



KPA Khmer Parents Association
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September 5, 2023

Dear Mayor Richardson, City Council Members, and City Manager,

My name is Mark Hopson, a Long Beach resident since mid 1970. I am here to represent the Khmer Parent Association (KPA) a non-profit agency that served the LB Community since 1995.

In 2012, a group of diverse community based organizations, community members, and allies came together to create the Language Access Coalition (LAC). In 2013, the LAC passed a more inclusive Language Access Policy (LAP) in the City of Long Beach that grew to include Khmer and Tagalog resources. In the following years, the LAC pushed to provide professional interpretation so that children were no longer the primary interpreters for their families outside of emergency situations.

As we have seen from the pandemic, it is critical to center and create equitable multilingual spaces for languages in our diverse communities beyond Spanish, especially those that have been historically marginalized. Many programs and services continue to be largely only in English and Spanish, leaving out significant populations that have unique needs and experiences. The result is that these communities remain underserved and become further isolated without access to critical services and benefits.

1-Dedicate a proper number of permanent staff (2 additional full-time Language Access Coordinators, 2 full-time Spanish interpreters, 2 full-time Khmer interpreters, 2 full-time Tagalog interpreters) to fully implement the City's Language Access Policy.

Permanently provide in-house language access resources for Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog to ensure faster and higher quality interpretation and translation for Limited English Proficiency(LEP) residents.

2-Provide Spanish and Khmer interpretation, and English Captioning and CART services at all City Council and all Commission meetings without having to make requests in advance. Dedicate resources for language needs not covered by in-house Language Access Specialists to ensure linguistic inclusion and equal access for all Long Beach community members.

3- Increase the use of a qualified network of contractors for all languages to meet current needs, this will include the cost of contracted vendors for language support in all requested languages beyond Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog, as well as tasks in these languages that are beyond the capacity of the in-house Language Access Specialists.

4- Bilingual Skill Pay and proactive recruitment of bilingual staff in all languages and throughout all city departments to consistently and meaningfully strengthen the delivery of interpretation and translation throughout the city and finally create a culture of language justice.

5- Provide community-based organizations who work with LEP residents ongoing stipends to conduct outreach about the Language Access Policy.
Language Justice City Budget Demands Fiscal Year 2024 (\$3,500,000)

In Solidarity with the Language Justice Coalition:

Respectfully Yours,



Mark Hopson,
Secretary
Khmer Parents Association