



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES AND FREEPORT, NY POLICE DEPARTMENT ENTER INTO VOLUNTARY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL LANGUAGE ACCESS TO POLICE SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Breon Peace, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and Kristen Clarke, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, announced today that the United States has entered into a Voluntary Technical Assistance Agreement with the Freeport, NY Police Department (FPD). The agreement memorializes a cooperative effort between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and FPD to help FPD develop a language access program that will ensure its police services are accessible to individuals who are limited English proficient (LEP).

This agreement is the first Voluntary Technical Assistance Agreement of its kind in the United States under DOJ's [Law Enforcement Language Access Initiative \(LELAI\)](#). It is the result of a mutual desire to improve FPD's language access services and not the result of an investigation or complaint against FPD. DOJ commends FPD for taking the initiative to build a complete and effective language access program for its LEP residents.

United States Attorney Peace stated, "It is critically important that law enforcement can communicate effectively with members of the community, regardless of the language that they speak. Working collaboratively with FPD, we will improve public safety for all and hope to replicate this agreement with other law enforcement agencies throughout the Eastern District of New York."

"The Law Enforcement Language Access Initiative was specifically designed for proactive police departments that recognize the need for accurate and timely communication and

are willing to invest in the language access tools and training that ensure that crime victims and witnesses can report, the reliability of evidence, protect the public, and promote community trust,” said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “The Civil Rights Division will continue to work cooperatively with law enforcement agencies across the country that seek to remove language barriers in policing.”

Launched in December 2022, LELAI is a nationwide effort to help law enforcement agencies address language barriers when they interact with the public. The initiative builds on the Department’s longstanding efforts to enforce Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (Safe Streets Act).

Under the two-year voluntary agreement, DOJ will help FPD build its language access program consistent with the parties’ shared goals of promoting officer safety and public safety, helping to further control crime, collecting reliable evidence for prosecution purposes, and fostering even greater community trust. DOJ will also help FPD develop policies, procedures, interpretation and translation protocols, community partnerships, and training, among other things.

LELAI provides [technical assistance resources](#) and [tools](#) that can help state and local law enforcement provide meaningful language access to individuals with LEP. By affirmatively engaging law enforcement agencies that want to review, update and/or strengthen their language access policies, plans and training, LELAI aims to support relationship-building efforts between law enforcement agencies, community stakeholders and populations with LEP.

Additional information about the EDNY U.S. Attorney’s Office Civil Rights work is available at its website at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/civil-rights>. The Civil Rights Division’s work is available on its website at www.justice.gov/crt and information about limited English proficiency and Title VI is available at www.lep.gov. More information on LELAI is available at www.lep.gov/law-enforcement. Members of the EDNY public may report possible civil rights violations at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/page/file/1396116/dl?inlineor%20civilrights.justice.gov/report/>.

This matter is being handled by Eastern District of New York Assistant U.S. Attorneys Megan Freismuth, Michael Goldberger, and Dara Olds of the Civil Division’s Civil Rights Team.