

Corporate Policies

SECTION: General	POLICY 14.14.0
SUBJECT: Multilingual Services	
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Background

The City of Brampton's mission is to be a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity where efficient services make it possible for families, individuals and the business community to grow, prosper and enjoy a high quality of life.

The City of Brampton values diversity and inclusiveness, and celebrates the unique contribution that each resident makes to the local community. The City understands the prevention of new barriers and the reduction and removal of existing barriers to services is essential. The City recognizes that enhancing access to goods and services provides increased opportunities, inclusion and dignity for people all ages and abilities.

This policy is developed in keeping with these values and in recognition of the linguistic and cultural demographic of the City of Brampton:

- Brampton residents represent 175 distinct ethnic backgrounds and speak more than 70 languages.
- Approximately 48% of Brampton residents are immigrants.
- Approximately 10 % of Brampton residents immigrated to Canada during the last census period (2001-2006)
- The number of limited English speakers in the City has increased significantly in recent years and is expected to continue to increase.

Purpose

This policy provides guiding principles for the provision of multilingual services, so that all persons, including limited English speakers, have equal opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from municipal goods and services.

The policy encompasses:

- A. General principles of multilingual service;

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- B. Interpretation, which addresses the verbal communication needs of limited English speakers;
- C. Translation, which addresses the written communication needs of limited English speakers;
- D. Training and development initiatives, which build understanding and appreciation of diversity and inclusiveness; and,
- E. Outreach and community partnerships; which build bridges between the City of Brampton and the many cultural and linguistic communities of which it is comprised.

Scope

This policy applies to all persons who interact with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer, student on placement, or otherwise.

Policy Direction

The City of Brampton is committed to the principle of barrier-free access to all municipal goods, services, information and resources. Providing interpretation and translation services to meet the needs of limited-English speakers is a step forward in the City of Brampton's efforts to reduce barriers and strengthens Brampton's ongoing customer service improvement initiatives. Multilingual services benefit the local community and economy by improving the quality of communication between the City of Brampton and its customers.

Principles of Multilingual Services

A. General

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English is both the language of business for the City of Brampton and a common link between Brampton's diverse communities. However, English is not the first language of many of the City of Brampton's customers, and some customers, particularly newcomers to Canada, may not yet be proficient in English.

The City of Brampton believes that the underlying principles of multilingual services include:

- When providing customer service, particularly to a limited-English speaker, the City shall communicate using simple, plain language;
- Providing interpretation and translation in various languages is an effective way to assist limited-English speakers to access City programs and services and to participate in local government; and,
- Interpretation and translation are skilled professions. The City shall make reasonable efforts to use qualified vendors to ensure high quality and accurate products that meet professional standards.

B. Interpretation

The City of Brampton will use reasonable efforts to ensure that interpretation services (i.e. interpretation provided over the telephone) are available at service counters, public information contact telephone numbers, and other points of public contact resulting in:

- An integrated and equal opportunity for all persons, including limited English speakers, to independently obtain, use or benefit from goods and services; and,
- Goods and services provided in a manner that is accommodating of cultural and linguistic differences.

C. Translation

1. Priorities

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The City of Brampton will use reasonable efforts to ensure that the language(s) of written communications is/are appropriate to the situation and the target audience. The City may elect to translate written communications into relevant languages, as indicated by current census data, subject to budgetary constraints.

Recognizing that the purpose and scope of written communication needs vary greatly across the corporation, translation decisions will often need to be made on a case-by-case basis according to the following priorities:

First Priority: Public Safety Communications

Services involving resident health and safety, such as Fire and Emergency Services and Emergency Preparedness are given first priority for translation.

Second Priority: Public Service Communications

Services provided by the City having immediate impact upon residents, such as road closures, construction and tax deadlines, etc., are given second priority for translation.

Third Priority: Special Purpose Communications

Services provided by the City having overall quality of life impact on residents, such as recreation and culture, land use planning, etc., are given third priority for translation.

2. Language Recommendations

When the decision to translate is taken, French, as an Official Language, shall be included as a target language. Other target languages shall be determined based on actual need, as defined by data from the most recent census, and consistent with the following recommendations:

City-Wide Communications

It is recommended that citywide communications be translated into the top 10 non-official languages spoken at home in Brampton, plus French.

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Localized Communications (targeting a specific neighbourhood, ward or community)

It is recommended that localized communications be translated into the lesser of the top 10 non-official languages spoken at home in the target neighbourhood, plus French; or, the languages spoken by at least 0.5% of the population in the target neighbourhood, plus French.

3. Communicating in English Only

When the City elects not to translate written communications, limited-English speakers may access the information contained in the communications with the assistance of telephone interpretation.

When written communications are provided in English only, it is recommended that a multilingual message be included (in the header, footer or a text box) that advises of the availability of interpretation services by telephone and provides a public contact telephone number.

D. Training & Development

Organizational and individual cultural fluency is essential to communicate effectively with limited English speakers.

The City of Brampton shall support continual learning by offering ongoing training opportunities to build cultural fluency and to improve customer service.

E. Outreach & Community Partnerships

Outreach to diverse communities is essential to identifying community needs and barriers to service, making the public aware of municipal goods and services, and increasing public participation in local government.

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- The City of Brampton supports initiatives that foster exchange of information and build relationships between the City and diverse communities; and,
- The City of Brampton supports partnerships and cooperative initiatives between the City and community agencies and institutions engaged in serving the needs of ethnic and cultural communities and newcomer populations.

Definitions

Barrier	Anything that stops a customer from having equal opportunity to obtain, use or benefit from municipal goods and services.
Diversity	The mosaic of people who contribute a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, beliefs and competencies to the communities in which they live and the groups and organizations with whom they interact.
Inclusive/ Inclusiveness	Taking deliberate steps (in policies and practices) to welcome, accept and value all individuals, including persons with disabilities, persons from other cultures, and limited English speakers.
Interpretation	The oral translation of what is said in one language into another, so that speakers of different languages can communicate.
Limited English Speaker	Someone who has limited spoken or written proficiency in English.
Target Language	The language into which a document will be translated. In most City translations the target languages are the top 10 non-Official languages spoken at home in Brampton, plus French.
Telephone	Interpretation services provided over the telephone, rather than in

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Interpretation	person.
Translation	The rendering of text written in one language into the text of another language.

Administrative Responsibilities

Responsibilities

Management will provide clear and actionable programs and training to employees to ensure that multilingual service policies and procedures are understood and achievable.

Accountability

Every manager and supervisor is responsible for the execution of multilingual service initiatives, monitoring performance and regularly coaching employees to meet the City's objectives.

Administration

Council and Administrative Services shall ensure this policy is reviewed on a regular basis (not to exceed three years) and remains relevant to the needs of the Corporation, in accord with Council direction, legislative requirements, and good business practices.

Contact: Multilingual Services Project Coordinator

Related Documents

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Policies:	Inclusive Customer Service
Standard Operating Procedures:	Interpretation Translation
Resources	Tips for Working with an Interpreter Tips for Working with a Translator Quick Reference Guide, Telephone Interpretation Language ID Card City-Wide Language Data Localized Language Data “Interpretation Available” Graphics Posters Translation Template for Web Publication