
 <b>MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE</b> <b>O P E R A T I N G</b> <b>P O L I C Y I P R O C E D U R E</b>	P&P No. <b>16 - 6</b>	Page 1 of 7
	Effective Date: <b>September 1, 2025</b>	
Subject:  <b>Language Access Policy</b>	Supersedes No. <b>N/A</b>	Dated: <b>September 1, 2025</b>
	Approved by: 	

1. PURPOSE.....	2
2. POLICY.....	2
3. ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED.....	2
4. REFERENCES.....	2
5. DEFINITIONS.....	2
6. RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
7. LANGUAGE ACCESS COMPLAINT PROCESS.....	6
8. ANNUAL REVIEW DATE.....	6
9. ADDENDUM.....	7

## 1. **PURPOSE**

To establish a policy to ensure compliance with civil rights laws to effectively provide information about municipal services, programs, and activities to residents and visitors with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

## 2. **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Municipality of Anchorage to provide timely and meaningful access to LEP and deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals in the conduct of municipal business. The MOA will utilize readily accessible telephonic language lines and professional face-to-face interpreters in the conduct of municipal business rather than to rely on less effective communication methods, like asking friends, family and children, to interpret.

## 3. **ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED**

All Municipality of Anchorage agencies.

## 4. **REFERENCES**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and implementing regulations, which prohibit discrimination based on national origin (42 U.S. Code 2000d).

Presidential Executive Order 13166 (August 11, 2000) requires any state or local agency that receives federal funding to examine the services they provide and identify any need for services to those with Limited English Proficiency. It is expected that the MOA's Language Access Plan will provide for such meaningful access consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of municipal agencies.

## 5. **DEFINITIONS**

- A. Department Language Access Representative: The employee designated by the department director to be responsible for implementing the MOA's Language Access Plan (LAP) within their department.
- B. Essential Public Information: Any information used by a department when dealing with the public which is necessary to accomplish the department's mission, especially with respect to public safety, public health, and economic development.

- C. Frontline: Applies to departments and/or personnel that have regular and substantive contact with the public via in-person or telephonic communication.
- D. Interpretation: The immediate spoken communication of meaning from one language (the source language) to another (the target language).
- E. Interpreter: A person who is bilingual or multilingual and possesses the ability to successfully convey a message from one language to another through oral communication.
- F. Language Access Plan (LAP): The Language Access document that outlines the procedures and practices that municipal departments and their staff will use to provide language access services to Limited English Proficiency (LEP), deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals.
- G. Limited English Proficient (LEP): Someone who is not able to speak, read, write or understand English at a level that allows them to interact effectively with department staff. Individuals maintain the right to self-identity as a LEP person and should not be expected to pay for interpreting or translation services.
- H. Mayor's Language Access Liaison: The Chief Equity Officer in the Office of Equity and Inclusion will serve as the Mayor's Language Access Liaison to help implement and support the MOA's Language Access Plan and the Department Language Access Representatives.
- I. Telephonic Interpretation: A service that connects human interpreters via telephone to individuals who wish to speak to each other but do not share a common language. The telephone interpreter converts the spoken language from one language to another, enabling listeners and speakers to understand each other.
- J. Translation: The written communication of meaning from one language (the source language) to another (the target language).
- K. Translator: A person who is bilingual or multilingual and possesses the ability to translate from one language to another in written form.
- L. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI): Language and/or sign-language interpreting services using remote video technology that connects human interpreters to individuals who wish to communicate with one another but do not share a common language.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Mayor's Office shall:
  - i. Designate the Mayor's Language Access Liaison; and
  - ii. Facilitate publication of these P&P's and the Language Access Plan on Municipal websites.

B. The Mayor's Language Access Liaison shall:

- i. Designate which municipal departments qualify as "frontline" for purposes of this policy;
- ii. Provide support and technical assistance to frontline departments and employees to assist in the implementation of the MOA's Language Access Plan;
- iii. Establish a reporting format template for department representatives to use for annual Language Access Plan updates;
- iv. Manage the content on the Language Access website;
- v. Take reasonable steps to inform LEP individuals and stakeholders about the availability of LEP services and the complaint process;
- vi. Work with Language Access Representatives to develop protocols used to measure department utilization of telephonic and in-person interpretation, translated documents and other currently unidentified needs in an effort to provide language access services; and
- vii. Monitor and address feedback from the public and LEP persons which has been gathered through the Language Access complaint form or through other forms of communication, i.e. email, phone calls, in-person communication, etc.

C. The Department Language Access Representative shall:

- i. Be designated by the department director;
- ii. Be responsible for ensuring that their department is in compliance with this policy;
- iii. Use reporting format template to record language services provided to LEP and deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals, Language Access Plan utilization, and recommendations for changes to be shared periodically with the department director and the Mayor's Language Access Liaison;
- iv. Share with the Language Access Liaison the department's internal protocols used to train staff and implement the Language Access Plan; and
- v. Prepare an annual report reviewing the department's implementation of the MOA's Language Access Plan - services rendered and resources used.

**D. Frontline Municipal Departments shall:**

- i. Implement the MOA's Language Access Plan to provide services to LEP and deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals at no cost to them;
- ii. Ensure that frontline employees are trained in Language Access policies and procedures (including efficient communication techniques, how to secure an interpreter, and the effective use of an interpreter) so they can assist LEP and deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals;
- iii. Ensure Language Link "Point to your language" posters are clearly displayed in public service counter areas and on the department's web page;
- iv. Allocate funds in the department's annual budget to cover the cost of language access services, or be responsible for finding those funds from independent grant sources; and
- v. Develop billing procedures and maintain billing records for employees' use of professional interpreting and translation services.

**E. Non-Frontline Municipal Departments shall:**

- i. Be exempt from implementing the Language Access Plan; but
- ii. They will make their employees aware of and keep current with the development of this Language Access policy and the MOA's Language Access Plan and resources.

**F. Frontline Employees shall:**

- i. Implement the MOA's Language Access Plan;
- ii. When working with a Limited English Proficiency person;
  - a. Utilize Language Link "Point to your language" posters to identify language and communication needs;
  - b. Upon determining language needs, determine the appropriate language resource to use:
    - 1) Professional telephonic or in-person interpreting service;
    - 2) Professional video remote interpreting platform;
    - 3) Bilingual staff;
    - 4) Professional translation service;
    - 5) See P&P 16-6 Addendum A for more details and contact info.

G. Essential Public Information and Vital Documents shall be:

- i. Selected by department staff and the Mayor's Language Access Liaison;
- ii. Submitted to Language Link and/or Alaska Institute for Justice Language Interpreter Center for translation quote; and
- iii. Made available on department's webpage.

## **7. LANGUAGE ACCESS COMPLAINT PROCESS**

A. A complaint may be made in person, in writing, or online. All complaints shall be directed to the Mayor's Language Access Liaison:

Mayor's Language Access Liaison  
632 W 6th Avenue, Suite 855, Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 343-7124  
Online: [Language Access Complaint Form - Formstack](#)

- B. Any LEP individual has the right to file a complaint when he or she believes that the Municipality of Anchorage did not provide Language Access services as appropriate.
- C. Frontline Departments shall take reasonable steps to inform LEP individuals and stakeholders about the complaint process. This shall include posting information about the complaint process and making it available in the most commonly spoken languages.
- D. The complaint should specify the date, individuals involved, the nature of the complaint (a LEP individual was denied services because they did not bring their own interpreter), and the complainant's contact information.
- E. The Language Access Liaison shall investigate whenever it receives a complaint, report, or other information that alleges or indicates possible noncompliance. The complainant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation. If the Language Access Liaison makes a finding of noncompliance, the letter to the complainant shall include the steps that will be taken to correct the noncompliance.

## **8. ANNUAL REVIEW DATE**

- A. Annual department reports will be due to Mayor's Language Access Liaison for review and assessment on or before July 31.
- B. Mayor's Language Access Liaison will submit an overview report to the Mayor and Municipal Manager for review on or before September 31.

**9. ADDENDUMS**

A. Interpreting and translation resources