



HSH Language Access Plan

Updated September 2021

I. Introduction

This Language Access Plan is to be used as a resource for the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) staff to know and understand how to serve Limited English Proficient (LEP) people who come into contact with the office. Policies and procedures are defined below.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that LEP clients of HSH can access, understand, and participate in HSH programs and services.

San Francisco Language Access Ordinance - San Francisco is a diverse city with a large immigrant population. The City's efforts have made it a leader in language access rights and immigrant assistance programs. Language Access became a key priority in San Francisco in 2001 when the City enacted the Equal Access to Services Ordinance (EAS) to ensure the same level of access to services for Limited English Proficient people that was available to all city residents. In 2009, the Ordinance was amended as the Language Access Ordinance (LAO). Beyond federal and state non-discrimination and language access laws, the LAO mandates key requirements for City Departments to follow to improve the accessibility of services and programs to the LEP population. Key requirements of the LAO include: (1) all City Departments that serve the public must utilize bilingual employees, (2) translate vital materials and signage, and (3) provide oral interpretation at public meetings and hearings upon request. The three certified languages (other than English) are Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino.

As a compliance agency for San Francisco's LAO and a department that directly serves monolingual, LEP, immigrant, and vulnerable communities, HSH takes language access seriously and strives to find innovative and practical ways to ensure that the department and the City are providing quality language services to city residents. This departmental Language Access Plan details the practices and measures HSH takes to ensure that its public services are provided in compliance with the LAO.

III. Description of Agency

The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) provides services to people experiencing and at risk of homelessness through the Homelessness Response System. The Department's mission is to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time occurrence.

HSH Organizational Chart

The most recent version of our Organizational Chart as of September 2021 is submitted with the policy as Appendix A. Please note that the chart is a living document that updated frequently.

Agency Contacts:

Shireen McSpadden Executive Director Email: shireen.mcspadden@sfgov.org Telephone: (628) 652-7743	Gigi Whitley Deputy Director for Administration and Finance Email: gigi.whitley@sfgov.org Telephone: (628)-652-7739
Noelle Simmons Chief Deputy Director noelle.simmons@sfgov.org Telephone: (415) 902-7417	Emily Cohen Director of Strategy and External Affairs Email: emily.cohen@sfgov.org Telephone: (628) 652-7905
Dedria Black Deputy Director for Programs Email: dedria.black@sfgov.org Telephone: (628)-652-7786	Cordell Thompson LAO Liaison Management Assistant for Deputy Director of Programs Email: cordell.thompson@sfgov.org Telephone: (628)-652-7734

IV. Multilingual Staff

HSH has a diverse staff that has proficiency in multiple languages. Language Access Unit (LAU) language specialists are certified by the Department of Human Resources and have attended Community Interpreters training. They have years of translation experience with the City and County of San Francisco. For any walk-in or phone calls with LEPs that speak Spanish and Cantonese, people should be directed to HSH’s LAU language specialists.

Language Access Unit Staff			
Name	Language	Phone Number	DHR Certification
Winnie Kwong	Cantonese	415-345-0995	Yes
Josue Mejia	Spanish	415-503-4147	Yes
Alexa Gutierrez	Spanish	415-674-0761	Yes
Tiffany Quong	Spanish	415-353-5655	Yes
Edgardo Esparza	Spanish	415-345-0980	Yes

V. HSH Office Protocols

Procedures for LEP Client Interactions:

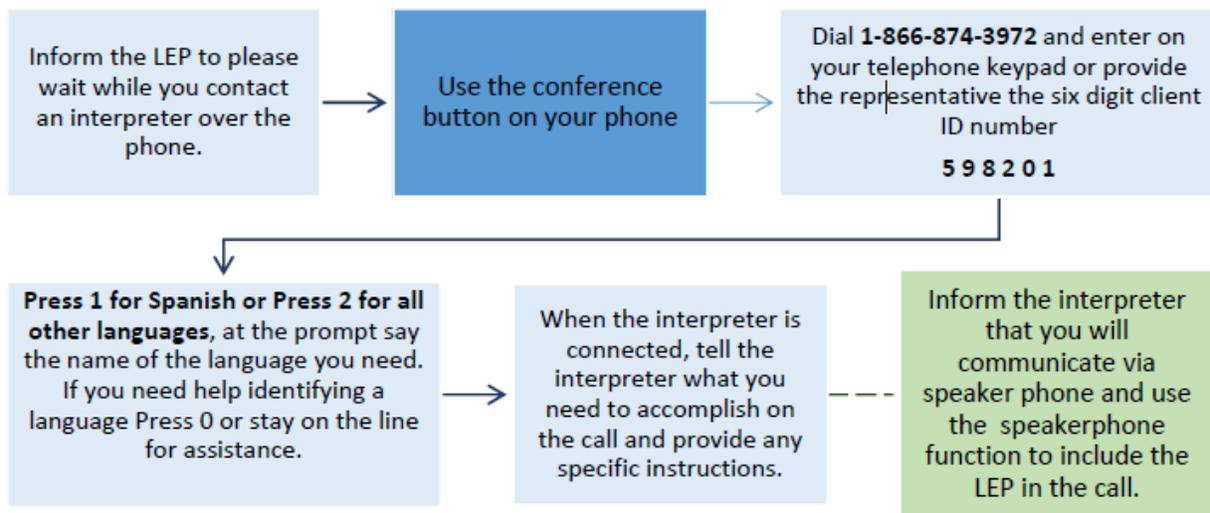
1. **Walk-in:** Occasionally LEP individuals will come into the office with questions about the work of HSH. When an LEP enters the office, the staff member at the front desk will determine the



language that the client needs help in and assist using the following steps:

- a) Identify the language required using the Language Services Public Sign (Appendix B), or by asking the person what language they speak.
- b) If the client speaks any language that is available in the Department (see Section IV. Multilingual Staff list) the front desk person can contact the LAO Liaison to identify an available staff member to provide language assistance. If the LAO Liaison is not available, then front desk staff should contact any relevant bilingual staff who is available, according to staff roster above and based on the language needs of the LEP speaker.
 - i. If no one is available with proficiency in the language required, HSH team members will use Language Line.
 - ii. Call Language Line Solutions for telephonic interpretation services. Using Language Line Solutions is appropriate if:
 - o staff are unable to locate bilingual speakers of the target language and if the LEP individual is otherwise unable to access a core service provided by HSH.
 - o if the individual is attempting to file a language access complaint. Use the following procedure to contact Language Line. All public contact staff should know how to use Language Line.

***SAMPLE - DO NOT USE NUMBERS**

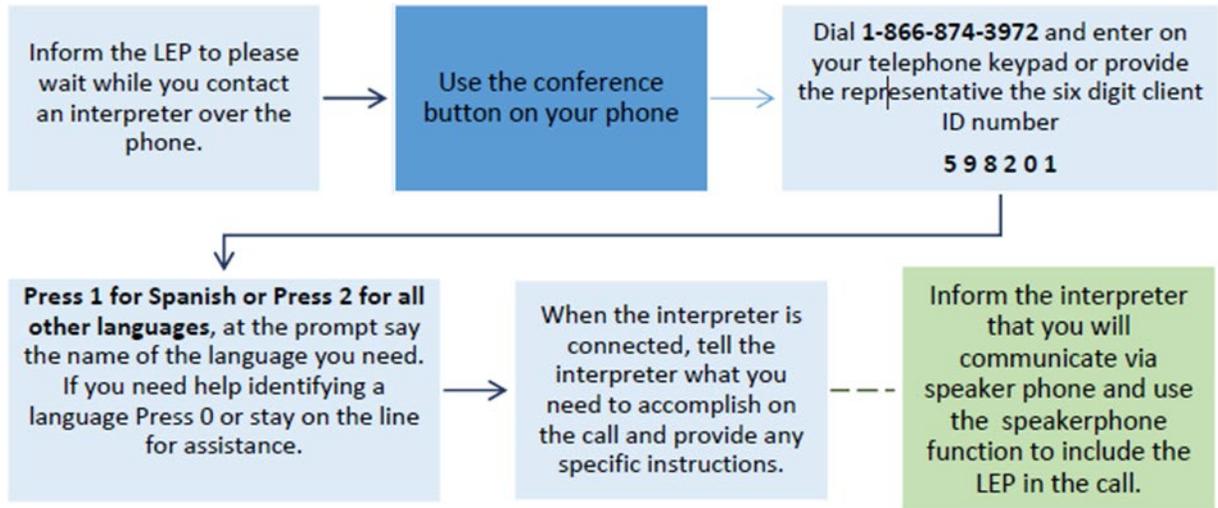


- c) information on the interaction in the tracking log (see Section VII. below).
 - d) Use of this service is charged to the office per minute used. HSH staff should consult their supervisor prior to using this service.
2. Telephone: HSH occasionally receives calls from LEP individuals seeking information. All employees who answer the main office line must be familiar with the following protocol:
- a) When an LEP contacts the main line of HSH, staff should identify the caller’s preferred language by asking what language they prefer to speak. If they understand some English and cannot state their language, try asking their country of origin or other questions that may help.
 - b) If and once the preferred language is identified, public contact staff should contact the appropriate bilingual staff (as outlined in Section IV.)
 - c) If HSH is unable to locate a bilingual speaker of the target language, staff should use



Language Line. Use of this service is charged to the office per minute used. Please consult your supervisor prior to using this service.

***SAMPLE - DO NOT USE NUMBERS**



- d) Log information from the call in the tracking log (see Section VII below).
 - e) Recorded telephonic messages: the Department has a basic telephone message about office hours and services. Callers can choose to listen to this message in English, Chinese, Filipino, or Spanish. Inform the Language Line interpreter that the department has received a recorded telephonic message in a specific language. Once the message has been interpreted, ask the Language Line interpreter to phone the caller and provide interpretation services over the phone. If the caller does not answer, please have the interpreter leave a voice message with the HSH staff's return contact information and reason for the call.
 - f) Use of this service is charged to the office per minute used. HSH staff should consult their supervisor prior to using this service.
3. **Email:** The office may receive emails in languages other than English. All general emails come through dhsh@sfgov.org.
- a) Employees who check the general office email account should send all non-English messages to the LAO Liaison.
 - b) The LAO Liaison will identify the language of the non-English messages and will send it to the appropriate bilingual employee for translation.
 - c) If the language is not available in-house, the LAO Liaison will identify another solution to translate and respond to the message in a timely manner.
4. **Events:**
- a) Interpretation at public meetings and community events: Contact the department's LAO Liaison to determine need and set up for interpretation services.
 - b) Bilingual staff may be asked provide language assistance at community events sponsored or co-hosted by HSH. Any expectation of language assistance will be discussed prior to the event.



5. **Off-site:** For off-site events and staff in the field when no present bilingual staff speaks the language required by the LEP, use Language Line (see above). Use of this service is charged to the office per minute used. HSH Staff should consult their supervisor prior to using this service.

VI. Tracking LEP Client Interactions

All public-serving Departments are required to submit an annual LAO Compliance Plan based on data collected during the prior fiscal year. The Compliance Plan must include data on the number of LEPs who used the Department’s services. HSH will use the following data collection methods:

1. All walk-ins, calls, or emails from LEP individuals should be logged by front desk staff, staff who answer phone calls from the main line or bilingual staff that is asked to assist a LEP caller or walk-in on the [online form](#). All staff who regularly answer phone calls as well as the LAU team should bookmark this link on their computers.
 - a. Front desk/Admin staff should log the interaction in the Google form if it is a simple interaction that does not involve other staff members.
 - b. If the client is referred to bilingual staff in the LAU, the LAU team member should fill out the Google form and submit information required by the form, taking care not to include protected health information.
 - c. For calls or walk-ins that required the use of Language Line, the staff member that helped facilitate the interpreted call should log the interaction.
2. The LAO maintains records of all translations and interpretations carried out by the unit. These records include data on the number of hours of assistance provided, and the number of LEP individuals who receive interpretation services at public meetings, outreach activities, etc. Upon completion of interpretation and translation projects, language specialists document this information (see Appendix C).

VII. Informing the Public

HSH uses signage to inform the public about available language services:

1. At HSH’s main office front desk entrance there is a Languages Services card that LEPs can use to indicate their preferred language (Appendix B).
2. LAO Language Signs are used at interpretation events and are placed prominently on and around the table where interpretation equipment is distributed.

VIII. Complaints

HSH is responsible for collecting, investigating, and resolving all complaints regarding alleged violations of the San Francisco Language Access Ordinance. Complaints can be submitted in person, by phone, emailed to dhsh@sfgov.org, sent by mail to 440 Turk Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, or faxed to 415-355-5288. Upon receiving a complaint form (see Appendix D), HSH staff should take the following steps:

1. Walk-in: If a person walks in to make an LAO complaint, the staff member at the front desk shall assess if bilingual assistance is needed. If the complainant needs language assistance, a member



of the LAU team shall be called.

- a) The staff member will ensure that the form is filled out completely. The form shall be marked with a “received” stamp and date received. The form will be delivered to the LAO Chief Investigator Frances Hsieh, (415-581-2359; frances.hsieh@sfgov.org).
 - b) If the complainant would like additional information, the staff member at the front desk will contact Frances Hsieh (if not available, contact the Deputy Director of Policy and Language Access). If needed, the Chief Investigator will contact a member of the LAU team speaking the appropriate language to provide interpretation.
 - a) **Staff should not make any additional commitments regarding specific outcomes or remedies at this time.**
 - c) If HSH is unable to locate a bilingual speaker of the target language, the LAO Chief Investigator, the Deputy Director of Policy and Language Access Senior Policy or HSH LAO Liaison should contact Language Line for interpretation while filling out the complaint form.
2. Telephone: If an individual would like to file a complaint by telephone, contact the LAO Liaison to identify an available LAU HSH staff member who speaks the appropriate language. If the LAO Liaison is not available, the administrative staff should transfer the call to any available LAU staff member who speaks the target language.
- a) The LAU staff member should use a blank version of the complaint form in the appropriate language and should orally ask the complainant for the same information that is required on the form. The staff member should not add or omit any information.
 - b) The LAU staff member can let the complainant know that HSH staff may contact them by phone for additional information about the incident, and that the complainant will receive a status update within 30 days.
 - **Staff should not make any additional commitments regarding specific outcomes or remedies at this time.**
 - c) If HSH is unable to locate a bilingual speaker of the target language, the LAO Chief Investigator, or LAO Liaison should contact Language Line for interpretation while filling out the complaint form. Email, fax, or mail: Complaints received through these channels should be immediately forwarded to the LAO Chief Investigator.

IX. Training

1. The Language Access Liaison will present the HSH Departmental Language Access Policy at an annual staff meeting. This short training presents all the basic information that the entire staff needs to know to ensure that the office is providing meaningful access to services for LEP individuals.
2. Bilingual HSH staff may have opportunities to participate in other training related to language access services. The LAO Liaison will inform staff of potential training opportunities.

Appendices

Appendix A - HSH Organizational Chart (as of August 2021)

Appendix B- Language Public Services Sign

Appendix C - Interactions Log – Template ([form for data collection linked here](#))

Appendix D - OCEIA Language Access Complaint Forms in Chinese, English, Filipino, Russian, Spanish

