

Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice



Language Access Implementation Plan

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Section 1: Agency Mission

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) advises the Mayor on matters relating to the maintenance and improvement of a fair and equitable justice system. MOCJ convenes government, community, and institutional partners; uses data and research; and supports programs and strategies intended to improve public safety, strengthen communities, and expand access to justice and supportive services.

MOCJ includes offices and programs with different types of public interaction. The Office of Special Enforcement (OSE) conducts inspections and enforcement activities; the Assigned Counsel Plan (ACP) supports the provision of assigned counsel and related services; and other MOCJ units manage policy, programs, research, operations, and public communications. These varied functions require language-access procedures that work in offices, field settings, public events, digital communications, and legal-service environments.

Section 2: Language Access Policy

MOCJ will provide free language assistance to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) when needed to access MOCJ information, programs, services, enforcement activities, or other public-facing functions. Language should not create a barrier to understanding information, exercising legal rights, participating in agency processes, or obtaining available services.

MOCJ will maintain the core requirements of Local Law 30, including designation of a Language Access Coordinator; access to telephonic interpretation in at least 100 languages; translation of the agency's most commonly distributed documents into the ten designated citywide languages, as applicable; conspicuous notice of the availability of free interpretation; and maintenance and publication of an agency Language Access Implementation Plan. MOCJ will also respond to any applicable temporary-language requirements or Citywide guidance issued by MOIA.

The Language Access Coordinator (LAC) oversees implementation of this Plan, coordinates with program staff and language-service vendors, supports annual reporting to MOIA, and leads continuous improvement of the agency's language-access practices.

Section 3: Language Access Needs Assessment

MOCJ will assess language need using multiple data sources. Vendor usage alone will not be treated as a complete measure of need because communities that face access barriers may not appear in service-usage data.

- Service-usage data: interpretation calls, translation requests, languages requested, duration/frequency of service, and program or event generating the request.
 - Demographic data: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data and NYC Department of City Planning tools, including neighborhood-level language data where relevant to an event, enforcement activity, program, or outreach location.
 - Program information: intake data, service population, geographic service area, public-event audience, enforcement activity, and known legal or service-delivery needs.
 - Community information: feedback from community-based organizations, contracted partners, event organizers, and program staff regarding language needs that may not appear in vendor usage data.
 - Complaint and request data: 311 complaints/requests and language-access questions or requests received directly by MOCJ.
- Program-specific considerations include:

- OSE: field inspections and enforcement encounters that may require immediate interpretation and clear notice of agency actions.
- ACP: client and family communication, intake, assigned-counsel support, and case-related interactions where clear communication can affect access to justice.
- MOCJ public communications and programs: websites, reports, public events, mailings, email, social media, and program materials that may reach individuals with LEP.

For planned public events or targeted outreach, the sponsoring unit will assess anticipated language need before the event using available demographic information, prior program experience, registrations or RSVPs, partner input, and the nature of the audience. A lack of prior interpretation requests will not, by itself, be treated as evidence that language support is unnecessary.

Section 4: Notice of the Right to Language Access Services

- Post easy-to-understand multilingual signage in conspicuous public-facing locations stating that free interpretation is available.
- Provide “I Speak” cards or equivalent language-identification tools to staff whose work may involve direct public interaction.
- Identify commonly distributed public-facing notices, forms, and materials for translation into the ten designated citywide languages, as applicable to the document and audience.
- Use multilingual outreach for events or activities where demographic or program information indicates language need.
- Maintain a public webpage that identifies the LAC, links the current LAIP, explains how to request language assistance, and explains how to submit a language-access complaint or question through MOCJ or 311.

Section 5: Provision of Language Access Services

A. Interpretation

For unplanned or immediate interactions, staff will use the agency’s approved telephonic interpretation resource whenever a person requests interpretation or staff reasonably identify a language barrier. Staff should not delay service solely because an in-person interpreter is unavailable when telephonic interpretation can provide meaningful access.

For planned public events, outreach, meetings, hearings, or other scheduled interactions, the sponsoring unit will notify the LAC as early as practicable. The LAC will determine whether on-site interpretation, video/remote interpretation, or another modality is appropriate based on the anticipated audience, languages, event format, confidentiality, and operational needs. The LAC will use an available agency or Citywide contract where possible and will coordinate with the ACCO when additional procurement is required.

To support quality, requesters should provide interpreters with relevant non-confidential materials, agendas, terminology, and context in advance when feasible. The LAC will address service issues with the vendor and document recurring concerns.

B. Translation

MOCJ will identify commonly distributed public-facing documents for translation and will arrange professional written translation through an approved vendor or other authorized City

resource. Translation priorities will consider legal significance, frequency of distribution, audience, urgency, and the potential consequence of misunderstanding.

MOCJ will translate applicable commonly distributed documents into the ten designated citywide languages and may translate into additional languages when demographic data, program information, community feedback, or service requests demonstrate need. Vendor quality controls should include professional translation and independent editing/proofreading where available. Requesting units remain responsible for confirming that the English source document is final and written in clear, plain language before translation begins.

C. Digital Communication

MOCJ will work with Public Affairs and IT to improve navigation to multilingual digital content. Human-translated or human-reviewed content is preferred for high-impact public information. If unsupervised machine translation is used on any MOCJ digital platform, the agency will display an appropriate disclaimer and will not rely on machine translation alone for high-stakes legal, enforcement, emergency, or rights-related content.

D. Emergency Communication

The LAC will coordinate with the agency's Emergency Management Liaison and other appropriate operations staff to incorporate language access into emergency planning. Critical alerts, shelter-in-place or evacuation instructions, operational updates, closures, continuity notices, and other emergency guidance will be translated or interpreted as needed using available rapid-turnaround language-service resources. The exact essential agency functions supported by these communications will be those identified in MOCJ's current COOP or other emergency preparedness plan.

Section 6: Resource Planning

A. Bilingual and Multilingual Staffing

MOCJ may identify language skills among staff through voluntary self-identification and may consider language skills as a relevant qualification for appropriate public-facing positions. Any formal use of staff language skills will be consistent with applicable civil service rules, collective bargaining requirements, personnel policies, and City guidance. Staff should not be treated as a substitute for qualified interpretation or translation when the interaction is complex, high-stakes, confidential, legal, or enforcement-related unless the staff member is appropriately qualified and assigned to perform that function.

B. Language-Service Vendor Contracts and Budget

The LAC will coordinate with the ACCO and Finance to maintain appropriate access to telephonic interpretation, written translation, and, where operationally needed, in-person or remote interpretation. Language-service costs should be considered during program and event planning rather than treated solely as an after-the-fact expense. Vendor usage and expenditures will be reviewed to determine whether contract capacity or service mix should be adjusted.

C. Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations

MOCJ recognizes that CBOs can help identify community language needs, strengthen outreach, and improve the cultural relevance of public communications. Program offices may work with CBOs for

outreach, feedback, and distribution of translated information while ensuring that professional interpretation and translation needs are met through authorized and quality-controlled resources.

Section 7: Training

The LAC will maintain basic language-access guidance for public-facing staff and coordinate periodic training. Training will be incorporated into onboarding or provided to relevant staff groups as feasible and will address:

- the right to free language assistance and MOCJ's responsibilities under Local Law 30;
- how to identify a language need and use "I Speak" tools;
- when and how to use telephonic interpretation;
- how to request planned in-person or remote interpretation;
- how to request written translation and prepare a final plain-language source document;
- appropriate and inappropriate use of bilingual staff;
- how to record language-service activity and refer complaints or questions to the LAC; and
- how to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate customer service.

MOCJ will begin using a simple attendance record and participant feedback mechanism so training completion and effectiveness can be assessed over time.

Section 8: Continuous Improvement Planning

MOCJ will move from primarily reactive service delivery toward a documented monitoring cycle. The LAC will maintain or coordinate a centralized log of language-service activity and review the data periodically with Operations and relevant program partners.

- Interpretation: date, program/unit, language, service modality, duration, and vendor.
- Translation: document/material, language(s), requesting unit, completion date, and vendor.
- Planned events/outreach: location, expected audience, demographic assessment, languages arranged, and actual use when known.
- Training: date, staff groups, topics, attendance, and feedback.
- Complaints/requests: source, issue, language, responsible unit, action taken, resolution, and recurring themes.
- Vendor/expenditure data: contract usage, costs, service issues, and capacity needs.

The LAC will use these data together with ACS/DCP demographic information and program feedback to identify gaps, adjust resources, improve training, prioritize translations, and determine where proactive outreach or in-person interpretation may be warranted. MOCJ will complete the annual MOIA language-access survey and expenditure reporting and will update this LAIP at least every three years or sooner if operational changes warrant.

Language Access Complaints, Questions, and Requests

Members of the public may submit language-access complaints, questions, or requests through 311 or through the contact method published on MOCJ's Language & Disability Access webpage. Complaints and requests received by MOCJ staff will be referred to the LAC. The LAC will review the matter with the responsible program, arrange corrective language assistance when needed, document the outcome, and follow up with the requester or complainant when contact information is available. Complaint and request data will be reviewed for patterns that warrant training, resource, or procedural changes.

Section 9: Goals and Action Planning

Goal 1: Formalize Governance and Tracking

MOCJ will formalize agencywide language-access governance by implementing a centralized language-access log and quarterly review process. The log will capture interpretation, translation, training, outreach, complaints, and related activity so the agency can monitor implementation and progress against its Language Access Implementation Plan. The Language Access Coordinator, in partnership with Operations, will lead this work.

Goal 2: Ensure Interpretation Readiness

MOCJ will strengthen its ability to provide timely interpretation services. The agency will establish and communicate procedures for immediate telephonic interpretation and for arranging planned in-person or remote interpretation for public events, outreach, meetings, and other scheduled interactions. Relevant staff will receive the procedures, and planned activities with an identified language need will include an appropriate interpretation plan. The Language Access Coordinator, ACCO, and program leads will share responsibility for implementation.

Goal 3: Use Proactive Language-Needs Assessment

MOCJ will use demographic, service, program, and community information to anticipate language-access needs rather than relying solely on prior service usage. ACS and NYC Department of City Planning data, service information, partner input, and event-specific information will be considered when planning outreach, enforcement activities, and public events. Language needs will be documented for major public events and outreach activities, and broader language trends will be reviewed at least annually by the Language Access Coordinator and relevant program leads.

Goal 4: Improve Public Notice and Digital Access

MOCJ will improve how members of the public learn about and access language-assistance services. The agency will maintain multilingual signage and notices and will update its Language & Disability Access webpage to identify the current Language Access Coordinator, link to the current Language Access Implementation Plan, explain how to request language assistance or submit a complaint, and improve navigation to multilingual content. The Language Access Coordinator will coordinate this work with Public Affairs and IT.

Goal 5: Strengthen Staff Capability

MOCJ will strengthen staff understanding of language-access requirements and procedures through recurring orientation and guidance for public-facing staff and relevant managers. Training will address interpretation and translation requests, identification of language needs, available resources, and referral of complaints or service issues. MOCJ will track attendance and collect participant feedback to assess effectiveness and identify areas for refresher training or additional guidance.