



Date: March 10, 2019

To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.H.W.*

From: Kelly Colopy, Director of Health and Human Services *KC*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

**Subject: Language Access Program Annual Report and Comprehensive Update**

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On August 13, 2013, the City Council adopted a comprehensive Language Access Policy (LAP). On October 6, 2015, the LAP was amended by the City Council to address the use of children as interpreters. On November 14, 2017, the LAP was amended, again, to shorten the turnaround time to request meeting interpretation for City Council and Charter Commission meetings from 72 hours to 24 hours. The City Council also requested that staff provide an annual status report, as well as written updates every six months.

During the FY 2019 budget approval process, the City Council requested a comprehensive evaluation of the LAP. The attached report serves as both an annual report and the comprehensive evaluation.

If you have any questions, please call me at (562) 570-4016.

ATTACHMENT

CC: CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY  
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MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (REF. FILES #13-0693, #14-0273, #15-0174, #17-1037, #18-0744)



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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## LANGUAGE ACCESS PROGRAM 2019 Annual Report and Comprehensive Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

### BACKGROUND

On August 13, 2013, the City Council adopted a comprehensive Language Access Policy (LAP). On October 6, 2015, the LAP was amended by the City Council to address the use of children as interpreters. On November 14, 2017, the LAP was amended, again, to shorten the turnaround time to request meeting interpretation for City Council and Charter Commission meetings from 72 hours to 24 hours. This report serves as both the 2019 Annual Report and the report of findings and recommendations of the comprehensive evaluation as requested by the City Council on September 4, 2018, during the FY 2019 budget approval process.

### Overview of City Demographics

Long Beach is home to approximately 469,500 people. Per 2013-2017 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, 46.6 percent of residents over the age of five speak a language other than English at home, which is slightly higher than the statewide average of 44.0 percent, and more than double the national average of 21.3 percent. After English, the most commonly spoken languages in Long Beach are Spanish (145,544 speakers), Khmer (14,762 speakers), and Tagalog (13,392 speakers).

The City's LAP exceeds the State requirement under the California Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (Government Code 7290 et seq.), which generally requires State and local public agencies serving a substantial number (5 percent or more) of limited English-speaking people to provide services and materials in the language(s) spoken by those persons, to the extent that funding is available. Under the Act, the high number of Spanish-speaking residents in Long Beach exceeds the 5 percent threshold. However, based on the City's substantial number of limited English-speaking Cambodian and Filipino residents, the LAP also includes Khmer and Tagalog.

### FY 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

#### Document Translation

As part of the LAP, the City provides document translation by request in Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog. In FY 2018, 190 documents were translated into Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog. Spanish is the most commonly requested language for document translation. The distribution of requested languages for document translation is outlined in Table 1. The three departments requesting the most document translation were Health and Human Services, Parks, Recreation and Marine, and Police. The distribution of document translation requests by department or distinct division is outlined in Table 2.

<b>Table 1: Number of Documents Translated by Language</b>	
Language	No. of Documents
Spanish Only	127
Khmer Only	90
Tagalog Only	66
Multiple Languages*	86
*Includes any combination of LAP languages and instances where multiple languages other than Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog were requested.	

<b>Table 2: Document Translation Requests by Department or Distinct Division</b>	
Department/Division	No. of Documents
Health and Human Services	50
Parks, Recreation & Marine	20
Police	19
City Manager	18
Development Services	15
Library Services	15
Public Works	10
Pacific Gateway	8
Economic Development	6
Office of Sustainability	6
Water	6
Disaster Preparedness	5
Technology and Innovation	5
Mayor and Council	5
Human Resources	1
Harbor	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>190</b>

### Interpretation at Public Meetings

As part of the Language Access Program (Program), the City provides onsite oral interpretation for public meetings by request in Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog. In FY 2018, Program staff provided interpretation services at 98 meetings or events. The three departments/distinct divisions requesting the most interpretation were Health and Human Services, Mayor and Council, and Development Services. The distribution of requests for oral interpretation at public meetings is outlined in Table 3.

<b>Table 3: Meeting Interpretation Requests by Department or Distinct Division</b>	
Department/Division	No. of Requests
Mayor and Council	30
Health and Human Services	23
Development Services	12
Police	12
City Manager	8
Harbor	5
Economic Development	3
Library Services	2
Financial Management	1
Human Resources	1
Technology and Innovation	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>

### **Bilingual Skill Pay**

Bilingual skill pay is provided to certified employees assigned to positions that have frequent or significant interactions with the public for the majority of the employee’s regular course of duty, including first-line emergency responders. According to an August 2018 report from the Financial Management Department, in FY 19 there were 534.74 FTEs budgeted to receive bilingual skill pay, totaling \$837,326. The bilingual pay rate is \$0.80 per hour for sworn employees and \$0.70 per hour for miscellaneous employees.

As of May 2019, 763 employees are listed in the Bilingual Staff Directory, a list of all certified employees receiving bilingual skill pay. The Directory is available on the City intranet as a resource for City employees if translation assistance is needed. Table 4 demonstrates the number of bilingual staff by language spoken and Table 5 indicates the number of bilingual staff per department.

<b>Table 4: Certified Bilingual Staff by Language</b>	
Language	No. of Certified Staff
Spanish	670
Cambodian/Khmer	39
Tagalog/Filipino	19
Vietnamese	16
Samoan	6
Thai	4
Laotian	2
American Sign Language	2
Arabic	1
Chinese	1
Italian	1
Korean	1
Portuguese	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>763</b>

<b>Table 5: Certified Bilingual Staff by Department</b>	
Department	No. of Certified Staff
Airport	6
City Clerk	6
City Manager	2
City Prosecutor	5
Civil Service	3
Development Services	49
Disaster Preparedness	8
Economic Development	3
Energy Resources	23
Financial Management	9
Fire	72
Harbor	42
Health & Human Services	90
Human Resources	3
Mayor and Council	3
Library	29

<b>Table 5: Certified Bilingual Staff by Department (continued)</b>	
Department	No. of Certified Staff
Parks, Rec & Marine	18
Police	316
Public Works	22
Technology & Innovation	1
Water	53
TOTAL	763

### Over-the-Phone Interpretation

Over-the-phone assistance in another language is most frequently provided by bilingual skill pay staff. However, if bilingual staff are not available when an individual needs immediate interpretation services, the Language Line provides over-the-phone interpretation in more than 240 languages. The three departments using the Language Line the most were Police, Energy Resources, and Parks, Recreation and Marine. The distribution of Language Line calls by department is outlined in Table 6. The most frequently requested languages for over-the-phone interpretation were Spanish, Khmer, and Mandarin. The frequency for each language is outlined in Table 7.

<b>Table 6: Over-the-Phone Interpretation by Department</b>	
Department	No. of Calls
Police	74
Energy Resources	69
Parks, Recreation & Marine	22
Unknown	20
City Manager	5
Airport	1
TOTAL	191

<b>Table 7: Languages Requested for Over-the-Phone Interpretation</b>	
Language	No. of Calls
Spanish	100
Khmer	63
Mandarin	8
Tagalog	6

<b>Table 7: Languages Requested for Over-the-Phone Interpretation (continued)</b>	
Vietnamese	5
Korean	4
Hindi	3
Portuguese	1
Russian	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>191</b>

### Increased Requests for Services

Table 8 shows the year-over-year Program services provided between FY 2017 and FY 2018. The demand for document translation remained relatively steady, while demand for interpretation at public meetings increased by 44 percent. Although the demand for services is increasing, feedback from community residents and the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) Student Project (described in a subsequent section) indicate that implementation across City remains inconsistent. As staff across departments become increasingly aware of the services they are expected to provide, it is anticipated that demand will continue to increase.

<b>Table 8: Increased Requests for Service</b>			
	FY 17	FY 18	% Change
Documents Translated	199	190	-5%
Interpretation Requests	68	98	44%

### LAP Training for City Staff

The Program provides training for staff to provide an overview of the LAP, the services that are available, and how to access them. To date, 757 staff members have been trained over the course of 31 trainings. In FY 2019, Program staff will conduct outreach to departments that have not yet received training, with a special focus on departments within the public safety continuum, particularly for those staff who have direct interaction with community members on a regular basis such as firefighters, paramedics, police officers, and emergency management personnel.

### Service Expenditures in FY 2018

Table 9 shows the expenditures by service category in FY 2018.

<b>Table 9: Expenditures by Service Category in FY 2018</b>	
Service	Expenditures
Language Line	\$ 2,901
Recorded Telephone Messages	12,000
Interpretation at Public Meetings	44,125
Document Translation	22,625
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 81,651</b>

### FY 2019 COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION AND FINDINGS

A comprehensive evaluation of the Program was requested by the City Council on September 4, 2018, during the FY 2019 budget approval process. A summary of the evaluation methodology, findings, and recommendations are provided below.

#### Methodology

The evaluation included five components:

- A review of the implementation of language access policies and staffing in other jurisdictions;
- A project in partnership with the CSULB Linguistics Department to assess language access implementation at 11 City facilities;
- A satisfaction survey of City staff who have used the Program in the last year;
- Resident focus groups in Spanish and Khmer; and,
- Key informant interviews with interpreters who most frequently provide interpretation services for the Program.

#### Findings

##### Language Access in Other Jurisdictions

The Office of Equity researched language access policy reports in other jurisdictions similar in size, demographics and language access policies to the City of Long Beach, including the City of [Oakland](#) and [Washington DC](#). Table 10 provides information about each jurisdiction's staffing, demographics, and language access policy. It shows that similar city jurisdictions, with similar budgets for the services provided, operate with higher staffing levels than found in the City of Long Beach.



<b>Table 10: Language Access Programs in Other Jurisdictions Compared to Long Beach</b>			
	<b>City of Oakland</b>	<b>Washington DC</b>	<b>City of Long Beach</b>
Report Period	July 2017 – June 2018	July 2015 – June 2016	Oct. 2017 – Sept. 2018
Report Published	2018	2016	2019
Total Population (2017)	425,195	693,972	469,450
Foreign born persons, percent, 2013-2017	27.6%	14.0%	26.0%
Percent of population that speaks a language other than English at home	40.6%	17.5%	46.6%
#1 Most common non-English language	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
#2 Most common non-English language	Chinese	Amharic	Khmer
#3 Most common non-English language	Vietnamese	Chinese	Tagalog
Language Access staff training	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of Language Access Coordinators	2.0 FTE, plus coordinators in each department	6.0 FTE, plus 4 coordinators in agencies with major public contact	.67 FTE
Language Access Annual Budget (Services only, does not include staffing)	\$200,000	\$210,000	\$160,000

### CSULB Linguistics Student Project

During the Fall 2018 semester, CSULB students in the Linguistics Department assessed language accessibility in a variety of City facilities. In small teams, the students used a rubric reflecting best practice to evaluate 11 unique sites across six City departments. The students observed each site for signage (including a LAP Counter Card at public counters and multilingual directional signage), bilingual staffing, staff familiarity with Program services, and language accessibility by phone (including recorded greetings and voicemail messages).

Key observations include:

- Inconsistent knowledge of LAP services within Departments leads to contradictory guidance and direction from some staff. However, multilingual signage and staff who are aware of LAP are more likely to be observed at locations that serve the most linguistically diverse communities, including the Department of Health and Human Services Main Facility, Housing Authority, Police Department Headquarters, Mark Twain Library, Towing Operations and Vehicle Storage Facility; and Parks, Recreation and Marine Administration.

- While bilingual staff commonly provide interpretation assistance, there is inconsistent awareness and utilization of their skills, especially for staff who speak Khmer and Tagalog;
- Lack of multilingual signage in some facilities and the locations that provided the signage often excluded Khmer and Tagalog;
- Inconsistent phone access for callers designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP);
- Insufficient knowledge about LAP services leading to the underutilization of the Language Line at many of the visited facilities.

A comprehensive report of the student project is included in Appendix A.

### Key Informant Interviews with Interpreters

The Language Access Coordinator interviewed two interpreters (one Spanish-speaking and one Khmer-speaking) who frequently provide interpretation at local community meetings to seek feedback about their experience working with the City and the Program. A key finding from these interviews was that onsite simultaneous interpretation allows community members to engage directly in the decision-making process and, most importantly, to have their voices heard. The interpreters described how they are in a special position to offer insights, as they help to strengthen bonds with the communities they work with, build long-lasting relationships with residents and organizations, and strive to improve the quality of life for Long Beach residents.

One interpreter emphasized the importance of community interpreting, which is a unique skill-set commonly used in community-based settings where residents are unable to properly gain access to public services and resources due to language barriers. Community interpreters must not only be fluent in the language, but must also be informed of relevant public services, City resources, and current City news. Additionally, they must be aware of the cultural and racial implications of the work they do.

One interpreter discussed the challenge of providing simultaneous interpretation, a skill in which the interpreter listens to the speaker and interprets in real time. This allows community members to participate freely and for more than one language to be present for each meeting or event. Residents have expressed to the interpreters how grateful they are to finally understand issues that affect them, their communities, and their quality of life. Occasionally, residents require additional assistance from interpreters to help them understand the translated documents they are provided. This can be a challenge because it reduces the time spent interpreting the workshop or event.

### Language Access Focus Groups

Program staff conducted the focus groups in collaboration with the Language Access Coalition, including local community-based organizations Long Beach Forward, Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition, and United Cambodian Community. Participants were invited to share their stories and experiences in accessing City services (in-person or over the phone), requesting translation of City documents, receiving interpretation at public meetings, and their overall aspirations for language access in Long Beach. Focus groups

were conducted entirely in Spanish and Khmer, and English interpretation was provided for staff support.

Group facilitators used a series of questions (see Appendix B) covering the following topics: accessing City services, interpretation at public meetings, accessing City phone lines, document translation, and overall aspirations for language access in Long Beach. The Spanish focus group was facilitated by Long Beach Forward and Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition; 13 Long Beach residents participated. The Khmer focus group was facilitated by the United Cambodian Community; 11 Long Beach residents participated.

Each focus group opened with an introduction and a general description of the most commonly used City services.

Most of the participants reported they go online to pay bills, and sometimes get help from their children to navigate the website. Some depend on a third-party service or friends to assist them in paying bills. Only 3 out of 11 Khmer-speaking participants reported going to City Hall for services. Participants expressed feeling discouraged and tended to avoid engaging with City services directly. One Spanish-speaking resident shared that she had a positive experience applying for a yard sale permit at City Hall. She was assisted by a friendly Spanish-speaking staff person who was able to walk her through the process.

Both focus groups reported receiving important documents, such as bills, that are not translated. When translations are requested, the translated documents are either not accurate or use complicated terminology. Khmer participants reported it was often easier to have someone verbally translate the document rather than to try to read the Khmer translation. Participants reported feelings of apprehension, discouragement, and frustration in requesting further services. The majority (11 out of 13) of the Spanish-speaking participants have had to rely on their children to interpret for them, including navigating websites, making phone calls or visiting City Hall as they were unaware of the services offered through LAP.

None of the residents were aware of the availability of over-the-phone interpretation through the Language Line. Some participants discussed calling City departments and having to wait over 30 minutes to receive assistance. Others reported having to call several times when their call is dropped or disconnected, while some have been turned away because staff could not assist them in Spanish.

Participants were asked to share their perspective on what their world would look like if language was not a barrier. They expressed they would feel more confident in engaging in City services, programs, and events. This would include more ease in paying bills over the phone or in person. Most importantly, they would feel their opinions and feedback would be heard in the language they speak.

### Staff Survey

The Language Access Staff Survey was distributed among City staff who have submitted document translation or interpretation requests to the Program since FY 2017. The questions can be found in Appendix C. Among the 26 survey respondents, most staff reported being satisfied. Details are outlined below:

### *Document Translation*

The majority of survey respondents (88 percent) that used the Program in the last year had submitted documents or written materials to be translated. Of those who submitted materials for translation:

- 87 percent reported being either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the accuracy of the translation, while 13 percent reported being either “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied.”
- 78 percent were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the amount of time it took to translate their document while 22 percent were either “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied.”

The primary challenges for document translation include the turnaround time for translation and, in some cases, the quality of the translation. For example, some documents were returned up to two weeks after the request for translation. Additionally, some completed document translations had to be edited so that they were more understandable to community members.

### *Interpretation at Public Meetings*

Nearly half of all respondents (46 percent) reported using the Program for oral interpretation at community meetings or events. Of those who reported using oral interpretation services:

- All respondents (100 percent) reported being either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the accuracy of interpretation.
- 92 percent of respondents who submitted a request for interpretation were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the interpreter's punctuality and professionalism, while 8 percent indicated they were “unsatisfied.”

Challenges in oral interpretation services included last-minute interpreter cancellations, tardiness of the interpreter, and issues with the interpreter's professionalism.

### *Overall Service*

The majority of respondents (84 percent) indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the efficiency of the Program in the areas of response time, professional staff, and overall communication. Most respondents (80 percent) indicated they would likely recommend the Program to a colleague.

Commentary and critiques given with respect to overall language access services were varied. Many of the suggestions echoed previous commentary regarding the need for quicker translation turnaround time. Other comments specifically requested the development of protocols (such as formal request forms), as well as further educational trainings and workshops focused on enhancing the effectiveness of the Program. Additional commentary spoke to the need for better quality translations. Finally, a few pointed to the need for a full-time staff dedicated to language access.

## Recommendations

Based on the evaluation, staff has the following recommendations and suggested actions for the Program:

1. ***Increase training and community outreach to improve knowledge of the programs and consistency in services.***
  - A. Language Access Training: To date, more than 700 staff have been trained on the LAP. Based on the information presented in this report, more training and technical assistance are still needed. Until now, training has been primarily provided based on request from departments. The Program Coordinator will develop a quarterly training schedule to serve staff on an ongoing basis starting in May 2019. Additionally, the Program Coordinator will offer more flexible training formats to fit the specific needs and questions of each department, including how to use the Language Line for individuals on the phone who need assistance in another language. In FY 2019, the Program Coordinator will also conduct outreach to departments who have not yet received LAP training, with a special focus on departments within the public safety continuum.
  - B. Community Outreach About LAP: Community residents are more likely to request language services when they know they are available. The Program will work with organizations that serve Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog-speaking residents to develop and disseminate education materials to residents to inform them of available services.
2. ***Increase staffing and support to meet the increased requests for services, training and outreach.***
  - A. Full-Time Program Coordinator: The Program Coordinator is currently a part-time position, working an average of 27 hours per week. The majority of this time goes toward handling requests, answering questions from staff about these services, and preparing the invoices and documentation to pay for services. Given the steady demand for document translation and the 44 percent increase for meeting interpretation, the Program Coordinator is not able to dedicate sufficient time to staff training, community outreach, and addressing quality challenges. To better meet the needs of those who interact with the City in languages other than English, the Program Coordinator will need to be increased to a full-time position. Increased staff capacity would accommodate the need for services, the need for increased awareness through staff training and technical assistance, the ability to develop community and resident partnerships to increase awareness of services, and the ability to quickly respond to requests and quality concerns. This request is under review as part of the FY 20 budget with a recommendation presented to the City Council by the City Manager.
  - B. Departmental Language Access Liaisons: To increase consistent LAP implementation, it is recommended that at least one person from each department be identified to serve as a Language Access Liaison who can act

- as point of contact for implementation, working with Language Access Coordinator on staff training, technical assistance, and ensuring the department's vital documents are translated. The time and capacity required from each Language Access Liaison would vary based on the varying needs for language services in each department.
- C. City Hall LAP Equipment Liaison: Currently, staff based at City Hall and other locations must drive to the Department of Health and Human Services on Grand Avenue to pick up interpretation equipment. To increase efficiency and accessibility it is recommended that at least one person be identified at City Hall who could serve as an on-site point of contact for interpretation headsets and transmitters. The time and capacity needed would be minimal as the Program Coordinator would continue to facilitate the scheduling of public meeting interpretation and equipment pick-up and drop-off.
3. ***Enhance vendor pool, signage and coordination across departments to ensure improved language access services for communities across the City of Long Beach.***
- A. Expanded Translation and Interpretation Vendor Pool: To increase the quality of services provided, including both document translation and meeting interpretation, the Department of Health and Human Services recently included language services as part of its on-call Request for Qualifications. Having an increased vendor pool will allow staff a greater number of options in identifying the most efficient and effective services.
- B. Cross-Departmental Collaboration: As City services and communications become increasingly digitized, the Program will collaborate with other departments, including the Technology and Innovation Department and the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Communications to ensure language accessibility is incorporated into Citywide planning efforts, including initiatives such as Digital Inclusion and disaster response planning.
- C. Multilingual Signage in City Buildings: The Program will continue to work with Public Works to ensure appropriate and accurate multilingual signage in the new Civic Center and other new or remodeled facilities as needed.

## **Conclusion**

Across the variety of methods used to develop this report, consistent themes emerged that indicate the need for increased training and awareness of the LAP and associated Program services by both staff and community members. The increased funding in the FY 2019 budget will allow the Program to accommodate more requests for services; however, the primary challenge remains in the limited staff capacity to meet the increased demand and the unmet needs.

## Appendix A: Language Access Ethnographic Report

Prepared by:  
Juan R. Rosas, CSULB Linguistics M.A Student

### Introduction

The findings presented in this report are the result of a collaborative effort coordinated between Long Beach's Office of Equity and the Department of Linguistics at California State University, Long Beach. Beach students enrolled in *Linguistics 472: Language and Social Justice* were given a Language Access Policy (LAP) Rubric and asked to carry out an ethnographic analysis of various city government sites, applying the knowledge and skills that they have gained throughout the duration of the course. The student researchers evaluated 11 unique city sites where LEP residents are likely to visit or seek services, representing a variety of different City departments, including: City Hall; Housing Authority; Multi-Service Center; Department of Health and Human Services Main Facilities; Long Beach Police Department Headquarters; Main Library; Mark Twain Library; Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library; Parks, Recreation, and Marine Administration; Silverado Park and Community Center; and the Towing Operations and Vehicle Storage Facility.

The analyses were based on visits to the physical departmental sites, their corresponding websites, as well as phone calls to these sites. The student researchers relied on two principal methodologies: *brief interviews* with city employees and *participant observation* of the designated sites.

### **Limited English Proficiency Service Strategies**

#### **Strategy 1: Reliance on Bilingual Staff**

Speaking with staff across all 11 sites, researchers inquired with staff and documented the reported strategies and protocols for assisting speakers designated as Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The most common strategy reported was a *reliance on bilingual staff* for interpretation, with seven staff members specifically mentioning they would utilize this strategy. However, while English-Spanish bilingual staff were available across all seven of these sites, a Khmer speaking staff member was readily available at only one site; Tagalog speaking staff were reported as perhaps being available at two sites, though the staff members with whom researchers spoke with were unsure. It is important to note that at one site, while some staff expressed uncertainty with regards to the presence of Tagalog and Khmer speaking staff, a researcher was able to access a Tagalog speaking staff member by making a phone call to the site.

A weak point for this strategy then, is that its effectiveness was often directly tied to offhand memory of bilingual staff. However, not all staff were fully aware whether there were any co-workers who could translate Tagalog and Khmer, even if they did exist. Thus, while reliance on a bilingual staff was a common strategy, it largely benefitted Spanish speakers, perhaps only because there is a larger number of bilingual English-Spanish staff. Even then, the effectiveness of this strategy for Spanish speakers is questionable, as its efficacy rests on having bilingual staff on location at any given time.

#### **Strategy 2: The Language Line**

The second most common strategy that staff specifically reported utilizing was the *Language Line*. However, inquiries regarding Language Line protocol revealed that there were discrepancies in staff's familiarity with the Language Line. At one site, the manager

## **Appendix A: Language Access Ethnographic Report**

affirmed that the Language Line would be implemented if a speaker designated as LEP (who could not be helped by English-Spanish staff) required assistance. A researcher making a call to this same site, though, reported that a staff member claimed that if a speaker designated as LEP called, he would direct that caller to city hall. This was despite the services at this site being distinct from those offered at city hall. At this site, then, it appeared that not all staff were aware of Language Access Policy or the existence of the Language Line. At another site, a staff member reported that they would utilize the Language Line in assisting speakers designated as LEP but did not have the number readily available. LAP cards were only present and visible at six of the 11 sites. Even then, at two of these six sites, researchers reported that LAP cards were present but not in clear view. Additionally, at one site where LAP cards were present, the staff member informed the researcher that no one on staff had received LAP training.

Thus, while the Language Line was a resource that staff reported they would hypothetically utilize, not all sites took measures to ensure its availability as a resource to speakers designated as LEP. This would appear to be due to a lack of LAP training because while some employees recalled receiving training, many staff were completely unfamiliar with it, despite having LAP cards in clear view, calling into question staff's ability implement the Language Line as a resource.

### ***Other Strategies***

Finally, there were a number of other, unique strategies that staff reported using in assisting speakers designated as LEP:

- At one site, a staff member reported they often relied on Google Translate. This same staff member said that if they were having a hard time communicating with a speaker designated as LEP, another strategy available to them would be to consult a foreign language dictionary.
- At another site, a staff member advised that speakers designated as LEP should bring in their own interpreters.
- At yet another site a staff member suggested they would redirect speakers designated as LEP to City Hall.
- Finally, at one site, researchers reported a man seeking assistance in Tagalog. A staff member then redirected the visitor to an online billing service and failed to extend any language access services.

While some of these makeshift strategies were made with good intentions, others exerted minimal to no effort in assisting speakers designated as LEP. All the above strategies, however, were developed out of a lack of knowledge about LAP protocol and the Language Line. Furthermore, all of these strategies placed the burden of access squarely on speakers designated as LEP themselves.

### ***Multilingual Signage***

Another important issue that emerged in researchers' reports was the lack of translated signage available at most of the field sites. Of the ten sites where student researchers performed field visits, half had no signage available in Spanish. At the other five sites, some signage was available in Spanish. Researchers emphasized that Spanish signage at these sites was often limited to a small number of signs.



## **Appendix A: Language Access Ethnographic Report**

Across all ten sites, however, researchers reported a near-complete lack of signage available in Khmer or Tagalog. One site was under construction at the time of the field visit and was visited by multiple researchers. At the time of her visit, one researcher noted that it was confusing navigating the site, as the front entrance was closed off, and there was no signage available in any language. Another researcher, visiting the same site, reported that signage directing visitors to a temporary entrance was available in Spanish, Khmer, Tagalog and English. This was, however, the only instance of Khmer and Tagalog signage that researchers noted.

### ***Phone-Calls***

Another point of evaluation in researchers' analyses were based on phone calls made to the designated sites. Of the ten sites that were called, four had automated dialogue options available to guide callers in Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog. One site had dialogue options available in Spanish and Khmer. All other sites automated dialogue options were unreported by researchers.

Two researchers calling two different sites reported that while selecting the English dialogue option led to the call being immediately answered by a clerk, the non-English options resulted in the speaker being put on hold. At one site, a researcher selected the Spanish option in the automated dialogue, but their call was answered by a monolingual English speaker. This researcher did, however, get their call appropriately transferred.

Not all phone calls made by researchers were successfully completed. At one site, a researcher requested to speak with someone who spoke Spanish and was put on hold for several minutes, leading the researcher to terminate the call. At another site, a researcher reported that the Tagalog and Khmer options were merged into a single option and that upon selecting that option, their call was never answered. Finally, at another site, a researcher elected to leave a voicemail in Spanish. The voicemail was responded two days later, before 8:00 am, while the researcher was still sleeping. The researcher reports that the clerk who left the voicemail gave a "generic" number to call back.

Based on the variety of ways that people can reach a department by phone, the researchers found there was inconsistent access for callers designated as LEP. These inconsistencies suggest the need for LAP training specific to the phone services provided by the field sites.

### ***Researchers' Impressions***

Below are some of the impressions that researchers had after reflecting on their experiences conducting research on the state of language access in the City of Long Beach:

- "Considering what a representation of the community [this] space ... ought to be it was odd not to have more multilingual members of the community working or trained to serve those multilingual members of the city."
- "I think it would be easier for a person speaking Spanish to get assistance than someone speaking Khmer or Tagalog. The site does well in trying to implement the LAP however they come up short when it comes to staff training as well as signage in any language other than English."
- "It would have taken me hours (or maybe days) to receive a service that would be helpful to me as a Tagalog speaker."

## **Appendix A: Language Access Ethnographic Report**

- “The woman at the help desk said something in passing that stuck with me: “I just assume the language barrier isn’t as important [here] than it would be in a hospital, where things are more life or death.” ... it made me realize that – for many people – only dire situations call for an emphasis and accessibility towards understanding each other.”
- “While I’m sure that bilingual staff is helpful, it would be even better to incorporate translators that are trained in being helpful in explaining document procedures.”

## Appendix B: Language Access Focus Group Questions

### Description of City Services:

- Think about a time when you accessed City Services including: parking ticket, paying City of Long Beach bill (sewer, water, gas, trash), going to the health department or housing authority, signing up for a class with Parks & Recreation, going to the library or interacting with Long Beach Police or City Council members.
- What was your experience accessing these services in your language? (For example, was interpretation provided in your language, were there documents in your language? What was the quality of interpretation or translation? Signage?)
- If you can't get help in your language, what do you do?
  - Have you used children or minors to interpret for you?
  - Have you ever used a Language Line service when interacting with the city? Did you know you could ask for Language Line if no one is available to assist you in your language?
- How often do you use these services?
  - Would you use these services more if language was not a barrier?
  - What would you use more if language was not a barrier?

### Interpretation at Public Meetings:

- Did you know that you could receive interpretation in your language if you attend a City Council or public meeting?
- If you have received interpretation at a public meeting before, what was your experience like? Did you feel comfortable with the interpreter? Did you know if the quality of interpretation was good?

### Phone:

- Have you ever tried to call a City phone line?
- What was your experience like calling and getting help in your language?
  - Did you speak to a person in your primary language?
  - If so, how long did this take?
  - Did you leave a voicemail for anyone? Were the outgoing messages in your language? Did someone call you back in your language?

### Document Translation:

- How often do you receive City documents in your language? For example, mail or other papers from the health department, utilities, etc.
- If you do get mail or documents in your language, are they easy to understand? What makes documents in your language easy or difficult to understand?

### Stories & Overall aspirations for Language Access

- In your perfect world (or if you had a magic wand), what would language services look like?
- What would it mean to you if language was not a barrier? How would your life be different?
- Do you have a story you can share about how receiving language services worked well for you and how it benefited you?

## Appendix C: Language Access Staff Survey Questions

- 1) Have you used the Language Access Program to translate any documents or written materials?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 2) How satisfied were you with the accuracy of the written translation (based on feedback from community/colleagues)?
  - a. Very Satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Unsatisfied
  - d. Very Unsatisfied
- 3) How satisfied were you with the amount of time it took to translate your document?
  - a. Very Satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Unsatisfied
  - d. Very Unsatisfied
- 4) Did you experience any problems with your translation request? If yes, please describe your request and the specific problem.
- 5) Have you used the Language Access Program for oral interpretation at community meetings or events?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 6) How satisfied were you with the accuracy of interpretation (based on participant feedback or engagement)?
  - a. Very Satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Unsatisfied
  - d. Very Unsatisfied
- 7) How satisfied were you with the interpreter's punctuality and professionalism?
  - a. Very Satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Unsatisfied
  - d. Very Unsatisfied
- 8) Did you experience any problems with your interpretation request? If yes, please describe your request and the specific problem.
- 9) Overall, how satisfied are you with the efficiency of the Language Access Program (response time, professional staff, overall communication)?
  - a. Very Satisfied
  - b. Satisfied
  - c. Unsatisfied
  - d. Very Unsatisfied

## Appendix C: Language Access Staff Survey Questions

- 10) How likely are you to recommend this service to a colleague?
  - a. Likely
  - b. Somewhat likely
  - c. Somewhat unlikely
  - d. Unlikely
- 11) What can the Language Access Program do to improve our services?
- 12) Any other comments or feedback?
- 13) If you would like us to follow up with you directly, please leave your contact information below.
- 14) If you would like to learn more about how you can attend a Language Access Program training or coordinate a training for your staff, please leave your contact information below.