



Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office Language Access Plan

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Introduction

The Supplier Diversity Office (SDO) has developed and prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP) outlining efforts taken to provide language services to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) constituents.

This plan also defines the actions the SDO is taking to ensure meaningful access to programs, services, activities, and materials for all LEP constituents.

The SDO will review and update the LAP as needed to ensure responsiveness to community needs.

The SDO serves a diverse population of various races, ethnicities, ages, and linguistic origins. An LEP person is someone who cannot speak, read, write, or understand English at a level that allows them to interact effectively with SDO staff. A constituent maintains the right to self-identify as LEP.

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure meaningful access to services, programs, activities, and materials for all LEP constituents.

The SDO is committed to making services available to LEP persons as part of its mission. Based on this commitment, the SDO makes every attempt to assist LEP constituents in assessing our services.

The LAP does not create new services, but strives to eliminate barriers for LEP constituents accessing existing services and ensures that all staff can assist LEP constituents in assessing those resources. The SDO will provide quality language assistance to LEP constituents in a fair and timely manner, ensuring meaningful access to the agency's services.

This LAP centralizes language access materials for staff and outlines the regular trainings for new hires to ensure that all staff can access the materials and services listed in the sections below.

The objectives of these Language Access Guidelines (LAG) are to:

- a. Improve access to and quality of state services, programs, and activities for non-English speakers and LEP persons;
- b. Reduce any disparities, barriers, and delays in the provision of services or programs to eligible LEP speakers; and
- c. Streamline training and resources for staff to increase effectiveness in serving LEP constituents and ensure public satisfaction

Policy

It is SDO policy to provide meaningful access to programs and services to persons who are limited in English proficiency. Language access services must be provided at no cost to the constituent, and LEP constituents should not experience burdens, delays, or reduced quality of service due to language barriers.

Applicability

This policy applies to all units and staff within the SDO.

Role

The SDO's goals are to increase opportunities for certified diverse businesses and Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP) participants through annual state agency spending benchmarks and include bid evaluation criteria within the state goods and services bid process. The SDO also provides public access to the certified business lists on the SDO web pages and distributes business opportunities, events, and notices to SDO participants. The SDO also offers informational workshops to educate potential businesses on the certification process and educate certified businesses on how to access and maximize bidding and contracting opportunities.

Language Access Plan

This LAP shall be fully implemented, subject to the availability of requisite fiscal resources. It represents the agency's commitment to ensuring that all residents of Massachusetts can readily access information and resources from the SDO.

For staff, this plan centralizes resources, training, and the agency's multilingual content and publications, while outlining the minimum standard of access to the agency for LEP constituents.

Language Access Coordinator

Name and Title: Amanda LaCroix, Chief of Staff

Email: amanda.lacroix3@mass.gov

Telephone: (857) 208-2672

Language Resources

Translation: Means the process of converting written text from a source language into an equivalent written text in a target language as fully and as accurately as possible while maintaining the style, tone, and intent of the text, and while considering differences of culture and dialect.

Interpretation: Means the act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then faithfully orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning. For individuals with certain disabilities that affect communication, this can include understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed communication in the source language and faithfully conveying that information into a spoken, captioned, or signed target language while retaining that same meaning.

Translating Publications

The SDO is committed to maintaining all its widely applicable publications in the five most spoken languages in the Commonwealth: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Chinese (Simplified or Traditional). The SDO is also committed to expanding our language access when possible. When reaching out to specific communities in the Commonwealth, SDO staff should ensure that these publications will be accessible in the languages prevalent in each community. Longer and more specific publications should be translated when there are accessibility concerns for the intended audience.

Public Requests for Written Translation or Interpretation Services

To request written translation or interpretation services, contact SDO's Language Access Coordinator, Amanda LaCroix, by email at amanda.lacroix3@mass.gov with the following information:

1. Whether it is a translation or interpretation need.
2. What language(s) are needed.

Written Translation Guidelines for SDO Staff

Written responses to LEP constituents should be provided within the same service timelines as responses to English-speaking constituents. Translated written materials should be clear, accurate, and culturally appropriate.

To request a translation, email Maryellen Osborne and Cc Amanda LaCroix. Be sure to include how the request was received (if a request was made by a member of the public), whether it is a translation or interpretation need, what language(s) are needed, and a timeline for the service.

Live Translation Guidelines for SDO Staff (In-Person and Remote)

When requesting an interpreter for an in-person event, email Maryellen Osborne and Cc Amanda LaCroix to request the interpretation service. Be sure to include how the request was received (if a request was made by a member of the public), whether it is a translation or interpretation need, what language(s) are needed, and a timeline for the service.

Correspondence

The generic babel below will be included below the signature line on automatic replies from general email inboxes.

<p>This document contains important information. Please have it translated immediately.</p>	<p>Questo documento contiene informazioni importanti. La preghiamo di tradurlo immediatamente.</p>	<p>ខេត្តសានស៊ីបប៊ី ប័ណ្ណជំនួយអ្នកស្រុក។ រាល់ការណាមួយខេត្តសានស៊ីបប៊ី ទៅដល់អ្នក ដទៃទៀត។</p>
<p>В данном документе содержится важная информация. Вам необходимо срочно сделать перевод документа.</p>	<p>Este documento contém informações importantes. Por favor, traduzi-lo imediatamente.</p>	<p>ឯកសារនេះមាននូវព័ត៌មានដ៏សំខាន់ ។</p>
<p>Este documento contiene información importante. Por favor, consiga una traducción inmediatamente.</p>	<p>此文件含有重要信息。請立即找人翻譯。</p>	<p>សូមបកប្រែវាជាបន្ទាន់ ។</p>
<p>تحتوي هذه الوثيقة على معلومات هامة. يرجى ترجمتها فوراً.</p>	<p>본 문서에는 중요한 정보가 포함되어 있습니다. 본 문서를 즉시 번역하도록 하십시오.</p>	<p>Ce document contient des informations importantes. Veuillez le faire traduire au plus tôt.</p>
<p>Docikman sa gen enfòmasyon enpòtan. Tanpri fè yon moun tradwi l touswit.</p>	<p>Tài liệu này có chứa thông tin quan trọng. Vui lòng dịch tài liệu này ngay.</p>	

Web Content

The SDO is committed to creating web content that creates easy access for LEP constituents. All Mass.gov web content can be auto-translated under “Select Language” at the top of the screen. Along with using a short and user-friendly URL, the SDO will have translation boxes below all advertising content sent out stating that the material can be translated via web browser. If LEP constituents need further help with translating the webpages, the material can be translated upon request by following the Written Translation Guidelines section above.

Multilingual Staff at SDO

The SDO is committed to hiring and retaining multilingual staff for all positions, but especially for public-facing staff and on the agency’s main phone lines. The SDO has assembled an LAP team that is ready and willing to help staff translate and communicate with LEP constituents that need assistance in languages spoken by the team. Staff should only be used for informal communications—not to translate official documents, or at events, or in any formal interviews of constituents. Staff have volunteered for informal translations in the following languages:

- Spanish
- Albanese

- French

If an informal translation is needed, email the Language Access Coordinator, Amanda LaCroix, to see if a member of the LAP team is available.

Interpreter Services for Walk-In Constituents

A [language identification poster](#) is printed and posted in the SDO office for easy access when constituents visit for walk-in services. The card states “I Speak” in 38 languages and can be used to identify the language spoken by LEP constituents accessing services provided by the SDO. Alongside the language identification poster is a pamphlet that shows how to say “[One moment please](#)” in eighteen common languages.

Main and General Phone Lines

When staff receive phone calls from LEP constituents, they should:

1. Determine the language being spoken by the constituent.
2. Check with the Language Access Coordinator to see if any agency members can assist with the translation.
3. If still needed, coordinate with Maryellen Osborne as described above to obtain over-the-phone translation services.

Timeliness of Oral Interpretation

LEP constituents contacting SDO by phone, in person, or via video should be offered professional interpretation services as promptly as possible, and generally within a reasonable timeframe comparable to services provided in English.

When bilingual staff are unavailable, staff must utilize approved over-the-phone or video interpretation services without delay.

Interpretation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at SDO Events

The SDO must provide interpretation for the deaf and hard of hearing when requested. The organization hosting the event might request that our office provide interpretation services when scheduling and confirming the event. When registering attendees for our office presentation or event, you should provide an option for attendees to request American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation for the deaf and hard of hearing.

If ASL interpretation is requested, you should request an ASL interpreter via the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH). Requests should be made at least two weeks before the event. [Click here to review the process for requesting ASL interpretation.](#)

Most events will require two ASL interpreters. It is possible to request interpreters from multiple organizations, and you should make time prior to the event for the interpreters to connect. If the services are no longer required or the event is cancelled, you should provide notice to MCDHH at least three days before the scheduled date to avoid fees.

Please notify the Language Access Coordinator if ASL interpretation is requested for recordkeeping purposes.

Language Access Requests Related to a Disability

For language access requests related to a disability, medical condition, or need for a reasonable accommodation to access programming or services, please contact the agency ADA Coordinator:

Name: Maryellen Osborne

Email: Maryellen.Osborne4@mass.gov

Telephone: (857) 286-8004

Staff Training

The Language Access Plan (LAP) will be:

- a. Posted internally for all employees;
- b. Incorporated into the orientation for new employees;
- c. Presented to management so they are fully aware of and understand the LAP to reinforce the plan's importance and ensure its implementation by staff; and
- d. Presented to SDO staff having contact with the public, so such staff is trained to work effectively with LEP constituents and telephone interpreters.

Monitoring

The SDO will review and update its LAP at least every two years, or more frequently if needed.

Such reviews will assess:

- a. Whether there have been any significant changes in the composition of language needs of the population served;
- b. Whether the staff knows and understands the LAP documents and is comfortable using the services described within;
- c. Whether additional documents require translation;
- d. Identification of any issues or problems related to serving LEP persons which may have emerged during the past two years; and
- e. Identification of any recommended actions to provide more responsive and effective language services (e.g. adding documents to be translated, hiring of new multilingual staff

who have volunteered for informal translations, creating or expanding partnerships with community organizations, or changing staffing priorities).

Monitoring the effectiveness of an LAP may include:

- a. Analyzing current and previous data on language assistance usage, including languages served;
- b. Surveying staff on how often they use language assistance services, if they believe there should be changes to the services provided or the providers used, and if they believe that the language assistance services in place are meeting the needs of the LEP communities in their service area; and
- c. Monitoring feedback from community-based organizations, legal services, and other stakeholders about the agency's effectiveness and performance in ensuring meaningful access for LEP individuals.

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Language Access Services

While AI tools have the potential to assist government agencies in various internal administrative functions, AI should not be the only tool used by the SDO to provide direct translation/interpretation services to LEP constituents. Professional Language Service Providers (PLS) or staff who are native speakers are crucial to providing accurate translations, maintaining cultural competency, providing confidentiality, protecting constituent rights, and meeting the Commonwealth's meaningful access standards. AI tools such as ChatGPT should only be used if there are no other available options and should not be used to translate official documents or conduct formal interviews.

Contact

If you have any questions about the LAP, please contact SDO's Language Access Coordinator, Amanda LaCroix, at amanda.lacroix3@mass.gov.

If you have further questions, please reach out to the Governor's Office of Access and Opportunity at eduardo.morenomendez@mass.gov or govcommunityaffairs@mass.gov.