



October 10, 2023

To the Honorable City Council President, Nick Mosby and
Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

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

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) is herein reporting on City Council Bill 22-0137R regarding the Informational Hearing – Hiring Initiatives – Spanish Speakers.

Since its establishment in 2014, MIMA has prioritized the hiring of staff that reflects the city's cultural and linguistic landscape. Currently, 100% of MIMA staff are bilingual and 50% can read, write, and speak Spanish. In addition, MIMA's two outreach staff are fluent in Spanish and conduct ongoing activities to support Baltimore's Spanish speaking constituencies.

As a technical assistance provider, MIMA has worked with city agencies to assist with recruitment of bilingual staff to meet the linguistic needs of their programs or services. For example, MIMA has referred city agencies with outside organizations, such as academic institutions and workforce development organizations working with immigrants to identify bilingual candidates. Furthermore, a section of MIMA's monthly newsletter is dedicated to sharing bilingual employment opportunities, many of which seek candidates fluent in English and Spanish. Finally, our biweekly community stakeholder calls and WhatsApp group are used to share employment opportunities with service providers working with immigrant communities.

While the need for hiring more Spanish speakers remains relevant, MIMA's goal is to ensure that all Limited English Proficient (LEP) residents in Baltimore City are served equitably. In April 2023, MIMA began implementation of an ARPA Language Access Project to expand the City's language access program. In June 2023, City Council included funding in its FY24 budget for a full-time Language Access Coordinator. With this additional support, MIMA will be able to further operationalize and institutionalize language access policies and resources for city agencies to overcome language barriers - beyond Spanish staff - in their day-to-day operations. Some of these resources include but are not limited to:

- Telephonic interpretation services made available – at no cost – to city agencies. In 2022, MIMA recorded a total of 17,000 minutes in Spanish telephonic interpretation and encountered LEP speakers of 22 different languages.
- Training to ensure that frontline employees can assist LEP constituents. MIMA has provided training to over 2,500 employees in the past 3 years. ARPA funds are being used to develop language access training modules that will be available in Workday.
- Translation of documents into Spanish and other core languages. MIMA translated a total of 126 documents to Spanish in 2022. Additional translations include documents in the city's top languages spoken by LEP residents (Spanish, French, Chinese, Korean and Arabic). Other languages by LEP Baltimore City Public School families include Swahili, Amharic, Tigrinya and

Nepalese. MIMA will work with 20 city agencies this year to translate over 400 vital documents into the city's top languages spoken by LEP residents.

In addition to the above, MIMA works with city agencies to tailor language access services based on both need and available resources. For example, MIMA may recommend a combination of approaches to overcome language barriers, such as the hiring of bilingual staff and/or subcontracting with community-based organizations when providing critical services.

MIMA is committed to ensuring that all LEP residents have access to services and resources. As such, our office will continue to assist city agencies with language and hiring needs to ensure services are available regardless of language proficiency.

For additional questions or concerns, contact:

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