

# **Language Access Plan**

**Suffolk County**

**Department of Economic Development and Planning**

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## **I. Introduction**

The Economic Development and Planning (“EDP”) has prepared this Language Access Plan (“LAP” or “Plan”), which defines the actions to be taken by EDP to ensure meaningful access to departmental services, programs and activities on the part of persons who have limited English proficiency. EDP will review and update, on a biannual basis, this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with Executive Order 10-2012.

## **II. Purpose**

The purpose of this plan is to ensure clients of the Department meaningful access to services, programs and activities although they may be limited in their English language proficiency.

The Department is committed to this Language Access Plan as the appropriate response to meeting our constituents’ needs. The Plan is consistent with the requirements of Executive Order 10-2012.

A Limited English Proficient (“LEP”) person is someone who is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with Agency staff. A constituent maintains the right to self-identify as a LEP person.

### **III. Agency Mission and Background**

The Department of Economic Development & Planning assists and promotes the development, growth and retention of a broad mix of industry clusters that facilitate job opportunities and private investment, as well as implements programs that enhance both economic development and the quality of life for Suffolk County residents. The Department provides a wide range of services to the County's towns and villages, including assistance, research, planning services and consultation, it also handles over 2,000 municipal zoning and subdivision referrals a year.

The Department is comprised of four divisions with a number of sub-divisions, as follows:

1. Economic Development
  - 1.1. Business Development
  - 1.2. Energy/Sustainability
  - 1.3. Aviation
  - 1.4. Cultural Affairs
  
2. Real Property Acquisition and Management
  - 2.1. Acquisition Appraisal Survey
  - 2.2. Auction and Direct Sales, Redemption, and Inventory
  
3. Planning
  - 3.1. Zoning and Subdivision
  - 3.2. Cartography
  - 3.3. Open Space and Farmland Protection
  - 3.4. Water Quality
  
4. Office of Housing and Community Development
  - 4.1. Home Improvement
  - 4.2. Home Investment Partnership
  - 4.3. Down Payment Assistance and Employer Assisted Housing Program
  - 4.4. Community Development

## IV. LEP Population Assessment

In response to Executive Order 10-2012, EDP has prepared “*The Six Most Common Non-English Languages Spoken by Individuals with Limited-English Proficiency At Home by Ability to Speak English, For the Population Age 5 and Over.*”

As given in the table below, the six most common Non-English languages spoken by LEP individuals in Suffolk County are French Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

**The Six Most Common Non-English Languages Spoken By Individuals With Limited-English Proficiency Age 5 and Over At Home By Ability To Speak English, For the Population Suffolk County, New York, By Town, For the Period 2007-2011\***

	<b>SUFFOLK COUNTY</b>	
Total persons age 5 and over:	1,400,148	
Speak only English	1,119,388	
Spanish or Spanish Creole:	166,141	11.9% of Suffolk County residents who speak Spanish or Spanish Creole
Speak English "very well"	79,112	
Speak English less than "very well"	87,029	52.4% of Spanish speakers who speak English less than very well
French Creole:	7,932	0.6% of Suffolk County residents who speak French Creole
Speak English "very well"	4,284	
Speak English less than "very well"	3,648	46.0% of French Creole speakers who speak English less than very well
Italian:	17,223	1.2% of Suffolk County residents who speak Italian
Speak English "very well"	12,659	
Speak English less than "very well"	4,564	26.5% of Italian speakers who speak English less than very well
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole:	5,176	0.4% of Suffolk County residents who speak Portuguese
Speak English "very well"	2,696	
Speak English less than "very well"	2,480	47.9% of Portuguese speakers who speak English less than very well
Polish:	7,797	0.6% of Suffolk County residents who speak Polish
Speak English "very well"	4,394	
Speak English less than "very well"	3,403	43.6% of Polish speakers who speak English less than very well
Chinese:	10,552	0.8% of Suffolk County residents who speak Chinese (Mandarin)
Speak English "very well"	5,512	
Speak English less than "very well"	5,040	47.8% of Mandarin speakers who speak English less than very well

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B16001

The 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from

\*Edited version of Document Prepared by Suffolk County Planning, Peter Lambert 4/15/2013 to include only the top six languages of LEP speakers. K:\PLambert\Census and Demographics\Race Minority Ancestry\LanguageSpoken.xlsx

## **V. Language Access Plan**

Approach: The EDP Language Access Plan shall be fully implemented subject to the availability of fiscal resources to implement said language access plan. This Language Access Plan has been developed to adhere to Executive Order 10-2012. This Language Access Plan represents EDP's administrative blueprint to provide meaningful access to EDP services, programs and activities on the part of LEP individuals. This Language Access Plan outlines the tasks EDP will undertake to meet this objective.

Language Access Plan:

### **(1) EDP Language Access Coordinator:**

Michelle Isabelle-Stark  
Department of Economic Development & Planning  
H. Lee Dennison Bldg., 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
100 Veterans Highway  
Hauppauge, NY 11788  
Phone: (631) 853-4834  
Email: michelle.stark@suffolkcountyny.gov

### **(2) Language Resources Assessment:**

EDP has one staff person in the division of Community Development who is technically able to deliver services in Spanish and is willing to serve in a volunteer capacity as an interpreter. The staff person will be assessed for fluency by the Suffolk County contracted Translation and Interpreting Services vendor before providing services in Spanish.

### **(3) Language Service Protocols:**

LEP individuals that come into contact with our Department will be informed of the availability of free telephonic interpreting services for all languages.

Upon request, an LEP individual may be permitted to use an adult family member or friend as an interpreter for routine matters including, but not limited to, asking about hours of operation, locations of offices, or scheduling an appointment. Minors cannot be used during routine encounters. Where the interaction with the LEP individual occurs at one of the offices or divisions within the Department, and an individual is permitted to use an interpreter of his or her choosing he or she must fill out a written consent/waiver form. This waiver is only valid for the

date it is signed, and must be re-filled out upon each visit if the person continues to proactively request to use an interpreter of their choosing in these types of situations.

Where an LEP individual is engaged in official business with the Department, the Department will provide an independent interpreter at all times and free of charge to the LEP individual. An LEP individual will not be permitted to use an independent interpreter of his or her choosing when filling out applications or involved in any legal matters. However, if the LEP individual would prefer to have their informal interpreter present, their interpreter may sit-in on the conversation unless there are compelling reasons to exclude them.

All notices of public meetings will contain the following statement:

*“Language Access Services are available for free to Limited-English Proficient individuals. Requests for telephonic interpretation services or other special needs must be communicated to the EDP Language Access Coordinator at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting in writing or by telephone. Contact: Michelle Isabelle-Stark, Department of Economic Development & Planning, H. Lee Dennison Bldg., 11th Floor, 100 Veterans Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788 Phone: (631) 853-4834 email: michelle.stark@suffolkcountyny.gov”*

Upon receipt of request for interpretation services, the EDP Language Access Coordinator will contact the contracted Translation and Interpreting Services vendor to make arrangements for telephonic interpretation services at the public meeting.

Documents will be explained orally to people who are illiterate.

Staff will communicate with hearing-impaired and/or deaf residents in writing.

Any documents that are received by EDP that are in a Non-English language will be forwarded to the Language Access Coordinator for processing.

**(4) Vital Document Translation:**

Documents categorized as vital in Exhibit 1 will be translated into French Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish, and made available online through EDP’s website.

In addition to the list of vital documents, the following web content that is directly provided for by EDP will be professionally translated into French Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish:

(a) “Better For Business” website

<http://suffolkcountyny.gov/sbfb/Home.aspx>

Contract agencies of EDP that receive funding from hotel/motel tax to provide cultural programs to Suffolk County residents will be asked to utilize Google Translate to provide online content of these programs in French Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

The Long Island Convention & Visitors Bureau, which maintains a calendar of events for programs in Suffolk County, will utilize Google Translate to provide the calendar in French Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish.

**(5) Stakeholder Consultations:**

The EDP Language Coordinator participated in consultations with advocates from the Long Island Language Advocates Coalition (LILAC) and the Long Island Civic Engagement Table (LICET) in developing the EDP LAP.

**(6) Staff Training:**

All EDP personnel will be required to register for and complete online training annually to assure knowledge of and compliance with Executive Order 10-2012 and the EDP Language Access Plan. Training will be provided through a PowerPoint presentation available online through the Department of Information Technology. Topics will include identifying individuals that need language access services, procedures for accessing services, and reporting requirements.

**(7) Notice to Public:**

- The public will be notified of the availability of language access services free of charge through signage next to the visitor telephone outside of each division of EDP (currently floors 2, 4, and 11).
- The “Better for Business” website will be translated into French Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish and there will be a large notification button of the availability of telephonic interpretation services.

- Notices of public meetings will include notification of free language access services.

#### **(8) Department Monitoring:**

A periodic review of the language access needs of EDP will be conducted annually, led by the Language Access Coordinator. The review will include the provision of language assistance services, the availability of translated materials, whether signage is properly posted, demographic data, and other relevant measures.

The Department will consult with community-based organizations and conduct an internal review in order to assess the efficacy of its LAP.

Ongoing monitoring will be conducted using the following methods:

- Interview staff for knowledge of EDP LAP.
- Use LEP volunteers throughout the year to test the EDP language access service quality.
- Review complaints annually for systemic issues.
- Analyze usage of language access services and compare to general population of LEP individuals.
- Random review of implementation of services by staff.

#### **(9) Complaints:**

The Department will display signage in its public areas and information on its website indicating the process for filing a complaint with the Department and the Office of Civil Rights when the individual is not satisfied with the quality or availability of the Department's Language Access services.

A constituent or constituent representative may file a complaint by completing the EDP "Access to Services in Your Language Compliant Form," which will be available on the Better for Business website in French Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish, and returning it to the EDP Language Access Coordinator.

The EDP Language Coordinator will have the complaint translated and will evaluate the complaint to ascertain whether the issue exposes a weakness in the EDP LAP, a lack of appropriate staff training, or some other cause.

Once the cause of the complaint has been identified, the Language Access Coordinator will report to the County Executive's Office with a recommended remedy.

# EXHIBIT 1

# EDP-LIST OF VITAL DOCUMENTS

File Name	Description	Vital	Updated	Division
Arts & Film Competitive Grant Program Guidelines and Application	Instructions and Application for Cultural funding	Yes	annually	Cultural
Downtown Revitalization Grant Program Guidelines and Application	Instructions and Application for Downtown funding	No	annually	EcoDev
Downpayment Assistance Program Guidelines and Application	HOME Consortium grant of \$10K for first time homebuyers	Yes	annually	ComDev
HOME Consortium Down Payment Assistance Program Guide	Quick reference Guide - one-sheet	Yes	annually	ComDev
HOME Consortium Mortgage Counseling List	List of Mortgage Counselors - required for down payment assistance	Yes	fixed	ComDev
Suffolk County Guide For Business	Description of services available to small businesses	Yes	fixed	EcoDev
Suffolk County Request For Information Registration Form	Intake form for business assistance services	Yes	fixed	EcoDev
Top 10 frequently asked questions when Suffolk County Acquires property by tax deed	Distributed on inspections of property taken by tax deed.	Yes	fixed	RealEstate
Access to Services in Your Language Complaint Form	Language Access Plan complaint form	Yes	fixed	EDP
Suffolk County Consortium Project Description Form Public Services	Request for HUD funds	No	fixed	ComDev
Suffolk County Consortium Project Description Form Administration and Planning	Request for HUD funds	No	fixed	ComDev
Suffolk County Consortium Project Description Form Public Improvements and Facilities	Request for HUD funds	No	fixed	ComDev
Emergency Solutions Grant Program Guidelines and Application	Request for HUD funds for Homeless Emergency Assistance	No	annually	ComDev
Suffolk County Community Development Consortium Annual Action Plan	Description of housing activities relevant to the municipalities covered by the HOME consortium	No	annually	ComDev
Suffolk County Consortium Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report	Review of the consortium's progress in carrying out the community development and housing activities identified in the annual plan.	No	annually	ComDev
Suffolk County Community Development Consortium Consolidated Plan	Five year plan and application for DDBG, HOME, and ESG funds	No	every 5 yrs	ComDev
Auction Sale of Surplus County-Owned Real Estate	A description of all County owned proerties for sale to the public	No	annually	RealEstate
Public Notice - Auction Sale of Surplus County-Owned Real Estate	Public Notice for publication in newspaper	Yes	annually	RealEstate
Public Notice - Public Hearing SC Community Development Consortium Action Plan	Public Notice for publication in newspaper	Yes	annually	ComDev
Public Notice - Finding of No Significant Impact and Requet Release of Funds	Public Notice for publication in newspaper	Yes	annually	ComDev