

**CITIZENS' LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW BOARD
POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

PROVISION OF EVICTION DOCUMENTATION IN COUNTY'S THRESHOLD LANGUAGES

BACKGROUND:

On 02-17-22, Zhirong Zhao was evicted from her residence. Zhao filed a complaint with the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board related to this eviction. Included in the complaint, Zhao alleged deputies failed to communicate effectively or provide an interpreter to her. Zhao's primary language is Mandarin. This allegation was ultimately determined unfounded, however, raised a question as to whether information related to evictions could be distributed to tenants in a more equitable way, as it relates to language. Currently, the "Notice to Vacate" document served to a tenant is provided only in English.



San Diego Sheriff's Department Policy and Procedure – Addendum F, speaks to the importance of a deputy recognizing potential barriers to an individual's level of compliance, specifically regarding "de-escalation." The policy states, "If time and circumstances reasonably permit, deputies should consider whether a subject's lack of compliance is a deliberate attempt to resist being taken into custody or rather an inability to comply with deputy orders based on factors including, but not limited to: Medical conditions, mental impairment, developmental disability or dementia, physical limitation, language barrier, drug/alcohol interaction/impairment"

Further, the County of San Diego (County) has recognized the importance of providing meaningful access to services, programs and activities offered. County of San Diego, Board of Supervisors Policy A-139, Language Access, speaks directly to this issue. The policy states, "County Departments shall ensure the quality and accuracy of language access services provided by each Department as they are critical to providing limited English-speaking individuals with meaningful access to department programs and activities." Further, the County provides free interpreter services in eight "threshold languages" as well as American Sign Language (ASL). Threshold languages refer to languages identified as having a substantial number of limited English-speaking persons. (See attachments A, B and Board Policy A-139).

It is reasonable to believe an individual receiving a "Notice to Vacate" with resources written in their spoken language, which explains the eviction process, in addition to information on how to access interpreter services, may contribute to them better complying with eviction instructions, possibly negating the need for a forced eviction. Further, implementing policy which provides access to language services aligns with the County's goal to increase translation services to ensure equitable treatment and access to County programs and information.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

1. It is recommended the San Diego Sheriff's Department create and provide an additional notice when posting or serving a "Notice to Vacate" to include a summary of interpreter services offered by the County of San Diego. Further, the notice should include information on how to access a summary of eviction timelines and processes, translated in the eight languages the County of San Diego has identified as having a substantial number of limited English-speaking persons. (See Attachments A and B)

Submitted by:  09-28-22	Date: 09-28-22	Reviewed by:  09-28-22	Date: 09-28-22
Spencer Klew, Special Investigator		Paul R. Parker III, Executive Officer	