

Access Deferred: Progress, Challenges and Opportunities

A Report on Language Access and the San Francisco Unified School District, Police Department and One-Stop/Career Link Centers



Chinese for
Affirmative
Action
CAA

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Introduction

The purpose of the survey is to document the experiences of limited-English proficient (LEP) residents in San Francisco who have tried to access key public services such as the public schools, the police department, and City jobseeker centers. CAA initiated this survey as part of our ongoing monitoring of City departments and their compliance with local, state and federal language access policies, and to capture the on-the-ground realities faced by the City's LEP population.

From June to September of 2008, CAA worked with partnering community-based organizations throughout the City to conduct the survey targeting primarily Chinese and Spanish-speaking individuals who utilize City services. While we understand the critical need to document smaller language groups – particularly Vietnamese, Tagalog, Russian, and Samoan – resource limitations required us to focus only on the two largest non-English language groups.

In addition to administering the surveys to our clients and constituents, CAA staff provided survey protocol trainings to our partners as a means to reach their constituency base. Partners included CAA's Visitacion Valley Parents' Association (VVPA), Coalition on Homelessness, Family Connections, Jewish Vocational Services, La Raza Community Resource Center, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, People Organized to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER), and Tenderloin Housing Clinic. A special thanks to the San Francisco Immigrant Legal and Education Network (SFILEN) for their support of this project, and for providing translation of the survey into Spanish. CAA would like to thank each and every one of our partner organizations who donated their time, translation and interpretation skills, and access to their clients and constituents in ensuring that their voices were heard.

Finally, we'd like to acknowledge the support of the Zellerbach Family Foundation in making this report possible, and for their continued support of improving language access and civic engagement opportunities for immigrant communities.

About CAA

CAA was founded in 1969 to protect the civil and political rights of Chinese Americans and to advance multiracial democracy in the United States. Today, CAA is a progressive voice in and on behalf of the broader Asian and Pacific American community, and advocates for systemic change that protects immigrant rights, promotes language diversity, and remedies racial injustice. Since our founding, one of the cornerstones of CAA's work has been ensuring language accessibility of government services for LEP communities.

For four decades, beginning with our involvement in the first significant bilingual education legal battle that led to the 1974 landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Lau v. Nichols*, which affirmed and expanded the rights of LEP students in the educational system, CAA has combated discrimination based upon language. Over the past few years, CAA has increased its efforts to improve the accessibility of government services to LEP persons, at both the state and local levels.

CAA's Sacramento-based Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality Project (AACRE), a partnership between CAA and the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Los Angeles, is a leading advocate for language access policies within the State Capitol. In the Bay Area, CAA, in conjunction with other community organizations, helped draft local ordinances in San Francisco and Oakland requiring government agencies to make critical services accessible to people with limited English fluency. These local ordinances, known as Equal Access to Services (EAS), are the first to be adopted by local governments in the United States.

In San Francisco, CAA continues to play an active role in overseeing compliance efforts of EAS by City departments and the San Francisco Unified School District. We have effectively advocated for the development of translated materials and the creation of new, bilingual staff positions at agencies that provide critical or emergency services. CAA is working with other community-based organizations and the City's

Immigrant Rights Commission to ensure effective implementation of new legislation mandating increased access, and with the San Francisco Unified School District to ensure that newly dedicated translation and interpretation resources are meeting the needs of students, parents and the community. In 2006, CAA published “Lost Without Translation,” a comprehensive report that identified language access as the most pressing barrier to parental involvement in the public school system for Chinese American parents in San Francisco.

Demographics of San Francisco’s LEP population

The diversity of San Francisco is apparent in the languages spoken around the City. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, over a third of the City’s population is foreign born, and almost half of those 5 years or older – 335,000 people – speak a language other than English at home. Of these individuals, one in four is limited English proficient. Across the City, 13% of households are “linguistically isolated,” where no one over the age of 14 is deemed proficient in English. More than of half of the linguistically isolated households in San Francisco speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language.ⁱ

In San Francisco, the two largest language groups other than English are the Chinese and Spanish-speaking populations. According to the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau, 18% of the City’s population speaks primarily Chinese in their homes, and 12% speak primarily Spanish.ⁱⁱ

Summary of Findings

The survey revealed challenges to accessing key City services for LEP individuals.

Despite strong local language access policies, particularly for the SFUSD and the SFPD, there is a need for more consistent compliance, more effective outreach, and a strong desire by the community for better in-language services.

- 93% of survey respondents indicated they wanted interpretation services and translated documents in their primary language when seeking public services.
- 77% of respondents indicated they needed services in their primary language to conduct a job search, 71% for job training, 74% in order to communicate with their children’s public school officials, and 74% to communicate with the SFPD.

The availability and quality of interpretive and translation services at the SFUSD, as well as the individuals providing those services, varies from meeting to meeting. For Pupil Services meetings such as truancy or disciplinary meetings, where students faced potential negative outcomes, the SFUSD generally did a poorer job of providing interpretation and translation.

- Translated notices were frequent for meetings such as Parent-Teacher Conferences. 63% of respondents indicated that the SFUSD provided translations for Parent-Teacher Conferences “every time” and 36% stated that it did “sometimes.”
- 57% of respondents (12 of 21) stated that the notices for truancy meetings were “never” translated, while 38% of respondents (12 of 32) noted the same for Disciplinary Hearings.

Despite a strong language access policy in place for the SFPD, there remains gaps in interpretive and translation services for LEP residents, and a perception that language services are not available.

- 14 out of 25 respondents indicated that they wanted to contact the SFPD, but did not because they thought there would be a language barrier.

- 64% (16 out of 25) of respondents did not receive documents translated in their primary language when provided forms by the SFPD.
- Of those respondents who have called 911, about 65% were offered the option to speak in their primary language by the 911 operator.
- Most alarming were the responses around witnessing or being a victim of a crime, and being arrested by the SFPD. 74%, or 20 out of 27, of respondents who witnessed a crime did not receive interpretive services when engaging with the SFPD. Similarly, 64% of victims of crimes and 93% of those respondents who had been arrested reported receiving no interpretative services.

LEP jobseekers in the City are not connecting with the One-Stop/Career Link Centers in proportion to their population, but when they do, the frequency of in-language services has been fairly strong.

- Despite the high need for jobseeker services, 67% of respondents indicated that they've had no contact with the Centers, and 45% of those respondents were simply unaware of its existence.
- Of the respondents who phoned the Centers, 94% were offered the option to speak in their primary language, and 77% of visitors to the Centers were in-language services at the front desk.
- 70 out of 74 respondents who participated in an intake/screening interview with a Center staff person received in-language services.
- 47 out of 50 respondents reported that they participated in a Center workshop that was provided in-language.

General Laws Governing Language Access

The laws and policies regulating the relationship between City departments and limited-English proficient (LEP) residents span local, state, and national levels. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964) states that any agencies receiving federal funds must ensure LEP residents can meaningfully access and participate in services. This legal right is founded on the protection from discrimination based on national origins as declared in Title IV. In August 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13166 in order to strengthen compliance with Title VI and extend this obligation to all federal agencies, rather than just federally-funded organizations.ⁱⁱⁱ The Department of Justice under both the Clinton and Bush administrations has since provided policy guidance for federal agencies to implement the directives of Executive Order 13166.^{iv}

In California, language access is governed by the Dymally-Alatorre Act (1973), which affirmed the right of every resident to access services despite language barriers (Gov Code 7291 para 3).^v It ensures that agencies serving substantially LEP populations must employ a sufficient number of bilingual staff and provide translated documents. The California legislature at the time recognized that “the effective maintenance and development of a free and democratic society depends on the right and ability of its citizens and residents to communicate with their government and the right and ability of the government to communicate with them” (Gov. Code §7291 para 1).

These laws, given their jurisdictions, do not apply to all San Francisco City departments and even when they do, enforcement is inconsistent.^{vi} The central policy governing language access for City agencies is then the Equal Access to Services Ordinance. It requires City departments to provide services in non-English languages when 10,000 City residents, 5% or more of the clients served by the department, or 5% of the residents of the supervisorial district in which the departments’ offices are located, are LEP and shares a primary language.^{vii} If any criterion is satisfied, the ordinance requires written translations, oral interpretation, and annual monitoring by each individual department and the City’s Immigrant Rights Commission.^{viii}

Description of Departments Studied in Survey and its Specific Language Access Policy

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)

Founded in 1851, San Francisco Unified School District annually enrolls over 55,000 K-12 students at more than 160 sites.^{ix} The *Education Code* of the California Department of Education governs language access for the very diverse SFUSD student body and its more than 1 in 4 limited English proficient (LEP) students. Section 48985 of the *Code*, recently amended by the State legislature in September 2006, ensures that, in a school with 15% or more pupils whose primary language is other than English, all related materials sent to parents or guardians must be in both English and that primary language, with enforced annual oversight by the Department.^x As of the 2006-07 school year, 85 of SFUSD schools meet the 15% threshold.^{xi} SFUSD created a translation department in 2001 to serve this function for the large number of Spanish- and Cantonese-speaking parents and students.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), on the federal level, echoes these requirements in order to guarantee the ability of LEP parents to remain involved in their children's education despite language barriers.^{xii}

City and County of San Francisco Departments

The Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, housed in the City Administrator's Office, is the division charged with providing translation services to all City departments. The services range from website and material translations to in-person and telephone interpretation. Presently, its focus is on the departments defined in the Equal Access to Services Ordinance as "Tier One": agencies with high interaction with the public and especially LEP communities, including the District Attorney's Office, Department of Elections, Police, and Fire Department. It is currently monitoring a pilot project to survey Tiers One and Two departments to gather data on agency language service needs and how to provide convenient access for such services.

San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)

Established in 1849, the San Francisco Police Department currently has 10 stations throughout the City and employs just over 2,200 officers. Although, the SFPD was subject to federal, state and local language access laws outlined above, as of 2006 SFPD had yet to develop a department-specific language access protocol.

Following an extensive five-month planning effort with community groups and language access advocates, Police Chief Heather Fong, in August of 2006, issued a Department Bulletin entitled "Obtaining Interpreter Services," which outlined departmental policy to provide free language assistance to LEP individuals. In October 2007, Department General Order (DGO) 5.20, Language Access Services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons, was passed by the San Francisco Police Commission. A DGO is the highest order within the department, and DGO 5.20 requires the SFPD to provide "timely and accurate communication and access to all individuals regardless of national origin or primary language."^{xiii}

The DGO is among the strongest and most comprehensive language access policies of any police department in the U.S. It outlines a clear protocol to guide the SFPD in their interactions with the LEP residents they serve. The DGO requires officers to provide access to free language assistance to LEP individuals they encounter, requires that interactions with LEP witnesses or victims be conducted by a bilingual officer or qualified civilian interpreter; ensures that family members, neighbors, friends, and bystanders are not used as interpreters; and provides forms to witnesses or victims in their primary language.

There are currently 460 certified bilingual officers, a majority of which speak Spanish and Cantonese. Civilian interpretation is readily available either in person or through telephone if no bilingual officers are present. The DGO also created Language Access Liaison Officer position that is dedicated to monitoring compliance,

direct training, preparing reports on progress towards the DGO, and overseeing the timely dispatch of language assistance.

One-Stop/Career Link Centers

In 1998, the Federal Workforce Investment Act created the centralized “One-Stop” delivery system for providing job training, education, and other services. The One-Stop/Career Link Centers offer job search, career development, and employment resources for jobseekers. Part of their mission is to affiliate with community-based organizations in the area to reach out to local communities. Here in San Francisco, the system, until mid-2008, was centered at three main facilities: the Mission Center located in the Mission District, the Southeast Center located in Bayview, and the Civic Center One-Stop.

In mid-2008, the City’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), which oversees and sets policy for the One-Stop/Career Link Center system, expanded the system to include three new “Neighborhood Workforce Centers” based in the Chinatown, Western Addition, and South of Market neighborhoods, and which will have a population-focused services.

This neighborhood-based expansion marked, in part, OEWD’s recognition that the traditional Centers were not effectively serving the LEP community, as well as the need to de-centralize the system to better penetrate other underserved communities. At the time of this report, full reporting of the output of the three new Centers has yet to be made available, and the vast majority of the survey-takers responses were based on their experiences with the three main One-Stop facilities.

Overview of Survey and its Respondents

Profile of Survey Participants

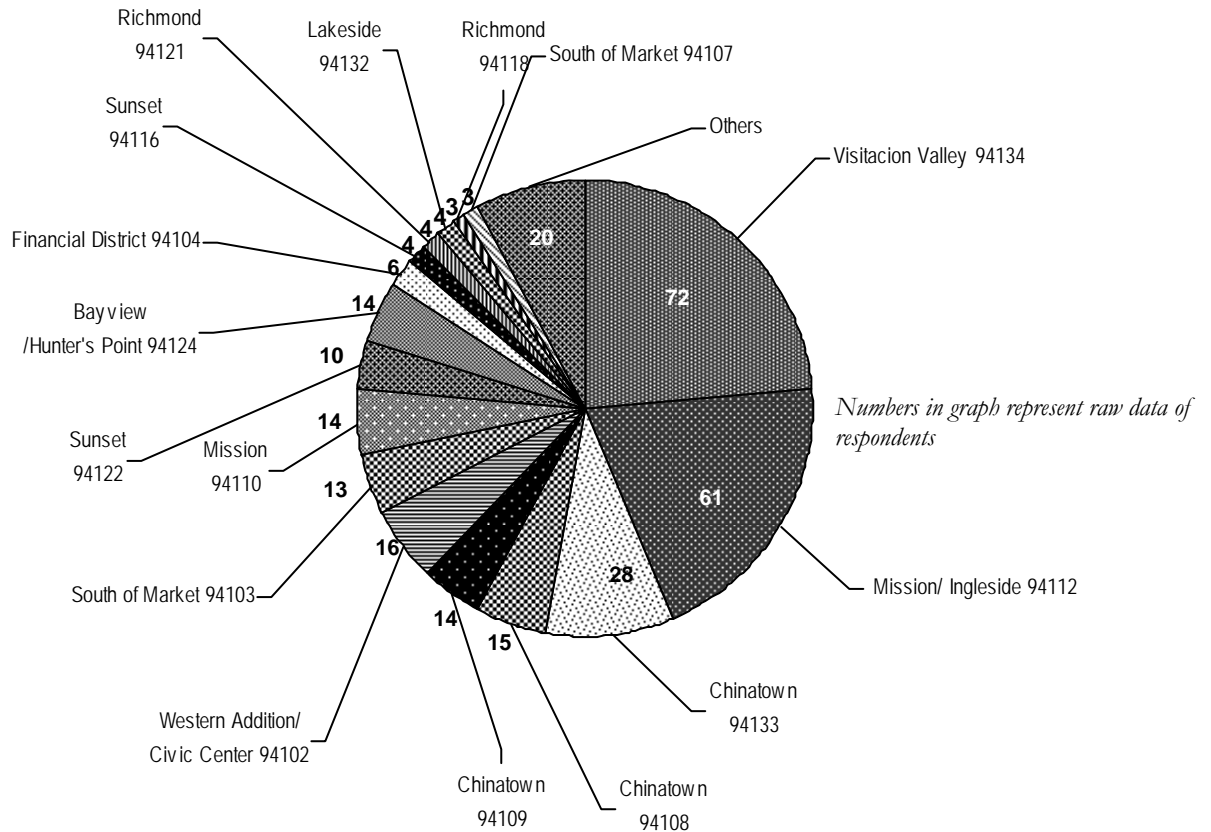
In embarking on identifying survey participants, CAA searched within its network of clients and constituents, worked with parent leaders from VVPA to conduct peer outreach, and collaborated with partner community-based organizations based throughout the City who serve immigrant clients. Surveys were all completed in-person by the respondents, and the results were then entered into Survey Monkey^{xiv} for analysis.

Our target population was: (1) adult residents of San Francisco from a diverse range of neighborhoods; (2) individuals who identified a language other than English as their primary language, focusing on Chinese and Spanish-speaking residents; and (3) individuals who had utilized or attempted to utilize services from City departments within the past three years.

Overall, 301 individuals completed the language access survey. Of that total, 186 identified themselves as primarily Cantonese-speaking, 90 as primarily Spanish-speaking, 22 as Mandarin-speaking, 2 Vietnamese, and 1 survey respondent spoke the Xinhui dialect. Forty-nine percent of respondents indicated they could speak some basic English, while 43% identified as not being able to speak English at all.

Zip Codes of Respondents

Survey participants were from every major immigrant neighborhood in San Francisco. The most common zip code was 94134, the majority immigrant neighborhood of Visitacion Valley, with 72 respondents. 61 respondents reside in the Outer Mission/Ingleside neighborhood (OMI), 94112. Other heavily represented zip codes include 28 respondents from Chinatown’s 94133, 15 from Chinatown’s 94108, 14 from Chinatown’s 94109, 16 respondents from the Western Addition/Civic Center area of 94102, 13 from South of Market’s (SOMA) 94103, 14 from the Mission’s 94110, 10 from the Sunset’s 94122, and 14 from Bayview/Hunter’s Point’s 94124.



Need for In-Language Services

The overwhelming majority of respondents, 93%, stated that they wanted interpretive services and translated documents in their primary language when seeking public services such as the school district, or the police department. When asked to identify other services, common responses included hospitals and the City’s Department of Public Health, unemployment agency, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) office, services for domestic violence cases, while others simply stated “all government agencies.”

When asked about the services provided by the City departments that were the focus of this survey, 77% of respondents indicated they needed services in their primary language to conduct a job search, 71% for job training, 74% in order to communicate with their children’s public school officials, and 74% to communicate with the SFPD.

Language Accessibility and the San Francisco Unified School District

Of the three departments that the survey focused on, the department that survey respondents most engaged with was the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), at 56%. This seems consistent with the family-focused services of the community-based organizations. Most of the respondents who hadn’t contacted the SFUSD reported that they “never had a need” (56%) an indication that they do not have children enrolled in the school district; however 18% indicated they could not find the proper contact information, and 19% expected that no one would be able to speak their language.

The survey results also demonstrated a decrease in both the quality and availability of language services for Pupil Services Meetings such as Truancy Meetings and Disciplinary Hearings as compared to school site meetings such as Parent Teacher Conferences and Council Meetings.

Quality of Language Services - SFUSD

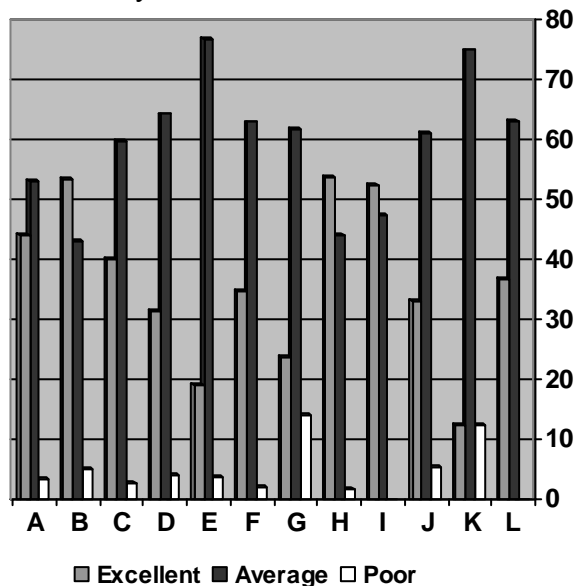
Survey takers were asked to assess language accessibility for 12 SFUSD meetings, ranging from Parent-Teacher Conferences, School Site Council meeting, Disciplinary Hearings, and Truancy meetings. When provided translation or interpretive services, respondents were mostly likely to find the quality of services as “average.” In rating the quality of translation of notices for all meetings, 59% of notices were rated as “Average,” 36% as “Excellent,” and only 5% as “Poor.” Assessment of the quality of interpretive services for meetings were similar: 63% of interpretation at the meetings were deemed “Average,” 33% as “Excellent,” and only 3% as “Poor.”

Specific meetings that stood out in terms of quality of translation for notices included Enrollment Process Counseling Meetings (54% of respondents deemed them to be “Excellent”), School Site Council Meetings (53%), and Individual Educational Placement Meetings (53%). Meetings that stood out as “Excellent” for interpretation were Enrollment Process Counseling Meetings (49%), Parent-Teacher Conference (44%), and School Site Council meetings (42%).

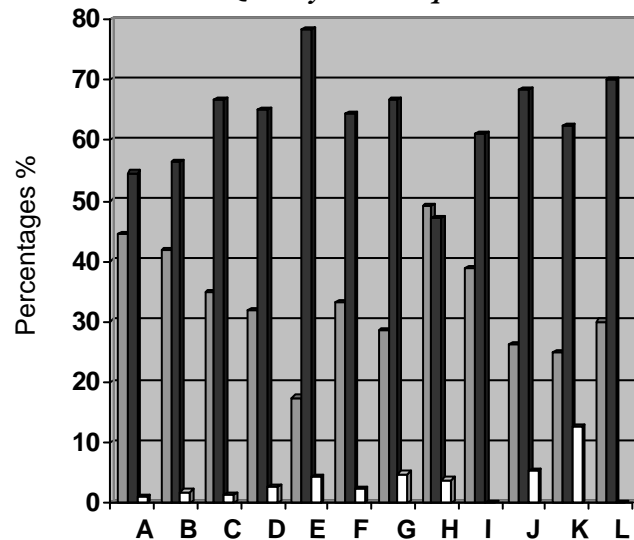
The quality of language services was less effective for meetings such as Truancy Meetings. For written notices, 75% deemed the translation to be “Average” and 13% as “Poor,” while interpretation quality stood at 63% “Average” and 13% “Poor.” English-Learner Advisory Council (ELAC) meetings also fared poorly, with 77% of respondents noting the quality of translation as “Average” and 4% “Poor,” and interpretation at 78% “Average” and 4% “Poor.”

Narratives responses on the quality of language services included the comment that “they (SFUSD) need more bilingual people because even though some are bilingual, they are not fluent,” from a primarily Spanish-speaking resident of Potrero Hill, while a Cantonese-speaking parent from North Beach suggested that “translation should be in one sentence Chinese, (followed by) one sentence English.”

Quality of Translated Notice



Quality of Interpretation



A = Parent- Teacher Conferences	E = English-Learner Advisory Council	I = Individual Educational Placement Meetings
B = School Site Council Meetings	F = Emergency Meetings i.e. child is sick/hurt	J = District School Board Meetings
C = PTA / other Parent Association Meetings	G = Disciplinary Hearing	K = Truancy Meetings
D = Back to School Event	H = Enrollment Process Counseling	L = District English Learner Advisory Council

Availability of Language Services - SFUSD

The availability of translation and interpretation services varied for the 12 SFUSD meetings, conferences, and functions that the survey focused on. Three meetings stood out among the others in terms of language access. The meetings that written notices were most frequently translated for “Every Time,” into either Spanish or Chinese, included Parent-Teacher Conferences (63%), Enrollment Process Counseling meetings (50%) and Back-to-School Events (48%). Similarly, interpretation was most frequently provided “Every Time” for School Site Council Meetings (56%), Parent-Teacher Conferences (55%), Individual Educational Placement Meetings (55%), and Back-to-School Events (54%).

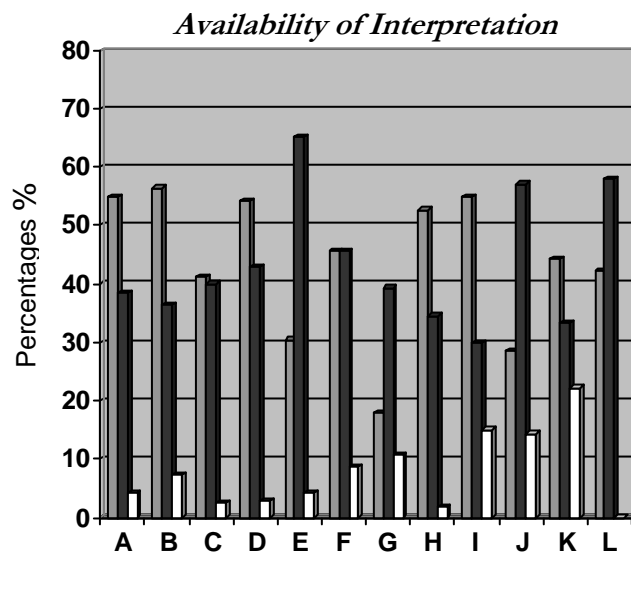
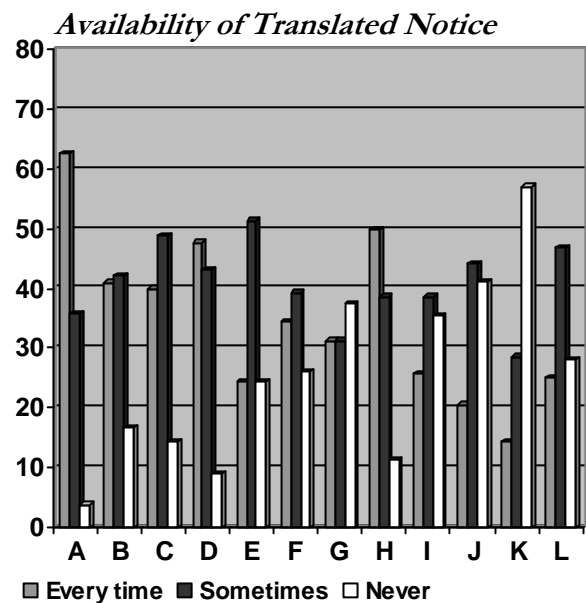
Despite its relative high marks, one survey respondent, a Chinese-speaking parent who lives in Visitation Valley, spoke about language access challenges at Back-to-School Events:

Schools with a large number of Chinese families hold Back-to-School Events without any interpretation. At my child’s school, the bilingual Principal made a speech in English addressing all the parents in attendance. The parents who understood English clapped and cheered at some of the remarks. But I had no idea what was being said. I wanted to share in the joy of the other parents, but couldn’t. I don’t know why the Principal, who speaks Chinese, didn’t use any Chinese or make arrangements for interpretation.

Another parent, a primarily Spanish-speaking parent from the Tenderloin, noted that interpretation is available but had concerns about the staff person providing the services:

We have a person at the school who translates but I feel that she translates in a way to support the principal. If you want to say something to the principal that is difficult and true, then she won’t translate this. And we honestly have very little contact with our principal but we don’t think he is interested in speaking with us anyway. It is hard not speaking English though I currently go to school for this. Especially when my child was injured at school. I’m still upset the principal never called me that day.

When asked for suggestions on how to improve access to services for families who speak basic or limited English, respondents stated better fluency by the school district interpreters and translator, Vietnamese-speaking staff, request for all mailing from the SFUSD to be in-language, and for 1-2 staff to be on “stand-by” for language needs.



A = Parent- Teacher Conferences	E = English-Learner Advisory Council	I = Individual Educational Placement Meetings
B = School Site Council Meetings	F = Emergency Meetings i.e. child is sick/hurt	J = District School Board Meetings
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Source of Language Services - SFUSD

When interpretive services were provided by the SFUSD for school site meetings, the services were generally performed by an appropriate district staff person. According to respondents, who were asked to check all categories that applied, paraprofessionals provided interpretation 41% of the time, with teachers the next most frequent response at 35%. Less frequently utilized were secretaries (17%) and principals (9%). An adult family member or friend (7%), or a youth/student interpreter (5%), were rarely utilized for SFUSD school site meetings.

The same held true for pupil services meetings. SFUSD translation staff provided interpretation 51% of the time, translation staff at 50%, with adult family member or friend at 7% and youth/student interpreter at 5%.

One of our survey respondents, a Chinese-speaking parent from the Tenderloin, noted that:

The bilingual secretary at school is not helpful. I am very concerned about my son's performance at school. He's been getting into trouble and he isn't doing well academically. At home, he's been acting up. I decided I need to find more ways to become involved in his education. I asked when the next English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC) will be held. The secretary said the date has not been set yet. I checked back every week to see when a date would be set. The last time that I asked, and the secretary told me the meeting was already held the week before. I asked why there was no notice about the meeting in the parent folder sent out every Wednesday, and the secretary responded that only the three ELAC members are notified. But ELAC should be public and open to all parents whose children are English Learners. I was disappointed and frustrated that even though I took the initiative to ask for information, the school did not provide it.

Language Accessibility and the San Francisco Police Department

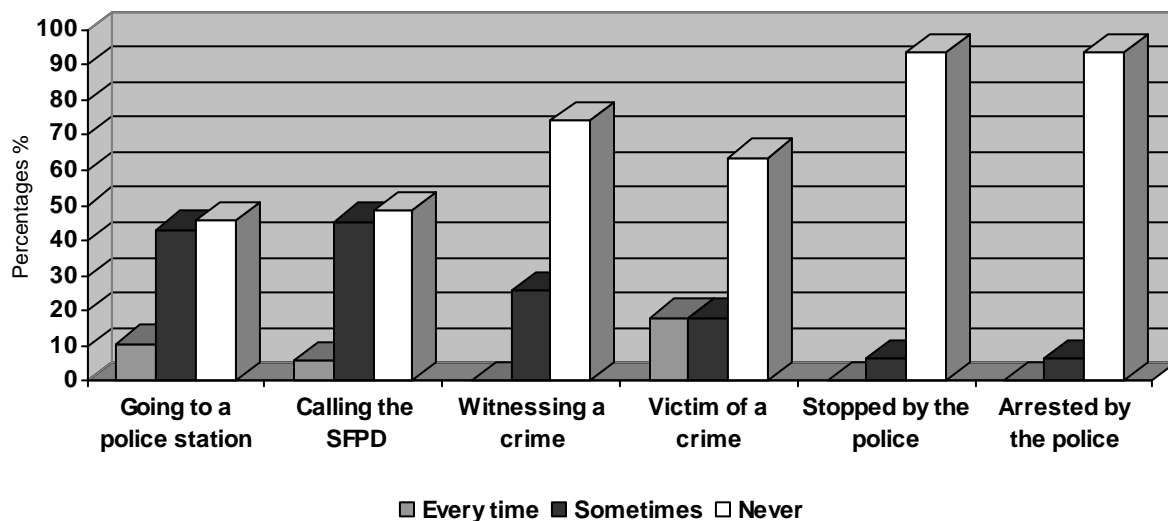
Despite having one of the strongest language access policies of any major police department, a significant majority of respondents, 78%, indicated that they never had any contact or experience with the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) within the past three years.

Of those respondents, 40% stated that anticipated language barriers, inaccessibility of contact information, or lack of information about the police in general prevented their contact with the department.

Availability and Quality of Language Services - SFPD

Survey-takers were asked about the availability and quality of interpretive services when interacting with the SFPD by visiting a district station, calling the SFPD, witnessing a crime, as a victim of a crime, and being stopped or detained by the SFPD.

Availability of Interpretation



The categories of interaction that were most likely to provide language services were for visiting the police station or calling the SFPD. 11% of respondents who had visited a police station indicated the availability of interpretation “Every Time,” and 43% noted it was available “Sometimes.” The figures for respondents who had called into the SFPD were 6% and 46%, respectively.

The most alarming responses, involved witnessing or being a victim of a crime, or being arrested by the SFPD. 74%, or 20 out of 27, of respondents who witnessed a crime did not receive interpretive services when engaging with the SFPD. Similarly, 64% of victims of crimes and 93% of those respondents who had been arrested reported receiving no interpretation.

When provided interpretive services, respondents were most likely to find the quality of interpretation to be “Average” (50%) or “Excellent” (31%). 21% of respondents found the quality of interpretation to be “Poor.”

Source of Language Services - SFPD

The DGO outlines a strict order of preference for providing oral interpretation, except in the case of emergency, or “exigent,” circumstances. Direct communication by a “qualified bilingual member,” meaning a certified member of the SFPD, is the first priority for providing interpretive services for LEP individuals. Qualified civilian interpreters are the next preferred source of interpretation, followed by professional telephonic interpretation.

The DGO states that “family members, neighbors, friends, volunteers, bystanders or children” should not be used for interpretive services, unless required by exigent circumstances. Once those circumstances have passed, SFPD members are required to follow the order of preference as soon as practical.^{xv}

According to respondents, the SFPD generally utilized appropriate sources of interpretation when providing language services. Respondents were offered the option to check multiple boxes to allow for the possibility that multiple interpreters could be used to address a situation. Survey-takers cited “Police Officers” as most frequently the source of interpretation (52%), followed by “Language Services” (35%), and “Operator” (15%). Less frequently used were “Youth” (7%) and “Adult family member or friend” (4%).

Narrative Responses to Experiences with the SFPD

There were some compelling responses when survey-takers were asked to describe any particular experience, whether positive or negative, in accessing services or communicating with the SFPD as it relates to language.

One respondent, a Cantonese-speaking resident of the OMI/Excelsior neighborhood, stated that:

I was robbed and requested Chinese translation to the police, but police said all the translators were busy today. So I had to call a friend to help translate.

Another respondent, also a Cantonese-speaking resident of OMI/Excelsior, noted:

I was in a car accident and the other party just left. I needed to make a police report but the police department didn't have a Chinese translator. I was very scared; they made me feel like a criminal. They were very impatient.

Other respondents had different experiences with SFPD language services. A Spanish-speaking resident of Potrero Hill noted that:

...my house got robbed and the police called my cell phone speaking my language. And the police then detained the thief.

One survey-taker, a Cantonese-speaking resident of Visitacion Valley, suggested that precinct telephones offer the option of in-language services up front:

It's good to have a specific option for people who don't know English. Because most of the time, in the beginning, there is always English introductions only, and people who don't know English are always afraid to hear English.

Language Accessibility and the One-Stop/Career Link Centers

The survey posed questions on the accessibility of the three One-Stop/Career Link Centers, the availability of interpretive services over the phone, at the front desk, and during appointments and workshops, the availability of translated materials, and the convenience of services.

According to survey results, 67% of respondents stated that they had no contact with the One-Stop/Career Link Center system, with a significant percentage, 45%, unaware of the existence of the services. This seems consistent with the general view of community organizations serving immigrant clients that the One-Stop/Career Link Centers do an inadequate of connecting LEP jobseekers to their services. Most of the respondents, 54%, said that they heard about the One-Stop/Career Link Center from another City agency, while another 43% indicated they were referred by a community-based organization.

Availability of Language Services at the One-Stop/Career Link Centers

Most who called into One-Stop did speak to someone in their primary language, and there seems to be adequate signage in their primary language when visiting the facilities. More than 80% of survey-takers noted the availability of signage and documents in languages other than English, and 94% of jobseekers who phoned into the Centers were provided an option to speak to someone in their own language.

When survey-takers did get an appointment with a One-Stop/Career Link Center staff person, they were overwhelmingly able to meet with someone who spoke their primary language (95%), as well as participate in a workshop that was provided in-language (94%).

Challenges in Accessing Services - One-Stop/Career Link Centers

The biggest challenge for the One-Stop/Career Link Centers seems to be one of visibility to the LEP jobseekers. As noted above, more than two-thirds of respondents had no contact with system, and nearly half of those respondents were unaware of its existence.

In the comments sections, there were a number of respondents who noted that the attitude of the staff could be improved, that waiting times caused some inconvenience, and the need for more written materials in their primary language.

One survey respondent, a Chinese-speaking resident of Visitacion Valley, noted challenges in getting assistance at the Southeast One-Stop Center:

I went to the Oakland One-Stop Center to look for a job. I approached the front desk and asked the staff there how to apply for services. He asked for my information, it was added to their system, and then he pointed to the job board and told me to look for myself. The line was very long and the Center was extremely packed. Nobody there spoke Chinese or told me about services in Chinese, and I was very confused. I looked at the job board for about 30 minutes, and found mostly office jobs.

Other respondents noted that “materials in Chinese were available,” “good communication by staff and the experience was positive,” and that the staff at the 801 Turk One-Stop “has really good customer service, and is really helpful.”

Recommendations for Improving Services for LEP Population

San Francisco Unified School District

Integrate language services into all parent communication at School sites and District departments

School sites and District departments should consider language access in its daily operations. To ensure meaningful parent involvement for all parents, School sites where there are more than 15% of English

Learners who share the same language should develop daily protocols for language services. Protocols should include identifying and training bilingual staff, community partners, school volunteers, and/or bilingual parents to assist LEP parents and ensure adequate planning time so that all parental notifications are translated and oral interpretation services are secured. There should also be emergency protocols for health related emergencies and urgent disciplinary situations to ensure that all parents have immediate access to critical information. Other strategies to consider include posting in-language materials on school's website and putting together a multilingual bulletin board with important current topics. For District departments that are in direct contact with LEP families, staff should develop a similar language access plan.

Provide ongoing District wide training to improve the language skills of all staff who serve as translators and interpreters

While an individual may consider him or herself bilingual, it takes ongoing training and experience to become a qualified interpreter and translator. District and School site staff and school volunteers who provide language services for LEP families in both formal and informal situations should receive ongoing training in order to provide effective language services. The training should help develop a bilingual individual's vocabulary of education related terms, appropriate protocols to provide unbiased language services, and skills to effectively provide simultaneous interpretation.

Offer interpretation and translation in more languages

Since some language groups may not trigger the 15% state threshold to require translation of parent notification, the District should assess the needs of other language groups that may be attending a number of schools within the District and set goals to translate critical template documents for schools to share. In order to maximize its limited resources, the District should also review and adopt translated documents on the California Department of Education's Clearinghouse of Multilingual Documents - <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/cm/>.

Develop District wide quality control protocols for language services

The quality of language services can directly impact how well LEP parents can engage in their children's education and effectively advocate on their behalf. The District should develop quality control methods to ensure that LEP parents are appropriately served throughout the District. For example, every translated document should be reviewed by a second translator. During community meetings, there should be at least two interpreters to take turns interpreting and monitoring for accuracy. It is imperative for meeting conveners to work with the interpretation team to ensure that the interpreters are familiar with the topic areas. Conveners should also facilitate meetings at a pace that allows the team to provide accurate interpretation. Finally, LEP parents should complete a brief evaluation after receiving language services. The results of the evaluations must be immediately reviewed and changes to improve the quality of language services implemented.

San Francisco Police Department

Conduct outreach campaign to LEP communities on the rights contained in Department General Order 5.20

While a department bulletin on language access has been in place since August of 2006 and a Department General Order since October of 2007, survey results demonstrate a basic lack of information on the rights of City residents for language services in its interactions with the SFPD. The SFPD should engage in an aggressive campaign, in partnership with community organizations serving immigrant populations, to ensure that City residents are fully aware of the availability of language services. Particular efforts should be made with smaller language groups in the City – Vietnamese, Russian, Tagalog, and Samoan.

Ensure sufficient staffing to conduct oversight of compliance with the DGO

There is currently one full-time Language Liaison Officer to oversee the compliance with the DGO in a 2,200 member police force. That Officer is charged with generally monitoring compliance with the DGO, ensuring that training efforts on the DGO is integrated at the Police Academy and Advanced Officer Training, coordinating with the Office of Citizen Complaints and community groups to resolve language access complaints, conducting outreach on the rights contained in the DGO, and providing compliance reports to the Department, the Police Commission, and the Immigrant Rights Commission. Additional staff resources must be assigned to these responsibilities for SFPD to come into compliance with the DGO.

Work towards providing officers with the necessary tools to be in full compliance with the DGO

The most common way that residents engage with the Department is through direct interactions with officers in the field. However, SFPD officers cannot easily access Language Line in order to effectively interact with the LEP population. Officers are not provided a Department-issued cell phone and are discouraged from using their personal cell phone, which can be subpoenaed in an investigation, for interpretive purposes. The SFPD should coordinate with the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs to obtain Language Line-specific phones, so that the availability of services is in concert with the provisions of the DGO.

One-Stop/Career Link Centers

Work towards achieving level of services for LEP communities that is consistent with the LEP population in the City

Historically, reports by the three traditional Centers have indicated a level of engagement by LEP jobseekers at a rate far below its proportion to the overall population of the City. With the expansion of the system from federal stimulus funds, priority should be placed on hiring bilingual and culturally competent staff to anchor the now six One-Stop/Career Link Centers. Language services should be fully integrated into its scope of services. The One-Stop/Career Link Center and its affiliate Neighborhood Workforce Centers should provide data on in-language services and demographics information on job seekers provided by each facility, as well as system-wide data including demographic information of jobseekers.

Ensure that strong linkages exist between new One-Stop providers and the three traditional One-Stop/Career Link Centers

The City's expansion of the One-Stop system, and its focus on population-specific needs, is a step towards creating a more LEP-friendly workforce system. The neighborhood-based Centers, however, must be linked formally and substantively to the larger One-Stop/Career Link Center network. The bulk of the infrastructure continues to be anchored at the three traditional Centers, and LEP jobseekers entering into the system at the Neighborhood Workforce Centers should not be limited to that Center alone, but to a continuum of services that are based at other facilities that have the capacity to also provide services that are linguistically and culturally accessible.

Align City's sector priorities with LEP focused services at the One-Stop/Career Link Centers

The City, through OEWD, develops priority industry sectors from which it focuses its workforce development efforts, nurtures key business relationships with employers, and launches employment and training programs. The most recent OEWD-identified priority sectors include biotechnology, construction, health care, hospitality, information technology/digital media, retail, and transportation/logistics. With the recent expansion of the One-Stop system, there needs to a renewed effort toward connecting the LEP workforce with these growth industries. A number of recent immigrants and LEP jobseekers possess some of the skills necessary to thrive in these emerging sectors, yet require the institutional commitment of the One-Stop system, policymaking that centralizes LEP jobseekers in workforce development efforts, and

language integration into all City training programs, to allow for full participation of the LEP population in the workforce.

Summary

While San Francisco has some of the stronger language access policies in the country, there remains gaps in the system of language access delivery that's unique to each of the departments addressed in this survey. Those gaps pose challenges to core services provided by the departments surveyed, even for the two largest minority language groups living in San Francisco. It's critical that City departments and the SFUSD remain committed to the policies that mandate their language access efforts, maintain flexibility and creativity in their approach to reaching LEP populations, and commit to the resources, the staffing and the outreach strategies in order to effectively serve all San Francisco residents.

ⁱ <http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/mocd/demoprofile.pdf>

ⁱⁱ 2006 American Community Survey (B16001)

ⁱⁱⁱ www.lep.gov

^{iv} Department of Justice, "Final LEP Guidance to DOJ Recipients," 67 Federal Register 41455. June 18, 2002. <<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/lep/DOJFinLEPFRJun182002.htm>>

^v <http://www.spb.ca.gov/bilingual/dymallyact.htm>

^{vi} CAA, "Equal Access to Services Ordinance," 1.

^{vii} EAS Ordinance 91.2, definition j

^{viii} EAS Ordinance, 91.3 – 91.7,

^{ix} SFUSD Summary <http://orb.sfusd.edu/profile/prfl-100.htm>

^x AB 680, <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/cr/cc/encla.asp>> and 48985, <<http://www.cde.ca.gov/LS/pf/cm/edcode48985.asp>>

^{xi} <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

^{xii} CAA, "Lost without Translation," 3.

^{xiii} http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/police/information/general_orders/DGO5.20.pdf

^{xiv} SurveyMonkey.com is an online survey tool commonly used by non-profits organizations.

^{xv} Ibid.