



**DEPARTMENT OF CITYWIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**  
MARTHA K. HIRST, COMMISSIONER

**Agency Language Access Plan**  
**2009**

## **I. Introduction and Agency Mission**

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) ensures that New York City agencies have the critical resources they need to provide the best possible services to the public. Though the bulk of our efforts support other agencies, DCAS offers select services directly to the public, such as civil service administration, opportunities to sell to and buy from the City, and a safe and clean environment in the many DCAS-managed buildings citywide. DCAS is deeply committed to ensuring that these public-facing services accommodate the vibrant, diverse array of New Yorkers and their needs.

This document, the DCAS Language Access Plan (the Plan), addresses Executive Order 120 and outlines how DCAS will accommodate persons with limited English proficiency (LEPs). As the City's population continues to evolve and diversify, DCAS will periodically review the Plan to ensure it supports the changing needs of the city.



## II. Language Access Goals

In formulating the Language Access Plan, DCAS established the following guiding principles for the Plan to address the public's needs, now and in the future:

1. Communicate with all New Yorkers
2. Ensure LEPs are accommodated and respected
3. Provide translation and interpretation services to the public seeking core DCAS services
4. Inform the public of the services DCAS offers and how to access them

Through the implementation of the Plan, DCAS will bring these principles to its frontline, public-facing services.

## III. Limited English Proficiency Population Assessment

The population that DCAS serves is reflective of the general population of New York City. In evaluating its target audience, DCAS drew from population studies produced by the Department of City Planning (DCP), whose studies identify the top six languages spoken in the City other than English. Those languages are Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Italian, and Haitian Creole.

DCAS evaluated its service population for language access using two sources: incoming 311 call data and qualitative interviews with DCAS frontline staff. Data from 311 shows that less than 0.5% of calls transferred to DCAS in calendar years 2007 and 2008 utilized interpretation services from 311's Call Center. Frontline workers reaffirmed the data, stating that interpretation or translation services are rarely, if ever, needed.

Data from 311 also indicate that, however modest in number, the LEPs seeking services from DCAS closely mirror the citywide LEP population; the most frequently spoken languages were Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, and Arabic. The Plan addresses language access for these languages, and the other two (Italian and Haitian Creole) identified by DCP, at a minimum; but can accommodate numerous others through contracted language services and an internal language bank. As the city grows and evolves, DCAS will adjust the Plan to ensure the most commonly spoken languages remain the focus of our efforts.

Some public-facing services, however, will not be eligible for translation or interpretation because of the nature of the service. These exemptions include:

- **Civil Service Administration** – civil service exams and their notifications will continue to be produced only in English, as the City requires job candidates hold a level of proficiency in the English language. DCAS will provide translated communications to inform LEPs of the English proficiency requirement.
- **Legal and Business Transactions** – DCAS will continue to conduct all legal and business transactions with public and private entities in English. These transactions include, but are not limited to, the areas of procurement, real estate services, contracted services, and municipal publications such as the City Record and the Green Book.

## **IV. Implementation Plan Logistics**

The Agency Language Access Coordinator, working with DCAS Senior Management and Managers of correspondence, call, and walk-in centers, will be responsible for administering the agency’s implementation of the Plan. The Language Access Coordinator will work with DCAS divisions to ensure the overall success of the Plan and liaise with the Mayor’s Office on Citywide language access issues and reporting.

DCAS will make the public aware of the Plan with the use of signage at points of contact and language access communications on the DCAS website.

DCAS will utilize two tools to deliver language access services:

1. **Volunteer Language Bank (VLB)** – Using guidelines established by the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, DCAS will develop a network of bi- or multi-lingual employees throughout the agency willing to volunteer their services. The VLB will be accessible to frontline employees to provide in-house translation and interpretation services.
2. **Over-The-Phone (OTP) Translation/Interpretation Services** – DCAS will offer over-the-phone translation and interpretation services through the Citywide service contract managed by the Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications. The contracted services, provided by the vendor Language Line Service, Inc., will be used when the VLB is unable to fulfill the service requested.

### **In-Person and Call-in Services**

The VLB and OTP services will be available at points where DCAS comes into contact with the public to provide language access to LEPs whenever feasible. Points of contact include the following:

<b>Point-of-Contacts</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Managing Division within DCAS</b>
Civil Service Application Center	2 Lafayette Street, 17 <sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY	Division of Citywide Personnel Services
Civil Service Examinations Walk-in Window	1 Centre Street, 14 <sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY	Division of Citywide Personnel Services
Civil Service Certifications Walk-In Window	1 Centre Street, 21 <sup>st</sup> Floor New York, NY	Division of Citywide Personnel Services
Office of Vendor Relations	1 Centre Street, 18 <sup>th</sup> Floor New York, NY	Division of Municipal Supply Services
CityStore	1 Centre Street, North Plaza New York, NY	Division of Fiscal Management and Operations
CityStore in the Office of the City Clerk	141 Worth Street New York, NY	Division of Fiscal Management and Operations
Security Posts in DCAS Buildings	Multiple locations citywide	Division of Administration and Security

The New York City Language Identification Poster and the Notice of Translation Services signage, developed by the Mayor’s Office, will be used at points-of-contact to inform LEPs that interpretation services are available and to identify the particular language access needed. DCAS will also communicate its language access services through the DCAS website. DCAS staff that interacts with the public will receive training and printed instructions on how to use the VLB and OTP services.

## **Document Translation**

DCAS will identify and translate essential public documents. DCAS will target documents that provide fundamental information about services offered and how to obtain further assistance. Document translation will be performed using the VLB and OTP services, and will adhere to plain language principles. The documents will be available at relevant walk-in centers and posted online. Essential documents to be translated in the second quarter of calendar year (CY) 2009 are:

- DCAS Auto Action Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Civil Service Information Sheet
- Government Jobs Information Sheet
- DCAS Real Estate Services Information Sheet

The agency will periodically revisit the list to ensure the LEP population has adequate access to DCAS functions and services.

## **Website Translation**

DCAS will post translated essential documents on its website, [www.nyc.gov/dcas](http://www.nyc.gov/dcas). There are currently no plans for full-scale website translation; however, DCAS will adopt any Citywide website translation and language access standards once they are established.

## **V. Training**

DCAS will offer language access and plain language training to frontline staff that interact or correspond with the public, such as security officers and walk-in center staff. In addition, DCAS will disseminate the Plan to all staff through its intranet site.

### **Language Access Training**

Language access training will be given to frontline staff that interact with the public. DCAS will conduct the training, based on Citywide training models developed by the Mayor's Office, which will include the following topics: overview of the Plan, how to identify a client's primary language, how to access tools for interpretation/translation services (VLB and OTP), how to work with interpreters, cultural sensitivity, and how to track and report language access interactions. Initial training will begin in the second quarter of 2009. Periodic refresher training and training for new frontline staff will be administered on an as-needed basis. Senior Management, walk-in center Managers, and the Agency Language Access Coordinator will identify which staff will attend the training.

### **Plain Language Training**

DCAS will offer voluntary plain language training for staff that generate public-facing documents or frequently correspond with the public. Training topics will include customer-friendly writing, how to structure a plain language document, how to evaluate and rewrite existing documents in a more customer-friendly manner, and an overview of DCAS writing guidelines. Initial training will begin in the second quarter CY 2009 and repeat on an as-needed basis.

## **VI. Measurement & Verification**

DCAS will measure the performance of the Plan by tracking point-of-contact reports as well as VLB and OTP usage reports. The data for the following indicators will be collected and analyzed on a monthly basis:

- # of completed customer request for interpretation
  - o Over the phone through OTP services
  - o Over the phone through VLB services
  - o In person through OTP services
  - o In person through VLB services
- # of documents translated
- Language Summary
  - o Languages accessed
  - o % of translations by language
  - o % of interpretations by language

Language Line Services will perform quality assurance reviews of translated documents, as standard practice. In addition, DCAS will employ the VLB to perform internal reviews of translated documents. DCAS will also utilize Citywide translator certification models once available.

## **VII. Resource Analysis and Planning**

DCAS will draw from several sources to implement the Plan:

- Citywide Materials: DCAS will use standardized signage and materials provided by the Mayor's Office, including the Language Identification Poster, Notice of Translation Services Poster, and various guidance documents.
- Citywide Services: DCAS will obtain translation and interpretation contracting services through a contract held by the Department of Information and Telecommunications (vendor: Language Line Services, Inc.). In addition, DCAS will utilize Citywide training models when available.
- DCAS Staff: DCAS will draw from its talented, diverse workforce to staff the Volunteer Language Bank.

### **Implementation Timeline**

DCAS will work diligently to execute the efforts set forth in this Plan. The following is a brief summary of key milestones for Plan implementation, listed by calendar-year quarter.

Q2 2009	Begin plain language writing training
Q2 2009	Begin LAP training for frontline staff
Q2 2009	Identify and translate essential documents
Q2 2009	OTP translation services will be available to all frontline staff
Q2 2009	Translation services signage posted at all public points-of-contact
Q3 2009	Launch VLB for all frontline staff
Q3 2009	Report language access data in the Mayor's Management Report
Q4 2009	Begin cultural competency training based on Citywide model
Q1 2010	DCAS conducts Language Access Plan analysis for internal use