bpda

Language Access Plan
Guidance for Article 80

What is the BPDA's Language Access Plan?

The Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) has adopted a Language Access Plan in an effort to ensure meaningful access to BPDA planning and development review public processes for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP.) These are individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. Additional information is available in the Board Memo related to the Language Access Plan.

The BPDA requires specific Project Proponents (Proponent) for Boston Zoning Code Article 80B (Large Project) and 80C (Planned Development Area) projects take reasonable steps to provide LEP persons meaningful opportunities to be informed of and participate in the BPDA's Article 80 development review process. This document provides guidelines and procedures for Proponents to create, implement and submit for BPDA staff approval a Project-specific LAP (PLAP) and Project Fact Sheets for Vital Documents as described below.

What is a Project-Specific Language Access Plan (PLAP)?

The BPDA requires Proponents of Article 80B Large Projects and PDAs to include a Project-specific LAP (PLAP) outlining the Proponent's strategies for providing translation of key documents and interpretation services for public meetings. The PLAP should be developed in consultation with the BPDA and be submitted to the BPDA prior to or concurrent with the Letter of Intent (LOI) or Planned Development Area (PDA) filing, as relevant. The PLAP is to be submitted in the form of a completed Checklist following the template provided on the BPDA's website.

The Proponent's PLAP is determined by Threshold Languages applicable to their project area and Vital Documents based on their project type.

Threshold Languages
Translation and interpretation services are to be provided in all the "Threshold Languages" spoken in the project area. Threshold Languages are those that are spoken by a LEP population within the project area that constitute either 5% of the neighborhood population or 1,000 individuals, whichever is less, or additional languages spoken by a substantial portion of the community as determined by BPDA for each individual project area.

Threshold Languages by Neighborhood
Threshold Languages are determined using demographic data from the US Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates (provided by BPDA Research) as a baseline, and supplemented with the neighborhood-level experience of BPDA Planning, BPDA Language Access Coordinator, and Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services. The BPDA will advise the Proponent on such a collectively determined list of Threshold Languages during the pre-file stage of their project.

Vital Documents
As part of the PLAP implementation, Proponents will be required to provide translations of filing documents and meeting materials that are part of the Article 80 review process. The BPDA has identified a list of "Vital Documents" for this purpose. Each Vital Document filing should be accompanied by a full translation or Project Fact Sheet as indicated below in all Threshold Languages relevant to the project. Additionally, to ensure accuracy and thoroughness of all translated materials, each entity providing translation or interpretation services should meet the minimum requirements set forth by industry certification or prior experience as determined by the BPDA.

Vital Documents for Article 80B - Large Projects
• Letter of Intent (full document)
• Project Notification Form (Project Fact Sheet)
• Draft Project Impact Report (Project Fact Sheet)
• Final Project Impact Report (Project Fact Sheet)
• Public Meeting Outreach Documents and Notices (full document)
• Public Meeting Presentation Materials (full document)
• Notices/advertisements required under Affordable Housing Marketing Plans (full document)

Vital Documents for Article 80C - Planned Development Areas (PDAs)
• Draft Planned Development Area (Project Fact Sheet)
• Planned Development Area (Project Fact Sheet)
• Public Meeting Outreach Documents and Notices (full document)

Creating and Implementing the Project-specific Language Access Plan (PLAP)

The PLAP should be submitted in the form of a completed Checklist provided on the BPDA's website in line with the guidance provided in this document. The PLAP should be submitted prior to or in conjunction with the project LOI. The Proponent is responsible for all costs of interpretation and translation services including those obtained by the BPDA for their processes for the purposes of Article 80 review.

Overall Steps
- During the pre-file stage, work with the BPDA to determine language needs for the Proposed Project.
- Consult with the BPDA on creating a Project-specific Language Access Plan (PLAP). This will be filed in conjunction with the LOI.
- For each subsequent "Vital Document" filing, create a full translation or project fact sheet based on the guidance provided here. Translated full documents and project fact sheets are to be submitted at the time of filing.
- For each IAG or public meeting presentation, provide a full translation of all the materials created for the meeting. Meeting materials are to be submitted by noon on the day of the meeting.

Recommended Practice for Interpretation Services
- The BPDA recommends providing interpretation services in all Threshold Languages at the first public meeting that follows any project filing (LOI, PDA or amendment, PNF, DPIR, or others.)
- At any subsequent public meetings, the Proponent may provide interpretation services by request. A request must be submitted to the BPDA at least three days prior to the date of the meeting.
- The Proponent must work with the BPDA Project Manager (PM) and Language Access Coordinator to ensure that information about interpretation requests is placed in the meeting advertisements and presentation materials.

Procedures Before Each Public Meeting

One week prior   Send the final English language presentation and any supplemental materials to the BPDA Project Manager (PM.) The BPDA PM will return the presentation with any changes in two days.

On the day of   Send all presentations and supplemental materials (English and other translations) to the BPDA PM and Language Access Coordinator by noon.

30 minutes prior   Join an online practice session or arrive at the venue to resolve technical challenges if any with the interpretation team.

Project-specific Language Access Plan (PLAP) Checklist

Proponents are required to submit a filled-out PLAP Checklist at the time of filing their LOI. By submitting this Checklist, the Proponent commits to meeting the standards of the BPDA's Language Access Plan throughout the Article 80 process for this Proposed Project. The Proponent understands that the Project-specific Language Access Plan may need to change after submission to reflect the Language Access needs of the community and will take the necessary steps to adjust their practices if needed.

The Checklist covers the following questions and is available as a fillable PDF on the BPDA's website.

- Project Name
- Filing Type
- Project Address
- Neighborhood
- Proponent Name
- Phone
- Email

- Threshold Languages
- LAP Point of Contact Name
- Company / Affiliation
- Phone
- Email

For each Threshold Language, please provide:
- Name of Translation and Interpretation Provider
- Email
- Address
- Phone Number
- Certification or Past Experience

Engagement and Language Access Strategy
- Please describe your strategy for providing Language Access at public meetings. (200 words)
- If applicable, please describe your strategy for engaging any LEP groups or communities who may not be represented in the Threshold Languages determined for your project. (200 words)
- If applicable, please describe your team's prior experience with Language Access. (200 words)