

To: Chair Souza
Members, Immigrant Rights Commission
Jorge Rivas, Executive Director, OCEIA

From: Ana I. De Carolis, Language Access and Policy Manager, OCEIA

Re: Quarterly Report - Language Access Complaints

Date: August 10, 2026

Language Access Ordinance Quarterly Report

As mandated by the Language Access Ordinance, the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA) must provide a quarterly report to the Immigrant Rights Commission regarding language access complaints received by OCEIA.

Reporting Period (April 2026 – June 2026)

OCEIA received six (6) language access complaints during the reporting period.

Complaint Number	Department	Summary of Allegations	Language(s)	Status
1	MOHCD	Complainant was not provided telephonic language services	Arabic	Closed / Resolved
2	DEM / EMSA	Complainant was not provided telephonic language services	Spanish	Closed / Resolved
3	MOHCD	No employee was present to provide information	Spanish	Closed / Out of LAO scope
4	MOHCD	The employee recognized the language. The employee provided a flyer with information. No interpreter services were provided.	Spanish	Closed / Resolved
5	SFPL	Complainant would like to see signs and visible materials in language.	Spanish	Closed / Resolved
6	RNT	Request for housing support	English	Out of LAO Scope

Number of complaints filed, year-to-date.

Time Frame	Total Complaint(s) received
January 2026 – June 2026	8 complaints were filed with OCEIA during this time frame.

Comparison with the filings for the previous year

Time Frame	Total Complaint(s) received
April 2025 – June 2025	6 complaints were received during that period.

Trends and Analysis

The LAO complaints received highlight the importance of:

- Providing training and reminders on language access requirements and departmental protocols to public-facing staff.
- Ensuring that City information and services are accessible for individuals with Limited English Proficiency through the use of bilingual employees in public contact positions or – if such employees are unavailable – through approved language service providers.
- Making available multilingual signage (including signage on the availability of language assistance services) to improve navigation and ease of access to services for LEP clients.



Language Access Ordinance (LAO) Summary Complaint Report

Reporting Period: April – June 2026

Complaint #1

Summary of Allegations

Complainant called the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) to request general information on housing support in Arabic. The complainant said in language, "I need Arabic." The complainant reports that no efforts were made to identify the language or to connect them to an interpreter.

Findings

OCEIA reached out to MOHCD's language access liaison, who responded immediately and cooperated with OCEIA to resolve the complaint. The Liaison noted that the department's telephonic language access services include designated phone lines for the current threshold languages (Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino), as well as a LanguageLine dual headset phone available at their office location.

MOHCD's Liaison discussed the Department's language access protocols with the involved employee, who said that they could not identify the language and did not understand the caller's request for Arabic language services. The liaison reported that their public-facing staff are familiar with the operation of their onsite dual-language interpretation phone but need support with learning the procedures for contacting telephonic interpretation through their softphone app. OCEIA shared best practices for contacting interpreters over the phone app and using interpreter services to determine language preference when unclear.

The Department committed to the following actions:

- Share with public-facing staff their most updated language access policy and procedures, including procedures to connect to interpreter services via conference call
- Share with staff the strategies for identifying preferred language over the phone

OCEIA provided LAO training resources and consultation to the MOHCD Liaison and staff. A staff training on LAO requirements was conducted on July 7, 2026.

Recommendations

- Upon request, provide Language Access Services in languages not covered by the required languages per LAO Sec. 91.14
- Train staff on procedures for contacting language services over the phone.



Complaint #2

Summary of Allegations

The complaint was submitted in Spanish and addressed to DEM. The complainant called a phone number to ask for information. Someone answered and said, “Sorry.” When the complainant asked for information in Spanish, no one could help or share information because they did not reply in Spanish.

Findings

OCEIA contacted DEM and found out that the phone number provided in the complaint was associated with the Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMSA) when it was housed at a different location. The number is still forwarded to the EMSA main line as a back-up but is unpublished.

OCEIA also found out that EMSA provides services for applicants who want to become (or are renewing as) Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and accredited Paramedics. They also review medical plans as a condition of a City event permit.

Recommendations

Based on the information provided, it appears that the EMSA main phone line conducts very limited or infrequent service provision to the general public, as it mostly serves its community of EMTs and Paramedics. Nevertheless, OCEIA recommends all public-facing City departments and agencies to train their front-facing staff in protocols for contacting language access services.

Complaint #3

Summary of Allegations

Complainant went to the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) office at 1 South Van Ness 5th Floor to request job-related information. There was no employee present to provide this information. The complaint states that it was the second time the complainant went to the office to seek information and no one was there. The complaint was submitted in Spanish.

Findings

The MOHCD liaison explained that this office area is shared with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and that MOHCD does not provide job-related services; those should be referred to OEWD. OCEIA shared with the complainant’s advocate Spanish-language information from OEWD’s [Workforce Division](#) where the complainant may reach out to with job-related questions.

Given that no employees were on duty, and no City information or services were requested by the complainant or provided by a Department, it appears that the Language Access Ordinance was not implicated in this case.



Complaint #4

Summary of Allegations

Complainant went to the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) office at 1 South Van Ness 5th Floor and, in Spanish, requested help to apply for housing. The employee recognized the language but did not offer interpretation services. The employee provided a flyer with addresses of organizations that provide services in Spanish and said -- in English -- that they could not help in Spanish.

Findings

OCEIA reached out to the complainant, their community advocate, and MOHCD. The complainant could not recall the language of the flyer and no longer had it but explained that the document listed various organizations that support with applying for housing. The flyer had circled an organization that provides services in Spanish and the MOHCD employee said – in English – that they could help her in Spanish there.

The MOHCD Liaison explained to OCEIA that their office does not provide assistance to the public with filling out housing applications. Instead, staff would provide a flyer on Rental Programs at a Glance, which is translated into Spanish and lists various locations where individuals may seek assistance in completing an online application to apply for affordable rental housing. The Liaison did not have information in their records to verify whether the complainant was provided with the flyer in Spanish.

Based on the facts provided, it appears that the Department does not provide direct help with filling out housing applications; however, it does provide referrals and information on community resources that help with the housing application process.

Providing a translated flyer with community-based resources is an important step. However, members of the public may have questions, need instructions, or more information to fully understand what the flyer is and how to use it, requiring meaningful communication between the employee and the member of the public.

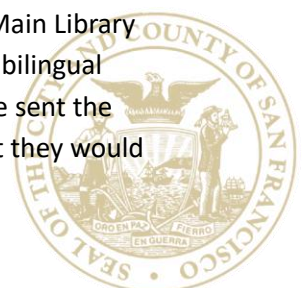
Recommendations

- Provide information and services to the public in the required languages per LAO Sec. 91.4.
 - Departments should utilize bilingual employees to provide information and services to the public in the required languages. If such employees are unavailable, Departments may use approved language access services.

Complaint #5

Summary of Allegations

The complainant asked for information in Spanish at the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) Main Library Information Desk. The employee recognized the language and directed the complainant to a bilingual employee who provided the requested information. The complaint alleges that the employee sent the complainant to a computer to register and it was not in Spanish. The complainant stated that they would like to see signs and visible materials in language.



Findings

OCEIA reached out to the complainant and their community advocate to clarify the information in the complaint. The complainant explained that a paper registration form that was near the computer area was in English only. The complainant stated that a bilingual staff member provided information in Spanish. The complainant did not ask the Library employee for a copy of the form in Spanish.

SFPL staff responded immediately to the complaint and reaffirmed their commitment to providing the highest standard of customer service to their patrons. SFPL explained that Digital library card applications are available via the card signup kiosks at the Main Library in the threshold languages Spanish, Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese, as well as in Japanese, Russian, and Arabic. SFPL added that print library card applications are available in all the above languages upon request at the Main Library and all branch libraries.

OCEIA staff went to the Main Library and verified that the library card application form is available online in all required languages via public computers kiosks.

Based on the facts provided and collected during the complaint investigation process, OCEIA did not find that an LAO violation had likely occurred in this instance, as bilingual staff provided information in language and translated online application forms were available via computer kiosks.

Recommendations

OCEIA recommends augmenting multilingual signage (including signage on the availability of language assistance services) to improve navigation and ease of access to services for LEP clients.

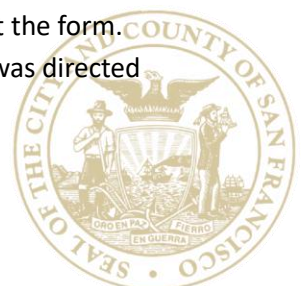
The Department took the following actions

- Began the process of creating signage about how to apply for a library card in the threshold languages that will be clearly posted on the 1st Floor of the Main Library near the card signup kiosks. They will also provide this translated signage for public posting to branch libraries.
- The Department will provide information about the availability of language access services via publicly posted brochures
- The Department will provide staff refresher trainings on navigating patrons' requests for services, including dedicating time to walk them through each part of the process.

Complaint #6

A member of the public submitted a request for help finding housing after experiencing homelessness. The complaint was submitted in English and stated that no one provided assistance filling out the form. The complaint listed "English" under "What language did you need help in?" The complaint was directed to the Rent Board.

Findings



OCEIA reviewed the complaint details, contacted the complainant, and confirmed that the complaint did not involve a language access issue under the LAO.

The Rent Board explained that they do not provide housing and would not have the information or resources that would best be able to assist with this matter. The Rent Board provided OCEIA with information on Access Points. OCEIA shared this information with the complainant and referred the matter to Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) for additional information and resources.

