

SAN DIEGO COUNTY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

DECEMBER 2022

ARTICLE 1: LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

1.1 Introduction. The San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) believes establishing a Language Access Policy is essential to the success of our mission to engage all members of the public, including limited-English language speakers, with the programs and activities offered by the SDAPCD.

1.2 Policy. The purpose of this policy is to establish effective guidelines and procedures for language access services within the SDAPCD. SDAPCD shall ensure the quality and accuracy of language access services provided by SDAPCD as they are critical to providing limited-English language speakers with meaningful access to SDAPCD programs and activities.

The SDAPCD shall provide Language Access Services for languages identified as having a Substantial Number of Limited-English Speaking Persons. Reasonable accommodation will be made to facilitate language access in other languages upon request. All Language Access Services required to be provided pursuant to this Policy shall be provided by the SDAPCD at no cost to the individual.

1.3 Purpose. To establish SDAPCD guidelines and procedures for communications with the public in a way that ensures access to limited-English language speakers.

1.4 Definitions.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

1. "SDAPCD" means any board, committee, office, department, or division within the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District.
2. "Language Access Services" means services including interpretation or translation services for both verbal and written communication.
3. "Interpretation" means the act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language) while retaining the same meaning.
4. "Translation" is the replacement of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).
5. "Substantial Number of Limited-English Speaking Persons" means one of the following five languages: Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Arabic.

1.4 Procedure.

There are two primary types of language access assistance: oral and written.

1. *Written translation.* SDAPCD shall take reasonable steps to prioritize translation of vital documents. Classification of a document as “vital” depends upon the importance of each program, information, encounter, or service involved, and the consequence to the individual if the information in question is not provided. The Air Pollution Control Officer shall make the final determination of what documents are “vital” to the SDAPCD.

Documents that may be considered “vital” may include, but are not limited to, certain:

- i. Notices to Comply and Notices of Violation;
- ii. Application forms;
- iii. Public outreach or education materials (including web-based material);
- iv. Letters or notices pertaining to regulatory requirements and policy changes or updates;
- v. Notices of community meetings or other community outreach;
- viii. Notices regarding the availability of language assistance services.

SDAPCD must inform the public of the availability of Language Access Services. When communicating with Limited-English speaking individuals, SDAPCD staff should assess eligibility for Language Access Services during all points of contact including telephone, in-person, mail, and electronic communication.

Additionally, the SDAPCD will provide translation for:

- i. Air Quality Annual Report (in its entirety);
- ii. Budget (Executive Summary only); and
- iii. Hot Spots Annual Report (Executive Summary only);

When possible, the SDAPCD website will include a Google Translation component. This converts the text on the webpage to any of the languages selected. Google Translation does not convert the contents of the documents that may be embedded on the website (such as any Word, PDF, Excel files). The Public Information Officer can be contacted for translation of embedded documents.

2. *Oral interpretation.* During regularly scheduled SDAPCD Governing Board meetings, oral interpretation services will be provided in Spanish for individual callers as requested. Oral interpretation in additional languages identified as languages with a Substantial Number of Limited-English Speaking Persons in the SDAPCD may be made available upon request to the Clerk of the Governing Board at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Reasonable accommodation will be made to facilitate communication in other languages upon request. In addition, reasonable accommodation will be made to accommodate oral interpretation at all other SDAPCD public hearings and meetings upon request to the Clerk of the Governing Board at least 72 hours prior to the hearing or meeting.

Interpretation services to Limited-English Speaking Persons may be provided as determined necessary by SDAPCD. Interpretation services can occur in-person, through a telephonic interpreter, or via internet or video interpreting. Source-language should be faithfully rendered into the target language by conserving all the elements of the original message while accommodating the syntactic and semantic patterns of the target language.

Staff will receive training on the content of this Language Access Policy; how to identify the need for language access services; working with a Limited-English Speaking Person;

providing Language Access Service in a culturally sensitive manner; working with an interpreter; and interpretation best practices.

To ensure accuracy, staff are prohibited from using minor children to interpret, absent emergency circumstances.

The public shall be advised of their ability to request an interpreter at no cost to the individual.