



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ERIC T. SCHNEIDERMAN
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DIVISION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE
CIVIL RIGHTS BUREAU

July 10, 2015

Re: Yonkers Police Department (YPD)'s Language Access
Services for Persons of Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

The purpose of this letter is to memorialize the Yonkers Police Department's (YPD) cooperation with the New York State Attorney General's Office (OAG) and commitment to implementing and maintaining policies, procedures and training protocols to help ensure that individuals of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are provided meaningful access to YPD services regardless of the individual's LEP status.

By way of context, Yonkers, New York has a population of 197,397 people, 28 percent of whom identify as Hispanic. Moreover, an estimated 17 percent of Yonkers residents five (5) years of age or older do not speak English "very well" or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English. The YPD and the OAG recognize that language for LEP individuals can be a barrier to accessing important police services and the YPD recognizes the importance of timely, effective and accurate communication between YPD employees and the communities they serve. While the YPD had previously implemented components of a language access plan, including use of a telephonic interpreter service, the recruitment and hiring of bilingual officers, and translation of certain written materials and public notices, under the leadership and direction of the Mayor and the Yonkers' Police Commissioner, the YPD has further expanded and strengthened its language access services to better serve Yonkers' LEP population and, in turn, the community at large.

Accordingly, the Yonkers Police Department and the OAG have identified the following steps to help expand the YPD's language access services:

1. Taking reasonable steps to ensure that its sworn officers, and civilian employees who have regular contact with the public, effectively communicate with LEP persons and provide them with timely and reasonable access to all of the services and benefits the YPD provides including, for example, when responding to calls for assistance; making traffic stops; taking complaints; interviewing victims, witnesses or subjects of criminal investigations; making public service announcements and issuing safety alerts when practicable.
2. Taking reasonable steps to ensure that its sworn officers, and civilian employees who have regular contact with the public, are periodically trained on how to effectively communicate with LEP persons and provide them with timely and meaningful access to all YPD services and benefits. The YPD will also distribute the following policy regarding serving LEP communities to all officers and civilian employees who have regular contact with the public: Foreign Language Interpretation Service, 190-2.

3. Promoting steps to recruit, hire and retain bilingual YPD officers and staff, conduct voluntary surveys of uniformed YPD officers to determine proficiency levels of sworn members, and maintain a mechanism for testing the proficiency level of its uniformed service applicants, in accordance with any requirements contained in any applicable collective bargaining agreements and New York State Civil Service Law.
4. Taking reasonable steps to translate vital documents, and relying upon translated materials made available through other law enforcement entities, agencies and courts.
5. Making English and Spanish-language Personnel Complaint Forms available at all YPD buildings and on the YPD and/or City website and, when a complaint relates to language access, providing written notice of the disposition of the complaint, in a form approved by the Commissioner, to the complainant in the language (English or Spanish) that the complaint was written in.
6. Periodically convening with the Office of the Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau to discuss the YPD's provision of language access services to LEP individuals, including those efforts outlined in this letter and consistent with the YPD's LEP policies.
7. The YPD is fully committed to maintaining an effective language access plan, and will meet with the OAG to discuss and identify alternative and/or cost-effective LEP policies, if necessary.
8. No person or entity is intended to be a third party beneficiary of the provisions of this letter for any purposes relating to any civil, criminal or administrative action. No person or entity shall be permitted to assert any claim or right as a beneficiary or protected class under this letter. Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing contained in this letter shall be construed to deprive any person, corporation, association, agency or other entity of any right provided by law, regulation or administrative pronouncement.
9. This letter represents a voluntary, collaborative effort by and between the YPD and the OAG, and does not constitute any allegation or admission of wrongdoing and/or the violation of any laws, regulations or administrative pronouncements applicable to YPD.

**YONKERS POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

**ERIC T. SCHNEIDERMAN
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF
THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

By: Charles Gardner
Charles Gardner, Commissioner
Yonkers Police Department
104 South Broadway
Yonkers, New York 10701

By: Kristen Clarke
Kristen Clarke
Civil Rights Bureau Chief
120 Broadway, 23rd Floor
New York, New York 10271

Date: 7-10-15

Date: 7/20/15

APPROVED AS TO FORM

Michael M. Curti 7/16/15