

Language Access Plan

Department of Sanitation

I. Mission and Scope of Agency Operations

The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) promotes a healthy environment through the efficient management of solid waste and the development of environmentally sound long-range planning for handling refuse and recyclables. The Department operates 59 district garages and manages a fleet of 2,033 collection trucks and 450 mechanical brooms. Each day, approximately 11,500 tons of household and institutional waste is collected. The Department enforces the City's Administrative and Health Code related to Sanitation, clears litter, snow and ice from City streets, and removes debris from vacant lots as well as abandoned vehicles from City streets.

II. Agency Language Access Goals

The Agency's primary services (e.g. refuse and recycling collection, street cleaning) are provided geographically on a regular schedule and are not related or dependent upon the need for customer contact.

Even though the Agency's direct services are not language dependent, the goal of the DSNY's plan is to communicate as may be needed with New Yorkers through our outreach programs. The Department of Sanitation is committed to updating this plan and its programs as may be necessary and possible. In addition, the plan will be reviewed annually.

The Department remains committed to working with elected officials, community groups, and immigrant/ethnic service organizations to provide outreach and education about sanitation services and codes to limited English proficiency residents.

Summary of Recent Initiatives

- Sanitation Press Releases and Commissioner's Message are sent to ethnic and foreign language media
- Community Affairs outreach staff have bilingual ability (Chinese/English and Spanish/English)
- Work with ethnic service groups and community organizations to provide language translations of the Digest of Codes (Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Yiddish)
- Work with City's 311 system to provide concise but comprehensive information about sanitation services which can be accessed via the 311 system's language line service
- Provide availability to the City's ethnic media as needed.

III. LEP Population Assessment

The Department of Sanitation's primary services – refuse and recycling collection, and street cleaning are not customer facing in that they are not dependent upon customer interaction for their provision. Service requests or complaints related to these services are handled through the 311 system with its available language-line services.

The Department's outreach efforts which, in a directed manner, may be used to educate particular groups has been identified as potentially benefiting the most from language translation services.

Census track data is not necessarily a useful indicator in determining the need for language translation of Department materials as often outreach is used to educate particular constituents (i.e. property owners or building superintendents/merchants etc.)

The Department obtains feedback from local community groups, service organizations and its field staff to assist in determining what language translation(s) may be helpful to a specific outreach or educational campaign.

Written translation of the Department's Digest of Codes, which contains a concise compilation of relevant sanitation codes, is planned in the following languages:

Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Yiddish

The use of these languages is based upon the Department's past experience with LEP persons encountered or part of outreach and educational efforts for which interpretation is requested.

IV. Implementation: Plan Logistics

The Department's Language coordinator (Office of Community Affairs) will:

- Coordinate the provision of effective and timely interpretation service for written service requests, complaints, correspondence requiring translation
- Document and report translation service requested and provided
- Coordinate document translation via any approved translation service that may be contracted
- Maintain up-to-date contact information for intra-agency and inter-agency assistance which may be available for language interpretation/translation

The Department of Sanitation's Office of Community Affairs has a long-term history of working with block associations, neighborhood and community groups and ethnic organizations. These working relationships have helped facilitate translation of Department material. The first of the Department's Digest of Codes, which was assisted by these historic and ongoing relationships appeared more than a decade ago.

Part of the Department's ongoing efforts include regular contact and meetings with block associations, precinct community councils, school groups, civic associations as well as ethnic service groups.

The Department has worked closely with the City's Customer Service Center (311 System) to provide comprehensive information on Sanitation services and codes, as well as access to Sanitation Service Requests. The 311 system acts as the Department's public telephone "hot line" and access point. As a result of the DOITT/311 contract for over-the-phone interpretation services, this is generally available to limited English proficiency customers.

The Department of Sanitation does not operate "walk-in" facilities therefore the DSNY does not have a need for multi-lingual signage at its facilities.

The City's 311 Customer Service Center serves as the Department's "hotline-information center". Therefore, the Department does not anticipate the use of telephone interpretation services or service center signage. Presently, the Department anticipates written translation of the Digest of Codes into a variety of languages. The Digest is a comprehensive but concise listing of laws, health and administrative codes related to Sanitation.

The Department intends to explore the use of the City-wide contract for needed language translation services. Where in-house or City language bank expertise may be available efforts will be made to utilize them to check translated materials.

The Department of Sanitation is presently revising the English-language version of the Digest of Codes (to be renamed the Summary of Rules and Regulations). This process involves the Department's Office of Community Affairs working closely with the Bureau of Legal Affairs. The goal is to provide a summarized version of Sanitation Rules and Regulations that is consistent with the laws, but easier to read and understand.

The new revised English-language translation is expected to be available later this year. Once that is completed, efforts to provide translated versions will begin with some languages becoming available in 2010.

Translated versions of the Digest of Codes will also be published on the Department's website. In addition, the Department will, in the seven (7) identified languages, post, within 180 days of the laws' approval, the following messages on its website's home page:

Information about Sanitation programs and services is available by calling New York City's Customer Service Center – call 311 or 212-639-9675 (outside New York City).

The Department will notify the bureaus and field offices of the availability of the translated materials. In addition, outreach will be conducted to elected officials, community boards, ethnic service organizations and ethnic/foreign language media. Outreach will include mail and e-mail notices, media releases and/or media events.

V. Training

The Department will, by April 30, 2009, send copy of the plan to all bureau heads and borough superintendents. They will also be kept informed of the availability of translated documents. In addition, the Office of Community Affairs will incorporate the plan and the availability of translated documents in its periodic updates/training sessions that may be conducted with both existing and new managerial and supervisory personnel.

The Department's outreach staff will receive a copy of the plan upon approval.

VI. Record Keeping and Evaluation

The 311 system records the telephone interpretation done in relation to Department of Sanitation inquiries and service requests. Requests for available translated documents will also be recorded. The Department will periodically review these records.