

# MAYOR'S OFFICE to COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN: 2015

## 1. Agency Mission and Background

### **Mission**

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV), established in 2001, oversees the citywide delivery of domestic violence services, develops policies and innovative programs, and works with diverse communities, City agencies, community based organizations and local leaders to raise awareness about domestic violence and strengthen the safety net for victims and their children.

### **Direct Services**

#### **New York City Family Justice Centers**

The New York City Family Justice Centers (FJCs) provide comprehensive multi-agency services for victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, and sex trafficking. Located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan, the Centers are co-located with the local District Attorney's Office and have NYPD Domestic Violence Prevention Officers (DVPOs) and staff from over 35 community partners on-site to offer counseling services for adults and children, civil legal assistance, immigration assistance, economic empowerment and supportive services. The FJCs are safe, caring environments, the services are free and confidential and all are welcome regardless of language, income, immigration status, gender identity or sexual orientation. In 2014, the Family Justice Centers served 36,517 unique clients of which 9,860 (27%) spoke a primary language other than English. Specifically, in 2014, clients at the Family Justice Center identified as speaking 78 different primary languages.

#### **Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT)**

*Staten Island DVRT* seeks to reduce the incidence of homicide by providing rapid response to high risk cases of intimate partner violence. DVRT facilitates interagency coordination and collaboration and creates individualized action plans to quickly and effectively meet the service and safety needs of clients. In 2014, Staten Island DVRT assisted 44 clients of which 4 spoke a primary language other than English.

*NYCHA DVRT* operates in 15 identified public housing developments throughout the City. In addition to providing services to high risk clients, NYCHA DVRT also conducts a robust outreach and public education campaign to raise awareness about healthy relationships and link residents directly to services at the FJCs. The NYCHA DVRT program started in January 2015 and anticipates assisting 550 clients annually.

#### **NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy**

The NYC Healthy Relationship Training Academy offers interactive workshops on dating violence and cyber abuse for adolescents, young adults, parents and service providers. Workshops are facilitated by trained Peer Educators who encourage discussion and critical thinking about these challenging topics. On-site workshops are free and offered in English and Spanish year-round throughout New

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York City. The Healthy Relationship Academy workshops are available in English and Spanish. In 2014, the Academy provided 261 workshops to over 5,539 youth.

**2. Agency Language Access Goal**

OCDV aims to continue to make agency services available to New Yorkers with limited English proficiency (LEP) so that language will never be a barrier to receive help. OCDV will continue to provide multilingual domestic violence information to the public through our educational materials, which are available online. OCDV staff will continue to partner with both professional translation/interpretation companies and domestic violence community organizations to ensure quality translation of materials and interpretation services.

**3. Identification and Assessment of LEP Communities**

OCDV utilizes the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) "Four Factor Analysis" to aid in determining the language access needs of the agency:

**Factor 1: The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service population:**

OCDV, utilizing the United States Census, American Community Survey, 2009-2014, has determined the most common limited English proficiency languages in our services areas. The following chart reflects the top 5 languages Citywide and by borough:

Rank	Citywide	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
1	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
2	Chinese	French	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Russian
3	Russian	Chinese	Russian	French	Korean	Chinese
4	French Creole	Italian	French Creole	Japanese	Russian	Italian
5	Korean	Arabic	Yiddish	Korean	Polish	Arabic

**Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the agency:**

In 2014, the Family Justice Centers served 36,517 unique clients of which 9,860 (27%) spoke a primary language other than English. Specifically, in 2014, clients at the Family Justice Center identified as speaking 78 different primary languages. OCDV, analyzing the primary language of clients, has determined the most common primary languages of our Family Justice Center Clients during 2014. The following chart reflects the top 5 languages Citywide and by borough:

Rank	Citywide	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens	Staten Island
1	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
2	Russian	Arabic	Russian	Chinese	Chinese	Polish
3	Chinese	French	Bengali	Amharic	Bengali	French
4	Arabic	Bengali	Chinese	French	Arabic	Ukrainian
5	Bengali	Korean	Arabic	Bambara	Russian	Russian

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### **Factor 3: Explanation of the nature and importance of the programs/services for the LEP**

**person requiring language assistance:** OCDV through the Family Justice Centers and the Domestic Violence Response Teams provide services to all victims who reside in the program's service area. The FJCs and DVRT programs serve all clients regardless of their English language proficiency. Domestic violence can be complicated and victims seeking help often require a variety of services to be provided simultaneously in order to increase their safety. The specific services needs depends on each individual client's situation but may include counseling, safety planning, civil legal assistance and/or a meeting with a prosecutor and the police. Because each of these services are often critical, language services are crucial. Additionally, it is important that victims can tell their story in their own language particularly when filing police reports or petitions for orders of protection.

**Factor 4: The resources available to the agency and the cost of providing services:** The staff at the Family Justice Centers and the DVRT programs have access to Language Line interpretation and translation services to assist clients. In addition, at the Family Justice Centers, have access to:

1. Multilingual staff from diverse community-based organizations located onsite;
2. Language Line dual-handset telephones in key areas of the Center and all onsite staff can access Language Line from any Center telephone;
3. Large posters obtained from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Office of Operations are placed in the reception areas which indicate that free interpretation services are available. In addition, point to your language posters are also displayed that indicate that interpretation services are provided at no cost;
4. The Center's telephone auto attendant, which answers the main telephone number, is currently available in multiple languages; and
5. The FJCs informational one-page handout which describes the services available at the Centers and provides their locations and travel information is available in 13 languages, including: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Haitian-Creole, Hindi, Korean, Japanese, Polish, Spanish and Urdu.

The DVRT program staff have access to:

1. Multilingual staff that speak.....
2. The DVRT program informational one-page handout which describes the services available and contact information is currently available in 2 languages – English and Spanish, with translations in Chinese and Russian available by August 15, 2015.

In 2014, OCDV paid \$115,550 for interpretation and translations services.

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### 4. Providing Language Assistance Services

OCDV staff interaction with the public includes direct in person meetings, as well as, telephone and written communication. The following provides an outline of language assistance services through specific OCDV programs:

Family Justice Center: I speak posters and cards are located in the reception area of each Family Justice Center so that staff can identify the language spoken by the client and if interpretation services are required. If a client indicates that they need assistance staff is trained to use the Language Line telephone interpretation service or to identify an onsite staff member that speaks the client's language. During initial screening for services, the client is specifically asked their primary language and if they would prefer services to be provided in their primary language. If the client identifies as needing language interpretation services, the client is linked to a staff member who speaks their language or Language Line telephone interpretation service is utilized.

All staff at the Family Justice Center have access to the language or Language Line telephone interpretation service

Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT): Domestic Violence Response Team clients are asked during initial screening their primary language and if they would prefer services to be provided in their primary language. If the client identifies as needing language interpretation services, the client is linked to a staff member who speaks their language or Language Line telephone interpretation service is utilized. All DVRT staff have access to the language or Language Line telephone interpretation service

### 5. Future Goals

1. **Language Access Complaints:** OCDV has designated a staff member to be the point of contact for all language access complaints received through 311. This staff member will review all complaints and speak with the relevant OCDV staff member overseeing the program through which the complaint originated and seek to resolve any language access issues. The 311 complaint information will be reviewed and analyzed quarterly to identify any trends.
2. **Secure Language Services:** OCDV, through the five District Attorney's Offices, have access to interpretation and translation services for the Family Justice Centers and the DVRT programs.
3. **Develop Emergency Preparedness Plan:** OCDV will continue to use, as appropriate, Language Line telephonic interpretation and multilingual staff to provide services during citywide emergencies. OCDV will review with staff the use of these services during a citywide emergency and update our emergency preparedness plan as appropriate.
4. **Language Access Training:** Family Justice Center staff and community-based onsite partners are provided language access training during their orientation. OCDV will review this

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- training and update as necessary. OCDV will also ensure that all OCDV staff, including DVRT staff, are also provided language access training.
5. **Continuing Language Access Training:** OCDV will develop a protocol and procedure to ensure that all staff are provided language access training every year.
  6. **Commissioner Language Access Letter:** The OCDV Commissioner will send a letter to all staff reminding them of the agency's obligations under the City language access policy once a year. The 2015 letter will be sent out by August 30, 2015.
  7. **Annual LEP Needs Assessment:** OCDV will use appropriate Census, American Community Survey and agency client information to conduct an annual limited English proficiency needs assessment. As appropriate, the LEP needs assessment will be utilized to update the agency's Language Access Plan.
  8. **Semi-Annual Language Access Surveys:** Language access questions will be incorporated into the semi-annual client satisfaction surveys conducted by the Family Justice Centers and the Domestic Violence Response Teams. OCDV staff and community-based partner will also be survey regarding language access at the OCDV programs.
  9. **Create Plan to Communicate LEP Community During Emergency:** OCDV will partner with Consulates to develop a communication strategy to the LEP community during an emergency.

### Evaluation

OCDV plans to do a complete review of its Language Access Plan once a year. The evaluation will include:

1. **Annual LEP Needs Assessment:** OCDV will use appropriate Census, American Community Survey and agency client information to conduct an annual limited English proficiency needs assessment
2. **Monitoring of Interpretation and Translation Services:** OCDV will monitor the languages most frequently identified as a client's primary language, the use of multilingual staff for interpretation and the utilization of Language Line telephone interpretation and translation services to identify the most common languages.
3. **Analysis of LEP Surveying:** OCDV will review the responses to the LEP survey questions to identify common themes and trends that may indicate issues with LEP language access.
4. **Surveying Staff and Community Partners:** OCDV will review the responses to the LEP survey questions to identify common themes and trends that may indicate issues with LEP language access; and
5. **Periodic LEP Inspections:** OCDV staff will visit the Family Justice Centers periodically to determine that appropriate LEP posters are displayed.

The LEP evaluation will be utilized to ensure that OCDV is meeting its obligations under the City's language access policy and to update the agency's Language Access Plan.