

From: [Krishnan, Uma](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Cc: [Elejalde, Tatiana](#)
Subject: Testimony in Support of Resolution for a Coordinated City of Language Access Policy
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Greetings!

This note is to express strong support for the **Language Access Resolution**. Of course, the resolution is a good starting place to strive towards an equitable and strong language access policy that can bring into fold several thousand households that speak another language at home and in fact do not speak English very well. At this time, the City's response to language access is fragmented and not systematically tracked. Further, there are assumptions like "translation" and "language interpretation" can address this need. Clearly, that is not adequate- a clear and uniform strategy across all City Bureau's is needed and OEHR is well poised to take lead in implementing this Resolution.

When we strive for "equitable access", it needs to be understood that this practice should be made a standard practice – Why is that essential?

In my opinion, the answer to this central question is as follows:

Equitable language access is essential for every City resident to be able to exercise their "**rights**" as well as "**responsibilities**". True, there is tendency to interpret language access as a way to communicate critical information as highlighted by the coordinated City-County emergency response with safety and health messaging in over 35 languages! However, a strong language access protocol will also help build civic roles and responsibilities for people who may not speak English that well. Also, having a good language policy sends a message of equity and inclusion. The language around "reasonable accommodation" falls short.

In sum, the resolution is a great foundation to build upon and implement an equitable language policy and will carry the message loud and clear-

"All are welcome, will be respected and be included in any/all City endeavors!"

Thank You for this wonderful opportunity to speak up in support of the Resolution!

Best
Uma

Warm regards

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