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Countywide Language Access Departmental Language Access Plan

The Departmental Language Access Plan, or DLAP, is intended to establish the minimum requirements for County departments to ensure that they are striving towards providing **consistent, high-quality language access**.

DEPARTMENTAL LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN (DLAP)

LA County Library Language Access Plan
 Effective Dates: (July 1, 2024)

Contact person: Julian Zamora, JZamora@library.lacounty.gov

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

A. Department Mission

- LA County Library belongs to our communities and serve as a portal to learn, grow, and succeed. LA County Library serves one of the nation's most culturally, economically, and socially diverse regions. According to the Census the top three languages spoken in LA County are English (45.2%), Spanish (37.7%) and Chinese (4%). Using this data, the Library prioritizes providing translations of vital department documents in Spanish and Chinese.
- Internal Data Analysis
 - i. LA County Library gathered data from all libraries, asking about Languages Other Than English (LOTE) spoken by customers at the library. This data was observed at the Circulation and Information desks of each library and reported by library staff. We analyzed the various languages submitted and identified the languages that were most commonly requested at the library.
 - ii. LA County Library wants to make sure everyone can use our services in different languages. On our Language Access Website community members will be able to share their feedback through our online complaint form. Your feedback helps us serve you better. Please use this form to tell us about your experience and how we can improve.
- The Library endeavors to provide materials and programming in multiple languages which best serve the needs of its varied and complex public.

The Library offers materials in a variety of languages, we actively purchase in these languages:

- i. English, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

B. Department Priority Languages

- o According to the Census the top three languages spoken in LA County are English (45.2%), Spanish (37.7%) and Chinese (4%). Using this data, the Library prioritizes providing translations of vital department documents in Spanish and Chinese.

SECTION 2: DEPARTMENT'S LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

C. General Policy Statement

- o LA County Library seeks to provide meaningful language access to all customers in our service area. We will provide translations of vital departmental documents, maintain a collection of resources in various languages and, when possible, connect customers with bilingual staff who speak their language of choice. The Library hopes to obtain pocket translators that library staff can use when interacting with customers. These devices are easy to use and can translate from English to many different languages.

D. Scope of Policy

- o This policy applies to library staff, along with how we interact with our library customers.

SECTION 3: KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Speaker of a Language Other Than English ("LOTE"): Also known as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or English Language Learner (ELL), this designation refers to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who do not read, write or speak English.

Preferred Language: The primary language in which an individual prefers to read, write and speak.

Interpretation: Rendering spoken or signed language into another language while maintaining the meaning and tone of the language.

Translation: Rendering written communication into another language while preserving meaning.

Vital Documents: Documents that affect enrollment, continued participation, or termination from a County program, benefit, or service.

Language Access: The provision of free language assistance to LOTE speakers in their preferred language, including through interpretation and translation services, to help enable reasonable access to and an opportunity to fully participate in the services, resources, and programs administered by the County.

Language Access Complaint: Common scenarios include but are not limited to the availability of language services not communicated to the public, when language services were not provided when requested, and when the quality of language services did not meet the needs of the LOTE speaker.

SECTION 4: PROCEDURES

This section is intended to set expectations with the public about the level of language assistance they might expect and the types of language assistance they may encounter.

E. Identifying Preferred Languages

- When customers enter our building and approach the customer service desks, they are greeted by library staff in English. If a LOTE speaker prefers their own language, they usually speak it to our staff, in the hopes that we can translate and provide language assistance.
- When LOTE speakers ask for a specific language, we may or may not have staff that speaks that language. The library has bilingual staff at various libraries throughout County libraries that may be able to assist. Additionally, the library assists as best we can with the resources we have.
- When possible we seek to provide language access through collection materials (books, periodicals , A/V materials) in LOTE when requested in a timely manner.

Points of Contact (A)	Level of Language Assistance Required (B)	Available Language Assistance Resources (C)	Procedures for Accessing Language Assistance Resources (D)
Initial inquiry (in-person)	Simple explanations	Some bilingual staff are often available	Have bilingual staff available during

A customer is coming in person to check-out books or ask about programs and services offered		at each library, but not guaranteed. Only selected languages spoken.	library hours or at nearby libraries to assist customers with their needs.
Initial inquiry (telephonic) A customer is calling via phone to ask about books, or a program and services offered	Simple explanations	Some bilingual staff are often available at each library, but not guaranteed. Only selected languages spoken.	Have bilingual staff available during library hours or at nearby libraries to assist customers with their needs.
Public / community meeting	Interpretation Services required	County or outside vendors available	Pay for interpretation services for any large community meetings hosted by the library
Other:			

F. Vital documents

- LA County Library has identified the following documents as being vital to all customers, *Library Card Application*, *Library Card ID Requirements*, *Internet Acceptable Use Policy*, *Internet Access Permission for Children*, and the library website. These documents are vital because they are required for any customer to become a library customer and participate in checking-out material, using the public computers and finding information on our databases. We aim to review other documents that may fall under these criteria to be translated and considered a vital document.

G. Policy on Untrained Interpreters (if one already exists)

- None at this time.

Section 5: Notification of Language Assistance

At the main service desk, library staff do their best to determine a customers preferred language by speaking to them. Also, library staff at the reference desk know to inform library customers that our website provides customers with language translation into various options.

The Library is looking into developing marketing materials that would notify LOTE speakers of the availability of language assistance services in the library. All library flyers have a statement that includes instructions on how to request ADA accommodations.

Section 6: Monitoring Language Assistance Effectiveness

H. Evaluation of Language Assistance

Our Human Resources Department tests bilingual staff internally to make sure they can read, speak and write in their language other than English. Library staff have to fill out an application, be approved by their supervisor and then be tested by human resources staff to make sure they meet the standards and needs of the department. Yearly, we require library staff to re-certify their language to keep their bilingual status. They fill out a form estimating the time per month that they use their language on the job. This is then approved by HR library staff and kept on file. We currently have the following amount of bilingual staff who speak the following languages on payroll: 146 Spanish, 20 Chinese/Cantonese/Mandarin, 3 Korean, 1 Hindi staff, 1 Persian/Farsi, and 1 Vietnamese.

Library Managers and Supervisors oversee the effectiveness of the customer service interactions that library staff provide to the public. LA County Library staff submit statistics into *Orangeboy* (an internal data collection tool), which gathers data about our Library Programs, including attendance, target audience, categories, and sub-categories. Some of these categories identify the LOTE that the program was conducted in, mainly Spanish.

I. Complaint Process

LA County Library has a formal complaint form where community members can share their feedback. This form was provided by the Office of Immigration Affairs. Customer feedback helps us serve our community better by informing us of their experience and how we can improve. The complaint will be directed to the appropriate library staff and customers will be notified of their complaint in a timely manner.

Library staff also actively observe, collect and report when customers request language access requests and whether they are able to fulfill those requests. Reports are reviewed on a regular basis and used to inform our services.

Section 7: Training

LA County Library will distribute this policy to all staff within 60 days of the Department's Language Access Plan being finalized. This policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it is still appropriate.

Beginning FY 2024-2025, LA County Library will develop training for staff on the Department's Language Access Plan. The priority will be to train staff who regularly interact with the public on how to access the Department's language assistance resources.

Training will begin within six months of the publication of the Library's Departmental Language Access Plan. Trainings for staff will include how to identify a LOTE speaker's preferred language and documenting language access requests. This will also include training material on how to access language access services / resources. Upon review, trainings will be updated as needed and included in New Librarian's Trainings. Trained staff will be required to complete revisit the DLAP every three years or as needed.

Section 8: Community Outreach & Engagement

LA County Library has created a Language Access webpage that provides a copy of the DLAP, instructions for changing the language on our website, and highlights library resources. Additionally, the Library website itself can be translated using Google Translate, allowing LOTE customers set the site to their preferred language.

On a case-by-case basis, library staff are able to request accommodations for large public programs such as American Sign Language services and live translation services.

The Library's Marketing Department disseminates information about programs and services to non-English speaking community-based organizations and ethnic media outlets. Internally, we also incorporate non-English language content on our social media pages, depending on the content.