



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 13-0693, **Version:** 1

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Recommendation to adopt resolution approving a comprehensive Language Access Policy.  
(Citywide)

On November 1, 2011, the City Council requested the City Manager work with the City Attorney and with community partners that have expertise in the area of language access, including Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, the Long Beach Immigrant Rights Coalition, Housing Long Beach, Centro Community Hispanic Association (Centro CHA), and United Cambodian Community (UCC), to draft a citywide Language Access Policy (LAP).

During phase one of LAP development, staff cataloged the current language access services available in the City. The City currently provides an array of services to assist residents who speak a language other than English as detailed in Exhibit A. Services currently provided include: bilingual City employees in public contact positions available to assist residents; translated City documents; translation provided at meetings and City Council meetings by request; and 911 public safety dispatch translation assistance available in all languages. As part of this effort, staff also prepared a list of potential implementation strategies.

During phase two of LAP development, staff researched data on City population by language spoken and calculated budget costs for current expenditures that provide language access assistance to residents. Through this research, it was determined that City departments spend approximately \$900,000 on these services. Staff engaged stakeholders as requested by the City Council and requested written input to consider in creating the policy.

Staff met with the aforementioned stakeholders on March 1, 2012. Several of the stakeholder groups created the Language Access Coalition (Coalition) along with additional partners. The Coalition chose to host their own community meeting on June 27, 2012, in an effort to include additional input from the public. At staff's request, the stakeholders submitted written recommendations for the policy. The Coalition, Centro CHA and UCC each submitted separate responses (Exhibit B).

In coordination with the City Attorney, staff drafted the proposed LAP taking into consideration input from the stakeholders, and the feasibility of implementation. The policy was reviewed by the City Attorney to ensure compliance with citywide standards. The proposed LAP is consistent with, and supplements, California's Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act, Government Code 7290 *et seq.*, which generally requires State and local public agencies serving a substantial number of limited English-speaking people to provide services and materials in the language(s) spoken by those persons, to the extent that funding is available. The Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act defines "Substantial Number of Limited English Speaking Persons" as 5 percent or more Limited English Speaking Persons residing in the City who speak a shared language other than English. In the City of Long Beach, Spanish-speaking residents qualify under the State definition (Exhibit C). However, based on the City's substantial number of limited English speaking Cambodian residents, and the City's current efforts to translate both orally and written in the Khmer language, staff recommends

that the LAP also be applied to the Cambodian population of Long Beach.

City staff and the City Attorney drafted the proposed LAP based on State and federal requirements, stakeholders' recommendations, and a review of other cities' language access policies (Language Access Policy - Exhibit D). While an effort was made to address stakeholders' concerns in the policy, in some cases, the requests from the stakeholders were cost prohibitive or could not be reasonably accommodated by the City. Staff has developed costs associated with all requests from the community (Responses to Community Partners - Exhibit E.) It is important to note that the community requested all language access activities be made available in Spanish, Khmer, Tagalog and Vietnamese, and the costs to provide the services are reflected in Exhibit E. In addition, staff included a list of best effort recommendations that can be considered in the future, pending available funding.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Linda Vu on July 22, 2013 and by Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on July 26, 2013.

City Council action on this matter is not time critical. As requested, the draft LAP was released to the stakeholders 30 days prior to City Council consideration on July 2, 2013.

The fiscal impact of implementing the LAP ranges from minimal to extensive, depending upon whether the City Council includes additional services above and beyond those services already occurring at an annual cost of approximately \$900,000. As proposed by staff, the draft LAP would result in an annual increase in costs of \$357,023 across all departments and all funds. Each department will be responsible for managing the fiscal impact of the proposed policy on their respective budgets.

Approve recommendation.

#### A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONG BEACH ADOPTING A LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

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DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST  
CITY MANAGER