

# **DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING (DFTA) LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY AND PLAN FY 2016**

The New York City Department for the Aging Language Access Plan complies with Local Law 73 and Executive Order No. 120 of July, 2008, titled Citywide Policy on Language Access to Ensure the Effective Delivery of City Services. DFTA has had a Language Access policy and plan since 2009. DFTA's current plan builds on the Agency's successes providing language assistance to elders with limited English proficiency.

## **Department for the Aging Mission and Scope of Services**

### **Agency Mission**

DFTA is the lead Mayoral agency addressing public policy and service issues affecting elderly residents of New York City. Through its community partners and direct service units DFTA serves more than 300,000 older New Yorkers. DFTA is also the largest agency in the Federal network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's). In this capacity, the Department advocates on legislative, regulatory, and socio-economic issues that affect older adults.

DFTA's mission is to work for the empowerment, independence, dignity and quality of life of New York City's diverse older adults and for the support of their families through advocacy, education, and the coordination and delivery of services.

The goals of DFTA's programs and initiatives are:

1. To foster older persons' independence, respect their choices, eradicate ageism and promote opportunities for sharing their leadership, knowledge, and skills;
2. To inform and educate the general public about aging issues, services, supports, and opportunities for older New Yorkers and their families;
3. To be a catalyst for increased resources to enhance and expand programs and services for older New Yorkers;
4. To ensure the provision of quality services fairly and equitably to older New Yorkers;
5. To enhance and expand effective, productive partnerships with consumers, advocates, private and public organizations.

## **Services Provided by the Department for the Aging**

### **Community-based Services**

DFTA provides the majority of its services through contracts with community-based and other organizations. DFTA-funded community services include case management, home delivered meals, home care, transportation, congregate programs for older adults (senior center services), caregiver services and elder abuse prevention and intervention services.

### **Services Provided Directly by DFTA**

*Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)* conducts public outreach presentations for the elderly, community partners and other groups on Medicare, Medigap, private industry health insurance and long term care planning. HIICAP also distributes the “Complete Guide to Health Care Coverage for Older New Yorkers.”

*Senior Employment Services Unit (SESU)* provides training for positions in data processing, electronic offices, customer services, food services, security services and the home health field to older persons seeking to re-enter or advance in the workforce. It also provides job search skills workshops, career advisement, job fairs, community placement and assistance with permanent employment. Trainees must be eligible for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V). The SESU continues to expand partnerships with public and private organizations that provide on-the-job skills training and employment opportunities for older adults.

*Grandparent Resource Center* provides information, referral and counseling assistance to grandparents who have primary responsibility for their grandchildren (or other older kin caring dependent children) due to parental unavailability. The GRC supports a network of grandparent caregiver support groups across the city, and provides training to grandparents on self-advocacy and empowerment, support group start-up, and caregiving issues. It also provides training and presentations to community-based groups and City government employees on grandparent caregiver needs.

*Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center (ECVRC)* provides counseling and supportive services to older persons who are victims of elder abuse or crime in New York City. It also provides training to groups that work with older adults on how to identify signs of abuse and provide intervention. The ECVRC works with its partners – including the Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence, the Family Justice Center(s) and the five community-based organizations funded by DFTA to provide elder abuse services – to ensure that older victims receive crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, information and assistance, emergency financial assistance, security device installation, and legal services.

*Alzheimer’s and Caregivers Resource Center* provides caregivers, professionals, and the general public with information, referral, consultations, technical assistance, trainings, and

other caregiver support services. The Alzheimer's Resource Center provides both phone and walk-in assistance to persons with caregiving issues.

***Long Term Care Unit*** oversees DFTA's contracts with providers of case management, home care and home-delivered meals. Its interactions with the public include answering phone inquiries and helping to resolve client complaints and other issues brought to its attention directly, by the City's Siebel system, or 311.

***Bill Payer Program*** provides one-on-one free assistance to older persons referred by community service agencies because they need help with checkbook maintenance and bill-paying in order to continue to live independently in their communities. Services are provided by trained volunteers.

***Volunteer Resource Center*** recruits volunteers of any age to assist DFTA Units in providing services to older New Yorkers.

***Housing Unit***, located in the Bureau of Community Services, receives phone calls from the public on senior housing resources.

***Special Projects Unit***, located in the Bureau of Community Services, receives phone call inquiries from the public.

***Foster Grandparent and Intergenerational Work Study Programs*** oversee the federally funded Foster Grandparent Program, which places older persons in service to children-at-risk in public schools and hospital programs. The Unit also administers a program coordinated with the Department of Education that places high school youth in service to older persons at nursing homes and senior centers.

***Community Outreach Unit*** makes presentations on DFTA's services upon request from organizations sponsoring health and community fairs and other public events.

## **DFTA Language Access Goal and FY 2016 Language Access Objectives and Implementation Plan**

Individuals are considered LEP when they are not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows them to interact effectively with service providers. In keeping with the Department's mission to serve older New Yorkers, DFTA is committed to ensuring that limited English is not an obstacle to older LEP individuals.

DFTA's Language Access Goal is to facilitate aging services access and utilization by older LEP individuals. The goal will be met in FY 2016 through the following objectives:

### **1. Disseminate DFTA's FY 2016 Language Access Policy and Plan to staff**

- Send Language Access Memo to staff from Commissioner
- Post Language Access Policy on DFTA Intranet and Internet

- Train direct service staff on Language Access Policy and Plan
  - Apprise staff of Language Access Policy and Plan through DFTA Staff Newsletter
  - Include copy of Language Access Plan in New Staff Orientation materials
- 2. Ensure appropriate use of Language Line by DFTA direct service units.**
- Provide all DFTA's direct service units with access to Language Line.
    - o Arrange for installation of Language Line equipment in direct service units at DFTA.
    - o Arrange training by Language Line for staff of direct service units.
- 3. Ensure appropriate utilization of New York City Volunteer Language Bank by DFTA units**
- Register with Language Bank.
  - Inform staff via email and DFTA intranet of procedure for requesting Language Bank translation services.
  - Track Language Bank translation requests.
- 4. Require contract partners (community-based organizations that provide DFTA services to older New Yorkers) to provide interpreter services and take other steps to specifically address the needs of LEP individuals.**
- Revise contract to include language requiring formal interpretation services.
  - Issue new program performance standards requiring providers of DFTA services to outreach to LEP older individuals, ensure availability of interpreter services and take other steps toward linguistic and cultural competence.
  - Begin monitoring contract agency compliance with new standards.
- 5. Develop and implement plan for translation of essential documents identified by DFTA Units as priorities in FY 2016.**
- Obtain a list of specific documents requiring translation from DFTA Bureau Heads.
  - Develop a protocol for staff requests for formal translation of documents by DFTA's contracted provider and by the City's Volunteer Language Bank.
  - Maintain a record of documents translated during the fiscal year and languages into which they were translated.

**Resources Available**

- Bilingual DFTA staff.
- Access to the citywide contract for Language Line Services, which offers interpretation and translation services in over one hundred and fifty (150) languages. Note: DFTA has had a contract for interpretation services with Language Line since 2009.
- Contract with Language Service Associates for translation services.

- Access to the City’s Volunteer Language Bank, a database of multilingual city employees who have volunteered to assist in interactions /translation with LEP individuals in their native languages.

### **DFTA’s FY 2015 Language Access Achievements**

- DFTA’s Long Term Care Unit: (1) distributed oral health material (5 flyers) in Spanish, Russian, Polish, Chinese, Korean and Haitian Creole to case management agencies for distribution to clients as appropriate; (2) arranged for distribution of seven Spanish-language nutrition education hand-outs to home-delivered meals clients; (3) arranged for delivery to homebound seniors of a health education booklet in Spanish, Russian, Creole and Chinese; (4) translated the Client Consent Form for use by case management agencies into Spanish, Russian and Chinese.
- DFTA’s Bureau of Community Services continues to administer senior centers with large specific ethnic populations – Hispanic, African-American, Chinese, Korean, Polish, Italian, Russian, and a growing Indian and East Asian population. These centers provide ethnic/cultural meals and programs.
- DFTA’s Bureau of Community Services arranged for provision of Spanish language Chronic Disease Self-Management workshops to be provided at various neighborhood senior centers.
- DFTA provided Language Line interpretation to 336 callers, of whom 195 required services in Spanish, 43 in Russian, 22 in Mandarin, 20 in Cantonese, 18 in Korean, 2 in Vietnamese, 8 in Haitian-Creole, 6 in Polish, 4 in Bengali, 4 in Italian, 1 in Swahili, 3 in French, 5 in Arabic, 3 in Turkish, 1 in Swahili and 1 in Urdu.
- DFTA’s Outreach Unit participated in 17 events for non-English speaking New Yorkers, reaching approximately 1,380 Chinese speakers; 380 Spanish speakers; 70 Russian speakers; 150 Bengali speakers. Events included: the Chinese American Planning Council Family Day Fair; the Charles B. Wang Good Health Days; Sheepshead Bay Community Center; Knickerbocker Health Fair; Homecrest Community Services; Alfred Smith NORC Health Fair; Isabella Geriatric Health Fair; Hudson Guild Center Health Fair; Chinese American Planning Council Lunar New York Celebration; Annual Boishakhi Mela Celebration; Assembly Member Felix Ortiz Mother’s Day Celebration at Sunset Park; Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Metropolitan Hospital; NYS Senator Simcha Felder Community Resource Day; Maimonides Hospital/Sing Tao Daily News Annual Immigrant Day; Health Essential Association International Family Day; and Leon Von Holden Health Care Expo.
- DFTA’s HIICAP Unit published its 2015 edition of “Complete Guide to Health Care Coverage for Older New Yorkers” in English, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.
- DFTA’s Alzheimer’s and Caregiver Resource Center served individuals in the following languages: Spanish (87); Chinese (2); Russian (15); and used Language Line assistance for two persons who spoke other languages.
- DFTA’s Office of Public Affairs sent press releases to all foreign language press when the topic would be of interest to them. The Office also took out extensive advertising in the Russian, Chinese and Spanish press for specific DFTA Units. Notice of DFTA’s annual Public Hearing was promoted in the Spanish press.

## **LEP POPULATION ASSESSMENT**

### **Older New Yorkers LEP Languages**

Based on American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-13 data, the most frequent non-English languages spoken at home by older New Yorkers 60+ are Spanish (43.4%); Chinese (13.3%); Russian (9.3%); Italian (5.2%) French Creole (3.7%).

*Note: Languages spoken by a percentage of people less than 2% are not included.*

### **LEP Individuals in DFTA's 2015 Client Data Base**

DFTA reported to NAPIS that 11% of clients served by contract agencies or DFTA's direct service units during FY 2015 were LEP individuals. Of the 243,151 older persons registered in DFTA's client data base, 32,989 have a primary language other than English, and 26,636 of these can't speak or understand English. Language breakdown of these non-English speaking individuals is as follows:

- Spanish (57%)
- Chinese – includes Cantonese, Mandarin and other dialects (32%)
- Russian (5%)
- Korean (2 %)
- Polish (1%)
- Other\*\* (3%)

*\*\* Other includes fewer than 100 clients. Language distribution: Abkhazian, Afrikaans, Albanian, American Sign L, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali Bangla, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian, Catalan, Cherokee, Corsican, Creole English, Creole Spanish, Croatian, Czech, Dakota, Dutch, Egyptian(EGY), Esperanto, Estonian, Farsi, Eastern, Farsi, Western, Finnish, French, French Creole, Georgian, German, Greek, Guarani, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Interlingue, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Kirundi, Kurdish, Latin, Latvian Lettish, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malay, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Moldavian, Nepali, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Rhaeto-Romanc, Romanian, Samoan, Serbian, Serbo-Croatian, Sindhi, Singhalese, Slovak, Slovenian, Somali, Sudanese, Swahili, Swazi, Swedish, Tagalog, Taiwanese, Tamil, Tegulu, Thai, Tibetan, Toishanese, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese, Yiddish, Yoruba*

## **DFTA LANGUAGE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STAFF AND ROLES**

- Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs
  - Oversee implementation of Language Access Policy
- Deputy Commissioner for Program Operations
  - Ensure implementation of Language Access Policy as it pertains to DFTA's Bureau of Community Services, Bureau of Long Term Care, Bureau of Active Aging and Bureau of Health Care Connections
- Deputy Commissioner for Planning
  - Ensure support for Language Access Policy/Plan implementation for DFTA's research, planning, and program development units

- Director, Office of Public Affairs
  - Supervise Language Access Coordinator
- DFTA General Counsel
  - Supervise DFTA’s General Services Unit on procurement and management of Language Line contract.
- Director of Center for Organization Development and Strategic Initiatives
  - Develop/conduct trainings for direct service staff/supervisors
- Language Access Coordinator
  - Liaise with Mayor’s Office and Office of Immigrant Affairs on Language Access Policy and Plan Implementation.
  - Annually review use of language interpretation services (Language Line/Volunteer Language Bank) to identify new needs and ensure suitability of Language Line contract to DFTA needs
  - Develop communication materials promoting DFTA’s Language Access capability
  - Review English-language documents for “plain language” before translation
  - Coordinate with Volunteer Language Bank on translation requests
  - Update Language Access Plan annually.

**PROTOCOL FOR PROVISION OF LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES BY DFTA’S DIRECT SERVICE UNITS**

*Identifying customers’ language need*

All Units will take the following steps in providing service to walk-in individuals:

1. When a walk-in customer appears to be LEP, front-line staff will attempt to ascertain the primary language spoken by the customer.
2. If a customer doesn’t verbally identify his/her primary language, staff will ask “What language do you speak at home?”
3. If verbal communication is unsuccessful, staff will use a Language Identification Card to facilitate communication. Language Identification Cards will be available in all direct service units.
4. Callers to direct service units or individuals contacted by phone will be asked their preferred language for communication if it appears they are LEP.

### **Accessing Interpreter Services**

When an individual needs an interpreter, front-line staff will assign the individual to a bilingual staff person who speaks his/her language. If an appropriate bilingual worker is not available, Language Line interpreter services will be accessed.

### ***Accessing Translation Services***

*Developing protocol for translation requests is a 2016 objective of DFTA's Language Access Plan.*