



Legislation Text

File #: 14-0273, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to receive and file a status update on implementation of the Language Access Policy. (Citywide)

On August 13, 2013, City Council voted to approve and adopt a comprehensive Language Access Policy (LAP), Resolution No. RES-13-0071, as amended to include the following:

[1] Inclusion of the Tagalog language.

[2] Launch of a Language Line Pilot Program in a City department at the City Manager's discretion and with recommendations to fund the Pilot Program in the upcoming Fiscal Year 14 Budget.

[3] Creation of a reporting or accountability plan that provides for: oversight by the City Council; and quarterly or bi-annual compliance reports at a public hearing concerning plan compliance activities, the results of the Language Line Pilot Program and the translation of vital documents.

[4] City Manager to review and report on the adopted policy in a "to-from-for memo" with options on how to: [a] improve translation training; [b] address the concerns related to child interpreters; and [c] implement best practices on setting bilingual hiring goals in the future.

To date, a number of initiatives have occurred to further the implementation of the LAP. The City Council received a memorandum of these efforts dated November 21, 2013 (Exhibit A). Since that time, there has been additional progress on these efforts.

At the direction of the City Council, the LAP has been updated to include the Tagalog language (Exhibit B). Staff has also developed a Language Line Pilot Program in the Department of Health and Human Services. The Pilot Program will last six months, and staff will document the utilization of Language Line for limited English Speaking persons, whose primary language is Spanish, Khmer, or Tagalog. In addition, Language Line utilization rates will be tracked and costs calculated to determine the beneficial interest in implementing this service to other departments. Bilingual staff will be utilized when available; otherwise Language Line will be used to ensure appropriate translation of services.

Staff is working with the Department of Human Resources to compile a report on the current level of bilingual staffing, recruitment efforts for bilingual staffing, and translation training for existing staff acting as interpreters or translators.

Staff is also in the process of issuing a purchase order for a vendor to provide written translation in Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog. Once the vendor is selected, City Departments will be able to use its services.

For public meetings and hearings, the City Council and Charter Commissions are in the process of including English, Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog notices on minutes and agendas regarding the availability of oral interpretation and written translation in compliance with the LAP (Exhibit C).

The following departments have a recorded telephonic message in English and Spanish:

Development Services, Health and Human Services, Fire, and Police. Pending available funding in Fiscal Year 15, all departments would comply with recorded telephonic messages in English, Spanish, Khmer and Tagalog.

The Language Access Policy is posted on the City's website. All other best efforts are being considered as part of the budget process for FY 15.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Rich Anthony on March 27, 2014 and by Budget Management Officer Victoria Bell on March 31, 2014.

City Council action to receive and file this report on April 15, 2014 in accordance with the City Council's request for bi-annual reports on the LAP.

The status update does not have a fiscal impact. However, continued implementation of the LAP will require additional General Fund resources that are currently unbudgeted and unfunded. If fully implemented, the LAP will result in an estimated additional cost of \$453,567 to the General Fund, most of which will recur annually, across all departments.

Approve recommendation.

AMY J. BODEK, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER