

Language Access

Organizational Needs Assessment

Background

Bend's demographic makeup continues to diversify, bringing valuable contributions to our community fabric and a need for greater access to materials and services in other languages. An estimated 8.4% of people living in Bend speak a language other than English at home, and an estimated 1.1% of Bend households are limited English-speaking households.¹ More than 30 different languages are spoken by Bend – La Pine School District students.² The latest American Community Survey data (2022) notes the following languages are spoken at homes in Bend:

- Spanish
- French, Haitian, or Cajun
- German or other West Germanic languages
- Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages
- Other Indo-European languages
- Korean
- Chinese (includes Mandarin and Cantonese)
- Vietnamese
- Tagalog (includes Filipino)
- Other Asian and Pacific Island languages
- Arabic
- Unspecified languages

The City of Bend launched an organization-wide needs assessment in Spring 2024 to evaluate its current service delivery capabilities as they relate to language access and offer recommendations to strengthen and expand these capabilities over time.

This needs assessment followed the federally required Four-Factor Analysis methodology. The assessment also explored existing internal policies and processes designed to provide meaningful

¹ Sources: 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate. **S1601: Language Spoken at Home - Census Bureau Table**; 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Subject Table. **S1602: Limited English ... - Census Bureau Table**.

According to the most recent ACS data, Bend households reporting a language other than English, 14.8% of Spanish-speaking households, 6.7% of households that speak Other Indo-European languages, and 11% of households that speak Asian and Pacific Island languages are estimated to be limited English-speaking households.

² Source: "About Us." **Bend-La Pine Schools :: About Us**. 7% of students are English Language Learners.



access to City services and programs to individuals with limited English proficiency (hereafter referred to as LEP).³ The City’s Four-Factor Analysis can be found in the “Four-Factor Analysis” section below. Findings and recommendations are included later in this document.

Methodology

In support of the City’s Language Access Policy, and of the City’s forthcoming Language Access Plan, the City of Bend conducted a Citywide language access needs assessment in Spring/Summer 2024.

All City departments participated in the organizational needs assessment. For several larger departments, multiple divisions participated. A full list of participating departments and divisions can be found in the appendix. The Accessibility & Equity Department is deeply grateful to these departments for their support and engagement with this needs assessment.

The organizational needs assessment drew heavily from the federal four-factor analysis outlined in the **Department of Justice’s LEP Guidance** document for language access initiatives. The Four-Factor Analysis is described in greater detail later in this report.

The City’s Four-Factor Analysis compiled data from the most recent American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (US Census Bureau) and the Oregon Department of Education’s English Language Learner Report. The Accessibility & Equity Department also worked with Finance and with Procurement and Public Contracts Departments to better understand the current federal funding landscape and how departments currently budget for translation and/or interpretation services.

To help prioritize and direct the City’s language access resources to the areas where the most language access services are needed, the needs assessment took an iterative and cross-departmental approach. The project team engaged departments’ designees at multiple points during the needs assessment to better understand current department- and division-level:

- Processes and procedures related to language access services,
- Patterns and trends (if any) related to community requests for language assistance,
- Plans for future language access work,

³ The City of Bend uses the phrase “individuals with limited English proficiency” as a people-first alternative to the common “LEP person/people” phrasing which appears in federal guidance documents. We recognize that the term “LEP” focuses only on a singular dimension of identity (in this case, English proficiency) and does not reflect the full linguistic and cultural diversity of individuals in our community.

- Financial allocations towards translation/interpretation, and
- Areas that would benefit from additional resources/support and/or standardization at an organizational level

The needs assessment also mapped the City of Bend's current language access landscape across departments and divisions, with attention given to the frequency and modalities of language assistance requests. The results were used to inform the creation of a tiered system to help departments determine what to prioritize regarding translation and interpretation. See "Factor 1 Summary" below.

Taken holistically, the needs assessment's findings inform the organizational recommendations listed later in the document. See "Findings and Recommendations" below.

Four-Factor Analysis

The Four-Factor Analysis is the first piece of a three-part federal requirement under Title VI and Executive Order 13166 to provide language assistance and ensure meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). After completing the analysis, the City is responsible for adopting and implementing a language access plan. The analysis involves compiling data that describe and balance the following federal factors:

- **Factor 1:** The number or proportion of individuals with LEP eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the recipient of federal funds (the City of Bend);
- **Factor 2:** The frequency with which individuals with LEP come in contact with the City of Bend's program, activity or service;
- **Factor 3:** The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the City of Bend to people's lives;
- **Factor 4:** The resources available to the City of Bend and costs [associated with providing language access services].⁴

Note that the data available for this analysis are based primarily on native language *spoken* among individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). There is very little information available to describe English *literacy* among immigrant and refugee populations in Bend.

While data on spoken language can help inform decisions regarding translation and interpretation, it is important to keep in mind that the two are not completely interchangeable (i.e. some communities

⁴ This includes identification of financial and personnel services needed to serve individuals with LEP.

commonly speak a language that they may not read or write). In all cases, it is a best practice that the material being translated and the translation itself are at an eighth grade reading level.

This analysis also does not address effective communication with people who have visual, hearing, or speech impairments. Requirements for ensuring that the City communicates in a way that allows individuals with disabilities to understand and convey information are outlined in the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Regulations**. It is worth noting that there are contracts for both sign language interpretation and closed captioning services that are managed through the City’s Procurement Department for community members who are deaf or hard of hearing.⁵

Below are findings from the organizational needs assessment broken down by each of the four federally-required analytical factors.

FACTOR 1

The number or proportion of individuals with limited English proficiency eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the City of Bend.

Table 1: Source: 2022-2027 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (C16001: Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over)

The following table lists eight languages (after English) spoken at home by individuals five years and older living in Bend. This list highlights languages (or language groups) with individuals who shared they spoke English “less than very well.” Additional languages spoken in Bend that did not include respondents who self-identified as speaking English “less than very well” are noted below the table.

Language	Estimate
<i>Total population 5 years and over</i>	<i>94,368</i>
<i>Individuals who speak only English</i>	<i>86,438</i>
<i>Individuals who speak a language other than English</i>	<i>7,930</i>
Spanish	5,134
Speak English “very well”	3,718
Speak English “less than very well”	1,416

⁵ Additionally, Zoom offers real time caption translation in over 15 languages. This means that anyone who attends a City of Bend public meeting in Zoom can turn on and select a language other than English for captioning.

French, Haitian, or Cajun	400
Speak English “very well”	319
Speak English “less than very well”	81
German or other West Germanic languages	524
Speak English “very well”	464
Speak English “less than very well”	60
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	273
Speak English “very well”	266
Speak English “less than very well”	7
Other Indo-European languages	321
Speak English “very well”	271
Speak English “less than very well”	50
Chinese (includes Mandarin and Cantonese)	261
Speak English “very well”	178
Speak English “less than very well”	83
Tagalog (including Filipino)	125
Speak English “very well”	100
Speak English “less than very well”	25
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages*	501
Speak English “very well”	346
Speak English “less than very well”	155

***Other** (total speakers / speak English “less than very well”): Vietnamese 177 / 0; Korean 29 / 0; Arabic 10 / 0; Other and unspecified languages 175 / 0.

Note: Census does not distinguish Other Asian and Pacific Island languages, nor does it distinguish Other and unspecified languages; based on other sources, possibly Khmer, Japanese, Native Hawaiian (Ōlelo Hawai‘i), and/or Thai.

Table 2: Source: 2022-2027 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1601: Language Spoken at Home)⁶

The following table outlines the top three language communities in Bend, their respective percentages of Bend’s estimated population with LEP, and the age range with the highest percentage of individuals with LEP within each language community.

“Age range with greatest need” was determined by comparing age cohorts within each language and noting which age cohort had the largest population (and highest percentage) of people who speak English less than “very well.” Age cohorts included: 5 to 17 years old, 18 to 64 years old, and 65 years old and over.

Language	% of Bend’s LEP Population	% of language group’s respondents who speak English less than “very well”	Age range with greatest need
Spanish	75%	28%	18-64
Indo-European languages	11%	13%	65+
Asian and Pacific Island languages	14%	24%	65+

Note: Census does not distinguish Asian and Pacific Island or Indo-European languages; based on other sources, possibly Armenian, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Native Hawaiian (Ōlelo Hawai’i), and Tagalog (including Filipino), among others.

⁶ Due to the pandemic-related challenges with the 2020 US Census, the American Community Survey (ACS) datasets for Bend have smaller sample sizes and thus higher margins of error. However, they remain the most reliable data currently available and are thus used in this analysis.

Table 3: Source: Oregon Department of Education ([District-level Data Profile](#) for Bend-LaPine School District, a part of the Oregon English Language Learner Report)⁷

The following table lists the percentage of youth with LEP in Bend and La Pine, showing that approximately 4.3% of local school-aged children are individuals with LEP:

Bend – La Pine School District	Elementary (K-5)	Middle (6-8)	High (9-12)	Total
<i>Current English Learners⁸</i>	457	139	143	739
Total Students	7,458	3,987	5,725	17,170
% of student population	6.13%	3.49%	2.5%	4.3%

Additional Sources: Oregon Department of Education ([2022-2023 Oregon English Language Learner Report](#) and [District-level Information Supplementing 2022-2023 English Language Learner Report](#)).

According to the Oregon Department of Education’s 2022-2023 Oregon English Language Learner Report, Spanish is the predominant home language of current English learners. Other prevalent home languages include Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese.⁹ The Oregon Department of Education also notes that the number of current English learners speaking Mesoamerican languages (as well as other languages) has been increasing in recent years. While this report includes statewide data, it does reflect general trends observed locally. For example, over 30 different languages are spoken in the Bend – La Pine School District. There is also strong qualitative data that indicates some individuals in Bend prefer a Mesoamerican home language but select “Spanish” when responding to Census and ACS questionnaires due to the current limitations of available language options to choose from.¹⁰

⁷ This data comes from the [District-level Information Supplement to the 2021-2022 Oregon English Language Learner Report](#); it appears the 2022-2023 report series changed format slightly and the relevant table for 2022-2023 is not yet available. It is worth noting that the reported number of current English learners rose for both Middle and High School students (from 139 to 158, and from 143 to 160, respectively) from 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

⁸ “Current English Learners” is a term used in the Oregon Department of Education’s data. The Oregon Department of Education defines “Current English learners” as multilingual students who were learning English in an English language development (ELD) program during the 2022-23 school year. The term also includes students who are eligible to receive English language instruction, supports and services in an ELD program but do not participate because their parents or guardians waive English language instruction, supports, and services.

⁹ See pages 14 – 15 of the 2022-2023 report.

¹⁰ This data includes information collected, observed, or shared regarding community engagement initiatives conducted by both the City of Bend as well as partner organizations.

Take together, the tables and sources above describe the population of individuals with LEP and the languages spoken in Bend. While the boundaries for the City of Bend and Bend – La Pine School District are not the same and thus slight discrepancies may exist, this summary represents the best approximation with available data.

FACTOR 2

The frequency with which individuals with limited English proficiency come in contact with the City of Bend.

Historically, the City of Bend has not systematically collected data on the number of individuals or instances in which language assistance was requested. However, with the number of individuals with LEP living and working in Bend, the chance for contact is high, especially when providing essential services and programs. Data collection standards will need to be a component of the City’s language access plan to obtain more concrete data moving forward.

Table 4: Frequency of Community Interactions and Languages Encountered (internal data)

A survey of all departments from May – June 2024 collected anecdotal information regarding contact with individuals with LEP and language assistance provided across departments in the City of Bend.

A selection of departments with the highest frequency of interactions is presented first below. Departments and other entities that receive federal funding either directly or through pass-through organizations (e.g. the State of Oregon) are marked with an asterisk and follow the high-frequency departments.

Department/Division	Frequency of Interactions	Languages Encountered
Bend Police	Very High (daily)	ASL; Spanish
Municipal Court	Very High (daily)	ASL; Chinese (Mandarin); Russian; Spanish; Thai; Vietnamese
Bend Fire & Rescue*	High (weekly)	Spanish
Community and Economic Development	High (weekly)	ASL; Spanish
Finance (Ambulance Billing)*	High (weekly)	Spanish
Water Services (formerly Utilities)*	High (weekly)	Spanish
Housing*	Quarterly	Spanish



Emergency Management*	As needed (emergencies)	N/A (as of Spring 2024)
Transportation and Mobility*	Rarely	Spanish
Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization ¹¹ (MPO)*	Rarely	Spanish
Engineering and Infrastructure Planning*	Rarely	Braille; Spanish

Languages encountered in requests for interpretation: American Sign Language, Chinese (Mandarin), Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Thai. Of these, American Sign Language and Spanish were the most commonly encountered.

Languages encountered in requests for translation: Braille, Spanish

Methods staff used to communicate with individuals with LEP included: Using another staff person to interpret, utilizing Language Line interpretative phone service, providing informational material in another language, and doing their best to communicate (e.g., using web-based translation platforms).

Identification of vital documents included: Permit forms, applications, informational brochures, website information, program flyers, preparedness information, letters of notice, utility billing, and non-emergency reporting of issues in the city.

Departments/divisions' reported frequency of interactions with individuals with LEP, as well as the variety of ways departments/divisions engage with the public, fell into three general categories:

Priority areas are departments/divisions that had the highest reported frequency of interactions with individuals with LEP, as well as the highest reported methods (9) of interacting with the public.¹² This group includes Bend Fire & Rescue, Bend Police, Community and Economic Development, Finance (specifically Ambulance Billing), Municipal Court, and Water Services (formerly Utilities). Each department/division reported a minimum of once/weekly interactions with individuals with LEP. Bend Police and Municipal Court reported daily interactions.

¹¹ Bend MPO is the federally designated regional transportation planning organization for Bend. It is a separate entity from the City of Bend. Bend MPO was included in organizational needs assessment because it is housed in the City of Bend's Community and Economic Development Department.

¹² Municipal Court reported 6 methods of interaction with the public and is a slight outlier.

Support areas are departments/divisions that reported occasional (quarterly or less-frequently than quarterly) interactions with individuals with LEP. This category of respondents reported using a mid-sized (5 - 8) variety of engagement and communication strategies.¹³ This group included: Accessibility & Equity, Bend MPO, Central Services, Communications and Engagement, Emergency Management, Engineering and Infrastructure Planning, Growth Management, Housing, Information Technology, Real Estate, and Transportation and Mobility.

Prepare areas are departments/divisions that reported minimal (or no) interactions with individuals with LEP. Respondents generally serve internal customers (as opposed to the public) and thus reported fewer (1 - 4) communications methods than other departments. This group included: Facilities, Fleet, Human Resources, Office of Performance Management, Procurement, and the Project Management Office.

FACTOR 3

The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the City of Bend to people's lives.

The third part of the Four-Factor Analysis reviews the importance of programs and services provided by the City of Bend. The City offers a range of programs and services including:

- Police services
- Business licenses
- Building permits
- Water and wastewater utility
- Permits
- Code services
- Parking
- Municipal Court services
- Fire services
- Emergency preparedness
- Housing and business development
- Boards and Commissions volunteer opportunities
- Community events
- Neighborhood Districts program
- Street maintenance services
- Non-profit small grants

¹³ Emergency Management is the outlier in this quadrant with a response of 9. In an emergency, the department anticipates using the maximum number of communications and outreach tools to reach the public.

The importance of a program, activity or service can be determined by comparing it to the potential consequences of a person *not* being able to access that information.¹⁴

In considering these potential consequences, departments and divisions should identify whether access to information can result in denial, delay, noncompliance with the law, or even life-threatening situations for an individual with LEP. If lack of language access to information can cause these effects, the program, activity or service has a greater need for providing language interpretation and/or translated material.¹⁵

FACTOR 4

The resources available to the City of Bend and costs associated with providing language access services.

At present, the City of Bend provides language premium pay for employees who are members of the Bend Police Association or the City of Bend Employees Association (COBEA) and who meet the qualifications in their respective bargaining agreement.¹⁶ Human Resources maintains a list of employees receiving Language Pay. At the time of this report (August 20, 2024), this list includes 22 employees.

It is important to note that departments also *de facto* rely on non-represented employees to provide translation and/or interpretation support for projects and community members. Additionally, some

¹⁴ A hybrid phone and text-to-online representative survey of Bend residents in December 2022 gathered feedback on emerging priorities and assessed community satisfaction with City services. A separate opt-in online community survey was offered in December 2022 as well. Both the representative survey and opt-in survey were available in Spanish and English. Survey findings confirm that City services, including those related to public safety, clean drinking water, affordable housing, and transportation are important topics to the community. For more information, view the [2022 Community Survey Results](#) and [2022 Online \(opt-in\) Community Survey Results](#) here.

¹⁵ All programs, activities and services must also consider forms, notices, applications or other documents required or deemed necessary to participate in or use a service.

¹⁶ Per the [City of Bend and Bend Police Association Collective Bargain Agreement 2022-2025](#), "Association members who are proficient in Spanish or American Sign Language (ASL) will receive an additional \$1.50 per hour premium pay. The Association and Police Department management will jointly establish criteria and testing to determine eligibility. The City may test proficiency yearly." Per the [COBEA Collective Bargaining Agreement 2022-2025](#), Section 13.13 (Language Premium Pay), "Association members who are proficient in another language that is required by the City will receive an additional \$1.50 added to the member's base hourly rate of pay. The premium shall be paid for all hours worked, including overtime."



departments have allocated funds for online language courses as part of employees' continuing education opportunities.

The City has several open contracts for language interpretation and translation. Allocation, use, and tracking of language access funds currently occurs at the department level. For language interpretation services, the City regularly contracts with four interpretation and/or translation vendors.¹⁷

For the years 2022-2024, the City invoiced just over \$27,500 for interpretation and/or translation services. Total budgeted translation services for 2024 was \$77,500, with a slight increase (to \$79,500) proposed for 2025. This discrepancy between allocated budget and actual spending suggests that existing resources are currently underutilized and could be leveraged to improve the city's language access programming.

Findings and Recommendations

Community Demographics and Translation Prioritization

Based on the information generated by the four-factor analysis, the following language prioritization tiers have been developed to respond to the language needs of individuals with LEP in Bend. These tiers are meant to guide written translation of vital documents and public communications materials that the City produces.

Each tier's level of importance is defined as the urgency to provide language access determined by the frequency or demand by individuals with LEP. The three prioritization levels for translation and interpretation are:

- **Low:** Internal documents available for public request. Government operations.
- **Medium:** Items that facilitate access to programming and events.
- **High:** Critical items for day-to-day, assistance, consent and compliance (law).

Written documents with high importance—those that the federal government would consider “vital documents”—should be translated into the language(s) that meet the federal “safe harbor” threshold.

¹⁷ The City has contracts with eight interpretation and/or translation services. Of these eight, four vendors are more regularly used. Frequency of use depends on vendor availability, turnaround times, types of translations requested, among other factors.

Safe harbor languages are those that are strongly prioritized for translation of vital documents and public communications materials. An LEP language group is eligible for safe harbor consideration when it constitutes 5% or 1,000 people, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered by a program, activity, or service.¹⁸ Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally.

At present, the following languages meet the federal safe harbor threshold for written translation of vital documents:

- Spanish

The population size of Spanish speakers in Bend meets the federal threshold and is also the one that was consistently represented among the top languages in multiple datasets above.¹⁹ It is likely that future needs assessments could identify additional languages that meet the safe harbor threshold for written translation—especially as community awareness of the City of Bend’s language assistance program expands and Bend’s population is forecasted to increase.

It is important to note that while other languages do not currently meet the threshold for translation of vital written materials, the City must still ensure meaningful access to individuals with LEP by providing competent oral interpreters (including of vital documents) where interpretation services are needed and are reasonable. Thus, the low-medium-high tiered system above also applies to providing oral interpretation services – particularly oral interpretation of vital documents that may not meet the safe harbor threshold for written translation into a language other than English.

Organizational Insights

The organizational needs assessment revealed several general patterns in current processes, practices, and policies around the City:

- **Areas of strength:** Departments have a strong customer service mindset; several have developed innovative processes that leverage existing resources to better serve a linguistically

¹⁸ The federal threshold for a “safe harbor” language—one where written translation language assistance must be provided— is defined as “[an] eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered” by the program, etc. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally. Please refer to the **DOJ Guidance** for more information about the “safe harbor” threshold.

¹⁹ See Factor 1 for more information.

diverse customer base. Several departments are starting to track customer interactions within their teams and build internal processes around requesting translation and/or interpretation resources.

- **Areas of opportunity:** See “Recommendations” below.
- **General observations:**
 - **Consistent training processes and resources are needed.** This includes standardized training for public-facing staff as a part of employee onboarding (including when existing staff transitions into a more public-facing role), as well as recurring trainings for frontline staff. It also includes regular communication and interaction with public-facing departments to ensure employees are aware of the City’s responsibility to provide language assistance services free of charge to community members.
 - **A centralized Language Access Coordinator position is also needed.** A Language Access Coordinator is necessary given the work required for the City to comply with its language access responsibilities. These responsibilities include training staff, ensuring vital documents are translated into Spanish, auditing existing processes and practices for effectiveness, serving as the point of contact for the City’s complaint process, and liaising with community-based organizations and individuals to gather feedback on the City’s language access programming.
 - **Complaint procedures must be established and communicated to staff and members of the public.** In alignment with the federal guidance related to Language Access, complaint procedures will be set up in accordance with Title VI and will ensure there is both a contact person to address complaints and a published means for community members to report any Title VI complaints.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To implement and maintain an effective language access program, the following priority areas have been identified. These areas include items that may already be ongoing in departments. These recommendations came out of the four-factor analysis.

In October 2024, members of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Advisory Committee, as well as representatives from departments that currently interact frequently—and in a variety of ways—with the public, will prioritize the recommendations listed below in a forthcoming workshop. Participating departments include:

- Accessibility and Equity
- Community and Economic Development
- Communications and Engagement
- Engineering and Infrastructure Planning

- Bend Fire & Rescue
- Municipal Court
- Police
- Water Services (formerly Utilities)
- Transportation and Mobility

Funding

Funding for translation, interpretation, and staff training related to language access should be tracked and monitored at the organization level. At present, departments track their language access commitments under different line items and may not always be clearly linked to language access services. More consistent and citywide tracking would allow funding to be reviewed annually as part of the budget process.

With a future Language Access Coordinator role, funding could come from several places, including from grants the City is awarded that contain language access requirements, departmental contributions, and enterprise funds.

Implementation Authority

A Language Access Coordinator (housed within the Accessibility and Equity Department) would be responsible for: identifying qualified interpreters and translators to contract with; creating standards and expectations for use of translation and interpretation services; maintaining a list of translated documents; and tracking the budget. In addition to these federal recommendations to demonstrate our organizational commitment to compliance, a Language Access Coordinator role would also be able to develop, implement, and refine key elements of the City's language access program, including trainings for public-facing City staff; standardize processes for tracking requests for language assistance, and create resources for departments' use.

Until the Language Access Coordinator position is established, these responsibilities should be shared between the Accessibility & Equity and Communications and Engagement departments. Please refer to the Language Access Plan for specifics on these roles and responsibilities.

Tracking of Requests/Interactions

Tracking by staff of contact with members of the public needing language assistance, languages spoken or requested, and the type of help requested is crucial for obtaining more concrete data about the number of language assistance requests the City receives, their type, and frequency.

Notice of Language Assistance Services

Consistent posted signage at all public-facing service areas, including those in City Hall, Utility Billing, public works administrative areas, Municipal Court, the Police Station, and the Fire Administration building is an important way to communicate with community members that free language assistance services are available.

Staff Training

Mandatory training on policies and procedures, including how staff are to respond to telephone calls or in-person requests in another language; how to track and record language preference information; how to access translation/interpretation services if necessary; how to use bilingual staff for in-house assistance; and how to process language access complaints will ensure staff understand the City's responsibility to provide meaningful language access to community members.

Additional Resources

Staff identified several needed resources:

- **An organizational glossary of common terms that can be shared externally with vendors and used internally by City staff for Spanish language translation projects.** This will provide consistent terminology when creating materials for public use. This would need to be a cross-departmental and iterative project, but would be an invaluable tool for both staff and vendors.
- **Taglines for public-facing City of Bend documents that explain how people can request language services.** These standardized messages would make it easier to incorporate language access considerations into both internal and customer-facing processes.
- **An internal list of vendor contacts and a checklist for how City staff initiate a translation and/or interpretation request with a vendor.** Updating, centralizing, and standardizing the language assistance request processes will help staff understand and plan for language assistance services they anticipate requesting for a project or other need.
- **An internal list of City staff who receive Language Pay incentives (if represented and/or compensated for their language skills), the language(s) they are proficient in, and their skill level(s) in those languages.** Staff shared knowing who at the City had availability to translate a document or interpret for a customer, and knowing what level of skill staff had (e.g. technical strengths in a particular City service area versus general conversational proficiency) would help their service delivery times and decisions.

Human Resources Support

The City should consider revisiting several elements of its language pay incentive(s) for future new employees entering the organization. The City should consider expanding the pay incentive to include non-represented staff (who often provide translation and/or interpretation support both within and beyond their departments) and members of Bend Fire & Rescue. The City should also consider revising the language pay incentive requirements in the future, ideally by offering language pay incentives to staff who pass a proficiency test issued by HR and whose position requires them to use Spanish or another language regularly.

The City should also expand its recruitment efforts to announce jobs to more diverse, multilingual audiences, list bilingual premium pay in job announcements, and promote multilingualism as an asset in hiring decisions.

Staff should be encouraged to improve their skills in other languages. Continued City support of public-facing staff who are taking language classes is encouraged.

Conclusion

The City of Bend is committed to serving all its residents. This organization-wide language access needs assessment is one step in the City's journey to providing better service to individuals with LEP. It is designed to establish a benchmark in the city's wider language access efforts, and will inform the forthcoming Language Access Plan. The City of Bend strives to provide holistic and ongoing support of these efforts, and holds itself accountable for reducing languages barriers that prevent people with LEP from accessing vital programs and services, understanding and exercising their rights, and/or complying with responsibilities.

Appendices

Appendix A

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

City of Bend's Language Access Policy

The City Manager authorized a Language Access Policy (**Policy No. ADM 2024-2**) on April 26, 2024. To view the signed policy on the City of Bend's website, **[click this link](#)**.

Department of Justice (DOJ) Guidance

The Department of Justice's August 2023 Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons forms the foundation of the City of Bend's Language Access programming, including the present organizational needs assessment. It is referred to throughout the City of Bend's Language Access programmatic materials as the "**DOJ Guidance**."

Appendix B

DEFINITIONS

The City of Bend uses the following terms as defined below for the purposes of this needs assessment, the organization's Language Access Policy, and the Language Access Plan.²⁰

Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) – The instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software. The text produced by the CART service can be displayed on an individual's computer monitor, projected onto a screen, combined with a video presentation to appear as captions, or otherwise made available using other transmission and display systems.

Critical Information – Material, either written or verbal, that may have life and death implications. An example of such information would be emergency evacuation messages.

Culturally Responsive – To learn and relate to the values and traditions of a person's culture to improve conveying written and oral messages.

Deaf/deaf (D/d) – Uppercase Deaf denotes a particular group of people who are deaf and share a language and a culture; lowercase deaf refers to the audiological condition of not hearing. An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing (D/HOH) may also have limited proficiency in spoken or written English and may not be proficient in ASL or any other recognized sign language.

Deaf Interpreter – A specialist who provides cultural and linguistic expertise. A Deaf Interpreter provides interpreting, translation, and transliteration service in sign languages (or written language) and other visual and tactile communication forms used by individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Deaf-Disabled, Hard of Hearing, or Late-Deafened.

Direct "In-Language" Communication – Monolingual communication in a language other than English between a multilingual staff and a person with LEP (e.g., Spanish to Spanish).

Hard of Hearing (HOH) – Someone experiencing hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing (D/HOH) may also have limited proficiency in spoken or written English and may not be proficient in ASL or any other recognized sign language.

²⁰ Many of these terms come directly from the [Department of Justice Language Access Plan, Appendix A](#).

Interpretation – The act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then faithfully orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning. For individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, this can include understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed communication in the source language and faithfully conveying that information into a spoken or signed target language while retaining the same meaning.

Language Assistance Services – Services made available by the City including but not limited to: 1) oral language services, including interpretation in non-English languages provided in person or remotely by a qualified interpreter for an individual with limited English proficiency; and 2) written translation performed by a qualified translator, or written content in paper or electronic form into languages other than English. These service offerings may be constrained by cost.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – As defined by the **Executive Order 13166**, individuals with LEP are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

This definition includes individuals with sensory impairments (SI), who are Deaf/deaf or hard of hearing and communicate using American Sign Language (ASL), have speech impairments, or who are blind or have visual impairments.

Note: Individuals with LEP may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g. speaking or understanding) but have limited proficiency in English in other areas (e.g. reading or writing). LEP designations are also context specific. An individual may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting (e.g. conversing in English with coworkers), but these skills may be insufficient in other settings (e.g. addressing court proceedings).

Meaningful Access – Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the individual with limited English proficiency. Meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English proficient individuals.

Methods of Communication – People who are Deaf or Hard of hearing use a variety of ways to communicate. Some rely on sign language interpreters or assistive listening devices; some rely primarily on written messages. Many can speak even though they cannot hear.

Primary Language – The language a person understands, uses or prefers to use for oral or written communication. This can include sign language or tactile sign language. An individual's primary language may be a language variant (e.g. a dialect).

Qualified Multilingual Staff – An employee who has proficiency in English and the ability to read, write, or speak in at least one other language at the proficiency level required by the department and as demonstrated through a validated language test.

Qualified Translator – An in-house or contracted translator who has been professionally trained and/or demonstrated competence to translate through national certification or comparable testing and is authorized to do so by contract with the City of Bend or by department approval. Qualified translators must also demonstrate knowledge of professional standards, and adherence to the corresponding professional code of ethics, as well as familiarity with required City of Bend (or department) terminology.

Qualified Interpreter – An in-house or contracted interpreter who has been professionally trained and/or demonstrated competence to interpret through outside certification or comparable testing and is authorized to do so by contract with the City of Bend or by department approval. Qualified interpreters must also demonstrate knowledge of professional standards, and adherence to the corresponding professional code of ethics, as well as familiarity with required City of Bend (or department) terminology.

Quality Assurance – The process to ensure accuracy, consistency, quality, and reliability of the City of Bend's language assistance services.

Sign Language – Method of communication for people who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing in which hand movements, gestures, and facial expressions convey grammatical structure and meaning.

Note: There is no universal sign language. Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) is a different language from American Sign Language (ASL), and Americans who know ASL may not understand BSL.

Sight Translation – Oral or signed rendering of written text into spoken or signed language by an interpreter without change in meaning based on a visual review of the original text or document.

Tagline – For the purposes of the City of Bend's Language Access work, this term means a short notice in multiple non-English languages informing the general public that a document (e.g., notices of language assistance services, notices of rights, forms, correspondence, etc.) or electronic media (e.g.

website, announcement via email, etc.) contains vital information and explaining how to request the document or electronic media in other languages.

Translation – Conversion of written communication from one language to another, preserving the intent and meaning of the original message. This includes keeping in mind differences of culture and dialect.

Vital Document – Documents that provide essential information for accessing City services and benefits. These can be paper or electronic. Whether or not a document is vital may depend on the importance of the program, information or service involved. It may also depend on the consequence to the individual with limited English proficiency if the information is not provided accurately or in a timely manner. Examples of vital documents include:

- Consent and complaint forms
- Notices of eligibility criteria, rights, denial, loss or decreases in benefit services
- Notices of availability of free language assistance
- Summary explanations of a department's direct services
- Fee, rate and taxation notices
- Compliance with the law

Appendix C

METHODOLOGY

In support of the City's Language Access Policy, and of the City's forthcoming Language Access Plan, the City of Bend conducted a Citywide language access needs assessment in Spring/Summer 2024. The assessment was based on the four-factor analysis outlined in the DOJ Guidance. The Four-Factor Analysis balances the following elements:

1. The number or proportion of individuals with LEP eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or by the recipient of federal funds (the City of Bend);
2. The frequency with which individuals with LEP come in contact with the program or service;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives; and
4. The resources available to the City, and their costs.

To help prioritize and direct the City's language access resources to the areas where the most language access services are needed, the needs assessment took an iterative and cross-departmental approach. The project team engaged departments' designees at multiple points during the needs assessment to better understand current department- and division-level:

- processes and procedures related to language access services,
- patterns and trends (if any) related to community requests for language assistance,
- plans for future language access work,
- financial allocations towards translation/interpretation, and
- areas that would benefit from additional resources/support and/or standardization at an organizational level

The Accessibility & Equity Department also worked with Finance and with Procurement and Public Contracts to better understand the current federal funding landscape and how departments currently budget for translation and/or interpretation services.

Taken holistically, these findings inform both the federal four-factor analysis and the organizational recommendations listed above in the document.

Appendix D

PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS AND DIVISIONS

The Accessibility and Equity Department is deeply grateful to the following departments and divisions, as well as the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for their support and engagement with the needs assessment:

- Bend Fire & Rescue
- Bend MPO
- Bend Police
- City Attorney's Office
- City Manager's Office
- Communications and Engagement
- Community and Economic Development (CEDD)
 - Administrative Resources Team (ART)
 - Growth Management Division (GMD)
- Emergency Management
- Engineering and Infrastructure Planning (EIPD)
- Facilities
- Finance
- Fleet Management
- Housing
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Municipal Court
- Office of Performance Management (OPM)
- Procurement and Public Contracts
- Project Management Office (PMO)
- Real Estate
- Transportation and Mobility (TMD)
- Water Services (formerly Utilities)



Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities

To obtain this information in an alternate format such as Braille, large print, electronic formats, etc., please contact Lindsay Wengloski at lwengloski@bendoregon.gov or 541-323-7177. Relay Users Dial 7-1-1.