



Malden Language Access Office

LANGUAGE ACCESS UPDATES

ELENA MARTINEZ, LANGUAGE ACCESS COORDINATOR

It is still less than a year since I became the Language Access coordinator for the City of Malden. Since then, I have been working on **real-time solutions** to eliminate language barriers and promote the **ready-to-use services** that our municipality has to offer.

- **At City Hall, the solutions are continuously implemented** by training staff and departments. Each department is required to develop a Language Access solution that supports the unique way they need to work with the constituents they serve. My office works directly with a liaison to understand what's needed for outreach, translations and interpretation and keep them informed of what is required by the law to be in compliance. An example of compliance would be knowing that if you receive Federal funds, you must have a Language Access plan or solution.
- **Multilingual Language Line**
 - We have seen great benefits of having the line: City Hall has a multilingual voice, it is a grassroots initiative led by community interpreters, and as it is always expanding – remember we have about 60 languages in Malden – it offers new opportunities to bilingual community members and contributes to the local economy.
 - Our most recent report indicates frequent usage. We can breakdown the data by languages, type of questions, and departments.
 - Number one request has been from people facing housing issues (unable to afford their rent / facing eviction / etc.). Housing Stability will use the interpreters to do intakes, referrals, and provide legal help when necessary. One question that comes up, is about getting help to find jobs.
 - Top 3 languages using the language Line have been Portuguese, Spanish, and Arabic
- **Town Hall Series Continues:** Next Portuguese Town Hall – TBA
 - Local Partners and participants will include city hall departments, Malden counsellors, TDM church Social Services, Malden Public School, YMCA, local businesses, etc. We have the support from Congresswoman Katherine Clark and other representatives.
 - I have been meeting with members of the Portuguese-speaking community and asking what issues and topics are of most importance and what information they need. Many families arrived right before the school year started and this would be their first introduction to municipal government and available services.





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- I have been participating in **Meetings, Learning Events, and Promoting Community Partnership Initiatives** to be able to understand what's needed beyond translation, interpretations and City Hall staff training.
 - Language Access Municipal Network
 - Racial Equity Commission
 - Climate Action Plan Initiatives
 - Community Outreach Events
 - Language Access Roundtables by MAPC, Department of Justice, White House Listening Sessions
- **Language Ambassador Program**
 - Launched in January with 3 volunteers. Gathering the information from feedback and from our first community interactions, I'm finalizing the draft of the Language Ambassador program, the goals, requirements, and training sessions that will teach participants about the services and opportunities available for all community members. Language Ambassadors will receive a stipend for training and commitments. Opportunities will be posted soon.
- **Next Steps**
 - **City Hall owned Interpretation equipment.** It will be available for all city meetings. We will be able to conduct multilingual meetings at any time with ease of community participation.
 - Working with community partners and exploring opportunities to bring **Community English Classes** to Malden
 - Language Access Webinars for Community / Nonprofits / Partners

