



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
{{item.tracking_number}}

Agenda Item Number: 4

Agenda Date: January 19, 2023

In Control: Community Health, Environment and Culture Committee

DEPARTMENT: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jennifer Mata

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

City of San Antonio's Language Access Plan

SUMMARY:

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Department will provide the Community, Health, Environment, and Culture Committee with an update of the status of the City's drafted Language Access Plan, data about San Antonio's linguistically diverse populations, and next steps for piloting the plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On June 25, 2019, Former Councilmember Shirley Gonzalez, Former Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, Councilmember Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Former Councilmember Jada L. Andrews-Sullivan, and Councilmember John Courage submitted for Council Consideration the issue of creating a Language Access Plan and process. The Council Consideration Request (CCR) included a focus on supporting Deaf and hard of hearing populations. Since the CCR the City has increased

meaningful access to public meetings including council committee meetings and other public meetings hosted by departments to include simultaneous interpretation for Spanish and ASL. In the FY 2022, City Council approved a budget to allocate funds to expand language access programming to include a Language Access Office and to expand of language services contracts. For FY 2023, City Council approved a budget to allocate funds for Phase II of the Language Access plan.

ISSUE:

The purpose of the drafted Language Access Plan is to actively reduce or eliminate barriers for linguistically diverse residents to participate in programs and services and to ensure that the city remains in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights act of 1964. The Plan establishes the responsibilities of City of San Antonio departments and assists them in fulfilling their responsibilities to linguistically diverse communities. The Plan reflects the City's commitment to providing timely and meaningful access to programs and services to those who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) and those who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing.

An important aspect of language access planning is to understand the language needs of community members. A recent analysis of language needs in San Antonio and Bexar County supports the inclusion of 7 languages in addition to Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL). The Language Access Office developed a tiered approach to top languages in San Antonio to support departments in anticipating language needs. In fiscal year 2023, the Language Access Office will guide select departments through a pilot of the drafted plan and begin community engagement activities to measure the plan's effectiveness and to learn from the community about how information is shared most effectively.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.