



PRESS RELEASE

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Community and Advocacy Groups Commend Nassau County Executive Orders Guaranteeing Translation and Interpretation Services to Nassau Residents:

*Nassau's new policy modeled on similar policies in New York State, Suffolk County,
and New York City*

Mineola, NY—In a major step towards ensuring good government in Nassau County, and as a direct result of our advocacy efforts, County Executive Ed Mangano signed the second of two Executive Orders today guaranteeing translation and interpretation services to all limited-English proficient (LEP) residents in their interactions with County Government. Recent emergency and relief efforts have brought into focus the importance of county agencies being able to communicate effectively and efficiently with all Nassau County residents, including the more than 130,000 county residents with limited ability to read, write, or speak English.

The two Nassau County executive orders (Numbers 67 and 72) align Nassau County with Suffolk County and New York State's similar executive orders passed in 2011 and 2012 that guaranteed such language access services to New Yorkers in Suffolk County and State offices. Under the provisions of the Order, all county agencies will translate essential public documents and forms into the top six languages spoken by LEP residents of Nassau County; provide interpretation services to all LEP Nassau residents; designate

a language access coordinator and draft plans for complying with this Executive Order in the next 120 days; and provide the County Executive's office with annual reports detailing their compliance with the Executive Order.

The passing of this Order makes Nassau County one of the first suburban counties in the United States to enact a comprehensive language access policy. This Order will bring significant public safety gains to the county and improve all agencies' ability to interact with Nassau's diverse population. It will also bring the county into compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act—which prohibits discrimination based on one's language—and ensure consistency between county, state, and federal policy.

Limited English Proficient individuals and their advocates have found it difficult to access vital services such as police protection, health care, housing, transportation, education, and even food due to the lack of language translation and interpretation services. LILAC's member organizations were encouraged and commented on the signing of the orders.

“These language access orders will help all of my LEP consumers with disabilities to have a better quality of life, to live more independently and to participate more in their community,” said Grisselle Rivera-Mucciolo, Director of the Hispanic Outreach from the Long Island Center for Independent Living Inc.

Martha Maffei, Executive Director at Services for the Advancement of Women (SEPA Mujer) stated “In my daily work with immigrant women escaping domestic abuse, language access is crucial for women who are seeking services for themselves, as well as for their families. I congratulate Nassau County for providing the tool that victims of domestic violence need to look forward in their lives.”

“The Early Years Institute would like to commend the administration on the passing of the Nassau Executive Order,” stated Johanna Rotta, Coordinator of Community Assets. “This order will assure that *all* parents are better informed about available services and, in turn, how to help their children succeed.”

"As Long Island becomes more and more diverse, language access is critical to ensuring that all of our residents have access to important services, and can participate in community life," said Anita Halasz, Organizer with Long Island Jobs with Justice.

“We applaud the signing of this executive order and look forward to its successful implementation. As evidenced by Hurricane Sandy, it is essential that all members of our community have equal and timely access to government services, especially during times of crisis,” said Cheryl Keshner, LILAC coordinator and senior paralegal with the Empire Justice Center.

LILAC thanks its many partners who were instrumental in gaining the passage of this order, including the Long Island Civic Engagement Table, Make the Road NY, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Empire Justice Center, NY Civil Liberties Union,

La Fuente, SEPA Mujer, Jobs with Justice, NY Communities for Change and the Center for Popular Democracy .

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LILAC (Long Island Language Advocates Coalition) is a coalition of individuals and organizations based on Long Island who are concerned about the unequal access to programs, such as health care, law enforcement, social services and justice through the courts, by persons with limited English proficiency. We seek to assure that this population receives full and equal access to programs and services. We aim to do this by highlighting the systemic issues that create barriers to meaningful access, advocating for the removal of these barriers, and educating on the advantages of systemic change.