2017 Limited English Proficiency Policy
Occupancy Department Staff Training
Center for Community Engagement and Civil Rights (CCECR)

CCECR consists of:

- Language Access Division;
- Resident Empowerment Department;
- Community Services Department;
- Office of Civil Rights
- Boston REACH: PHH

Purpose:
To build and support sustainable communities in BHA housing that are economically, environmentally, and socially vibrant by:

- Engaging residents;
- Building capacity & advancement opportunities;
- Broadening access;
- Raising customer service standards; and
- Affirming civil rights.
LEP Background

• Program purpose:
  – Assess language needs
  – Provide language access and services
  – Monitor LEP policy compliance under OCR
• Staff:
  – Language Access Team
  – Part-time Bilingual/Multilingual Interns
  – Many Bilingual/Multilingual Volunteers
  – Contract interpreters/vendors

Presentation by BHA-CCECR Language Access Team (September 2017)
LEP Service Highlights

• Oral interpretation in *any* language upon request. (Currently serving 30 languages)

• Written Translation of vital documents in Spanish and Chinese. (Over 150 pages per year)

• Volunteer Interpreters Program (100+ volunteers, cost savings of $180,000 per year)

• BHA Multilingual Line 617-988-4001 (7 languages, and average over 10,000 calls per year)
Interpretation Requests

• In person/over the phone; One-on-one or group meetings; Over 2300 in-person interpretation requests in 2016

• Akan, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bamileke, Bosnian, Cape Verdean, Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin, Toisanese), Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Mende, Nigerian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese.

• Screening appointments, application briefings (Chinese, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Multilingual), hearings, walk-ins, residents meetings, task force elections, private conferences, and public safety transfer interviews.

• Departments we serve: Occupancy, Leased Housing, Operations (Housing Developments), Public Safety, Legal, Work Orders, Administration.
Service Providers (2016)

- **BHA Language Access Team**: 51%
- **Department Staff**: 26%
- **Client's own interpreter**: 10%
- **Contractor/Vendor**: 13%
Written Translation

- Written Translations Available in Spanish and Chinese
- When requested or needed, make translated documents available
- Located on BHA Website
- Who to contact if unable to find a translated document?
LEP Tools*

- BHA LEP Policy
- Language advisory
- Language ID Card
- Glossary (English/Spanish/Chinese)
- “Interpreters Available” Logo
- HUD Q&A

* Available online
Making Language Services Available

• **How to identify a Walk-In LEP Client’s language?**
  o Just ask! LEP clients generally will be able to let you know which language they speak.
  o Use a Language ID Card – LEP clients will be able to point to their language, in the context of requesting language assistance.

• **How do clients know that language services are available?**
  o Post a notice of free interpreter service. (This would be considered a Vital Document)
  o Post a Language ID card in all direct service areas.
  o Verbally let LEP clients know on first interaction that an interpreter can be made available.
Interpretation Requests

• Client makes an interpreter request to the department’s contact

• Staff will use Request Form: Online on BHA Website
  – 5 business days in advance (Let us know if needed before)
  – Check for correct language (i.e. If client asks for “Creole” interpreter, staff must ask if it is Haitian Creole or Cape Verdean Creole)
Post Logo to let your clients know

Interpreter Service Available

Contact your BHA Department/Management Office or Call the BHA Multilingual Line 617-988-4001
The Interpreter Request Web Form is located on the Employee Only section of the BHA website.

Go to:
Appointment Info
Make sure to double check the language needed.

Client Info
We need this to mail the client a letter to inform them that an interpreter will be provided.

Your Info
Make sure to put both your name and BHA Email to successfully process your request.
• If you submitted the request successfully you will get an automatic confirmation email.
• If you do not receive a confirmation email, please email the Language Access Team at LanguageAccessTeam@bostonhousing.org
Translation Request Web Form

• Only for Vital Documents!!!
• The Translation Request Web Form is located on the Employee Only section of the BHA website.
• Go to: https://www.bostonhousing.org/en/Center-for-Community-Engagement/Language-Access-Division/Written-Translation-Request-Form.aspx
Who can request written translations?

What if a client submits a document in a language other than English?
Requester ►
Provide your contact information for follow up.

Document Info ►
Please provide all information about the document(s) to help us determine a timeline.

Language(s) ►
Be sure to specify the language you’re requesting the document in, we’ll need to make sure it is possible and/or necessary.
Notating in Elite interpretation requested & received
The following must be entered into Elite in the Resident/Applicant Notes Screen when a client requests and receives interpretation:

Occupancy
► LEP – these letters must be entered first for the reporting to work correctly.

All departments must enter the following after the three letters:
► Language requested
► Nature of request (screening, phone call, etc.)
► Name of person / resource providing interpretation (Occupancy Staff, LEP Staff, Family Member, Social Worker, Etc.)
► Date service provided (if different from date of notation) – if date same as notation, leave it blank.
Working with BHA Interpreters

Please remember to...

1. Keep in mind that the interpreter assisting you may have not assisted at BHA before and **may not be familiar with BHA terms**.

2. Separate your questions or statements to give the interpreter time to interpret to the client and then back to you before asking the next question.

3. Call us and **do not transfer** calls to the Language Access Team when the caller speaks limited or no English. Too much time is wasted trying to figure out who they are trying to reach when calls are transferred.

**Notify us when an appointment has been canceled, rescheduled, or if the client brought their own interpreter.** *This is very important because many of our interpreters are volunteers who give their time for free.*
Quick Summary of Dos & Don’ts – The Dos

- Remember that compliance with LEP Policy is required by HUD.

- Inform and notify clients that interpreter service is available from BHA upon request.

- If a client appears to need interpretation assistance, make it available.

- If client brings his/her own interpreter, the interpreter must be at least 18 years old.

- If client refuses to use a BHA interpreter, document refusal and reason in Elite.

- Document Interpreter requests & language services provided.

- Monitor language services and provide feedback.

- When requested or needed make translated vital documents available.

- Be familiar with what makes a good interpreter.

- Discontinue appointment if interpreter is not interpreting accurately or if the quality of interpretation service is poor.

- Present information in brief segments and allow time for interpretation.

- Provide written notifications in clear and precise language to facilitate translation.

- Do make multilingual resources or info available to clients as much as possible and as often as possible.

- Do share linguistic resources with colleagues if possible.

- Do strive to learn about our multilingual/multicultural clients
  - Be able to recognize common surnames
  - Portuguese and Cape Verdean are two different languages.

Presentation by BHA-CCECR Language Access Team (September 2017)
Quick Summary of Dos & Don’ts – The Don’ts

• Do NOT put burden on client to provide an interpreter

• No client under 12 years old is allowed to interpret under normal circumstances.

• Do NOT turn Limited English speaker away without getting the person’s name and phone number (and nature of visit), and arrange for follow-up by bilingual staff or interpreter.
BHA Multilingual Line 617-988-4001


As staff you may call us directly:
- Spanish: Ext. 4031 or 4032
- Chinese & other language: Ext. 4033

For an urgent matter and as a last resort use the super expensive AT&T Language Line at 1-800-874-9426
- Enter BHA’s Client ID: ask Gloria
- Enter Access Code: assigned by Gloria
- Follow further instructions from AT&T

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Q & A and Thank You!!!

Training materials also available online:
https://www.bostonhousing.org/en/Center-for-Community-Engagement/Language-Access-Division/Language-Access-Information-for-Staff.aspx