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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER 120 REQUIRING CITYWIDE  
LANGUAGE ACCESS**

*Language Access Executive Order Requires City Agencies to Improve Customer Service by  
Providing Translation and Interpretation Services for All New Yorkers*

*Agencies to Provide Services in Top Six Languages Spoken in New York including Spanish,  
Chinese, Russian, Korean, Italian, and French Creole*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today signed the City's first Language Access Executive Order, establishing a uniform policy and standards for translation and interpretation services for City agencies that have direct interaction with New Yorkers. Executive Order 120 requires every such City agency to provide language assistance in the top six languages spoken by New Yorkers. To ensure that limited-English-proficient residents have meaningful access to City programs, services and activities, the City's new Customer Service Group, housed within the Mayor's Office of Operations, will work closely with the Mayors Office of Immigrant Affairs to facilitate the application and oversee compliance with the executive order by each agency. The Mayor was joined at the signing today by City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Deputy Mayor for Legal Affairs Carol Robles-Roman, Operations Director Jeff Kay, Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Guillermo Linares, Counselor to the Mayor Anthony Crowell, Deputy Counselor William Heinzen, City Legislative Affairs Director Eddie Bautista, City Councilmember Rosie Mendez, New York Immigration Coalition Executive Director Chung-Wha Hong and Yorelis Vidal, a Make the Road New York Member and Senior Organizer.

"For the 1.8 million New Yorkers with limited English proficiency, interacting with government all too often can be a challenge," said Mayor Bloomberg. "All New Yorkers should have the same access to the same services and the same opportunities. This Executive Order will make our city more accessible, while helping us become the most inclusive municipal government in the nation."

"Thanks to this Executive Order, New Yorkers will now more easily be able to communicate and receive services at all City agencies, not just the few that currently have language access programs," said Council Speaker Quinn. "I want to thank all who worked on this issue, including Deputy Mayor Carol Robles-Roman and Council Member Rosie Mendez, for collaborating on this Executive Order that will directly impact thousands of New Yorkers."

*(more)*

Nearly one-half of all New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home, and 25 percent of City residents do not speak English as their primary language. New York City residents who have difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding English will now have better access to City government information and services in their language.

Executive Order 120 requires that City agencies provide interpretation services, including the use of telephonic interpretation, oral or written translation services, and translation of essential public documents into the most commonly spoken languages including Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Italian and French Creole. Each agency will designate a Language Access Coordinator who will work to develop a Language Access policy and implementation plan.

“Today’s Executive Order will make great strides in ensuring meaningful access to City services for all New Yorkers, including those with limited English proficiency,” said Deputy Mayor Robles Roman. “Our City agencies, many of which are already making great progress in the area of language access, will now even better meet the needs of the countless New Yorkers seeking city services.”

“We are excited about taking on language access as part of our broader customer service initiative,” said Operations Director Kay. “Without holding agencies accountable for the way they serve people with limited English proficiency, we can’t accomplish our goal of improving customer service for all New Yorkers.”

“This Executive Order strengthens our City’s commitment to serving immigrant families and communities, and recognizes that language should not be a barrier between any New Yorker and the vital services that we all need to lead a safe and healthy life,” said Commissioner Linares.

The Language Access Executive Order expands the Bloomberg administration’s commitment to accessible services for limited English proficient New Yorkers. In 2003, the 311 Customer Service Center changed the way New Yorkers interacted with City government providing information for callers in 170 different languages. The expanded Translation Unit in the Department of Education currently provides parents with information in eight languages. Under Local Law 73 signed by Mayor Bloomberg in 2003, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Homeless Services, the Administration for Children’s Services and the Human Resources Administration already provide enhanced language access for limited-English-proficient individuals seeking vital services.

“Part of making the American dream open to everyone, is about making it possible for immigrants to access vital city services,” said Council Member Mendez. “Without adequate language access at City agencies, we are turning our backs on the most vulnerable members of our society. We cannot let that happen, not on our watch. I want to thank the Mayor for this bold and necessary action. Today New York City takes a giant step toward better serving our limited-English-residents and immigrant communities.”

“We applaud Mayor Bloomberg’s tremendous leadership and commitment to improving government services for millions of City residents, including our newest New Yorkers,” said

Chung-Wha Hong, Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition. “By ensuring good communication with the public, the executive order will improve the efficiency of city agencies and enhance the safety of all New Yorkers.”

“Millions of immigrant New Yorkers will now be able to go interact with City government and get the help of an interpreter when they need it,” said Andrew Friedman, Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York. “Never again, will we will never have to ask our children and grandchildren to translate complicated government forms for us.”

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