



State of Nevada Merit Award Board

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

October 23, 2024

I. Purpose and Authority

The Merit Award Board (Board) is committed to compliance with NRS 232.0081 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006) to ensure meaningful access to the Board's services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Nevada Revised Statute 232.0081 and the federal guidance on Title VI both agree that language should not be a barrier to accessing governmental programs and services. As stated in NRS 232.0081, "Persons with limited English proficiency require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language," and the legislation states that it is the responsibility of government to provide that access:

State and local agencies and entities that receive public money have an obligation to provide meaningful, timely access for persons with limited English proficiency to the programs and services of those agencies and entities.

The purpose of this document is to establish an effective plan and protocol for Board staff to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, LEP individuals.

II. General Policy

The Board is composed of five members as follows:

- (a) Two persons who are members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees or its successor, designated by the executive committee of that Federation or its successor;
- (b) One member from the Budget Division of the Office of Finance appointed by the Chief of the Budget Division;
- (c) One member from the Division of Human Resource Management of the Department of Administration appointed by the Administrator of the Division; and
- (d) One member appointed by and representing the Governor.

The Board is responsible for investigating, reviewing and evaluating the merits of proposed employee suggestions that are intended to reduce, eliminate or avoid state expenditures or improve the operation of the state government.

The Board adopts the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals are afforded equal access to services and effective communication. The Board is well versed in accommodating individuals with language barriers and limited language proficiency.

It is the Board's policy to grant access to services to every person regardless of their ability to speak, understand, read, or write English, without discrimination based on race, color, gender, gender identity, or expression, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, pregnancy, genetic information, domestic partnership, or disability in accordance with state and federal law. The Board intends to take all reasonable steps to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to its services. The Board seeks to reduce barriers by increasing its capacity to deliver services and benefits to people in their preferred languages.

To this end, the Board endorses the following policies:

- A commitment to equity and taking reasonable steps to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to all its services.
- The Board, rather than the LEP individual, bears the responsibility for providing appropriate language services, regardless of the LEP individual's preferred language, at no cost to the LEP individual.
- Staff at the initial points of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs.
- The Board will not suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive agency services.

The Board's Language Access Coordinators are:

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III. Profile of the Board's LEP Clients

The Board's clients consist of current state employees and agency management. Based on our interactions with our client base, a large percentage of our current state employees are typically English proficient. The Board does not collect information on its client base regarding English proficiency. The Board is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among our LEP clients so staff can provide meaningful, timely access to services.

The Board used national demographic data from the U.S. Census to identify limited English proficiency in the State of Nevada. According to U.S. Census data, 70.1% of the Nevada population speaks English only with 29.9% speaking a language other than English. The American Community Survey (ACS) administered by the U.S. Census Bureau is the nation's most current, reliable, and accessible data source for local statistics on critical planning topics. The survey samples approximately 3.5 million addresses each year. Data is collected continuously throughout the year to produce annual social, economic, housing, and demographic estimates. The data collected through ACS is used to distribute more than \$675 billion of federal government spending each year. The ACS data indicates Limited English

Proficiency for the State of Nevada as follows:

Limited English – Households Speaking --

Spanish	19.5%
Other Indo-European Languages	3.30%
Asian and Pacific Island Languages	7.20%
Other Languages	1.30%

IV. The Board’s Language Access Services and Procedures

The Board provides the following language access services (LAS) to facilitate LEP individuals’ access to the Board’s services and ensures that all language service providers are fully competent to provide these services. The Board will handle language access on a case-by-case basis, as the need arises.

A. Oral and Sign Language Services

As requested, the Board will provide spoken and sign language translation services utilizing two resources, the State’s bi-lingual list or contracted vendors through the current statewide contract held by the Purchasing Division for the State of Nevada.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Board will not discriminate against any individual based on disability and will make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity to access services. LEP individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, visually impaired, blind, deaf/blind, or persons with language disorders may request assistive technology or alternative language access services.

Assistive technology or alternative language access services may include but not limited to:

- Augmentative and Assistive Communication Systems
- Braille Translations
- CapTel
- Screen Braille Communicator
- Text Telephone (TTY) or Telecommunication Devices (TDD)

Bi-Lingual Contact List: Lists 142 employees who can provide translation for various languages including Spanish, Arabic, French, Chinese, Mandarin, Filipino, Korean, and Serbian/Croatian. Additionally, there is one employee on the list who can provide American Sign Language services.

Link: [Bilingual Contact List.xlsx](#)

The **Statewide Contract** makes vendors accessible to state agencies for on-site spoken, sign language interpretation and document translation services at a cost.

Link:

https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/

B. Written Language Services

As requested, the Board will provide translated “vital documents” and related written translation services by vendors contracted through statewide contracts by the Purchasing Division for the State of Nevada.

C. Providing Notice of Language Assistance Services

The Board will provide notification of the relevant points of contact on the Division of Human Resource Management’s website.

V. Implementing the Board’s Language Access Services

In order to implement LAS for clients who have limited English proficiency, the Board requires its members and Division staff to follow the policies and procedures referenced below to ensure meaningful access to available language services. The Board is committed to full compliance with these procedures and provides staff with the training described below so that all staff are familiar with these policies and procedures and recognize their importance to the Board’s mission.

Language Access Procedures

To promote diversity and inclusion of all individuals who receive services from the Board, it will facilitate all types of language access for LEP individuals who they serve.

The Board will provide notice of its available language services to LEP individuals at the relevant points of contact, at no cost to the LEP individuals.

A. Identifying Client Language Needs and Preferred Language

In order to understand the Board’s client language access needs, the Division, on behalf of the Board, will gather and assess data, and update the LAP as needed. This will include DHRM staff: (1) interacting appropriately with LEP clients, (2) informing clients of the availability of language services, (3) determining clients’ preferred languages, and (4) documenting and tracking LEP client language preferences. These policies and procedures will guide the Board’s staff through all their interactions with LEP clients.

B. Accessing Appropriate Oral and Sign Language Services

The Board recognizes that certain circumstances may require specialized interpretation and translation services even when staff with bilingual abilities are available, and in those instances, staff should seek assistance from the Language Access Coordinators along with staff on the bi-lingual contact list or contracted vendors for professional in-person or telephone interpreters.

C. Accessing Appropriate Written Language Services

A determination of “vital” documents will be based on front-line interactions with LEP

clients and an evaluation of the Board's documents. These actions will identify the necessary steps to ensure meaningful access to qualified written language services. This will apply to both written information intended for broad distribution, as well as written communications between the Board and individuals accessing services.

If qualified staff are unable to meet these needs, the Board will utilize State of Nevada contracted language translation services to provide accessible vital documents.

D. Language Services Quality Assurance

The Board is committed to ensuring that all language service providers it uses are qualified and competent to provide those services. The following procedures are in place to establish provider qualifications and track provider performance.

- DHRM staff, on behalf of the Board, who are identified as possible interpreters or translators will be screened to determine qualifications and officially designated as interpreters or translators if qualifications are deemed sufficient.
- The Board will use vendors contracted through statewide contracts by the Purchasing Division for the State of Nevada.

E. Staff Training Policies and Procedures

The Board acknowledges that appropriate interactions with diverse clients and the provision of language services for clients with limited English proficiency is vital to the fulfillment of its mission. To that end, DHRM, on behalf of the Board, will ensure that its staff completes cultural competency training and are familiar with its LAP for providing services.

VI. Evaluation of and Recommendations for the Board's Language Access Plan

The Board is committed to monitoring the performance of the applicable policies, procedures, and resources to ensure that its LAP is responsive to the needs of its clients. At a minimum, DHRM, on behalf of the Board, will review, evaluate, and, as appropriate, update the LAP biennially.

A. Processes for Monitoring and Evaluation

On behalf of the Board, the Language Access Coordinators will solicit qualitative and quantitative data biennially from members and alternate members and review statistical data to determine LAP needs and program compliance.

B. Evaluation Outcomes and Proposed Changes

DHRM, on behalf of the Board, will evaluate LAP data and propose changes to LAP policy and procedures as necessary.

C. Proposed Budgetary Implications

Additional funding needs are currently being identified.

D. Suggested Legislative Amendments

No suggestions at this time.