



# Language Access Plan

**Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation  
& Conservation**

**May 2019**

Designee: Philip Berdolt, Commissioner

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## **Introduction**

This Language Access Plan for the Department of Parks, Recreation & Conservation has been prepared in accordance with Executive Order 10-2012 and outlines Park's planned actions to improve access to Park programs and services by Limited-English Proficient individuals (LEPs)

## **I. Department Mission and Background**

The mission of the Suffolk County Parks Department is to provide diverse year-round activity and leisure opportunities, to preserve, enhance and protect our open spaces to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations in a safe and secure environment. These benefits are especially designed to enhance the overall quality of life in Suffolk County.

### **Suffolk County Parks Background:**

- **Recreational Facilities and Beaches**

Parks manages over 60,000 acres of parkland (passive & recreational), 11 campgrounds, 4 Golf Courses, 3 Beaches, and 3 Marinas that provide direct recreational activities to Suffolk residents of all ages. Nature trails, picnic areas, hunting opportunities, fishing, horseback riding, rowboating, canoe & kayak launch sites, etc are also services provided by our department.

- **Permit Offices and Administrative Headquarters**

Suffolk County Parks manages 12 permit offices, one at the headquarters office and countywide permit offices at various manned parks. The permit offices sell Green Keys and other permitted functions. Our main administrative buildings house the various units that operate the parks system, including administration, accounting, contracts, customer service, Parks IT, payroll, environmental, and operations.

- **Seventy + Passive Parks and Nature Preserves.**

- **Concessions, Non-profit Partnerships and Special Events**

Parks also provides services in partnerships with non-profit organizations such as historic societies, Seatuck Environmental Association, Cornell Cooperative Extension, LI Greenbelt Trail Conference, Splashes of Hope, etc. to host special events, tours, and environmental programs at some of our historic sites and parks.

## Department Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain all park areas for public use;
- Recommend and implement programs to preserve the wildlife, natural resources and habitats of fish, birds and other animals;
- Organize and develop recreational activities recreational facilities and programs;
- Provide for the restoration and interpretive tours of historic properties under the jurisdiction of the Department;
- Eliminate artificial barriers and provide recreational opportunities for handicapped individuals;
- Meet on a regular basis with constituent organizations to further improve recreational opportunities in the County Parks;
- To provide a safe environment in the parks for patrons.
- Park Management and rule and safety guideline enforcement

## II. Agency Language Access Policy and Goals

Guided by Executive Order 10-2012, Parks main goals and timetables for its language access plan is to ensure all individuals, including those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), who request services from Suffolk County Parks must be treated respectfully and professionally. All LEP patrons have the right to free interpretation services provided by NYC Parks and should never be turned away –language should not be a barrier to receiving services.

- Language Identification Posters should be prominently placed at all walk-in facilities (campgrounds, marinas, permit offices, parks offices). “I speak” cards may also be utilized to inform patrons that interpretation services are available as well as to help identify the primary language that patrons speak.
- To provide clear access to LEPs through telephone interpretation services provided through County Contract and paid for through Grants obtained by the County for this sole purpose. The Customer Service Department with assistance from the Parks Commissioner will manage this initiative and will conduct a site by site review of language access at each facility to ensure achievement of these goals.
- Staff should make an effort to offer interpreters for meetings with patrons where needed and/or requested. To arrange an interpreter for a meeting, please email [scparks@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:scparks@suffolkcountyny.gov).
- To expand use of universal symbols on park signage especially in key areas such as playgrounds, beaches and campgrounds where public safety is crucial. On general information signs, a line could be inserted to direct LEPs to our website where the interpreted information will be posted.
- As signs are put up or replaced new signs should be reflective off universal symbols or another language. If there is an immediate need for signs in languages other than English a request should go directly to the Commissioner for approval.
- To train all staff, especially first point of contact personnel (cashiers, security, etc.) to assist LEPs and to understand the goals and tools involved with this plan. The Parks Operations and Enforcement division will be encouraged to participate in the Cultural Sensitivity Training. Suffolk County Parks aims to train and/or provide a refresher course to all front-line staff where needed, and the Program Examiner at Parks will manage this effort.

### **III. LEP Population Assessment**

As identified by Executive Order 10-2012, documents and signs identified in previous section would be translated into the six languages spoken by the most limited English-proficient (LEP) residents of Suffolk County: Spanish, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, French Creole and Portuguese.

Parks would provide interpretation services through the County's contracted vendor utilizing grant funds obtained by the County for LEPs using Spanish, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, French Creole and Portuguese.

### **IV. Implementation Plan Logistics**

Some of the Parks main implementation timelines are as follows:

- ❖ Parks has implemented the Language Access Plan
- ❖ Parks began with rollout of updated signs with addition of universal symbols (where applicable) and the addition of website or phone number where LEPs can see language assistance if needed
- ❖ Parks has conducted initial training for first contact staff members
- ❖ Parks will begin to provide translated content on Parks website.
- ❖ Parks has added universal symbols to Parks locations to indicate what is available at the Park
- ❖ Parks will continue to develop its internal Language Bank by soliciting volunteers from employees throughout the agency.
- ❖ To the extent possible Parks has worked to simplify documents using plain language, symbols, and other graphics to make information as readily accessible as possible. Parks will work to provide access to maps through our website with symbols for features and services like campsites or bathrooms in each park.
- ❖ Parks produces its own signs at in-house sign shops and also through sign contract services and will continue to use universal symbols whenever possible

### **V. Training**

The Parks Department will take the following steps to introduce the Language Access Plan to staff and to incorporate language access into our long term training efforts:

- ❖ Through Employee training session, staff will receive instruction on using “I Speak” cards as well as the dual hand-set translation services once they are obtained.
- ❖ Parks includes language access in training for all staff, especially staff at parks and permit offices, as both a refresher training and ongoing customer service training and institute the training for Park Ranger Staff.
- ❖ Parks will continue to work with its Park Administrators and non-profit partner organizations to promote language access initiatives in our largest parks and will encourage all park managers and outreach coordinators to meet with local community and partnership groups to promote the availability of these services in local parks and communities.
- ❖ Through Parks Training Programs, park and permit offices, supervisors and front desk staff receive training and hands-on practice in implementing language access including interpretation services, using “I speak” cards and Language Identification posters, requesting translation services, and required signage.
- ❖ Broadcast emails will provide introduction and regular updates and information about our Language Access Plan to all staff.

## **VI. Record Keeping and Evaluation**

Parks will take the following steps to ensure the quality of language access services:

- ❖ Parks will evaluate signage and written documentation each year to determine what updates and changes need to be made
- ❖ Parks will formally report when and how often “I speak” cards and dual handset translation services are used each year.

Parks will maintain the following records:

- ❖ Parks will track all language line interpretation and translation services through our Customer Service offices. This will be reported internally on a semi-annual basis.
- ❖ Parks will track the number and type of translated signs produced annually.
- ❖ Parks Customer Service will, to the extent practical, maintain digital copies of all translated documents and record the number of translated documents.