



City and County of San Francisco
OFFICE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

LANGUAGE ACCESS ORDINANCE
ANNUAL COMPLIANCE SUMMARY REPORT
JUNE 2010

San Francisco is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse cities in the nation. Nearly half of all city residents speak a language other than English at home and over a third of all residents are immigrants. The San Francisco Language Access Ordinance (LAO), formerly known as the Equal Access to Services (EAS) Ordinance, was enacted in 2001 to provide “equal access to city services to all San Franciscans, including those with limited proficiency in English.”

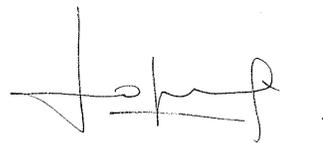
The LAO requires the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA) to oversee citywide compliance with language access laws and to provide a summary report to the Immigrant Rights Commission, Board of Supervisors and Mayor indicating which departments have filed their annual language access plans as required by the LAO. As reported by OCEIA on March 1, 2010, all Tier I city departments filed their 2010 plans in compliance with the LAO.

The Immigrant Rights Commission commends the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs for preparing this report and for its partnership in ensuring that LEP residents have equal access to city services and programs. The Commission also wishes to thank the Board of Supervisors, Mayor Newsom and city departments for their leadership and continued commitment to meeting the language needs of all San Francisco residents.

It is the Commission’s hope that our city leaders continue to dedicate sufficient resources to ensure that all San Francisco residents have equal access to city services, programs and timely information.



Commissioner Angus McCarthy
Chair, Immigrant Rights Commission



Lorena Melgarejo
Vice Chair, Immigrant Rights Commission

LANGUAGE ACCESS ORDINANCE ANNUAL COMPLIANCE SUMMARY REPORT JUNE 2010

This report contains summary information submitted by Tier I city departments as required by the San Francisco's language ordinance, established in 2001 as the Equal Access to Services Ordinance, and amended in 2009 as the Language Access Ordinance. Full versions of individual department compliance reports are available upon request from the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs.

**LANGUAGE ACCESS ORDINANCE
2010 ANNUAL COMPLIANCE SUMMARY REPORT**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Language access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals is mandated by federal, state and local law. To many immigrant and newcomer communities, language access is a civil right and one of the key paths to full and meaningful participation in a democracy. But accessing timely and relevant information is often challenging for LEP individuals. Despite multiple laws at every level of government that establish and mandate language access, these laws are often ignored and gaps exist in the provision of adequate services in a diversity of languages.

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the current status of the San Francisco Language Access Ordinance and summarize to what degree city departments are complying with its provisions. The 2010 report addresses three main issues: 1) the impact of changes that were made to the Language Access Ordinance (LAO) in 2009; 2) the extent to which departments are meeting the spirit and legal requirements of the LAO, and 3) recommendations to strengthen the efficacy of the LAO to better serve and inform residents. This report also identifies barriers to compliance, including the lack of prioritization; insufficient resources and tools for departments to meet the language needs of residents; and budgetary challenges to properly fulfilling LAO monitoring obligations.

Federal, State and Local Mandates

Title VI of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.¹ Title VI has consistently been interpreted by courts as mandating that recipients of federal funds take reasonable steps to ensure their services and programs are meaningfully accessible to LEP individuals, including providing information in languages that LEP individuals understand.

Executive Order 13166 (EO13166), “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” was signed on August 11, 2000 by President William Clinton. EO13166 requires federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify needs for services and implement a system to provide language services so LEP individuals may have meaningful access in languages other than English.²

The Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (Act), enacted in 1973 by the State of California, calls for effective communication between government and all people in the state. The Act contains specific requirements for state departments to ensure that programs and services are accessible to LEP individuals. State departments must create implementation plans, and

¹ No person in the United States shall, on ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.).

² See *Federal Agency LEP Guidance and Language Access Plans*, website of the Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency, www.lep.gov.

provide specific information about their Bilingual Services Programs and actions taken to correct deficiencies found in previous language surveys.

The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco established the Equal Access to Services (EAS) Ordinance in 2001 for the purpose of providing “equal access to city services to all San Franciscans, including those with limited proficiency in English.” EAS compels city departments to provide their services in English and in the languages spoken by substantial populations of limited-English speaking persons, ensuring that all residents have meaningful and equal access to critical city services. In August 2009, the ordinance was amended to strengthen its efficacy and effectiveness, and renamed the Language Access Ordinance (LAO). Thirteen new city departments were added to the existing list of Tier I departments subject to the full extent of the law.

Summary of Key Findings for 2010 Compliance Plans

Tier I departments are required to file an annual compliance plan by January 31st of each year. For 2010, the first year of implementation, the deadline was extended to February 28th to allow departments additional time to factor in new requirements. All 13 Tier I departments and the Controller’s Office filed annual plans in 2010.

- ✓ **Greater demand and frequency** -Tier I departments reported serving a greater number of LEP clients and with greater frequency. The proportion of LEP clients relative to total clients reported by Tier I departments increased from 8.9% to 11.2% over a one-year period.
- ✓ **Less capacity to meet demand** -Most Tier I departments reported having sufficient bilingual staff to meet LAO requirements however, citywide, there are fewer public contact staff and bilingual employees than in previous years. Total department staff and bilingual staff numbers declined by 0.7% and 2.2%, respectively during a one-year period. Many departments currently outsource services or rely on Language Line (an authorized third party provider of telephonic interpretation services) to meet the translation and interpretation needs of LEP clients.
- ✓ **Need for standardized citywide training to increase capacity** - Some departments reported that they do not offer training and development for their bilingual staff, while others rely on significantly different training mechanisms. The content, breath and depth of training varies significantly across departments.
- ✓ **Greater need for quality control protocols in crisis situations**- Overall, Tier I departments reported a lack of systems in place to qualify and measure competency of bilingual staff. Processes and protocols to ensure accurate and appropriate translations during crisis situations vary significantly across city departments. It is unclear how some departments determine if bilingual staff are adequately competent in their language abilities. For example, some departments indicated that bilingual staff members are “certified,”³ while

³ Language Certification and testing of city employees is administered by the Department of Human Resources.

others do not require any specific certification. Some departments did not include this information in their plans.

- ✓ **Limited public notification of language access rights-** Many departments indicated they do not publically post procedures for accepting and resolving complaints of alleged violations of the Language Access Ordinance. Educating both city departments and the LEP client population remains vitally important. While there have been no official complaints reported by Tier I departments this year to the Immigrant Rights Commission, OCEIA, or the Board of Supervisors, OCEIA has received telephone complaints and will be cross-checking for language access complaints with 311. Factors that may influence non-reporting include: limited public awareness of language access rights and complaint procedures, unavailability of in-language information, lack of access to the Internet, and inability to navigate and access information on websites that are primarily in English only.
- ✓ **Need for consistency and better procedures for data collection-** New requirements in the amended LAO call for capturing demographic data that some departments have significant difficulty in collecting without developing entirely new tracking mechanisms. Departments are required under the LAO to use one of three methods to determine the number of LEP clients: 1) surveys, 2) at the point of service, and/or 3) Language Line or other telephonic language translation vendors contracted by the department. In practice however, some departments face challenges capturing required information on their LEP clients. They rely on sources such as annual estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau or simply track phone calls received by the department. In some cases, departments reported the same information from previous years because there were no available updates.
- ✓ **Need for standardized reporting** – Significant gaps continue to exist in compliance plan reporting among Tier I departments. Some departments remain unable to report information required under the LAO due to existing internal procedures, lack of tracking devices and systems, staff turnover, and conflicting priorities in providing language access services. Other departments have not updated information and frequently refer to or rely on outdated data reported several years ago; others report data that is incomplete or not reflective of the entire reporting period. Several compliance plans were bulky and cumbersome, requiring significant staff time to separate out relevant LAO data. Many plans contained conflicting data as well as omissions. In a few cases, reports contained very little substantive or useful data and tended to rely on data submitted in previous years. On a going-forward basis, all Tier I departments will be required to use the standardized reporting template with the same type of required data fields developed by OCEIA.
- ✓ **Doing more with less-** Most Tier I departments reported that their current strategies for improving language services are sufficient and adequate. On the other hand, several departments also reported on-going barriers to providing language services, including: translation accuracy and speed, providing adequate and effective language services, and budgetary constraints.

Good Government in San Francisco

In the 2000 Census, San Francisco ranked fifth of 68 large cities⁴ with the highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the nation. Seven of the top ten cities in this category were located in California, with San Francisco ranking third in the state. Currently, nearly 37 percent of San Francisco's estimated 815,358 residents⁵ are immigrants. Of all San Franciscans over the age of five, 46 percent speak a language other than English at home, with the largest language groups being Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog and Russian. Fourteen percent of San Francisco households are "linguistically isolated" with no one over the age of 14 indicating that they speak English "well" or "very well."⁶

Emergency and safety situations in San Francisco over the past year, including a fire in Chinatown that displaced over 90 low income seniors and families, misunderstandings resulting from MUNI fare enforcement activities, and recent racial tensions and violence in the Southeast Sector due to cultural and linguistic differences, point to the continued need to make language access a priority in this city. In each of these incidents, sufficient numbers of properly trained bilingual and culturally competent staff could have significantly improved the level and timeliness of responding to victim needs.

It is clear that citywide cultural and linguistic competency training are needed. Language access is about more than merely having a handful of employees who speak varying levels of languages other than English. All residents must feel confident that they will be treated with respect and dignity when interacting with government. Residents are asked to report crimes, participate in emergency preparation and follow numerous laws, rules and regulations. They must be able to understand requirements and laws as well as interact with government officials and representatives without fear or intimidation.

Language access and cultural competency should be priorities for city departments. Good government means understanding and responding to the needs of all communities and residents. All residents, regardless of their proficiency in English, need meaningful access to vital programs, services and information. Engaged and well-informed individuals are crucial to government effectiveness, public safety and quality of life for all residents, workers and visitors of San Francisco.

⁴ Large cities are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as having populations of 250,000 or more.

⁵ Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, Census of Population and Housing, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06075.html>.

⁶ A "linguistically isolated household" is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as one in which no member 14 years old and over (1) speaks only English or (2) speaks a non-English language and speaks English "very well." In other words, all members 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with English.

II. LANGUAGE ACCESS ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

At minimum, all city departments that provide information or services directly to the public are required by the Language Access Ordinance (LAO) to translate all publicly-posted documents and post notices in public areas of their facilities, ensure accurate and appropriate translations, designate a staff member for quality control, provide oral interpretation of any public meeting or hearing and translate meeting minutes, have a documented process for handling complaints regarding alleged violations of the LAO, and inform Limited English Speaking Persons who seek bilingual services of their translation service right.

The LAO also imposes on Tier I City departments the obligation to provide the same level of service to limited English-speaking persons in various languages as are available to all city residents. Departments subject to the LAO are required to utilize and hire sufficient bilingual employees in public contact positions, translate materials, provide oral translations at public meetings, maintain recorded telephonic messages about the department operations or services in multiple languages and file annual compliance plans by February 1st of each year.

Key Changes in the Language Access Ordinance

The LAO now contains stronger compliance and reporting requirements. All Tier I Departments under the original ordinance must comply with the full extent of the amended law and file an annual compliance plan with the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs by January 31st of each year.⁷ Thirteen additional departments will be designated as Tier I city departments effective July 1, 2010. New Tier I departments will be required to meet the full extent of the law and submit their first compliance plans by January 31, 2011.

Tier I Departments are required to provide the following additional information in addition to the minimum requirements:

- ✓ Demographic profile of clients served by the department.
- ✓ Certifications of bilingual capacity for bilingual Public Contact Positions.
- ✓ Language access liaison information.
- ✓ Employee development and training strategy, and quality control protocols for bilingual employees and individuals in crisis situations.
- ✓ Budget allocation and strategy.
- ✓ Changes between previous Plan submittal and current submittal.

⁷ The amended LAO was passed in August 2009- a one-month extension was granted for departments to submit annual plans incorporating new data.

The following charts summarize key requirements under the LAO for Tier I and Tier II city departments.

DEPARTMENTS	LAO REQUIREMENTS
<p>Tier I (existing departments under the EAS)</p> <p><i>All departments designated as Tier I must comply with the full extent of the law and submit Annual Compliance Plans to the Board of Supervisors and the Immigrant Rights Commission through OCEIA. All requirements amended in August 2009 became effective immediately for Tier I Departments.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adult Probation Department 2. District Attorney's Office 3. Department of Emergency Management 4. Elections Department 5. Fire Department 6. Department of Public Health 7. Human Services Agency 8. Juvenile Probation Department 9. Municipal Transportation Agency 10. Public Defender's Office 11. Residential Rent Stabilization & Arbitration Board 12. SF Police Department (SFPD) 13. Sheriff's Office 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total number and percentage of limited English speaking persons who use the department's services listed by language. 2. Total number and percentage of limited English speaking clients residing in the supervisorial district in which the department is located who use department services, listed by language. 3. A demographic profile. 4. Total number of public contact positions. 5. Bilingual public contact positions. 6. Language access liaison. 7. Telephone-based interpretation services. 8. Protocols to communicate with limited English speaking clients. 9. Employee development and training strategy, and quality control protocols for bilingual employees and individuals in crisis situations. 10. An assessment of the adequacy of bilingual staff public contact positions. 11. List of all designated bilingual staff assigned to review accuracy and appropriateness of translation materials. 12. List of the department's written materials required to be translated by language. 13. Written copies on providing services to Limited English Speaking Persons. 14. Procedures for receiving and resolving complaints of any alleged violations of the ordinance. 15. Department goals for the upcoming year and a comparison to the previous year's goals. 16. Budget allocation and strategy. 17. Changes between previous Plan submittal and current submittal. 18. Any information requested by the Immigrant Rights Commission necessary for implementing listed requirements above.
<p>Tier I (New Departments- effective July 1, 2010)</p> <p><i>New Tier I departments must file their first annual compliance plans by January 31, 2011.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. San Francisco International Airport 2. Office of Assessor Recorder 3. City Hall Building Management 4. Department of Building Inspection 5. Department of Environment 6. Office of Economic/Workforce Development 7. Planning Department 8. San Francisco Public Library 9. Department of Public Works 10. Public Utilities Commission 11. Recreation and Parks Department 12. Treasurer and Tax Collector (Office of) 13. San Francisco Zoo 	

DEPARTMENTS	LAO REQUIREMENTS
<p>Tier II (All Other Departments)</p> <p><i>Required for all other city departments not specified as Tier I (see previous chart) that provide information or services directly to the public.</i></p> <p><i>Note: All Tier I Departments must meet these minimum requirements in addition to those indicated in the previous section.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Translate all publicly-posted documents related to (1) services provided and, or affecting a person’s rights to, determination of eligibility of, award of, denial of, or decrease in benefits, or (2) services into the languages spoken by a Substantial Number of Limited English Speaking Persons. 2. Post notices in public areas of their facilities. 3. Ensure translations are accurate and appropriate. 4. Designate a staff member for quality control. 5. Oral interpretation of any public meeting or hearing if requested at least 48 hours in advance. 6. Translate meeting minutes if (1) requested; (2) after the Legislative body adopts the meeting minutes; and (3) within a reasonable time period thereafter. 7. Allow complaints alleging violation of LAO. 8. Document actions to resolve complaints and maintain copies of complaints for not less than 5 years. A copy shall be forwarded to the Commission and OCEIA within 30 days of receipt. 9. Inform Limited English Speaking Persons who seek bilingual services of their right to request translation services.

III. 2010 COMPLIANCE DATA AND DEPARTMENT PLANS

The following charts summarize self-reported information by Tier I departments. ⁸ Individual compliance plans are available upon written request to OCEIA (civic.engagement@sfgov.org).

Tier I Departments

APD = Adult Probation	HLTH = Public Health	RENT = Rent Stabilization and Arbitration
DA = District Attorney	HSA = Human Services Agency	SFPD = Police
DEM = Emergency Management	JP = Juvenile Probation	SHF = Sheriff
ELEC = Elections	MTA = Municipal Transportation Agency	AVG = Average
FIRE = Fire	PUBDF = Public Defender	TTL = Total

Summary of information provided by departments

DEPARTMENT	LEP DATA	PUBLIC CONTACT & BILINGUAL EMPLOYEES	TRANSLATED MATERIALS	WRITTEN POLICY & PROTOCOL FOR SERVING LEP CLIENTS	TELEPHONIC TRANSLATION SERVICES	ANNUAL GOALS, BUDGET & STRATEGY
APD	√	√	√	√	√	√
DA	√	√	√	√	√	√
DEM	√	√	√	*	√	*
ELEC	√	√	√	√	√	√
FIRE	√	√	√	√	√	*
HLTH	√	*	√	√	√	*
HSA	√	*	√	√	√	*
JP	√	√	√	√	√	√
MTA	√	√	√	√	√	√
PUBDF	√	√	√	√	√	√
RENT	√	√	√	√	√	*
SFPD	√	√	√	√	√	*
SHF	√	*	√	*	√	*

Partial or incomplete information is denoted with an asterisk (*)

Note: The filing date for City departments to submit annual compliance plans was extended to February 26, 2010 and all departments submitted plans within the extension period.

⁸ The Controller's Office is commended for filing an annual plan. The charts displayed in this section reflect only Tier I departments that are required to plans as required by the LAO.

Question #1: What is the number and percentage of Limited English proficient (LEP) persons who actually use the department’s services citywide?

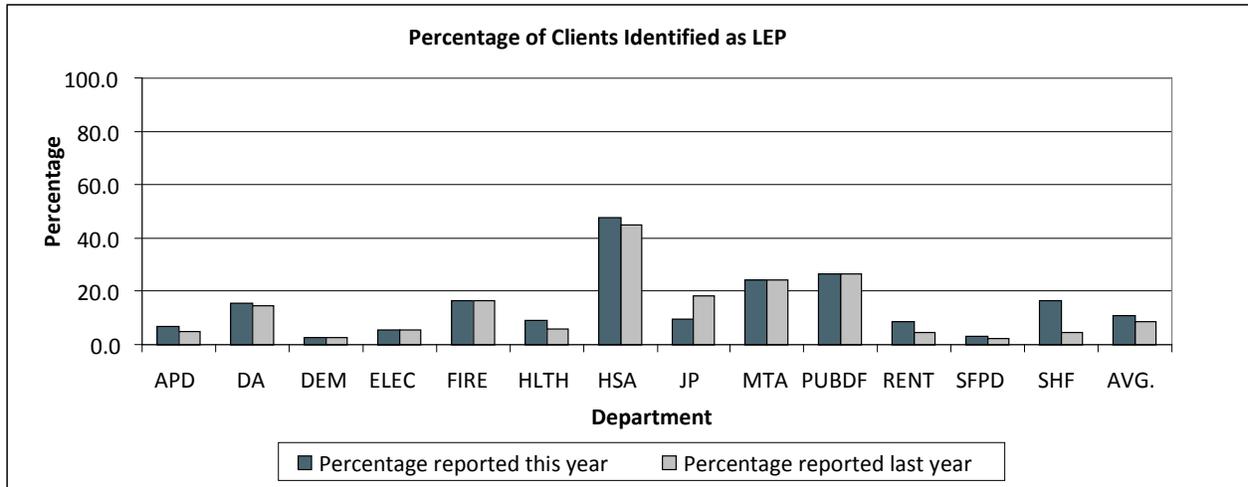
Figure 1-1 summarizes the number of LEP clients and total clients in each Tier I department and what percentage LEP clients represent of the total client population. The proportion of LEP clients relative to total clients reported by Tier I departments increased from 8.9% to 11.2% over the past year.

Figure 1-1

DEPARTMENT	2009			2010		
	LEP Clients	Total Clients	Percentage	LEP Clients	Total Clients	Percentage
APD	231	4,578	5.0%	480	6,835	7.0%
DA	4,251	28,719	14.8%	3,867	24,575	15.7%
DEM ⁱ	9,330	359,341	2.6%	13,215	465,000	2.8%
ELEC	26,164	475,432	5.5%	25,938	465,181	5.6%
FIRE ⁱⁱ	13,059	80,300	16.3%	13,215	80,300	16.5%
HLTH ⁱⁱⁱ	79,473	1,338,147	5.9%	110,521	1,208,419	9.1%
HSA ^{iv}	62,244	138,628	44.9%	125,757	264,949	47.5%
JP	210	1,136	18.5%	204	2,131	9.6%
MTA ^v	169,325	703,169	24.1%	176,858	724,829	24.4%
PUBDEF	5,830	22,000	26.5%	7,420	28,000	26.5%
RENT ^{vi}	1,668	36,372	4.6%	2,436	27,806	8.8%
SFPD ^{vii}	27,617	1,225,303	2.3%	43,302	1,425,333	3.0%
SHF ^{viii}	8,710	183,040	4.8%	20,800	125,112	16.6%
TOTAL	408,112	4,596,165	8.9%	544,013	4,848,470	11.2%

Figure 1-2 compares the percentage of each Tier I department’s client population identified as LEP this year to the percentage indicated last year.

Figure 1-2



Question #2: What is the breakdown of LEP clients served by language?

The following table shows the distribution of languages spoken by each department's LEP clients. LEP clients remain primarily Spanish (32.3%) and Cantonese (26.8%) speaking. However, some Tier I departments only disaggregate some of the data, or do not report the data by languages spoken among LEP clients. As result, the table below groups many LEP clients under "other languages spoken" even though many of these clients are in fact Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog or Vietnamese speaking LEP clients.

Figure 2-1

DEPARTMENT	CAN	MDRN	RUS	SPN	TAG	VIET	Other	Totals LEP	Total Clients
APD	7	0	1	454	1	8	9	480	6,835
DA	684	609	1	1,967	3	7	596	3,867	24,575
DEM	2,952	820	430	8,065	145	217	586	13,215	465,000
ELEC	21,727	0	0	3,989	24	124	74	25,938	465,181
FIRE	2,952	820	430	8,065	145	217	586	13,215	80,300
HLTH	40,525	3,950	3,077	36,124	572	5,779	20,494	110,521	1,208,419
HSA	58,891	N/A	13,251	33,593	6,234	5,514	8,274	125,757	264,949
JP	32	0	1	153	4	3	11	204	2,131
MTA ^{ix}	N/A	N/A	N/A	41,315	N/A	N/A	135,543	176,858	724,829
PUBDF	420	0	0	7,000	0	0	0	7,420	28,000
RENT	1,536	48	132	612	48	24	36	2,436	27,806
SFPD	9,905	1,870	1,084	21,670	1,107	776	6,890	43,302	1,425,333
SHF	6,006	N/A	N/A	12,766	N/A	N/A	2,028	20,800	125,112
TOTAL	145,637	8,117	18,407	175,773	8,283	12,669	175,127	544,013	4,848,470

SPN = Spanish	MDRN = Mandarin	VIET = Vietnamese
CAN = Cantonese	RUS = Russian	TAG = Tagalog

Figures 2-2 and 2-3 are visual representations of the data above. Figures 2-2 and 2-3 represent LEP clients by languages spoken as a percentage of the total number of LEP clients.

Figure 2-2

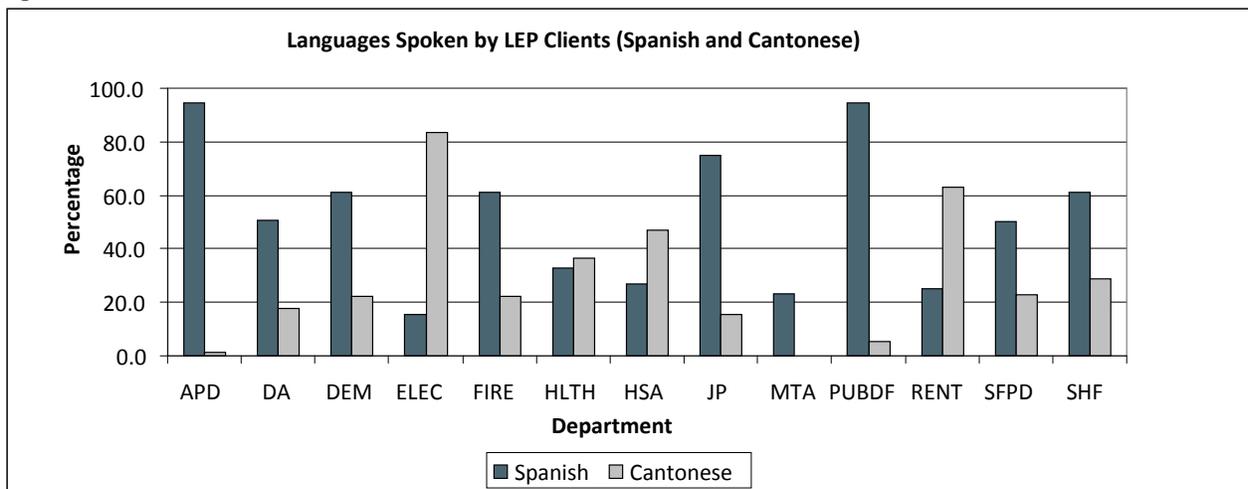
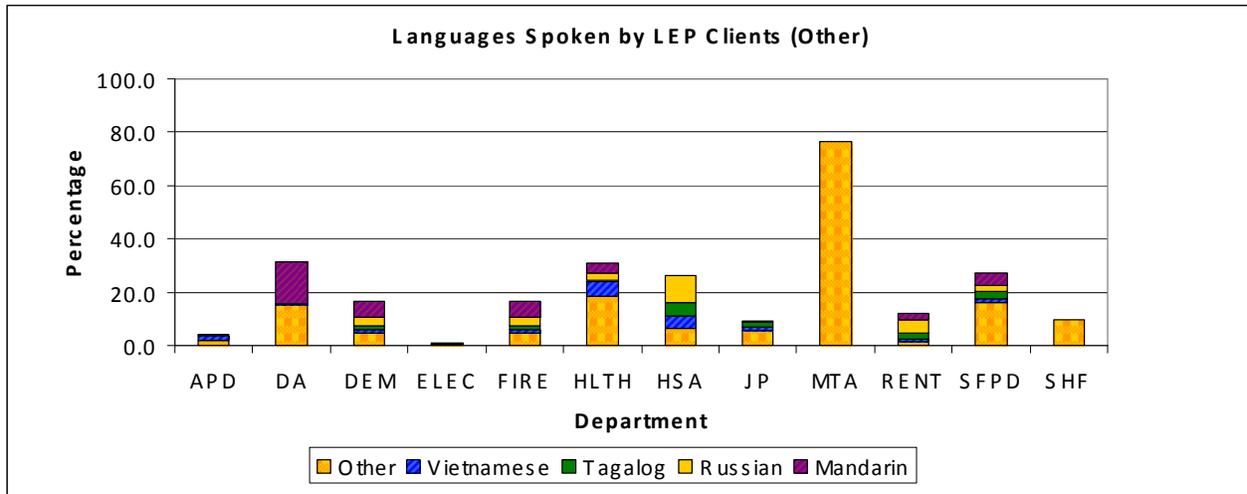


Figure 2-3



Question #3: What is the total number of public contact positions in the department? List the total number of bilingual staff in public contact positions and identify each by language(s) spoken.

Figure 3-1 shows the number of each department’s public contact position staff identified as bilingual. According to the LAO, a public contact position is defined as “a position in which a primary job responsibility consists of meeting, contacting, and dealing with the public in the performance of the duties of that position.” Additionally, the LAO defines a bilingual employee as “a city employee who is proficient in the English language and in one or more non-English language(s).” However, not all departments rely on the definition of the Ordinance in reporting data on public contact and bilingual staff, and in some cases, departments reported data using a broader or different definition than stated in the LAO. Because some staff speak more than one non-English language, the data reported below on languages spoken may exceed the number of bilingual staff.

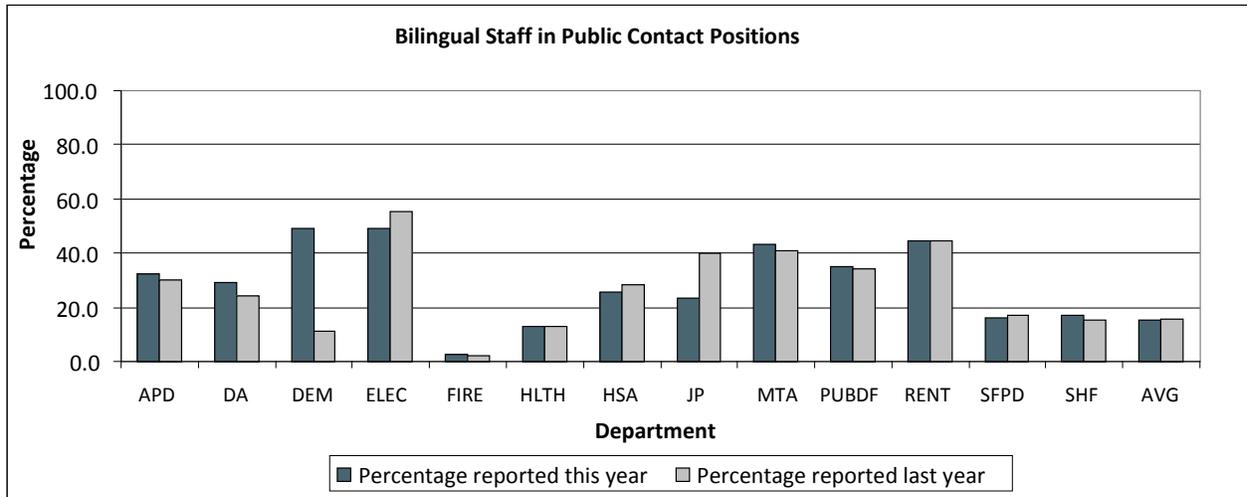
Figure 3-1

DEPARTMENT	TOTAL PUBLIC CONTACT STAFF	BILINGUAL PUBLIC CONTACT STAFF	%	CAN	MDRN	RUS	SPN	TAG	VIET	Other
APD	86	28	32.6%	1	2	1	21	2	0	1
DA	174	51	29.3%	9	4	1	30	1	3	3
DEM	55	27	49.1%	5	2	1	16	2	0	1
ELEC ^x	71	35	49.3%	15	8	4	13	2	0	0
FIRE	1,600	41	2.6%	11	30	0	0	0	0	0
HLTH ^{xi}	8,000	1,031	12.9%	258	110	19	550	41	30	23
HSA ^{xii}	1,777	453	25.5%	174	15	43	186	16	36	5
JP	212	50	23.6%	10	0	1	28	5	1	5
MTA	244	106	43.4%	24	8	2	26	20	4	22
PUBDF	160	56	35%	7	7	0	34	0	1	7
RENT	9	4	44.4%	2	1	0	1	1	0	0
SFPD	2,727	439	16.1%	81	18	6	157	51	5	121
SHF ^{xiii}	1,071	181	16.9%	37	0	1	116	25	2	0
TOTAL	16,186	2,502	15.5%	634	205	79	1,178	166	82	188

SPN = Spanish	MDRN = Mandarin	VIET = Vietnamese
CAN = Cantonese	RUS = Russian	TAG = Tagalog

Figure 3-2 shows the change in the percent of bilingual staff in public contact positions reported last year compared to this year. Total department staff and bilingual staff declined slightly as compared to last year (0.7% and 2.2%, respectively).

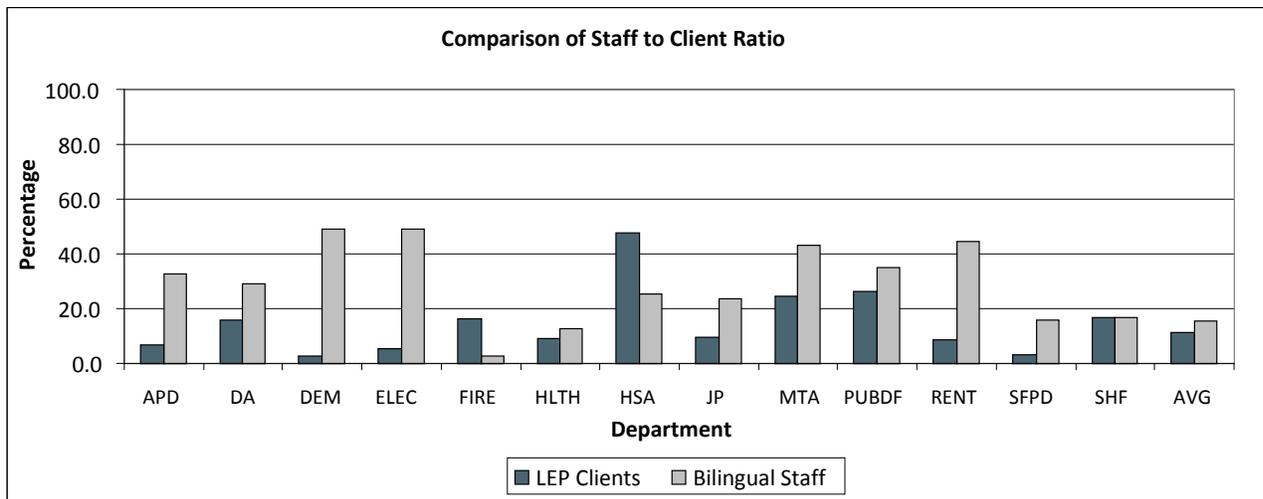
Figure 3-2



Question #4: Comparison of bilingual public contact staff and LEP client ratios. What is the department’s assessment of additional bilingual employees needed to meet the requirements of LAO?

Figure 4-1 compares the percentage of the client population that is LEP to the percentage of staff in bilingual contact positions that is bilingual. Bilingual staff represent 15.5% of all public contact staff while LEP clients represent 11.2% of the total client population for Tier I departments. Departments reported no significant disparity in the proportion of bilingual staff available relative to respective LEP clients served among departments. Additionally, most departments reported sufficient bilingual staff to meet LAO requirements and to serve LEP clients.

Figure 4-1



Question #5: Describe any telephone-based interpretation services used, including tracking LEP clients by call volume and language.

Figure 5-1 summarizes the use of telephonic-based interpretation services, including most frequently used services, call volume, and client languages. Most Tier I departments heavily depend on their bilingual staff and/or Language Line to help meet the growing need of translation and interpretation services. Language Line is the most highly used language assistance provider of telephonic services among Tier I departments. The vast majority of calls involve LEP clients who speak primarily Spanish, Cantonese or Mandarin.

Figure 5-1

Department	Telephonic Services Used	Tracks LEP clients	TOTAL CALL VOLUME	Call Volume by Core Languages						
				CAN	MNDN	RUS	SPN	TAG	VIET	OTHER
APD	Language Line	√	48	3	-	-	41	-	-	4
DA	Language Line	√	1,070	129	58	-	702	10	48	123
DEM	Language Line	√	13,215	2,952	820	430	8,065	145	217	586
ELEC	Other ^{xiv}	Info not submitted	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FIRE	Language Line & Network Omni	-	13,215	2,952	820	430	8,065	145	217	586
HLTH	Language Line & Pacific Interpreters	Info not submitted	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HSA	Language Line	√	1,068	316	163	47	346	21	92	83
JP	Language Line	√	63	4	9	0	29	2	2	17
MTA	Language Line	√	509	124	40	2	331	0	6	6
PUBDF	Language Line	Not indicated	-	10%	-	-	90%	-	-	-
RENT	Language Line	√	31	21	0	2	5	0	3	-
SFPD	Language Line	√	15,326	3,301	960	460	9,372	171	282	780
SHF	Language Line	√	29	5	2	3	13	0	2	4

SPN = Spanish	MDRN = Mandarin	VIET = Vietnamese
CAN = Cantonese	RUS = Russian	TAG = Tagalog

Question #6: Please assess the procedures used to facilitate communication with LEP and indicate whether such procedures are adequate.

Figure 6-1 describes current procedures in place among departments to facilitate communication with LEP clients. All departments report procedures for communicating with LEP clients and almost all indicate that existing procedures are adequate.

Figure 6-1

DEPARTMENT	CURRENT PROCEDURES	DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT
APD	Bilingual staff in the reception area, bilingual officers are assigned to cases with language needs when possible, and Language Line telephonic services are available.	Adequate
DA	Front reception area has staff to interpret for Cantonese, Mandarin or Spanish, but staff can be called upon for 20 other languages. For classes or community court, translators are hired or volunteers are used. Language Line is also used.	Adequate; Would hire staff in public contact and help line positions with multi-lingual capacity as primary job function if funding is available.
DEM	Bilingual staff communicates with callers when available; otherwise Language Line provides translation services.	Asked Language Line to improve speed of connection to Cantonese translators.
ELEC	Adequate bilingual staffing levels are maintained throughout the year. All voter material is translated and information on the website is available in Chinese and Spanish. Community outreach conducted on services available to residents.	Adequate
FIRE	All 9-1-1 calls are processed through DEM; non-emergency and administrative calls are transferred to Language Line.	Adequate
HLTH	Interpreter Services Department at San Francisco General Hospital provides interpreter and translation services; Videoconferencing Medical Interpretation (VMI) Project allows real-time visual representation of a medical interpreter for patient and provider.	Adequate; Plans to install VMI at other DPH Primary Care health clinics in the future.
HSA	Bilingual staff for language groups that make up at least 5% of caseloads and telephone based interpretation services are available; multilingual signs inform clients of free language services; face to face interpretation services can be arranged.	Adequate; Gathers feedback from contracted vendors to resolve problems quickly; created multilingual glossaries of technical vocabulary.
JP	Certified bilingual staff asked to speak to LEP clients, then non-certified bilingual staff, and then the phone line. Written materials are available in five languages other than English.	Adequate; Actively seeks to improve operations and looks forward to OCEIA training for suggestions
MTA	If a customer requires language assistance, the department finds bilingual staff to communicate; otherwise Language Line is used. Major information is translated into Chinese and Spanish, and parts of the MTA website are translated in Chinese and Spanish.	Adequate; Would hire multilingual speakers for the Community Outreach group if resources are available; tracks requests and demographics to assess language assistance procedures.
PUBDF	Telephone operator is bilingual in Spanish; if client requests a translator, staff is called upon to translate. If unavailable, an interpreter is retained by the department to interpret.	Adequate
RENT	Staff assesses language requirement and sees if staff is available to translate. If not, Language Line is utilized.	Adequate
SFPD	Language identification cards used to identify language spoken by clients; bilingual staff and Language Line used to aid interpretation.	Adequate
SHF	Language Line provides telephone-based translation services; bilingual employees assigned throughout various locations.	Adequate; Continue to target recruitment of bilingual entry level deputy sheriffs and for other positions.

Question #7: Does the department offer employee development and training to maintain well trained bilingual employees and general staff? Does the training include a description of quality control protocols for bilingual staff?

Figure 7-1 summarizes staff members responsible for ensuring the accuracy of language translation in each department. Training available to bilingual or general staff is inconsistent; content and quality controls in place vary significantly by department.

Figure 7-1

DEPARTMENT	TRAINING FOR BILINGUAL STAFF	QUALITY CONTROLS FOR BILINGUAL STAFF
APD	Yes, offers “Basic Spanish for Probation” that teaches basic Spanish legal terms.	Yes, all employees that provide bilingual services to clients must be certified by Dept. of Human Resources.
DA	No, but encourages employees to take free Spanish class offered at Hall of Justice.	Yes, staff members ensure accuracy and appropriateness of translations.
DEM	Yes, offered bilingual training through Office of Language Services for Elementary Spanish classes.	No, Language Line provides overwhelming majority of bilingual services; especially so for calls that require technical vocabulary.
ELEC	Yes, provides poll worker training classes in Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish in addition to English.	Yes, staff designated with producing multilingual material are hired based on past work experience and must take proofreading tests in English and target language and earn a near perfect score to be considered for the position.
FIRE	No	No
HLTH	Information not submitted	Yes, department’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office periodically conducts Language Proficiency Exams for designated bilingual employees and language waiver exempt employees.
HSA	Information not submitted	Information not submitted
JP	No	Yes, first line of quality control is Supervisors; second line is the Division Directors.
MTA	Yes, Public contact staff trained on procedures to assist LEP clients.	Yes, translated materials are reviewed by designated staff or externally.
PUBDF	No	No
RENT	Yes, Training on applicable requirements of job, such as how to serve LEP community.	Yes, quality of service monitored by supervisory staff who are physically present to audit interactions of staff with clients.
SFPD	Information not submitted	Information not submitted
SHF	Information not submitted	Information not submitted

Question #8 Are there designated bilingual employees responsible for ensuring the accuracy of translated materials? If yes, please list by language.

Figure 8-1 indicates staff who are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of language translations in each department. Most departments reported having designated staff to ensure translation accuracy. However, some departments do not have in-house designated staff, several outsource this function, and some can ensure translations in only a few languages. The majority of staff provide translations in Spanish and Chinese languages.

Figure 8-1

DEPARTMENT	DESIGNATED STAFF WHO ENSURE TRANSLATION ACCURACY	NO. OF DESIGNATED STAFF	LANGUAGES
APD	√	1	Spanish
DA	√	10	Cambodian, Cantonese, Chao-Chow, Danish, French, Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese
DEM	No	-	-
ELEC	√	5	Cantonese/Mandarin, Russian, Spanish
FIRE	√	2	Cantonese, Spanish
HLTH	√	Information not submitted	Information not submitted
HSA	√	-	-
JP	√	6	Cantonese/Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Other
MTA	√	21	Cantonese/Mandarin, Hebrew, Punjabi Urdu, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Tagalog
PUBDF	No	-	-
RENT	√	3	Cantonese/Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog
SFPD	√	19	Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Tagalog, Vietnamese
SHF	No	-	-

Question #9: Has the department translated all written materials required under the LAO and has the department provided a list of all translated materials by language?

As indicated in Figure 9-1, all Tier I departments reported a list of translated materials and the respective languages of the translations.

Figure 9-1

DEPARTMENT	LIST PROVIDED	TRANSLATED MATERIALS BY LANGUAGE
APD	√	Spanish
DA	√	Cantonese, Spanish, and Other
DEM	√	Cantonese/Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese
ELEC	√	Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish
FIRE	√	Spanish and Cantonese
HLTH ^{xv}	√	Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese
HSA	√	Chinese, Mongolian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese
JP	√	Cantonese/Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Other
MTA	√	Cantonese/Mandarin, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese
PUBDF	√	Cantonese/Mandarin, and Spanish
RENT	√	Cantonese/Mandarin, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Other
SFPD ^{xvi}	√	Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese
SHF	√	Chinese and Spanish

Question #10: Describe the department’s procedures for accepting and resolving complaints of alleged violation of the ordinance.

Figure 10-1 describes the methods for accepting complaints of alleged violations of the ordinance by each department and how many complaints were received. Many departments did not indicate whether complaint procedures were publically posted, however all departments reported providing multiple methods to the public on filing complaints. According to Tier I departments, there were no complaints filed with the department for this compliance period.

Figure 10-1

DEPARTMENT	WRITTEN AND PUBLICLY POSTED?	HOW ARE COMPLAINTS ACCEPTED?	HOW ARE COMPLAINTS RESOLVED?
APD	√	In person, over the phone, or in writing to Chief Adult Probation Officer.	Complaints are reviewed by the employee’s supervisor unless a reason exists to proceed otherwise. A written report of results is forwarded to the Chief Adult Probation Officer within 5 days of completing review. Upon completion of review complainant is notified of results of investigation and any actions taken.
DA	√	In person, over the phone, in writing, through a complaint form, or electronically, by the office manager and forwarded to the staff member who ensures the accuracy and appropriateness of the translation for each language.	After review, a solution will be recommended to the District Attorney or designated person. A copy of the complaint will be forward to the Immigrant Rights Commission within 30 days of its receipt.
DEM	Information not submitted	In person, via telephone, in writing, or electronically.	Staff examines the Computer Aided Dispatch system to identify delays in translations, and sends a complaint to Language Line if necessary.
ELEC	Information not submitted	In writing, through a complaint form, or electronically through the department website.	The Director of the department approves all resolutions to complaints made and works with managers and staff to seek information and advice in resolving the complaint. Complaints are resolved in person, over the phone, or in writing
FIRE	√	In person, via telephone, in writing, or electronically	Complaints resolved in person, via telephone, in writing, or via e-mail.
HLTH	Information not submitted	Information not submitted	The Interpreter Services Department responds to grievances for the Community Health Network, including San Francisco General Hospital; the Office of Cultural Competency and Consumer Relations within the Community Mental Health Services handles complaints related to mental health programs.
HSA	Information not submitted	Via telephone, through a complaint form, in writing, or by contacting the State Civil Rights Bureau	Assigned staff investigates complaints; staff often uses Language Line, informs program management, and interviews staff to resolve the issues. Complaints are logged in Title VI logs.

JP	Information not submitted	In person, via telephone, in writing, through a complaint form, or electronically.	Complaints are handled pursuant to department policy 832PC. Administrative Manual, Policy 7.2, "Citizen Complaint," and staff strive to communicate with clients in the language that they are most comfortable with.
MTA	√	In person, via telephone, in writing, through a complaint form, or electronically.	Each division manager reviews submitted complaints on a weekly basis. The manager works with the LAO Program Coordinator to resolve the case and examine how to resolve the case and avoid future complaints.
PUBDF	Information not submitted	Via telephone, electronically, in writing, or in person.	Complaints are handled by departmental liaison of the ordinance implementation.
RENT	Information not submitted	In person, via telephone, in writing, or through a complaint form and are forwarded to a senior staff member for immediate attention.	The Rent Board has contracts with six community-based organizations to provide outreach services to people whose primary language is not English.
SFPD	Information not submitted	In person, via telephone, or in writing, and referred to the Management Control Division or the Office of Citizens Complaints.	Directed Investigations will include a finding for the allegation; a letter including follow-up will be submitted to the Police Chief or other designee for review. After reviewing, an action recommendation will be made in 60 days of receipt unless an extension is requested.
SHF	Information not submitted	In person or over the phone with Investigative Services Unit or at main office. Grievance system in jail system for complaints received by prisoners.	Follow up conducted by Investigative Services or location where complaint was filed. Complaints filed by prisoners are followed up by the Investigative Services Unit or the jail facility.

Question 11: What are the changes between the Department’s previous Annual Compliance Plan submittal and the current submission? Indicate how the Department’s current strategies and procedures, and proposed solutions to achieve LAO goals improved the language services from the previous compliance plan.

Figure 11-1 summarizes changes from the previous annual compliance plans based on current submission. Most departments reported that current strategies for language services are effective and adequate. Barriers to providing language services include: translation accuracy and speed, and significant budget constraints and cuts.

Figure 11-1

DEPARTMENT	OVERALL CHANGES	EFFICACY OF CURRENT STRATEGY IN IMPROVING LANGUAGE SERVICES SINCE PREVIOUS PLAN	BARRIERS & PROPOSED SOLUTIONS
APD	Better tracking of LEP clients in case management system	LEP clients assigned to bilingual staff when possible; otherwise Language Line used. Staff is very satisfied with Language Line. Department is currently in compliance with section 91.3 of Language Access Ordinance.	None, current allocation of existing resources meets language needs of clients .
DA	Utilized Language Line more to provide more efficient service to clients	Dept. does its best to provide services to people who need dept.’s services. Would like more staff specifically designated for bilingual duties.	General budget constraints, seeks to hire bilingual employees in public contact positions when there are job openings or if funding is available.
DEM	No changes	No changes	None
ELEC	No significant changes	Department currently meets required LAO goals.	None listed
FIRE	Department confident in ability to provide service based on current levels of language capabilities	Department confident in ability to provide service based on current levels of language capabilities.	Department confident in ability to provide service based on current levels of language capabilities.
HLTH	Information not submitted	Information not submitted	Information not submitted
HSA	No changes stated	Current strategy is adequate	Difficult to obtain prompt and accurate document translation and interpretation services; proposed solutions include contracting with multiple vendors, creating a glossary of technical vocabulary, and periodically gathering feedback on services from staff
JP	Development of “Parent Guide to the Juvenile Justice System”, a comprehensive guide on how the Juvenile Justice system works; partnership with new organization	Strive to make work with LEP youth and parents part of Standard Operating Procedure, and ensure clients can communicate effectively and wants staff to understand value of strong consumer relations.	Lack of personnel to perform on-the-spot translation services, especially with reduction in department staff; further redistribution of resources will be a challenge. Looks to suggestions from OCEIA’s LAO training.

MTA	Changes in staffing, additional translation of public information documents	Additional Spanish-speaking staff has enabled SFMTA to better meet needs of Spanish-speaking clients; SFMTA will continue to translate materials into Spanish and Chinese, and broadcast messages in Spanish and Chinese. SFMTA will track language assistance requests when practical, in public contact divisions to assess client needs.	Severe budget cuts; look to internal bilingual staff to reduce reliance on external translating and language assistance, as well as external assistance, such as OCEIA, for translation assistance and to meet the needs of LEP clients.
PUBDF	No changes	Current strategy is adequate	No barriers listed
RENT	Now reports telephonic interpretation services, small changes in training, recruitment and assessment	Current strategy is sufficient; department increased accessibility to LEP clients by making majority of translated materials available on website.	Barriers to service delivery, but current allocation of resources meets needs of the LEP community.
SFPD	None listed	Current strategy is adequate	No barriers listed
SHF	None listed	Current strategy is adequate	In the event of a budget reduction, funding to provide for Constitutional requirements of prisoners is prioritized.

Question 12: Did the department submit a plan listing annual goals for the upcoming year and was an assessment of the department’s success at meeting last year’s goals included?

DEPARTMENT	PLAN & FY2010-11 GOALS SUBMITTED	ASSESSMENT OF GOALS FROM FY2009-10
APD	Maintain current level of service for LEP clients and refine the department’s staff bilingual compensation policy to ensure compliance with collective bargaining unit.	Department met goal to adhere to City’s standard for serving LEP clients.
DA	Complete website language translation as website is being completed and fill open staff positions with bilingual employees when possible.	Provided adequate level of service to clients.
DEM	Continue to provide fast and accurate oral translation services for 9-1-1 callers, as well as accurate translated written materials in multiple languages.	Satisfied with progress in meeting LEP goals.
ELEC	Educate poll workers about Election Day procedures on how to assist LEP voters, increase number of bilingual poll workers, explain mandated bilingual requirements in poll worker training and continue to partner with community organizations to disseminate information about department’s multilingual services.	Information not included
FIRE	Translate materials for proprietary electronic patient care reporting system into five languages and continue translating Block Captain materials and Christmas tree safety precaution materials into Spanish and Cantonese.	Information not included
HLTH	Conduct proficiency exams at primary and specialty care clinics regularly, standardize existing data collection requirements with LAO requirements, expand posting of bilingual signage on how to access language services at the point of service, and expand pilot training program on how to provide bilingual services.	Information not included

HSA	Continue analyzing HSA's website and identify the most relevant web pages/content to be translated. The Bilingual Services Committee is also looking for someone to oversee the editing and translation of website content.	Planned to translate the five most frequently visited pages on website into Chinese and Spanish, but no pages have been translated.
JP	Translate "Parent Guide to the Juvenile Justice System" in five languages and disseminate to community and on intranet and internet, continue translating materials, work with OCEIA and participate in training to refine protocols, and provide on-site translation services for clients.	Increased training opportunities and expanded partnerships, developed "Parent Guide to the Juvenile System," recruited diverse staff and maintained satisfactory level of service to clients.
MTA	Increase bilingual capabilities of Community Outreach group, improve language assistance at community meetings and language accessibility on website, translate additional materials and track requests for language assistance when practical to assess current procedures.	Information not included
PUBDF	Translate additional materials into Cantonese and Spanish.	Maintained level of service to meet needs of LEP clients
RENT	Have 394 discreet documents translated and available to the public.	Exceeded goal to have 252 documents translated.
SFPD	Continue to work with community groups and have the LEP Liaison Officer attend community meetings to further assess needs of LEP communities.	Collaborated with community groups to create a comprehensive training plan and completed series of training videos.
SHF	Information not included	Was part of test project to have website translated; project was not completed.

-
- ⁱ All LEP clients served by DEM are through Language Line; the department does not receive walk-in clients. Calls received by DEM are forwarded to departments such as FIRE, SFPD, and other emergency service providers, who also include these calls as part of their LEP client population.
 - ⁱⁱ Number of LEP clients reported by the Fire Department is the number of calls transferred to Language Services in Calendar Year 2009, as reported by SFFD
 - ⁱⁱⁱ DPH's total client population is taken from the DPH Annual Report FY2008-2009, "Ch. 4: Who We Serve" (<http://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/reports/PolicyProcOfc/2008-09AnnRpt/Chapt04WhoWeServe.pdf>)
 - ^{iv} Submitted caseload information, by language, for the Department of Human Services and the Adult and Aging Services
 - ^v Source for MTA's estimated total LEP client population and total client population for 2010 is the U.S. Census 2007 American Community Survey (http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/MYPTTable?_geo_id=16000US0667000&-qr_name=ACS_2007_1YR_G00_CP2_1&-ds_name=ACS_2007_1YR_G00_)
 - ^{vi} RENT's estimated total LEP client population is extrapolated from a two month survey conducted from October to November 2009
 - ^{vii} SFPD's estimated total LEP client population is based on a two-week survey from September 12, 2009 to September 25, 2009 at SFPD Ingleside Station, as well as the total number of clients served by Language Line
 - ^{viii} Sherriff's Office Information extrapolated from two week survey conducted
 - ^{ix} The 2007 American Community Survey sorts information as follows: Asian and Pacific Islander (116,697), Spanish (41,315), Other Indo-European (17,396) and Other (1,450)
 - ^x Number of staff during an election period
 - ^{xi} Reported that approximately 10% of the estimated 8,000 employees are in public contact positions. However, the department does not designate employees as "public contact," so the number provided is the total number of bilingual employees out of the total number of employees.
 - ^{xii} Did not designate specific staff as public contact positions
 - ^{xiii} Did not designate specific staff as public contact positions
 - ^{xiv} The department operates two phone lines in addition to its main line, one for Chinese-language assistance, and another for Spanish-language assistance
 - ^{xv} Number of new documents translated this year
 - ^{xvi} Number of new documents translated this year

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following actions should be considered to strengthen the efficacy of the LAO and improve compliance:

- ✓ Language access should be a priority for all city departments that directly serve the public and this should be reflected in all aspects of normal operations and planning. Language access should also be a requirement for all city commissions, task forces and advisory bodies that work directly with the public.
- ✓ Department Heads, senior staffs, and designated LAO liaisons should review LAO requirements annually with their staffs and incorporate LAO compliance elements in future plans and budgets.
- ✓ A centralized team of highly qualified translators and interpreters should be coordinated to provide year-round assistance to city departments, particularly during crisis situations, emergencies and disasters. This team can also be available to assist departments with translating website information, public documents and other essential information for LEP residents.
- ✓ Cultural and linguistic competency standards should be developed citywide, incorporating best practices developed by the Department of Public Health and based on National Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS). Although these standards are primarily directed at health care organizations, they can be leveraged to ensure that city services are more culturally and linguistically accessible to LEP residents.
- ✓ Consequences for non-compliance with language access should be clearly spelled out in the LAO.
- ✓ Bilingual ability should be an additional factor in recruiting qualified candidates for future job openings.
- ✓ The Immigrant Rights Commission and the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA) should be adequately funded and staffed to implement expanded language services responsibilities, particularly all activities associated with enforcement, translations, and assisting departments with Language Access Ordinance compliance and training.

The following activities are currently under development by OCEIA:

- ✓ Citywide training on the LAO and department responsibilities will begin in August 2010. This includes information on collecting, monitoring and reporting language services for each department. New and existing Tier I departments will also be trained on outreach about language access rights and complaint procedures to targeted immigrant communities.

- ✓ In partnership with the MTA and the IRC, a pilot Cultural and Linguistic Competency training program for fare enforcement inspectors is being developed by OCEIA.
- ✓ OCEIA continues to collaborate with departments to develop standardized annual compliance reporting formats and templates that will increase consistency and accuracy. Citywide use of these tools is encouraged.
- ✓ OCEIA will provide further clarification in defining and measuring adequacy and competency in future reporting forms.
- ✓ OCEIA will work closely with the IRC to develop guidelines for departments to develop written protocols and best practices on serving LEP residents.
- ✓ In addition to promoting language services in partnership with city departments, the IRC will continue outreach and education efforts to the City's diverse immigrant and LEP communities so that they may understand their rights under the LAO.
- ✓ OCEIA will continue to assist and partner with departments and community-based organizations to meet the language needs of San Francisco residents and increase the city's cultural and language competency and sensitivity.
- ✓ OCEIA will promote streamlined, standardized processes for bilingual certification and training across city departments.

V. CONCLUSION

“... when studying marginalization and exclusion of minority language speakers, one must look beyond stated policy. On the surface, the United States appears to have a supportive policy that recognizes the fact that LEP individuals have equal right to accessing services and therefore should not be prevented access due to language barriers. However, the mere existence of Executive Order 13166⁹ and the assortment of local language access mandates indicates that the legal requirement of language access, which was established almost a half-century ago, has often gone ignored. “

Jessica Sperling, Doctoral Student, Sociology,
Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY), February 2010

San Francisco like other major cities is becoming increasingly more diverse and global. A city that limits itself to doing business or serving residents in a single language is not only violating the law, it is missing out on realizing its full potential. As government information becomes more available electronically at unprecedented speeds, it is critical that city departments provide equal access to services in the languages that residents understand. Residents who speak a language other than English or who lack access to the internet are further disadvantaged when the same information that is provided to other residents is not readily available to them. The benefits of having all residents understand their respective roles and participating fully in a civil society far exceed the initial cost of making language access a normal part of doing business.

In the past year, most Tier I departments continued to make good faith efforts to comply with the San Francisco Language Access Ordinance (LAO). Some continued to go beyond the requirements of the LAO and have excelled, some have struggled, and others continue to file the same reports from year to year without adjusting their plans to meet increased demand.

Several departments state that they cannot comply with language access laws due to a lack of resources. However, this is a barrier that can be overcome if city departments and officials take the law seriously, redistribute resources and see the value of making this a priority in San Francisco.

Language access is about more than merely having a handful of employees who speak varying levels of languages other than English. All residents need to feel confident that they will be

⁹ Executive Order 13166 “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” was signed on August 11, 2000 by President William Clinton.

treated with respect and dignity when interacting with government. They must be able to understand requirements and laws as well as interact with government officials and representatives without fear or intimidation.

Language access and cultural competency should and need to be priorities for city departments. Good government means understanding and responding to the needs of all communities and residents. Engaged and well-informed individuals are crucial to government effectiveness, public safety and quality of life for all residents, workers and visitors.

Results of the 2010 Census are certain to reveal even greater levels of language diversity in San Francisco. Every department in the City and County of San Francisco should continue to identify strategies for improving communication and responding effectively to the needs of its language-diverse residents.

Good government serves all the people and speaks the languages of the people it serves.

OFFICE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS



OCEIA promotes civic participation and inclusive policies that improve the lives of San Francisco’s residents, particularly immigrants, newcomers, underserved and vulnerable communities. OCEIA seeks to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers to ensure that San Francisco’s diverse residents have equal access to city services and opportunities to participate and contribute in meaningful ways to the success of the community and to the city.

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CURRENT PROJECTS:

CENSUS

- SF COUNTS 2010 Census citywide campaign
- San Francisco Complete Count Committee
- Hard-to-Count Community Outreach Grants Program
- Population Estimates and Census Survey Challenges

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Community Outreach & Education (City ID, 311, Sanctuary City, Language Rights)
- Day Laborers Program

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

- Immigrant Rights Commission
- Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- Immigrant Integration and Citizenship

LANGUAGE ACCESS

- Bridges to Freedom Domestic Violence Language Training for Law Enforcement
- Cultural and Linguistic Competency Training
- Language Access Ordinance Oversight
- Translation Services

An electronic version of this report may be accessed at www.sfgov.org/oceia.
To view individual Tier I department plans, please contact the
Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs at (415) 554.5098

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