantonese) the customer speaks, we will seek help from the telephonic interpreters. Our agents will note the customer's language preference in our Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) system so that we can better assist the customer in the future.
- ***How Finance Anticipates the Volume of LA Requests:*** Our Customer Assistance helpline handles approximately 40,000 calls a month; we expect at least 2,000, or 5%, of those calls will be from LEP customers. This translates into about 24,000 calls from LEP customers a year. According to 311, 80% of LEP customers calling about a Finance issue this year have asked for a Spanish interpreter. We therefore expect that our bilingual agents will be able to serve many of these customers. We believe these estimates are conservative, however, because once people know that Finance provides interpretation services the demand for these services is likely to increase.

*Anticipated Languages That Will Be Served:* We anticipate that the selected telephone interpretation vendor will allow us to serve over one hundred languages.

### Timeline for Implementation of Interpretation Services:

Dec '08	Research translation/interpretation services vendors contracted by other City agencies
Jan '09	Prioritize areas for language access services Assess and plan for space configurations and equipment needs such as telephone sets, space configurations, and technical software Identify signage requirements and locations Obtain quotes for special signs, space configurations and equipment purchases
Feb '09	Select Vendors Begin procurement process, preparing paperwork and securing approvals Begin Drafting Language Access Policy and Procedures, including procedure for accessing Language Line services, and utilizing bilingual staff and Language Bank Submit procurement paperwork for necessary equipment and space requirements
Mar '09	Secure funds for Language Line Begin using data collection and reporting procedures Finalize Language Access Policy and Procedures, including procedure for accessing Language Line services, and utilizing bilingual staff and Language Bank volunteers
Apr '09	Finalize Language Line contract for services Finalize Employee Training Program and develop schedule of all customer service participants Produce signs, finalize purchasing equipment and configuring work spaces
May '09	Initiate and deliver Language Access training for all Customer Service staff
June '09	Approval and Prepare Installation for IVR message, equipment, signage and space in Business Centers Post signage, update website and send reminder to staff by COB on June 26, 2009
July '09	Begin offering LA services in Call Center and Business Centers on July 6th Continue collecting and reporting data from all points of public contact

Post new LA page on website with translated documents and advise that interpretation services are available by phone or in Business Centers

Aug-Sept '09 Develop quality control program to assess Language Line and Customer Service delivery

Oct-Dec '09 Administer a mystery customer program to assess service delivery  
Analyze data and reassess customer demand and agency resource allocation  
Modify procedures, as necessary, to assure quality of customer service

### Translation of Written Materials:

- ***How Finance Identifies Essential Documents:*** Finance defines Essential Documents as a form, application or other document that is necessary or helpful to the public to access our services or receive a benefit. Each division reviewed their list of documents and submitted what they consider “essential”. These documents include applications, forms, brochures, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) or guidelines. Additionally, the Language Access Planning Team reviewed Finance’s inventory of documents posted on our website and how often they have been downloaded. Based on these reviews, we have selected the 10 documents listed in Section III, Factor 3 for translation during the next fiscal year. (See also Appendix A). We will translate these documents into **Spanish, Chinese and Russian**.
- ***How Finance Sets “Plain Language” Guidelines and Standards:*** Finance will take advantage of training opportunities and support from the Mayor’s Offices of Correspondence, Adult Education, and Operations. We are planning to offer this specialized training to all of our Correspondence and Communications staff. Going forward Finance staff will also utilize the tools available to routinely assess the grade level necessary to read our documents as we update essential documents and publications.
- ***Who Will Provide Translation Services to Finance:*** Finance is researching the quality of services and costs for all translation and interpretation service vendors, with a focus on those that are already being used by other City agencies. We will select our preferred vendor by February 2009 and will begin translating documents no later than May 2009.
- ***How Finance Will Ensure the Quality of Service:*** Finance will issue a Document Translation Guideline by February 2009 to establish a process by which we handle translation of documents. All translations will be verified by our Language Bank volunteers for accuracy and will be proofed by the Communications Unit for consistency of format, style, font, dates and numbers.
- ***How Finance Will Collect Data:*** Communications will prepare and maintain a monthly Translation Monitoring & Evaluation Spreadsheet to collect and report data.

### Translation Services for Finance’s Website:

Finance will notify our customers of the availability of language access services on our website home page. We will also link to a section where one can access those documents and informational materials that we have translated into Spanish, Chinese and Russian.

### Signage at Customer Service Centers:

Finance recognizes the need to ensure that when our customers walk into our Business Centers there are clear and easy to understand signs directing them to language access services. By July 2009, Finance will post LEP signage suggested by the Mayor’s Offices of Operations and Immigrant Affairs. In addition, we are developing directional signs that will also include pictograms, which will also help our LEP customers.

Signage will be posted at the five Borough Business Centers, managed by Payment Operations Division:

The Bronx -- 3030 Third Avenue, 10455  
Brooklyn -- 210 Joralemon Street, 11201  
Manhattan - 66 John Street, 10038  
Queens -- 144-06 94<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 11435  
Staten Island -- 350 St. Marks Place, 10301

**Timeline for Implementation of Written Translations and Signage:**

Dec '08	Identify essential documents for translation Research translation vendors
Jan '09	Validate list of essential documents for translation
Feb '09	Select vendors Issue agency Document Translation Guidelines
Apr '09	Develop internal communication plan
May '09	Continue to translate documents and develop outreach materials
Jun '09	Implement internal communication plan
Jul '09	Post translated documents on website and make available in Business Centers Continue collecting and reporting data

## VI. EMPLOYEE TRAINING

### Language Access Policy

The Finance Commissioner will send all employees an agency-wide email with a copy of the Language Access (LA) Policy, along with a link to this plan on our Intranet. We will also promote the LA policy and plan through a variety of agency communication vehicles, e.g. Intranet, Website, monthly newsletter, EEO training, etc.

### LA Training for Employees

Once the Language Access policy is finalized in April of 2009, our Employee Services Division will initiate training for customer service staff in the Business Centers, on the Customer Assistance Helpline, and in our Outreach Unit to support the agency's plan. This training, to be completed by July, will review the Language Access policy and procedures, including such topics as identifying a customer's primary language, requesting an interpreter, using any specialized equipment, and the reporting and tracking of data. Finance will also take advantage of any citywide training resources or opportunities that become available.

We also will implement a "train-the-trainer" program so that each area that provides direct LA services will have staff members that are trained on dual handsets and the use of telephonic interpreters. These 'Power Trainers' will then be responsible for providing on the spot training and support for new employees.

Finally, we will also include the LA policy as well as cultural sensitivity training within our Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) curriculum, which is required for all employees. This will further serve to reinforce awareness and educate staff about Finance's expectation for providing services to our LEP customers.

### Timeline for Employee Training:

Feb '09	Begin Drafting Language Access Policy and Procedures
Mar '09	Develop LA training for customer service employees
Apr '09	Finalize Employee Training Program and develop schedule of all customer service participants
May '09	Initiate and deliver training for Customer Service staff
Jun '09	Implement Internal Communication Plan for All Employees Complete training for Customer Service staff

### VII. RECORD KEEPING AND EVALUATION

#### Ensuring Quality of Our Language Access Services

We will apply Finance's performance management strategy as we implement this language access plan to ensure the quality of our service meets our customers' needs and expectations. That strategy requires that we identify the results we want to achieve upfront, measure our performance regularly, set standards, review the data to identify performance deficits, and develop a strategy to address where we may fall short. It also calls for the development of training for staff, standardized reporting mechanisms, a mechanism to receive feedback from our customers, and a "mystery shopper" type of quality control review.

As stated at the beginning of this plan, our goal is to ensure that the public has timely and easy access to our information and services, regardless of their ability to speak English. We will develop performance metrics to measure whether we achieve this goal. The metrics will seek to measure ease of access and quality of service against our standards.

Finance has requested support from the Mayor's Offices of Immigrant Affairs and Operations Customer Service Group to develop a standardized data collection and reporting tool - such as a web-based tracking system - to aggregate agency data on language assistance requests and service provision citywide. We believe a centralized data collection and reporting site will serve as valuable resources for agencies and for Operations to evaluate and benchmark customer demand and agency performance. Once such a tool is developed, Finance will collect and report data from the implementation of our language access plan in accordance with the established criteria.

In the interim, Finance has developed a manual data collection and reporting process (see draft attached in Appendix F), which will be used by the Borough Business Centers as well as the Customer Assistance Helpline, Outreach Unit and Language Bank Liaison. We will collect data on service requests we receive and how those requests are accommodated. Data will be reported to Finance's Director of Performance Measurement on a monthly basis. The Director of Performance Measurement will collate, analyze and distribute this data to Finance's Language Access Planning and Implementation Team as well as to other relevant managers.

Finance will also monitor our website "hits" on those documents that have been translated, as indicated in Appendix A.

## VII. Record Keeping and Evaluation

Based on the analyses of the data, and the availability of resources, Finance will modify our Language Access Plan, based on evolving needs of our LEP customers at least annually.

### Maintaining Records of the Language Services Finance Provides

Finance will maintain accurate and detailed records of the language services our agency provides, in accordance with this Language Access Plan and any citywide data reporting requirements. As mentioned above, a manual data collection process and a standardized form to request language services (See Appendix F) will document and track incoming calls walk in visits, or letters received from customers with limited English proficiency.

Each area involved in delivering customer services (Payment Operations, Adjudication in the Borough Business Centers, as well as the Customer Assistance Helpline, Correspondence Unit and Outreach) will be required to collect data daily and provide monthly reports, indicating frequency of service requested, and the language requested by subject matter. Reports will include issues and resolutions; whether or not interpretation/translation was provided; number of bi-lingual employees utilized; accuracy of translation and number of people serviced.

Finance expects that the language service vendor the agency selects will keep records of number of calls, indicating language and service requested which will be reconciled against internal agency records to insure accuracy of information on both sides.

### Ensuring Compliance with the Executive Order

Finance is committed to compliance with Executive Order 120. To ensure compliance, we will collect, analyze and distribute data to key managers on a monthly basis to hold managers accountable for making sure services are provided where there's a need. Based on the data, modifications to enhance service delivery will be suggested for future implementation. (Example: if we see a need to translate material into a 4<sup>th</sup> language, the Language Access Team will make that recommendation to the Language Access Coordinators for plan modification).

Finance will include Language Access in the list of customer services to be monitored by our internal "mystery shopper" program, recently developed based the on Mayor's Office Customer Service Group model. We will also create a mechanism for customers and employees to provide us with feedback on the quality of services, or to file a complaint or report any irregularities in the delivery of language services.

### VIII. RESOURCE ANALYSIS AND PLANNING

#### Existing Agency Resources to Implement the Plan

Coordination and Management: Finance has appointed the Department's Chief of Staff to coordinate planning, resources and executive level support of language access services, as well as the agency's Director of Business & Community Outreach to coordinate implementation of this plan. In addition, the Commissioner has appointed an agencywide Language Access Planning team to oversee the ongoing implementation of our LA plan, to collect and analyze data, and to modify the plan based on our findings and results achieved. (See also Team Member Roles and Responsibilities in Section IV)

Language Bank Volunteers: Finance has access to Citywide Language Bank volunteers (of which 31 are Finance employees) who speak in approximately 80 languages. We plan to tap into this group for language assistance services.

- Employee Services will also survey current Finance Language Bank volunteers to confirm their continued interest in volunteering in the bank.
- The EEO Officer/Language Bank Liaison coordinates the assignment of volunteers and collect/report relevant data on requests for Language Bank volunteers.

Bilingual Employees: Finance is again fortunate to have many bilingual employees who are fluent in a second language -- Arabic, Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese, Farsi, French Creole, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian French, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Malayalam, Nigerian, Punjabi, Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese.

- Employee Services will also survey all employees to determine those who are proficient in languages other than English, with a particular focus on those customer service areas such as the Business Centers, Customer Assistance Helpline, Correspondence and Communications.

Training & Development Unit: Finance will initiate training for staff in the Business Centers, on the Customer Assistance Helpline, and in our Outreach Unit to support the agency's plan. This training will include such topics as identifying a customer's primary language, requesting an interpreter, using any specialized equipment, and the reporting and tracking of data.

- We also will implement a "train-the-trainer" program

### Leveraging Citywide Resources

We anticipate taking advantage of any citywide language access resources or opportunities that becomes available through the Mayor's Offices of Immigration Affairs and Operations' to support LA training, signage, bilingual employee certification, etc.

Finance will also collaborate with other city agencies to develop quality language assistance training, resources and materials in a cost-effective manner.

Section IX that follows discusses our plans to reach out to not-for-profit agencies and community organizations to create a Language Access Advisory Committee. This group will advise and provide feedback to the agency on effective strategies to ensure we are reaching our LEP customer base.

### IX. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND OUTREACH STRATEGY

#### Language Access Outreach Strategy:

Finance plans to use various means of communication to raise awareness among our customers about the availability of Language Access (LA) services. Some examples beyond those already detailed in this plan, are announcements in press releases, at Finance outreach events, in posters, flyers, and mailing inserts. We will also implement an LA outreach campaign targeting communities with a high LEP population, especially those speaking Spanish, Chinese and Russian. We will start implementing this plan immediately after Finance begins offering translation and interpretation services in July 2009.

We will pilot our LA outreach campaign in neighborhoods such as Jackson Heights (home to a large Spanish-speaking immigrant population from Central and South American), Flushing (which draws a concentration of Chinese immigrants), Forest Hills in Queens (home to many of New York's Russian immigrants) and Brighton Beach in Brooklyn (also a large Russian enclave).

To help identify other areas of need, Outreach will establish a Community Advisory Committee made up of members recommended by the Borough Presidents and other elected officials, Church groups and community-based organizations. Through the Advisory Committee, Outreach will develop a database of community-based organizations that can serve as liaisons and/or resources to disseminate translated materials and assist LEP homeowners with Finance-related issues.

#### Timeline for Implementation of Outreach Campaign and Awareness Activities

Feb '09	Identify community organizations to advise on Language Access outreach strategies Meet with representatives from other City agencies and non-profit organizations to discuss distribution of bilingual materials such as the Lien Sale Brochure
May '09	Establish Language Access Community Advisory Committee
Jun '09	Prepare materials for public awareness campaign (flyers, posters)
Aug-Sept '09	Implement pilot outreach to Spanish, Chinese and Russian community groups Distribute awareness materials Design joint outreach events with other city agencies

- A. Finance Schedule of Documents for Translation
- B. Business Center Customer Survey on Language Preference
- C. Call Center Customer Survey on Language Preference
- D. Employee Survey on Language Access Needs
- E. Summary of LEP Population and Survey Data
- F. Draft Language Access Request and Tracking Forms

APPENDIX A: Schedule of Documents for Translation

<u>Service</u>	<u>Document Name</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Timetable</u>
Parking Ticket Hearings	Got Ticket Brochure. (Guide to parking ticket hearings)	Adjudication	December 2008
Property Tax Assessment	Notice of Property Value Brochure	Property	February 2009
Exemption and Abatement	Exemption and Abatement Application for Owners	Payment Operations	February 2009
Lien Sale	Lien Sale Brochure (already translated into Chinese, Korean, Russian, Creole, Spanish)	Collections	February 2009
Bail Refunds	Bail Assignment Application	Treasury	March 2009
" "	Change of Address Notice	" "	March 2009
" "	Lost Bail Receipt Affidavit	" "	March 2009
" "	Stop Payment Affidavit	" "	March 2009
" "	"What you should know about bail" brochure	" "	March 2009
Finance Website	Homepage notation on the availability of translation services	CGA	July 2009
Statement of Account & Billing	Quarterly Statement of Account Brochure for property tax.	Payment Operations	September and December 2009

## CUSTOMER SURVEY ON LANGUAGE PREFERENCE

To fulfill our mission of helping people pay the right amount on time, the NYC Department of Finance (“Finance”) wants to ensure all our customers have access to our information and services regardless of whether you speak fluent English. *Please take a moment to fill out this survey to let us know what language, other than English, you may prefer us to use. Thank you for your time and input.*

You are here today for: a) Parking tickets; b) Property tax; c) Business tax; d) Other\_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you often interact with Finance? *Check all that apply*

\_\_\_\_a) In-person      \_\_\_\_b) By phone      \_\_\_\_c) By mail and email      \_\_\_\_d) On our website

2. How often do you use our services?

\_\_\_\_a) Less than once a month      \_\_\_\_c) Two to five times a month  
 \_\_\_\_b) Once a month      \_\_\_\_d) More than five times a month

3. Do you prefer Finance to provide information and services in a language other than English?

\_\_\_\_a) Yes      \_\_\_\_b) No

4. If you answered yes, which of the following services would you prefer that we provide in a language other than English? *Check all that apply*

\_\_\_\_a) In-person service at Finance locations      \_\_\_\_e) Forms, applications, and brochures  
 \_\_\_\_b) Telephone service on Finance helpline      \_\_\_\_f) Tax laws and regulations  
 \_\_\_\_c) Email and correspondence services      \_\_\_\_g) Information on Finance website  
 \_\_\_\_d) Bills and notices      \_\_\_\_h) Signs at Finance locations  
 \_\_\_\_i) Other, please specify\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_k) All of the above

5. If you answered yes to Question 3, which language would you prefer?

____Arabic	____Korean	____African Languages
____Armenian	____Persian	Please specify: _____
____Bengali	____Polish	
____Chinese/Cantonese	____Portuguese	
____Chinese/Mandarin	____Portuguese Creole	____Scandinavian Languages
____French	____Russian	Please specify: _____
____Haitian Creole	____Serbo-Croatian	
____German	____Spanish	
____Greek	____Spanish Creole	____Other languages
____Gujarathi	____Tagalog	Please specify: _____
____Hebrew	____Thai	
____Hindi	____Urdu	
____Italian	____Vietnamese	Division: Business Center
____Japanese	____Yiddish	Location: Manhattan

## CUSTOMER SURVEY ON LANGUAGE PREFERENCE

To fulfill our mission of helping people pay the right amount on time, the NYC Department of Finance (“Finance”) wants to ensure all our customers have access to our information and services regardless of whether they speak fluent English. *Do you mind answering a few questions to let us know what language, other than English, you may prefer us to use? Thank you for your time and input.*

Today’s call is about: a) Property tax; b) Parking tickets; c) Business tax; d) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. How do you primarily interact with Finance? *Check all that apply*

\_\_\_\_ a) In-person      \_\_\_\_ b) By phone      \_\_\_\_ c) By mail and email      \_\_\_\_ d) On our website

7. How often do you use our services?

\_\_\_\_ a) Less than once a month      \_\_\_\_ c) Two to five times a month  
 \_\_\_\_ b) Once a month      \_\_\_\_ d) More than five times a month

8. Do you prefer Finance to provide information and services in a language other than English?

\_\_\_\_ a) Yes      \_\_\_\_ b) No

9. If you answered yes, which of the following services would you prefer that we provide in a language other than English? *Check all that apply*

____ a) In-person service at Finance locations	____ e) Forms and applications
____ b) Telephone service on Finance helpline	____ f) Tax laws and regulations
____ c) Email and correspondence services	____ g) Information on Finance website
____ d) Bills, notices and brochures	____ h) Signs at Finance locations
____ i) All of the above	____ k) Other: _____

10. If you answered yes to Question 3, which language would you prefer?

____ Arabic	____ Korean	____ African Languages
____ Armenian	____ Persian	Please specify: _____
____ Bengali	____ Polish	
____ Chinese/Cantonese	____ Portuguese	____ Scandinavian Languages
____ Chinese/Mandarin	____ Portuguese Creole	Please specify: _____
____ French	____ Russian	
____ Haitian Creole	____ Serbo-Croatian	____ Other languages
____ German	____ Spanish	Please specify: _____
____ Greek	____ Spanish Creole	
____ Gujarathi	____ Tagalog	
____ Hebrew	____ Thai	
____ Hindi	____ Urdu	
____ Italian	____ Vietnamese	
____ Japanese	____ Yiddish	

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT FINANCE EMPLOYEE SURVEY  
ON LANGUAGE ACCESS NEEDS**

To fulfill our mission of helping people pay the right amount on time, the NYC Department of Finance wants to ensure all our customers have access to our information and services regardless of whether they speak fluent English. As of now, we primarily communicate and provide services in English. In order for us to determine what languages other than English our customers speak and may prefer to use to do business with us, we need your help.

Please take the following short survey to share with us your experience with non-English speaking customers. Thank you for your time and input. We look forward to sharing with you the survey results and the agency's language access plans.

**Your job title: (Please circle one)**

- Call Center Agent
- Business Center Customer Service Staff
- Cashier
- Business Center manager/supervisor
- Land Records Division staff
- Surveyor
- Deputy Sheriff
- Administrative Law Judge
- Settlement Clerk
- Other Adjudication staff
- Outreach and Communications staff
- Treasury staff
- Collections staff
- Other Finance staff/manager\_\_\_\_\_

**Your work location: (Please circle one)**

- Brooklyn 210 Joralemon
- Brooklyn Warehouse
- Bronx 3030 Third Avenue
- Manhattan 1 Centre Street
- Manhattan 31 Chambers Street
- Manhattan 253 Broadway
- Manhattan 66 John Street
- Manhattan 59 Maiden Lane
- Queens 144-06 94th Ave
- Queens 30-10 Starr Ave
- Staten Island 50 St Marks Place

Please select the primary way in which you interact with Finance customers: (Please circle one)

- In person
- By telephone
- By email
- By correspondence

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been approached by a Finance customer who does not speak English? (Please circle one)

- Yes
- No

2. If yes, approximately how many times did this happen per month in the last six months? (Please circle one)

- Less than once a month
- 1 to 3 times per month
- 4 to 6 times per month
- 7 to 10 times per month
- More than 10 times per month

3. In the instances where you were approached by a non-English speaker, what did the customer inquire about? (Please circle one)

- Billing and payment services at Business Centers
- Parking ticket hearings
- Inquiries through Finance helpline
- Inquiries by email and mail correspondence
- Forms and applications distributed by Finance
- Tax laws and regulations distributed by Finance
- General information on Finance website
- Brochures and directions
- Issues related to audit and enforcement actions
- Issues related to debt payments
- All of the above
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you think about the customers you serve, approximately what percent do not speak English or speak some English but would prefer to use another language? (Please circle one)

- Less than 1%
- 1%
- 5%
- 10%
- 15%
- 20%
- More than 20%

5. Based on your experience, what are the most common foreign languages that non-English speaking customers have used? Please circle at least 5 and up to 10 languages from the following list, with 1 being the most frequently heard.

- African Languages (please specify if known)\_\_\_\_\_
- Arabic
- Armenian
- Bengali
- Chinese/Cantonese
- Chinese/Mandarin
- French
- Haitian Creole
- German
- Greek
- Gujarathi
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Persian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Portuguese Creole
- Russian
- Scandinavian Languages (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_
- Serbo-Croatian
- Spanish
- Spanish Creole
- Tagalog
- Thai
- Urdu
- Vietnamese
- Yiddish
- Other (please specify)

6. Do you have any other feedback or suggestions as we plan for Finance to provide information and services in other languages?

APPENDIX E: Summary of LEP Population and Survey Data

	U.S. Census 2000 NYC Population		American Com. Survey 2007 NYC Homeowners		Finance Employee Survey*		Finance Customer Survey*		Consensus	
	Language	% LEP Speak	Language	% LEP Speak	Language	% Surveyed Employees Selected	Language	% Surveyed Customers Selected		Language
<b>CITYWIDE</b>										
1	Spanish	52.12%	Spanish	25.49%	Spanish	92.62%	Spanish	59.81%	1	Spanish
2	Chinese	12.46%	Chinese	13.88%	Cantonese	54.33%	Haitian Creole	5.71%	2	Chinese
3	Russian	6.88%	Italian	8.67%	Russian	39.57%	Arabic	5.71%	3	Russian
4	Korean	2.89%	Russian	7.23%	Mandarin	39.29%	French	5.60%	4	
5	Italian	2.79%	Cantonese	6.80%	Haitian Creole	20.99%	Chinese/Cantonese	5.28%	5	
6	Polish	2.59%	Polish	4.39%	Korean	19.29%	Russian	5.17%	6	
<b>BRONX</b>										
1	Spanish	78.14%	Spanish	60.68%	Spanish	98.11%	Spanish	82.05%	1	Spanish
2	Polish	3.32%	Italian	15.57%	African	35.85%	African	5.13%	2	African
3	Yiddish	3.32%	Chinese	4.76%	French	30.19%	Armenian	3.21%	3	
4	Italian	1.98%	Bengali	4.05%	Cantonese	30.19%	Bengali	2.56%	4	
5	Chinese	1.85%	French	1.65%	Russian	26.42%	Serbo-Croatian	1.92%	5	
6	African languages	1.68%	Kru, Ibo, Yoruba	1.53%	Mandarin/Haitian Creole/Italian	18.87%	Spanish Creole	1.92%	6	
<b>BROOKLYN</b>										
1	Spanish	36.13%	Spanish	18.98%	Spanish	92.98%	Spanish	56.01%	1	Spanish
2	Russian	16.90%	Russian	14.53%	Cantonese	58.77%	Haitian Creole	11.00%	2	Chinese
3	Chinese	14.73%	Cantonese	12.52%	Russian	44.74%	French	9.97%	3	Russian
4	French Creole	5.12%	Chinese	12.63%	Haitian Creole	32.46%	Russian	7.90%	4	
5	Yiddish	4.64%	Italian	10.89%	French	28.07%	Chinese/Mandarin	7.56%	5	
6	Polish	3.89%	French Creole	5.45%	Mandarin	26.32%	Chinese/Cantonese	6.53%	6	
<b>MANHATTAN</b>										
1	Spanish	64.75%	Chinese	22.17%	Spanish	93.37%	Spanish	57.14%	1	Spanish
2	Chinese	18.31%	Spanish	20.84%	Cantonese	54.64%	Chinese/Cantonese	12.61%	2	Chinese

APPENDIX E: Summary of LEP Population and Survey Data

3	French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	2.71%	French	14.60%	Mandarin	43.50%	Chinese/Mandarin	8.40%	3	
4	Japanese	2.33%	Italian	4.53%	Russian	42.44%	French	5.88%	4	
5	Russian	1.36%	Mandarin	3.87%	Korean	19.10%	Arabic	5.04%	5	
6	Korean	1.19%	Russian	3.87%	Haitian Creole	18.57%	Bengali	5.04%	6	
<b>QUEENS</b>										
1	Spanish	45.10%	Spanish	28.56%	Spanish	94.44%	Spanish	66.81%	1	Spanish
2	Chinese	14.57%	Italian	7.17%	Cantonese	61.11%	Haitian Creole	7.08%	2	Chinese
3	Korean	7.13%	Chinese	6.96%	Mandarin	50.00%	French	4.87%	3	
4	Other Indic Languages	4.66%	Russian	5.41%	Russian	34.72%	Chinese/Mandarin	3.98%	4	
5	Russian	3.93%	French Creole	4.44%	Korean	31.94%	Arabic	3.54%	5	
6	Italian	2.95%	Greek	3.89%	Haitian Creole	27.78%	Russian/Bengali/Urdu	3.10%	6	
<b>STATEN ISLAND</b>										
1	Spanish	34.78%	Italian	13.02%	Spanish	100.00%	Spanish	39.47%	1	Spanish
2	Italian	13.80%	Polish	12.52%	Cantonese	62.50%	Arabic	16.67%	2	Chinese
3	Chinese	8.90%	Spanish	12.42%	Russian	56.25%	Armenian	12.28%	3	
4	Russian	8.33%	Chinese	12.34%	Mandarin	31.25%	Russian	12.28%	4	
5	Korean	4.90%	Russian	11.68%	Arabic/Korean/Polish	25.00%	Chinese/Cantonese	7.02%	5	
6	Other IndoEuropean Languages	4.48%	Albanian	7.45%			Italian	6.14%	6	
<b>CALL CENTER</b>										
1							Spanish	50.00%	1	Spanish
2							Russian	16.67%	2	
3							Korean	11.11%	3	
4							Chinese/Cantonese	11.11%	4	
5							Arabic	5.56%	5	
6							Chinese/Mandarin	5.56%	6	

\* The Finance Employee Survey received 791 respondents.

\* The Finance Customer Survey received 2,947 respondents.



New York City Department of Finance  
**LANGUAGE ACCESS REQUEST**

<b>Request No.</b>	
<b>Request Date</b>	
<b>Customer's Type</b>	
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Language</b>	
<b>Inquire About:</b>	
<b>Accommodated by:</b>	
<b>Time Arrived</b>	
<b>Time Started</b>	
<b>Time Finished</b>	
<b>Outcome (Successful or Not Successful)</b>	
<b>If Not Successful, why?</b>	
<b>Name of DOF Staff</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	

Appendix F: Draft Language Access Request and Tracking Forms

Request No.	Request Date	Customer's Type	Location	Language	Inquire About:	Accommodated by:	Time Arrived	Time Started	Time Finished	Outcome	Reason	DOF Staff	Comments
1	02/03/09	Business Center Customer	Brooklyn 210 Joralemon	Arabic	Billing and payment services at Business Centers	DOF Bilingual Staff	13:25	13:45	13:50	Successful		Victor Jativa	
2	02/04/09	Customer Assistance Helpline Caller	Manhattan 59 Maiden Lane	African Languages. Please specify in Comments section	General information on Finance website	Language Line Interpretation	9:50	9:55	10:02	Not Successful.	Language Line interpreter did not speak dialect.	David Feinberg	Swahili
3													
4													
5													
6													
7													
8													
9													
10													
11													
12													
13													
14													
15													
16													
17													
18													
19													
20													
21													
22													
23													
24													