

**Local Government Language Access Collaborative**  
**Application : Entry # 193**

**Official name of local government:**

City of Concord

**Name and title of local government contact:**

Katherine Ramirez Campbell, Community Outreach Coordinator

**What is your motivation for participating in the Language Access Collaborative?**

The core mission and principles that the City of Concord staff and leadership work to uphold cannot be fulfilled without providing quality and appropriate communication to all residents, including individuals who are non-English speaking or have limited English proficiency. There is substantial internal support and external demand to develop lasting multilingual communications tools and set permanent language assistance practices. Additionally, our history with El Puente Hispano has prepared us for the partnership opportunity that is being offered through the Language Access Program (LACP). Since 2017, the City of Concord and El Puente Hispano staff have built strong relationships through a multitude of projects and events to reach the Hispanic community within Concord. The aspiration to establish consistent inclusive communication and opportunities for our Spanish-speaking residents is long-standing, but the implementation has been gradual.

The course content that is being offered through LACP includes all topics that the city is intent on addressing. We are facing challenges expanding our bilingual staff, finding reliable local language service providers, offering best practices for our first responders, organizing bilingual events, and creating multilingual communication tools. We are seeking expert assistance to guide our exemplary team in navigating the language needs of our residents to create a language access plan that best serves our unique and flourishing community.

**Why is a language access plan important for your community?**

The City of Concord is growing. According to the latest data released by the U.S. Census Bureau, Concord now holds the title of the tenth largest city in North Carolina and is one of the fastest growing cities in the state and region. As Concord grows, so does its immigrant and refugee constituency from Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Asia. City leadership has worked to responsibly manage this growth by expanding our utility capabilities, building new facilities, and expanding our parks. As we strive to meet the dynamic service demands of our growing constituency, we want to continue to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within our city. We have established consistently successful modes of communication for our residents through newsletters, social media, an automated call system, direct email campaigns, and more. However, we have identified gaps in our efforts to reach populations of residents that have limited English proficiency. We believe that by creating and implementing a language access plan, we can meet our residents where they are at, increase their civic engagement, and encourage a sense of belonging in the community they live in.

Additionally, the City of Concord is the largest in Cabarrus County. Our influence over our community partners and local government agencies does not go unnoticed. We believe that by participating in LACP and applying the changes and programs that we develop through the program, the positive outcomes will have an impact that reaches beyond the city limits of Concord. Our participation in LACP will likely pave the way for the surrounding municipalities in our area to develop their own language access plans after us using our support, as they have with other initiatives we have led.

**What resources, programs, or organizations currently exist in your local government and community to support residents born outside of the U.S.?**

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The City of Concord's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are seen through the creation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office within our City Manager's office in 2021. The DEI coordinator's Report of Accomplishments found that the city staff had taken great strides working towards reaching our minority and immigrant communities. The Report of Accomplishments also reiterated that since its foundation in 2017, El Puente Hispano has served as a vital partner in our work towards language inclusion, partnering with the city in different initiatives that focus on the Latino community . Some of the initiatives listed below are the result of this partnership.

The city joins forces with El Puente to host an annual International Festival. The festival is a celebration of the many cultures and diversity represented across our county and displays the city's continuing efforts towards a more inclusive city.

Parks and Recreation makes continued efforts to have all their brochures, registration and reservation forms, and regulations in English and Spanish. They also offer bilingual exercise classes to encourage the participation of the Latino community. In addition, the continued efforts and partnership with El Puente Hispano resulted in a core volunteer request from the Concord Youth Council to assist with tutoring young children from the Latino community.

The city's fire and police departments have numerous initiatives to connect to the Hispanic community and provide education on services and resources.

The public transportation department has ensured that all informational signs/announcements are posted in English and Spanish. Also, major stops and key transfer points are announced in Spanish and English (audio and text).

Other local organizations are committed to creating policies and initiatives to support residents born outside of the U.S. For example, the Cabarrus Health Alliance (CHA) has a concise communication policy regarding non-English speakers. The policy states that they will provide services to all clients regardless of race, ethnic group, country of origin, or ability to speak English. It is the policy of CHA to facilitate communication between their staff and clients who do not speak English. If the client does not speak English, interpreter services are provided for the client. To do so, CHA maintains an average of 40 bilingual employees and contracts with Interpreters Unlimited to professionally translate all their materials.

El Puente Hispano is the only organization in Cabarrus County whose purpose is solely to meet the needs of the Latino population in the county. We hope to continue the strong partnership that has developed between the City of Concord and El Puente to develop the first city-wide language access plan through your program.

**Please provide the names and titles of each team member, separated by commas.**

Katherine Ramirez Campbell, Community Outreach Coordinator (Public Affairs Office), City of Concord  
Sandra Torres, President  
Jaime Brown, DEI Strategist, City of Concord  
Tammy Linn, Customer Services Manager,

**Name of community partner organization:**

El Puente Hispano

**Name and title of community partner organization contact:**

Sandra Torres, El Puente Hispano

**Letters of commitment and support**

- [LACP-CoC1.pdf](#)
- [El-Puente-LOS\\_Concord1.pdf](#)