

1 [Reaffirming Commitment to Language Access in San Francisco]

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3 **Resolution reaffirming San Francisco’s commitment to equitable language access to**
4 **for all residents through City services and the Office of Civic Engagement and**
5 **Immigrant Affairs.**

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7 WHEREAS, San Francisco is home to many diverse immigrant communities and is a
8 national leader in providing language access services with one of the strongest and most
9 comprehensive local language access laws; and

10 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco (City) recognizes the importance of
11 ensuring equitable and inclusive access to services for all residents, particularly those with
12 Limited English Proficiency (LEP), regardless of immigration status or language spoken; and

13 WHEREAS, The City is committed to providing equal access to information about City
14 services and programs by providing language access services, including language
15 interpretation and written translations; and

16 WHEREAS, In 2001, the City enacted the Equal Access to Services Ordinance, which
17 required major departments to provide language access services to LEP persons; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2009, in Ordinance No. 202-09, the City enacted a number of significant
19 changes including renaming the ordinance as the Language Access Ordinance (LAO) and
20 establishing the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA); and

21 WHEREAS, Since the previous amendment of the Language Access Ordinance, City
22 departments have made significant progress in providing language access services, however,
23 significant gaps remain in language access consistency, quality, budgeting, and
24 implementation across all departments; and

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1 WHEREAS, In 2023, Supervisor Shamann Walton introduced File No. 230868 to
2 amend the Language Access Ordinance to clarify Departments' responsibilities to provide
3 language access services to members of the public and expand the role of language access
4 in San Francisco; and

5 WHEREAS, In the latest revision of the LAO, recent revisions to the Dymally-Alatorre
6 Bilingual Services Act of 1973 by the California State Legislature underscore the critical need
7 for language services, particularly in emergency situations, further emphasizing the
8 importance of robust language access policies at the local level have been incorporated; and

9 WHEREAS, Through a collaborative process with community advocates like the
10 Language Access Network San Francisco (LANSF), the South of Market Community Action
11 Network (SOMCAN), the Immigrant Rights Commission (IRC), and the Office of Civic
12 Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, additional amendments were included in the Language
13 Access Ordinance to strengthen the overall goal of language access and expand OCEIA's
14 capacity building to assist city departments on their language access needs; and

15 WHEREAS, OCEIA has committed to working with grantees, community-based
16 organizations (CBOs), affected communities, and relevant departments to develop
17 administrative guidelines to publish the LAO complaint form into the top 20 languages with the
18 most need in the City and create a process for how the complaints will be translated upon
19 request and resolved internally; these guidelines will be completed and submitted to the IRC
20 for review within one year; and

21 WHEREAS, OCEIA will work with grantees, CBOs, affected communities, relevant
22 departments, and unions to develop best practices for hiring and retention of qualified
23 bilingual staff within departments that engage with LEP residents; these best practices will be
24 completed and submitted to the Immigrant Rights Commission for review within one year and
25 updated every three years; and

1 WHEREAS, OCEIA will work with grantees, CBOs, affected communities, and relevant
2 departments to increase community employment opportunities and implement the community
3 language bank and these guidelines will be completed and submitted to the Immigrant Rights
4 Commission for review within two year and updated every three years; OCEIA will share
5 potential opportunities for community and Immigrant Rights Commission and share resources
6 to community to build capacity on how to become a qualified city vendor; and

7 WHEREAS, OCEIA will work with CBOs, immigrant communities, and relevant
8 departments to develop best practices for the Board of Supervisors to define adequate
9 departmental investment in language services based on language access data that can
10 include but is not limited to a department's size, type of services, and number of LEP clients
11 served every year; these guidelines will be completed within two years and submitted along
12 with the annual compliance report and updated every three years; and

13 WHEREAS, The latest revision of the LAO, includes language ensuring that the San
14 Francisco Public Utilities Commission will make resources available for LEP customers to
15 understand their utility bills; and

16 WHEREAS, Those resources through the SFPUC will include live translation over the
17 phone, and in-person, online resources, language on all bills in the Threshold Languages
18 advising LEP customers of available language assistance, and the distribution of bill overlays
19 in the Threshold Languages; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco and the Board of Supervisors
21 hereby reaffirms its commitment to providing equitable access to city services for all residents,
22 regardless of language spoken; and, be it

23 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco will continue to
24 work with OCEIA to develop a comprehensive language access plan recommendations and
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1 build capacity within city departments to address language access needs for LEP persons;
2 and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco through OCEIA
4 and IRC, will continue to engage with diverse communities to solicit feedback on language
5 access needs and preferences, ensuring that language access services are responsive to the
6 linguistic and cultural diversity of San Francisco; and, be it

7 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco through OCEIA
8 and IRC will work closely with community-based organizations and language access
9 advocates in developing and evaluating language access initiatives to ensure effectiveness in
10 city services; and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco through OCEIA
12 and IRC will work closely with LANSF, SOMCAN, and other interested community-based
13 organizations, unions, City College of San Francisco and language access advocates in
14 developing administrative guidelines and implementing of bilingual staffing within
15 departments, and evaluating the culturally competent and in-language city services to ensure
16 effectiveness; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That to ensure successful implementation, engagement in the
18 above activities will be subject to budget allocation and adequate funding; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution and the final Language Access
20 Ordinance shall be transmitted digitally to all city departments.

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