



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DISTRICT 5
File #: 23-890

Board Meeting Date: 11/7/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor David J. Canepa, District 5
Supervisor Noelia Corzo, District 2
Subject: Resolution to create a language access ordinance

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution acknowledging the importance of language access and directing the creation of a language access ordinance and implementation plan.

BACKGROUND:

The County of San Mateo is a culturally and linguistically diverse region, with nearly half of the population speaking a language other than English at home. In recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2023 Half Moon Bay shooting, and Bay Area storms, residents who do not speak English as their first language faced difficulties accessing essential information and services. The lack of language resources has highlighted the need for greater attention to language access.

While the County provides existing language access resources and programming, it is essential to strengthen these efforts and ensure compliance with existing federal and state regulations. The County of San Mateo remains committed to promoting equal access and protecting the diversity and general welfare of our communities.

DISCUSSION:

Recognizing that language matters is crucial to fostering a more inclusive, socio-culturally diverse environment that can enhance accessibility to resources. By promoting equitable access to language services, the County of San Mateo aims to improve the health and welfare of all its residents.

The proposed resolution outlines a series of actions to create a language access ordinance, including:

1. The County Executive's Office working with a Subcommittee of the Board of Supervisors and the County Attorney's Office to draft a language access ordinance that enhances accessibility

to County programs, services, information, and facilities for populations with limited English proficiency.

2. Ensuring that the drafted ordinance considers efficacy and feasibility for implementation to achieve the desired outcomes.
3. Developing an implementation and funding plan to accompany the drafted ordinance.
4. Addressing the necessary elements to ensure intended outcomes and compliance, including adequate resources, training and technical assistance, accountability structures, and clear timelines for effective implementation.
5. Planning for the presentation of the ordinance by the Board Subcommittee on Language Access for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

This resolution highlights the County's commitment to improving language access, which is vital for ensuring that all residents, regardless of their language proficiency, can access County programs and services. By formalizing a language access ordinance and associated plan, the County of San Mateo can address the needs of our diverse community more effectively, promote inclusion, and enhance the overall well-being of our residents.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None