

BOARD OF APPEALS

2026 LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

I. Introduction

The Board of Appeals (BOA) has prepared this Language Access Plan to define the actions to be taken by Department staff to ensure meaningful access to Board services by Limited English Proficient (LEP) members of the public, in compliance with San Francisco Administrative Code, Chapter 91, the Language Access Ordinance (LAO). The aim of the Department is to afford LEP individuals with free, timely, and equitable access to services, consistent with the access provided to English speakers.

II. Purpose

The BOA Language Access Policy provides a framework for the provision of timely and effective language assistance to LEP members of the public that come in contact with the Board of Appeals.

III. Department Description

The Board of Appeals is a quasi-judicial body that provides the public with final administrative review of appeals relating to a wide range of City determinations, including the granting, denial, suspension, or revocation of permits, licenses, and other use entitlements by a wide range of City commissions and departments. As it hears and decides cases, the Board strives to provide an efficient, fair and expeditious public hearing and decision-making process before an impartial panel.

a. General Language Access Needs of the Board of Appeals

The Board of Appeals recognizes that meaningful access, effective communication, and the delivery of quality services to LEP individuals requires providing interpretation and translation services in the LEP individual's preferred language at all stages of the appeal process, beginning with general telephone inquiries and continuing on through to the hearing before the Board.

The percentage of LEP individuals using the Department's services is well below the 5% threshold in all languages other than English. Annually, the Department will reassess its language access needs through an analysis of the language services actually used throughout the fiscal year. This plan will be updated as necessary to ensure continued responsiveness to the needs of the public.

IV. Language Access Protocols

a. Procedures for Assisting LEP Individuals

i. Walk-Ins

When an LEP individual comes to the Board office and indicates that he or she speaks a language other than English, counter staff will adhere to the following protocols:

1. Identify the language the LEP individual speaks by asking or by using the *LanguageLine Interpretation Services Available* sign located on the front counter (see Appendix A).
2. If appropriate, enlist bilingual staff to provide assistance with interpretation (see Appendix B).
3. If no one in-office can provide language assistance, staff should call LanguageLine Solutions for assistance with interpretation.

ii. Appeal Intakes

1. When a member of the public files an appeal, Board staff should pay close attention to the ensuing dialogue and whether or not the appellant appears to completely understand what is being conveyed. A great deal of complex information is communicated in this part of the process; if there's a sense that understanding is being hindered by language barriers, Board staff should proactively offer the LEP individual language services using either bilingual office staff or LanguageLine Solutions.
2. Board staff performing intake should inform the Executive Director immediately of any need for interpreters at the hearing.

iii. Telephone calls

When an LEP individual calls the main phone line, staff answering the phone will adhere to the following protocols:

1. Identify the caller's language of preference.
2. If appropriate, transfer the caller to bilingual staff in the office to provide assistance with interpretation.
3. If no one in-office can provide language assistance, staff should call LanguageLine Solutions for assistance with interpretation.

4. The staff member responsible for monitoring the Department's main voice mail line will transfer non-English messages to bilingual staff, if appropriate, or obtain the assistance of LanguageLine Solutions for interpretation.

iv. Incoming Mail and Email

When the Board office receives mail and email in languages other than English, staff responsible for monitoring the general office email account and the daily incoming mail should adhere to the following:

1. Attempt to identify the language of the message in question.
2. Enlist the assistance of bilingual staff in the office, if appropriate, for translation.
3. If the language cannot be translated in-house, consult with the Language Access Liaison, who will arrange to have the message translated.

v. At the Board Hearing

1. When the need of an interpreter is evident, Board staff will arrange for an interpreter to attend the hearing, using interpreters supplied by outside vendors.
2. Prior to the beginning of a Board hearing, Board staff should meet with the interpreter in order to introduce them to the LEP individual requiring interpretation, and to ensure that both consecutive and simultaneous interpretation will be used to interpret the *entire* proceeding for the LEP individual.
3. When any party to an appeal has the need of an interpreter to deliver testimony while appearing before the Board, speaking times will be doubled.
4. With 48-hour advance notice, interpreters can be arranged for any LEP individual wishing to speak during any public comment portion of a Board hearing.

b. Tracking Client Data for Language Access Ordinance (LAO) Compliance Plan

All City departments who serve the public are required to submit an annual LAO Compliance Plan based on data collected during the prior fiscal year. The Compliance Plan must include data on the number of LEP individuals who used the department's services. The Board of Appeals will use the following methods for data collection:

1. Annual Survey: All staff will count interactions with members of the public over the telephone, in person at the office and at Board hearings, noting the language spoken and whether or not language services were needed and what kind.
2. The Language Access Liaison will keep a log of all calls and in-person office encounters needing staff interpretations throughout the fiscal year. Bilingual staff are instructed to inform the Liaison if they are ever called upon to assist with interpretation either on the telephone or with members of the public who come to the office.
3. Annually, the Language Access Liaison will be responsible for completing the Language Access Ordinance Compliance Report submitted to the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs.

c. Informing the Public of the Availability of Language Services

1. At the Board office front counter is an *Interpretation Services Available* sign from LanguageLine Solutions in twenty languages that LEP members of the public can use to indicate their preferred language.
2. An additional *Interpretation Services Available* sign is on the wall in the area where members of the public sit to file an appeal.
3. The Board's website has a Language Access Notice in nine languages.
4. All Board agenda have information regarding free language services for LEP individuals available in the City's threshold languages of Spanish, Chinese and Filipino.
5. Staff are trained to be proactive when it appears there is a need for language assistance services.

V. Complaint Process

- a. Initial complaints regarding language access should be brought to the attention of the Board's Executive Director.
- b. If the problem or the issue underlying the complaint is unable to be resolved at the office level, the Executive Director will refer the complainant to the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA). The OCEIA is the monitoring agency for the City's Language Access Ordinance. Members of the public may file a complaint regarding language access against any City agency with OCEIA by phone, in writing or electronic mail.

VI. Internal Staff Training

- a. All new hires to Board staff are trained to use LanguageLine Solutions for interactions with LEP individuals and are given a reference sheet of instructions for how to use their services.
- b. All Board staff are provided copies of this policy.

VII. Appendices

- a. Appendix A: *Interpretation Services Available Sign*
- b. Appendix B: Roster of Multilingual Employees
- c. Appendix C: List of Translated Materials

Appendix A: Interpretation Services Available Sign



Interpretation Services Available

English Translation: Point to your language. An interpreter will be called. The interpreter is provided at no cost to you.

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| Arabic عربي  أشر إلى لغتك. وسوف يتم جلب مترجم فوري لك. سيتم تأمين المترجم الفوري مجاناً. | Korean 한국어  귀하께서 사용하는 언어를 지적하시면 해당 언어 통역 서비스를 무료로 제공해 드립니다. |
| Armenian Հայերէն  Ցոյց տուելք ո՞ր լեզունը կը խօսիք՝ Թարգմանիչը մը կանչելը կը տամք. Թարգմանիչը կը տրամադրուի անվճար. | Laotian ພາສາລາວ  ຊີ້ບອກພາສາທີ່ເຈົ້າເວົ້າໄດ້. ພວກເຮົາຈະຕິດຕໍ່ນາຍພາສາໃຫ້. ທ່ານບໍ່ຕ້ອງເສຍເງິນຄ່າແປໃຫ້ແກ່ນາຍແປພາສາ. |
| Cantonese 廣東話  請指認您的語言， 以便為您提供免費的傳譯服務。 | Mandarin 國語  請指認您的語言， 以便為您提供免費的口譯服務。 |
| French Français  Pointez vers votre langue et on appellera un interprète qui vous sera fourni gratuitement. | Polish Polski  Proszę wskazać swój język i wezwiemy tłumacza. Tłumacza zapewnimy bezpłatnie. |
| German Deutsch  Zeigen Sie auf Ihre Sprache. Ein Dolmetscher wird gerufen. Der Dolmetscher ist für Sie kostenlos. | Portuguese Português  Indique o seu idioma. Um intérprete será chamado. A interpretação é fornecida sem qualquer custo para você. |
| Hindi हिंदी  अपनी भाषा पर इंगित करें और एक दुभाषिया बुलाया जाएगा। दुभाषिये का प्रबन्ध आप पर बिना किसी खर्च के किया जाता है। | Russian Русский  Укажите язык, на котором вы говорите. Вам вызовут переводчика. Услуги переводчика предоставляются бесплатно. |
| Hmong Hmoob  Taw rau koj hom lus. Yuav hu rau ib tug neeg txhais lus. Yuav muaj neeg txhais lus yam uas koj tsis tau them dab tsi. | Spanish Español  Señale su idioma y llamaremos a un intérprete. El servicio es gratuito. |
| Italian Italiano  Puntare sulla propria lingua. Un interprete sarà chiamato. Il servizio è gratuito. | Tagalog Tagalog  Ituro po ang inyong wika. Isang tagasalin ang ipagkakaloob nang libre sa inyo. |
| Japanese 日本語  あなたの話す言語を指して下さい。 無料で通訳を提供します。 | Thai ไทย  ช่วยชี้ที่ภาษาที่ท่านพูด แล้วเราจะจัดหาสามให้ท่าน การใช้สามไม่ต้องเสียค่าใช้จ่าย |
| Khmer (Cambodian) ខ្មែរ (កម្ពុជា)  សូមចង្អុលភាសាអ្នក ។ យើងនឹងហៅអ្នកបកប្រែភាសាកម្ពុជា ។ អ្នកបកប្រែភាសានឹងជួយអ្នកដោយមិនគិតថ្លៃ ។ | Vietnamese Tiếng Việt  Hãy chỉ vào ngôn ngữ của quý vị. Một thông dịch viên sẽ được gọi đến, quý vị sẽ không phải trả tiền cho thông dịch viên. |

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 Over-the-phone interpretation and document translation in more than 170 languages.



Appendix B: Roster of Multilingual Staff

1. Xiomara Mejia, Legal Process Clerk, English and Spanish
Tel. No. (628) 652-1153

Appendix C: List of Translated Materials

1. *Appeals Process Overview*: Chinese, Filipino, Spanish and Vietnamese
2. *Indigency Form*: Chinese, Filipino, Spanish and Vietnamese
3. *Special Instructions for the Parties*, Chinese, Filipino, Spanish and Vietnamese
4. Website Information: Chinese, Filipino, Spanish and Vietnamese