

New technology provides language solutions for City customer service

Feb. 24, 2020 — Residents will be able to use their first language when interacting with City staff going forward, be it inquiring about a swim schedule via the phone in Mandarin, or buying a dog licence via American Sign Language in person.

The City is launching a new service through LanguageLine Solutions this week, allowing customer and guest services workers, both at City Hall's Citizens First and the St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre, to access interpreters representing over 240 languages.

"It's a fantastic opportunity to better serve our community, people from all over the world call our city home," said Manager of Customer Service Cherise Titus, explaining, "our residents can now interact with their City in the way that is easiest for them, it makes them more comfortable and means our staff can better address their needs."

The LanguageLine technology means when individuals need service in a language ranging from Armenian to Yoruba over the phone, City customer service representatives can connect with an interpreter, usually within just 10 to 30 seconds.

In person that experience extends to tablets set up at both City Hall and the St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre. Via the tablet select languages, most critically sign language, can be accessed via video chat, providing an additional level of interaction.

"This is really about accessibility and equity, no matter their language all our residents can now expect the same level of customer service," said Aquatics Supervisor Jennifer Green.

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