



March 18, 2021 5:15 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.

Zoom: <https://cambridgema.zoom.us/j/92461748993>

Summary of Conversation Topics

- Language Access in Seattle and Boston
- Language Justice Working Group Update
- Cambridge Youth Council Updates

Present:

Co-Chairs: Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui and Neal Michaels

Members: Tina Alu, Branville Bard, Ron Benham, Ben Clark, ~~Hiba Eddaiif~~, Luba Feigenberg, Michelle Godfrey, Kim Goldstein, Irene Hill, Liz Hill, Claude Jacob, ~~Mike Johnston~~, David Kale, Michelle Lower, Alanna Mallon, Maria McCauley, ~~Geeta Pradhan~~, Bridget Rodriguez, ~~Kenny Salim~~, Ellen Semonoff, Tagesech Wabeto, ~~Ayesha Wilson~~, **Executive Director:** Nancy Tauber

Notetaker: Sydney Down

Find It Manager: Andrew Liedtka

Cambridge Youth Council (CYC) Coordinator: Tina Johnson

CYC Members: Kaliab Kebede, Rhodes Pate, Routh Derege, Samia Afrose, Ahmed Benghomari, Salma Bokouj, Ziya Forbes, Elijah Lee-Robinson, Mohammad Jihad, Jonathan Akbari

Guests: Peggy Liao, Jeniffer Vivar Wong, Robin Harris, Abigail Lopez, Lorena Curtis, Shayla Simmons, Christine Elow, Jen Baily, Judy Nuefeld, Meghan D'Arcy, Christine Elow, Ruth Santos, Maria Teresa Valencia, Rohan Kundargi, Sally Ulmer, Leslie Jimenez, Aboma Dirbaba

5:15 Meeting Starts

Welcome & Agenda Overview

Presentations and Discussion:

- Jeniffer Vivar-Wong - Boston's Language and Communications Access Interim Director
 - See presentation below
- Q&A
 - City of Boston's Virtual Meeting Protocol - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FowUfLnuG30vu-pWqtfjOUZdX9WeCvFMsGw4Yl4Xvkc/edit>
 - How long has the office been in existence?
 - 2016 ordinance was passed, no one in the office until 8 months after. Currently the ordinance is being revised.
 - Contracts?
 - Language Line
 - ASL on Demand (Purple VRI)

- Is most work in the public or with city offices?
 - Transitioning from internal facing to external with new ordinance.
 - Structured by each department overseeing a different part of language access, now embarking on engagement work, informing about practices in the community, evaluating the competency of resources provided.
- Are you housed under the Equity Cabinet of the city? -- Yes
- Peggy Liao - Seattle's Language Access Program and Policy Specialist
 - Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH8-xXNrJFM>
 - See presentation below
- Q&A
 - Seattle has an executive order - not an ordinance
 - Language Access Liaison Meetings - Monthly meetings with representatives from different departments, collaborating, sharing best practices.
 - Top Tier Languages -- Hierarchy helps prioritization of resources for language access.

Interview - Tina Alu, Peggy Liao, and Jeniffer Vivar-Wong You both described your structure and goals.

We would like to follow-up some more questions

- **What have you learned since COVID?**
- Boston implemented putting together a group of community based translators and multilingual staff providing rapid translations for important covid information.
- Alerts went out through text message system in 10 different languages, then was adapted through sending out through all community organizations in community org. lists.
 - <https://www.boston.gov/news/city-deploy-sound-trucks-stay-home-message-covid-19-information>
- There was a need to have access efforts (consolidated) when it comes to emergencies and extreme situations such as pandemic.
- Created connections that disseminate emergency information and will work on this further because of learned covid experience.
- Seattle was able to work with the county when pandemic hit, including other jurisdictions to see what access really looks like with greater combined resources to create emergency response translators from different communities providing quick translation information turn around.
- Building translation memory, hitting the same people consistently and communications to their refugee community.
- Centralization.

What are the pros and cons of centralized vs. decentralized?

- Decentralized systems require less heavy lifting, don't need to create a new entity to support other departments, might be easier to start with as people like the freedom of choice from different vendors, not just one.
- Long term benefits include being able to build up knowledge internally, and would ideally move towards a centralized.
- Benefits in centralized systems include trying to get everyone on the same page -- a lot of effort is put into ensuring each department is following guidelines of their language access guiding office.
- Centralization helps everything get done.
- Decentralized in Boston ensures any interaction with any department can provide language access. Each department is held accountable they can provide for all Bostonians, departments just need support in order to do so.

Can you talk more about the relationship between disabilities and language access and overall communication in your city?

- The Immigrant advancement and disability commission created the Boston ordinance.
- They handle communications aspects specifically providing for example to those who are blind, deaf, hard of hearing etc. -- ASL interpretations, screen reader, large fonts, dubbing videos, audio descriptions, and other ways to be innovative and provide new formats for individuals with disabilities.
- Learned to work with the Mass coalition for deaf and hard of hearing, have their support and learn from their wealth of knowledge the specificities of services and communications from them.

Can you share some of the costs?

- Boston 750,000 for FY21, FY22 closer to 2 million. They have their own budget committee, allocating budgets for each department for access. Departments are categorized by tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3.
- Seattle doesn't have a centralized budget, 8% should really be the minimum for their budget- 8% of the population, 22% allocated for true services needed.
- The way Boston is set up requires an extensive budget every year -- decentralized approach encourages each department to factor in access to their individual budget, normalizing the services, embedding it within how the government works, not as an afterthought.
- Communication between people making budget and people providing access is essential.
- Higher up support, advocacy from the mayor's office, budget committees also essential.

What is the money spent on?

- Vendors that do the work of translating and interpreting.
- Working to incorporate community based interactions, they understand the culture, nuances of language in the community.
- These orgs are best suited to build trust and communication in the community.
- Translation biggest cost.

What would you recommend we prioritize first as we develop Language Access policies and plans?

What advice would you give us?

- Jeniffer
 - Find 'champions within the city' that will advocate for language access
 - Institutionalize support and make sure it is maintained year after year
 - Uplift the office doing language access work and all departments they serve. Make sure everyone knows they are a resource that should be utilized.
 - Be patient and create a safe space for those who are new to the work to ask questions may be considered silly (within different departments).
- Peggy
 - Echoes point about higher-up support.
 - Have a specialist with lived-experience and budget for it.
 - Ordinances must be backed by individuals and budget.
 - Position language access not as a separate function of the city.

How do you involve the community and ensure the community has access to information?

- Does appreciate being Housed under Immigrant and Refugee affairs because can easily cater to their audience and achieve community engagement.
- Boston created forms, surveys and listening spaces, created spaces where feedback can be given at all times, filtered through departments.
- Liaisons in each neighborhood focus on that community or language group
- Ethnic media roundtables to share resources, most feedback is filtered through departments.

Breakouts

Now that you've heard from Boston and Seattle, what do you think would work in Cambridge?

Suggestions

- Plan should include a timeline and a phased in approach
- Need a person whose job it is to focus on language access
- Focus on forward facing employees within city departments
- Community input -- community involved at every level and in the creation of an ordinance
- Including in ordinance holding organizations and outside providers accountable for their involvement/ work
- Focus on sets of Cambridge, already have starting points. Different ambassadors that we already have 'champions' 'liaisons', the only way this would work is connecting existing systems.
- Didn't resolve how to incorporate disability into access work -- bring back to the working group.
- Seattle video was extremely helpful. Create a similar video or use the Seattle video.

Family Policy Council Business

- Adoption of Minutes (February 11, 2021)
- Public Comment
- Announcements
 - Pre-registration for vaccines is open through the state, previous sites were taken down and pre-registration is necessary through Mass sites. People should keep trying through federal pharmaceutical sites.

Cambridge Youth Council Updates

- CYC & BSU Fundraising Challenge: MLK Fundraiser -- Raised over \$24,000, which includes a match from the Cambridge Community Foundations of \$12,000.
- 12 organizations in Cambridge each received \$2,045
- RAW- Survey sent out gathering young people's ideas on topics to be discussed in their 'Jubilee' style conversation (Youtube channel series allowing opposing viewpoints on a given topic to debate) was successful. They are preparing further to facilitate the conversation for young people.
- Guidance - Group monitors and works to incorporate youth needs/ perspectives into the CRLS Guidance program. Beginning to work with the head of Guidance at CRLS, Lynn Williams.
- Vote-16 -
 - Recently put out a survey about voting as a young person and lowering the voting age
 - Working to collaborate/ connect/ reach out with other cities to lower voting age
 - Meeting with HerVote club at CRLS, tomorrow
 - Meeting with the Vote16 Mass coordinator to talk about how Mass cities can pass their home-rule petitions.
 - CYC is in support of the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) who has had recent changes and resignations within their student leadership due to experiences of abuse from the school district and adult leadership. They will be attending the BSAC community meeting to show support for the council and hopefully foster a relationship looking forward.
 - Mental Health and Racism - Planning a 'Desk' conversation with the Black Student Union who will be bringing in a psychologist, working with the Mental Health awareness club,

and put out a survey to the school community for students.

Language Justice Working Group Updates

- Since the last meeting, the working group disseminated the Language Access survey to city departments/divisions, Cambridge Public Schools, and community partners
- Someone from every city department took the survey
- There were about 30 responses from the schools
- There were over 40 responses from community partners
- Total of 116 surveys collected
- We are in the process of reviewing the surveys, and we will be presenting that information and draft recommendations at the April 15th meeting.

Next Steps

- Next Meeting is April 15, 2021

Adjourn @7:15

PRESENTATIONS



MISSION STATEMENT:

To ensure all City of Boston programs, services and activities are meaningfully accessible to all.

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**LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH
(LOTE)**

Any person whose primary language is not English and has varying abilities in speaking, reading, writing or understanding English

- *Immigrant community*
 - *Education level*
 - *Income level*

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DISABILITY

Complex phenomena of interaction between a person and their environment

- *Acquired*
- *Temporary*
- *Progressive*

WHO IS INVOLVED?



LCA STAFF

2 FTE

4 Fellows

Internal Working Group

Municipal Network



LCA LIAISONS

Point person and content expert to lead LCA implementation



DEPARTMENTS & THEIR STAFF

Staff Roles:

What do I do? How do I do it? When? With what? With whom?



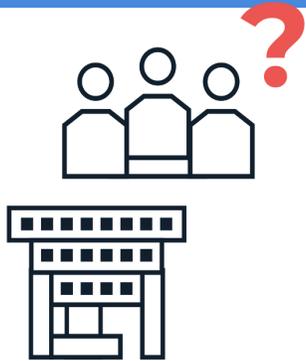
BOSTON COMMUNITY

Individuals

Community & Advocacy Groups

Ethnic Media

DEPARTMENT LIAISON



- Expert on LCA
- Lead implementation of LCA
- Goal setting
- Plan financially
- Data collections
- [Who is your Department Liaison?](#)

PROCESS OVERVIEW

INTERNAL SETUP

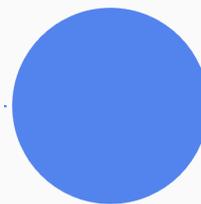
Set up staff for success through education and training

ENGAGE COMMUNITY

Set expectations in community about what to expect, what is happening, and why.

ACCESSIBLE BOSTON

An accessible City relies on both elements.



INS

- **interpretation**

- the act of listening to a communication in one spoken language and converting it to another spoken language while retaining the same meaning

- **translation**

- the replacement of a communication from one language into an equivalent written text in another language

- **assistive technology**

- any item, equipment or product system used to increase, maintain or improve a person's functional capability

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

SPONTANEOUS INTERACTIONS:

- *In-language comm. with bilingual staff.*
- *Volunteer interpreters.*
- *24/7 Language line availability*
- *Video Remote Interpretation (ASL)*

PLANNED EVENTS:

- *Professional interpretation*
- *Communications Access Realtime Translation (CART)*
- *Assistive Listening Devices*
- *Interpretation Equipment*

ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS:

- *Vital documents translated*
- *Braille*
- *Screen Reader Accessibility*
- *Large Print*
- *Captions, transcript*
- *Audio description, audio dubbing*

THANK YOU!

Questions?



CONTACT:

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Language Access in the City of Seattle

With Family Policy Council - Cambridge
March 18, 2021

Language Access Goals

"Language access helps all immigrant and refugee residents, regardless of their English proficiency, have meaningful and equitable access to City programs, services, and stakeholder engagement."

- City of Seattle [Executive Order 2017-10](#)



City of Seattle

Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Program Structure



City of Seattle

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Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Immigrant and Refugee Populations



22% of Seattle residents speak languages other than English.

8% of Seattle residents speak English "less than very well."

150+ languages are spoken in Seattle schools.



City of Seattle

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Office of Immigrant
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Seattle Top Tier Languages

- Tier 1 - Should include: **Traditional Chinese***, **Spanish**, **Vietnamese**, **Somali**, **Amharic**, **Korean**, **Tagalog**
- Tier 2 - If feasible, include: **Tigrinya**, **Oromo**, **Japanese**, **Russian**
- Tier 3 - Consider including: **Arabic**, **Khmer**, **Thai**, **Laotian**

*There are two primary Chinese writing systems: Traditional and Simplified Chinese. The two systems are mutually intelligible. Considering the composition of Seattle's Chinese language users and their English proficiency, we recommend translating into Traditional Chinese for written materials. For oral interpretation, we should include both Cantonese and Mandarin.

Read more here: [City of Seattle Top Tier Languages 2020 Report](#)



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Thank you!

Peggy Liao

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