



## Staff Report

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**File #:** 20-330

**Version:** 1

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Steve Powers, City Manager

**SUBJECT:**

Language access to City Council agendas and meetings

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Good Governance

**ISSUE:**

Participation in City Council meetings in languages other than English

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Information only.

**SUMMARY:**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council on how a person can participate in City Council meetings and access meeting materials in one's language.

**FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

City Council meetings and other city meetings may include simultaneous interpretation and/or translation of written materials. Persons in need of language access, including American Sign Language, are encouraged to request this support from the City as soon as is practicable. This allows for time in securing interpretation services. Meeting notices include information to the public regarding how to make this request. The City's budget provides for interpretation and translation, in many circumstances, upon request in American Sign Language and in Spanish. City Council meetings are also routinely live captioned. Assistance with other languages can also be provided when the topic is of direct importance or when budget allows.

Should a member of the public require assistance with translation of a City Council agenda and associated documents, they are encouraged to contact City staff. Staff can assist with interpreting the information on the agenda and, if indicated, translating agendas and documents.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City complies with Federal Executive Order 131166 and with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, each of which provide direction to cities regarding equity and access.

City administrative policy and procedure on interpretation and translation applies to all City operations, to assist with consistent application of the rules in all City activities.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, when at least 1,000 persons or 5% of the population of a governmental unit that receives federal funds has a language other than English as their primary language, the governmental unit must provide interpretation and translation into that language in certain circumstances. Currently in Salem, Spanish is the only language that meets the threshold.

A four-factor test is applied to determine when to provide interpretation or translation:

- a. The number of persons served or affected by the action;
- b. The frequency of contact between the department and the persons served or affected by the action;
- c. The nature and importance of the program or service, and the possible consequences to the person served or affected; and
- d. Whether the costs to provide the interpretation and translation substantially outweigh the benefits.

Additional interpretation and translation services may be provided as resources allow.

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Strategic Initiatives Manager

Gretchen Bennett  
Human Rights and Federal Compliance Manager

Attachments:  
None