

To: Chair Kennelly, Vice Chair Paz
 Members, Immigrant Rights Commission
 Richard Whipple, Acting Director

From: Chloe Noonan, Policy and Civic Engagement Officer

Re: Quarterly Report - Language Access Complaints

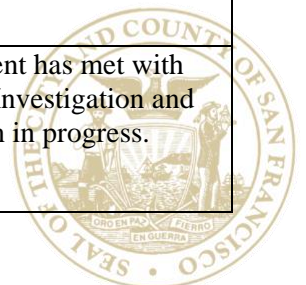
Date: October 17, 2022

As mandated by the Language Access Ordinance, the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA) must provide a quarterly report to the Immigrant Rights Commission regarding language access complaints received by OCEIA.

Reporting Period (April 2022 – October 2022)

OCEIA received eight (8) complaints since our last report.

Department	Description	Language(s)	Status
Rec & Park	Community member called Rec & Park seeking information about summer programs. The automated message was in English only, and caller was unable to navigate the phone system.	Chinese (Cantonese)	Department has met with OCEIA. Investigation and resolution in progress.
Rec & Park	Community member called Rec & Park and found automated telephone prompts were only in English. Caller was unable to connect to an operator to support them.	Chinese (Cantonese)	Department has met with OCEIA. Investigation and resolution in progress.
Human Rights Commission	Community member called the Human Rights Commission and found the Department only provided automated telephone prompts in English. Caller was unable to connect to an operator to support them.	Chinese (Cantonese)	Department has met with OCEIA. Investigation and resolution in progress.
Metropolitan Transit Authority	Community member called the Chinese telephone line, but the automated system stated that Chinese language service was unavailable and that they should choose the English line for services. After being connected, operator transferred the call to an interpreter, but call became disconnected and caller was unable to access information in their language.	Chinese (Cantonese)	Meeting with Department and OCEIA pending.
Homelessness and Supporting Housing	Community member asserted that there are inadequate numbers of Spanish-speaking bilingual staff at a recently opened shelter.	Spanish	Department has met with OCEIA. Investigation and resolution in progress.



Fire Department	Community member called the Fire Department by phone and the operator did not provide interpretation or in-language services when requested.	Chinese (Cantonese)	Department has met with OCEIA. Investigation and resolution in progress.
Housing Authority	Community member called the Housing Authority by phone and selected their preferred language through the automated prompt, but the system continued in English. Caller was on hold for more than 15 minutes and unable to get connected to a live operator.	Chinese (Cantonese)	Meeting with Department and OCEIA pending.
SF Zoo	Community member called the Zoo by phone and was informed by the operator that they do not provide Chinese in-language or interpretation services. Caller was not connected to bilingual staff or an interpreter during the call.	Chinese (Cantonese)	Department has met with OCEIA. Investigation and resolution in progress.

Trends and Analysis

The majority of the complaints submitted since the last reporting period focus on language access issues with Departments’ telephonic message systems.

The SF Language Access Ordinance (LAO) addresses multilingual requirements for phone message systems in Section 91.8. This section, entitled “Recorded Telephonic Messages,” states as follows:

All Departments with recorded telephonic messages about the Department’s operation or services shall maintain such messages in each language spoken by a Substantial Number of Limited English Speaking Persons, or where applicable, a Concentrated Number of Limited English Speaking Persons. Such Departments are encouraged to include in the telephonic messages information about business hours, office location(s), services offered and the means of accessing such services, and the availability of language assistance. The requirements of this Section 91.8 shall apply only to recordings prepared by a Department to provide general information to the public about the Department’s operations and services, and shall not apply to voicemail recordings on City employees’ telephone lines.

While the annual LAO training provided to language access liaisons does address requirements for recorded telephonic messages, the complaints from this reporting period indicate that additional focused training on this topic would be beneficial for Departments.

Previous Report Comparison

Time Frame	Total complaint(s) received
January 2022 – March 2022	0

