



MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

From: Alice Kennedy, Housing Commissioner



Date: December 15, 2022

Re: City Council Resolution 22-0137R Informational Hearing - Hiring Initiatives - Spanish Speakers

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Resolution 22-0137R for the purpose of inviting representatives from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Transportation, the Department of General Services, the Office of Equity and Civil Rights, and the Baltimore City Public School System to discuss the hiring of Spanish speakers for employment in City government.

DHCD is pleased to participate in an informational hearing to discuss the hiring of Spanish speakers for employment in City government. While we do not directly require new hires to be proficient in Spanish for all positions, we recognize the value of a workforce that is reflective of the population we seek to serve, including its Hispanic and Latino residents in order to promote municipal services that are open and accessible to all.

DHCD has assessed all internal and external forms, website content, handbooks, policies, and other content accessible to employees, recruits, constituents, visitors, and others to ensure ADA compliance and to identify those forms/information most important to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

We also utilize the *Neighborly* platform, an online application portal, to promote several important programs in multiple languages including; Community Catalyst Grants, Homeownership Incentives, Housing Preservation Programs, Housing Upgrades to Benefit Seniors (HUBS), Tax Sale Exemption Program, Emergency Mortgage & Housing Assistance Program and AHTF – New Construction/Preservation of Existing Rental Housing.

As part of a cohort of City agencies identified to create a Language Access Guidance document pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights act of 1964, we have been working with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) on the translation of identified vital documents. DHCD has also recently hired a permanent Equity Coordinator to continue to advance this work.

Conclusion

DHCD supports increasing the number of Spanish speaking employees in public-facing roles, including an examination of relevant City hiring processes aimed at recruiting and retaining Spanish speaking employees. DHCD is supportive of finding ways to recruit Hispanic and Latino peoples into the workplace, break down language barriers and build trust in this ever-growing community.

DHCD defers to the Department of Human Resources in providing further details on best practices to attract and retain quality candidates for employment within the City of Baltimore.

The Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully **defers to DHR** on City Council Resolution 22-0137R.

AK/sm

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office of Government Relations

Ms. Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary of the City Council

Brandon M. Scott, Mayor • **Alice Kennedy**, Housing Commissioner

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