



Summary of Equal Access to Service Ordinance

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors and signed into law by the Mayor on June 15 2001, Chapter 91 of the City’s Administrative Code requires all city departments to provide services in non-English languages when (a) 10,000 city residents (b) five percent or more of the clients served by the Department or (c) five percent of the residents of a Supervisorial district in which the department’s offices are located are limited English-speaking and share a common language. This is to ensure that the LEP community will be able to access, participate and benefit from city services while minimizing language barriers.

The EAS ordinance further requires city departments to

1. Provide written materials in languages spoken by a substantial or concentrated portion of the population using the department’s services
2. Employ sufficient numbers of bilingual staff in positions that interface with LEP communities
3. Establish a complaint procedure for LEP individuals who are denied language access to city services or complaints about the department

The Equal Access to Services Ordinance (EAS) defines “Tier One” departments as those departments with a high volume of interaction with the public, especially with limited English-proficient (LEP) communities:

Adult and Aging Services	Fire	Police
Adult Probation	Human Services	Public Defender
District Attorney	Juvenile Probation	Public Health
Elections	MUNI	Sheriff
Emergency Communications	Parking and Traffic	Rent Board

Since the passage of EAS in 2001, the Department of Parking and Traffic and MUNI have been consolidated into Metropolitan Transportation Agency. Also, the Department of Adult and Aging Services has been subsumed under the Human Services Agency. The remaining departments and city commissions are termed “Tier Two” departments.

Chapter 91, section (4) further requires Tier One departments to translate “vital” information regarding city department’s services and programs including: application forms, client rights and responsibilities, eligibility requirements, complaint process, notice of reduced benefits/services, appeal process, program brochures and newsletters, publicly-posted documents and website contents.

Further, all other city departments providing services to LEP communities are required to translate materials into the language(s) spoken by their clients in all publicly-posted documents that provide information regarding (1) the department’s services or programs (2) the department’s decisions that affect client’s rights with regard to eligibility of services, denial or loss of services and the right to appeal. Departments with recorded phone messages about the department’s operation or service are also required to translate recorded phone messages in the language(s) spoken by their clients.



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EAS further requires ALL departments that currently provide translations to:

- (1) post notices in public areas of their facilities in the relevant language(s) indicating that written materials and bilingual staff are available in that language(s)
- (2) designate appropriate staff with the responsibility of ensuring that translations are accurate and appropriate for the target audience
- (3) comply with the annual reporting requirements of EAS

Although city commissions and departments are not required to translate meeting notices, agendas or minutes, they are required to provide oral interpretation of public meetings or hearings if requested within 48 hours of the meeting or hearing.