

Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District



General Department Policies

Section Title:

**Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation
District Language Access Plan**

Language Access Designee:

Corey Humphrey, District Manager

Effective Date: 5/17/2019

I. AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT AND BACKGROUND

Mission Statement

The mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District (SCSWCD) is to conserve the natural resources of Suffolk County through planning, design, and implementation of conservation practices that control and prevent soil erosion, sedimentation, flooding and non-point source pollution, assist in the irrigation and drainage of agricultural lands, preserve wildlife, and protect public lands.

Background

The Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) provides technical assistance and services for:

- Agriculture – Conservation planning through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) process, management and design of sprinkler and micro-irrigation systems, design and implementation of engineering and agronomic practices to reduce soil erosion, design of Agrichemical Handling Facilities and assistance in the NYS Agricultural Value Assessment Program. The District Manager is a member of the Suffolk County Farmland Committee serving as a technical advisor for onsite evaluations and recommendations.
- Non-point Source Pollution – Recommendations for Nutrient and Pesticide Management, recommendations to control storm water surface runoff and Watershed delineations.
- Water Quality and Nitrogen Reduction – Promote the County's agricultural industry while protecting Long Island's groundwater and surface waters through successful agricultural stewardship efforts.

- Erosion and Sediment Control – Development or review of Erosion and Sediment Control Plans for construction sites, reviews subdivision plans and conducts site inventories and evaluations for Erosion and Sediment Control and flooding issues. These efforts include hosting several mandatory NYSDEC Four Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Trainings for contractors, municipal partners, Suffolk County employees and the general public. The SWCD is a participant in the Suffolk County’s North Shore Coastal Erosion Task Force.
- Open Space Management – Develop New York State Law “Conservation Plans” (regarding conservation of natural resources), recommend wildlife habitat improvements or development, recommend plant materials and address invasive species management. The District Manager is a member of the Suffolk County Farmland Committee serving as a technical advisor for onsite evaluations and recommendations.
- Resource Inventory and Evaluation – Suffolk County and other local municipalities inventory and evaluate natural resource concerns upon request. Soils Information - Soil Maps are available in book form or paper maps for all areas of Suffolk County showing the boundaries of soils as classified by the USDA. Boundary maps are displayed on an aerial photo base map, and descriptions of soil types are also available as they pertain to land use
- Soil Group Worksheets – includes determining soil types, according to the New York State Soils List, on a tax map parcel(s) in order to assess agricultural values for the purpose of partial reduction in Real Property Taxes for Eligible Farmland in NYS. The landowner brings the completed Soil Group worksheet to their respective township to apply for tax reduction.
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II. AGENCY LANGUAGE ACCESS GOALS

Meaningful Access

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District Suffolk is subject to Suffolk County Executive Order #10-2012, which requires agencies, departments, and divisions of Suffolk County government to take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons having limited English proficiency have access to county programs and services. The SCSWCD is therefore obligated to take reasonable steps to ensure that limited English proficient (LEP) persons can access services and benefits. A LEP person is someone whose primary language is other than English, and whose ability to read, write, speak, or comprehend English is limited.

The SCSWCD is tasked to conserve the natural resources of Suffolk County through planning, design, and implementation of conservation practices that control and prevent soil erosion, sedimentation, flooding and non-point source pollution, assist in the irrigation and drainage of agricultural lands, preserve wildlife, and protect public lands. To perform these tasks effectively and efficiently, the SCSWCD personnel must be able to communicate with the all the residents of Suffolk County.

To that end, the SCSWCD has developed a language access plan. The purpose of the plan is to identify those measures the Department has taken to ensure that LEP persons have ready access to all of our services and benefits of the SCSWCD.

Current Policy

Most individuals living in the United States read, write, speak and understand English. There are many individuals, however, for whom English is not their primary language. If these individuals have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English, they are limited English Proficient, or "LEP." In other words, an individual with a primary language other than English who must, due to limited fluency in English, communicate in that primary language in order to have an equal opportunity to participate effectively in, or benefit from any aid, service, or benefit provided by SCSWCD.

Currently, the SCSWCD communicates with LEP persons in their primary language, using either bilingual employees or Language Line Solutions, a telephonic interpretation and translation service. These services are provided at no cost whenever the Department services a LEP person, or whenever a LEP person requests language assistance services. As a matter of policy, the Department does not allow the child of a LEP person to interpret for the client, nor do we engage another adult to interpret for the client, except in the case of an emergency or imminent danger. Written documents deemed 'vital' to the various functional areas of the Department have been translated into Spanish, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, French Creole and Portuguese.

Existing Language Assistance Services

The SCSWCD has provided and will continue to provide, language assistance services to all who require language assistance services. Language assistance includes both interpretations (orally converting one language, the source language, to the target language, while retaining the same meaning) and translation (converting written text from the source language to the target

language). As previously noted, language assistance services are provided by bilingual staff and by a private contractor.

Suffolk County, SCSWCD and our partner agencies have contracted with Language Line Solutions to provide telephonic interpretation and translation services in multiple languages including Spanish, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, French Creole, and Portuguese. The Department maintains contact information for Language Line Solutions in all its offices, and that information has been circulated agency wide.

III. LEP POPULATION ASSESSMENT

Methodology for Language Assessment

Based on US Census data, more specifically, the 2007-2011 American Community Survey, the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District has determined that within the LEP population, the most frequently spoken languages county wide are Spanish/Spanish Creole, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, French Creole, and Portuguese speakers.

Language Spoken at Home By Ability to Speak English, For the Population Ages 5 and Over, For the Period 2007 – 2011

	<i>Total Persons Age 5 or Older</i>	<i>Speaks English "Very Well"</i>	<i>Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"</i>
<i>Spanish or Spanish Creole</i>	166, 141	79, 112	87, 029
<i>Italian</i>	17, 223	12, 659	4, 564
<i>Chinese</i>	10, 552	5, 512	5, 040
<i>French Creole</i>	7, 932	4, 284	3, 648
<i>Polish</i>	7, 797	4, 394	3, 403
<i>Portuguese</i>	5, 176	2, 696	2, 480

Signage has been posted in the lobby of SCSWCD offices in multiple languages, to advise clients that interpreters are available at no charge to LEP individuals. Additionally, the Department provides translated forms and documents available for LEP persons upon request.

IV. Implementation

Organizational Commitment

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District language access plan was implemented in May of 2013, and is updated as needed.

General Roles and Responsibilities

The Department's senior and mid-level managers will ensure that all SCSWCD employees comply with the agency's language access policy to communicate with clients, their families, and other involved parties in their primary language.

The Department's 'Language Access Designee,' District Manager Corey Humphrey, or the designee, Principal Account Clerk Susan Odell-Pepe, will monitor the contractor providing telephonic translation and interpretation services and maintain records related to those services; ensure that language identification information is posted Department-wide; review and update as necessary the Department's list of bilingual employees; review the Department's catalog of written materials to ensure that vital documents have been translated; and in conjunction with the Department Head, review and update the Department's language access plan as necessary.

Action Items

➤ Data Collection

Review historical data on our contracted language assistance services so as to identify utilization access trends.

➤ Information Dissemination

Beginning on 5/17/2019, and annually thereafter, all Department employees will receive written notification on (1) how to obtain language assistance from the pool of bilingual staff and (2) how to access telephonic language interpretation and translation services from the contractor. The listing of bilingual staff will include the employee's name, bilingual language, duty station, and telephone number.

➤ Notification to the Public

The Department will display 'Language Identification Card' posters in all public waiting areas, informing clients about free language assistance resources.

➤ Document Translation

The Department has identified, and will continue to identify, all its vital documents and provide for the translation of those documents into a language or languages, as determined by the results of our language assessment.

➤ Community Review

On an annual basis, the Language Access Coordinator or the designee will assess demographic data, review the language access services utilization rate and as needed, consult with community-based organizations to determine the need to translate vital documents into a language other than Spanish.

V. Service Provision Plan

Identifying and Documenting Primary Language

When interacting with a LEP person, their family, or another interested party, Department staff can identify the person's primary language by using a "Language Identification Card."

Securing Oral Language Assistance

Employees will inform the LEP person that the Department provides free language assistance services. If the person requests an interpreter, one will be provided.

When communicating with a LEP person by telephone, if a bilingual employee is not available, or if the LEP person's primary language is not Spanish, the employee will use the Department's contractor, Language Line Solutions, to enable that communication by following these steps:

When receiving a call:

- Use Conference Hold to place the LEP person on hold
- Dial 1-866-874-3972 and provide the 6 digit client ID number
- Press 1 for Spanish or Press 2 for all other languages. At the prompt, speak the name of the language needed. If assistance is needed to identify the language, press 0 and stay on the line
- Provide the building's 4 digit access code
- Brief the interpreter
- Add the LEP person to the call

When placing a call:

- Begin by dialing 1-866-874-3972, then follow the above instructions

Translation of Written Materials

The Department has identified those documents considered vital to the supervision, investigation, and intake functions. A list of these vital documents will be maintained and updated, as necessary, by the Department's Language Access Coordinator or the designee. Although a private contractor will provide document translation services, whenever possible, documents will be translated by the Department's bilingual (Spanish speaking) employees.

Department staff should enlist the assistance of bilingual employees to provide sight translation of a non-vital document as may be requested by the LEP person.

VI. Complaint Process

The SCSWCD will take all reasonable measures to ensure that LEP persons receive free language assistance services in their primary language. Should a LEP person assert that they did

not receive adequate language assistance, the LEP person will be advised to submit a written complaint, using the Language Access Complaint Form available on line. The Language Access Coordinator or the designee will promptly review, investigate, and respond in writing to that complaint.

VII. Training

The SCSWCD will disseminate information regarding its language assistance program to new workers during employee orientation. Current staff will receive this information during periodic section and/or meetings. Additionally, an 'all Department' memo will be issued no less than once each year, detailing key aspects of the Department's language access plan.

VIII. Record Keeping

The Language Access Coordinator, or the designee, will monitor the Department's language assistance program by collecting and reviewing any data deemed relevant to the program.

IX. Future Planning

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to providing effective and efficient language services to LEP persons. To that end, the SCSWCD will:

- (1) Examine population and language trends in the county on an annual basis
- (2) Examine demographic data annually
- (3) Review its catalog of vital documents, adding or removing documents from that catalog as necessary

Enhancements to the existing plan will be implemented as needed, and as circumstances allow.

Appendix A: EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 10 – 2012

Countywide Language Access Policy

WHEREAS, Suffolk County is a linguistically diverse county in which 20 percent of the County's population over 5 years old speaks a language other than English at home, and nearly 10 percent of the people in Suffolk County are English-language learners or they are limited-English proficient, insofar as English is not their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English, thereby presenting potential barriers to accessing important government programs or services;

WHEREAS, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits agencies that receive federal funds for programs or activities from discriminating against persons on the basis of race, color or national origin; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 13166 (August 11, 2000), federally-funded agencies must take reasonable steps to ensure that people who have limited English proficiency (LEP) have access to the recipient's programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the public safety, health, economic prosperity, and general welfare of all Suffolk County residents is furthered by increasing language access to County programs and services; and

WHEREAS, the County is committed to ensuring that language access services are implemented in a cost effective and efficient manner;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Steven Bellone, the County Executive of Suffolk County, by virtue of the authority vested in me pursuant to the authority of the Suffolk County Charter and Suffolk County Administrative Code, do hereby order as follows:

Definitions.

For purposes of this Order:

"Direct public services" means services administered by an agency directly to program beneficiaries and/or participants. For agencies that provide services to the public that are not programmatic in nature, such as emergency services, the provisions of this order shall be implemented to the greatest degree practicable.

"Executive County agencies" mean the agencies, departments and divisions of Suffolk County government overseen by the Suffolk County Executive as their administrative head.

"Vital documents, including essential public documents" means those documents most commonly distributed to the public that contain or elicit important and necessary information regarding the provision of basic County services.

Language Access Requirements

1. *Executive County agencies that provide direct public services shall, in all relevant programs and services, competently translate vital documents, including essential public documents such as forms and instructions provided to or completed by program beneficiaries or participants. The translation shall be in the six most common non-English languages spoken by individuals with limited-English proficiency in the County of Suffolk, based on United States*

census data, and relevant to services offered by each of such agencies. Competent translation shall mean a trans-language rendition of a written message in which the translator comprehends the source language and can write comprehensively in the target language to convey the meaning intended in the source language. Agencies shall not use online translation tools such as Google Translate, Yahoo!, babel fish, or comparable services. Translation shall be achieved on a rolling basis to be completed no later than 365 days from the signing of the Order.

2. Each such agency, in all relevant programs and services, shall provide competent interpretation services between the agency and an individual in his or her primary language with respect to the provision of services or benefits. Competent interpretation shall mean a trans-language rendition of a spoken message in which the interpreter comprehends the source language and can speak comprehensively in the target language to convey the meaning intended in the source language. The interpreter shall know relevant terminology and provide accurate interpretations by choosing equivalent expressions that convey the best matching and meaning to the source language and capture to the greatest possible extent, all nuances intended in the source message.

3. Each such agency shall publish a language access plan that will reflect how the agency will comply with this Order and all progress since it last submitted a language access plan. Such plan shall be issued within 90 days of the signing of this Order, and updated every two years thereafter.

4. Each language access plan shall set forth, at a minimum, the following:

a. When and by what means the agency will provide, or is already providing, language assistance services;

b. The titles of all available documents and the languages into which they have been translated;

c. The number of public contact positions in the agency and the number of fully bilingual employees in public contact positions, including the languages they speak;

d. A training plan for agency employees which includes, at minimum, annual training on the language access policies of the agency and how to provide language assistance services;

e. A plan for annual internal monitoring of the agency's compliance with this Order;

f. A plan of how the agency intends to notify the population of offered language assistance services; and

g. A language access coordinator at the agency, who shall be publicly identified.

5. The language access coordinator for each such agency shall monitor the agency's compliance with this Order by annual collecting data on the provision of language assistance services, the availability of translated materials, whether signage is properly posted, and any other

relevant measures. The monitoring plan shall include feedback from the public, community groups, and other stakeholders.

6. Use of language services shall not be deemed by any county employee as a basis for inquiring into confidential information relating to immigration status or other personal or private attributes. No county employee shall inquire about or disclose confidential information including, but not limited to, immigration status, unless such inquiry or disclosure is required by law.

7. The Deputy County Executive for Intergovernmental Affairs shall oversee, coordinate and provide guidance to agencies in implementing this Order and ensure that the provision of services by agencies meets acceptable standards of translation or interpretation.

Dated: November 14, 2012

*Steven Bellone
Suffolk County Executive*

*cc: Regina M. Calcaterra, Chief Deputy County Executive
Fred Pollert, Deputy County Executive
Jon Schneider, Deputy County Executive
Hon. Joseph Sawicki, Jr., Comptroller
Hon. Judith A. Pascale, County Clerk
Hon. Thomas J Spota, District Attorney
Hon. Vincent F. DeMarco, Sheriff
Hon. Angie M. Carpenter, County Treasurer
Hon. William J. Lindsay, Presiding Officer
Hon. DuWayne Gregory, Legislator
Hon. John M. Kennedy, Legislator*

Appendix A: List of Important Forms and Documents

- Annual Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Director's Meeting Schedule
- Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
- Conservation Plant Material Information Sheets
- Wildlife Management Information and Assistance Guides
- Education Materials
- Program Opportunities