

# Long Beach Language Access Coalition Language Access Compliance Report



## Background on Language Access Policy

- ») On August 13, 2013, the City Council approved a City-wide Language Access Policy and directed Staff to fund the Policy in the FY 2014 Budget.
- ») On November 21, 2013, the City Manager issued a To-From-For Memo to the City Council, which indicates that the Policy has not been implemented.
- ») The April 15, 2014 Staff Report for this item also indicates that the Policy has not been implemented in accordance with the Council's direction.
- ») It is critical that the Council direct Staff to implement the Policy as intended. The following issues must be resolved:
  1. Language Line: It is unclear if Language Line has been launched. It also appears that the City only intends to use Language Line for Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog. The Language Line Pilot Program was intended to be used for all languages.
  2. To date, no vital documents have been translated. There are not any plans to translate any documents this year.
  3. There are no plans to improve translation training.
  4. The use of children as interpreters has not been resolved.
  5. There is no information regarding bi-lingual hiring goals.
  6. Despite the Council's direction, Staff alleges that they have not budgeted any money to implement the Policy.
  7. A clear timeline for quarterly or bi-annual compliance hearings needs to be scheduled, per the Council's motion, to ensure the Policy is implemented.

## Language Access Testing:

The Long Beach Language Access Coalition, in conjunction with LEP residents, has been conducting language access tests over the past few months, to determine if the Policy has been implemented and to determine if access to the City's services, meetings and vital documents has improved for the City's limited English speaking residents. The attached report summarizes the results of these tests.

- ») In total, **110 tests were conducted** by LEP residents, via calls or walk-ins, to assess the City's accessibility for LEP residents. The attached report summarizes the results of these tests.
- ») The **majority of the tests were done via telephone**, as most LEP residents were very reluctant to conduct walk-in tests, based upon prior bad experiences when they were sent away without help.
- ») We **conducted tests in four commonly used City Departments** by LEP residents, which included:
  - Health Department,
  - Utilities Department,
  - Housing Authority and,
  - Neighborhood Services

## Key Findings:

It is clear from the test results that that Policy has not been implemented and serious issues remain with basic access for LEP residents. Some of the biggest access issues include the following:

- ❧ Voicemails have not been translated into Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog.
- ❧ More than 50% of those who called the City were not connected with a bilingual staffer.
- ❧ Nearly half of those who conducted tests said they did not get useful information.
- ❧ The average wait time for callers to be connected with a bi-lingual staffer was 3 to 5 minutes. Some callers waited 15 minutes or longer.
- ❧ Some callers were told that there was no one available to speak to them in their language and they were hung up on.
- ❧ No one was connected to Language Line.
- ❧ Many testers experienced disrespectful attitudes.
- ❧ Translated vital documents are not available for Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog residents.

## Recommendations:

1. **Implement** and fund the Policy, as directed by the Council last August
2. **Include** Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog on voicemail messages
3. **Train staff** on how to speak to LEP residents and how to work with interpreters
4. **Translate vital documents** into Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog
5. Create a **plan for bi-lingual hiring goals**, especially for Khmer and Tagalog
6. Use the **Language Line Pilot** Program for all languages, not just Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog
7. **Limit the use of children** as interpreters to emergency situations
8. Direct staff to **allocate necessary funds** for ongoing implementation of the Policy
9. **Set a clear timeline** for quarterly or bi-annual compliance hearings. The next compliance hearing should in July 2014 to ensure that the Policy is implemented and funded in next year's budget.



# LONG BEACH LANGUAGE ACCESS COMPLIANCE REPORT

by  
Language Access Coalition of Long Beach



## Community Language Access Background

The Long Beach Language Access Coalition, in conjunction with LEP residents, has been conducting language access tests over the past few months, to determine if the Policy has been implemented and to determine if access to the City's services, meetings and vital documents has improved for the City's limited English speaking residents.

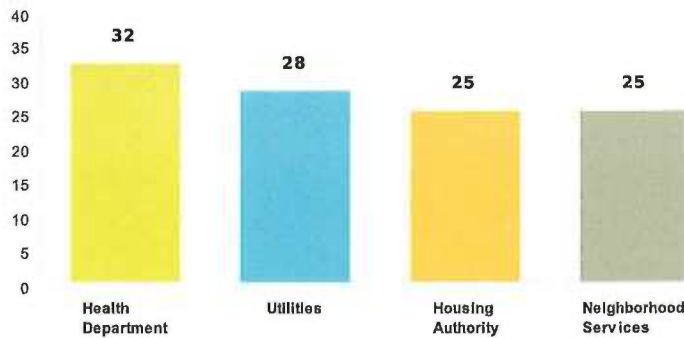
- ) In total, **110 tests were conducted** by LEP residents, via calls or walk-ins, to assess the City's accessibility for LEP residents. The attached report summarizes the results of these tests.



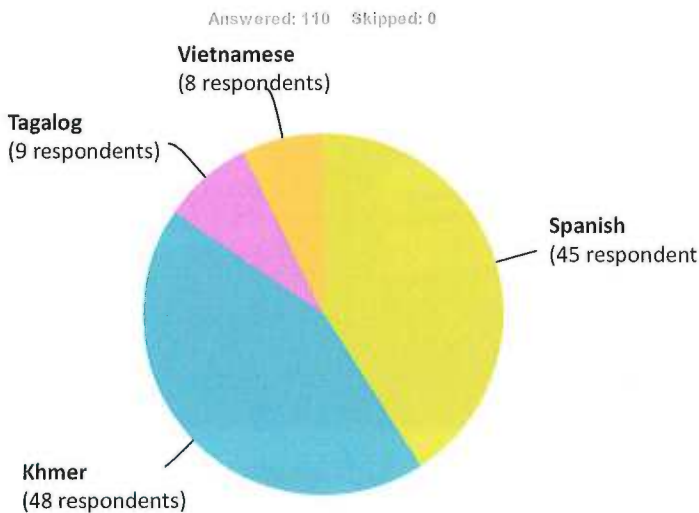
## Testing Demographics

In order to have the most diverse and representative results as possible, testing was conducted by LEP residents in 4 different languages (Spanish, Khmer, Tagalog & Vietnamese), through phone calls and walk-ins, and focused on 4 commonly used City Departments: Health Department, Utilities Department, Housing Authority, and Neighborhood Services.

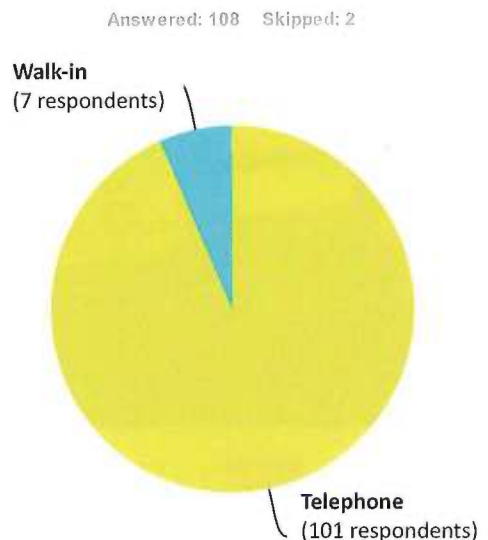
City Departments that were tested



Language test was conducted in



Walk-in vs. Phone Call Testing\*



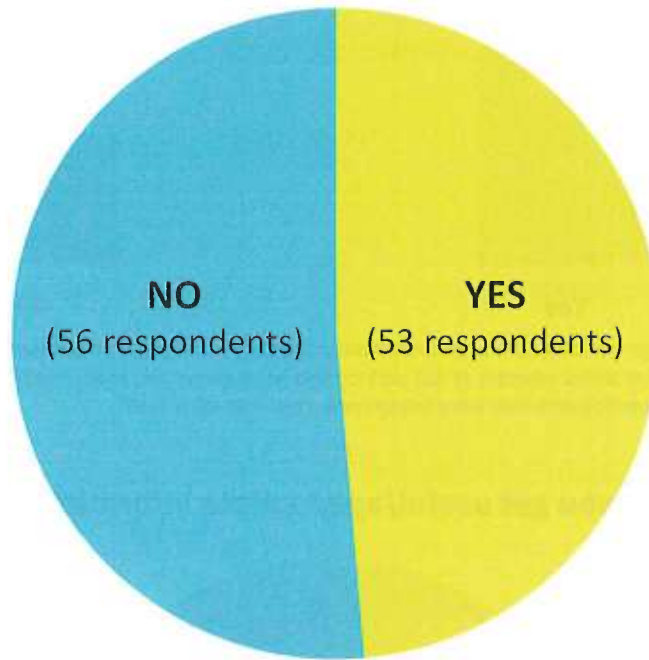
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## Language Accessibility

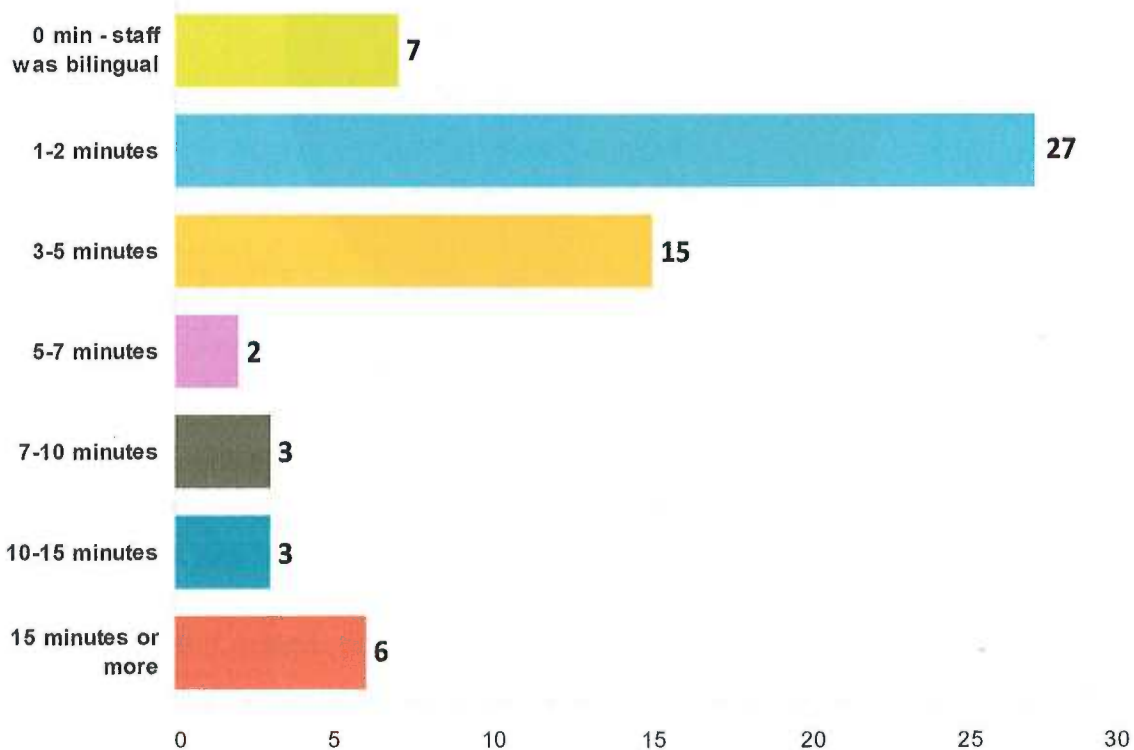
To test language accessibility we surveyed participants on their ability to be connected to bilingual staff, the length of time it took to get connected, and whether or not they received useful information from City Departments.

### Did you get connected with a bilingual staff?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 1

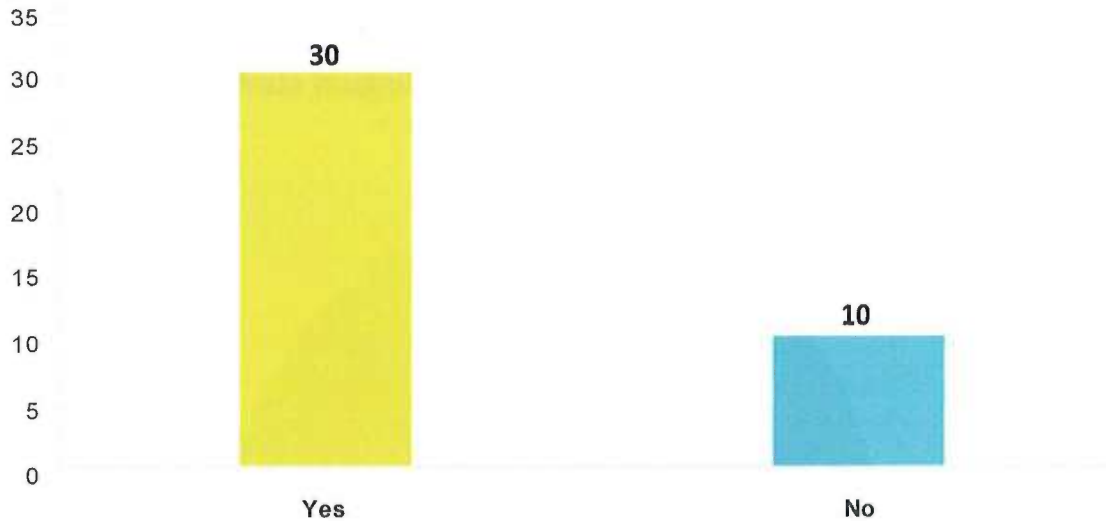


### How long did you have to wait to get connected with a bilingual staff.



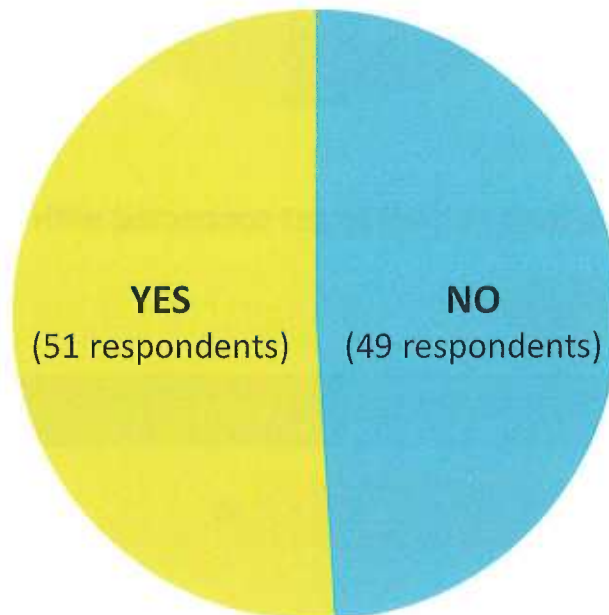
## If you were NOT connected with a bilingual staff, were you connected with a voicemail?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 70



*\*Total survey respondents for this question are lower than our overall participants for this question because this question was added at a later date. Our initial survey did not include a question about whether or not participants were connected to voicemail. It was added after our first round of testing as a result of the high number of participants that were being connected with voicemail.*

## Did you get useful/appropriate information?



### Key Findings:

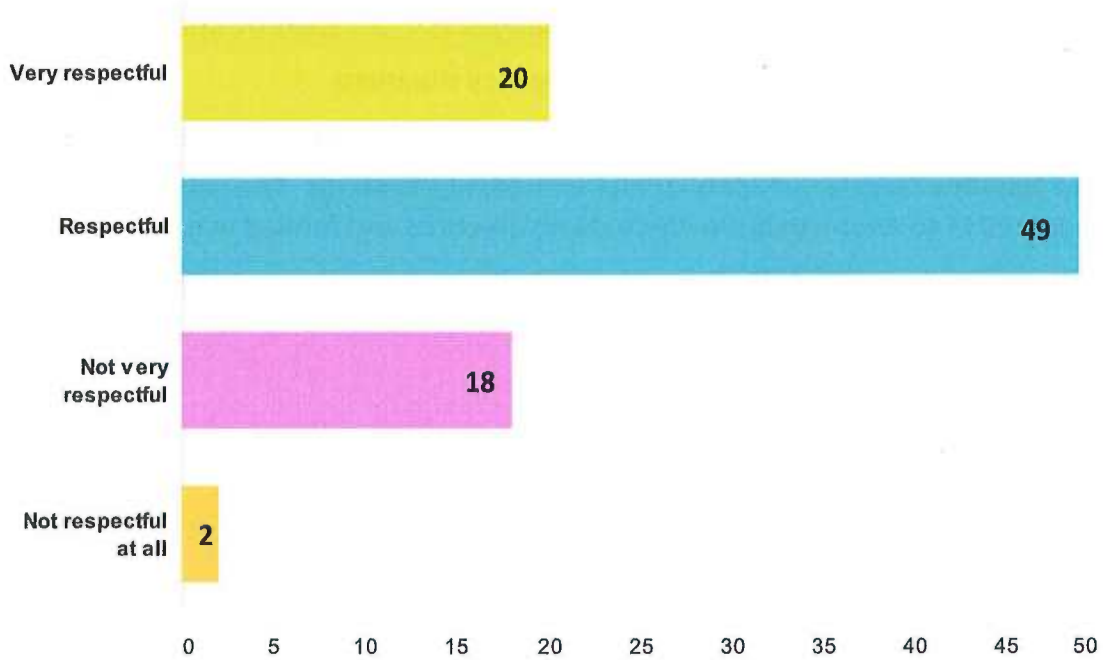
- Voicemails have not been translated into Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog.
- More than 50% of those who called the City were not connected with a bilingual staffer.
- Nearly half of those who conducted tests said they did not get useful information.
- The average wait time for callers to be connected with a bi-lingual staffer was 3 to 5 minutes. Some callers waited 15 minutes or longer.
- Some callers were told that there was no one available to speak to them in their language and they were hung up on.
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## Attitude & Overall Experience

We also surveyed participants on how respectful city staff were in helping them get access to information and a bilingual staff, and their overall experience.

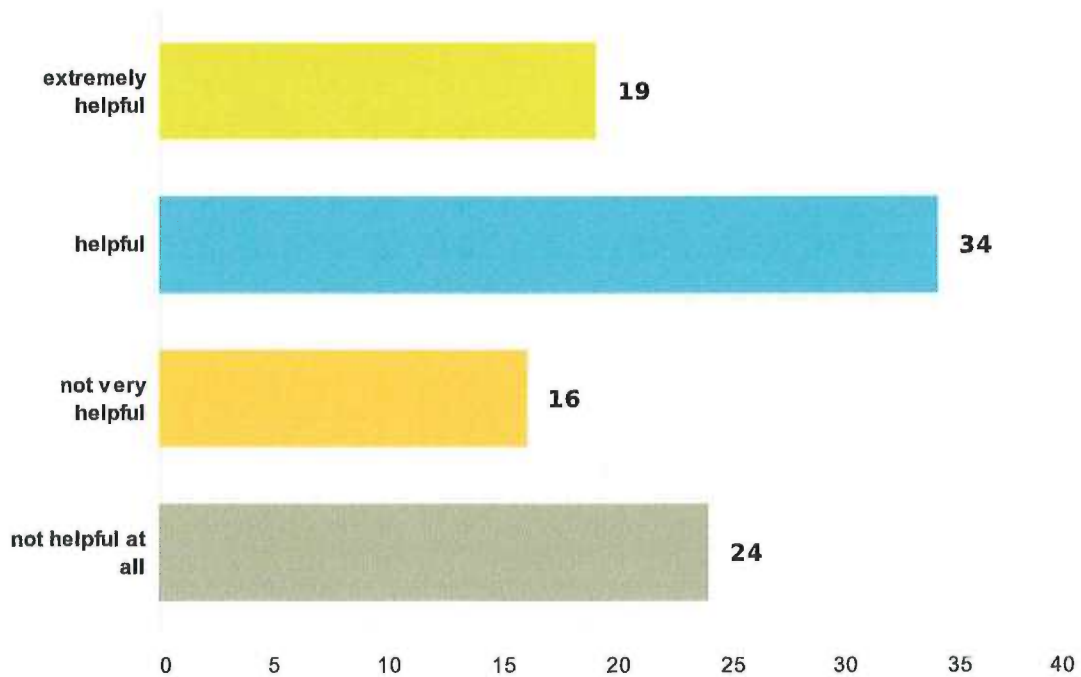
### Were the people you spoke with respectful?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 21



### How would you rate your overall experience?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 17



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