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COMMISSION

AGENDA MEMORANDUM Item No. 11a

BRIEFING ITEM Date of Meeting March 12, 2024

DATE: February 28, 2024

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Bookda Gheisar, Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

SUBJECT: Briefing of action items from Language Access Order 2023-05 and request for a multiphase extension to complete the remaining deliverables, moving the due date on these deliverables from February 29, 2024 to February 28, 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2023, the Port of Seattle Commission adopted Order 2023-05 to advance language access.

The Order directs the Port to develop a language access policy and plan to ensure the inclusion of non or limited English speakers, including those who are hard of hearing or deaf, in the use of Port services and facilities; and the Port wide implementation of a plan directing divisions with public services to offer language assistance including translation and/or interpretation. The policy makes language access a permanent, ongoing commitment by the Port of Seattle in every department and every division.

The Order set into motion the design and implementation of a Port-wide assessment of current practices (including a review of publicly facing documents, resources, signage, websites, social media sites, and forms); the development of a guidance manual for departments to create language access plans; and a proposal for budgeting resources necessary to effectively implement this policy.

The Order identified nine key deliverables noted in the table below. Several of these deliverables have a completion due date of February 29, 2024. Five of the deliverables have been completed. One deliverable has been slightly modified but is also complete. Three of the deliverables will require further research, cohort input and analysis, and time for completion.

Action: OEDI requests an extension of two years to complete the remaining deliverables, moving the due date on these deliverables from February 29, 2024, to February 28, 2026.

1. Guidance Manual – for department and division use.
2. Compensation Policy – for employees who are tasked with interpretation services outside of their regular job duties.
3. Department Annual Language Access Plans – focusing on goals, implementation, reporting, and budget inclusion.

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ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED

To understand the current state of the Port's language access strengths and weaknesses, a Port-wide department survey was developed, distributed, and analyzed. Forty-one (41) departments participated (including External Relations), meaning that one hundred percent of the Port departments completed the survey. Next, a similar survey was created for local nonprofit and community partners' input. This helps us understand the current community landscape. One hundred fifty (150) community partners were sent the survey, and 60 responded, reflecting a 44% participation rate.

To take a deeper dive at the department level, a cohort of representatives from high usage departments was formed. The cohort consists of the 18 departments noted below. The cohort meets twice per month and has been instrumental to providing both quantitative and qualitative data. They have also provided input to both innovative and practical solutions.

High Usage Departments

AV 911 Dispatch AV Police Department
AV Capital Program Management + FI AV Public Records Request
AV Commercial Management AV Security
AV Customer Experience Boating, Operations + Security
AV Environment & Sustainability Central Procurement Office
AV Fire Department Diversity in Contracting
Marine Maintenance Port Construction Services
Ground Transportation Cruise Operations

AV Facilities + Infrastructure External Relations**Key Findings:**

Key findings from the department surveys and cohort sessions include the following:

- Most departments interact or communicate with the public or with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals.
- Aviation Customer Service and Accessibility have the most frequent engagements and variety of interactions.
- Formal processes surrounding language assistance services are uncommon.
- Across all departments, trainings about language assistance services are rare.

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- Survey responses suggest a desire for processes, standards, and supports to be established Port-wide.

Key findings from the community survey include the following:

- Interpersonal modes of sharing information, such as personal connections and community meetings, were most preferred.
- Information about jobs and contracting opportunities are the most important to have available in other languages.
- Although computer-generated translation tools are seen as useful by most, few agree that they are accurate.
- The need for Language Access Services varies across communities.
- Many participants were aware of difficulties accessing Port information within their community, including problems navigating the Port website and accessing job opportunities.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND: LANGUAGE ACCESS DELIVERABLES & TIMELINE

Green- completed.

Orange- modified but done.

Yellow- need more time, asking for an extension.

Deliverable Status Timeline**1 Language Access Assessment (Port-wide) Completed**

OEDI shall conduct an assessment of every department and of the most critical materials that need translation, the need for interpreters, and the level of training and implementation necessary.

2 Language Access Community Survey Completed

External Relations shall conduct a prioritized assessment of its most critical internal and external facing communications and determine the level of resources needed to implement language access in the department's materials and programming.

3 Assessment of Aviation Division Completed

External Relations shall also collaborate with OEDI in assessing the Aviation Division.

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4 Language Access Guidance Manual In progress – additional January (Q1)

By September 2023, OEDI and ER shall start to time needed for org- 2026 collaborate to develop a Language Access wide development, guidance manual. training and implementation.

5 Language Access Cohort Formation and on- In-progress. Language Ongoing – going meetings/collaboration/learning Access Cohort is February (Q1)

OEDI and External Relations shall begin to meeting and working 2026 provide departments and divisions technical towards this goal.

assistance for establishing and/or updating annual language access plans. This technical support shall include budget planning for departments to resource language access strategies and implementation.

6 Language Access Department Plans In-progress. Cohort is January (Q1) Departments and divisions shall establish and/or meeting and working 2025 update their language access plans on an annual towards this goal. basis starting no later than 2025.

7 Compensation Policy for Interpretation In-progress, research is December (Q4) Per the 2022 Salary and Benefits Resolution, being conducted. 2024 Human Resources shall propose a policy and compensation model for Port employees who are tasked with interpretation services outside of their regular job duties prior to the 2025 budget development.

8 Technical support and Training Completed and on- The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion is going designated co-lead to provide technical support, oversight, and program management duties in fulfillment of this order. External Relations is designated co-lead to provide technical support for departments to execute language access plan strategies related to the Port's external facing operations and outreach activities in fulfillment of this order.

9 Commission Briefing March 12, 2024 OEDI and External Relations shall provide a report to the Executive Director and the Commission on lessons learned and future considerations related to this order to establish language access plans and tools across the Port.

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ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) Order No. 2023-5 Language Access Policy and Plan
- (2) Presentation slides
- (3) Appendices
- (4) Samples of work
- (5) Language Access Assessment

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

April 11, 2023 – The Commission authorized ORDER 2023-05 (item number 10b order)

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