

# Department for the Aging (DFTA) Language Access Policy and Plan Fiscal Year 2018

The New York City Department for the Aging Language Access Plan complies with Local Law 73 and Executive Order No. 120 of July 2008, titled Citywide Policy on Language Access to Ensure the Effective Delivery of City Services. DFTA has had a Language Access policy and plan since fiscal 2009. This updated Plan includes requirements of Local Law 30, which went into effect on July 1, 2017.

## 1. DFTA Mission and Background

### Agency Mission

The NYC Department for the Aging's Mission is to work to eliminate ageism and ensure the dignity and quality-of-life of New York City's diverse older adults, as well as to support of their caregivers, through service, advocacy, and education.

DFTA is the lead Mayoral agency addressing public policy and service issues affecting older New Yorkers. Through its community partners and direct service units DFTA serves more than 200,000 older New Yorkers and their caregivers. DFTA is also the largest agency in the Federal network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's). In this capacity, the Department advocates on legislative, regulatory, and socio-economic issues that affect older adults.

The goals of DFTA's programs and initiatives are to:

- promote and support the independence of older New Yorkers;
- eliminate ageism;
- inform and educate the general public about aging issues, services, supports, and opportunities for older New Yorkers and their families;
- be a catalyst for increased resources to enhance and expand programs and services for older New Yorkers;
- ensure the provision of quality services fairly and equitably to older New Yorkers; and,
- enhance and expand effective, productive partnerships with consumers, advocates, private and public organizations.

### Services Provided by the Department for the Aging

DFTA provides the majority of its services through contracts with community-based and other organizations. DFTA-funded core community services include:

- Senior centers: The Department currently funds over 240 senior centers, located in every Community Board and are attended by nearly 30,000 individuals daily.
- Case management: Case Management is the gatekeeper for DFTA funded in-home services such as home delivered meals, home care, and friendly visiting. All clients receiving an in-home service funded by DFTA receive a comprehensive assessment from a case management agency.
- Home delivered meals: The Home Delivered Meals program provides nutritious meals to older New Yorkers while creating greater choice to address the future needs of a growing homebound population.
- Home care: The Home Care program is designed for low-income seniors 60 years and older who have unmet needs in activities of daily living and do not qualify for Medicaid or other ongoing insurance-funded home care. The goal of this program is to maintain seniors safely at home and prevent or at least delay the placement of frail elderly individuals into more expensive Medicaid-funded nursing homes.

- Transportation: The Department provides transportation for older adults through contracted non-profit organizations. These providers transport frail older New Yorkers who have no access to, or cannot use public transportation, for the purpose of attending senior centers and essential medical and social service appointments.
- Caregiver services: DFTA provides oversight of ten contracted Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Programs. These community based organizations support caregivers by providing information on long term care topics and resources, assisting caregivers in accessing benefits and entitlements, offering individual counseling, support groups, and care-related training, linking with in-home, congregate, and overnight respite care, and offering supplemental supportive services. Grandparents or other older relatives who are solely responsible for raising their grandchildren age 18 and under are also eligible for services, as are older adults caring for their adult disabled child.
- Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs): DFTA oversees the city-funded Naturally Occurring Retirement Community Supportive Service Programs (NORC SSPs), which provides social work services, assistance with health care management, wellness activities, and other social and educational programs. There are currently 28 NORC SSP contracts funded by DFTA.
- Elder abuse prevention and intervention services: Through this program, seniors who are experiencing any of several forms of maltreatment (physical, sexual, financial, psychological, and/or active or passive neglect) by someone who has a special or "trusting" relationship with the elder (a spouse, a sibling, a child, a friend, a caregiver, etc.) are provided with direct services. The objective of elder abuse intervention strategies is to increase the client's sense of control and self-acceptance and to provide a range of legal and social service options for ending abuse.

DFTA provides the following core services directly:

- Health insurance information counseling and assistance (HIICAP); HIICAP conducts public outreach presentations and workshops for older adults, community partners, and other groups on Medicare, Medicaid, Medigap, Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC), private health insurance and Medicare's preventive services. HIICAP's counselors are state certified who provide assistance with Medicare Part D prescription plan selection and enrollment by appointment and over the telephone, among other services. HIICAP has 33 community based sites citywide that offer 15 different language capabilities.
- Senior employment: DFTA's Senior Employment Unit provides, training, and employment opportunities for adults 55 and older, including job search skills workshops, career advisement, job fairs, and computer technology and customer service training. The SCSEP training components include a variety of online courses geared toward helping participants become more successful in their job search.
- Caregiver/grandparent information and assistance: The Caregiver Resource Center consists of social workers who offer support through the provision of information, assistance, and referrals to individuals caring for older New Yorkers; consultation is provided to professionals who request guidance for their clients; and informational sessions on relevant long term care topics are conducted for caregivers, professionals, seniors, and the community at large. These presentations include areas such as Alzheimer's disease, caregiving, residential alternatives, and community resources. These sessions are offered in English, Spanish and Mandarin. In support of the Department's Health Promotions Unit, workshops on the evidenced-based Chronic Disease and Diabetes Self-Management programs are conducted in Mandarin and Cantonese.
- Elderly crime victims information and support: The Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center provides direct services to crime and elder abuse victims and training to groups that work with older adults on how to identify signs and provide intervention. The ECVRC and its community partners – including the Mayor's Office to

Combat Domestic Violence and the Family Justice Centers of Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island – provide crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, information and assistance, limited emergency financial assistance, and legal services referrals.

- One-on-one free assistance to older persons who need help with checkbook maintenance and bill paying: The Bill Payer Program works to assist low income seniors in paying their bills on time, while protecting them from financial exploitation. The program helps financially vulnerable seniors to remain in the community with the assurance that their monthly financial obligations have been met.

For more information about DFTA's services, please visit our website at: [www.nyc.gov/aging](http://www.nyc.gov/aging).

## 2. DFTA Language Access Policy and Goal

Individuals are considered to be of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) when they are not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows them to interact effectively with service providers. In keeping with the Department's mission to serve older New Yorkers, DFTA is committed to ensuring that limited English is not an obstacle to older LEP individuals.

DFTA's language access goal is to facilitate aging services access and utilization by older LEP individuals. The goal will be met through the following objectives:

- Ensuring DFTA staff, provider and public are aware of and knowledgeable about DFTA's Language Access Policy;
- Providing staff with access to and usage of the Language Line and New York City Volunteer Language Bank;
- Requiring providers contracted with the NYC Department for the Aging to have plans and policies in place to address the needs of LEP individuals as per the Department's General Standards of Operation;
- Monitoring contract agency compliance with standards;
- Translating commonly distributed documents in the 10 designated citywide languages; and
- Ensuring that other documents and announcements, identified by DFTA programmatic units, are translated into the top 10 languages of Older New Yorkers and/or the City's 10 designated citywide languages;
- Implementing a protocol for Provision of Language Access Services by DFTA's Staff.

## 3. LEP Population Assessment (Application of the US Department of Justice Four Factor Analysis)

### Factor 1: The number and proportion of LEP older individuals in New York City

#### Primary Languages of Older New Yorkers

Based on the American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-15 data, the top ten most frequent non-English languages spoken at home by older New Yorkers 60+ are Spanish (20.0%); Chinese (6.0%); Russian (4.0%); Italian (2.0%); French Creole (2.0%); French (1.0%); Greek (1.0%); Tagalog (1.0%); Korean (1.0%); and Polish (1.0%).

#### The Primary Languages of DFTA's Clients Served During Fiscal 2017

During Fiscal 2017, DFTA served over 200,000 older New Yorkers and their caregivers; of those:

- 32,989 speak a primary language other than English; and,
- 26,636 can't speak, read, or understand English.

The language breakdown of all DFTA clients whose primary language is not English is as follows:

- Spanish (57%)
- Chinese - includes Cantonese, Mandarin and other dialects (32%)

- Russian (5%)
- Korean (2 %)
- Polish (1%)
- Other<sup>1</sup> (3%)

## Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the agency

The table below shows the number and of, and frequency with which LEP individuals came into contact with DFTA – funded core programs during Fiscal Year 2017. The most common languages spoken among these individuals who can't speak, read or understand English are: Spanish (57%); Chinese (24.7%); Russian (7.7%); Korean (5.1%); and Polish (1.2%).

Number of Contacts with DFTA funded programs	Limited English Proficiency					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent	Clients	Percent
Less than 10 times	10,782	38.4%	90,526	46.3%	101,308	45.3%
10 ~ 24 times	4,213	15.0%	27,668	14.1%	31,881	14.2%
25 ~ 49 times	3,213	11.4%	21,075	10.8%	24,288	10.9%
50 ~ 99 times	4,176	14.9%	28,286	14.5%	32,462	14.5%
100 ~ 199 times	3,553	12.7%	18,951	9.7%	22,504	10.1%
200 and more times	2,141	7.6%	9,146	4.7%	11,287	5.0%
Total	28,078	100.0%	195,652	100.0%	223,730	100.0%
Average Contacts	55.4 times		43.4 times		44.8 times	

In FY2017 DFTA provided more than 600 over the phone interpretation in more than 20 languages through its Language Line Services. The table below shows the languages for which translation was provided and the number of calls for each.

Language	Number of Calls
Spanish	259
Russian	90
Chinese	157
Korean	39
Haitian Creole	11
Arabic	8
Polish	7
French	7
Bengali	7
Romanian	6
Italian	5
Farsi	4
Greek	3
Hindi	3
Fuzhou	3

<sup>1</sup> Other includes fewer than 100 clients. Language distribution: Abkhazian, Afrikaans, Albanian, American Sign Language, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali Bangla, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian, Catalan, Cherokee, Corsican, Creole, Creole Spanish, Croatian, Czech, Dakota, Dutch, Egyptian (EGY), Esperanto, Estonian, Farsi, Finnish, French, French Creole, Georgian, German, Greek, Guarani, Gujarati Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Interlingue, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Kirundi Kurdish, Latin, Latvian Lettish, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malay, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Moldavian, Nepali Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Rhaeto-Romanc, Romanian, Samoan, Serbian, Serbo-Croatian, Sindhi, Singhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali Sudanese, Swahili, Swazi, Swedish, Tagalog, Taiwanese, Tamil, Tegulu, Thai Tibetan, Toisanese, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Yiddish, Yoruba.

Albanian	2
Fukienese	2
Hungarian	2
German	1
Laotian	1
Turkish	1
Portuguese	1

**Factor 3: The importance of the benefit, service, information, or encounter to the limited English proficient person.**

All of DFTA's programs and services are important to ensuring older adults are safe and secure, and age well in their communities. The lack of, or delay of access to, translation or interpretation services can have serious implications for LEP older adults and their caregivers trying to access these services.

**Factor 4: Resources available to the agency and the costs of providing the various language services.**

DFTA's current resources include Language Line Services, which offers translation and interpretation services in over 170 languages, and DFTA's multilingual staff who can competently assist LEP individuals in the languages they speak. DFTA also contracts with translation providers for document translation. Costs for these services can be made available upon request.

**4. Provision of language access services**

**Protocol for Provision of Language Access Services by DFTA's Staff**

- All DFTA staff interacting with potential clients and/or service information seekers will take the following steps in providing service to walk-in individuals:
  - When a walk-in customer appears to be LEP, staff will attempt to verbally ascertain the primary language spoken by the customer.
  - If verbal communication is unsuccessful, staff will use a Language Identification Card to facilitate communication. Language Identification Cards will be available in all reception areas and units.
- When individuals visiting DFTA's offices need language services, they will be assigned to a bilingual staff person who speaks his/her language if available.
- If an appropriate bilingual worker is not available, Language Line interpreter services will be accessed.
- Callers to direct service units or individuals contacted by phone will be asked their preferred language for communication if it appears they are LEP and interpretation services will be provided.

Primary language will be tracked in DFTA's Correspondence Tracking System (CTS) and correspondence, including mail and emails to specific LEP persons will be translated into the language the individuals speak if requested.

Translation and interpretation services will be provided primarily by Language Line or any other certified vendors with whom the agency contracts in the future. Other services available to clients through the agency's contract with Language Line include video interpretation, on-site interpretation, and document translation. All DFTA's direct services units have access to the Language Access line.

The department will also register with and use the Volunteer Language Bank for reviewing translations.

**Translation of essential service documents and announcements**

Essential service documents and announcements identified by DFTA programmatic units, will be translated into the top 10 languages of Older New Yorkers and/or the City's 10 designated citywide languages where applicable. Using the data included in the four factor analysis, DFTA's priority, given current limited resources, will be to translate documents into the languages that best meet the needs of the New York City's senior population or target areas. The top ten languages spoken by New York City's seniors include three languages not included in the citywide designated languages – Italian, Greek, and Tagalog. The department will:

- Maintain a list of specific documents requiring translation from DFTA Bureau Heads.
- Develop a protocol for staff requests for formal translation of DFTA documents.
- Provide translated routine documents to DFTA's contracted providers (e.g.: consent forms, contribution requirements, complaint procedures, etc.).
- Maintain a record of documents translated during the fiscal year and languages into which they were translated.

### **Use of Plain Language**

Documents targeted for translation will be written in plain language to ensure that information is accessible to a range of literacy levels. Staff responsible for developing these documents will receive plain language training. Documents will be reviewed for readability and clarity, and edited where necessary, prior to translation and dissemination to the public. When appropriate or feasible, multilingual taglines or graphics will be added to documents written in English to assist LEP individuals in understanding the information provided, and to inform them that free language assistance is available.

### **Signage**

Multilingual signs will be placed in the reception areas of the programs who receive walk-ins informing visitors of the availability of free interpretation services. Signs will be in the ten designated citywide languages, which includes the top five languages spoken by New York City's seniors.

### **Addressing language access needs in the agency's emergency preparedness and response**

Materials produced for publication by DFTA's Bureau of Emergency Preparedness (BEP) will be translated in the 10 citywide designated languages (see appendix for a list of the commonly distributed documents distributed by BEP). Information on emergency preparedness to community partners will be in the languages most commonly spoken by their communities. Language Access will also be incorporated into DFTA's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

## **5. Training**

DFTA's Center for Organization Development and Strategic Initiatives develops and conducts or facilitates language access and cultural competency trainings for direct service staff, supervisors, and program officers who are responsible for monitoring contracted providers. (See appendix for copy of curriculum).

## **6. Record Keeping and Evaluation**

The department will maintain records of all language services provided by the agency. A formal tracking system will be developed and each direct service unit will be required to document all language services provided on a monthly basis.

Based on the information gathered from each unit, the Language Line invoices, and 311 data, the Language Access Coordinator will prepare quarterly reports for DFTA's Executive staff. DFTA will also maintain a record of the number of bilingual interpreter staff providing services and the language they are proficient in, as well as a list of documents that have been translated and disseminated.

All providers contracted with the NYC Department for the Aging are required to have plans and policies in place to address the needs of LEP individuals and compliance will be monitored as a part of the provider's assessment. As per the Department's General Standards of Operation (Standard 2 Compliance 2.1 and 2.2):

**Compliance 2.2. The program is linguistically and culturally competent.**

- *The program has a language access plan that includes these provisions:*
  - *The program will provide on-demand language assistance free of charge to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). At minimum, the program will have a telephonic interpretation service contract or similar community arrangement with a language interpretation services provider to assist LEP individuals.*
  - *The program will inform persons with limited English proficiency of the availability of free language assistance at its location. Notice will be in writing designed to be understood by LEP individuals.*
  - *The program will train staff that have contact with the public in the timely and appropriate use of these and other language services.*

**Compliance 2.2. The program is culturally competent.**

- *All service activities reflect (1) understanding of the needs, characteristics, cultural expectations and preferences of different ethnic groups residing in the community; (2) sensitivity and responsiveness to issues relating to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation and immigrant adjustment; (3) sensitivity to cultural barriers impeding service utilization, including but not limited to language barriers; and (4) knowledge of linguistically and culturally competent service providers in the community and City, and ability to refer individuals to these providers when needed.*
- *All services are provided with respect for cultural differences, preferences and styles of communication, and with skill in assisting individuals in overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. As appropriate to the type of services provided, cultural preferences are respected – e.g. through foods served, holiday celebrations, social activities and program communications.*

## 7. Resource Analysis and Planning

Implementation of the Plan, coordination and management of translation services, and ensuring compliance with Local Law 30 will be provided by the following DFTA staff:

Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Management Analysis and Planning (OMAP) and the Director of Planning, Policy and Analysis (PPAU) will supervise the Language Access Coordinator whose responsibilities include:

- Facilitating the coordination/implementation of Language Access Policy;
- Coordinating Language Access Policy and Plan Implementation with key DFTA staff;
- Reviewing (monthly) the use of language interpretation services (Language Line, Volunteer Language Bank, etc.) to identify new needs and ensure suitability of contracted translation providers to DFTA needs;
- Coordinating with the Volunteer Language Bank on translation confirmation requests;
- Keeping records/notes on items that need to be added to, and/or changed/updated in, the Language Access Plan annually;
- Tracking, and preparing reports on, Language Access Plan implementation;

- Working with the Supervisor of Policy and Correspondence (SPC) to update the Language Access Report to the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs;
- Preparing monthly, quarterly and annual reports on Language Access.

Deputy Commissioner for Program Operations:

- Ensure implementation of Language Access Policy, as it pertains to DFTA's Bureau of Community Services, Bureau of Long Term Care, Bureau of Active Aging and Bureau of Health Care Connections.

Director of Public Affairs:

- Ensure that DFTA's public announcements and key publications are translated into the 10 designated citywide languages and top 10 languages of older New Yorkers.

DFTA General Counsel:

- Provide supervision to DFTA's General Services unit; this is the unit responsible for the procurement and management of the Language Line contract.

Director of the Center for Organization Development and Strategic Initiatives:

- Develop and conduct language access and cultural competency trainings for direct service staff, supervisors, and program officers who are responsible for monitoring contracted providers.

## 8. Outreach and Public Awareness

The department will keep the updated Language Access Policy posted on its website in the top 5 languages in NYC where all stakeholders (Internal staff, providers, older New Yorkers, general public, etc.) can have access to it. Annual reminders about DFTA's Language Access Policies will be sent from the Commissioner to staff and providers, with DFTA's language access policy attached and the location on the Internet referenced. A copy of the Language Access Plan will be included in New Staff Orientation materials.

## 9. Complaint Procedure

Information about how to file a complaint is included in each internal and external provider Bill of Rights and Grievance Procedures, which are distributed to clients and/or posted in public areas as well as are located on DFTA's website. This year DFTA will be posting the contact number of the language access coordinator, as well as the procedure for filing language access complaints, in the top 10 languages, on DFTA's website. The language coordinator will be responsible for keeping a log of all complaints, and ensuring that all complaints are addressed in a timely manner.



## 10. Implementation Plan Logistics

Language Access Goals	Milestones
Identify a Language Access Coordinator.	The Department is in the process of identifying the coordinator.
Develop a tracking system to track complaints and document language translation services provided.	The Department has been working on building and programming a new Correspondence Tracking System that will track all of the agency's correspondence, complaints, including those language access related, as well as internal and external requests for translation.
Develop a complaint form and post on the internet.	
Develop a protocol for staff requests for formal translation of DFTA documents.	
Incorporate Language Access into the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)	
Ensure that multilingual staffers are tapped to table at disaster service assistance centers and multilingual materials provided.	
Develop a system to monitor whether language services are being provided by contracted providers.	
Ensure that all Programs and In-House Units have Language Cards Posted	Assess who has cards and who does not Purchase cards to distribute for posting. Distribute cards and follow-up to confirm that they have been posted.
Review the Clarity of Materials to be Translated.	Review documents for clarity (plain language) prior to translation.
Identify and Prioritize Documents for Translation.	Identify which essential documents are to be translated into which languages and the priority for translation.
Convene the first biannual multi-Bureau Language Access Meetings.	PPAU will meet with Bureaus twice yearly to evaluate and report on actions taken to meet language access goals and priorities.