

Language Access Program

Mission

To ensure that Limited English Proficient/Non-English Proficient (LEP/NEP) individuals who live, work or visit the District are afforded equal access to information and services provided by DC government.

How We Work

The Office of Human Rights (OHR) is the agency designated by the Act to oversee the Language Access (LA) Program. OHR provides central coordination and technical assistance to these government programs, departments, and services with major public contact in their implementation of the Language Access Act of 2004. The Language Access Team works in consultation with the Mayor's Office on African Affairs (OAA), the Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA), the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (OLA), and the DC Language Access Coalition (DCLAC) – an alliance of pro-immigrant community-based groups.

The most frequently encountered languages spoken in the District as determined by the Office of Human Rights:

Spanish Chinese Vietnamese Korean French Amharic

If You Need Help or Want to File a Complaint

The LA Program is also charged with tracking, monitoring, and investigating public complaints of language access violations. An LEP/NEP resident or individual doing business who experiences discrimination or is denied access to information or services at a District agency or grantee can file a complaint with the Office of Human Rights at:

District of Columbia Office of Human Rights
Language Access Program

Winta Teferi
Director of Language Access
(202) 727-3942
winta.teferi@dc.gov

Gretta Rivero
Program Analyst
(202) 727-0892
gretta.rivero@dc.gov

The DC Language Access Act

The purpose of the Language Access Act of 2004 is to provide greater access and participation in public services, programs, and activities for the District's Limited English Proficient/Non-English Proficient (LEP/NEP) constituents at a level equal to that of English proficient individuals. All District government agencies, divisions, or programs, including government contractors and grantees, that provide information or render services to the public, are covered under this Act.

The Language Access Act of 2004 and corresponding regulations identify specifically what District agencies are required to do to serve LEP/NEP customers. As listed below, all District agencies must comply with four (4) sets of requirements, and agencies designated as having major public contact have an additional three (3).

The Act requires all District Agencies

1. Collect data on primary language spoken
2. Provide interpretation services
3. Translate vital documents
(as per 3% or 500 threshold)
4. Train personnel in public contact positions on how to serve these customers

Agencies with Major Public Contact are also required to

5. Complete a biennial language access plan
6. Designate a Language Access Coordinator
7. Hold public meetings and conduct outreach to LEP/NEP communities

Language Access Coordinators (LAC)

The Language Access Program works closely with 34 agency LACs. LACs work as liaisons to ensure language access resources such as interpretation services, compliance trainings for agency staff, translated documents, and multilingual signs are available throughout the agency so no LEP/NEP customer is turned away.

District Agencies with Major Public Contact

Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration
Child and Family Services Agency
DC Housing Authority
DC Lottery and Charitable Games Control Board
DC Public Library
DC Public Schools
Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
Department of Corrections
Department of Disability Services
Department of Employment Services
Department of Health
Department of Housing & Community Development
Department of Human Resources
Department of Human Services
Department of Mental Health
Department of Motor Vehicles
Department of Parks and Recreation

Department of Public Works
Department of Small and Local Business Development
District Department of the Environment
District Department of Transportation
Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department
Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency
Metropolitan Police Department
Office of Contracts and Procurement
Office of Human Rights
Office of Planning
Office of Tax and Revenue
Office of the People's Counsel
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Office of the Tenant Advocate
Office of Unified Communications
Office of Zoning
Office on Aging