



**City of Long Beach**  
*Working Together to Serve*

**R-14**  
**Office of Dee Andrews**  
**Council Member, Sixth District**  
**Memorandum**

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**Date:** November 1, 2011  
**To:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
**From:** Dee Andrews, Councilmember Sixth District DA  
Steven Neal, Councilmember Ninth District SJ  
**Subject:** **AGENDA ITEM:** Language Access Policy

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### **DISCUSSION**

Many members of our community desire to be involved in Long Beach City government and City services, however their limited proficiency of the English language acts as a disempowering barrier. As the most ethnically diverse City in the nation, Long Beach should be a leader in terms of language access, to services and City government, to ensure that Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons have meaningful access to the City.

Essential to the success of Long Beach City government is transparency and meaningful community involvement of all residents, as stated in the City's Mission Statement. In Long Beach, 45.5 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home. Nearly one in four residents in the City of Long Beach speak English less than "very well." The major languages spoken are English, Spanish, Khmer, Vietnamese and Tagalog. Community involvement and government transparency are impossible for LEP Persons.

To ensure that LEP Persons have equal access, all City Departments, Board meetings, Commission meetings, City Council meetings and City organized/hosted community meetings must be accessible to LEP persons through the use of interpreters. Moreover, vital City documents must be translated into the primary languages spoken by Long Beach residents and the City's website should be available in languages other than English. In order to create a comprehensive policy to address these and other language access issues for LEP Persons residing in Long Beach, the City must create and adopt a city-wide Language Access Policy for LEP Persons, in conjunction with community groups with expertise in this area.

We find that public safety, health, convenience, comfort, prosperity and general welfare will be furthered by the adoption of a Language Access Policy for the City that establishes consistent standards and procedures with respect to access to City government, programs and services by residents who are not fluent in English.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is respectfully requested that the City Manager to work with the City Attorney and community partners with expertise in this area, including the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, the Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition, Housing Long Beach, Centro Cha and United Cambodian Community, to draft a city-wide Language Access Policy with consistent city-wide standards, and report back to the City Council within 90 days.