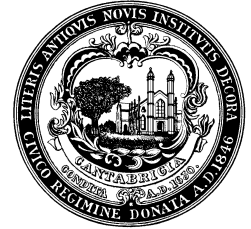


City of Cambridge

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

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Avril dePagter
Chair

Mary Devlin
Secretary

Loring Brinckerhoff
Gary Dmytryk
Jerry Friedman
Stelios Gragoudas
Valerie Hammond
Nicole Horton-Stimpson
Jackie Jones
Philibert Kongtcheu
Daniel Stubbs

Rachel Tanenhaus
Executive Director/
ADA Coordinator

Kate Thurman
Project Coordinator

**The next meeting of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities
will be held online via Zoom on Thursday, June 9, 2022 at 5:30 PM**

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO JOIN BY 5:30 PM

AGENDA

Please keep your microphone muted when you are not speaking

- | | | |
|--|---------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Introductions
<i>If needed, alternates named</i> | 2 min. | |
| 2. Announcements | 2 min. | CCPD staff / Board |
| 3. Approval of April 14 &
May 12 Minutes | 4 min. | CCPD Board |
| 4. Language Justice Update
<i>See page 4 for presentation</i> | 30 min. | Nancy Tauber &
Kate Thurman |
| 5. Discussion on Member Interests | 15 min. | CCPD Board |
| 6. Chair's Report
<i>Vote on Summer Recess – July or August</i> | 5 min. | Avril dePagter |
| 7. Public Works Update | 10 min. | Jerry Friedman |
| 8. Executive Director's Report | 10 min. | Rachel Tanenhaus |
| 9. Old Business | 3 min. | CCPD staff / Board |
| 10. New Business | 3 min. | CCPD staff / Board |
| 11. Public Input | 3 min. | general public |

CART/closed captioning will be provided for this meeting

Captions can be turned on within the Zoom platform. Additionally, you may stream CART in a separate URL at <http://bit.ly/CCPDCART>
(captions will not appear until the meeting has started)

The City of Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, does not discriminate, including on the basis of disability. The Commission for Persons with Disabilities will provide auxiliary aids and services, written materials in alternative formats, and reasonable modifications in policies and procedures to persons with disabilities upon request.

The next CCPD meeting will be held online on either Thursday, July 14 or August 11
(Summer recess to be voted on in today's meeting)

Approved 7/14/22

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Minutes for Thursday, June 9, 2022

Online via Zoom

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

Present:

Members: Loring Brinckerhoff, Avril dePagter, Mary Devlin, Gary Dmytryk, Jerry Friedman, Nicole Horton-Stimpson, and Dan Stubbs

Absent: Stelios Gragoudas, Jackie Jones, Phil Kongtcheu, Valerie Hammond

Staff: Rachel Tanenhaus and Kate Thurman

Minutes:

The May 2022 minutes were approved unanimously

Language Justice Initiative:

- See attached presentation for more information.
- Kate Thurman and Nancy Tauber, Executive Director of the Family Policy Council, presented on the City's Language Justice Initiative. Language justice is a person's right to communicate in the language and method with which they are most comfortable.
- The working group used Cortico to record community conversations with different stakeholder groups. The Cortico software picks up keywords and provides summaries.
- It was mentioned how difficult it can be to understand strongly accented English. Nancy said there is a podcast on training you can do to listen to accents. She remembered in a meeting she had that a Cambridge Health Alliance translator was speaking about being frustrated when they weren't understood, saying "I wish he would listen to my words and not my accent." It can take a lot of practice to understand heavy accents.
- The Language Justice working group is working to create a portal on the City website with guides and toolkits. The plain language guidelines are just a starting point. .
- The Cambridge Public School (CPS) superintendent is on the Family Policy Council. CPS has been doing a lot of parallel work. The communications manager for CPS reviewed the plain language guide. The goal is to have less parallel work and more intersectional work. Nancy has learned a lot from CPS.
- Mary said it would be valuable if the whole city moves toward language justice communication work. For example, individualized education plans (IEPs) are really hard to read.
- Nancy mentioned a free web tool called the Hemingway Editor (www.hemingwayapp.com) that will tell users which grade level their writing is.
- Jerry asked if the plain language guide and other Language Justice Initiative resources will be available to communication managers of different departments. The plan is to roll them out citywide.
- Avril attended the Morse School Race Equity Committee meeting earlier this week. Someone at that meeting asked what families do when they do not have anyone who can read. Avril asked Kate and Nancy if there was any data on this. Kate mentioned that Cliff Cook of the Community Development Department could do a presentation on Cambridge demographics at a future meeting.
- The Community Engagement Team (CET) is comprised of immigrants and can help with in-person engagement with immigrant communities.

Discussion on Member Interests:

- This topic was tabled until the next meeting; it will be given 30 minutes on the agenda.

Public Works Update:

- Jerry reported about a City Council order a while back about hostile architecture and making sure the City roots it out. DPW is looking at all the public benches in the city, with an eye toward cataloguing hostile features.
- The issue of hostile architecture came to the City's attention recently when the MBTA put some benches that were not well-received in Central Square station. That led the Council to think about City owned infrastructure, specifically benches in parks and plazas.
- As part of the Port infrastructure project, DPW held public walking tours. They had a good turnout, asking participants what they would like to see done differently. DPW gathered a lot of input and will use it for current street design projects.
- Jerry will send Kate a link to the project website; it contains an interactive map where users can provide feedback.

Executive Director's Report:

- Rachel reported attending the Massachusetts Office on Disability's (MOD) regional virtual meeting for disability commission members for the eastern part of the state. MOD is also holding these meetings for other regions and folks from any part of the Commonwealth can attend. There were check-ins from other commissions. It was neat to hear some of the things they're working on. Most of them are set up differently than CCPD is because CCPD pre-dates the state ordinance that created most disability commissions.
- There is a statewide conference on July 21 called REV UP – register, educate, vote, and use your power, which is about getting people with disabilities out voting and making sure they have access to elections. They're very interested in having individuals with disabilities there. Rachel passed the information along to the Cambridge Election Commission.
- Rachel thanked people who provided feedback to the City Council on the selection of the new City Manager.
- At a previous meeting, a CCPD board member had asked about disability-related projects on last year's participatory budgeting final ballot. Rachel said there are a lot of unhoused folks with disabilities and "home essentials for new residents" is a project that was funded in the last participatory budgeting round, but most of the projects were not disability related. She said that most of what was explicitly disability related did not make it onto the ballot of the top 20 projects.
- Rachel reported conducting a few site visits.
- She said that she attended a meeting to discuss electric vehicle charging stations so DPW can ensure that some of them are near accessible parking spaces. The City is going to start installing them by on street parking

Chair's Report:

- The board voted to take a recess in the month of August

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Thurman

Language Justice Initiative

City of Cambridge

Nancy Tauber, Family Policy Council

Kate Thurman, Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Overview of Cambridge Family Policy Council

- Nancy Tauber, Executive Director
- Chaired by the Mayor
- Members: family & youth representatives; elected officials, the City's top decision-makers, and other community stakeholders
- Makes policy & program recommendations
- Current focus is language justice

Language Access should be more than meeting legal requirements and technical assistance.

It's about Language Justice



Language Justice is....

The right everyone has to communicate, to understand, and to be understood in the language(s) & formats in which they feel most comfortable.

Target Audience

Persons with Disabilities (PwD)

Address the needs of people with disabilities, providing information in **accessible formats**.

Language Preferred Other than English (LPOE) Individuals

Address the needs of those for whom English is not the preferred language for communication, either **verbal or written**.

By addressing the needs of PwD and LPOE individuals, **ALL** community members will be better understood, valued, and have equitable access to information, services and resources in Cambridge.

Where we are and where we want to go...

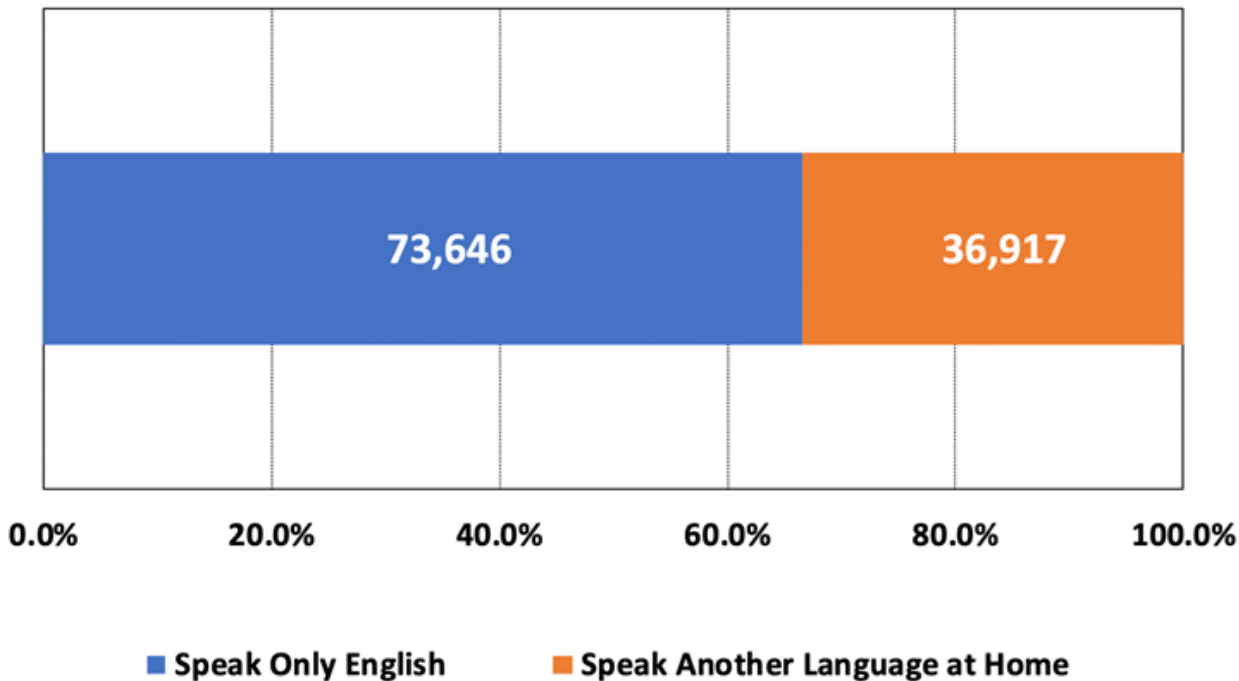
Timeline 2020-22



Cambridge Language Demographics

73,646 (66.7%) c
Cambridge
residents speak
only English at
home

36,917 (33.3%) c
residents speak
another languag
home



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 5-Year Estimates ⁹

Ability to Speak English

Household Population 5 & Older: 2014-2018

Of the 33.3% of households that speak a language other than English at home:

- 27% speak another language & speak English very well
- 3.3% (3,700) do not speak English well & are considered to be in a linguistically isolated household
- 2.9% (3,200) do not speak English well & are NOT in a linguistically isolated household

Key Learnings (Research, Survey, and Focus Groups)

- Language justice cannot be an afterthought - it must be a **primary thought**.
- By focusing on language justice, we will
 - Increase the number and ways people **engage**
 - Provide more **meaningful** and **equitable access** for **ALL** - especially those who are from underrepresented and underserved communities
- It's the **law**.
- Currently, there is **limited infrastructure** for language justice.
- **Funding** and **staff** are needed.
- Lead with a **continuous improvement** mindset and incorporate **accountability** mechanisms.

The burden of understanding information and navigating systems is often placed on community members who need the most help.

- What resources are available?
- How do I find them?
- Are they for me?
- Am I eligible?
- How do I access them?

What we can do now!

- We need to focus on excellent **customer service** - smile, speak slowly, active listening, be patient, etc.
- Prioritize **cultural translation** - the practice of translation while respecting and showing cultural differences
- Use **plain language!**
 - Plain Language Guide
 - Over 200 people
 - 5 Trainings
 - Poster Contest
 - Digital Accessibility Guide

LANGUAGE JUSTICE: WRITING FOR ALL!



Plain Language is clear, concise and well-organized. It is a powerful tool of inclusion and builds community trust.

✓ Best Practices:

- Know your audience
- Personalize your content
- Be short and to the point
- Avoid jargon and technical terms
- Use active voice
- Break up content with headers, bullets, and visuals

✓ Plain Language supports everyone, including people:

- Who are English language learners
- With varying literacy levels
- With disabilities



Why is Plain Language important?

Increases engagement

When language is clear, concise, and well-organized, it helps your audience:

- **Find** the information they need.
- **Understand** what they find.
- **Use** what they find in a *meaningful way* to meet their needs.

Reduces errors in translations

When our messaging is simple and concise, translations will be more accurate.

Benefits all!

There is no Language Justice without accessibility!

The people we communicate with have a **range of visual, hearing, physical and cognitive abilities**. Residents access information and resources in many different ways.

We can't achieve language justice without building accessibility into our communications. **Accessible communication is a powerful tool of inclusion.**

We are currently working on a guide dedicated to accessibility.

Digital Accessibility: Assistive Technology

We must create content that is accessible for people with disabilities, including those who use assistive technologies (AT) and adaptive strategies.

A few examples of AT:

- Screen reader software
- Text reader software
- Screen magnification
- Alternative input software and devices

Digital Accessibility: Adaptive Strategies

Adaptive strategies are **techniques that people with disabilities use to make it easier for them to access digital content.**

A few examples of adaptive strategies:

- Reducing mouse speed
- Turning closed captioning on
- Adjusting volume
- Increasing text size

Accessibility Guidelines

Making digital material accessible is complicated!

Target audience: City employees who create public-facing materials, including those who are not “techies”

Goal: To provide an overview of key accessibility issues, with easy-to-understand how to tips

Formats:

- Flyers
- Newsletters
- Fillable forms
- Presentations
- Social media
- Reports
- Posters
- Mailings

Fiscal Year '23

- Language Justice Division (Human Rights Commission)
- Full Time Language Access Manager
- ARPA Funding for Translation and Interpretation



Smartcat Pilot

What is Smartcat?

Smartcat is an **all-in-one localization platform** that combines technology and human editors to help streamline translation processes.

Smartcat provides:

- 24/7 project progress monitoring to ensure measures are taken if there are any issues
- Management of terminology databases and translation memories
- Secure cloud storage

Benefits:

- Access to machine translation, human translators, and community reviewers.
- Translated words and department terms saved in a glossary.
- Pays all suppliers with a single transaction.
- **Quality** and **accurate** translations quicker.
- **Saves money and time!**
- Smartcat will help us build on community **trust!**



Advice

Slow down - <https://app.lvn.org/highlight/2386394>

Smile and be patient -

<https://app.lvn.org/highlight/2386396>