



# Language Access

## All Town Staff Guide

*This guide is a tool for the Town staff at large that use the language access services, including translation, interpretation, and interpretation equipment. The Town provides these services to residents at no cost to them. Internally, the Affordable Housing & Community Connections Department budgets for the cost of most language access services.*

**November 2023**

# Background

Because the Town receives funding from the federal government, [federal law](#) requires us to plan for and provide limited English proficient (LEP) individuals with meaningful access to services, programs, and activities. Language Access is also consistent with the Town’s equity and inclusion goals and aligns with our values of creating a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents, including those who speak languages other than English.

While the federal government refers to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language as ‘limited English proficient’ (LEP), the Town prefers the term, ‘speakers of languages other than English.’

In November 2019, the Chapel Hill Town Council unanimously approved a Townwide [Language Access Plan \(LAP\)](#). This Plan outlines policies and procedures to ensure meaningful access and supports the right of all residents to communicate with the Town in the language they prefer. Some key policies include:

- Provide free interpretation and translation to any community members in need
- Translate vital Town documents and emergency communications
- Offer interpretation for public meetings, small groups, etc.

# Language Access Staff

Community Connections staff facilitate language access services. We also know that language access looks different in each department: as outlined in the LAP, **all** Town staff play a role in supporting residents who speak languages other than English. If you need any assistance, please contact: [languageservices@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:languageservices@townofchapelhill.org).

# Town Languages

Primary languages for all Town communications	Key languages for Public Housing Communications (based on composition of residents)
	Arabic عربي
Burmese မြန်မာ	Burmese မြန်မာ
English	English
Karen ကညီ	Karen ကညီ
Mandarin 简体中文	
Spanish español	

# Language Request Process Overview

**1** Use the community engagement toolkit and this Language Access Guide to inform your outreach and messaging.



**2** Submit request via the Hive.



**3** Make revisions as requested by Community Connections staff.



**4** Receive interpretation confirmation or completed translation.



**5** Implement effective multilingual community engagement strategies.



# 1. Use the Community Engagement Toolkit and this Language Access Guide to inform your outreach and messaging.

Providing interpretation and translation services is only one (and usually last) step toward equitable community engagement. How you show up in the community to spread the word about your event or message impacts how speakers of languages other than English will engage with the Town. Please use the [Community Engagement Toolkit](#) to help craft your outreach strategy.

**Before you submit a request, consider the following:**

## All Requests:

- Use the Community Engagement Toolkit to inform your engagement plan, especially the **Equity and Language Access** sections.
- The Town's policy states that we must provide "meaningful access" to essential and emergency information. For non-emergency and non-essential communications, consider these questions to determine if language services are needed:
  - **Will the project's outcome directly affect immigrants, refugees, and/or speakers of languages other than English?** Consider the location and community impact. For example, a development next to a manufactured home community with a Spanish-speaking population should have translated materials. Think about how each project will have different impacts and thus require different outreach strategies.
  - **Does the project's engagement plan include outreach to speakers of languages other than English?** The [2022/23 Engagement Study](#) found that many residents who speak languages other than English were not aware that the Town offered interpretation or translation services and, as a result, were less likely to engage with the Town. In the weeks leading up to Peoples Academy, staff were present in Spanish speakers' community spaces to spread the word about language services. Then, staff invested time and resources in interpretation and translation services. What kind of community engagement and outreach will you be doing in the weeks and months leading up to your event to encourage participation of speakers of languages other than English?
  - **Is this material evergreen?** Consider the communication's longevity. Re-occurring programs and events, like Peoples Academy and Parks & Recreation summer camps, are good candidates for translations and interpretation that will have more use than a one-time project.
  - **What resources will be needed?** Good news - Affordable Housing and Community Connections has resources in our budget to cover most language access requests! If you have a large project that may have ongoing language access needs or a "big ticket" request, please reach out with us to discuss how to cover these costs and, when possible, build resources into your project budget.

# Translation Requests:

Please review the Town's Style Guide [here](#).

- **Plain Language:** Communication that is clear and easy to understand. Did you know that about half of U.S. residents ages 16-74 read at a 6th grade level? Plain language is important for both English and non-English speakers because many of our residents have varying levels of literacy.
- A clear and concise message also saves money on translation and allows us to stretch our budget further to get more messages translated. Consider the following when writing your message:
  - **Know your reader:** Who is the audience and what kind of info do they need?
  - **Organize your document:** What are you trying to say and what can you leave out?
  - **Write clearly:** Avoid jargon, use everyday language, and avoid idiomatic expressions.
  - **Beware the passive voice:** Remove ambiguity. Rather than saying "it was decided by the Town," use "The Town decided."
  - **Clear writing takes time:** have you built in enough planning time to revise and submit this document for translation? Do you have a teammate that can give you feedback?
  - **Use images:** can you add images that people universally understand? (Example: food, hospital, phone)
- To learn more about the Town's Plain Language guidelines and schedule a training, contact:
  - Christina Strauch: [cstrauch@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:cstrauch@townofchapelhill.org)
  - Mary Jane Nirdlinger: [mnirdlinger@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mnirdlinger@townofchapelhill.org)

## Quick Tips

- Vendors charge per word, so the shorter the better.
- Consider message length. Spanish often has more words than English. Mandarin typically reduces the number of characters.
- Reduce government jargon as much as possible.
- Always end your message with the following graphic:

<p><b>Sabías?</b></p>	<p><b>မိန့်သွန် ညါဇါ?</b></p>	<p><b>Did You Know?</b></p>	<p><b>သင်သိပါ သလား။</b></p>	<p><b>你知道吗?</b></p>
<p>¡La ciudad ofrece servicios gratuitos de traducción e interpretación!</p>	<p>ဝှံဟုန်တံကွဲး ကျိးထံဒီးတံက တံကျိးထံတံ အတံမၤစၢတံ မၤကလံတဖန် နံလံ!</p>	<p>The Town offers free translation and interpretation services!</p>	<p>မြို့တော်က အခမဲ့ ဘာသာ ပြန်ဝန်ဆောင်မှုနဲ့ စကားပြန် ဝန်ဆောင်မှုတွေ ကို ပေးပါတယ်။</p>	<p>本镇提供免费翻译与口译服务!</p>

 [townofchapelhill.org/LanguageAccess](http://townofchapelhill.org/LanguageAccess)
 919-969-5105
 

## Interpretation Requests:

- If you have an unexpected interaction with a resident who speaks another language and needs immediate assistance, please call the [24/7 staff language line](#) to connect with a phone interpreter.
- If you would like to schedule a meeting with a live interpreter, request that the interpreter arrive 15 minutes early. (For example, if the event starts at 4:00, ask the interpreter to arrive at 3:45.)
- In your request, provide as much detail as possible:
  - Simultaneous or consecutive interpretation
  - Content interpreter will cover
  - Any supporting written materials the interpreter will need to access
  - Event point of contact and their contact information

## Other Requests:

- Multilingual Audio and Video
  - Meet with AH&CC and Communications to discuss.
  - Provide a written script and original video, if applicable.
  - Include any text overlay included in the video.

# 2. Submit a request via the Hive.

Please submit your request with as much notice as possible.

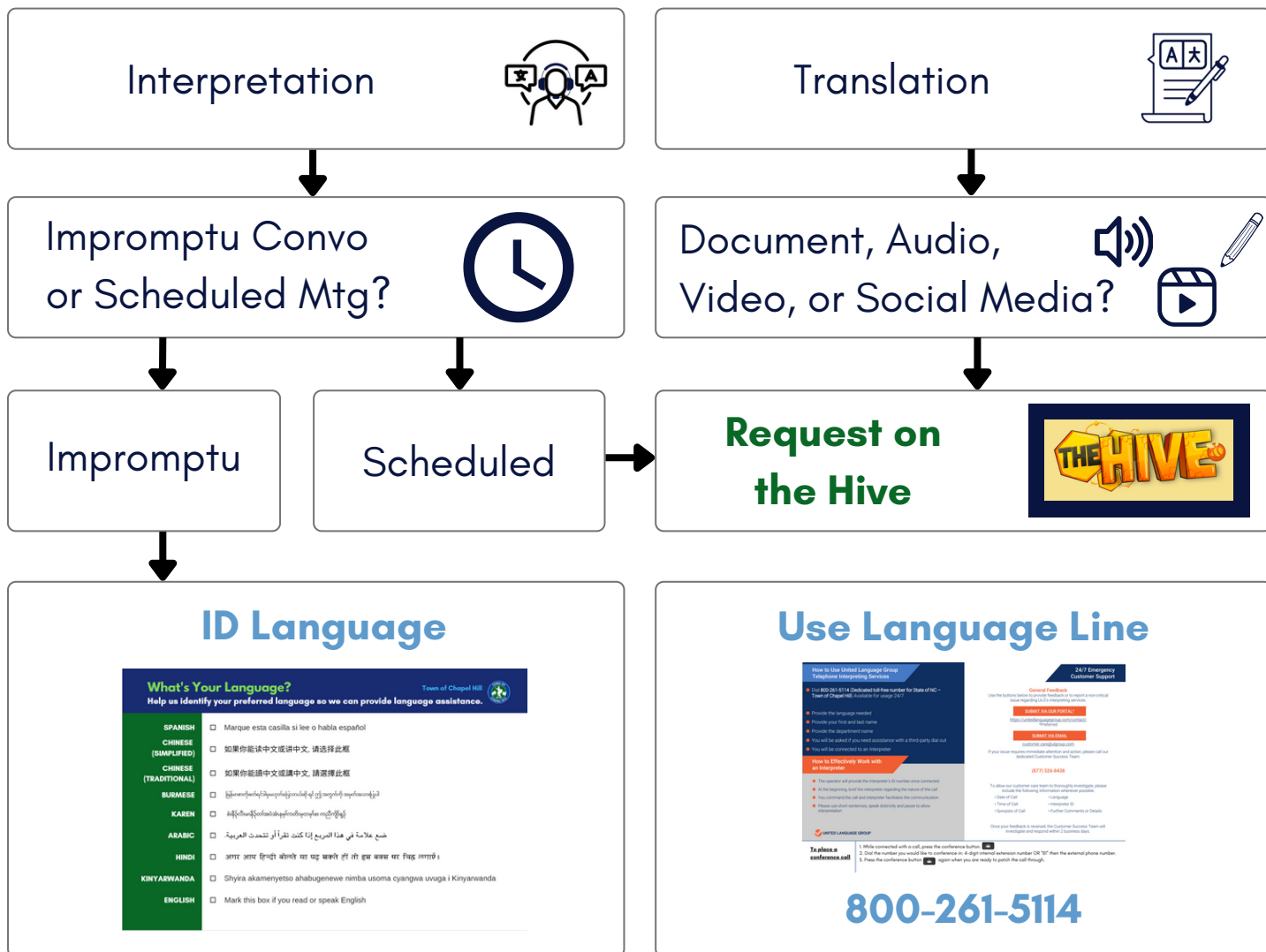
The size and scope of the project will affect the time needed to make language arrangements. For example, Peoples Academy is 10 sessions over 5 weeks. When the schedule was finalized, we requested interpretation 3 months in advance, so we had ample time to review the sessions, provide the background materials, and include interpreters in a dress rehearsal. A one-time program, like tabling at a community event, requires 2 weeks' notice.

Please submit your service request at least 2 weeks in advance.

If this is not possible, please note your request's turnaround time so our team can anticipate a rush fee.



## Which service should I request?



### 3. Make revisions as requested by Community Connections staff.

Once Community Connections staff review your request, they may reach out and ask you to make revisions or ask questions to get more details and discuss the proposed approach. The sooner you respond to them, the more quickly they will submit your language request.

### 4. Receive interpretation confirmation or completed translation.

Once you receive the interpretation confirmation, reach out to the interpreter, and introduce yourself. If you haven't already shared meeting materials with Community Connections, share materials, including agenda, presentation notes, PowerPoint slides, etc. so the interpreter can prepare for the meeting.

Once you receive the completed translation, format the translated text as needed. If you need additional formatting assistance, contact: [languageservices@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:languageservices@townofchapelhill.org). Always compare the source translation to your formatted version for accuracy: this is especially important for languages with a non-Roman alphabet. If you do not have the Karen font on your computer, please ask TS to download KNU and KSN onto your computer. If you're using your department's Canva account, upload the Karen font located in the Uploaded Fonts section in the font selection menu. For Burmese, select the Zawgyi font in Canva.

**When posting content in different languages, please use the appropriate language identifier.**

For example, instead of: Chinese

Use: 简体中文

This helps residents who speak a language other than English identify translated materials. See list and image below for the names of the languages.

عربي	Arabic
မြန်မာ	Burmese
简体中文	Mandarin Chinese
ကညီ	Karen
Kinyarwanda	Kinyarwanda
español	Spanish





# 5. Implement effective multilingual community engagement strategies.

## Share Translated Messages

- For translated social media messages, Communications may tag community partners.

## Community Partners to Tag on Social Media

- All Affordable Housing & Community Connections email distribution lists, including BIC partners.
- For translated social media messages, Communications can tag community partners.
- [Human Services Partners](#)
- Refugee Community Partnership - All languages
  - <https://www.facebook.com/rcpnc>
- Refugee Support Center - Burmese, Karen
  - <https://www.facebook.com/Refugee-Support-Center-135588977022982/>
- Family Success Alliance - All languages
  - [https://twitter.com/FSA\\_OC](https://twitter.com/FSA_OC)
  - <https://www.facebook.com/fsaorangecounty/>
- UNC Center for Global Studies - All languages
  - [https://twitter.com/UNC\\_GlobalCurr](https://twitter.com/UNC_GlobalCurr)
  - <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGlobalStudies/>
- Carolina Latinx Center - SPANISH (opt)
  - [https://twitter.com/UNC\\_CLC](https://twitter.com/UNC_CLC)
  - <https://www.facebook.com/CarolinaLatinxCenter/>
- Orange County Health Department - All languages
  - @OrangeHealthNC
- Chapel Hill Carrboro Schools - All languages
  - @chccs
- Jackson Center - Food Assistance Specifically
  - @MCJCenter
- Rogers Eubanks Neighborhood Association (RENA) - All languages
- CHICLE - language org (opt)
  - <https://www.facebook.com/CHICLELanguageInstitute/>
- El Centro - SPANISH
  - <https://twitter.com/CentroHispanoNC>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/elCentroHispanoNC/>
- Apoyo - Centro para la Comunidad - SPANISH
  - <https://www.facebook.com/apoyoNC/>
- El Futuro (SPANISH)
  - <https://twitter.com/ElFuturoNC>
  - <https://www.facebook.com/elfuturoNC/>

# Example Multilingual Message for Public Housing

## Department of Public Housing

**MAINTENANCE NOTICE**

**DATE:**  **TIME:**

**ADDRESS:**

**WHO CAME BY:**

**REASON FOR VISIT**

- Tenant Requested Service**
- Safety/Preventive Maintenance**
- Pest Control**
- Inspection**
- Other:**

**STATUS OF WORK**

**COMPLETED**

**NOT COMPLETED**

**WILL RETURN:**

**INITIALS:**

**COMMENTS:**

**REASON:**

- You Were Not Home
- Parts Are Needed & Ordered
- Private Contractor Called
- Work Requires More Time

**Office Number**  
 During Business Hours  
 919 - 969- 4983

**Office Hours:**  
 Monday - Friday  
 8am - 5pm

**Emergencies Only**  
 After Business Hours  
 919 - 968 - 2855

## Translation Guide:

**SPANISH:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Servicio solicitado por el inquilino</li> <li> Mantenimiento preventivo de seguridad</li> <li> Control de plagas</li> <li> Inspección</li> <li> Otros</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Usted no se hallaba en casa</li> <li> Se requieren refacciones y ya fueron solicitadas <span style="float: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concluido</span></li> <li> Se llamó a un proveedor privado <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> No concluido</span></li> <li> El trabajo requiere de mas tiempo</li> </ul>
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**ARABIC:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> خدمة طلبها المستأجر</li> <li> الصيانة الوقائية للحفاظ على السلامة</li> <li> مكافحة الآفات</li> <li> تفتيش</li> <li> أخرى</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> لم تكن بالمنزل</li> <li> قطع في حاجة لها وتم طلبها <span style="float: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> مكتمل</span></li> <li> تم التواصل مع المقاول الخاص <span style="float: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> غير مكتمل</span></li> <li> العمل يتطلب مزيدًا من الوقت</li> </ul>
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**BURMESE:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> အိမ်ရှင်က တောင်းဆိုထားသော ဝန်ဆောင်မှု</li> <li> ဘေးအန္တရာယ်ကင်းရှင်းရေး ကြိုတင်ကာကွယ်ထိန်းသိမ်းမှု</li> <li> ပိုးမွှားထိန်းချုပ်မှု</li> <li> ဝစ်ဆေးရေး</li> <li> အခြား</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> သင်သည် အိမ်တွင် မရှိခဲ့ပါ</li> <li> အစိတ်အပိုင်းများ လိုအပ်နေပြီး မှာယူနေဆဲဖြစ်ပါသည်။</li> <li> ပုဂ္ဂလိက ကန်ထရိုက်တာ ခေါ်ခဲ့သည်။</li> <li> အလုပ်ဆောင်ရန် အချိန်ပိုလိုအပ်သေးသည်။</li> </ul>
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**KAREN:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> ဖုင်အိန်တိုင်ဆွထိုင်တင်မဟေ</li> <li> တင်ကွဲလွဲတင်တီတီသအလအပူခွဲခွဲတင်လီအိန်တိုင်</li> <li> တင်မဆူတင်မိလံမိမာလအမဟေဂီတင်</li> <li> တင်မိထံသမံသမိ</li> <li> အဂတစိုင်</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> နတအိန်လဟိုင်</li> <li> တင်လိုင်အိန်တင်တိုင်နီတင်နီလီတင်နီလီမသတီတစိုင်</li> <li> တင်တီပုတဂလအအအိုင်လီသလတမဟေ</li> <li> တင်လိုင်အိန်အိထိုင်တင်မတင်မအတတတီ</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> တင်မဟေပဲ</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> တင်တမဟေပဲ</li> </ul>
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# Example Translation Table for Planning

This content was then published on social media and shared with community partners.

Reel #4: Supporting Text - ENGLISH	Reel #4: Supporting Text - Translation
<p>A Public Hearing is a Council meeting where community members can share their feedback with the Council. The Council discusses the item, but doesn't vote on it.</p>	

Reel #4: Script - ENGLISH	Reel #4: Script - Translation
<p>On May 24, The Chapel Hill Town Council expects to hold a Public Hearing to discuss the Housing Choices proposal.</p>	
<p>A Public Hearing is a Council meeting where community members can share their feedback with the Council.</p>	
<p>The Council discusses the item, but the Council doesn't vote on it.</p>	
<p>They might hold more than one meeting to discuss the proposal.</p>	
<p>The first chance that Council could vote on this topic is in June.</p>	
<p>If they haven't heard from you yet, there's still time to give feedback</p>	
<p>One way to share your thoughts is to attend the Town Council meeting at Town Hall</p>	
<p>Another way is to email the Mayor and Council <a href="mailto:mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org">mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org</a></p>	
<p>A third way is to answer the online survey: <a href="https://bit.ly/publicinputCH">bit.ly/publicinputCH</a></p>	
<p>If you would like to request language interpretation and translation services, please call: 919-969-5105.</p>	