

Monroe County Language Access Plan



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Introduction

The purpose of this Language Access Plan is to demonstrate the commitment of Monroe County to reduce and eliminate language access barriers and provide meaningful language access to agency services, programs, resources, and activities. Monroe County's Language Access Plan establishes guidelines for County agencies and programs to follow when developing and implementing reasonable accommodations for individuals who have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English, also known as Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals. Monroe County will provide interpreter and translation services free of charge to its constituents upon request. Staff will be educated about the county's language access plan with specific operation details to address language accessibility within each department and programs.

This Language Access Plan is intended to comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000, et seq., as well as its implementing regulations set forth at 45 C.F.R. Part 80, Title I & Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Questions regarding this policy and its implementation should be directed to the Monroe County Language Access Compliance Coordinator:

Jesus Paesch
Language Access Compliance Coordinator
50 West Main Street
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languageaccess@monroecounty.gov

ASSESSING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT POPULATION LANGUAGE NEEDS

According to the United States Census Bureau the most common languages spoken by Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals served by Monroe County, or potentially served, are listed below.

Most Common Languages in Monroe County	
Languages	Estimated LEP Individuals
Spanish	41.90%
Italian	6.70%
Arabic	5.48%
Nepali, Marathi, or other Indic Languages	5.02%
Chinese (Including Mandarin, Cantonese)	4.35%
Russian	3.65%
French (Including Cajun)	3.24%
Other Languages of Asia	2.72%
Vietnamese	2.54%

Language

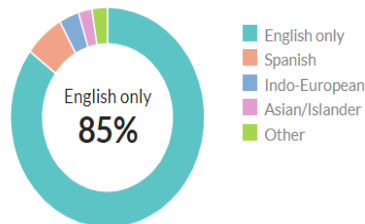
14.4%

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

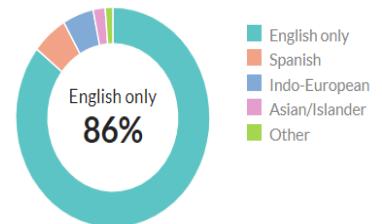
about half the rate in New York: 30.7%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States: 22%

Language at home, children 5-17



Language at home, adults 18+



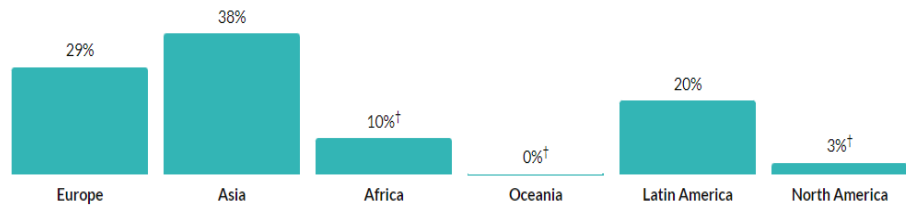
9.1%

Foreign-born population

about two-fifths of the rate in New York: 22.4%

about two-thirds of the rate in United States: 13.7%

Place of birth for foreign-born population



Column	Monroe County		New York		United States							
Europe	29%	±1.9%	18,733	±1,351	15.9%	±0.2%	703,049	±7,797	10.8%	±0%	4,763,845	±21,112
Asia	37.9%	±1.1%	24,483	±1,043	29.3%	±0.1%	1,294,292	±6,998	31%	±0.1%	13,641,680	±42,444
Africa	9.9%	±1.4%	6,385	±927	4.6%	±0.1%	201,084	±5,361	5.1%	±0%	2,256,673	±20,042
Oceania	0.2%	±0.1%	131	±67	0.3%	±0%	14,796	±1,065	0.6%	±0%	271,223	±4,039
Latin America	19.9%	±1.6%	12,861	±1,105	48.7%	±0.2%	2,151,080	±13,425	50.6%	±0.1%	22,261,633	±95,955
North America	3.2%	±0.5%	2,088	±346	1.3%	±0.1%	55,336	±2,039	1.9%	±0%	816,353	±7,832

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Process Implementation

Departments are identified either as operating departments, which provide direct services to the public, or staff departments, which perform functions relating to the support of the operating departments. Departments may be separated into divisions, sections, and units, as necessary, to reach a level that facilitates analysis and understanding. The number of divisions, sections, and units presented generally varies according to a department’s size and complexity.

Monroe County Departments should take reasonable steps to provide language assistance to Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals. The Head of each Department will allocate Funds that will only be used for language access and ensure that their staff has the resources necessary to provide language access. The language access budget for each department will varies depending on the Departments operations. Typically, language access budgets range from \$5,000-\$100,000.

Each Monroe County Department and Division will have a Language Access Plan to implement policies and procedures to comply with the Monroe County Language Access Plan. The Departmental Language Access Plan should address procedures of how staff will communicate with LEP Individuals and individuals that are deaf.

All Monroe County Department should have signage in regularly encountered languages in waiting rooms, reception areas, and another initial entry point to inform constituents about free language assistance services to invite individuals needing interpreting services.

Vital Documents

Vital documents are required to be in English and Spanish. Reasonable accommodations will be made to translate vital documents in other languages when requested by an LEP person. Vital

documents are defined as applications, consent forms, complaint forms, correspondence, and notices pertaining to the service provided by the Monroe County Department.

Interpreting

Monroe County Departments must have resources available and make reasonable accommodations to provide interpreting services. Departments will use staff and vendors to provide in-person, virtual, or telephonic interpreting. It is estimated that Monroe County has over 40,000 residents who are deaf or hard of hearing. All Monroe County Departments must make reasonable accommodations to have an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter available when requested.

Emergency Situations

The Director of Public Safety shall establish protocols for securing the services of qualified and certified American Sign Language interpreters at all emergency press conferences. "Emergency situation" shall mean disaster, rioting, catastrophe, severe weather, flooding, or similar event whether or not a state of emergency has been officially declared, including a "Public Disaster," as defined in Section 21-2 of the Monroe County Administrative Code and a "Disaster," as defined in Section 20(2) of the New York State Executive Law. "Press conference" shall mean a meeting organized by a County official, employee, or other representatives of the County with one or more journalists and other representatives of the media, to officially distribute information to the media and answer questions.

Qualified and certified American Sign Language Interpreter" shall mean an interpreter fluent in American Sign Language and who meets the requirements outlined in Section 390 of the Judiciary Law Section 3.

Sign Language Interpreters at Emergency Situation Press Conferences. It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Public Safety to ensure that qualified and certified American Sign Language Interpreters are available to provide sign language interpretation services at all emergency situation press conferences. Such sign language interpreters shall be present and shall provide such services at each emergency press conference held by any officer, official, employee, or agent of the County. To the maximum extent possible, the Director of Public Safety shall ensure that the sign language interpreter shall be so physically positioned that his or her face, body, arms, and hands are visible in the video transmission of the press conference at all times.

Monroe County will also provide a qualified interpreter or staff to provide information in Spanish during Emergency Situation Press Conferences. A fluent Spanish-speaking staff or an interpreter shall be present at each emergency situation press conference held by any officer, official, employee, or agent of the County.

Staff roles and responsibilities

Ensuring staff is adequately trained is a crucial element for the effective implementation of the Monroe County Language Access Plan. It is crucial that all staff members, especially those having contact with the public, understand their responsibility to provide meaningful and timely access to information and services for LEP persons. Staff members who do not regularly interact

with the public must also be aware of and understand the Language Access Plan within their department. The Language Access Plan will be available to all staff members upon either the implementation or adjustment of the Plan. Additionally, all newly-hired staff members will receive a copy and training about Monroe County's Language Access Plan. Training will include distribution and review of this Plan, any instructional materials, and forms used during communication with LEP persons.

All Monroe County staff are expected to abide by the following guidelines when interacting with LEP persons:

- ❖ Staff must remember that they are having a conversation with the customer, not the interpreter. They will direct their words and eye contact towards the customer.
- ❖ Be patient. Providing service across a language barrier takes time.
- ❖ Avoid abbreviations, slang, jargon, and acronyms whenever possible. Use the most straightforward and precise language possible to describe internal concepts, policies, and processes.
- ❖ Speak slowly and in relatively short segments and pause so the interpreter can interpret.
- ❖ Ask customers to repeat back important information ensure understanding.
- ❖ Be mindful not to patronize the customer and not treat a Limited English Proficient customer with less respect than any other customer.
- ❖ Do not refuse to serve someone because they are uncomfortable or want to use the interpreting services.
- ❖ Always acknowledge the interpreter as a professional in communication. Respect their role and give the interpreter time to restructure their minds to present it in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.
- ❖ Staff will not hold the interpreter responsible for what the customer says or doesn't say. The interpreter is the medium, not the source of the message.
- ❖ All Monroe County new hires will have access to the Language Access Plan for their department or division.

Monitoring and updating of the Plan

The Language Access Compliance Coordinator will periodically evaluate and monitor the Plan's content and implementation. The evaluation ensures that the scope and nature of language services reflect updated information. The Language Access Compliance Coordinator will monitor each Language Access Plan quarterly and yearly. Each Department will have a liaison that will work closely with the Language Access Compliance Coordinator.

Monitoring shall also include documentation and review of complaints received from customers. Periodic reviews will include examining the following issues: a. any changes in the demographics of Limited English Proficient persons in Monroe County; b. Review the data of Interpreting services provided; c. An assessment if the existing language assistance services meet the needs of LEP individuals; d. Staff expectations; and e. Assignment of Language Assistance Coordinator.

Complaint Procedure

Monroe County is committed to reducing or eliminating Language Access barriers. We believe in a transparent process to serve the community. Thus, our community has the right to file a complaint if they have not been provided with adequate language access.

Complaints may be made directly to The Language Access Compliance Coordinator. The Language Access Compliance Coordinator will be responsible for receiving, addressing, and resolving all complaints. Complaints are accepted in writing or verbally. The complaint should include the following information: name of the person filing the complaint, nature of the complaint, name of persons responsible for the alleged incident, requested relief or corrective action, and name of any person or group assisting in filling out the complaint.

A copy of the Language Access Services complaint form is attached to the Language Access Plan.



Monroe County Language Access Complaint Form

Customer Name _____

Today's date _____

Phone number _____

Time of the incident _____

Date of the incident _____

Department where the incident occurred _____

Name of the person assisting to complete this form _____

Please Describe the Incident:

I Certify that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Person making the complaint)

Please submit this form via email or mail at languageaccess@monroecounty.gov, 50 West Main St., 7th Floor,
Rochester, NY 14614 Phone: 585-753-2400



Monroe County Language Access Policy Acknowledgement

In effect: (Date) until further notice

I _____ have read and been informed about the content, requirements, and expectations of the Language Access Plan for employees at Monroe County. I have received and read a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy guidelines as a condition of my employment and my continuing employment at Monroe County.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the Language Access Plan policy, I will consult with my supervisor.

It is required for all Monroe County staff to review the Language Access Plan for their department and sign this policy acknowledgement.

Employee Printed Name

Employee Signature

Date



Language Access Request Form

If you are attending an upcoming visit and need a language access accommodation to participate fully, please fill out a language access request form.

Monroe County can arrange reasonable accommodations for assistance in a language other than English with advance notice of at least fourteen business days. To submit a language access request, go to the Monroe county language access website at <https://www.monroecounty.gov/dei-language>

Full Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Monroe County Department _____

Date of the appointment _____

Type of language access accommodation do you need:

Do you need an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter

Yes

No

Do you need oral interpretation?

Yes

No

Do you need written translation?

Yes

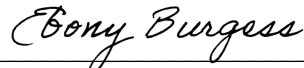
No

What language do you need assistance with?

Monroe County Language Access Plan

Language Access Plan authorized by:

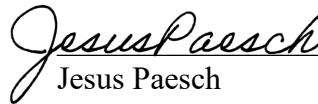
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Language Access Plan prepared by:

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Jesus Paesch

Language Access Plan read and approved by:



Adam Bello, County Executive