

Language Access Implementation Plan

The Language Access Implementation Plan explains how the agency will provide services to people who have limited English proficiency (or LAP).

Agency name: NYC Department of Youth and Community Development

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Language Access Coordinator title: Senior Director, Office of Intergovernmental and Public Engagement, EEO Counselor and Language Access Coordinator

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4	Notice of the right to language access services	How the agency notifies the public about their right to language access services
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9	Goals and actions planning	How the agency will put the plan into action

Signatures

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrew Miller", written in dark ink above a horizontal line.

Andrew Miller, Senior Director, Office of Intergovernmental and Public Engagement, EEO Counselor and
Language Access Coordinator
May 14, 2024

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Keith Howard", written in dark ink above a horizontal line.

Keith Howard, Commissioner, Department of Youth and Community Development
May 14, 2024

Section 1. Agency Mission and Services

The [New York City Department of Youth and Community Development](#) (DYCD) invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for all New Yorkers and communities to flourish. DYCD supports New York City youth and their families by funding a wide range of high-quality, innovative, impactful, and practical youth and community development programs, including:

- Immigrant services programs which assist participants with accessing government benefits; application assistance (including assistance with matters relating to citizenship and immigration status); employment; healthcare; social services; and civics classes in preparation for citizenship.
- Afterschool programs, including the nationally known Beacon programs; COMPASS, the largest municipally funded afterschool initiative in the country; and the Cornerstone Initiative in public housing developments, Summer Rising, and Saturday Night Lights.
- Youth workforce development programs, including the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), Train & Earn, Advance & Earn, Learn & Earn, and Work, Learn & Grow (WLG).
- Runaway and Homeless/LGBTQ+ youth outreach, drop-in centers, and shelters.
- Family support services, including the Fatherhood Initiative.
- Literacy programs.
- Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) programs which empower New Yorkers, and work to pursue community-driven solutions to public safety.
- Technical assistance and capacity building for community-based organizations.

DYCD is committed to building and expanding partnerships that generate innovative and practical programs for youth, their families, and communities.

To ensure that all New Yorkers are aware of these services, DYCD directly administers [Community Connect](#) to provide information and assistance to callers in over 180 languages. Additionally, [discoverDYCD](#) allows users to search in multiple languages for DYCD-funded programs by borough, neighborhood or zip code, and provides contact information, activities offered, and a mapping feature with navigation.

Section 2. Agency Language Access Policy

DYCD's overarching goal for language access is to provide equal access to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals into DYCD's array of services. This is accomplished by ensuring they can locate services in their primary language online with the agency's website, through discoverDYCD, and by calling Community Connect where live interpretation services are provided.

DYCD's language access goal will be met through the following objective:

- Providing live interpretation services to LEP callers through **Community Connect** (formerly Youth Connect), a resource and referral service for communities and families of New York City. Community Connect aims to increase awareness of opportunities and services available to New Yorkers. When you contact our toll-free hotline, you are connected with an Engagement Specialist that not only provides top-notch customer service, but provides the public with the most updated information. We are a one-stop shop resource for all ages.

DYCD Community Connect is the connective thread of the agency which provides information and assistance to callers in more than 180 languages.

- Free interpretation services at DYCD offices (123 William Street and 2 Lafayette Street). While most visitors are representatives of community-based organizations funded by the agency, the availability of interpretation services is available to all visitors. Upon entry, visitors are greeted by agency receptionists who, with the assistance of a sign advertising free interpretation services in many different languages, connect the visitor to Language Line. The service provides on-demand interpretation services through more than 14,000 professionally trained interpreters who are fluent in 240+ languages.
- Ensuring that resource information on the DYCD website can be translated into the required languages.
 - Ensuring universal enrollment form and other commonly used forms are available in the 10 designated citywide languages.
 - Translating commonly distributed documents in the designated citywide languages.
 - Ensuring that “plain language” is used whenever possible.
 - Translating community needs assessment forms in the designated citywide languages.
 - Ensuring DYCD staff and the public are aware of DYCD’s Language Access policies so that that the public can access Community Connect, discoverDYCD, and the agency’s website.

New Yorkers are made aware of DYCD’s services through [its website](#), the [discoverDYCD](#) portal, and [Community Connect](#) (1-800-246-4646 or 646-343-6800).

The Language Access Coordinator works closely with the agency’s Disability Service Facilitator (DSF) to ensure alignment with the agency’s LL 30 and LL 12 responsibilities. The agency is exploring the creation of an “Accessibility Workgroup” to facilitate these efforts.

Section 3. Language Access Needs Assessment

The United States Department of Justice states that agencies “should apply a four-factor test to decide what steps to take to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities to their programs and activities for LEP persons.”

The four factors include:

- 1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service area.**

DYCD utilizes the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). According to the ACS, nearly 48 percent (3.9 million) New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home. Of these, less than half (1,797,808) speak English “less than very well.” According to ACS, there are 1,923,155 New Yorkers who speak Spanish at home; 500,659 who speak Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese); 185,662 French or Haitian Creole; and 155,601 Russian, Polish or other Slavic languages.

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.

New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) reported that during the 2022-2023 school year, there were 43 percent of students enrolled in schools with a primary home language other than English. Approximately 16 percent (135,000) students were identified as English Language Learners. This information is helpful to DYCD, as many participants in our services are public school students and attend programs located in NYCPS buildings. During the 2022-2023 school year, English Language Learners (ELLs) in NYC public schools communicated in 150 languages other than English. Over 63 percent of ELLs are Spanish speakers, followed by students who speak Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Bengali, Urdu, Haitian Creole, Uzbek, French, and Ukrainian.

NYCPS EEL Home Languages	Percentage
Spanish	66.19%
Chinese	9.96%
Arabic	4.78%
Bengali	3.36%
Russian	3.89%
Urdu	1.28%
Haitian Creole	1.25%
Urdu	1.28%
Uzbek	1.9%
French	.92%
Ukrainian	.87%

To better assess the frequency of participants in DYCD-funded programs, the Universal Application form asks three specific Language Access questions to help DYCD identify Language Access needs of participants and communities (this form is available in all required languages). DYCD will share this data in future reports.

1. How well does the applicant speak English? (Select One):

☐ Fluent/Very well ☐ Well ☐ Not well ☐ Not well at all

2. Applicant's Primary Language (Select One):

☐ English ☐ Albanian ☐ Arabic ☐ Bengali ☐ Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin)
☐ French ☐ Fulani ☐ German ☐ Gujarati ☐ Haitian Creole ☐ Hebrew ☐ Hindi ☐ Hungarian
☐ Italian ☐ Japanese ☐ Korean ☐ aligns with the American Community Survey ☐ Mande
☐ Punjabi ☐ Persian ☐ Polish ☐ Portuguese ☐ Romanian ☐ Russian ☐ Spanish ☐
☐ Tagalog ☐ Turkish ☐ Urdu ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Yiddish ☐ Other: _____

3. Other Languages Spoken by Applicant (Select all that Apply):

☐ English ☐ Albanian ☐ Arabic ☐ Bengali ☐ Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin)
☐ French ☐ Fulani ☐ German ☐ Gujarati ☐ Haitian Creole ☐ Hebrew ☐ Hindi ☐ Hungarian
☐ Italian ☐ Japanese ☐ Korean ☐ Kru, Ibo, or Yoruba ☐ Mande ☐ Punjabi ☐ Persian ☐

Polish ☐ Portuguese ☐ Romanian ☐ Russian ☐ Spanish ☐ Tagalog ☐ Turkish ☐ Urdu ☐
Vietnamese ☐ Yiddish ☐ Other: _____
☐ Not applicable (only one language spoken by applicant)

Additionally, in 2016, DYCD introduced a robust Community Needs Assessment (CNA) to hear directly from New Yorkers and document their views on what is needed to improve the well-being of their own communities. The findings demonstrated that programs and services in the categories of education, employment/career advancement, and basic needs are the top priorities, and these just happen to be the resources that would especially benefit low-income New Yorkers. The city has invested tremendous resources to begin to address these priorities, including expanding DYCD services and programs.

DYCD expanded on previous needs assessment efforts by introducing:

- Multiple surveys that combine common questions regarding service needs and gaps along with questions tailored to specific stakeholder groups: adults, youth, employers, faith-based leaders, public school principals, program directors, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)-funded program participants, and key informants (elected officials and Community Board leaders).
- Use of newly released publications and studies to identify the causes and conditions of poverty in New York City.
- An adult survey was translated in the required 10 languages and Yiddish (many DYCD programs support Yiddish speakers). It included questions about the languages spoken at home. It revealed that in addition to the required languages, New Yorkers spoke other languages at home. The NDA reports can be found on our [Community Needs Assessment](#) webpage. In addition to paper distribution, DYCD developed a series of web-based survey platforms.
- While not required under Local Law 30, these findings help shape Request for Proposals (RFPs) issued by DYCD in an array of programs including, but not limited to: Immigrant Services, ESOL, Adult Literacy, Senior Services, High School Educational Support, Healthy Families, and Economic Development.

3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program.

DYCD invests in a network of community-based organizations and programs to alleviate the effects of poverty and to provide opportunities for New Yorkers and communities to flourish. DYCD strives to improve the quality of life of New Yorkers by collaborating with local organizations and investing in the talents and assets of our communities to help them develop, grow, and thrive. To be able to access services, all New Yorkers must be able to easily locate programs in their community with a smart device or on the telephone.

4. The resources available to the Department, and costs associated with different language service options.

DYCD has a contract to translate documents and provide telephonic interpretation for Community Connect callers and visitors to DYCD offices. The Language Access Coordinator (LAC) works with multiple units to facilitate the translation of documents. Should the translations need corrections, they are returned to the vendor for updates. The LAC works with the Communications unit and unit heads to identify the most distributed documents to have them translated in plain language. The LAC is available for units to inquire about language access services.

Section 4. Notice of Right to Language Access Services

DYCD greatly values providing all New Yorkers access to services. Upon entry to DYCD offices, visitors are greeted with signage indicating free interpretation services are available, and a welcoming banner in the required languages. Visitors can select their preferred language and get connected to Language Line. Additionally, callers to Community Connect are provided services through Language Line, and the Language Access Plan is posted on DYCD's website and staff is notified that it is available to read online.



Signage at the entrances of DYCD offices at 123 William Street and 2 Lafayette Street.

Section 5. Provision of Language Access Services

DYCD's overarching goal for language access is to provide equal access for LEP individuals into DYCD's array of services. This is accomplished by ensuring they can locate services in their primary language online with the agency's website and discoverDYCD, and by calling Community Connect where live interpretation services are provided.

DYCD's language access goals are met through the following objective:

- Providing live interpretation services to LEP callers through **Community Connect** (formerly Youth Connect), a resource and referral service for communities and families of New York City. Community Connect aims to increase awareness of opportunities and services available to New Yorkers. When you contact our toll-free hotline, you are connected with an Engagement Specialist that not only provides top-notch customer service, but provides the public with the most updated information. We are a one-stop shop resource for all ages. DYCD Community Connect is the connective thread of the agency which provides information and assistance to callers in more than 180 languages.
- Free interpretation services at DYCD offices. While most visitors to DYCD's two office locations (123 William Street and 2 Lafayette Street) are representatives of community-based organizations funded by the agency, there are interpretation services available to all visitors. Upon entry, visitors are greeted by agency receptionists who, with the assistance of a sign advertising free interpretation services in many different languages, connects the visitor to Language Line, which provides on-demand interpretation services by professionally trained interpreters fluent in more than 240 languages.
- Ensuring that resource information on the DYCD website can be translated into the required languages.
 - Ensuring universal enrollment form and other commonly used forms are available in the 10 designated languages.
 - Translating commonly distributed documents in the designated languages.
 - Ensuring that "plain language" is used whenever possible.
 - Translating community needs assessment forms in the designated languages.
 - Ensuring DYCD staff and the public are aware of DYCD's Language Access policies so they can access Community Connect, discoverDYCD, and the agency's website.

New Yorkers are made aware of DYCD's services through its [website](#), and the discoverDYCD portal. DYCD is committed to ensuring that all New Yorkers can learn about and enjoy services available to them. The agency's overarching goal for language access is to allow access and utilization by LEP individuals into DYCD's array of services. DYCD services are provided through contracts through non-profit providers who are selected through a competitive process. Cultural competency and understanding of the needs of specific neighborhoods, including languages spoken by the communities they serve, plays an important role in this process.

DYCD is in the process of developing a "Limited English Proficiency Dashboard" to assist DYCD staff to better understand the needs of local communities. While not required under Local Law 30, DYCD's non-profit providers will also be given access to assist in their provision of services.

DYCD directly administers its website, the online application discoverDYCD, and Community Connect, a toll-free confidential hotline. All these services offer translation or interpretation services.

Free interpretation services:

- **Community Connect** is a resource and referral service for youth, families, and community-based organizations (CBOs) utilizing web-based strategies and a confidential toll-free hotline. Community Connect's mission is to increase access to and visibility of New York City's opportunities for young people by serving as one-stop shopping for all youth and community resources in NYC. Community Connect and receptionists at DYCD's main offices provide information and assistance to callers in over 180 languages.
- **Notification of free interpretation services:** In the event a visitor to DYCD's offices needs language assistance, DYCD receptionists utilize tools developed by the Mayor's Office to assist agencies in the implementation of their language access services. These tools include standard signage and language identification tools. The signs have been updated to in 22 languages, including those required by law.

Translation Services:

- **The DYCD website** includes translation into all required languages, plus many others, for over 180 language options. It provides information to young people, parents, and community-based organizations about DYCD-funded services and how to access funding opportunities.
- **discoverDYCD** allows users to search in multiple languages for DYCD-funded programs, by borough, neighborhood, or zip code, and provides contact information, activities offered, and a mapping feature with navigation. It provides enhanced search capabilities for New Yorkers to find DYCD resources in over 180 languages. DYCD also launched the sign-up feature which allows users to apply to many of DYCD-funded services directly from the web or smart phone in all required languages. The goal is for discoverDYCD to serve as the hub to develop pathways for our participants, enable access to other city services and benefits, directly capture participant feedback, and market events.
- **Translations of the most distributed documents:** DYCD has supported the translation of the most commonly distributed documents, including the Community Needs Assessment, universal applications, and parents' consent forms through Language Line. The Language Access Coordinator works with the Senior Director of Strategic Communications & Stakeholder Engagement, the Office of Strategic Communications, and other senior staff in determining which commonly distributed materials need to be translated into the required languages and others (including Yiddish), and on the use of plain language. DYCD also surveys agency personnel on language skills to assist as well.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** DYCD's website and Community Connect are constantly updated to reflect which programs are operational. This helps ensure that LEP New Yorkers can get the most up-to-date information on programming and other critical services.

Digital and emergency communications:

DYCD's website can be translated into many languages using the translate feature on the home page. Our emergency communications are largely programming changes due to weather or other emergencies, and these are posted on our website and on social media. DYCD also has a system

to message employees about emergencies and weather-related issues. DYCD participates in City Hall and Office of Emergency Management drills.

Section 6. Resource Planning

- A. DYCD contracts with Language Line Services to handle calls received by Community Connect and visitors to agency reception areas to provide interpretation services.
- B. DYCD has supported the translation of the most distributed documents through Contreras Translation & Interpretation Services, Inc., including the Community Needs Assessment, universal applications, and parents' consent forms. The Summer Youth Employment Program application has been translated into the required languages. DYCD also surveys agency personnel on language skills to assist. DYCD reviews the number of calls received through Community Connect.

DYCD has in place two contracts for Language Access:

- 1. Language Line Services, Inc. for \$15,000 through a micro purchase for phone interpretation services.
- 2. Contreras Translation and Interpretation Services for \$30,000 through a MWBE Non-competitive for document translation.

DYCD is currently assessing the need for additional services and is exploring utilizing the Department of Citywide Administrative Services contract with Language Line Services for phone interpretation services due to the increased demand.

- C. While not required under Local Law 30, DYCD gave access to Runaway and Homeless Youth providers serving ELPs, in particular asylum seekers. DYCD is reassessing its language access budget to ensure it meets the need. This has resulted into an increase in demand, particularly in Spanish, French, Wolof, Fulani, Arabic, Mandarin, Pulaar, Soninke and Dari. Community Connect runs monthly reports which track the language requested, number of calls, average length of call, and costs associated with the calls.
- D. Additionally, DYCD has supported the translation of the most distributed documents through Language Line including the Community Needs Assessment, universal applications, and parents' consent forms. DYCD also surveys agency personnel on language skills to assist. DYCD reviews the number of calls received through Community Connect and data collected on the Universal Application form to make refinements to its Language Access Plan.

Section 7. Training

DYCD provided the agency's Language Access Plan to all employees. The Language Access Coordinator meets with agency personnel including Community Connect to discuss the City's Language Access laws and ensure that the agency continues to meet and exceed its requirements. DYCD staff assigned to Community Connect are taught how to connect callers to Language Line and the time of on-boarding. In addition, this winter DYCD's Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer provided 270 employees with training on digital accessibility, which included writing in plain language. Staff learned about tools that can be used to review writing and highlight areas to simplify for language that is easy to understand. DYCD is planning future trainings to better understand language access and

Section 8. Continuous Improvement Planning

DYCD is striving to continue to improve language access. As part of the surge in asylum seekers entering the city, DYCD stepped up to assist RHY providers in serving this new population some of which include Spanish, French, Fulani, Wolof, Pulaar, Arabic, Soninke, Manadiran and Turkish. DYCD's RHY providers have also been assisting asylum seekers in connecting to school, social, and legal services.

The Language Access Coordinator meets regularly with Community Connect, the Chief Public Information Officer, and the Agency Chief Contracting Officer to ensure the agency has the resources necessary to support this plan.

Data Collection and Monitoring

DYCD keeps a record of the number of calls received by Community Connect and requires interpretation services. Additionally, DYCD tracks all complaints filed through 311, Community Connect, and the Commissioner's e-mail portal. DYCD uses this data to identify language access gaps and make informed decisions for language access improvements. DYCD will also be reviewing language data from the Universal Forms to help the agency make strategic decisions on language access.

Language Access Complaints

Members of the public may make complaints concerning Language Access through 311, Community Connect, the DYCD Commissioner's office or directly through the Language Access Coordinator. The Language Access Coordinator is responsible for keeping a log of all complaints and ensuring that all are addressed in a timely fashion. This generally consists of suggestions for the transition of additional materials which would be immediately reviewed and if applicable be immediately implemented.

Section 9. Goals and Actions planning

DYCD is proud of its efforts to ensure that every New Yorker can access DYCD's services. We are constantly striving to make it simpler to find programs in communities across the city. This helped ensure that LEP New Yorkers can get the most up-to-date information on programming. DYCD is committed to ensuring that all New Yorkers are able to learn about and enjoy services available to them.

Language Access Goals	Update
Identify a Language Access Coordinator	DYCD's Senior Director of Intergovernmental Affairs serves as the Language Access Coordinator.
Providing interpretation services to LEP callers to Youth Connect to access services and ask questions to Youth Connect Resource Specialists	Community Connect remains operational and available to the general public and is available to provide live interpretation services in over 240 languages through Language Line. While not required under Local Law 30 this has been expanded to include youth being served in Runaway and Homeless Youth programs operated by non-profits due to an increase in demand due to asylum seekers. DYCD is exploring using DCAS' contract with Language Line to meet this new demand.
Ensure that resource information on the DYCD website can be translated into the required languages.	Includes translation into all 10 required languages plus many others for over 180 language options. It provides information to young people, parents and community-based organizations about DYCD-funded services and how to access funding opportunities. DYCD launched discoverDYCD, a web platform that enables the public to search for and apply to DYCD Programs throughout New York City. After finding a program of interest, prospective applicants can choose to create a discoverDYCD account to apply to programs directly. Completing one online application enables an applicant to apply to multiple DYCD Programs. Like the agency website it is available in over 180 languages.
Ensure universal enrollment form is available in the 10 designated languages	Completed and is available through DYCD funded providers and on-line. DYCD recently added the Summer Youth Employment Program application form.

Translating commonly distributed documents in the 10 designated Citywide languages	DYCD is constantly reviewing its most commonly distributed forms and translates them in the 10 designated languages plus Yiddish.
Ensuring that “plain language” is used whenever possible	The Language Access Coordinator and the Press Officer have attended a Plain Language presentation conducted by Language Line. These individuals review agency correspondence and materials.
Translating community needs assessment forms in 10 designated Citywide languages	Completed and used in recent NDA needs assessment in 41 communities across the city.
Ensuring DYCD staff and the public are aware of DYCD’s Language Access policies	Plan is posted on the agency website and shared with agency personnel. The agency is planning on training staff on the plan in 2025.
DYCD is planning to launch a new application to assist agency staff and providers in identifying languages spoken by neighborhood tabulation area according to the US Census Bureau.	On track for Fiscal Year 2025 and will be helpful when planning community meetings in terms of interpretation and printed materials.
While not under Local Law 30, DYCD contract in place to provide American Sign Language (ASL) Interpretation and Communication Access Real-time Transcription (CART) (which offers live captioning). ASL and CART are services that provide inclusive communication for persons with hearing disabilities.	<p>In Fiscal 2025, DYCD is putting into place a similar process for requests for Interpretation services.</p> <p>DYCD is also exploring technologies available.</p>