

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2022 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers**

April 15, 2021

Question: What would it cost the City to create a language access team to ramp up rapid response multilingual communications appropriate for different demographics in our community such as Arabic, Amharic and Spanish? Can it be done internally or do we need to hire additional staff and what would it cost to build the capacity for graphic designing (bringing in house) and purchasing the necessary software to create communications material in multiple languages?

Response:

City staff are working to establish a coordinated Citywide Language Access Policy. For the Office of Communications and Public Information to execute translation, multilingual graphic design and proactive multilingual media relations, additional resources would be required. Current funding of \$75,000 allows for translation and design of approximately 80 single-page documents in Amharic and Arabic; single language translation of approximately 170 single-page documents; and 12 one-hour public meetings with simultaneous live interpretation in 3 languages. Once filled, an existing bilingual writer/editor position would provide Spanish translation and an existing visual developer would format Spanish text, so no additional resources would be required for Spanish versions. The addition of 1.0 FTE for a language coordinator would be required to oversee the process with vendors, translators, proofreaders, and requesting staff members, and would cost approximately \$88,000, including benefits.

To provide proactive multilingual media relations, an existing 1.0 FTE currently dedicated to a writer/editor position would be adjusted to focus on bilingual media relations. This would provide dedicated media relations capacity to build relationships with multilingual media outlets and execute strategic communication plans. This offsets writing/editing capacity by removing shared media relations responsibilities from the Editorial Manager position.

If it is deemed that additional multilingual graphic design capacity is required beyond what is proposed, and in-house support is preferred, two .5 FTEs could be added as needed for an additional total cost of \$113,500, including \$104,000 in personnel costs and \$9,500 for equipment and software. One .5 FTE position would be an Amharic-speaking graphic designer and the other would be an Arabic-speaking graphic designer.

For reference, between March 1, 2020 through March 1, 2021, 80 documents were translated as part of the pandemic response communications and formatted in Spanish, Amharic and Arabic and 52 documents were translated and formatted in Spanish only. The language coordination of the 300 documents was conducted as a temporary reassignment during the pandemic response and would require additional capacity to continue after the pandemic.