Language Access Program

June 5, 2025

Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Stats**
- **Terminology and Legal Reasons**
- **Why is Language Access Important**
- **Creating Welcoming and Resilient Anchorage**
- **Objectives**
- **Making Language Access Simple**
- **Language Access Representatives**
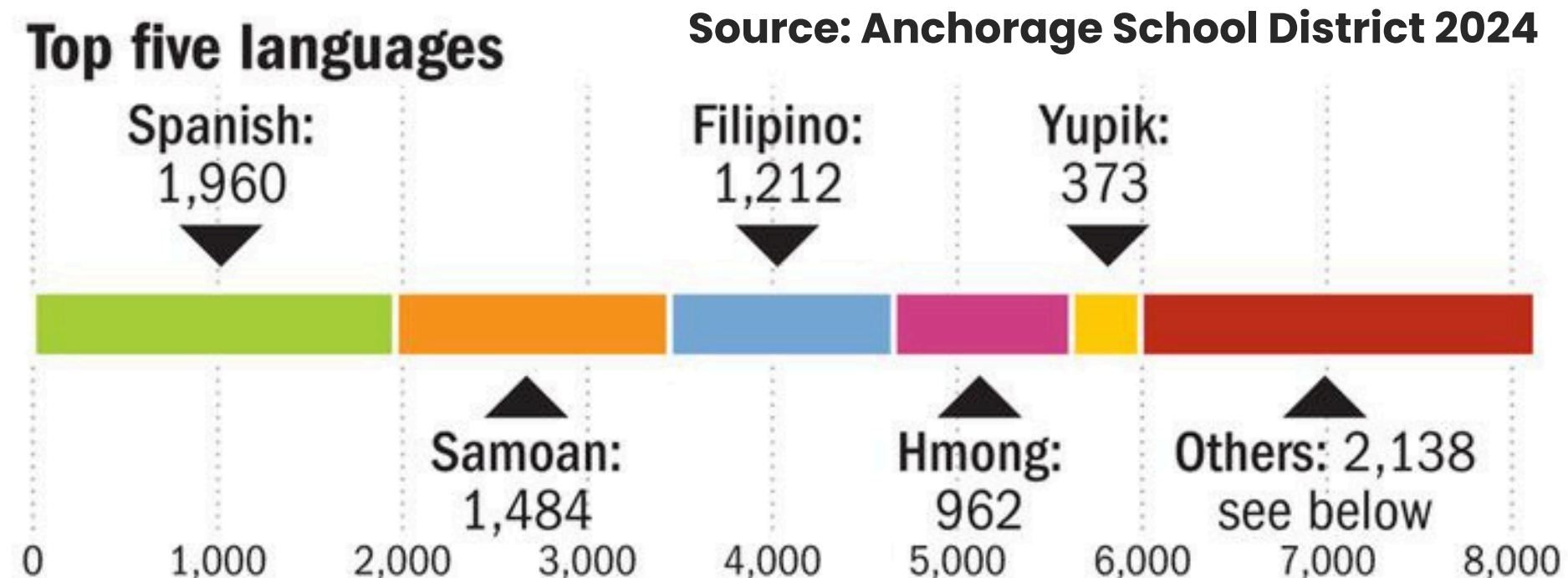- **Tangibles**
- **Let's Practice**

Amy Coffman

Municipality of Anchorage Languages

Top five languages

Spanish: 1,960

Filipino: 1,212

Yupik: 373

Samoan: 1,484

Hmong: 962

Others: 2,138 see below

0   1,000   2,000   3,000   4,000   5,000   6,000   7,000   8,000

The remaining other languages

Language	Students	Language	Students	Language	Students
Russian	235	Polish	29	Bengali	12
Korean	189	Kinyarwanda	28	Hawaiian	12
Lao	154	Mien	27	Dari	11
Inupiaq	96	Pashto	26	Hindi	10
Arabic	93	Mandarin	24	Turkish	10
Nuer	77	Triqui	24	Aleut	9
Albanian	71	Urdu	23	Kosraean	9
Vietnamese	69	Trukese	20	Cantonese	8
Chinese	62	Dinka	19	Chamorro GM	8
Ukrainian	62	Cupik	18	Italian	8
Tongan	61	Nepali	18	Norwegian	8
Japanese	59	Palau	18	Pidgin	8
Thai	54	Amharic	16	Romanian	7
Somali	53	Portuguese	15	Bulgarian	6
German	50	Wolof	15	Dutch	6
French	40	Creole	14	Hebrew	6
Cambodian	34	Khmer Cambo	14	Pohnpeian	6
Kiswahili	34	Mandinka	14		

Top Languages by Call Volume

01/01/2018 – 06/04/2025

Language	Minutes	Calls	Avg Call Length (mins)	Avg Connect (secs)	% of Total Calls
Spanish	51.417.10	3,380	15,21	13	51.94%
Hmong	7,701.10	481	16.01	43	7.39%
Russian	7,084.40	462	15,33	37	7,10%
Tagalog	7.502.50	380	19,74	29	5.84%
Korean	3.609.00	274	13,17	38	4.21%

Language Access Terminology

- Limited English Proficient: LEP, ELL, EL
- Bilingual Staff or Dual Role
- Interpreter
- Translator
- Trained or Qualified Interpreter/Certified Interpreter

- Meaningful Access
- Vital Information and Documents
- Language Access Program
- Language Services
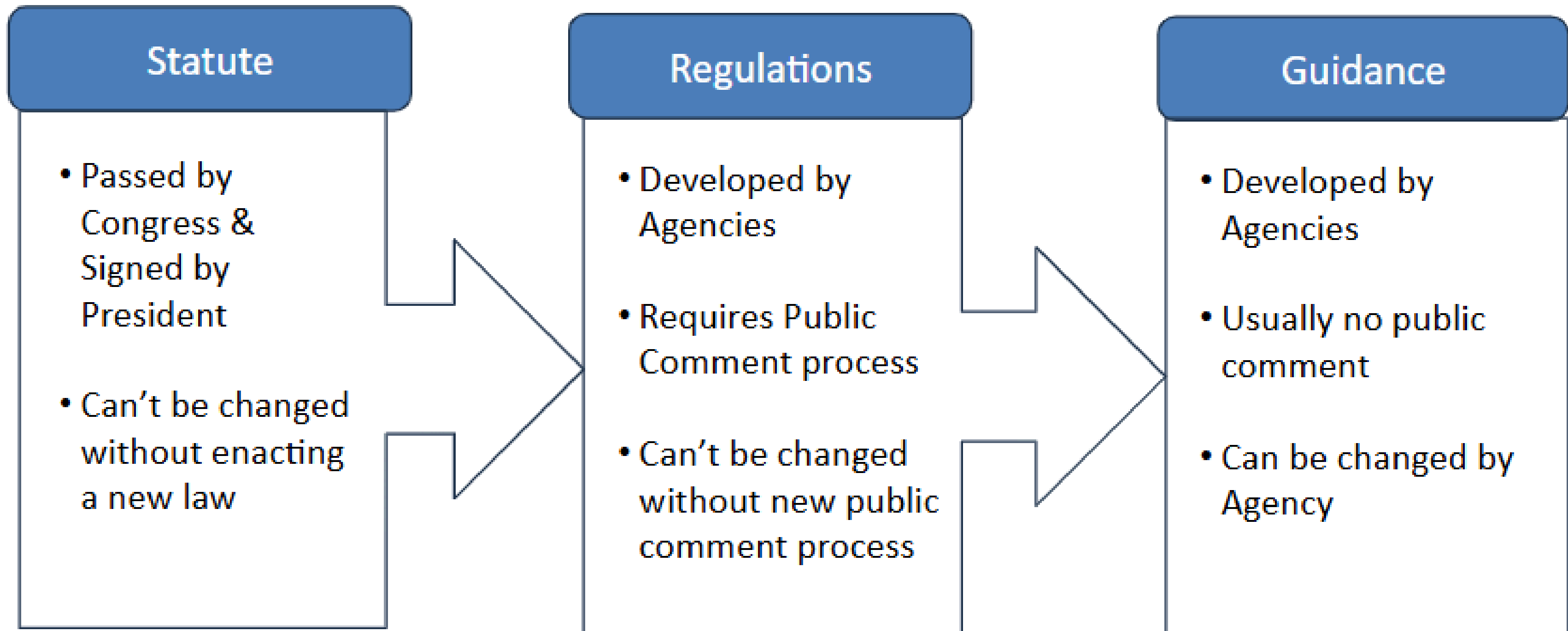- Language Access Representative

Legal Reasons for Language Access

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

National origin refers to ancestry, not just country of origin; ancestry and language are connected.

Hierarchy of Law

NATIONAL HEALTH LAW PROGRAM

Statute

- Passed by Congress & Signed by President

- Can't be changed without enacting a new law

Regulations

- Developed by Agencies

- Requires Public Comment process

- Can't be changed without new public comment process

Guidance

- Developed by Agencies

- Usually no public comment

- Can be changed by Agency

A word or three about immigration...

Questions?

Why is language access important in the MOA?

A well-implemented Language Access Program is an investment that:

- Saves money
- Boosts efficiency and
- Ensures all residents receive high-quality services

How a Comprehensive Language Access Program benefits the MOA
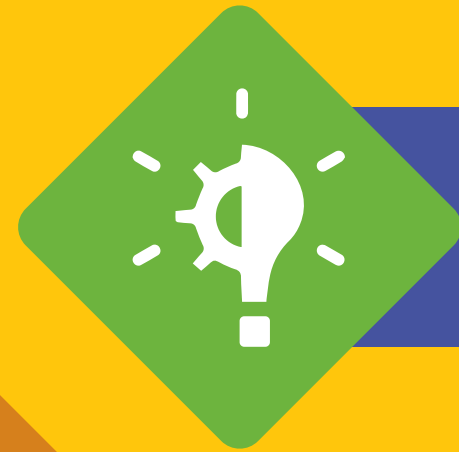
Economic Efficiency

1. Reduces Costs of Miscommunication
2. Improves Public Health & Safety
3. Increases Workforce Productivity
4. Enhances Business & Economic Growth
5. Improves Access to Grants & Funding Opportunities

How a Comprehensive Language Access Program benefits the MOA

Effective Service Delivery

1. Ensures Equitable Access to Services
2. Strengthens Community Trust & Engagement
3. Reduces Service Bottlenecks
4. Enhances Emergency Preparedness & Response
5. Fosters a More Welcoming City

Creating a Welcoming and Resilient MOA

Increasing Inclusivity

- Removing Barriers to Services
- Promoting Equitable Opportunities
- Upholding Rights and Dignity

Creating a Welcoming Community

- Fostering Trust in Local Government
- Encouraging Civic Engagement
- Reducing Isolation

Enhancing Community Resiliency

- Improving Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Building a Stronger Economy
- Strengthening Social Cohesion

MOA Language Access Program Objectives

Expand Language Services

Provide access to a wider range of languages, with a focus on languages spoken by Anchorage's growing immigrant communities.

Increase Accessibility

Ensure that all online, phonebased, and in-person services are accessible to residents with limited English proficiency (LEP) as well as deaf and hard of hearing individuals and those with sight limitations.

Engage LEP Communities

Regularly seek input from LEP residents to make the LAP responsive to community needs.

Implement Technological Solutions

Adopt technology for real-time language support, document translation, and program management.

Use Simplified Language

This will make official MOA information easier for all residents to understand and assist in easier and potentially lower cost for translations

Making Language Access Simple

Educate and Train Staff
- How to identify an LEP and respond accordingly
- How to use vendor services
- How to track usage

TRAIN

Provide Services
- Telephonic and Video Interpretation
- Translate documents
- AI Tools

PROVIDE

Connect Communities and Build Belonging
- Notification of language services
- Outreach to LEP serving organizations
- Complaint process and rectification

CONNECT

Providing Services

PITFALLS

- Using children to interpret or translate
- Using friends or family members
- Using bilingual employees who have not been assessed and trained
- Relying on Google translates or other AI systems
- Making assumptions about language ability
- Not paying for language services

Language Access Representatives

- Serve as department contact
- Track language service requests
- Train new staff on language access procedures
- Submit documents for translation
- Update department staff on new information, best practices, complaints received
- Participate in Language Access Rep calls to discuss any challenges or successes

June 2025

First Actions for Language Access Representatives to Take

- Obtain and place Point to Your Language Signs in visible languages
- Identify vital documents for translation
- Gain access to Language Link and understand billing and usage
- Train department staff on using Language Link

Forthcoming Components

Language Access Enhancements

- Policy Updates
- Additional Vendors
- Plan Posters

Technological Integration

- Internal webpage for trainings and guidance
- External webpage for public notification

Staff Training and Capacity Building

- Annual Language Access Training for Staff
- Bilingual Staff Recruitment and Support
- Develop a Language Access Representative Program

Community Engagement and Outreach

- Conduct Annual Language Access Needs Assessment
- Community Outreach Events and Informational Campaigns
- Feedback Mechanism for Continuous Improvement

Municipality of Anchorage
Language Access Program

Language Access Plan
Department
Effective Date:

Dept. LA Representative
Title:
[Date]

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Language Access Plan is to ensure meaningful access to programs, services, and activities for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP)

2 Policy Statement

is committed to providing equitable access to all individuals, regardless of language barriers, by offering language assistance services where needed.

3 Contact Information

Department Language Access Representative
Phone: [Phone Number]
Email: [Email Address]

4 Most Spoken Languages in Anchorage

Languages spoken by LEP individuals in the service area:
List Languages:

5 Language Assistance Measures

Interpretation Services: [Describe available services, e.g., in-person, telephonic, video]
Translation Services: [Describe process for document translation]
Signage and Notices: [Describe how language access information is displayed]

6 Staff Training

Frequency of training: [e.g., annual, biannual]
Topics covered: [e.g., LEP policies, use of interpreters, cultural competency]
Responsible training personnel: [Department/Person Responsible]

7 Outreach and Staff Awareness

Methods used: [e.g., website, brochures, community meetings]
Key community partners:

8 Monitoring and Evaluation

How effectiveness is measured: [e.g., surveys, feedback, service usage tracking]
Responsible party for evaluation: [Name/Department]
Frequency of plan review and updates:

9 Complaint Process

Individuals who experience difficulties with language access services may file a complaint using the following methods:
In-Person/By Mail - Office Address:
Email: [Complaint Email]
Phone: [Complaint Phone Number]

Tangibles

- **Langauge Link Posters**
- **Language Link Booklets**
- **Language Link Cards**

What is your department's account code?

Do you need booklets in MOA vehicles?

Where can you best display posters?

Let's Practice

Questions?

Update 2025