



**County of Los Angeles
Department of Beaches and Harbors**

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

June 30, 2024 – July 1, 2026

Language Access Contact:

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COUNTYWIDE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As Adopted by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors on November 1, 2022

The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants—past, present, and emerging—as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multigenerational trauma.

This acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the

- Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians—Kizh Nation
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.gov.

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

Introduction

The Department of Beaches and Harbors (Department) manages the Marina del Rey harbor and 23 miles of beaches along the Los Angeles County coast, including world-famous Zuma, Malibu Surfrider, Venice, Dockweiler and Manhattan beaches. In addition to promoting and maintaining a clean coastline, the Department operates Burton Chace Park in Marina del Rey and the Dockweiler Youth Center and Dockweiler RV Park at Dockweiler State Beach. For more information, visit our website at beaches.lacounty.gov.

A. Mission Statement

The Department of Beaches and Harbors manages 23 miles of beaches and Marina del Rey, offering access to clean, safe, and welcoming spaces for recreation, cultural events, and environmental stewardship. We aim to ensure that our programs and services are inclusive of Los Angeles County's linguistically diverse communities.

B. Department Priority Languages

Based on County demographic analysis and service area populations, DBH prioritizes the following languages for language assistance:

- ASL
- Arabic
- Armenian
- English
- Japanese
- Korean
- Russian
- Traditional Chinese
- Simplified Chinese
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

Although American Sign Language and Spanish have previously been identified as priority languages based on prior public translation and interpretation requests, the Department serves all County constituents and ultimately hopes to provide language access for all languages used in the region. The Department is proactively assessing language access needs, utilizing resources throughout the County, providing training to staff, and adopting policies and procedures that will enable us to provide greater language services to the public.

The Department's main clients are all Los Angeles County residents and visitors to the Los Angeles-area beaches and Marina del Rey. Specific client populations for our services and programs include:

- *Beach Maintenance*
Beach maintenance is an integral part of our Department's mission. The beaches' main client population includes Los Angeles County residents, visitors, international tourists, shore birds and other marine animal species. Due to the differing demographics for individual beaches and the difficulty in collecting such data, we do not have more specific information.
- *Beach and Marina del Rey Events and Programs*
The Department produces a variety of free community events and programming designed for a wide audience, at Dockweiler State Beach and in Marina del Rey, such as the Kids Beach Cleanup, Marina del Rey Summer Concert Series, Beach Movie Nights, Marina Movie Nights, Marina Spooktacular, Dance MDR, and Marina Culture Jam. The audience demographics differ among events; however, there may be options for LOTE outreach for events more likely to attract a LOTE affinity group.
- *Marina del Rey lessees*
The Department is responsible for managing the ground leases for County-owned land in Marina del Rey. The lessees are primarily corporations that conduct business in English.
- *WATER Program Ocean Safety Days*
The WATER (Water Awareness, Training, Education, and Recreation) Program provides children the chance to learn about ocean water safety right on the beach. Clients of this program are school-aged youth from across Los Angeles County; system-involved youth; and members of community youth groups, especially from populations in underserved communities. While the children themselves usually understand English, they may have parents who are not LOTE users.

Other clients for the Department's services include beach volleyball players, boaters, paddlers, cyclists, beachgoers, recreationists, and leisure enthusiasts. The Department also has a special interest in those who historically have had limited access to the coast, as well as those who are disabled, hard-of-hearing or deaf, or otherwise have access and functional needs.

SECTION 2: DEPARTMENT'S LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

C. General Policy Statement

It is the Department's policy to provide language assistance services free of charge and without undue delay for people who use Languages Other Than English (LOTE) or who

have other communication challenges that require equally effective communication to ensure equitable access to all its programs, services, and activities.

DBH provides free, timely, and meaningful access to its services for all individuals who use Languages Other Than English (LOTE) or who have communication needs, including those who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

D. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all DBH staff [contractors, vendors, and grantees] who interact with the public. It encompasses all communication modes: in-person, written, digital, and telephonic.

In accordance with the [Countywide Language Access Policy](#), the Department developed this Language Access Plan (LAP) to ensure equitable access to programs, services, and activities in Marina del Rey and on the Los Angeles County beaches. Meaningful language access can only be achieved by providing accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the LOTE person. By developing and updating its policies, programs, processes, services, and training, the Department hopes to significantly reduce gaps in language access. The development and implementation of this LAP, which applies to all Department staff, contractors, and vendors, will ensure that the Department:

1. Creates a protocol for translation and interpretation services.
2. Establishes a language access complaint process.
3. Conducts outreach and public awareness of the Department's language access efforts.
4. Develops a recordkeeping and monitoring system for language access services.
5. Develops internal language access training and resources.

Further, this LAP aims to enable the Department to provide language assistance through the translation of written materials and interpretation of spoken and sign language to ensure effective communication and access to the Department's services and information. Whether interacting with the public in person, over the phone, or online, staff will inquire about their preferred language of communication. If a member of the public does not identify English as their preferred language, staff will follow the Department's LAP and associated procedures, trainings, and resources to communicate with the person.

The Department also strives to use plain language written for a wide audience when crafting documents and other forms of messaging. Plain language is especially important when providing information on complex, multidimensional topics, such as policies, contracts, permits, initiatives, etc., especially when the information will be translated into multiple languages. Using plain language ensures that everyone—regardless of age,

education level, culture, or language—receives and understands information about the Department and its services.

SECTION 3: KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

1. **American Sign Language (ASL):** A language expressed by movements of the hands and face.
2. **Interpretation:** Rendering spoken or signed language into another language while maintaining the meaning and tone of the original language.
3. **Language Access:** Providing free language assistance to LOTE speakers in their preferred language, including through interpretation and translation services, to help enable reasonable access to and an opportunity to fully participate in the services, resources, and programs administered by the County.
4. **Language Access Complaint:** Common scenarios include but are not limited to the availability of language services not communicated to the public when language services were not provided when requested, and when the quality of language services did not meet the needs of the LOTE speaker.
5. **Plain Language:** Easy-to-understand language that is designed to ensure the receiver understands as quickly, easily, and completely as possible.
6. **Preferred Language:** The primary language in which an individual prefers to read, write, and/or speak.
7. **Speaker of a Language Other Than English (LOTE):** Also known as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or English Language Learner (ELL), this designation refers to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language or do not read, write, or speak English.
8. **Translation:** Rendering written communication into another language while preserving meaning.
9. **Vital Documents:** Documents that affect enrollment, continued participation, or termination from a County program, benefit, or service.

SECTION 4: PROCEDURES

E. Identifying Preferred Languages

Although the Department does not provide critical County services, such as healthcare or general assistance, it does offer community programming and services that promote coastal access and recreational opportunities. When a LOTE speaker contacts the Department (via telephone, email, social media, or in-person), staff will first ask what their

preferred language is. If English is not identified as their preferred language, staff will contact a staff member who has been pre-identified and approved to provide translation and interpretation services, utilize online resources, or request real-time services from a vendor on the County's Master Agreement to assist the person appropriately. Staff will also document the language assistance request as part of the Department's efforts to monitor and evaluate its language assistance efforts.

The Department's protocol for translation services of its vital documents will be determined by consideration of the following questions:

- Who needs access to the document?
- What is the frequency of use?
- What is the overall intent and effect of the document?
- Does the document ask for personal information?
- Does the document provide informational instructions or educational resources?

F. Vital Documents

Listed below are vital documents that the Department will further assess for translation services.

Applications and Permits:

- Right of Entry
- Marina and Beach Use
- Signage and Banners
- Programming Liability Waivers
- Senior Parking Pass
- Annual Parking Pass
- Beach Wheelchair Liability Release
- WATER Program application packet

The Department will revise its applications to ask applicants their preferred written and spoken language. This information will assist the Department in providing improved language access to the public.

Information-Based:

- Beach & Marina Parking
- Boater's Guide
- Beach Wheelchairs

- Programming
- Russell Walker Water Awareness Training Education and Recreation (WATER) Program
- Request for Bids/Proposals
- Can the Trash! Clean Beach Poster Contest and environmental campaign
- Department initiatives (e.g., Marina del Rey for All, Coastal Resilience, Affordable Housing, etc.)
- Commission Meeting Packets (i.e., Small Craft Harbor Commission, Design Control Board, and Beach Commission).

SECTION 5: NOTIFICATION ON LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

The Department will post multilingual posters, flyers, and/or signs in all public-facing facilities notifying LOTE speakers of the availability of free language assistance services. Similar information will be distributed through the Department's communication channels, such as its website, email distribution lists, and social media platforms.

The Department has secured professional translation services from vendors with at least 10 years of experience; certification by the American Translators Association; proof of compliance with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation; and professional staff including translators, editors, and proofreaders.

The Department installed an on-demand Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) system at the Marina del Rey Visitors Center to assist deaf or hard of hearing customers. Employees receive the necessary training to access the system.

The Department's WATER Program, Marina del Rey July 4th Fireworks Show, Summer Concert Series, and Marina Drum Circle are just a few of the programming flyers and brochures that the Department has translated from English to Spanish over the past year. Depending on the complexity of the length and complexity of the promotional collateral, which also includes advertisements and social media captions, they were either translated using a professional vendor or Department staff pre-approved to provide translation services.

The Department will continue to offer translation services for its inventory of vital documents. Should additional documents be translated using an online application, the information will be checked by pre-approved bilingual staff.

As previously mentioned, the Department strives to use plain language and will assess and update its current inventory of documents to ensure the information is easy to understand.

In addition to written materials, the Department will review information shared electronically to ensure that translation services are provided for content that may be

accessed through its website, social media platforms, email blasts, media releases, and advertisements.

When communicating its programs, services, and initiatives, the Department will make a committed effort to use plain language to ensure the information is easily understood by the public the first time they read or hear it. This will be accomplished by using clear messaging that focuses on the reader or listener and uses words and sentences that are simple, common, and short.

SECTION 6: MONITORING LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE EFFECTIVENESS

G. Evaluation of Language Assistance

The Department will develop a recordkeeping and monitoring system that collects data and evaluates its performance in making translation and interpretation services available. This system will allow the Department to track language demand by logging the details of all requests for translation services, including the language services offered and utilized, delivery of language access services, qualitative feedback from LOTE speakers, and engagement metrics on our website, social media platforms, and email bulletins. The Department will conduct semi-annual reviews of the collected data to assess the effectiveness of the LAP, identify any gaps in language access services, and provide recommendations for improvement.

The Department maintains a list of qualified staff who receive a bilingual bonus to provide frequent and continuing bilingual duties in connection with the Department's goals. Common scenarios of the bilingual staff's assistance include verbally explaining procedures and clarifying instructions to the public, both in person and over the phone, and assisting other staff by translating documents. In these interactions, the ability of bilingual staff to convey information clearly can significantly impact language accessibility and customer satisfaction.

H. Complaint Process

The Department is committed to providing linguistic and culturally competent services to all County residents. If a resident's linguistic needs are not met, they can submit a Language Access Complaint by visiting the Department's website at beaches.lacounty.gov/LAcomplaint or emailing language@bh.lacounty.gov. Printed notification of the Department's language access complaint process will be available or displayed at the Department's public-facing facilities.

The Department will review the complaint and offer a resolution within 90 days of receiving the complaint, per the Countywide Language Access Policy.

The Department's Language Access Team is responsible for receiving and coordinating responses to language access complaints.

SECTION 7: TRAINING

The Department will distribute this policy to all staff within 60 days of the LAP's publication. The policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure it remains current and appropriate.

By January 1, 2026, the Department will provide training to its entire staff on the LAP. Topics covered in the training will include an overview of the Countywide Language Access Policy and the Department's protocols for

- translation and interpretation services,
- online language access tracking and complaint processes,
- outreach and public awareness of our language access efforts, and
- internal language access training and resources.

Training sessions on other topics like cultural competency, cross-cultural communication skills, American Sign Language (ASL), and non-verbal communication assistance will also be provided.

All new staff members will receive LAP training within two weeks of onboarding, and all staff will complete refresher training every three years.

The Department has collected and will continue to collect data on its staff's language proficiency. The Department's Human Resources Office reviews Bilingual Bonus requests, which are awarded based on staff members' frequency of bilingual duties and interactions, the completion of a Bilingual Bonus Form, and an Employee's Language Proficiency Certification. Additionally, more than 100 current employees self-attested to fluency in a second language (comprising 15 languages other than English), including Chinese, Korean, and Russian. Bilingual staff, regardless of bonus status, have not received Department-sponsored training in language access.

The Department is researching the feasibility of expanding VRI services at additional facilities. In addition, the Department previously offered voluntary ASL training to its staff. This training opportunity will be offered again.

The Department will examine its programming budget each year and decide what proportion of the funds to further allocate for translation and interpretation services. To guarantee the best quality of service, the Department will also review its training budget and determine which professional vendor services to use for knowledge and skills-based training, cultural competence and responsiveness courses, and certification and recertification programs. These resources will be used to support all staff, with an emphasis on frontline employees—who are often among the first to assist LOTE speakers—as well as employees who speak a language other than English.

SECTION 8: COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

To ensure the public is aware of our ongoing efforts to enhance language access in L.A. County, the Department will conduct outreach in the following ways:

- Distribute an email blast to the Department's more than 50,000 subscribers of its general mailing list.
- Post language access goals on the Department's website and social media platforms.
- Post signage at public-facing facilities, including the Dockweiler Youth Center, Dockweiler RV Park, Marina del Rey Visitors Center, Burton W. Chace Park, and Permits Office.
- Make a verbal announcement or presentation at the Department's public Commission meetings.
- Include a language access statement on agenda documents for public meetings.
- Collaborate with stakeholder groups with LOTE speakers and advocates.
- Conduct surveys at various events to solicit feedback