Mayor's Office

Language Access Implementation Plan February 2023

Mayor Eric Adams

Mayor's Office Language Access Implementation Plan

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Mayor's Office Language Access Implementation Plan

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Communication plays a central role in the effective delivery of government services and community engagement. Local Law 30 of 2017 (Local Law 30 or LL30) and language access are critical to ensuring that all New Yorkers, regardless of the language(s) they speak, have access to the information and services provided by their City.

The Office of the Mayor of New York City (Mayor's Office) is comprised of a number of distinct offices that address a wide array of public needs. The Mayor's Office Language Access Implementation Plan (Plan) addresses how Mayoral offices that are covered under Local Law 30 (based on their engagement with the public), address language access. The first Plan was published in 2020 and is being updated in 2023, pursuant to LL30.

The Plan was developed by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), in coordination with other covered Mayoral offices. MOIA advances language access throughout City government by advising and providing technical assistance to City agencies on language access, and Local Law 30 implementation specifically, as well as by providing language services to Mayoral offices. MOIA provides a central coordination role for implementation of the City's language access laws, specifically oversight of LL30, in consultation with the Mayor's Office of Operations (Operations).

Covered Mayoral offices have each appointed a Language Access Liaison who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan for their respective Office. MOIA provides oversight and technical assistance and language services to offices help them meet the requirements of Local Law 30 and communicate effectively with New Yorkers who speak languages other than English.

I. Agency mission and background

The Mayor's Office is comprised of a number of offices that address a wide array of public needs. The Mayor's Office Language Access Implementation Plan addresses how Mayoral offices that are covered under Local Law 30 (based on their engagement with the public), address language access. A description of covered offices is below.

<u>Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM)</u>

The Office of Citywide Event Coordination and Management (CECM) provides oversight on all event permitting activities; advises and assists the Mayor in the coordination of policies, procedures and operations in relation to permitting; reviews the coordination of street activities and pedestrian plaza events; and works directly with other permitting agencies to ensure active communication with residents, community boards and business improvement districts.

Community Affairs Unit (CAU)

The Mayor's Community Affairs Unit is the fundamental connection between City Hall and New York City residents throughout the five boroughs. The primary mission of CAU is to establish deep partnerships with communities in order to actively engage and mobilize New Yorkers in City government.

Housing Recovery Office (HRO)

The Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery's (HRO) mission is to help New Yorkers return to safe, resilient housing after a disaster. Our work includes programs that support homeowners, landlords, renters, and tenants with temporary housing and case management; housing recovery needs assessment; and designing and managing programs to address those needs, such as property rehabilitation, reconstruction, and acquisition of damaged properties.

Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice (MOCEJ)

The Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice (MOCEJ) is a team of architects, lawyers, data and climate scientists, engineers, policy advisors, geologists, and city planners leading the City's strategy to create a city where our 8.8 million New Yorkers can live, work, learn, and play in healthy, resilient, and sustainable neighborhoods — now and into the future. MOCEJ works to make our buildings efficient and resilient, ensure our infrastructure is climate-ready, transform our streets and public realm into living, open spaces, and make our energy clean and resilient. Through science-based analysis, policy and program development, and capacity building, and with a focus on equity and public health, MOCEJ leads the City's efforts to ensure that New York City is both reducing its emissions and preparing to adapt and protect New Yorkers from the intensifying impacts of climate change.

Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health (OCMH)

The Office of Community Mental Health (OCMH) works to ensure that every New Yorker has access to mental health support, whenever and wherever they need it. OCMH works in partnership with many City agencies to: Innovate by piloting new evidence-driven strategies to

address mental health needs; enhance mental healthcare equity by increasing access to mental health support outside of traditional clinical settings, in locations such as shelters, senior centers, schools and community-based organizations; and promote inclusion by reducing stigma and cultural barriers to care and partner with communities to ensure that vulnerable populations know about and have access to mental health support.

Mayor's Office of Correspondence

The Mayor's Office of Correspondence is responsible for reading, routing, and responding to all letters, emails, and 311 calls addressed to the Mayor. Correspondence staff also draft mayoral messages, certificates and proclamations for events, in addition to assisting other Mayoral offices and agencies with a variety of writing and editing projects.

Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ)

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) advises the Mayor on all matters relating to the maintenance and improvement of a fair and equitable justice system. Recognizing that public safety cannot be achieved by law enforcement alone, MOCJ brings together community and institutional stakeholders to address the systemic issues that undermine the safety and stability of our neighborhoods. We work to move our city forward by providing better resources and expanding access to support and services needed to maintain healthy communities and improve public safety for all New Yorkers.

Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation (OER)

The New York City Mayor's Office of Environmental Remediation is a team of scientists and engineers that design and operate municipal programs to promote cleanup and redevelopment of vacant contaminated land in New York City.

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA)

The mission of the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is to facilitate the full inclusion of immigrant New Yorkers into the City's civic, economic, and cultural life. Realizing this mission in a city as diverse as New York City requires multiple approaches to advance immigrant inclusion. MOIA seeks to increase access to services for immigrant New Yorkers, as well as inform and engage and advocate on behalf of immigrant New Yorkers.

Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD)

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) is the liaison between New York City government and the disability community. In partnership with all City offices and agencies, MOPD ensures that the rights and concerns of the disability community are included in all City initiatives and that City programs and policies address the needs of people with disabilities.

NYC Service

NYC Service builds partnerships to deepen and expand civic engagement through volunteer and service programs, creating sustainable change for our city's greatest needs.

Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants (MOPT)

The Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants (MOPT) coordinates the City's range of tenant protection efforts and plays a key role in the City's strategy to confront the affordable housing crisis. This newly established office will work across City agencies to make existing anti-harassment and anti-displacement programs better, and create new strategies to root out abuse.

Mayor's Office of Special Enforcement (OSE)

The Mayor's Office of Special Enforcement (OSE) is an innovative, solutions-oriented task force that ensures NYC communities are safe from harmful illegal and unregulated industries that one agency and one set of enforcement tools alone can't address.

Mayor's Office of Special Projects and Community Events (MOSPCE)

In support of the Mayor's commitment to honor the diverse communities of our City, the Mayor's Office of Special Projects and Community Events organizes Mayoral events in partnership with city agencies and with the support of the private sector.

Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent)

The Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent) partners with public agencies, educational institutions, and the private sector so NYC residents succeed in family sustaining careers and NYC employers hire and train the talent needed to thrive. To promote equity, we aggregate and align public as well as private resources to match talent to opportunity, to adapt to the rapidly changing labor market and relentlessly tackle historic disparities.

Public Design Commission (PDC)

As New York City's design review agency, the Public Design Commission (PDC) has jurisdiction over permanent structures, landscape architecture, and art proposed on or over City-owned property. The mission of the PDC is to advocate for innovative, sustainable, and equitable design of public spaces and civic structures, with a goal of improving the public realm for all New Yorkers throughout the five boroughs.

II. Agency language access policy

It is the policy of the Mayor's Office to provide timely, meaningful access for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to services and information, in accordance with Local Law 30 of 2017.

- All personnel shall provide free language assistance services to individuals with LEP whom they encounter or whenever a person with LEP requests language assistance services.
- When engaging with persons with LEP, personnel will inform members of the public that language assistance services are available free of charge to persons with LEP and that the office will provide these services to them.
- Language assistance available to the public under the provisions of Local Law 30 includes: telephonic interpretation, in-person interpretation where appropriate, and translations into ten designated Citywide languages of documents deemed to be most commonly distributed by the covered offices.

III. LEP population assessment

As required by Local Law 30, the Mayor's Office applies the "four factor analysis¹" promulgated by the US Department of Justice to assess its obligations for language access and inform its Language Access Implementation Plan.

Factor 1 – the number or proportion of persons with LEP in the eligible service population:

As noted in Section I, the units of the Mayor's Office have multiple and varied types of engagement with the public across New York City. The eligible service population, accordingly, is the general population of New York City.

On behalf of the Mayor's Office, MOIA looked at citywide data to assess the number or proportion of LEP persons and their languages in the eligible service population for the services and information provided by covered offices. According to Census data from the American Community Survey provided by the Department of City Planning, 48% of New Yorkers above the age of five, or approximately 3.9 million New Yorkers, speak a language other than English at home. Twenty two percent of New Yorkers, or 1.8 million individuals, are considered limited English proficient (LEP), meaning that they self-identify as speaking English "less than very well." LEP correlates with an increased need for language assistance.

The Mayor's Office applies the analysis undertaken by MOIA under Local Law 30 to determine the top ten citywide languages based on data from the Census and the NYC Department of Education. Based on this analysis, the ten citywide languages are: Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Korean, Arabic, Urdu, French, and Polish.

Factor 2 – the frequency with which individuals with LEP come into contact with the office

¹ See Department of Justice Final LEP Guidance for description of four factor analysis: https://www.justice.gov/crt/doj-final-lep-guidance-signed-6-12-02

According to the breadth and variety of activities realized by the Mayor's Office, the frequency with which units of the Office come into contact with individuals with LEP varies.

Some offices, such as MOPD, MOIA, and CAU, engage directly with individuals with LEP on a regular basis, while others have much lower frequency of contact. Many offices have significant contact with populations with LEP, but only a few times a year, in relationship to specific initiatives, campaigns, or events. Others have activities that are open to, or communications directed at, the general public, and therefore must also be accessible for individuals with LEP.

Factor 3 – the importance of benefit, service, information or encounter to the LEP person

The Mayor's Office serves as a critical link between the City's government and its constituency.

Units across the Mayor's Office provide invaluable information and services to the public in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- constituent services and outreach (CAU, HRO, NYC Service, MOCEJ, MOPD, MOIA, MOSPCE, NYC Talent)
- provision of permits (CECM)
- events, town halls, and public meetings (MOIA, CAU, MOCJ, OER, NYC Service)

Factor 4 – resources available

MOIA's Language Services Team (LST) provides language services for Mayoral offices. The LST contracts with vendors that provide translation, translation review, in-person and telephonic interpretation services. The LST is in the process of hiring a team of language access specialists who will provide culturally responsive and timely translations and who will engage with community groups and language communities to understand their needs.

MOIA has procured interpretation equipment as well as computer-assisted translation tools, to streamline translation requests, improve consistency, quality, and turnaround times of translated materials.

Mayoral offices also employ bilingual staff, who can engage directly with LEP individuals.

Evaluation of language access needs of agency's service population

Based on our assessment of the above factors, a significant number of the Mayor's Office's target service population has LEP.

While speakers of the ten Designated Citywide Languages under Local Law 30 account for more than 85% of foreign-born New York City residents with LEP, MOIA makes additional efforts to engage speakers of languages beyond the ten designated under the law.

In order to ensure that MOIA's Outreach Team can effectively engage with these hard-to-reach communities that it has identified, MOIA provides interpretation in and translates materials into languages beyond the local law languages. Additionally, MOIA's LST collaborates with other Mayoral offices to support specific requests. For example, from the launch of the LST in December 2016 through the end of CY 2022, the LST:

- provided 1368 interpreters that spoke 32 languages at 556 Mayor's Office events. In addition to the 10 designated citywide languages, interpreters spoke Albanian, Burmese, Hindi, Nepali, Pashto, and Soninke, among other languages.
- translated materials into 78 languages in response to outreach to specific communities.
 In addition to the 10 designated citywide languages, materials were translated into Dari, Kiche, Kurdish, Gujarati, Mixteco, Punjabi, Quechua, Shona, Tagalog, Thai, Twi, Ukrainian, Wolof, and Yoruba, among other languages.

As part of the implementation plan, MOIA will continue to work with Mayoral offices to assess their respective engagement with New Yorkers with Limited English Proficiency.

IV. Provision of language assistance services

The Mayor's Office provides language services to serve, communicate, and engage with its constituents through multiple means. Across the array of resources, the Mayor's Office seeks to improve the coverage, appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of its language services.

Bilingual Staff

The Mayor's Office recognizes that understanding cultural nuances of immigrant communities and being able to communicate with New Yorkers who are limited English proficient without the use of an interpreter are critical. Roughly half of New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home. The language ability of bilingual staff is an important asset, if used appropriately, for communicating with fellow New Yorkers.

As such, several units of the Mayor's Office employ bilingual staff. MOIA in particular seeks to hire bilingual staff for any position that will directly engage with LEP individuals. MOIA is also hiring language access specialists who will provide culturally responsive and timely translations and who will engage with community groups and language communities to understand their needs. Additionally, offices such as CAU, MOCEJ, OER, HRO, NYC Service, and the Office of Special Enforcement currently employ bilingual staff members who, where appropriate, communicate directly with individuals with LEP.

Professional Language Services

While multilingual staff are an asset to reaching New Yorkers with LEP, the Mayor's Office does not rely on them to translate materials or interpret. To ensure effective communication, the Mayor's Office uses the services of contracted translation and interpretation vendors. Bilingual staff may be used to communicate directly with New Yorkers with LEP in their primary language, as opposed to acting as an interpreter for another staff member who is rendering services to a client.

In December 2016, MOIA established the Language Services Team (LST) to centralize the coordination of language services within MOIA and Mayoral offices. MOIA's LST provides services for Mayoral offices that need these services by:

- Coordinating the delivery of translation and interpretation services
- Providing a point of contact for staff, external vendors and other partners
- Managing procurement and accounting of contracted language services
- Distributing and maintaining an inventory of interpretation equipment
- Providing language access training to Mayor's Office staff
- Identifying new needs and language services solutions
- Providing technical assistance to agencies to support their delivery of language services

This centralization streamlines the processing of requests and turnaround times, and leverages the language access technical expertise of staff, which improves the quality of the multilingual content that the Mayor's Office delivers. The LST stays up to date with developments and trends in the language services industry.

Below is a description of MOIA's approach to providing translated documents and interpretation services.

Translation

The Mayor's Office aims to ensure that critical written material is available and disseminated in the languages needed by its target audiences. MOIA's LST works with translation vendors to translate these materials and will be hiring a team of language access specialists who will provide culturally responsive and timely translations and who will engage with community groups and language communities to understand their needs.

"Most-commonly-distributed" documents

As a result of LL30 and MOIA's coordination of language services to Mayoral offices, MOIA has identified and translated its most commonly-distributed documents and has asked Mayoral offices to do the same. Following the change of Administration, leadership, and staff across Mayoral offices, Mayoral offices are re-evaluating their most commonly distributed documents to ensure MOIA's LST continues to translate new and updated commonly-distributed documents into at least the 10 LL30 languages.

<u>Plain language</u>

The LST language access training addresses how to develop content and design materials for a multilingual audience. Units will integrate plain language review into the workflow for all new document creation, to ensure that ease of translation and accessibility in English. MOIA and Operations will provide technical assistance around plain language practices.

Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement

The LST incorporates standard practices and tools from the language service industry to expand delivery of translated materials that are high quality and produced in a timely fashion.

To ensure quality, the LST's practices incorporate:

- Standardized project and file management for translation projects, including version control
- Consistent and proactive communications with vendors and clients (colleagues at MOIA and other Mayoral offices)
- Advising clients, including sister agencies, on content issues that may affect the translation process
- Conducting training for staff of covered Mayoral offices.
- Liaising with vendors, DCAS, and the Mayor's Office of Contracts (MOCs) to ensure we receive high quality services
- Utilizing computer-assisted translation tools to help improve the consistency and quality (as well as turnaround times) of translations
- Standardizing the tools used to produce materials (e.g., Adobe Creative Cloud).
- Expanding the use of a glossary (or termbase) and style sheets

While contracted vendors have quality assurance processes, MOIA provides supplemental quality assurance through a contract with a vendor that reviews certain translated materials. MOIA's bilingual staff or the Citywide Volunteer Language Bank may also provide quality assurance reviews of materials and when MOIA hires its team of language access specialists, these staff will also be able to review translated material to ensure it is culturally responsive and accurate.

The LST developed a language service protocol and distributes a one-page guide for staff on how to request translation and interpretation services and how to use telephonic interpretation. The LST reviews its provision of language services to identify opportunities for improvement through refined practice (coordination and collaboration) and more appropriate inputs (vendors, tools/technology).

Written communications beyond the "most commonly distributed" documents

MOIA translates a variety of communications. For example, MOIA uses professional translators to translate its website into the LL30 languages. MOIA has also translated Op-eds, social media content, infographics, and subtitles, depending on the target audience. The Mayor's Office will assess what additional communications covered units have with LEP individuals and how to make those accessible, in order to continue to expand coverage over time.

Interpretation

When it is not appropriate to use bilingual staff, the Mayor's Office uses professional contracted interpretation services (either in-person or over the phone) in its outreach, to respond to constituent inquiries, and at points of service, as needed. The LST assesses feedback about the quality of services and relays any concerns back to the vendors, as necessary.

In-Person Interpretation

MOIA provides in-person interpretation at events and gatherings, including Mayoral Town Halls and other public-facing events held by Mayoral offices. For these events, MOIA uses its

contracted vendors to provide consecutive or simultaneous interpretation in languages of the target audience. MOIA has purchased and maintains interpretation equipment, including both stationary and portable transmitters, receivers, headphones, and booths, to allow for simultaneous interpretation. The LST provides this equipment and coordinates interpreters for events organized by MOIA staff and covered Mayoral offices.

Telephonic Interpretation

Telephonic interpretation provides a valuable and flexible service to support exchanges in languages not spoken by bilingual staff – for phone calls and to support in-person encounters in the office or in the field. Telephonic interpretation provides ready access in more than 200 languages. All Mayoral office staff can access telephonic interpretation service through the DCAS contract with Language Line, coordinated by MOIA.

Notification of Free Interpretation Services

The Mayor's Office informs members of the public about the availability of free interpretation services in multiple ways, including through multilingual signage and outreach presentations. MOIA developed wall posters, tabletop signs, and wallet-sized "I Speak" cards to support awareness about the availability of free interpretation. City agencies and Mayor's Offices can access these tools through the citywide intranet. MOIA has provided these tools to covered units in the Mayor's Office.

MOIA also provides signage and makes announcements at events where there is interpretation to ensure individuals with LEP are aware of the service. MOIA's multilingual "Immigrant Rights Workshops" also promote awareness about Local Law 30 and New Yorkers' rights to language services across City government (see Section VIII).

Emergency Planning

MOIA works with NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) and the lead agency in an emergency to ensure that language access is provided during emergency response. While the lead agency responding to an emergency is responsible for providing language access, including providing in-person or over-the-phone interpretation and translating its materials, MOIA helps identify language access needs, assesses resources available to provide language access and works with agency partners to address language access challenges. When the emergency is of a certain scale, NYCEM triggers an Interagency Language Access Task Force, comprised of NYCEM, DSS, MOIA and other key agencies to assess language access needs, determine how language services should be provided, and identify whether additional resources need are needed.

V. Training

To ensure that Mayor's Office staff are aware about language access obligations and services available to support their efforts, the LST provides annual training for MOIA staff and MO Language Access Liaisons. The training addresses the following:

- The importance of language access in ensuring equity and its importance to the mission of the Mayor's Office;
- The City's legal obligations around language access, including Local Law 30;
- The language services resources available to MO staff to ensure they can communicate with LEP New Yorkers and how to access those services; and
- Steps staff can take to ensure the quality of multilingual communications, including standards for ensuring that documents are written in plain language.

The LST also provides additional refresher trainings on language services and the use of interpretation equipment for Language Access Liaisons and/or staff developing materials or conducting outreach.

The LST distributes its one-page guide on how to request translation and interpretation services and how to use telephonic interpretation to staff. The LST reviews and updates training and instructional materials at least annually to further integrate multilingual communications across operations.

Language Access Liaisons are responsible for distributing the guide to language services to their colleagues and providing periodic reminders to staff about what is available to them and their respective Office's responsibility to provide services.

VI. Record keeping and evaluation

The LST processes and tracks the translation of materials, as well as requests and fulfillment of interpretation services at covered Mayoral offices. The LST regularly assesses the volume of service requests.

In alignment with the procurement and fiscal cycles, the LST reviews its delivery of language services to identify new needs and opportunities for improvement. This review includes an assessment of demand for language services, the LST's ability to meet demand and manage projects effectively, and any issues encountered with respect to contracted services.

VII. Resource analysis and planning

In addition to periodic review by the LST to improve its delivery of language services and identify gaps in provision (see Section IV), MOIA seeks to better understand shifts in language needs across immigrant communities and to ensure that communications and communications resources are being used effectively.

MOIA maintains relationships with immigrant-serving community organizations that share the priority needs and challenges faced by their respective communities, including language barriers to accessing services. This information guides MOIA's practices around staffing, developing multilingual information and resources for these communities, and working with contracted vendors. MOIA also shares relevant information learned through these relationships with City agencies and Mayoral offices.

VIII. Outreach and public awareness of language access services

There are various ways Mayoral offices can promote awareness of languages services. MOIA developed and provided tools, such as signage, "I speak" cards, and "Point to Your Language" one-pagers that inform New Yorkers about interpretation services. Offices will also provide notification on their websites regarding the availability of free interpretation and translated materials, and add notification on relevant flyers and include this information in outreach presentations, as appropriate. Sections IV and VII describe additional ways MOIA raises awareness to communities about language services, including through its Immigrant Rights Workshops and engagement with immigrant-serving community organizations.

IX. Language access complaints

All covered Offices will continue to appoint a liaison who will receive, troubleshoot, and track language access complaints received via 311. Liaisons will provide a response to the complainant within 14 days as per the Citywide Customer Service Standard. Liaisons will contact appropriate staff member to investigate the complaint, respond to the constituent, and if necessary, re-issue any relevant guidance regarding language access. MOIA is copied on complaints, which it tracks to ensure offices have followed up.

X. Implementation plan logistics

Implementation Goals & Timeline			
Assess which Mayoral offices are "covered offices"	 In consultation with Mayoral offices and relevant legal teams, MOIA will identify additional Mayoral offices that are covered under LL30 (given new offices that have been created due to the change in Mayoral administration) 	CY23 Q2-Q3	
Strengthening infrastructure to deliver language services	 MOIA will expand its LST to improve delivery of language services by hiring language access specialists MOIA will ensure it has necessary contracts with language services providers 	Ongoing	
Providing Language Services	 Offices identify commonly distributed documents Offices will integrate plain language principles into material creation MOIA will translate materials 	CY23 Q2 Ongoing Ongoing	
Training	 MOIA will provide annual training to liaisons of covered Mayoral offices regarding LL30, language services available to them and how to request services and train MOIA staff 	CY23 Q4, CY24, CY25	

	- Liaisons will disseminate info to colleagues	ongoing
Awareness of free	- Offices will disseminate language access tools to	CY23 Q1, CY24, CY25
language services	staff	
	 Offices will add text to outreach/hearing flyers and presentations re availability of free 	Ongoing
	interpretation	
	 Offices will create Language Access page on 	CY23, Q2, Q3
	website with information about the Mayor's	
	Office LAC, and a link to the Mayor's Office	
	Language Access Implementation Plan	
311 Complaint	- Offices will designate a person to receive 311	CY23, Q2
Procedures	complaints	
	- Offices will determine process for responding to	CY23, Q2
	311 language access complaints	