



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** COUNTY MANAGER

**File #:** 18-649

Board Meeting Date: 8/7/2018

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Emma Gonzalez, Office of Community Affairs Manager  
**Subject:** Resolution adopting Telephone Interpretation Pilot Project

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution waiving the request for proposals process and authorizing an agreement with Certified Languages International to provide telephone interpretation services to San Mateo County departments in support of the Language Access Policy.

**BACKGROUND:**

In March of 2017, the Board of Supervisors formed an ad-hoc committee to study the County's need for a departmental Language Access Policy. This committee researched existing national and state law, conducted a Countywide assessment of existing language services, and identified existing gaps in language access services.

Based on feedback from all County departments and with input and review from departments with existing, robust language access policies, the committee drafted a Countywide Language Access Policy with three main components: (1) universal signage and wayfinding; (2) spoken interpretation; and (3) written translation. In June of 2017, the Board unanimously adopted this Language Access Policy.

Since that time, the committee has obtained input from and worked with various departments to study and analyze current language access services. Based on input from County departments and staff, the Office of Community Affairs recommends implementing a Telephone Interpretation Pilot Project, which will provisionally fund all County Departments currently without interpretation services for one year under a consolidated contract. This will allow each department to accurately gauge the necessity of interpretation services and utilize services that have been unavailable until now-but which have been identified as needed.

**DISCUSSION:**

According to the 2009-2013 U.S. Census Data, nearly half of San Mateo County residents (46%) speak a language other than English in their homes. Collectively, the County's residents speak more

than 100 different languages from across the world with the most prevalent being English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Russian, and Arabic. The purpose of a Countywide Language Access Policy is to achieve consistency across departments and to facilitate the use of language services.

The adoption of this Telephone Interpretation Services Pilot Project is the first phase in the previously passed Language Access Policy that aims to support access to County resources for all residents. Currently, five County departments operate and utilize a telephone interpretation service via an independent contract. The Telephone Interpretation Services Pilot Project will grant the remaining 20 departments access to over the phone interpretation services for clients either entering or calling a department.

This pilot project will last one year to ensure equal access to services regardless of language spoken and regardless of which county department a resident is trying to access. This project will also help the County gain better knowledge of those utilizing county services in hopes of enhancing the customer experience with all County departments. After a one year period, the information gathered from this pilot will be shared with each County department to analyze an appropriate budget for continued use the telephone interpretation services.

The resolution directs the County Manager's office to adopt a Language Access Policy to affirm the County's aspiration of meeting the language needs of residents, regardless of their English proficiency, as stated in the attached Resolution.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The term of this agreement is August 1, 2018, through July 31, 2019. The maximum amount payable under the agreement is \$150,000. The fiscal obligation incurred under this agreement will be funded with Measure-K Sales and Use tax revenues. Budgetary appropriation for this agreement was included in the FY 2018-19 Tentatively Adopted Budget.