

2025

OFFICE OF EQUITY & INCLUSION



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE – OFFICE OF
EQUITY & INCLUSION**

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OFFICE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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February 27, 2026

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Assembly:

Attached is the Office of Equity and Inclusion's 2025 Annual Report for your review and information.

This report shares details on programs and projects executed by our office during the 2025 calendar year. We are proud to announce the Municipality of Anchorage is federally compliant with Language Access for the first time since 2021. Included in this report are program recommendations for your consideration.

In addition, we have met federal Equal Opportunity Employer requirements, with the Chief Equity Officer also serving as the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer.

AO No. 2020-137(S), § 4, 1-14-21 mandates that at least once a year, the Municipal Office of Equity and Inclusion, in consultation with the Native Village of Eklutna and other Tribal leaders and Tribal organizations as appropriate, shall provide training to Municipal employees on the history and legal status of Tribes within Alaska and the Municipality, and on issues of concern to Tribes. We are pleased to announce this training was completed for the first time in 2025 and will continue on an annual basis.

Kimberly Y. Waller
Director, Office of Equity and Inclusion



DEDICATION

OFFICE OF EQUITY & INCLUSION

The OEI is fortunate to have the support and thought partnership of Anchorage residents, religious leaders, nonprofits, a large swath of Municipal departments, past and current elected officials and those who have devoted their life's work to cultivating highly productive environments where diversity is celebrated.

Their generous guidance and kind encouragement in shaping a collective vision for this office has been immeasurable.

We dedicate this report to them, and to our incredible Municipal team who inspire us daily with their hearts of service.

Lastly, we dedicate this to those who use their voice to advocate for a better, more just society.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"

- Martin Luther King Jr.



OUR TEAM



Kim Waller
Chief Equity Officer



Zaneta Stetsunov
Social Media Strategist /
Contractor



Lupe Chavez
Administrative Officer



Amy Coffman
Language Access / Contractor

THE OFFICE OF EQUITY & INCLUSION

OUR MISSION

The Office of Equity and Inclusion was formed to assure Municipal services are accessible, uplift the voices of residents and encourage public participation in government.

The Chief Equity Officer represents the Municipality on community issues in a variety of forums, and assures we remain federally compliant with Language Access and Equal Employment Opportunity policies.

The OEI develops and participates in a number of special projects, committees and community-driven initiatives, always with an equity lens. We are a highly collaborative office by design, with both an internal and external focus on inclusive Municipal communications, outreach and advocacy.

In addition, the OEI supports The Department of Human Resources in their efforts to recruit, compensate, retain and promote the best talent to ensure the Municipality is a fair and rewarding place to work.

LANGUAGE ACCESS



Language Access is a federal requirement. It is the policy of the Municipality of Anchorage to provide timely and meaningful access to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals in the conduct of Municipal business. The Municipality 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, or including friends, family and children, to interpret.

In 2025, the OEI facilitated language access training for all departments within the Municipality. The first training to take place since 2021, department representatives were empowered with education around the technology and the importance of assuring every resident has access to Municipal services and vital documents in their language.

The Municipality's Language Access Program is managed by the OEI's Administrative Officer, Lupe Chavez. The OEI would like to credit the (now disbanded) Anchorage Equity Committee for helping us to understand the importance of compliance with language access requirements and how it impacts residents.

TRUSTED MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION

Point to your language

Over 240 languages 24|7|365

Amharic አማርኛ	Hebrew עברית	Portuguese Português
Arabic العربية	Hindi हिन्दी	Punjabi ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
Bosnian (Serbo Croatian) Bosanski	Hmong Hmoob	Romanian Română
Burmese မြန်မာစာ	Italian italiano	Russian Русский
Cambodian ខ្មែរ	Japanese 日本語	Somali Soomaali
Cantonese 廣東話	Karen ကရင်	Spanish Español
Haitian Creole Kreyól Ayisyen	Kirundi Ikirundi	Swahili Kiswahili
Farsi فارسی	Korean 한국어	Tagalog Tagalog
French Français	Laotian ພາສາລາວ	Thai ภาษาไทย
French-Canadian français canadien	Mandarin 國語	Tigrinya ትግርኛ
German Deutsch	Nepali नेपाली	Urdu اردو
Turkish Türkçe	Polish Polski	Vietnamese Tiếng Việt

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 Find us online: [ctslanguagelink](https://ctslanguagelink.com)
 Telephone: 1.800.208.2620

cts languagelink
We speak your customer's language

HOW DOES LANGUAGE ACCESS BENEFIT THE MUNICIPALITY?

Economic Efficiency

1. Reduces Costs of Miscommunication: Clear communication reduces errors, misunderstandings, and costly rework in government services (e.g., legal disputes, incorrect paperwork, and delays in service delivery).
2. Improves Public Health & Safety: Ensuring residents understand health and safety information prevents emergencies and reduces reliance on costly emergency services.
3. Increases Workforce Productivity: Municipal employees spend less time navigating language barriers, leading to faster and more effective service delivery.
4. Enhances Business & Economic Growth: A multilingual-friendly community attracts diverse businesses, encourages entrepreneurship, and promotes local economic activity.
5. Improves Access to Grants & Funding Opportunities: Communities with strong language access programs may qualify for additional funding and resources tied to inclusive service delivery.

Effective Service Delivery

1. Ensures Equitable Access to Services: Residents receive essential services (e.g., healthcare, transportation, public safety) without language barriers.
2. Strengthens Community Trust & Engagement: Language-inclusive policies build trust between the government and non-English-speaking communities, encouraging civic participation.
3. Reduces Service Bottlenecks: Translated materials and multilingual staff decrease wait times and improve efficiency in government offices.
4. Enhances Emergency Preparedness & Response: Multilingual communication ensures all residents receive timely, life-saving information in crisis.
5. Fosters a More Welcoming Community: A welcoming environment for diverse populations leads to greater social cohesion and civic involvement.



2025 Municipality-wide Language Access Training



MOA Language Access Program | 2025 Year Report

Prepared by Lupe Chavez, Administrative Officer | Office of Equity and Inclusion

The Office of Equity & Inclusion is pleased to report on the revival of the Municipality of Anchorage's (MOA) Language Access Program. Reintroducing the Language Access Program to Municipal employees and providing education for each department was a priority for our newly formed office.

We accomplished our goal by updating and streamlining processes which helped create a Language Access Program that was easier to use, empowering employees to effectively serve individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) or who are deaf / hard of hearing.

Many steps were involved in restructuring the program. We began by reviewing and updating the Language Access Policy & Procedures, P&P 16-6, and the existing LAP. Both had not been updated for many years. Next, we called on Municipal departments to complete a language access survey and conducted one-on-one interviews with just under a dozen department directors. From these surveys and interviews, we gathered information on how often interpreting and translation services were being used, what was working or not, and what updates and resources were needed.

Municipal directors were then asked to designate an official Language Access Representative for their departments. These Language Access Representatives now serve as leaders and trainers for other Municipal employees within their respective departments, helping to disseminate important information and carry the Language Access Program forward.

In collaboration with Language Link (the main language interpreting and translation service provider for the MOA), we discovered that Municipal accounts had not been updated for years - contact information for departments was outdated or missing and, in some cases, department accounts had been made inactive (Parks & Recreation, Human Resources, Office of Emergency Management). We worked with those departments to reactivate their accounts and opened new accounts for departments that did not have accounts already set up (Anchorage Fire Department, Office of Equity & Inclusion, and the Office of Federal Compliance).

Copies of the updated MOA's Language Access Policies & Procedures and the new Language Access Plan were then distributed to department directors and Language Access Representatives. We also shared updated Language Link account information and detailed instructions on how to access language interpreter and/or translation services.

With the help of our Reprographics Department, laminated copies of the "Point To Your Language Poster" were printed and distributed to all departments who did not have them. Department Representatives placed these posters in public facing lobbies and areas where they can be easily seen by residents.

In addition to the Point To Your Language Posters, two newly created MOA Language Access Program posters were also shared with departments. One for Municipal employees, intended for break rooms or common shared areas. This poster highlights what the MOA's Language Access Program is and why it is important. The second poster is for the public, providing information on available language access services. We requested departments display signage next to the Point To Your Language Poster to help inform the public and to help promote the Language Access Program.

In the summer of 2025, two new Language Access trainings were implemented - the first for department directors and the second for both directors and Language Access Representatives. One of the goals of these trainings was to enhance staff capacity and empower Language Access Representatives with the resources they will need to continue training other employees within their departments. Another important component of this training was educating staff on how to identify people with limited English proficiency or who are deaf or hard of hearing so they can effectively provide language access services.

After completing department trainings, we focused our time on cleaning up and updating the LAP internal (Muniverse) and external webpages;

[Equity and Inclusion Home.](#)

We then created new reporting and feedback forms for the LAP. One is an electronic feedback and reporting form for the Language Access Representatives that will be completed twice a year. The others are complaint/feedback forms for the public.

Lastly, we continued to engage with language interpreting and translation service vendors, community stakeholders and our department Language Access Representatives to learn what is working and is not, and what has changed or updated so we can continue to make the MOA's LAP better. As we have learned from LAPs across the nation, this federally required program

requires ongoing maintenance, succinct communication and oversight of evolving technologies. This updated Language Access Program will foster a more inclusive and accessible Municipality of Anchorage for all residents.

GOALS FOR 2026:

- Continue communications and engagement with department Language Access Representatives and employees to gather feedback and offer support via ongoing training. For example, in the fall of 2025, we delivered in-person training for the HR Department that was customized to their needs (new department Language Representative and several new supervisors/employees). We will continue to conduct smaller, more customized training opportunities upon request.
- Work with IT Department to set up a Litmos Training link that will go out to all new MOA Employees that first week of employment.
- Work with the HR Department to highlight the LAP as a part of the new employee orientation slide presentation.

Employee Feedback on Language Access:

- “We needed an interpreter for a hearing today, and I just wanted to let you know that everything went smoothly! A witness said during the hearing that they needed an interpreter, and it only took a minute or two to get one on the line. Thanks for making this easy!”

Very Respectfully, PE, Administrative Hearing Officer

- “I wasn’t aware that the MUNI offered such a great service for our patrons!”

DC, Legal Secretary, Municipal Attorney’s Office

- On Language Access website update: “I have previously visited and reviewed both pages. I think that they are AWESOME and are much better than what the MUNI previously had. Great job!”

Office of the Ombudsman

2025 Updated Policy & Procedures P&P 16-6:

- [MOA Language Access P&P 16-6](#)
- [MOA Language Access P&P Addendum A](#)

New MOA Language Access Plan (Supersedes all Dept. Language Access Plans):

- [MOA Language Access Plan](#)

New Language Access Poster for Municipal Residents:

Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) -- Language Access Services

All services are FREE for MOA business

Language services make sure everyone — no matter what language they speak or how they communicate—can access information, services, and support in their community.

What's Available

- Interpretation** – Over-the-phone, video, or in-person help in your language
- Document Translation** – Important forms and notices translated for you
- Assistance for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Individuals** – Including sign language interpretation and captioning services

How to Get Language Help

- In Person** - Ask a staff member for an interpreter. They will contact a paid person over the phone or on video
- Phone** - Call the department and a staff member will contact a paid person over the phone or on video for interpretation or translation

Look for the "Point to Your Language" poster in any MOA office

Contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion to:

- Learn more
- File a complaint or suggestion about language services

You Have the Right to Be Understood
All services are FREE for MOA business

New Paper Complaint/Feedback Form:



Language Access Complaint Form

Municipality of Anchorage

← (Scan here for online form with [Google Translate](#))

We want to make sure everyone in the Municipality of Anchorage can easily get help from the Municipality, no matter what language they speak. Feedback from the public is important to us because we want to provide good customer service. Please use this form to tell us if you did not receive the language help (interpretation or translation services) you needed.

The information you share on this form will go to the Municipal department where the problem occurred and to the Office of Equity and Inclusion. This will help us work together to stop similar instances and to improve our services. Thank you.

• [MOA Language Access Paper Complaint Form](#)

New Online Reporting Form for Dept. Language Access Representatives:

• [MOA Language Access Online Complaint Form](#)

New Language Access Training for Employees:

• [MOA Training Overview PowerPoint](#)

2025 MOA'S LANGUAGE ACCESS PROGRAM DEPARTMENT NUMBERS

DEPARTMENT:	LANGUAGE USED:	MINUTES:	COSTS:
ANCHORAGE FIRE DEPARTMENT	All Languages Interpreting	509Min	\$455.08
	Language Link Srvs.	108Min	\$61.88
	Korean		
	Spanish		
	Swahili		
	Tagalog		
	Somali		
	Albanian		
	Kinyarwanda		
	Language Line Svs	401Min	\$393.20
	Spanish		
	Korean		
	Mien		
	Pashto		
	Tagalog		
	Turkish		
	Swahili		
	Russian		
	Greek		
ANCHORAGE HEALTH DEPARTMENT	All Languages Interpreting	14,070Min	\$7,679
	Spanish		
	Tagalog/Filipino		
	Hmong		
	Kinyarwanda		
	somali		
	Swahili		
	Russian		
	French		
	Dari		
	Sudanese		
	Ukrainian		
	Nepali		
	Pashto		
	Arabic		
	Korean		

	Dinka		
	Vietnamese		
	Thai		
	Laotian		
	Portuguese		
	Nuer		
	Cambodian		
	Haitain		
	Amharic		
	Hindi		
	Filipino		
	Mandarin		
	Tigrinya		
	Chinese		
	Hebrew		
	Portuguese/Brazilian		
	Samoan		
	Urdu		
ANCHORAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT	All Languages Interpreting:	5,768Min	\$3,106.00
	Spanish		
	Kinyarwanda		
	Korean		
	Mandarin		
	Arabic		
	Russian		
	Albanian		
	Ukrainian		
	Swahili		
	Tagalog / Filipino		
	Thai		
	French		
	Hmong		
	Nuer		
	Somali		
	Pashto		
	Laotian		
	German		
	Cambodian		

	Cantonese		
	Chinese		
ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY/CLERK'S OFFICE	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
ANCHORAGE EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION	All Languages Interpreting	12Min	\$6.99
	Spanish American Sign Language		\$1,340.17
AWWU	All Languages Interpreting	249Min	\$87.00
	Spanish		
	Korean		
	Laotian		
	Russian		
	Tagalog		
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
FINANCE	All Languages Interpreting	106Min	\$58.89
	Spanish		
	Korean		
HUMAN RESOURCES	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
LIBRARY	All Languages Interpreting	8Min	\$4.58
	Mandarin		
MAYOR'S OFFICE	All Languages Interpreting	675Min	\$367.92
	Spanish Russian	563Min	
	All Translations	107Min	
	Spanish		\$457.07
	Samoan		
	American Sign Language		\$924.37
MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
MERRIL FIELD AIRPORT	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00

MUNICIPAL ATTORNEY'S OFFICE	All Languages Interpreting	81Min	\$28.99
	Spanish Hmong		
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
OFFICE OF EQUITY & INCLUSION	All Languages Interpreting	87Min	\$45.84
	Spanish		
	Kinyarwanda		
	All Translations:		\$134.25
	Spanish		
OFFICE OF FEDERAL COMPLIANCE	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN	All Languages Interpreting	60Min	\$34.60
PARKS & RECREATION	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
PLANNING DEPARTMENT	All Languages Interpreting	2Min	\$1.00
DON YOUNG PORT OF ALASKA	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
PROJECT, MANAGEMENT & ENGINEERING	All Languages Interpreting	2	\$1.00
PROPERTY APPRAISAL	All Languages Interpreting	19Min	\$11.06
	Russian		
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	All Languages Interpreting	1,598Min	\$906.00
	Spanish		
	Russian		
	Hmong		
	Korean		
	Somali		
	Greek		
PURCHASING	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00
REAL ESTATE	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00

SOLID WASTE SERVICES	All Languages Interpreting	17Min	\$9.62
TRAFFIC	All Languages Interpreting	0	\$0.00

THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA



On January 14, 2021, the Anchorage Assembly approved an ordinance to establish government-to-government relations between the Municipality of Anchorage and the Sovereign Native Village of Eklutna (AO 2020137(S)).

In 2025, the Municipal Office of Equity and Inclusion - in collaboration with the Native Village of Eklutna- delivered an educational opportunity to municipal employees on the history and legal status of Tribes within Alaska and the Municipality, and issues of concern to Tribes. The Municipality of Anchorage is committed to clear and lasting government-to-government relations with the Native Village of Eklutna. This event will now take place on an annual basis with the next event scheduled for August 19th, 2026.

A TEAMS link was provided for employees who were unable to attend in 2025. Municipal employees may access that video [here](#).

Link to online OEI-produced Eklutna Video: <https://vimeo.com/1111509477/ff229fae5c?share=copy>

NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA
LEARNING SESSION

August 26th, 2025

Wilda Marston Theater at
Z.J. Loussac Library

3600 Denali St, Anchorage,
AK 99503

10AM (Doors open at 9:30A)



2025 Eklutna Training

MUNI.WORKS.AK



Staying connected to those within the Municipality is what the OEI does best. We prioritize and maintain strong community relationships, which bolster our understanding of resident concerns and gives us the ability to share information about Municipal government.

Simply stated, government business can be complex. In our office, we have learned of several barriers to engagement: lack of ability to navigate the Municipal website, language that is dense and talks “over-the-heads” of residents, and lack of knowledge about important dates, processes, deadlines and other general announcements.

Launched in April of 2025, Muni.Works.AK speaks to our commitment to call residents into the work happening in municipal government. It is a fun, fast way to connect with residents - complete with hyperlinks, procured videos and additional resources for those in search of factual information. Muni.Works.AK has a growing audience on Facebook and Instagram.

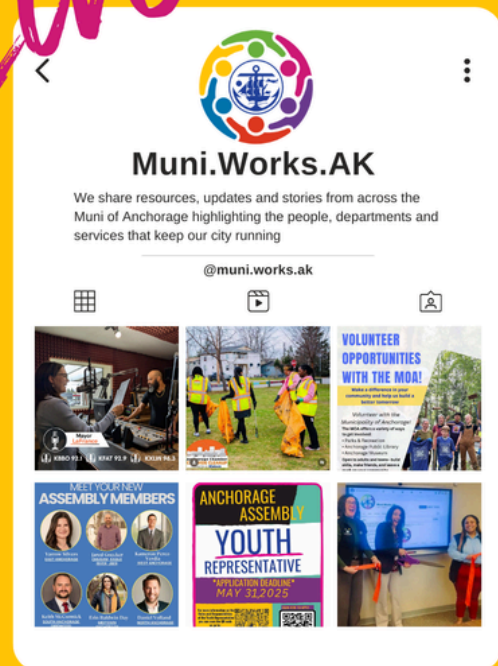


MUNI.WORKS.AK Ribbon Cutting

Muni.Works.AK is

Live

Instagram: @muni.works.ak
Facebook: Muni.Works.AK



MUNI.WORKS.AK

AUGUST - OCTOBER, 2025



MUNI.WORKS.AK

August 2025 Recap

National Health Center
 Back Open Again
 The National Health Center is pleased to announce that it is now open for business. We are grateful for the support of our community and look forward to serving you again.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A
 [Event details]

CLOSED LABOR DAY
 We will be closed on Monday, September 1st, in observance of Labor Day.

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MUNI.WORKS.AK

September 2025 Recap

CLOSED LABOR DAY
 We will be closed on Monday, September 1st, in observance of Labor Day.

Party!
 Join us for a community celebration on September 10th.

LOCAL LENS
 Anchorage's Local Lens Series

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MUNI.WORKS.AK

September 2025 Recap

WELCOME BACK
 We are excited to have you back!

YOU'RE INVITED
 Join us for a special event on September 15th.

LOCAL LENS
 Anchorage's Local Lens Series

8

MUNI.WORKS.AK

October 2025 Recap

PUBLIC HEARING
 Join us for a public hearing on October 10th.

WELCOME BACK
 We are excited to have you back!

LOCAL LENS
 Anchorage's Local Lens Series

9

MUNI.WORKS.AK

October 2025 Recap

WE WELCOME THE YK
 We are excited to have you back!

[Group photo of staff members]

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Advocacy

The OEI advocates on behalf of residents, nonprofits, religious leaders, and stakeholders alike looking to have their voices uplifted in Municipal government. Our office has visited in person with many organizations, including Catholic Social Services, Mountain View Boys and Girls Club, Access Alaska, Camp Fire Alaska, Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center, Shiloh Community Housing and various community councils. These meetings allow us to better understand local concerns around a vast set of issues. This information is then shared back with the Mayor's staff.



The “Visit with the Mayor” gatherings, for example, came to be as a result of the OEI uplifting community requests for deeper engagement with the current administration. Launching in February 2025, these monthly convenings provide an opportunity for special interest groups, sectors & community representatives to visit with the Mayor in a private setting. Questions are submitted in advance and the Mayor is present to address those questions, listen and schedule follow ups for her team.



CITY HALL

TYPHOON HALONG RESPONSE



Alaskans show up for Alaskans. The compassionate response to over 600 Western Alaska evacuees due to Typhoon Halong has been enormous. The Municipality has worked closely with federal emergency response teams, community members, faith-based leaders and nonprofits wanting to help ensure families are supported as they adjust to living in Anchorage. These efforts are ongoing.

After learning of the trouble many evacuees were experiencing with transportation, the Municipality directed a \$25,000 grant to fund a shuttle service to supplement existing transportation needs.

The OEI enlisted partners to include the YWCA Alaska, BAC Transportation and MOA Public Transportation to establish shuttle service on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays during the holiday season. We then worked with Repographics to print badges to help identify riders. Next, we worked with Tidal Basin on the distribution of badges and shuttle maps.

The shuttle, funded to operate for two months, helped to connect families staying in various hotel locations throughout the Municipality. It also provided access to groceries, a health and social services office, the Loussac Library and a pharmacy.



“THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING OUR FELLOW ALASKANS AS THEY REBUILD THEIR LIVES,” SAID MAYOR SUZANNE LAFRANCE, ADDING “THE SHUTTLE SERVICE WILL HELP ENSURE DISPLACED FAMILIES ARE SAFE, SUPPORTED, AND WELCOMED WHILE THEY ARE IN OUR COMMUNITY.”

INTERNAL TEAMS



Office of
Equity and Inclusion
MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

The OEI has the pleasure of working across departments within the MOA. As a highly collaborative office that values inclusion, we gladly support internal initiatives (as our capacity allows).

In 2025, the Chief Equity Officer served on Request for Proposal (RFP) committees to assist in providing increased training for the Anchorage Police Department, Leadership Development Training for Municipal directors, and on the Employee Lifecycle Team (led by Chief Administrative Officer, Bill Falsey). The CEO also served on the Mayor's Arts Grants review committee - an internal team responsible for distributing \$175,000 to organizations contributing to the Municipality's wellness through beautifying public space, preserving and enriching cultural heritage, sparking community dialogue, and empowering local artists.

These relationships extend to Members of the Assembly, who have called on the OEI to assist with community outreach and elevate queries from constituents around tax education, public safety, property tax liens/nonprofit tax exemptions and afterschool care.



Representation

The Chief Equity Officer represents the Municipality on community issues in a variety of forums.

In 2025, the OEI had 88 meetings and public engagements with community members and stakeholders.



SPECIAL PROJECTS



The OEI has contributed to the planning and support of community initiatives to include The Good Neighbor Fund launch event, Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Military Appreciation Day, the Black Business Expo, Meet The World, the Alaska Civil Rights Conference, the Pride Parade, MOA50 Events and more. We were proud to partner with the Food Bank of Alaska, roping in 10 internal departments for a Municipal-wide holiday Food Drive in November and December of 2025.



OEI PERFORMANCE MEASURES



Performance Measures: Promote the Municipality as an outstanding place of employment and help reduce barriers to entry, advocate for a positive, collaborative work environment and maintain strong community connections to uplift the voices of all Municipal residents.

Progress in achieving goals shall be measured by:

Measure #1: Increase cross-departmental and external collaboration on special projects, thereby encouraging collaboration and equity (5% annually)

Measure #2: Increase direct HR employment applicant referrals to assist those in the community who seek to bring their talents to the MOA (5% annually)

Measure #3: Increase community engagements, thereby uplifting the voices of residents, community councils, religious leaders and stakeholders alike in Municipal government (5% annually)

2025	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Community / Stakeholder Meetings & Public Engagements	5	26	39	18
Language Access Training (DEPT)	N	Y	N	N
EEO Policy Distribution (DEPT)	Y	Y	Y	Y
MOA Applicant Referrals	0	4	6	1
Native Village of Eklutna Training	N	N	Y	N
Social Media Community Members (Muni.Works.AK)	25	368	482	601

NOTE: Native Village of Eklutna / Language Access Training are required on an annual basis

Recruitment & Retention

The OEI collaborates with Human Resources on recruitment and retention. We want qualified residents to bring their talents to the MOA. As an Equal Opportunity Employer, we consider ourselves ambassadors of City Hall. That means connecting prospective applicants directly to our Municipal Recruiter, Phil Ayers.



In 2025, Mayor LaFrance kindly assisted in our efforts to promote employment opportunities at the MOA (pictured) with a radio campaign spanning various demographics.

In addition, the OEI stood up exit & transfer interviews. This feedback allows the MOA to better understand its strengths and weaknesses as an employer. We want the best talent in the community, and employee experience matters!



2 out of **11** direct referrals from the OEI to Human Resources were hired for full time employment at the MOA in 2025

CITY HALL

Municipality of Anchorage Language Access Program Update and Recommendations

July 18, 2025

Prepared by Amy Coffman, Contractor | Office of Equity and Inclusion

Executive Summary

This report details the work completed and recommendations for updating the Municipality of Anchorage's (MOA) Language Access Plan (LAP) from January to July 2025. The overarching goal has been to create a radically simple language access program that empowers staff to effectively serve individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and or Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and ensures the public is fully aware of and can easily access available language services.

The comprehensive update involved reviewing existing policies, conducting a departmental assessment, engaging with vendors and community stakeholders, and developing new training and communication materials. The recommendations aim to streamline processes, enhance staff capacity, and improve public awareness, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and accessible MOA for all residents.

I. Conclusions: Creating a Radically Simple Language Access Program

A radically simple language access program hinges on two core principles:

1. clear guidance for staff on identifying and providing services, and
2. robust public awareness of service availability and receiving those services

A. Ensuring Staff Understand How to Identify a Person Who Needs Services and Provide Them

For staff to effectively provide language access services, they must first be able to identify individuals who need assistance and then understand the straightforward steps to connect them with the appropriate resources.

1. Identifying Language Needs: The updated approach emphasizes practical indicators for staff to identify individuals requiring language assistance. These include:

- **Self-Identification:** The individual explicitly states they need an interpreter or translator.
- **Staff Assessment:** The individual struggles with speaking, reading, or writing in English (e.g., difficulties with sentence structure, understanding, or frequently asking staff to repeat or slow down).
- **Visual Cues:** The individual points to a "Point to Your Language" poster, which is designed to be easily accessible and understood.

(Reference: MOA - 2025 Draft Language Access Plan (1).docx, Section 7; 5.0 with AI audio MOA Training Video 2025.pdf, Page 10)

2. Providing Language Services: Once a language need is identified, staff are guided to utilize professional, paid language services, avoiding reliance on friends, family, or untrained bilingual staff. The primary methods include:

- **Over-the-Phone Interpretation (OPI):** The primary and most readily accessible service, currently provided by Language Link. Staff follow a simple, step-by-step process to connect with an interpreter.
- **In-Person Professional Interpreters:** For situations requiring face-to-face interaction, the Alaska Institute for Justice Language Interpreter Center is the designated provider, requiring advance scheduling.
- **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):** A modern solution for visual communication, with details on providers and procedures to be disseminated by the Office of Equity & Inclusion.
- **Sign Language Interpreters:** Specific providers and relay services are identified for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.
- **Document Translation:** For written materials, staff are instructed to identify the document and required languages, then submit them to approved vendors for professional translation. A key recommendation is to use simplified language in source documents and exercise caution with AI translation tools for official materials.

(Reference: MOA - 2025 Draft Language Access Plan (1).docx, Section 8; 5.0 with AI audio MOA Training Video 2025.pdf, Pages 6-7, 11)

3. Staff Training and Capacity Building: A critical component of a simple program is consistent and effective staff training. The plan mandates annual refresher training for all staff, covering the Language Access Policy, identification techniques, and proper utilization of interpretation resources. The Office of Equity & Inclusion and Department Language Access Representatives are responsible for this training. Recommendations from focus groups and the DEI Commission report emphasize the importance of compensating bilingual staff for their skills and ensuring cultural appropriateness of interpreters, suggesting a need for a committee to oversee this.

(Reference: MOA - 2025 Draft Language Access Plan (1).docx, Section 9; 5.0 with AI audio MOA Training Video 2025.pdf, Page 9; Language Access Equity Committee Work.pdf, Page 2-3)

B. Making Certain the Public Knows Language Services Are Available and Receive Them

Public awareness is paramount to ensuring equitable access. The program focuses on clear notification and an accessible feedback mechanism.

1. Notification of Services: The MOA is committed to prominently displaying "Point to Your Language" posters in public-facing offices and counters. Online, an "Icon" web button and banners will facilitate text translation and direct users to language services information. Community outreach through partners is also a key strategy. The external flyer clearly communicates that "All services are FREE for MOA business" and "You Have the Right to Be Understood."

(Reference: 6.0 MOA - External Flyer.pdf; 6.0 MOA Language Access Program Poster (18 x 24 in).pdf; MOA - 2025 Draft Language Access Plan.docx, Section 8.C; 5.0 with AI audio MOA Training Video 2025.pdf, Page 8)

2. Complaint and Feedback Process: A clear and accessible complaint process is established for LEP individuals who believe services were inadequate or denied. Complaints can be filed online, via email, phone, or in-person/by mail to the Office of Equity and Inclusion. The process ensures investigation and written notification of outcomes, including corrective actions if noncompliance is found. The DEI Commission report suggests allowing agencies or advocates to complain without identifying the individual and providing a place to upload evidence. It also recommends alleviating punishment for residents who miss deadlines due to inadequate language access.

(Reference: MOA - 2025 Draft Language Access Plan.docx, Section 11; Language Access Equity Committee Work.pdf, Page 7)

II. Work Completed: January - July 2025

This section outlines the key activities undertaken to update the MOA's Language Access Plan.

A. Assessment Creation and Interviews

An assessment spreadsheet was created and distributed to various MOA departments to gather data on their current language service provision. Interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights.

Key Findings from Departmental Assessments:

- **Plan Existence:** While many departments (e.g., Anchorage Health Department, Treasury, AWWU, Anchorage Public Library) reported having a written LAP, several (e.g., Solid Waste Services, Information Technology, Chief Admin Officer, Mayor's Office, AFD, PM&E, Purchasing) indicated they did not have one or were unsure. Some existing plans were outdated (more than 3 years old).
- **Identification Methods:** Most departments primarily rely on self-identification, staff assessment, and language identification cards/signage.
- **Services Provided:** Telephone interpretation (Language Link) is the most common service. Some departments also provide document translation, in-person interpretation, and bilingual staff assistance. Video interpretation is less common, but some departments expressed a need for it.
- **Training Gaps:** Several departments reported inconsistent or no formal training on language access procedures, or that training was only conducted upon new hire.
- **Designated Department Language Access Representatives:** Most departments have a designated Language Access Representative, but some were unsure or indicated the contact was outdated.
- **Data Recording:** Recording of language service requests and interactions is inconsistent, with some departments using invoices, manual logs, or no formal process.
- **Frequency of Use:** Many departments rarely or never utilize language services, while others like APD use them daily, and AWWU and Public Transportation use them monthly.
- **Most Requested Languages:** Spanish, Hmong, Russian, Korean, Samoan, and Filipino/Tagalog were frequently cited. ASL was also mentioned.
- **Effectiveness and Challenges:** Departments rated their services from "Unsure" to "Very Effective." Common challenges included lack of resources (especially for document translation), lack of trained staff, limited availability of language access providers (e.g., for specific dialects), and difficulties in identifying language needs. Some noted customer reluctance to use services.

- **Budget Allocation:** Most departments reported spending and allocating between \$1-\$1,000 annually, with Public Transportation allocating "More Than \$10,000." Several departments expressed a need for more funding for translation services.
- **Suggested Improvements:** Departments requested updated data on LEP populations, consistent plans across departments, annual mandatory training, improved video services, and a municipal contract for ASL interpreters. Many expressed a desire for a clear LAP template and more guidance.

(Reference: MOA Language Access Plan Assessment Form - 2025 (Responses) (1).xlsx - Form Responses 1.csv)

B. Policy & Procedure 16-6 Suggested Updates

Policy & Procedure 16-6, the existing Language Access Policy, underwent significant review and suggested updates to align with current best practices and federal guidelines. Key changes include:

- **Expanded Definitions:** Inclusion of Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and clearer definitions for existing terms.
- **Clarified Responsibilities:** More detailed roles for the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Department Language Access Representatives, and Frontline Municipal Departments.
- **Prohibition of Informal Interpreters:** Explicitly stating that friends, family, or children should not be relied upon for interpretation.
- **Enhanced Complaint Process:** Streamlined and more accessible complaint mechanisms.
- **Emphasis on Plain Language:** The DEI Commission report specifically recommended the "recognized use of plain language for all communications for those with English Language Learners and those with low literacy levels."
- **Mayor's Language Access Liaison Placement:** The DEI Commission report suggested a discussion about the best placement for this role, recommending it be self-sustaining and autonomous, potentially reporting to the Equity Committee directly.

(Reference: MOA Policy_Suggested Edits.pdf; MOA - 2025 Language Access Plan.docx; Language Access Equity Committee Work.pdf, Page 1-4)

C. Vendor Outreach and Updates of Contracts with Recommendations of Publishing a New RFP for Additional Vendors

Outreach was conducted with existing language service providers, Language Link (for OPI and translation) and Alaska Institute for Justice Language Interpreter Center (for in-person interpretation and translation). The assessment revealed some limitations, such as difficulty accessing interpreters for specific dialects (e.g., African dialect, Hmong) and a desire for more video interpretation options.

Given the identified needs and the goal to "Expand Language Offerings" and "Ensure Quality Standards for Interpretation and Translation Services" (as highlighted in the Director's Meeting presentation), a recommendation to publish a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for additional vendors is being made. This will allow the MOA to diversify its language service providers, potentially securing more competitive rates, broader language coverage, and enhanced service types (e.g., VRI, specialized language services). The DEI Commission also suggested a committee to ensure cultural appropriateness of interpreters and auditing of trainings, which could be integrated into future vendor requirements.

(Reference: MOA - 2025 Language Access Plan.docx, Section 8; MOA_Director's Meeting Feb 2025_Language Access Program.pptx, Proposed Updates & Timeline; MOA Language Access Plan Assessment Form - 2025 (Responses) (1).xlsx - Form Responses 1.csv; Language Access Equity Committee Work.pdf, Page 2)

D. Creation of Language Access Program Poster for Staff

A dedicated "Municipality of Anchorage Language Access Program" poster (18 x 24 in) was developed for staff. This poster serves as a quick reference guide, outlining the MOA's policy, federal law context, most spoken languages, types of language assistance available, how to identify language needs, and steps for calling Language Link. It also includes contact information for the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

(Reference: 6.0 MOA Language Access Program Poster (18 x 24 in).pdf)

E. Creation of Notification of Language Services to the Public

An external flyer, "Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) -- Language Access Services," was created to inform the public. This flyer clearly states that "All services are FREE for MOA business" and highlights available services (interpretation, document translation, assistance for deaf/hard-of-hearing) and how to get help (in-person, call, "Point to Your Language" poster). It also provides a QR code and contact information for the Office of Equity and Inclusion to learn more or file complaints.

(Reference: 6.0 MOA - External Flyer.pdf)

F. Updated Simple Language Access Plan

The "MOA - 2025 Draft Language Access Plan (1).docx" represents a significant update, aiming for simplicity and clarity. It consolidates information on purpose, policy, affected organizations, references, definitions, responsibilities, identification methods, assistance measures, staff training, monitoring, evaluation, and the complaint process. This updated plan serves as a comprehensive yet accessible guide for all MOA departments.

(Reference: MOA - 2025 Language Access Plan.docx)

G. Presentation to Language Access Representatives

A presentation titled "Language Access Program Update 2025" was developed and delivered to MOA Directors and Language Access Representatives. This presentation underscored the importance of language access, highlighted the benefits of a comprehensive program (economic efficiency, effective service delivery, increased inclusivity), outlined proposed updates and timelines (policy enhancements, technological integration, staff training, community engagement), and communicated immediate needs from directors (self-assessment completion, records submission, representative assignment).

An additional two-hour training was provided in-person to the Language Access Representatives. This training included components of the information presented to the directors but also expanded to include scenarios of language barriers and how to provide services. The recorded video is available through OEI.

(Reference: MOA_Director's Meeting Feb 2025_Language Access Program.pptx)

H. Creation of an Online Intro to Language Access Video Training

An online introductory video training, "MOA Language Access Training Video," was created. This video provides an overview of the MOA Language Access Program, covering policy and legal frameworks, when and how to deliver language services, and MOA procedures. It serves as an accessible and consistent training resource for all staff.

(Reference: 5.0 with AI audio MOA Training Video 2025.pdf, Pages 1, 16)

I. Focus Group Conversations with English Language Learners

Insights from the "Language Access Equity Committee Work.pdf" indicate that focus group conversations with English Language Learners (LEP community members) were conducted or their feedback was considered. Additionally, small group conversations were held at ALP and Catholic Social Services in June 2025. These sessions highlighted critical issues such as:

- The inadequacy of relying on friends or children for interpretation.
- Experiences with lack of language access in specialized medical appointments.
- The need for culturally appropriate interpreters.
- The desire for the Municipality to release progress on language access.
- The importance of complaint forms being available in all languages and allowing complaints without identifying the individual.
- Concerns about telephonic interpretation being awkward and clunky, and the difficulty in holding translators accountable.
- Recommendations for the MOA to hire and highly compensate bilingual frontline employees.
- Being told "Your English is good - you don't need an interpreter"
- Language access issues at non-muni establishments like local hospitals, Anchorage School District and Ted Stevens Airport.

(Reference: Language Access Equity Committee Work.pdf, Pages 1-7)

III. Recommendations

Based on the work completed and the insights gathered, the following recommendations are put forth to further strengthen the Municipality of Anchorage's Language Access Program:

1. **Standardize and Mandate Training:** Implement a mandatory, annual language access training for all MOA staff, with a focus on practical scenarios for identifying LEP individuals and utilizing services. This training should be easily accessible (leveraging the new video) and tracked for compliance.
2. **Update OEI Language Access Muniverse Webpage:** Have additional resources related directly to the Language Access Program Poster that further explain practices and procedures. For simplicity, having this created in a toolkit fashion that follows the poster will make it easier to navigate for staff

3. **Enhance Technological Integration:** Accelerate the implementation of digital translation tools and multilingual website access. Explore on-demand interpretation technology beyond basic telephonic services, including robust VRI solutions, as requested by departments.
4. **Publish a New RFP for Language Service Vendors:** Issue a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) to expand the pool of qualified language service providers. This RFP should prioritize:
 - Broader language coverage, including less common dialects and indigenous languages
 - Robust VRI capabilities.
 - Mechanisms to ensure culturally appropriate interpretation.
 - Competitive pricing and clear billing procedures.
5. **Strengthen the Language Access Representative Program:** Ensure every department, especially those with high public interaction, has a clearly designated Language Access Representative whose role is formally recognized, funded, and integrated into their job description. These liaisons should be adequately trained and empowered to track service requests, train new staff, and report on compliance.
6. **Develop Clear Guidelines for "Essential Public Information":** Create a municipal guideline for departments to determine what constitutes "essential public information" requiring translation, ensuring consistency across the MOA.
7. **Improve Data Collection and Monitoring:** Implement a standardized system across all departments for recording language service requests, utilization, and feedback. This data is crucial for measuring effectiveness, identifying emerging needs, and informing future resource allocation.
8. **Address Bilingual Staff Compensation:** Investigate and implement a policy for appropriately a.) assessing language ability, b.) providing training on "how to serve as an interpreter" and c.) compensating bilingual MOA employees who utilize their language skills in their official duties, recognizing this as a valuable asset.
9. **Continuous Community Engagement:** Formalize a process for regular listening sessions and feedback mechanisms with LEP communities to ensure the LAP remains responsive to their evolving needs and experiences. This should be integrated into how departments do their work.
10. **Promote Plain Language:** Continue to advocate for and train staff on the use of simplified, plain language in all communications, both written and oral, to enhance accessibility for individuals with varying literacy levels.
11. **Fund Allocation for Language Access:** Every department stated financial issues for providing services. The Assembly and Mayor should work together to create a budget line item that creates a pool for language access needs OR to carve out funding for departments to provide services.
12. **Language Access Coordinator/Manager Position:** Eventually the MOA should create a full-time position for a language access coordinator or manager. This person will be able to operate a comprehensive language access program that supports the community and staff in this work.

By implementing these recommendations, the Municipality of Anchorage can build upon the foundational work completed and establish a truly simple, effective, and equitable language access program for all its residents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This annual report was prepared and completed the week of January 18th, 2026, by the following staff members and contractors within the Office of Equity and Inclusion:

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OFFICE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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