

Town of Chapel Hill advances language access in the community

Did you know?

- 20% of Chapel Hill's residents speak a language other than English at home
- 6% of our residents have limited ability to speak, understand, read, or write in English

We want our community to be a place where everyone can participate in Town services and have their voice heard in local decision making. Therefore, the Town Council approved the Town's first-ever Language Access Plan on Wednesday, November 13. (www.townofchapelhill.org/languageaccess)

Town staff will begin implementing the plan immediately.

"This Language Access Plan responds to the highest priority issue identified by immigrant and refugee residents in Chapel Hill," said Sarah Viñas, assistant director of the Town's Housing and Community. "This positions Chapel Hill to be a leader among NC local governments in language access."

Some of the key Language Access Plan policies are:

- Offering interpretation and translation services free of charge for Town services and programs.
- Translating emergency communications and vital documents in the Town's primary languages (Burmese, Karen, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish).
- Educating Town staff about the diverse cultures represented in Chapel Hill and how to interact and serve residents who speak languages other than English.

Interpretation Equipment

The Town has free interpretation equipment for Town and community use. It's already being used at Council and community engagement meetings, reducing barriers to participation in Town government.

You can borrow the equipment for your own meetings. Learn more at:

www.townofchapelhill.org/languageaccess.

What's next?

The Language Access Plan responds to a need identified by our immigrant and refugee residents through the Building Integrated Communities (BIC) initiative (www.townofchapelhill.org/bic). The Town will now begin implementing more strategies identified in the [Building Integrated Communities Action Plan](#), and continue the many immigrant and refugee initiatives already underway, such as the [DACA Renewal Assistance Program](#).