

**Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
Language Access Plan
January 2024**



I. Introduction

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) has prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP) regarding interacting with individuals who have limited English proficiency. MWRA is committed to improving the accessibility of our programs, policies and activities for the non-English speaking residents within the communities that we serve. MWRA recognizes the importance of providing accessible communications, engaging with communities, and fostering involvement from all members of the public. MWRA will review and update this LAP annually in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs, consistent with MWRA's mission to provide high quality and equitable drinking water and wastewater services.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this LAP is to ensure meaningful communication and access to information on MWRA's services, programs, activities and materials for all residents in MWRA's service area.

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have limited ability to read, write, or understand English may be considered Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

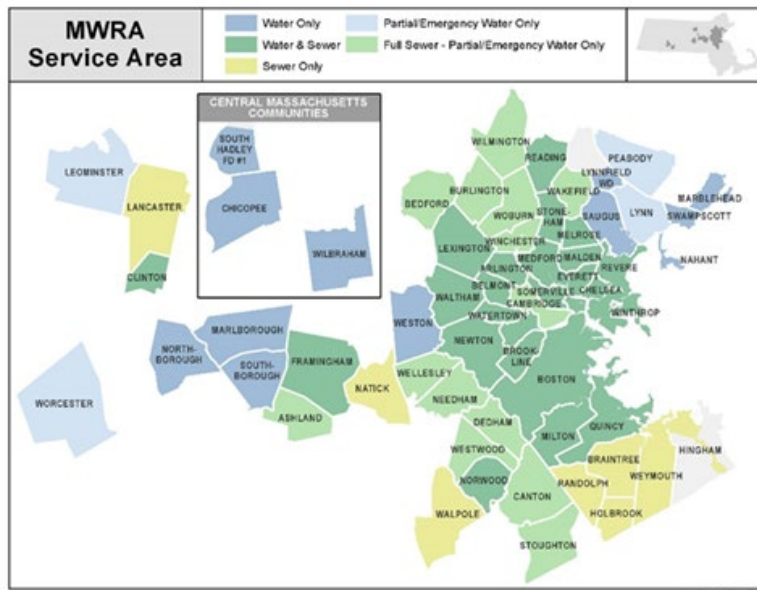
MWRA is committed to making information and communications available to LEP individuals as part of its mission. Based on this commitment, MWRA makes every attempt to assist LEP individuals in a fair and timely manner by providing translation and interpreter services.

- *Translation* is the process of converting written text from a source language into an equivalent written text in a target language as fully and as accurately as possible while maintaining the style, tone, and intent of the text, and while considering differences of culture and dialect.
- *Interpreter Services* are conducted in person by trained interpreters who provide face-to-face interactions to provide real-time interpretation between individuals who speak different languages. In-person interpreting enables effective communication and ensures that individuals can fully participate and comprehend the information being conveyed.

III. MWRA

MWRA's mission is to provide reliable, cost-effective, high-quality water and sewer services that protect public health, promote environmental stewardship, maintain customer confidence, and support a prosperous economy. MWRA was established by the legislature in 1984, tasked with cleaning up Boston Harbor and modernizing the region's water and wastewater systems. MWRA now provides wholesale water and wastewater services to over three million people in 61 communities throughout the Commonwealth.

MWRA's commitment to Environmental Justice (EJ) is embedded in our mission and includes ensuring accessible communications to communities we serve.



IV. Language Access Plan

This LAP has been prepared to ensure that MWRA service area residents and communities have timely access to public notices, information on and links to public meetings, contact information, financial reports, information regarding upcoming and ongoing construction, water quality information, special projects and initiatives, and environmental and planning documents.

MWRA has identified the following 7 languages as the most prevalent languages spoken by residents in MWRA's service area, based on EEA's *Languages Spoken in Massachusetts* GISViewer and 2015 Census Bureau American Community Survey data. This list includes the five most spoken languages in Massachusetts (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Chinese).

- Arabic
- English
- Chinese
- French
- Haitian Creole
- Hindi
- Korean
- Mon-Khmer/Cambodian
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish

- Vietnamese

a. **MWRA's Language Access Coordinator is:**

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 Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
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 617-788-4363

MWRA's Language Access Coordinator will perform the following:

- Conduct staff training
- Assist with the procurement of language assistance services
- Annually reassess LAP
- Consult with stakeholders
- Participate in EEA's Language Access Working Group
- Facilitate an internal language access group

b. **Language Resources:**

- 1) Translation: MWRA is committed to maintaining its widely applicable publications in the 7 most prevalent languages spoken by residents in MWRA service area, which includes the 5 most spoken languages in the Commonwealth. When reaching out to specific communities, MWRA will work with those communities to identify any additional languages prevalent in that hat community.
- 2) Vital Documents: MWRA will work to continuously ensure that vital documents, listed below, are translated into the 7 languages most commonly spoken within its service area, and that they are translated in a timely fashion, ensuring equitable access to this information. MWRA will regularly review that all vital documents have been translated and are available for our LEP residents.

Vital Documents are documents that bring awareness to agency's programs, activities, services, customers' eligibility rights, or any information available in the English that without translation may deny non-English speakers and limited English proficiency persons meaningful access.

- MWRA Board Meeting Agendas
- Public Meeting Notices
- Construction Project Information including Updates and Flyers
- Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs)

- Affirmative Action Plan
- Environmental Justice Strategy
- Language Access Plan
- Master Plan Summary
- Capital Improvement Plan Summary

3) Website Content: MWRA will continue to implement translation services on its website, MWRA.com, to ensure that information is accessible, including press releases, public notices, links to public meetings, upcoming and ongoing construction, contact information, special project information, water quality, information regarding sewer overflows, financial reports, and information on environmental and planning documents.

4) Interpretive Services: MWRA will provide translation services for public meetings, upon request, in the 7 most prevalent languages spoken by residents in MWRA service area and American Sign Language (ASL).

5) Contract Vendors: MWRA will continue to work with its current contract vendor for translation and interpretive services. MWRA will also explore utilizing the state vendors list on the PRF75 Statewide Contract.

6) Correspondence: MWRA maintains a public notification system allowing residents to sign up for emails and text messages on important information such as water quality, construction projects, emergencies, CSO and SSO discharges and more. MWRA will work to ensure that information included in these public notifications is accessible in the 12 most prevalent languages spoken by residents in MWRA service area.

7) Hotlines: MWRA will continue to maintain the following hotlines:

- 24-Hour TTY Hotline for the Hearing Impaired: 617-788-4971
- Spanish Language Hotline: 617-788-1190

c. **Staff Training:** MWRA will train and familiarize staff with the language access protocols outlined in this LAP to ensure they are incorporated into MWRA's projects, programs and activities. The LAP will be

- available to all employees;
- incorporated into orientation for new employees; and
- presented to management personnel so they are fully aware of and understand the LAP, and to reinforce the plan's importance and ensure its implementation.

V. Monitoring

MWRA will review and update its LAP at least annually. The review will include the following:

- a. Whether there have been any significant changes in the composition or language needs of the population served.
- b. Whether staff knows and understands the LAP document, and is comfortable, applying the protocols described within.
- c. Whether additional documents require translation.
- d. Identification of any issues or problems related to serving LEP persons, which may have emerged during the past year.
- e. Identification of any recommended actions to provide more responsive and effective language services (e.g., adding documents to be translated, creating or expanding partnerships with community organizations, or changing staffing priorities).

MWRA will also monitor effectiveness of the LAP. Monitoring efforts may include the following:

- a. analyzing information and data on languages spoken in the MWRA service area;
- b. collecting data on language access services used (translation and interpretation requests); and
- c. monitoring feedback from community-based organizations, legal services and other stakeholders about the agency's effectiveness and performance in ensuring meaningful access for LEP individuals.

VI. Additional Information

MWRA is committed to this plan for all residents in MWRA's service area. For additional information or to file a complaint please contact:

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