



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

110 WILLIAM STREET, 14<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10038

September 18, 2009

The Honorable James S. Oddo  
Office of the Minority Leader  
City Hall  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Council Member Oddo:

Your office requested that the Independent Budget Office (IBO) look into the cost of implementing Executive Order 120, which was issued by Mayor Bloomberg on July 22, 2008. Executive Order 120 requires that “all City agencies that provide direct public services shall ensure meaningful access to such services by taking reasonable steps to develop and implement agency-specific language assistance plans regarding LEP (limited-English proficiency) persons.”

Under the Executive Order, each agency must designate a Language Access Coordinator and develop a language access policy and implementation plan. Language access services must be provided in at least the top six LEP languages spoken by the population of New York City. All agency language access policy and implementation plans must include the following elements for LEP individuals: identification and translation of essential public documents provided to or completed by program beneficiaries and/or participants; interpretation services, including the use of telephonic interpretation; training of frontline workers and managers on language access policies and procedures; posting of signage about the availability of free interpretation services; establishment of an appropriate monitoring and measurement system regarding the provision of agency language services; and creation of appropriate public awareness strategies for the agencies’ service populations.

By May 2009, 37 agencies had completed detailed language access plans and filed them with the Mayor’s Office of Operations, the central coordinating agency for implementing Executive Order 120. Based on the fact that many of the agencies already had extensive language access programs in place prior to the executive order, we decided that it would be more informative to examine the costs of implementing Executive Order 120 in the context of these already-established programs. Therefore, in June 2009, IBO contacted each of the 37 agencies and asked them to estimate both the incremental cost of implementing Executive Order 120, and the overall cost of their language access programs including these new incremental costs. With the assistance of the Mayor’s Office of Operations, we have now received responses from all of the agencies. This information is presented in the attached table.

***Overall Cost of Language Programs.*** The total citywide cost of language access programs, including both new programs resulting from Executive Order 120 and programs already being implemented, was \$26.9 million in 2009. IBO requested that the agencies break out their language costs into three categories: personal services costs, contract costs; and all other costs. Of the citywide total costs, \$12.6 million or 47 percent was for personal services, \$12.1 million or 45

percent was for contracted services (primarily for translation and interpretation), and the remaining \$2.2 million or 8 percent was for miscellaneous costs such as printing and signage.

Although nearly all of the agencies report at least some measureable spending on language access services, these costs tend to be concentrated in a few large agencies that provide health care, social services, housing, and education to large numbers of city residents. The six agencies with the greatest language access costs account for \$24.9 million or 92 percent of citywide spending on language services. The Health and Hospitals Corporation alone accounts for \$10.9 million in spending, as a result of the fact that it annually serves 1.3 million patients at numerous acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, diagnostic and treatment centers, and community-based clinics. The other agencies with the largest language access expenditures include the Department of Education, the Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications (through its servicing of the 311 system and NYC.gov), the New York City Housing Authority, the Administration for Children's Services, and the Human Resources Administration.

**Cost of Executive Order 120.** Along with their overall language access costs, agencies were asked to estimate the incremental costs of implementing Executive Order 120. The agencies reported a total of \$1.7 million in such incremental costs in 2009. In addition, two agencies with ongoing language access programs, Health and Hospitals and the Police Department, reported that they assumed minimal incremental costs from the Executive Order that they are unable to measure. Even when we account for these two agencies, however, it is likely that the costs of implementing Executive Order 120 amounted to less than 10 percent of the overall cost of language access programs in 2009. Based on the agency reports, we estimate that the incremental costs will increase somewhat to about \$1.9 million in 2010, and level off after that point.

The implementation of Executive Order 120 has thus led to a significant increase in the number of city agencies with language access programs. For 13 agencies the cost of implementing the Executive Order accounts for the entire cost of their language access programs, meaning that they had no prior language programs in place.

If you have any further questions regarding this request, please do not hesitate to contact me at 212-442-0225 or Paul Lopatto, IBO's Supervising Analyst for Social and Community Services, at 212-442-8613.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Lowenstein  
Director

Cc: Council Member Vincent Ignizio

**ESTIMATED COSTS OF LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICIES IN NEW YORK CITY AGENCIES  
FISCAL YEAR 2009**

<u>Agency</u>	Overall Cost of Language Access Policies	Incremental Cost of Executive Order 120
Health and Hospitals Corporation	\$10,911,501	NA
Department of Education	\$4,000,000	\$0
Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications	\$3,931,850	\$639,406
New York City Housing Authority	\$3,510,326	\$226,118
Administration for Children's Services	\$1,450,000	\$80,000
Human Resources Administration	\$1,053,082	\$420
New York Police Department	\$344,731	NA
Department of Correction	\$332,335	\$319,039
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	\$276,198	\$0
Department of Probation	\$191,700	\$0
Office of Emergency Management	\$125,000	\$0
Department of Small Business Services	\$100,840	\$72,676
Department of Housing Preservation and Development	\$92,850	\$5,250
Law Department	\$80,200	\$850
Department of Sanitation	\$76,613	\$76,613
Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence	\$49,427	\$12,427
Department of Transportation	\$46,807	\$46,807
Department of Finance	\$46,182	\$46,182
Department of Homeless Services	\$40,074	\$1,074
Environmental Control Board/Office of Admin Trials & Hearings	\$35,267	\$35,267
Department of Youth and Community Development	\$31,853	\$31,853
Department of Buildings	\$23,534	\$23,534
Commission on Human Rights	\$22,000	\$22,000
Department for the Aging	\$20,500	\$20,500
Business Integrity Commission	\$19,500	\$19,500
Fire Department of New York	\$17,000	\$14,000
Department of Consumer Affairs	\$16,440	\$0
Department of Citywide Administrative Services	\$10,944	\$10,944
Department of Records & Information Services	\$7,663	\$7,663
Taxi and Limousine Commission	\$6,443	\$6,443
Office of the Chief Medical Examiner	\$5,410	\$0
Department of City Planning	\$4,950	\$4,950
Department of Environmental Protection	\$4,782	\$2,100
Department of Parks and Recreation	\$1,394	\$0
Mayor's Office of Film and Theatre Broadcasting	\$0	\$0
Landmarks Preservation Commission	\$0	\$0
Department of Juvenile Justice	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$26,887,396</b>	<b>\$1,725,616</b>

SOURCES: IBO; The above listed agencies.

NOTES: Each of these agencies filed language access policy implementation plans as required by Executive Order 120.

The Mayor's Office of Film and Theatre Broadcasting and the Landmarks Preservation Commission report no language access costs beyond their normal operations. The Department of Juvenile Justice reports no costs for 2009; they estimate they will spend \$69,000 on language access in 2010.