



LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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Mission

The Governor's Office for New Americans ensures that all agencies, cities, counties, and boards comply with developing their Language Access Plans to provide meaningful access to services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) as well as persons with disabilities.

Introduction

Following SB 318 for agencies and AB 266 for cities and counties, the Office of New Americans (ONA) has been diligently providing technical assistance, reviewing language access plans, overseeing language accessibility on the State Agencies's websites and facilitating the implementation of the Language Access Program statewide. This report updates the progress of agencies, cities, and counties in utilizing available language access services. In addition, the AB 480 appropriated funding to IFC for allocation of Executive Departments to implement their Language Access Plans.

Summary

In this year's report, the Office of New Americans is pleased to announce that the utilization of language access services has increased, benefiting many constituents. This is evidenced by the increased number of Language Access Plans we received, compared to the 32 entities that participated in 2022.

In 2024, 55 state agencies, 42 boards, and 7 counties and cities have implemented their Language Access Programs to address the barriers faced by LEP communities, ensuring equitable access to and participation in benefits and services.

IMPLEMENTATION UPDATES

ONA has completed the following tasks:

- Developed Toolkit for cities and counties.
- Competency and demonstrations for multilingual language lines and chatbot.
- Created guidelines on how to contract translators and interpreters.
- Created guidelines on how request funds.
- Solicited and oversaw the public comments phase.
- The Language Access Coordinator attended public comment meetings.
- Organized English and citizenship classes for LEP's (Language English Proficient).
- Review Language Access Plans from all agencies, cities, counties, and boards and provided feedback.
- We reached out to other agencies, boards, and commissions that were not participating previously. As a result, in 2024, the number of participating entities increased to 104 (7 cities and counties included), compared to 32 in 2022.
- Provided participating entities with the demographical information of LEP Nevadans.
- Offered cultural competency training.
- Offered toolkit training to State agencies, cities, boards and counties.

FUNDS APPROVED BY IFC FOR AGENCIES

AGENCY	AMOUNT
DMV	\$ 244,157.00
Department of Wild Life	\$ 174,556.00
Department Aging and Disability Services	\$ 126,600.00
Division of Child and Family Services	\$ 79,763.00
Total as of 09/30/24	\$ 625,076.00

Note: We are unable to implement an annual budget and procurement strategy for expenses due to the agencies still being in the process of implementing their LAPs and determine how much they are going to request from the funds allocated by AB480.

AGENCIES WAITING TO BE APPROVED BY IFC

* As of 09/30/24

AGENCY	AMOUNT
Department of Education	\$ 1,161,500.00
Department of Agriculture	\$ 646,028.00
Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs	\$ 375,200.00
Department of Taxation	\$ 326,884.00
Department of Business and Industry	\$ 75,000.00
Governor's Office of New Americans	\$ 68,765.66
Total	\$ 3,278,453.66

Agencies participating in Language Access Program

- Division of Public and Behavioral Health
- Office of Military Nevada National Guard
- Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)
- DMV
- Department of Wildlife
- Division of Child and Family Services (DHHS)
- Department of Health and Human Services-Aging and Disability Services Division -Administration
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Taxation
- Governor's Office for New Americans
- Department of Business & Industry
- Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs
- Nevada Sagebrush Ecosystem Program
- Department of Sentencing Policy
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Natural Heritage
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division State Lands
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of State Parks
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Nevada Office of Historic Preservation
- Department of Veteran Services
- Nevada State Public Charter School Authority
- Silver State Health Insurance Exchange
- Commission on Mineral Resources, Division of Minerals
- Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development
- Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP)

Agencies participating in Language Access Program

- Nevada Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Tech
- Nevada Division of Forestry
- Nevada Conservation and Natural Resources
- Department of Indigent Defense Services
- Public Utilities Commission of Nevada
- Department of Corrections
- Division of Health Care Financing and Policy (DHHS)
- Department of Nuclear Projects
- Colorado River Commission
- Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR)
- Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DHHS)
- Department of Tourism
- Department of Public Safety
- Division of Industrial Relation
- Governor's Office of Energy
- Nevada Department of Transportation
- Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
- NV State Library Archives and Public Records
- Dept. of Administration - Director's Office
- State of NV Dept. of Administration Hearings Division
- State of NV Department of Administration Fleet Services Division
- State of NV Mail Services Division
- Department of Purchasing Division
- Nevada Deferred Compensation Program
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Division of Environmental Protection
- Department of Administration HR Management

Boards participating in Language Access Program

- Nevada Board of Parole Commissioners
- Pharmacy Board
- Nevada Funeral and Cemetery Services Board
- State of Nevada Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
- Nevada State Board of Massage Therapy
- State of Nevada Board of Occupational Therapy
- Nevada Cannabis Compliance Board
- State of NV Board of Oriental Medicine
- Nevada Applied Behavior Analysis Board
- Nevada State Board of Medical Examiners
- Nevada State Board of Accountancy
- Nevada Board of Environmental Health Services
- Chiropractic Physicians' Board
- Nevada Board of Psychological Examiners
- Nevada Board of Dispensing Opticians
- Physical Therapy Board
- Nevada Board of Examiners for MFT/CPC
- Nevada Gaming Control Board
- Nevada Board of Cosmetology
- Nevada State Barber Health and Sanitation Board
- Board of Athletic Trainers
- State Board of Architecture Interior Design Residential Design
- State Board of Landscaping
- Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors
- Board of Examiners for Social Workers
- Board of Examiners for Alcohol, Drug and Gambling Counselors
- Nevada State Contractor's Board
- Certified Court Reporters Board
- State Board of Nursing
- Nevada Private Investigators Licensing Board
- Speech, Language, Pathology Audiology and Hearing Dispensing Board

Boards participating in Language Access Program

- Nevada State Board of Optometry
- Food Security Wellness and Prevention Program
- Nevada State Board of Podiatry
- Board of Dental Examiners of Nevada
- Nevada Commission of Ethics
- NV State Environmental Commission
- Board for Financing Water Projects
- Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
- Committee on Catastrophic Leave
- Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources-Off Highway Vehicles
- Boulder Library District Board of Trustees

Cities and Counties participating in Language Access Program

- Clark County
- Las Vegas
- North Las Vegas
- Henderson
- Reno
- Washoe
- Sparks

Challenges

Agencies	Cities and Counties	ONA	Remediation / Suggestion for remediation
Data Collection		Data Collection	Ona provided demographical information
Literacy level	Literacy Level		<p>We suggested that the information should be provided at a literacy level of 5th grade.</p> <p>We also suggested using a more "casual" "amiable" language such as, "What school level did you attend last? Or "Last grade of education"</p>
Need of Tagalog interpreters and translators in Las Vegas			<p>Tagalog translators and interpreters can be found on ONA's website under the Translators/Interpreter s list of vendors.</p>

Challenges

Agencies	Cities and Counties	ONA	Remediation/ Suggestion for remediation
Training agencies to recruit and retain Interpreters	Training cities and counties to recruit and retain interpreters		Purchasing Division expressed that the Bill seems to contradict current state policy. Currently, only Purchasing Division can procure contracts with translators and interpreters
How should employees be tested, and where should the testing take place?	How should employees be tested, and where should the testing take place?	How should employees be tested, and where should the testing take place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer incentives to encourage employees to undergo testing. • Have the state cover the certification expenses for employees.

Challenges faced by Cities and Counties

Clark County:

This County has 38 departments that handle a high volume of translations of vital documents into multiple languages. Many of these documents are time-sensitive, making it challenging for the County to translate them effectively and promptly. While some employees are bilingual, few have formal certification. To meet language service needs, Clark County contacts vendors, which results in high costs.

Washoe County:

Emergency situations require the use of alternative and informal language services or interpreters to meet the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).

City of Las Vegas

There is a shortage of certified staff for translation and interpretation, limited staff capacity, high costs associated with language service vendors, no existing bilingual pay policy, and lack of funding.

City of Henderson

State general funds do not allocate funds to all City and County but they are required to meet the AB 266 requirements. Use of informal interpreters is not allowed.

Challenges faced by Cities and Counties

City of Reno:

Limited Communication Channels: Difficulties accessing information or engaging with City services due to language barriers. This can result in a lack of awareness about the available resources, programs, or integrated technology available.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Reno's diverse population brings with it a multitude of languages and cultural backgrounds. Ensuring effective communication and accessibility for all residents requires sensitivity to these diverse linguistic needs, including communication styles and methods.

Resource Constraints: Budgetary limitations and resource constraints may pose challenges in implementing comprehensive language access initiatives. Adequate funding and staffing are essential to providing translation services, interpreter services, and other language access accommodations.

Challenges faced by Cities and Counties

City of Sparks:

Given the wide range of services provided, the City recognizes that identifying and translating all vital documents—some of which contain technical terminology that is difficult to translate—will require significant time. The time-sensitive nature of certain documents, such as Planning Commission notices and agendas, further complicates timely translation efforts.

Additionally, while bilingual employees can interpret, they may lack the specialized vocabulary needed for specific contexts (e.g., land use applications, engineering, legal matters). Consequently, the City anticipates the need to contract with various vendors to address these challenges, which may incur substantial costs, that were not allocated by AB266.

Recommendations to The Legislature

Governor's Office of New Americans:

- It is suggested that the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) develop and offer courses in translation, interpretation, and other relevant subjects to equip Language Access Coordinators with additional tools and skills for serving individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Additionally, providing training for other employees who interact with constituents would be beneficial.
- Cultural competence training is suggested for LAP liaisons across agencies, boards, cities, and counties, as well as for all personnel whose roles involve direct interaction with the public.
- During emergencies, ONA lacks the capacity to hire a translator on the spot, as the process can take several days. It is recommended that if any employee serve as translators after regular hours, they should be authorized for overtime pay.
- If additional assistance with translations and interpretations to ELP constituents is required by agencies or boards from ONA, it is suggested that a new position be created to fulfill these duties.
- The agency does not require information on whether constituents are refugees. Requesting this information could impact the interaction with the constituent.
- Given the infrequency of IFC meetings, state agencies are still in line to request funds that will only be available for expenditure until June 30, 2025. It is suggested that a special IFC meeting be convened to address all funding requests for LAP.

Recommendations to The Legislature

City of Reno:

Adequate funding and staffing are essential to provide translation and interpretation services, and other language access accommodations.

City of Henderson:

The city of Henderson strongly recommends that bi-annual updates be required during odd-numbered years instead of even-numbered years to avoid unnecessarily burdening Cities and Counties during Primary and General Election periods.

Most Frequently Repeated Recommendations:

- Cities and Counties recommend the creation of a bill that will assist with funds for the implementation and sustainability of the ongoing services to LEP individuals.
- Agencies suggest that the state provides testing for employees to offer better services to their constituents.
- An increase of 5% in the base pay rate for bilingual and multilingual employees is also recommended.
- In case of Emergencies, provide agencies, cities, counties, and boards with the option to choose other vendors outside the state providers one.
- Agencies propose that the State provides free training for cultural competence for employees.

Suggested Legislative Amendments

Agencies:

Governor's Office of Science, Innovation, and Technology:

For agencies with few/intermittent LAP requests that have uncertain budgetary implications, it might be more efficient for ONA or another State Agency to have funding for language services in its budget that State agencies that do not have significant public facing, client serving operations could request ad hoc and ONA/other Agency could deploy on their behalf. Since state agencies are mandated to provide language access services, it would be beneficial to offer comprehensive and collaborative support to ease their burden and provide best practices with the procurement and provision of these services.

To reduce redundant efforts, the State could consider establishing a department to provide these services to all agencies under its jurisdiction as needed. The State already follows this model with the Administrative Services Division, which provides accounting services to State Agencies to increase efficiencies and reduce duplication.

Suggested Legislative Amendments

State Historic Preservation Office

Nevada Division of State Lands

Nevada Division of Water Resources

These agencies propose that certain agencies be exempt from having to maintain a LAP. It can be demonstrated that the agency does not serve LEP individuals, an LAP should not be required. Alternatively, agencies with no LEP individuals, or smaller agencies that do not have the capacity to provide language access roles, a liaison that works for ONA could be assigned to provide those duties for the agency on an as needed basis, similar to an assigned Deputy Attorney General (DAG)

Department of Wildlife:

- The Department does not deem it appropriate to request a customer, client, or member of the public to share whether they are a refugee or not with Department staff. This information does not help the Department more effectively provide meaningful, timely language services.
- The Department does not deem it appropriate to request a customer, client, or member of the public to share with Department staff whether or not they are indigenous. This information does not help the Department more effectively provide meaningful, timely language services.
- The Department requests that if state agency staff are required to attend cultural competency training that the State of Nevada provide said training to the Department free of charge.

Suggested Legislative Amendments

Nevada Department of Public Safety

Based on DPS' experience as it pertains to developing a Language Access Plan (LAP) in accordance with SB 318 the following revisions to SB318 and the associated costs to fully realize this LAP in practice are as follows:

- The Department requests that if sworn staff is to receive pay for providing bilingual services that civilian staff shall also be included under SB 318 and current NAC.
- The Department requests that if funding requested is denied or future costs in accordance with implementing the LAP are not within the department's budget that it will no longer be required to provide those services.
- The Department does not deem it appropriate to request a customer, client, or member of the public to share whether they are a refugee or not, with Department staff. This information does not help the Department more effectively provide meaningful, timely language services.
- The Department does not deem it appropriate to request a customer, client, or member of the public to share with Department staff whether or not they are indigenous. This information does not help the Department more effectively provide meaningful, timely language services.
- The Department requests that if state agency staff are required to attend cultural competency training that the State of Nevada provide said training to the Department free of charge.

Suggested Legislative Amendments

State of Nevada Department of Agriculture

Based on the NDA's experience with language access, the following revisions to SB 318 are recommended:

Recommendation A:

The NDA requests that Nevada Revised Statute 284 be amended to include a pay plan for state employees who use multilingual or sign language skills to help their department provide access to state programs and services, as described in the Department's Language Access Plan (LAP). Additionally, the NDA asks the Division of Human Resource Management to review and update Nevada Administrative Code 284.206. This change would allow staff to receive a pay increase for providing translation services, regardless of collective bargaining agreements.

- Current NAC 284.206 language:

1-An employee may receive a 5 percent pay increase of the employee's base rate of pay during any period while:

The employee is required to use bilingual skills or sign language for persons who are deaf at least 10 percent of his or her work time.

- Proposed NAC 284.206 language:

2- An employee may receive a pay increase of the employee's base rate of 10 percent while:

- The employee is required to use multilingual skills or sign language for persons who are deaf.

Suggested Legislative Amendments

State of Nevada Department of Agriculture

Justification: With the State's goal of making government accessible to all, employees who can demonstrate language proficiency provide an important service for ensuring equity and access. Employees who use these skills to help their department should receive special pay for the time they spend providing these services, regardless of the percentage of their work time it involves.

Recommendation B:

The NDA asks the Legislature to consider the requirements of SB 318 and provide resources to the Office of Employee Development within the Department of Administration Human Resource Management. These resources would help create and provide diversity and language interpretation trainings across the state.

Justification: If equity and access are goals, it is important that all departments provide relevant training to their employees. A statewide program would ensure all State employees receive the necessary training.

Recommendation C:

The NDA suggests that the Legislature align SB 318 with existing federal language access plan requirements.

Justification: The NDA runs programs and services funded by the federal government. Different requirements between state and federal rules could make data collection difficult. The department might not be able to collect additional state-required data through federal forms and would need to find other ways to get the required information.

Suggested Legislative Amendments

Boards:

- Independent regulatory Boards that do not have staff capacity to perform language access roles could benefit from a state assigned liaison that works for the Governor's Office of New Americans to provide those duties for the Boards on an as needed basis, similar to an assigned Deputy Attorney General (DAG).
- The Board is exempt from the State Budget Act; all expenses are paid from fees received from licensed individuals.

Client's profile:

A board can have a limited constituency of individuals with limited English proficiency such as the Nevada Funeral and Cemetery Service Board. In contrast, some boards, like the Board of Examiners for Social Workers, do not provide programs and services directly to the public.

Note: Since this is a new initiative for some boards and agencies, they do not have data to share at this time. However, they will collect and update this information moving forward .

2025 Goals and Objectives

- Create training on the importance of the Language Access Plan (LAP) and best practices.
- Attend conferences and participation in Federal, State and Local trainings and initiatives directed to Language Access Coordinators, to gain knowledge and provide assistance to ELP individuals.
- Develop infographics with useful information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals to help agencies utilize various resources to serve their constituents.
- Implement the policy manual.
- Review and update the toolkits for Agencies, cities and counties, on preparation for the 2026 revision.
- Add a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section on ONA's website.
- Include a complaints section on ONA's website
- Implement a video refresher training.
- Create a collaborative cultural-competency training video.
- Resources related to Language Access Plan on the website.
- Creation of an oversight LAP committee



Elena Guerra
Language Access Coordinator
eguerra@ona.nv.gov

Iris Ramos Jones
Director
ijones@ona.nv.gov