



Language Access Plan

JULY 5, 2023

Language Access Plan

Introduction

Creating a Language Access Plan is an essential step for any organization or institution that wants to ensure effective communication with individuals with limited English proficiency or non-native speakers. This plan outlines specific measures and resources designed to provide language assistance services, such as interpretation and translation, to help these individuals access programs, services, and information. By developing a Language Access Plan, the City of Grand Junction promotes inclusivity, equal access, and effective communication for diverse linguistic communities.

Section 1: City-wide assessment of Language Access needs

In this section, we use data from both the Census and the local school district to ensure that language accommodations are provided based on demand. The purpose of using both sources is to serve the current community members and upcoming adults and leaders.

Number of individuals with limited English proficiency:

- **Census Data-** Based on the latest Census data as of July 1, 2021, the current population of Grand Junction stands at 66,964. Out of this number, 7.5% speak languages other than English in their homes. The Grand Junction community comprises individuals from diverse races and ethnicities, including those in the LEP (Limited English Proficiency) community. Specifically, the population includes 15.7% Hispanic or Latino, 5.8% biracial or multiracial, 0.2% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, 1.6% Asian, and 0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native.
- **School District Language Data-** School District 51 has gathered language data on their students in the early stages of education to predict the upcoming dominant languages for the next 15 years. While the census only collects data on people over 18, the district's findings show that 15% of the population is Latino, with only 3% speaking Spanish at home. Additionally, 1% of the population speaks a language other than English at home; this suggests that around 4,617 individuals over 18 speak Spanish at home, with an additional 1,027 youths under 18 also speaking Spanish at home. In total, approximately 5,600 people speak Spanish at home. The district's database shows that 1,434 students have Spanish as their primary language, while 136 students speak other languages, such as Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Cantonese.

Section 2: Language access and procedures:

Our language access and procedures are designed to assist our staff in communicating with the public when language accommodations are necessary. These accommodations may be required in various settings, such as City Hall in customer service interactions, public events, or City Council meetings. The internal City website offers access to Translation and Interpretation services through a request form. This form plays a crucial role in determining how translation

and interpretation services costs will be divided between the requesting department and the Communications and Engagement department. It is mandatory to provide detailed information while filling out this form, including the requesting department's point of contact, approval from the department director, the objective of the translation or interpretation, the target audience, the type of document needing translation, a description of the event (if applicable), and the deadline. By providing all the necessary information, the form ensures that the translation or interpretation service is carried out seamlessly and promptly. Aside from the request form staff it is fully trained and equipped for immediate interactions with customers over the phone or in person.

Day to day documents and forms- Written translation request:

- Identifying the documents that Spanish-speaking patrons frequently use is important. Some examples include fence applications, sign clearances, sign permits, planning clearances, comp plans, strategic plans, banner permits, and informational brochures about city services. Each department will identify other documents as well. These documents only need to be translated once, as they contain evergreen information.
- Once the document has been identified, a request for translation form will be completed and automatically sent to the Community Engagement Coordinator for determination as to whether internal or external translation service is appropriate. If the need is determined for outsourcing, costs will be shared and approved by requesting department.
- The Community Engagement Coordinator will deliver the final written translated document based on requested deadline.
- All requests for short forms or one-page documents must be submitted two weeks prior to the due date. Longer documents require 30 days' notice for delivery.

Social media announcements and website- Written translation request:

The Communications and Engagement department suggests that translation of postings should not be done separately, as social media platforms and the City website already provide translation options online. However, emergency alerts should still be translated separately.

Project/ event/ community meeting materials- Written translation request:

- The Communications and Engagement department is open to discussing communication strategies with project leaders. If the strategy involves communication with Spanish speakers, appropriate tactics will be developed.
- A request for a meeting from the project leader is necessary to discuss department projects/events/community meetings should be made by email to the Community Engagement Coordinator.
- The Community Engagement Coordinator will discuss the objectives of the proposed outreach and the audience being served.

- Once objectives and audience are determined, the Community Engagement Coordinator will advise the requesting department regarding the best method of delivery with regard to promotion (e.g., flyer, postcard mailing, social media, door hanger) and whether those items require written translation in addition to determining needs of any in person interpretation.
- All project/ event presentations and other written materials need to be submitted 30 days before the due date.
- If translation is outsourced due to size or complexity, costs will be shared and approved by requesting department.
- If the presentation that needs to be translated is from a third party, the service will be requested from the contractor or organization.

Project/event/community meeting - Interpretation:

To ensure successful outreach events, staff must consider including interpretation services for effective communication with diverse language-speaking community groups.

- Unless already having taken place due to the need for written materials, a request for a meeting to discuss department projects/events/community meetings should be made by email to the Community Engagement Coordinator.
- The Community Engagement Coordinator will discuss the objectives of the proposed Spanish outreach and the audience being served.
- Once objectives and audience are determined and in person interpretation is agreed upon as the best approach for those who are Spanish speaking, the Community Engagement Coordinator will advise the requesting department regarding promotion and the RSVP process.
- Requests for in-person interpretation must be submitted 30 days prior to the meeting date.
- In some cases, additional interpretation may be needed from an external vendor (e.g. ASL).
- If the need is determined for outsourcing, costs will be shared and approved by requesting department.

Event information summaries (AFTER the event)- written translation request:

- These translations will be available to the public after the event and are intended to inform the community about the project timeline, the project process, and the direction given by the council, etc.
- The Community Engagement Coordinator will coordinate any requests for outsourced translation if necessary.
- The Community Engagement Coordinator will deliver the final written translated document based on the deadline to the requesting department.

- All project/ event/ meeting materials need to be submitted two weeks before the due date.
- Before requesting translation services within the City of Grand Junction, project managers need to check if the project/event/meeting materials that require translation are from a third party. If so, it is necessary to request for translation services from the respective organization or individual.
- If outsourcing is necessary, the requesting department will share the costs with the Communications and Engagement Department.

*All materials shared with a third party for translation are secure and confidential.

Interpreters on-call:

- The City of Grand Junction is looking for a skilled team of interpreters who can be contacted in case of an emergency or when their services are needed for a project. The team should consist of experienced interpreters who work as independent contractors and are available on request.

Section 3: Staff training

All department contacts were offered in-person staff training for language accommodations. In addition to the previously shared translation options, each department has a designated person responsible for managing access to language accommodation technology. The training included a department visit, identification of a technology champion, and raising awareness that the Community Engagement Coordinator is always available to help in any difficult situation where assistance is needed to operate or navigate language accommodations.

- **Department visits:** Our staff underwent in-person training to ensure adequate language accommodation for community members. The training involved setting up the LanguageLine Insight App on designated iPads for customer interactions. Additionally, staff practiced carrying out conversations in English and Spanish through video calls, app calls, and regular phone calls. The training also included guidance on identifying the languages that require translation through the LanguageLine Insight app and how to request assistance.

Section 4: Points of contact and implementation:

The City of Grand Junction provides language assistance for community members with limited English proficiency at different contact points. It's important to note that at each customer service point of contact, the City notifies all community members of the opportunity to opt-in for language accommodations. This way, everyone can receive the help they need to access essential city services.

- **Customer service windows:** At all customer service windows, city staff can access on-demand interpretation services in over 240 languages, including American Sign

Language. When interacting with customers, they can point to their preferred language on the LanguageLine language menus flyer to indicate the need for language accommodation. The flyer displays 24 language options, the most commonly used languages in the United States. If language accommodation is needed, an interpreter will be called at no cost to the customer. The app used for language accommodations can create face-to-face or audio interactions, making communication more manageable and accessible for everyone.

- **Customer Service on the field:** A big part of the City staff is constantly on the field helping our community members. Departments such as Police and Fire can access our on-demand language accommodations through our LanguageLine app. Each first responder has an iPad with an internet card or a City-issued phone to access interpretation services. They also travel with a flyer that displays 24 languages primarily used in the United States.
- **Building signage:** To ensure that all customers feel confident and self-reliant when navigating our public-facing building, the City is installing signage in Spanish and Braille. The signs will mark staff-only areas, elevator hours, directional information, wheelchair-accessible areas, and language accessibility accommodations.
- **Outreach events:** The City of Grand Junction informs people about language accommodations right from the start of our outreach events. Our event flyers and notices clearly state that language accommodations will be available on-site or upon request via an RSVP. We offer language accommodations through an on-site interpreter or our LanguageLine app for in-person public meetings. Additionally, also provide a designated time tours or presentations to translate for a large group during an open house setting.
- **Documents and notices:** Many departments are now implementing a translation and interpretation policy to ensure that all community members are informed about what is happening in their community. This includes translating documents and notices, such as open house events, project updates, and forms, among others, for public use.
- **E-newsletter:** The Parks and Recreation Department offers a monthly e-newsletter in Spanish. To receive it, community members can sign up for notifications through the "Notify Me" portal on the department's website. This newsletter contains information about upcoming activities and classes, facility updates, and events.
- **Phone calls:** All staff members are required to utilize LanguageLine services for phone calls that require language assistance of any kind.

Section 5: Tracking the Usage of the Language Access Plan:

Type of request data	Number of requests	Timeline
Number of requests for interpretation	12	August 2022 – June 2023
Number of requests for translation	43	August 2022 – June 2023
Number of P&R e-newsletter subscribers	23	February 2023 – June 2023
Community events attended with language accommodations	125	June 2022 – May 2023
Translation for local media	259	June 2022 – May 2023
City of Grand Junction Website Stats	1,461 Spanish users, and 1,436 of those users were new to the site. There have been 1,809 sessions with the Spanish language tool, and Spanish users make up 0.41% of the traffic on the website.	November 28, 2022 – May 30, 2023