



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 24-00329

Agenda Date: 6/25/2024

Agenda Item Name:

Immigrant and Language Services Coordinator Presentation -2400329

Presenter:

Gracia Fernandez

Description:

Alachua County acknowledges the crucial need for a proactive language access plan to overcome barriers to residents that do not speak English. Led by the Board of County Commissioners, the Language Access Policy aims to ensure all residents can access services regardless of English proficiency. By offering interpretation and translation services, the plan fosters seamless communication with public institutions, empowers diverse residents and enhances community well-being.

Recommended Action:

Hear the presentation; Approve Language Access Policy.

Prior Board Motions:

On June 14, 2022, The Board of County Commissioners approved the ARPA proposal and budget amendment for the implementation of the proposal to build a language access system that allows residents who are limited English speakers equitable access to critical information and services which the County offers, facilitates or partners in.

Fiscal Note:

The County has budget established in 052.00.0064.519.12.00, 052.00.0064.519.34.00, 052.00.0064.519.55.00 and 052.00.0064.519.99.24 for any cost related to the Language Access Policy. The Language Access Policy is supported by the Revenue Recovery Fund.

Strategic Guide:

Social and Economic

Background:

Language barriers can present formidable challenges for individuals who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), impeding their capacity to access essential services and participate fully in community life. In a county as culturally diverse as Alachua, where a multitude of languages are spoken, these barriers can exacerbate disparities in access to vital resources such as healthcare, education, legal aid, and social services. LEP Alachua County Residents often encounter difficulties understanding official documents, navigating government processes, and communicating effectively with service providers, leading to frustration, misunderstandings, and disenfranchisement. Moreover,

these barriers can deepen social isolation and hinder integration into the broader community fabric, limiting opportunities for meaningful engagement and mutual understanding among residents from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Addressing language barriers is not only a matter of equity but also a fundamental aspect of fostering a cohesive and inclusive community where all individuals can thrive and contribute.