



**New York County District Attorney's Office
Language Access Implementation Plan**

This Language Access Implementation Plan explains how our office provides services to people with limited English proficiency.

Agency Name: New York County District Attorney's Office

Language Access Coordinator Name: Alison Rives

Language Access Coordinator Title: Director of Language Services

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This Plan includes information about:

Item #	Item	Description
1.	<u>Agency Services</u>	The type of services we provide.
2.	<u>Language Services</u>	Our commitment to language services.
3.	<u>Language Access Needs Assessment</u>	How we assess the language access needs of the people we serve.
4.	<u>Notice of the Right to Language Access Services</u>	How we notify the public about their right to language access services.
5.	<u>Provision of Language Services</u>	The language services we provide.
6.	<u>Resource Planning</u>	How we ensure we have the internal and external resources to provide language services.
7.	<u>Training</u>	How we train staff to provide language services.
8.	<u>Continuous Improvement Planning</u>	How we ensure ongoing language access improvements.
9.	<u>Goals and Action Planning</u>	How we put this plan into action.

1. Agency Services

Our office investigates and prosecutes crimes in Manhattan (i.e. New York County), while working toward both a safer and fairer borough. We provide a comprehensive range of services for crime survivors and their families, addressing issues such as child abuse and family violence, elder abuse, financial crimes, frauds targeting immigrants, hate crimes, human trafficking, intimate partner and sexual violence, housing and tenant protection, and worker protection and wage theft. Our work is strengthened by the diversity of our staff and the communities we serve. Therefore, it is important that we ensure equitable, meaningful access to all our in-person and virtual services, including helplines and information resources.

2. Language Services

In compliance with Local Law 30 (2017) as well as federal and state laws, we take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) can fully access our services. We offer free interpretation and translation services across all points of contact—including in-person, by phone, video, at community events, and vital documents—so that language is never a barrier to safety or justice. At our office, we ensure that children are prohibited from acting as interpreters and discourage using untrained people – such as family and friends – to interpret. We do not discriminate based on language in the operation of our programs, services, and activities, and we strive to be welcoming to and inclusive of all people.

3. Language Access Needs Assessment

To determine how best to serve our population with LEP, we assess language access needs using the following four factors:

- a. *Factor 1 – The number or proportion of persons with LEP in the eligible service population.*

To identify the Manhattan population with limited English proficiency (LEP), we use the most recent available data from NYC Planningⁱ - sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS)ⁱⁱ. The 2018-2022 survey results show that approximately 12% of Manhattan residents are considered LEP:

Borough	Total Population Five Years and Over	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
Manhattan	1,572,542	218,388
NYC	8,095,426	1,795,297

In addition to identifying the LEP population, understanding non-English languages spoken at home provides further insight. This information is

essential for designing effective outreach, translation, and communication strategies, since not all non-English speakers require language assistance. According to the same ACS dataset, 38% of Manhattan residents speak a language other than English at home:

Borough	Total Population Five Years and Over	Speaks a language other than English at home
Manhattan	1,572,542	600,519
NYC	8,095,426	3,887,063

A closer look at the survey results reveals that the top non-English languages spoken at home in Manhattan differ significantly from citywide trends, underscoring the need for borough-specific language access planning:

Top 10 Language Other than English Spoken at Home, New York City, 2018-2022				
Rank	Manhattan		New York City	
	<i>Language</i>	<i>Population Estimate</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Population Estimate</i>
1	Spanish	329,985	Spanish	1,890,190
Top 10 Language Other than English Spoken at Home, New York City, 2018-2022 (continued)				
Rank	Manhattan		New York City	
	<i>Language</i>	<i>Population Estimate</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Population Estimate</i>
2	Chinese (includes Mandarin, Cantonese, and Min Nan Chinese)	83,501	Chinese (includes Mandarin, Cantonese, and Min Nan Chinese)	504,270
3	French	32,372	Russian	199,030
4	Russian	15,446	Bengali	123,410
5	Korean	11,048	Yiddish	100,622
6	Japanese	10,190	Haitian	96,906
7	Italian	10,070	French	91,970
8	Hebrew	9,373	Arabic	76,230
9	Hindi	8,048	Korean	63,172
10	German	7,462	Italian	61,056
Total		600,519	Total	3,887,063

Understanding the linguistic makeup of Manhattan's population is vital to our language access efforts. It ensures that our services are responsive, inclusive, and legally compliant, and allows us to prioritize languages based on actual community needs.

- b. *Factor 2 – The frequency with which individuals with persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) encounter our office.*

We employ a variety of methods—both formal and operational—to track how frequently individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) encounter the office. This data collection is crucial for understanding demand, identifying service gaps, and continuously improving language access across all functions of the office.

We track interpretation and translation requests from our Assistant District Attorneys for case-related matters, community events that are non-case related, as well as from visitors utilizing the Point to Your Language Poster, to better allocate resources.

In Fiscal Year 2025, the top languages requested for interpretations and translations that were fulfilled by our trained in-house and contracted interpreters (in order from most to least utilized) were Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, French, Wolof, Korean, and Turkish. For over-the-phone interpretations requested and provided through our contracted agency vendor, the top languages requested were (in order from most to least utilized) Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, French, Cantonese, Russian, Wolof, Bengali, Korean, and Turkish.

- c. *Factor 3 – The importance of the benefit, service, information, or encounter to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).*

To promote safer communities and a fairer criminal justice system while ensuring meaningful access for individuals with LEP, we remain committed to providing all staff who regularly interact with visitors the tools and training needed to effectively communicate with all New Yorkers for all our services and programs. Resources include training and intranet guides available to all our staff on requesting interpretation and translation services, as well as using over-the-phone interpretation.

- d. *Factor 4 – The resources available to our office and the costs of providing various types of language services.*

Our office employs trained in-house interpreters and translators that provide interpretation services in Spanish and Mandarin/Cantonese as well as translations services in Spanish and simplified/traditional Chinese.

We also work with contracted trained interpreters and translators to provide high-quality interpretation and translation services across a wide range of languages, including the 10 designated citywide languages and American Sign Language.

Bilingual and multilingual staff may assist on non-case related matters or in emergency situations.

4. Notice of the Right to Language Access Services

We provide free interpretation and translation services at all office locations, including phone and video interpretation. The Point to Your Language poster—developed by the New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs—is posted in public areas to inform visitors in over twenty languages (including the 10 designated citywide languages and American Sign Language) of their right to language access. We also communicate our language access services on our website.

5. Provision of Language Access Services

a. Interpretations

We provide in-person, phone, and video interpretation to visitors and staff during the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases, and for grand jury proceedings. Our in-house Language Services Unit is composed of trained professional Spanish and Mandarin/Cantonese interpreters, which reflect the top two most widely requested languages in our office. Language Services supports the office’s legal and ethical obligation to provide language access and reinforces the commitment to fair and effective prosecution that serves all members of Manhattan’s diverse community.

When our in-house interpreters are unavailable or an individual with limited English proficiency (LEP) needs a language other than Spanish or Mandarin/Cantonese (including the 10 designated citywide languages and American Sign Language), we work with our contractors to provide the service.

Services include:

- Two-way interpretation between English and the target language for visitors on non-case related questions as well as victims, witnesses, defendants, and community members during casework or outreach including office interviews, proffers, early case assessment, grand jury prep/presentation, trial prep, victim support encounters, field cases (e.g., police precincts, crime scenes, hospitals), and community presentations.
- Telephonic interpretation in at least 100 languages.

b. Translations

Our in-house professional translators provide translations in Spanish and simplified/traditional Chinese. However, when our in-house professional translators are unavailable or a translation is required in a language other than Spanish or simplified/traditional Chinese (including the 10 designated citywide languages and American Sign Language), we work with our contractors to provide the service.

Services include:

- Written translations for victims, witnesses, and community engagement.
- Evidence-grade transcriptions and translations of audio and video.
- Sight translations of written materials, including legal documents and sworn statements.
- Translations of public materials (e.g., flyers, handouts) available in common languages and others upon request.

c. *Digital Communications*

Our website offers a translation tool (powered by Google Translate) to the public for general informational use in at least the 10 city-designated languages. A proper disclaimer posted on our website informs users of the translation tool, clarifying that the translations are not legally binding and may contain inaccuracies.

As for other forms of digital communication, the Language Access Coordinator will work to identify and address to the extent possible. As we discover new ways to interact with the public through digital platforms, we remain committed to ensuring any information about our core services is made available to individuals with limited English proficiency.

d. *Emergency Communications*

During emergencies, public safety information is posted on our website, which can be translated via the integrated Google Translate tool available to the public.

In the event of an emergency, the Language Access Coordinator will partner with internal emergency coordinators to ensure all language access needs are met.

The Language Access Coordinator will also review our Continuity of Operations Plan to identify language access needs and ensure they are considered and incorporated as needed.

6. Resource Planning

In the legal system, it is important for individuals who do not understand English to have access to competent interpreters who enable effective participation in legal proceedings.

For our office, this highlights the need for strategic and proactive resource planning to ensure timely access to qualified language services. Doing so is not only critical to complying with constitutional and statutory mandates, but also essential for safeguarding convictions, minimizing delays, and preserving the overall integrity of legal proceedings.

a. *Bi/multilingual Staffing*

We prioritize the use of professional interpreters who are trained to ensure complete and faithful interpretation of testimony, evidence, and legal arguments—without distortion, omission, or addition.

Professional interpreters bring specialized expertise that promotes fairness, accuracy, and efficiency. For example, they:

- Have a high level of proficiency in the languages that they interpret.
- Are trained in relevant specialized terminology.
- Convey meaning, tone, and cultural nuance—not just words.
- Recognize when language is ambiguous or culturally sensitive and know how to raise concerns appropriately.
- Remain impartial and avoid any appearance of advocacy or bias.
- Help reduce miscommunication and delays, improving courtroom operations.
- Have completed formal interpreter training.
- Demonstrate relevant workplace experience.
- May be certified/qualified/accredited by recognized organizations, such as the National Center for State Courts, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, and the American Translators Association.

Due to the limited number of in-house professional interpreters, our office also:

- Engages internal bilingual and multilingual staff to assist with limited, non-case-related matters for individuals with limited English proficiency. These staff members self-report language abilities through internal outreach efforts.
- Trains frontline personnel to use phone and video interpretation services, which provide on-demand access to over 100 languages—including the ten designated citywide languages and American Sign Language.
- Works with multiple language service vendors to ensure timely, high-quality interpretation and translation services.

b. *Language Service Vendor Contracts*

Our Language Services Unit continuously monitors expenditures of contracted vendors against language access contracts to ensure sufficient funding is made available and that purchase orders are in place to provide all

language services. In Fiscal Year 2025, our language service contracts included:

Vendor Name	Contract Purpose	Languages Provided
Accents Language Services, Inc	In-person interpretation	100+ languages
Eriksen Translations, Inc.	Written translations; Transcriptions	100+ languages
Language Line	Telephonic interpretation; Video remote interpretation	100+ languages
Accurate Communication	American Sign Language	American Sign Language
Accurate Communication	In-person interpretation	100+ languages
Individual per diem Interpreters / Translators	American Sign Language; In-person interpretation; Telephonic interpretation; Video remote interpretation; Transcription; Written translation	100+ languages
Dynamics Multilingual Language Services	In-person simultaneous interpretation	Spanish

c. Partnership with Community-Based Organizations

Our Community Partnerships Unit advances our goal to serve and protect the people of Manhattan, by maintaining a consistent presence in all Manhattan communities to foster trust between the community and our office, raise awareness about our office and crime issues, increase access to our office and our resources, and create partnerships that prevent crime and enhance community safety. They also work with our community partners to understand their needs for interpretation services at community events and coordinate with the Language Services Unit to provide the service.

The Language Access Coordinator will continue to work closely with the Language Services Unit and our Community Partnerships Unit (CPU), which includes the Hate Crimes Prevention Team, the Youth and Education Team, and the Community Engagement Team, to ensure that language access needs of individuals and community groups with limited English proficiency are effectively addressed by: identifying language needs, supporting the delivery of multilingual outreach materials, and providing language services at community meetings and events to the extent possible. Together, they will foster trust, promote equitable access to the resources and services of our office, and strengthen community partnerships that enhance public safety and quality of life for all residents—regardless of language proficiency.

Together, these resource planning strategies help us meet the diverse language needs of our office and the public we serve.

7. Training

Our Legal Training and Language Services Units play a pivotal role in relation to language access training in our office.

The Legal Training Unit ensures that all legal staff—especially Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs)—are well-prepared, knowledgeable, and continuously developing the skills needed to carry out the office’s mission effectively, ethically, and in accordance with the law. The unit also promotes language access and accessibility for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) by ensuring that legal staff are trained to recognize, respect, and uphold the rights of individuals with LEP throughout the criminal justice process. This includes:

- Training on legal obligations and language access laws; how and when to request interpreters (both in and out of court).
- Implementing best practices for working with interpreters during interactions with individuals with LEP.
- Emphasizing the importance of using qualified interpreters, not friends, family, children, or untrained bilingual staff.

- Educating on how to ensure victims and witnesses with limited English proficiency (LEP) can understand their rights, participate in the criminal justice process, and make informed decisions.
- Promoting use of translated materials and forms when appropriate; and
- Encouraging respectful, trauma-informed communication with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The Language Services Unit collaborates with units across the office to ensure staff are aware of how to:

- Access interpretation and translation services.
- Assess language needs during interactions with the public.
- Avoid common pitfalls, such as using unqualified interpreters or relying on bilingual staff without proper training.

Our Language Access Coordinator will continue to collaborate with the Legal Training and Language Services Units to ensure the continued alignment with language access legal obligations and office-wide policies.

8. Continuous Improvement Planning

We are committed to continuous improvement in serving individuals with LEP. To meet this responsibility, our office engages in a range of proactive and evolving strategies aimed at strengthening language access across its operations, services, and outreach. Key approaches include:

- Regularly monitoring language trends and interpreter usage to identify which languages are most commonly spoken by individuals with LEP to inform staffing, training, and translation priorities.
- Maintaining and enhancing our dedicated Language Services Unit that:
 - Ensures timely access to qualified interpreters and translated materials.
 - Provides training for legal staff on best practices for working with interpreters.
 - Translates critical forms into the most frequently used languages.
 - Uses input from community events to refine and improve services.
 - Explores and implements tools that enhance language access, including remote and telephonic interpreting services, as appropriate.
 - Streamlines internal processes for requesting and tracking interpreter services, improving efficiency and response times.
 - Participates in citywide working groups focused on improving access to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP); and
 - Assists in aligning office practices with the broader city, state, and federal standards for language access.

Our Language Access Coordinator will continue to collaborate with all areas of the office to ensure the continued alignment with language access legal obligations and office-wide policies.

9. Goals and Action Planning

To ensure that all members of the public—regardless of the language they speak—can access our services and understand their rights, we have set the following key goals to strengthen and expand our language access efforts over the next three fiscal years (i.e., 2026-2028).

a. *Continued Commitments*

- Conduct regular needs assessments using both internal data and publicly available data sources to identify and respond to changing language access needs.
- Include language access costs in our annual budget planning to ensure services are adequately and sustainably funded.
- Review translated public documents regularly that explain our core services and how to seek help, to ensure they are accurate, written in plain language, and accessible to people with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- Translate new, essential public-facing documents as they are developed, making sure they are available in plain language and in the most commonly spoken languages across our community.
- Maintain and update our list of bilingual and multilingual staff who can support language access efforts in non-legal capacities.
- Provide regular refresher training to staff on our language access policies, tools, and responsibilities.
- Submit required language access data to the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs as part of the City's annual reporting process.
- Ensure signage promoting the availability of interpretation services is clearly posted at all public service locations.

b. *Future Initiatives*

- Work with internal stakeholders to review all communications, ensuring that core service information is accessible to individuals with LEP across all platforms to the extent possible.
- Review and strengthen our Continuity of Operations Plan to identify any language access gaps and develop practical solutions to the extent possible given that the buildings we inhabit are managed by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services or managers from buildings where we lease space.
- Collaborate closely with our Community Partnerships, Language Services, and Legal Training Units to meet the language access needs of the communities we serve to the extent possible.
- Develop and implement our Language Access public feedback process.

These goals reflect our ongoing commitment to equity, access, and public trust. We recognize that language should never be a barrier to justice, and we are dedicated

to ensuring that everyone we serve can understand and navigate our system—no matter what language they speak.

ⁱ <https://www.nyc.gov/content/planning/pages/resources/datasets/american-community-survey>.

ⁱⁱ The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), is a nationwide, ongoing survey that collects detailed population and housing data from a sample of households in the United States. Unlike the decennial census, which is conducted every 10 years and provides a snapshot of the population, the ACS is continuous and provides updated estimates every year, including five-year estimates like the 2018–2022 dataset. It is the most reliable and up-to-date source of local demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics between decennial censuses covering topics related to demographics, languages spoken at home and English proficiency, educational attainment, employment and occupation, income and poverty, housing characteristics, migration, citizenship, and ancestry. The data from the survey guides local government decisions (e.g., school planning, public transportation, emergency preparedness, etc.), assists with determining funding, and supports compliance with civil rights and laws. The five-year data set is more reliable for smaller areas than the one-year estimates because they aggregate five-years of data. For more information visit <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.html>.