

City of Houston

Executive Orders

EO 1-17

Language Access

July 31, 2013

- Policy
- E.O. 1-17 -- [Language Access](#) -- 07.31.2013

1. AUTHORITY 1.1 Article VI, Section 7a, of the City Charter of the City of Houston.

2. PURPOSE 2.1 Establish policies for providing information about City services, programs and activities to residents and visitors with limited English language proficiency (LEP).

3. OBJECTIVES 3.1 Houston is an international city of commerce, culture, trade, travel, and tourism. Over 100 different languages are spoken in Houston's neighborhoods. All Houston residents and visitors, regardless of their proficiency level in English, should have access to essential public information about City programs, services and activities.

3.2 While continuous efforts shall be maintained by implementing and expounding on a department's language access protocols, it is understood that this multiphase process shall be enacted and improved upon over an extended period of time.

4. SCOPE 4.1 This policy applies to all City departments.

5. DEFINITIONS *Essential Public Information* - Any information developed or used by the department and deemed vital for purposes of public safety, public health and economic development.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES 6.1 All City departments that provide services directly to the public shall designate a Language Access Coordinator (Coordinator) within 60-days of this Executive Order to effect the creation and execution of the department's Language Access policy and implementation plan. The Coordinators will serve as their department's liaison, and they will work regularly with the Mayor's language access designee.

6.2 The Mayor's Office Language Access Designee shall be the Office of

International Communities, which shall assist in the provision of language services to the public and will provide technical assistance to City departments in providing such services.

7. POLICIES

7.1 When feasible, the City shall begin implementing essential public information for a minimum of the top 5 commonly-used languages utilized by the City's culturally diverse population. The City will depend on a variety of relevant sources (example: US Census) to determine the commonly-used languages. The information will be available via effective communications channels, including but not limited to the City's website at <http://www.houstontx.gov>.

7.2 All City departments that provide services directly to the public shall provide information about LEP services by developing and implementing department or agency-specific language access plans shall be submitted to the Mayor's Office within six months of the issuance of this Executive Order.

7.3 Each department will receive, from the Mayor's language access designee, technical assistance and resources to assist in the development and implementation of their language access plan.

7.4 City employees who routinely have direct, substantive interaction with the public (front-line employees) shall be trained in language access policies and procedures that shall include protocols for assisting LEP populations. Training shall be provided by the Mayor's designee.

7.5 Reporting

7.5.1 All Coordinators shall report plan progress, assessments and recommendations periodically to department heads and the Mayor's designee.

7.5.2 The Mayor's Designee will establish a reporting format, report submission interval and technical assistance to departments. Reporting logistics should be established within 6 months of this Executive Order.

7.5.3 The Mayor's Designee will work with the Coordinators to develop protocols used to measure the progress by the department, as well as by feedback from the public constituencies with limited English proficiency served by the City department.