

# Chatham County Language Access Plan

## What is Language Access

- ▶ Language access means that people who don't speak English very well or at all, are able to use and benefit from a wide range of services.
- ▶ Furthermore, Chatham County believes that the access should also consider the range of abilities that individuals may have and attempt to reduce any barriers to accessing the information and services provided by the County.

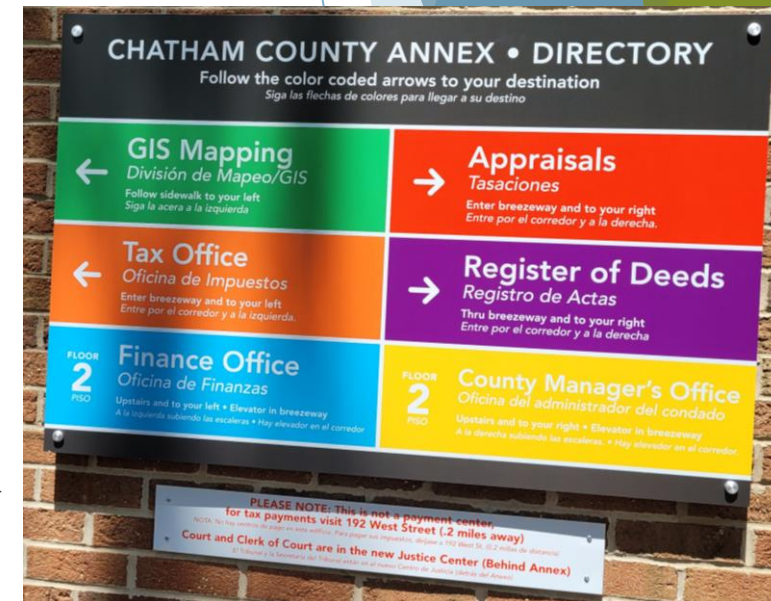
## Why It is Important

- ▶ Chatham County serves a diverse population in a variety of ways that are important to day-to-day life.
- ▶ Communications should be accessible to the whole community
- ▶ Chatham County will be more inclusive and welcoming to all that seek information or services.

# Chatham County

## Plan in Action

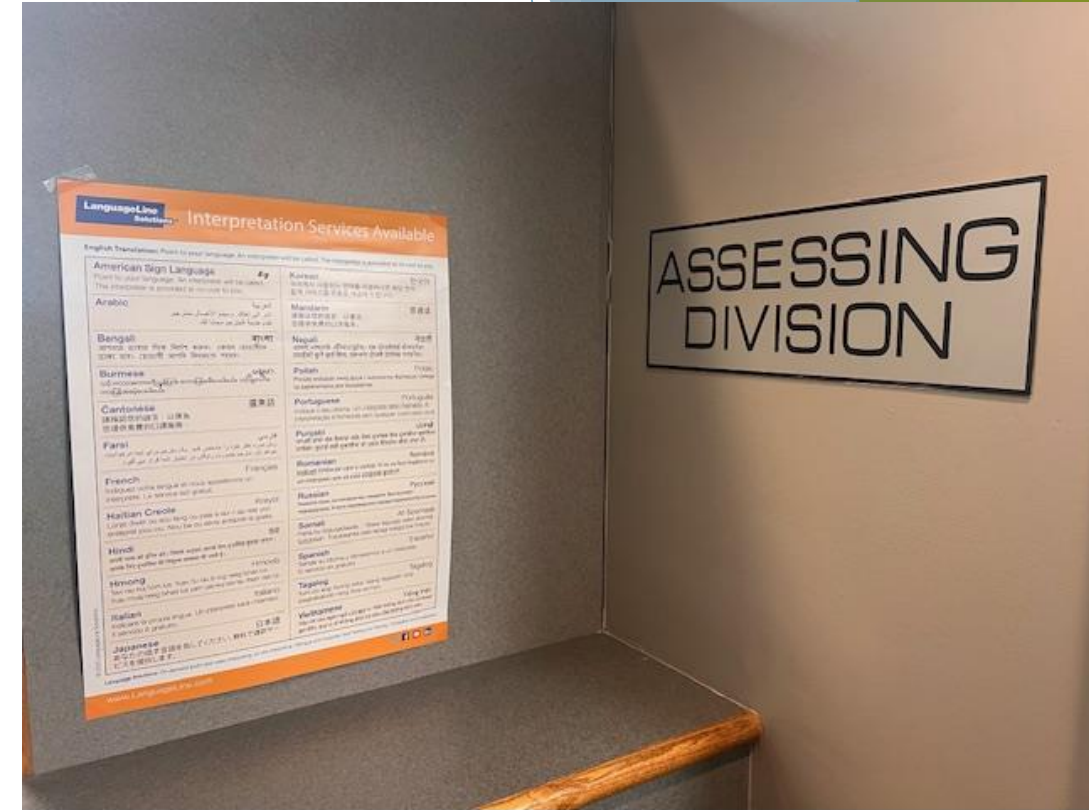
- ▶ Improve communication between Chatham County and LEP residents through expanding multilingual communications and engaging in outreach with LEP residents
  - ▶ Translate building signage and vital documents
  - ▶ Created interpreter request process for public services and meetings
  - ▶ Launched LanguageLine services and Document Translation services to all County Departments, Chatham County Schools and Non-Profit Partners
  - ▶ Revamping of County website
- ▶ Grow involvement and leadership of LEP residents and bilingual staff
  - ▶ Build a Team-Support Staff of bilingual employees who want a secondary role as interpreter on an “on-call” rotational basis with compensation. Halted to use certified Interpreters
- ▶ Interpretation Equipment will be housed at the Chatham Community Library and Wren Library: may be checked out on a first-come first-serve basis. There will be 3 separate units available at each location.
- ▶ One 50-person capacity Interpretation-set housed in The Equity & Community Engagement Office



# Chatham County

## *Community Impact*

- ▶ Contract certified Onsite Interpreters for community events allowing more opportunities for increased engagement.
- ▶ Interpretation signage in Public-facing departments:
  - ▶ Increased communication for better sense of customer service and belonging.
  - ▶ Ease of use of County services
- ▶ Launch of a new community engagement platform: Chatham Community Nexus
- ▶ Request for translation of documents averages 5/month since launch from County departments
- ▶ Partnership with local nonprofits
  - Chatham Literacy Council
  - Hispanic Liaison
- ▶ New collaboration with Chatham Schools



# Creating a Language Access Plan (LAP) for Chatham County

## Key Components to a formal Plan

- ▶ Needs Assessment
- ▶ Policy Development
  - Commitment Statement
  - Scope of planned services
- ▶ Implementation Strategies
- ▶ Resource Allocation-
- ▶ Public Notification
- ▶ Monitoring & Evaluation
- ▶ Partnership & Community Engagement