



**PUBLIC REQUEST TO ADDRESS
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

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Correspondence Received

Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:				
11.	95-C	Favor	Andrew S Menor	Please refer to attached sign-on letter from L.A. community-based organizations and advocates in favor of Agenda Item #11: Supporting Immigrants in Los Angeles County.
			antonio dominguez	hola mi nombre es antonio dominguez a favor de esta propuesta numero 11 en la agenda en apoyo para los programas de inmigrantes
			Byron Jose	Fund services immigrants.
			Carlos Amador	I am in support of today's motion regarding programs for immigrant communities in Los Angeles County. I ask the Board of Supervisors to make sure that the programs that serve immigrants receive the necessary funding in the 2024-25 county budget.
			Daniel Jefferson	
			Hector Ramirez	
			Jonathan Pacheco Bell	
			Rafael Fabian	<p>Hello, my name is Rafael Fabian with COFEM in Los Angeles, CA. 90012. I am writing in support of the Immigrants Are Los Angeles Coalition. Immigrants are an indelible, prominent part of this county, one that cannot be overlooked when it comes to the problems our community faces or the solutions we can all put in place. County supervisors must respond to and include immigrants because we are a significant part of their constituency. We contribute much to this community, whether through tax revenues and economic activity, or through policy ideas that can help this county solve the truly big problems it faces.</p> <p>The motion being advanced today is the beginning of a response by the county to the concerns we expressed in our letter to the board in February. We will continue to engage in this budget process to ensure that the areas singled out in the motion: housing, worker justice, language access, and the social safety net, are substantially addressed in the final document. We want to see barriers to immigrants removed from programs, and non-budget mechanisms like an immigrant work group to review departments' language access plans, put in place to advance equity for all.</p> <p>We are eager to work with the board and county departments to move toward this goal. I continue to ask the Board of Supervisors to ensure that the programs that serve immigrants receive adequate funding in the 2024-25 county budget.</p> <p>Sincerely, Rafael Fabian</p>

The following individuals submitted comments on agenda item:				
Agenda #	Relate To	Position	Name	Comments
11.	95-C	Favor	Sara Reyes	Immigrant Angelenos make up 35 percent of the County's total population of over 10 million individuals. The immigrant community in the Los Angeles metro area contributes significantly to nearly all aspects of County life, including spending over \$108.6 billion per year and contributing over \$38 billion in state, local, and federal taxes.
			Yvonne Garcia Medrano	
		Item Total	10	
Grand Total			10	



Hello, my name is Daniel Jefferson with the Pilipino Workers Center. I am writing as part of and in support of the Immigrants Are Los Angeles Coalition.

The Pilipino Workers Center educates, organizes and mobilizes Filipino workers across Southern California with a strong focus on homecare workers. We represent members in each of the 5 County districts and advocate for our communities at every level of government.

Immigrants are an indelible, prominent part of this county, one that cannot be overlooked when it comes to the problems our community faces or the solutions we can all put in place. County supervisors must respond to and include immigrants because we are a significant part of their constituency.

We contribute much to this community, whether through tax revenues and economic activity, or through policy ideas that can help this county solve the truly big problems it faces.

The motion being advanced today is the beginning of a response by the county to the concerns we expressed in our letter to the board in February.

We will continue to engage in this budget process to ensure that the areas singled out in the motion: **housing, worker justice, language access**, and the **social safety net**, are substantially addressed in the final document. We want to see barriers to immigrants removed from programs, and non-budget mechanisms like an immigrant work group to review departments' language access plans, put in place to advance equity for all.

We are eager to work with the board and county departments to move toward this goal. I continue to ask the Board of Supervisors to **ensure that the programs that serve immigrants receive adequate funding in the 2024-25 county budget.**

Sincerely,

Daniel Jefferson

May 20, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St., Room 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Agenda Item 11: Supporting Immigrants in Los Angeles County

Dear Supervisor Solis and Supervisor Horvath:

As the County of Los Angeles finalizes their budgets for the coming year, we write in strong support of Motion 24-1853, No. 11 on the May 21, 2024, Board of Supervisors Agenda. In supporting the budget requests of Immigrants Are Los Angeles (IRLA), we urge you to prioritize and promote language justice in the County's programs, services, and operations. As you know, over half of all Angelenos speak a language other than English at home, with nearly 2.2 million residents having limited English proficiency (LEP) and using non-dominant languages. Although Spanish is a great need, there are hundreds of other languages and linguistic varieties spoken and signed in the County, including many significant language populations with LEP living in linguistic isolation. These are our most vulnerable communities who need County services now more than ever. Yet, many are left stranded when they try to access services from County departments. County departments must eliminate language barriers which stand in the way of far too many residents of LA County who are simply trying to engage their county government and access services to which they are entitled.

As you are well aware, the County of Los Angeles and its departments are subject to a wide range of existing federal and state mandates, along with implementing regulations and guidance, that provide broad anti-discrimination language rights protections. Unfortunately, these requirements have not always been followed in Los Angeles. **In practice, for languages other than Spanish, very little is translated and interpreters are rarely available.** For example, even the general programs offered by the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, which houses the Office of Immigrant Affairs, have little accessibility for those who do not use English or Spanish as their primary language. Other than the use of a Google translate bar (which carries tremendous risks of inaccurate and in some instances disrespectful communication and has not

been found to be an acceptable method of complying with language rights obligations¹), the website, portals, and phone number do not offer meaningful linguistic access beyond English and Spanish. The phone number is answered by an interactive voice response (IVR) system that asks in English only and only, whether the caller would like to proceed in English or Spanish. If a different language is requested, the IVR system states, “Sorry, I could not understand; goodbye,” after which the call ends. DCBA provides critical services related to important consumer protections and housing rights, as well as the office of the Small Claims Advisor. When we inquired about the limited languages directly with the Small Claims Advisor, we were told that they only have capacity in English and Spanish. DCBA’s programs and services can make the difference between staying housed and being evicted. With the current housing crisis, this is not only unlawful and discriminatory, but could have irreparable consequences for already isolated and vulnerable linguistically marginalized individuals and communities, who may possibly become unhoused. This is not a unique example, as many County departments have similar systemic barriers. As a result, community based and legal aid organizations, such as those who have signed below, have had to fill the void of interpreting, translating, outreaching, and disseminating critical information in multiple languages, as well as helping individuals navigate the complex county departments protocols to access services and benefits.

We are deeply disappointed that past budgets have failed to specifically lay out sufficient resources for meaningful language assistance services, including interpreter services and translated materials, for LA county residents with LEP. We implore the County to consider the budget demands put forth by Immigrants Are Los Angeles (IRLA) to ensure that the County’s budget reflects sufficient resources to provide meaningful language access to all linguistically marginalized individuals and communities. We strongly support the Motion to direct the DCBA through its Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) in partnership with relevant Departments to review IRLA’s budget requests and report back in 90 days. We provide the

¹ See Language Access in Digital Portals and Data Collection Systems, Improving Access for People with Limited English Proficiency through Effective Digital Portals and Data Collection Systems, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice, August 2023 (“Relying on machine translation or other automated translation services to create multilingual digital content, without first having that content checked for accuracy by a competent human translator, will likely lead to inaccurate or incorrect information and cause confusion for persons with LEP.”); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Nondiscrimination in Health Programs and Activities, 1557 Final Rule, 89 Fed. Reg. 37522, 37695 (May 6, 2024)(“If a covered entity uses machine translation when the underlying text is critical to the rights, benefits, or meaningful access of an individual with limited English proficiency, when accuracy is essential, or when the source documents or materials contain complex, non-literal or technical language, the translation must be reviewed by a qualified human translator.”); U.S. Department of Justice, 2023 Language Access Plan, at 13 (“Components should also ensure that all translations are completed by qualified translators. Components should avoid using machine translation alone without human review and quality control.”); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2023 Language Access Plan, at 17 (“Machine translation or other artificial intelligence applications, or software designed to convert written text from one language to another, should not be utilized without the involvement of a qualified human translator before the text reaches the intended audience.”); Memorandum of Agreement between the United States of America and Fort Bend County (FBC), Department of Justice No. 171-76-19 (<https://www.justice.gov/file/1407571/download>) (stating that the FBC “will not rely solely on the use of online or automatic translation services” to translate written materials).

following input regarding the areas of examination laid out in the motion, which promotes language justice in our linguistically diverse communities:

We strongly support conducting an assessment of IRLA's five recommendations to increase language access in the County. The creation of a **Language Access Community Consultation Group** will provide invaluable feedback on the need for meaningful language access, the reasonable steps to achieve it, and ways to support the following language justice priorities:

- **Departments should dedicate and increase resources for all language needs to ensure linguistic inclusion and equitable access for all County of LA community members.** As a general principle, each *individual* must be provided free, timely, and meaningful language services, either through multilingual staff or a qualified interpreter, when interacting with any County department. This includes protocols for the early identification and documentation of spoken/sign and written language preferences, on-demand/real-time language services through qualified interpreters and trained multilingual staff in all languages, and the provision of sight translation of written content. The Language Access Community Consultation Group can advise departments on how to best ensure adequate language assistance services for individuals with LEP accessing county services and how the County can allocate more funding to increase interpretation and translation, on-demand and real-time assistance, and other language support services in all languages.
- **Departments should dedicate a proper number of permanent staff and language service budgets, including requiring full-time Language Access Coordinators and in-house language specialists for larger public facing departments.** Ensure the coordinator has their other responsibilities restructured so they have ample time and capacity to effectively fulfill their role. For entities with 50 or more full-time (FT) public-facing staff, a minimum of one full-time staff member focused on coordinating language services should be required. Moreover, Departments should also prioritize hiring in-house bilingual language specialists, who are qualified and trained interpreters/translators, for languages used in the County of Los Angeles. Languages should be based on community needs and include historically marginalized, emerging, and isolated linguistic communities.
- **Departments should develop and implement an inclusive process for determining threshold languages for proactive translations and selection of vital documents/information within high-touch public-facing departments.** Although the list of threshold languages may vary based on the program and activity offered, in a county as diverse as Los Angeles, it is never appropriate to have only Spanish or even just a few languages. There are over 30 language groups with over 1,000 individuals with LEP in Los Angeles County. County departments offer a wide range of critically important programs and activities, and our linguistically marginalized communities in

need should not have to differentiate among and between the various departments, agencies, and components, in whether or not they will receive meaningful language access or what level of language access they will receive. Our communities should be able to equitably access all services and benefits critical to their health, safety, stability, well-being, and fundamental rights. Individuals with LEP should be able to receive written translations upon request if the document or content is not proactively translated by departments. Individuals should also receive in-language sight translations and explanations of documents and portals if they have technology-related challenges or are unable to access or read existing written translations. Community stakeholders can provide invaluable insights into effective methods to disseminate information to linguistically marginalized communities. Recordings and videos through websites, ethnic media, and social media platforms are other avenues to disseminate vital information in addition to or in lieu of written translations to inform individuals of benefits, services, and procedures. The creative use of QR codes is another option to explore, which has been used by other government agencies, in explaining forms or notices in-language through audio or video recordings. One promising example comes from Ventura County in California, where the County, in partnership with CBOs, created audio alert systems in Mixteco and Zapoteco to protect farmworkers from wildfires.² Language access plans and policies must have consistent principles, elements, requirements, and definitions across agencies, industries, and sectors.

- **Departments should have dedicated language access budgets.** Every public facing department must have a budget that lays out sufficient dedicated staffing, training, line items for qualified interpreters and translators, and resources to properly implement their language access plans and provide meaningful language access.
- **Departments should have a wide range of language service providers to meet the diverse needs of County residents.** The Language Access Community Consultation Group should provide input into and review the list of contractors available to provide translation and interpretation services to be compiled by OIA.
- **Departments should work together to develop an equitable and accessible contracting process for CBOs to provide translation and interpretation services.** This process must include adequate and timely reimbursement where applicable, alternatives to a reimbursement model, reducing administrative burdens and addressing burdensome reporting requirements.
- **Departments should enhance the bilingual skill pay and proactive recruitment of qualified bilingual staff in all languages and throughout all county departments.** Bilingual staff are key to connecting with and providing services to individuals whose primary language is not English. Bilingual staff must be properly assessed for their language, interpreting, and translating skills, as appropriate. Bilingual staff and their

² See Ventura County, CA Launches New Audio Alert System in Mixteco and Zapoteco to Protect Farmworkers from Wildfires, September 2022 (<https://mailchi.mp/mixteco/audio-alert-system>).

supervisors must be provided with clear expectations about their roles and if they are expected to deliver services directly in-language or to interpret and/or translate or both. Bilingual staff should not be used as interpreters or translators unless they have specific training, including their role as an interpreter or translator, their qualifications are assessed, and this is an expected part of their duties. Dual roles should be avoided, meaning that when serving as an interpreter, staff should not take on additional roles. Bilingual staff should have their workloads adjusted, as appropriate, so that they are not taking on disproportionate work on top of their regular duties. This will consistently and meaningfully strengthen the delivery of equitable multilingual services throughout the County and cultivate a culture of language justice.

- **On an ongoing and regular basis, Departments should conduct a wide range of trainings on language rights, language access, and language justice topics.** These can be conducted through consultants and language justice experts, as well as OIA and other in-house staff with appropriate expertise, to ensure that county staff, language specialists, contractors, and all public facing employees understand all aspects of providing meaningful language services and promoting linguistic inclusion.
- **Departments should create and implement effective systems for enforcement, accountability measures, and complaint processes for departments and OIA.** Strong enforcement mechanisms are critical in supporting the recognition that the law protects people who experience language discrimination. Clear and accessible procedures for filing, investigating, and remediating discrimination complaints should be established. These procedures must be transparent and accessible to all, including community members with LEP. Complaints should be coordinated countywide through DCBA/OIA, investigated by DCBA/OIA, and accepted in any language through a wide range of entry points and methods and should be accepted from affected individuals, advocates, and non-advocate third parties assisting individuals. Having clear procedures and compliance actions are important to accessing critical services and benefits. Departments must enhance efforts in providing technical assistance, support, and engagement, in addition to strong and effective enforcement around language rights. Detailed guidance and directives, letters, and memos on language access topics and engagement efforts with government agencies, components, recipients, and advocates can strengthen compliance.

We also stand in strong support of providing support for community-based organizations working with linguistically marginalized communities through **capacity building and outreach grants**, as well as **expediting formal contracts for interpreting and translation services**. Community-based organizations have disproportionately taken on the burdens of outreach and education, and the actual provision of language services, for far too long. The County of Los Angeles must engage in meaningful partnerships with trusted community stakeholders to ensure that our culturally and linguistically marginalized communities understand their language rights and ability to seek meaningful language services when interacting with the County of Los

Angeles. This will ensure that each individual is provided with appropriate culturally responsive language services by requiring an increased use of a qualified network of contractors for all languages to meet current needs. This network must include community-based organizations who are the trusted messengers in their communities and can provide the most effective culturally and linguistically competent services to the communities they serve.

The need for a **centralized language services hub for the county, Language.LACounty.gov**, is also a greatly needed resource, which should be explored and implemented. We also strongly support the IRLA recommendation to **increase funding for OIA to properly implement, enforce, monitor, evaluate, and revise the County's Language Access Policy**. This includes approving dedicated full time staffing and other training, consultants, and resources necessary to promote language justice through the County Language Access Policy. As support for smaller departments with fewer language resources, DCBA should prioritize hiring in-house language specialists, who are qualified and trained interpreters/translators, for languages used in the County of Los Angeles. Again, languages should be based on community needs and include historically marginalized, emerging, and isolated linguistic communities.

With respect to the other items in the Motion, we request that the analysis of the **Los Angeles County Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA) eligible programs for immigrants**, exploration of the viability of a **Worker's Justice Fund through DCBA's Office of Labor Equity**, and evaluation of opportunities for the economic wellbeing of immigrants through **DCBA's Center for Financial Empowerment**, include **recommendations and strategies specifically on how to improve language services planning, policies, protocols, and practices within each of these programs**. Many of our linguistically marginalized community members have reported they are simply unable to access County housing, employment, and economic programs and services due to language barriers.

Although language barriers are not new, they became greatly exposed and exacerbated during the pandemic, as critical services and benefits have been in constant flux in their accessibility and operations. Many County departments have shifted to an increased reliance on complex phone trees, websites, and online portals. Digital spaces and websites must have clear and easy-to-navigate in-language links to multilingual information and videos in various languages on websites. Phone lines must have a simple and accessible path to a live person where language services can be provided in real-time. There should also be taglines in more languages notifying the public of the right to services in their preferred language with corresponding contact information. We continue to be profoundly concerned that individuals with LEP are neither receiving accurate and timely information in a culturally and linguistically accessible manner nor can they obtain related benefits and services. Many community members who do not obtain the assistance of legal aid or other services fall through the cracks and simply do not obtain critical services and benefits. Best practices for serving non-dominant language users center on holistic

planning to implement and enforce a wide range of elements to ensure meaningful access, not on quick-fix tech-based solutions like Google Translate or use of minimally trained bilingual staff and volunteers. There should be a focus on working with trained professionals and intersecting with practices that proactively address low literacy and the digital divide.

While we strongly support the requests by IRLA and the above priorities for the upcoming budget cycle, we also maintain and reiterate that much more must be done to ensure that each County resident has meaningful access to all its services, benefits, programs, and activities. County departments must have resources to implement a detailed plan and set of protocols per the County Language Access Policy. This includes: 1) conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, 2) implementing protocols that proactively and accurately identify language needs, utilizing qualified interpreters in real-time for all languages and qualified translators to translate informing materials, contracting with multiple language services providers, including community based organizations, 3) recruiting and retaining multilingual staff, 4) providing written, audio, and video translations of vital information and documents by qualified human translators (not solely by machines or other types of artificial intelligence) that are transmitted to individuals who need them, collecting and analyzing data, conducting outreach, 5) engaging and partnering with community based organizations and stakeholders, 6) regular training staff, 7) notice to LA residents of their right to free language assistance services, and 8) ensuring there is appropriate funding, monitoring, evaluation, and oversight. Providing *meaningful language access* includes a holistic approach that combines these various elements and strategic plans to provide these services effectively.³ The County must develop, implement, and enforce these requirements and plans internally and in partnership with community organizations, so all constituents are informed of their rights and can meaningfully access critical County services.

With the budget process rolling out, we urge the Board of Supervisors and all County Departments to enhance systems and services that recognize, honor, and celebrate our County's diverse communities and their vast language abilities. Thank you.

³ See 42 U.S.C. § 2000d and its implementing regulations, 28 C.F.R. § 42.401 *et al*; U.S. Department of Justice, Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 67 Fed. Reg. 41455 (2002); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 68 Fed. Reg. 47311 (2003); U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 72 Fed. Reg. 2732 (2007). Other federal statutes with language rights obligations include, but are not limited to, the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601-19 (Fair Housing Act). See also Executive Orders 13166 and 13985; state civil rights statutes (not exhaustive) Cal. Gov. Code §11135; Cal. Gov. Code §12955; Cal Civ. Code §51.

Sincerely,

AAPI Equity Alliance
Hoang Nguyen, Director of External Affairs

Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California
Bonnie Fong, Director of Language Justice (BFong@AJSOCAL.org)

Asian Resources, Inc.
Doreena Wong, Policy Director (dwong@asianresources.org)

Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
Gloria Cruz, Director of Policy and Advocacy

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
Joann Lee, Special Counsel (jlee@lafla.org)

Little Tokyo Service Center
Erich Nakano, Executive Director

Long Beach Language Justice Coalition
Joanna Diaz (joannaddiaz7@gmail.com)

South Asian Network
Shakeel Syed, Executive Director

Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC)
Chanchanit Martorell, Executive Director (chancee@thaicdc.org)

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***Past Chairperson**

Diego Cartagena
President and CEO

May 21, 2024

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St., Room 383
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Letter of Support for Immigrants Are Los Angeles (IRLA) Motion

On behalf of Bet Tzedek Legal Services, I write to express our support for Supervisors Hilda Solis and Lindsey Horvath's motion supporting immigrants in Los Angeles County. Bet Tzedek-The House of Justice provides legal assistance that impacts more than 80,000 people of every racial and religious background each year. Bet Tzedek does not receive funding from the U.S. Legal Services Corporation, in order to offer our full range of services to clients regardless of immigration status.

Immigrants are an indelible, prominent part of this county, one that cannot be overlooked when it comes to the problems our community faces or the solutions we can all put in place. More than two-thirds of the undocumented population of Los Angeles lives below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and undocumented Angelenos have measurably lower wages than documented workers even when they attain similar education levels. Even more, they face wage theft of an unfathomable degree. The creation of a Worker's Justice Fund for workers experiencing wage theft and retaliation is vital to combatting the exploitation immigrant workers face in our city.

The motion being advanced on May 21, 2024, which reviews Immigrants Are LA's (IRLA's) budget request, would result in advanced equality for all Angelinos, including immigrants who are routinely excluded from federally and state-funded programs and face wage theft more than any other group in our community.

For those reasons, we ask the Board of Supervisors to ensure the programs that serve immigrants receive the funding they deserve in the 2024-2025 county budget.

Sincerely,



Mary Tanagho Ross
Directing Attorney - Economic Justice Project
Bet Tzedek Legal Services

Bet Tzedek is a nonprofit organization funded in part by the City and County of Los Angeles, the State Bar of California, the Equal Access Fund, and the City of West Hollywood.

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The motion being advanced on May 21, 2024, which reviews Immigrants Are LA's (IRLA's) budget request, would result in advanced equality for all Angelinos, including immigrants who are routinely excluded from federally and state-funded programs and face wage theft more than any other group in our community.

For those reasons, we ask the Board of Supervisors to ensure the programs that serve immigrants receive the funding they deserve in the 2024-2025 county budget.

Sincerely,



Mary Tanagho Ross
Directing Attorney - Economic Justice Project
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