Commissioner Bonilla's Report

Language Access – Administration Regulations

Define the Problem

- Problem: There is not a meaningful consistent customer experience for those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

- This impacts persons who have a limited English proficiency.
- The impacts to these persons and the county are limited access to federally funded services, delayed access, loss of pay due to taking time off from work multiples days to receive service, loss of business opportunities, loss of business opportunities to work with the county, loss of international trade opportunities.

SOLUTION

- Administrative Regulation
- Designated Languages

  (1) Spanish, (2) Haitian Creole, (3) Brazilian Portuguese; (4) Arabic; and (5) Vietnamese

Top Outcomes for Our County

- Reduce wait time for access to services from over 24 hours in some cases to immediate
- Cover more languages that are not currently covered which will increase access to more of the LEP population
- Increase the knowledge of County Directors, Managers and others of the expectations and processes for providing meaningful access for LEP persons
- Consistent service across all departments and divisions
- Consistent availability of translated documents and communication across all departments and divisions

Timeline

- January - May of 2018: Mayor Jacobs would not time our monolingual Spanish speakers, they were allowed to speak and have translation. (Vamos4PR)
- May 2019 - Members of the Mayor Demings' Housing for All Task Force ask for minutes and records to be made available for Spanish speakers. Mayor accepted and those minutes are available
- August 22, 2019 - Letter from Maria survivors as part of Pa'lante por Mas with Organize Florida to the Mayor regarding insufficient time for public comments translation at the BCC meeting on August 20, 2019 and Housing for All taskforce on April 12, 2019. The Mayor responded with an email to all Commissioners and County staff, ensuring that equal time was given for translation (3 mins + 3 mins for translation, 2 mins + 2 mins for translation). Translation box was added to the speaker's sign-in sheet allowing speakers to request translation
- Summer of 2022 - January 2023: Various County Board meetings where monolingual speakers and others discussed need to include language access to be in the Tenant Bill of Rights. Access to Notifications in Haitian Kreole and Spanish were included in ordinance, but the services and workshops provided in the new Office of Tenant services were not. Public speaking - Mayor permits bilingual speakers equal time to translate their testimonies so that audience members could understand what was being said.
- February 2023: Monolingual Spanish speakers engaged the County on need for codification language in the Tenant Bill of Rights. First time there was a discrepancy for translation with only 1 minute added to public speaker being translated.
- County Administrator and County Attorney advise Mayor and Board that there is no need for codification since the county is already mandated to provide services to all residents without discrimination. There was no mention of the existence of the Title VI resolution and LEP plan
- Mayor Demings directs staff to "look at best practices and go from there"

2022 Analysis

- Eighteen divisions reported having resources available, 10 did not
- County must improve documentation of the types of documents translated
- Need for additional training of bilingual staff to be competent translators
- Most materials related to individual rights, forms are not translated and other lack of translations across the county

Review of Comparison Chart