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**COLLABORATIVE CALLS ON CITY TO RESTORE FUNDING FOR LANGUAGE ACCESS AS NEW DATA REVEALS WIDESPREAD VIOLATIONS OF NEW YORK LANGUAGE ACCESS LAWS**

*The data released by the City is from a Mayor’s Office “secret shoppers” program aimed at evaluating language access compliance.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—The Language Justice Collaborative (LJC) is calling for the restoration of \$3.8 million to fund language access services amidst new data released by the New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. The data comes out of a 2023 evaluation of 148 service centers as part of the [Language Access Secret Shopper](#) (LASS) program, a program that employs “secret shoppers” to pose as limited-English proficiency clients to test City agencies’ language access compliance. It showed that more than half of the centers that were evaluated are in violation of Local Law 30, the City’s local language access law.

In response to the data announcement, the Language Justice Collaborative (LJC) [created a factsheet](#) highlighting the key data findings. The LJC is urging the City to restore funding for language access in the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget, noting that the City agencies are failing to meet “the most basic requirements of the City’s own language access policy—to post information translated into designated languages, and to provide interpretation in the languages that clients speak.” The factsheet specifically identifies the following findings:

- Only four out of 148 agency offices visited had both translated signage and documents on-site as required by law.
- Nearly 40% of agency offices visited lacked signage notifying clients about their right to interpretation services.
- Most city agencies did not make use of telephonic interpretation through Language Line.
- When a staff member who spoke the language was not present, clients were frequently denied interpretation.



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The data discrepancies were covered in [an article published last week by The City](#) which features comments by LJC members African Communities Together and the New York Immigration Coalition.

“It is a serious problem that City agencies are failing to follow the City’s own laws, and are denying immigrant New Yorkers their right to access services in their languages. As the City budget deadline approaches this week, restoring language access funding must be a top priority,” **said Amaha Kassa, Executive Director, African Communities Together.**

"With almost 44% of Asian New Yorkers having limited English proficiency, it is crucial to include languages that reflect our communities' diversity, ” **said Jo-Ann Yoo, Executive Director, Asian American Federation.** “We have to ensure immigrants can access essential city services. City agencies need to better uphold laws designed to help our most vulnerable neighbors. Given the crucial need for language access, we urge the City Budget to restore its funding.”

"For some time now, it has been very clear to the Language Justice Collaborative (LJC) advocates that New York City, while being one of the most diverse cities in the world, has not adequately provided city services in the languages that are required by law, therefore, rendering city services inaccessible to those who need it the most,” **said Aracelis Lucero, Executive Director of Masa.** “We urge the City to address the severity of these findings promptly and to demonstrate their commitment to immigrant New Yorkers by restoring critical funding for Language Access that is meant to support the creation of a Community Interpreter Bank and Language Services Worker Cooperatives."

"This continues to highlight the need for a very intentional and strategic investment in funding language support and more specifically the further development of a Community Interpreter Bank and the Language Services Worker Cooperatives,” **said Robert Agyemang, Vice President of Advocacy, New York Immigration Coalition.** "The City continues to struggle on many levels with providing language support to those who most desperately need it. This would be the step necessary to move towards an approach that addresses this very need now and moving forward."

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**The Language Justice Collaborative (LJC)** fights to eliminate language and cultural barriers to just and equitable access to public services for immigrant New Yorkers. The collaborative includes [African Communities Together](#), [Asian American Federation](#), [MASA](#) and the [New York Immigration Coalition](#). Each of our organizations has a long history of advocating for language



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accessibility for immigrant New Yorkers. The coalition aims to fight particularly for speakers of languages of limited diffusion (LLDs), which include African languages, many Asian languages, and indigenous Latin American languages.