



November 15, 2022

Hon. Bruce Blakeman  
Nassau County Executive  
1550 Franklin Avenue  
Mineola, NY 11501

**Re: Language Access to Ensure Equal Access for All Nassau County Residents**

Dear County Executive Blakeman and Honorable members of the Nassau County Legislature,

**We write to demonstrate our support and draw your attention to the urgent need for comprehensive language access in the Nassau County Police Department (NCPD).** According to the recently released [2022 Language Access Testing Report](#), conducted by the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) and Long Island Language Advocates Coalition (LILAC), the NCPD has repeatedly failed to comply with County Executive Orders 67 and 72-2013, which require the provision of interpretation services by county agencies in their interactions with individuals whose primary language is one other than English. We call on you to issue a memorandum directing NCPD Commissioner Patrick Ryder to address these shortcomings immediately and implement a comprehensive language access plan which includes internal audits, enhanced training, and additional measures to ensure increased accountability.

There are more than 160,000 people living in Nassau County who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), meaning they are not fluent in, or have difficulty, communicating in English. Language barriers can impact a person's ability to effectively communicate their needs, understand critical information, and access vital resources. Even for those who may speak some English, their ability to communicate fluently in their preferred language may be compromised when they are in crisis. When police fail to provide language assistance, the safety and well-being of all our community members are placed in jeopardy.

The NYIC-LILAC testing report reveals that of the 94 calls made, volunteers were unable to obtain language assistance or get the requested information 44 times; a 46.8% failure rate. In addition, more than a third of the callers were disconnected and another 16% were intentionally hung up on. While the test was conducted in Spanish and did not cover other languages, it is a clear indication that the NCPD is currently unable to adequately address the needs of our diverse community. Departmental personnel must be properly trained, the department must be diversified, and the NCPD and Nassau County must make language access a top priority. The current system is inefficient, frustrating and wasteful of residents' and county workers' time. Failure to implement language access means critical government services and emergency assistance remain largely inaccessible to the residents, many of whom are elderly, disabled, or newly arrived immigrants.

# NYIC 35 YEARS OF BUILDING IMMIGRANT POWER



We encourage the Nassau County Executive and members of the Nassau County Legislature to review the full report and implement the policy recommendations listed therein. Language access is the cornerstone to protecting the human rights and the civil rights of all of our Nassau County residents, establishing trust with the police, and ensuring all residents are treated with respect and dignity.

Sincerely,

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Kevin Thomas, District 6  
Member of the NYS Senate

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Anna M. Kaplan - Senatorial District 7  
Member of the NYS Senate

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John Brooks - Senatorial District 8  
Member of the NYS Senate

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Kimberly Jean-Pierre - Assembly District 11  
Member of the NYS Assembly

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Taylor Darling - Assembly District 18  
Member of the NYS Assembly

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Michaele Solages - Assembly District 22  
Member of the NYS Assembly

**NYIC35** YEARS OF  
BUILDING  
IMMIGRANT  
POWER



cc: Hon. Kevan Abrahams (District 1)  
Hon. Siela Bynoe (District 2)  
Hon. Carrié Solages (District 3)  
Hon. Debra Mulé (District 5)  
Hon. Delia DeRiggi-Whitton (District 11)  
Hon. Arnold W. Drucker (District 16)  
Hon. Joshua A. Lafazan (District 18)