



Town of Newmarket  
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,  
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

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## **New Language Interpretation Service Information Report**

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Department(s): Customer Services

Author(s): Hayley Fryer, Manager, Corporate Customer Services

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to inform Council about the Town's new on-demand, phone, language interpretation service. This initiative is designed to support Newmarket's commitment to being an inclusive, diverse, and welcoming community by reducing language barriers and increasing residents' access to Town services and information.

### **Background**

The Town of Newmarket has always been focused on meeting the needs of all residents who access our programs and services. For many years the Town has drawn upon the diverse language skills of our staff to provide interpretation services. This dedicated group of 20 staff volunteers have provided in person interpretation support for 18 languages. While this approach has been effective, it is not always an option that can be readily accessed to ensure timely customer service.

In 2025, staff launched an internal pilot program to test on-demand interpretation services during customer interactions. The Town partnered with MCIS Language Solutions, a non-profit social enterprise that provides interpretation in more than 300 languages through immediate access to trained interpreters. During the pilot phase, the service proved easy to use, reliable, and effective in supporting both staff and customers.

## **Discussion**

Throughout the pilot, staff observed that interpretation services significantly improved their ability to communicate effectively with customers of all backgrounds. Interactions became smoother and more accurate, even when complex or technical details were involved. This proved especially helpful when assisting residents who have recently moved to Newmarket and are learning about Town services and program offerings.

## **Using the Language Interpretation Service**

When conversing with members of the public, staff or members of council may wish to suggest the inclusion of an interpreter. The interpreter can be reached by telephone within 60 seconds and can be conferenced into a call or can interpret an in-person conversation over speakerphone.

## **Security and Privacy**

All interpreters working for MCIS must adhere to a Professional Services Agreement which includes a Non-Disclosure Agreement. Interpreters are also bound by the Interpreter Code of Ethics and must meet industry requirements, including enhanced criminal background checks. MCIS privacy policies are aligned with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

## **Next Steps**

Customer Service staff provided very positive feedback during the pilot, noting that interpreter connections were quick and that conversations flowed naturally once the interpreter joined the call. As a result, the service was made available to all staff in the fourth quarter of 2025.

The next steps in the rollout include promoting the availability of the service to the public and preparing a corporate-wide communication plan to ensure all staff and members of Council are aware of how and when to use the service.

## **Consultation**

Customer Services staff have worked closely with Human Resources – Equity Diversity & Inclusion throughout the planning phase of this project.

## **Conclusion**

The on-demand interpretation service is already proving to be a valuable addition to the Town's customer service tools. It improves residents' access to services, strengthens communication, and helps remove language as a barrier. The initiative directly supports the Town's broader inclusion and equity goals and contributes to the creation of a more welcoming, accessible, and diverse community.

## **Council Priority Association**

This report aligns with the following Council Priority: Diverse, Welcoming, and Inclusive Community

## **Human Resource Considerations**

No additional staffing is required. Training needs are minimal, and staff and council can begin using the service effectively with short, targeted guidance. This service also reduces the impact on multilingual staff who were often sought out and relied upon for interpretation, allowing them to stay focused on their work.

## **Budget Impact**

The cost of the service is billed by the minute, with no monthly fees or contract commitments. Staff will monitor both usage and financial impact over the next year and will provide a follow-up report with usage data, cost analysis, and recommendations for future budgeting.

## **Attachments**

None.

## **Approval for Distribution**

Jeff Payne, Commissioner, Community Services

## **Report Contact**

For more information on this report, contact [info@newmarket.ca](mailto:info@newmarket.ca).