



**NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office**

***Lee Harris, Mayor***

Vasco A. Smith, Jr., Administration Building  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

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Kelly Roberts  
Communications Specialist  
Office: 901.222.2014  
Email: Kelly.Roberts@shelbycountyttn.gov

**SHELBY COUNTY MAYOR LEE HARRIS' NONPROFIT COMMITTEE EXPANDS  
ACCESS TO VITAL SERVICES FOR THOSE FACING LANGUAGE BARRIERS**

***Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris' Nonprofit Committee, Shelby County Division of  
Community Services, and World Relief Memphis have partnered with 13 nonprofit service  
providers to provide free translation services for residents in need.***

**Shelby County, TN** – Today, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris' Nonprofit Committee has announced a new pilot program, called Language Connection, to break down language barriers between Shelby County residents and nonprofit service providers across our community. It is the latest recommendation of Mayor Lee Harris' Nonprofit Committee, which was formed to identify barriers in providing services and formulate concrete solutions to problems.

Through the Language Connection program, Shelby County Government collaborated with World Relief Memphis to identify and provide free translation services to 13 area nonprofit service providers. Organizations were selected by the Nonprofit Committee's Health and Human Services Subcommittee based on their existing outreach to non-fluent English-speakers. The pilot program kicked off this summer and is scheduled to last six months.

The addition of the translation services is thanks to the use of Shelby County Government-sponsored telephonic interpretation service Language Line. Over 240 languages are available with live audio interpreting. When a non-fluent English-speaker needs access to services, a staff member will simply dial a number to connect the client with their preferred language.

VASCO A. SMITH, JR. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
160 North Main Street, 11th Floor Memphis, TN 8103  
901-222-2000 Fax 901-222-2005  
[www.shelbycountyttn.gov](http://www.shelbycountyttn.gov)



Shelby County is home to more than 55,000 immigrants who speak over 68 different languages. It's also home to more than 2,000 nonprofits offering vital services that improve the lives of residents.

**The nonprofits participating in the Language Connection pilot program are:**

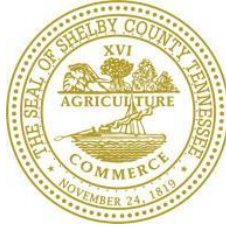
- Advocates for Immigrant Rights (AIR)
- Alliance Healthcare Services
- Catholic Charities of West Tennessee
- Community Legal Center
- Greater Memphis Financial Empowerment Center (GMFEC)
- HopeWorks
- Latino Memphis
- Mid-South Food Bank
- Porter-Leath
- The Works CDC
- United Housing
- United Way of the Mid-South
- World Relief Memphis/Connect Language Center

**Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris:** “Shelby County has always proudly welcomed immigrants. I’m excited that more service providers will have access to the translation services they need to connect to residents through this latest innovation from our Nonprofit Committee. Immigrants are valued members of our community and we should do everything we can to make sure they can fully thrive in our county.”

**Janet Lo, Manager of Community Partnerships, Shelby County Division of Community Services:** “Growing up as a child of immigrant parents, I remember well what it’s like to see your parents struggle trying to understand complex forms and systems. It’s a comfort to know this program is removing a big barrier that is keeping families from accessing services they might need and helping organizations reach a new audience.”

**PJ Moore, Executive Director, World Relief Memphis:** “At World Relief Memphis, we aim to provide vital services, build just and welcoming communities, and bring people together for mutually transformative relationships. The Language Connection program has been a valuable resource to our organization as we seek to fulfill our purpose and is helping to make Shelby County a stronger community for all its residents.”

**Glenda Stark, LCSW at Alliance Healthcare Services:** “Being a part of the Language Connection program has helped us improve our relationships with non-English speaking



consumers. The interpreters have proved to be very professional and polite, and connecting with them has been easy.”

(End of Release)



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