



STATE OF NEVADA, MAIL SERVICES DIVISION

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

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Mail Services Division

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INTRODUCTION

The Mail Services Division is pleased to present the Language Access Plan (LAP). This serves as the divisions first comprehensive plan. The Plan is a critical part of the agency's commitment to provide substantially equal and meaningful access to services to all people, regardless of their English proficiency.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination on the bases of, race, color, national origin, and disability. Consistent with these authorities, the Mail Services Division is dedicated to ensuring that persons with LAP have meaningful access to our services.

The LAP describes our language access policy, strategy, and program. It underscores our ongoing pledge to:

- communicate with members of the public in a language they understand,
- make language access programs available, and
- provide language assistance at no cost to individuals who have limited English proficiency.

In keeping with the Division's mission, the LAP reflects our promise to adopt an equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment that respects individuals of varying cultural backgrounds. We value all our customers and strive to serve them for all their mailing needs. The LAP is a living document and is subject to updates, as well as our policies, to best meet the needs of customers we serve.

This LAP is divided into six sections, they are as follows:

- I. Purpose and Authority - This section provides the legal basis for the Mail Services Division's plan and protocol and connects the plan and protocol to the State Agency's mission.
- II. General Policy - This section explains the policy of the Mail Services Division. It is the commitment of the division and its employees to ensure meaningful language access.
- III. Profile of Mail Services Division's LAP Clients – This section details the demographic information required by SB318 Section 7.2.b.

- IV. Mail Service Division's Language Access Services and Procedures – This section details the types of services the agency provides, as required by SB318 Section 7.2.c.
- V. Implementing Mail Services Division's Language Access Services – This section details the agency's procedures for training its staff to use its language access services, as required by SB318 Section 7.2.d.
- VI. Evaluation of and Recommendations for Mail Services Division's Language Access Plan – This section details how well the agency's language access policies and procedures have met the need, and what is required to improve those services if the need is not being fully met, as required by SB318 Section 7.2.f.

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

Nevada's Senate Bill 318 (SB318) and the federal guidance on Title VI both agree that language should not be a barrier to accessing governmental programs and services. As SB318 puts it, "Persons with limited English proficiency require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language." Moreover, it makes it clear 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 Mail Services Division is committed to compliance with Nevada Senate Bill 318 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006) in ensuring meaningful access to State services and programs for individuals with limited English proficiency.

The purpose of this document is to establish an effective plan and protocol for the Mail Services Division personnel to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, individuals who have limited English proficiency.

Following this plan and protocol is essential to the success of our mission to provide mail services to participating state and local government agencies in the Carson City, Reno, and Las Vegas areas. Services include pickup, processing, and delivery of outgoing, overnight, and interoffice mail (including service between Carson City and Las Vegas). The United States Postal Service processes and delivers all in-bound mail to the individual agencies on a daily basis. Other services provided in the Carson City and Reno areas include: folding, inserting, addressing, and bulk mailing.

2. GENERAL POLICY

- The Mail Services Division recognizes that the population eligible to receive its services includes limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals. It is the policy of the Mail Services Division to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals. The Mail Services Division adopts the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to the Mail Services Division services and communicate effectively. This Plan applies to all Mail Services' programs and services including, but not limited to:

Employment opportunities, benefits and services offered by the Mail Services Division. This includes pickup, processing, and delivery of outgoing, overnight, and interoffice mail (including service between Carson City and Las Vegas). Other services provided in the Carson City and Reno areas include folding, inserting, addressing, and bulk mailing.

- It is Nevada's policy to grant access to services or programs to every person regardless of their ability to speak, understand, read, or write English. The Mail Services Division intends to take all reasonable steps to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to its services and programs. The Mail Services Division seeks to reduce barriers by increasing its capacity to deliver services and benefits to people in their preferred languages.
- Toward this end, the Mail Services Division endorses the following policies:
 - The Mail Services Division is committed to equity and will take all reasonable steps to provide limited English proficient (LEP) individuals with meaningful access to all its services, programs, and activities.
 - The agency, 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.
 - Use of informal interpreters such as family, friends of the person seeking service, or other customers is not allowed. Minor children are prohibited from acting as interpreters.
 - No staff may suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive agency services.

The LAP Coordinator for the Mail Services Division is the administrator position, and can be reached at 775-684-1864, or mailservices@admin.nv.gov.

3. LEP CLIENTS OF MAIL SERVICES

This section of the LAP focuses on identifying various specific communities that participate in Mail Services Division's services, as well as those that are eligible to participate. Importantly, "participation" includes both people who are directly served (e.g., through interacting with staff) and people who are indirectly served, such as people who access information or services electronically. The Mail Services Division provides mail services to participating state and local government agencies in the Carson City, Reno, and Las Vegas areas.

To better serve its client base, the Mail Services Division is committed to employing diverse individuals to mirror the demographics of the State of Nevada. Our clients consist of current state employees, employees of other local government entities and vendors.

A large percentage of our current state employees, local government and vendors are English proficient. Mail Services Division historically has had very limited business with individuals who have limited English proficiency when providing services. Mail Services does not collect information on its client base regarding English proficiency. Mail Services is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among our LEP clients so division staff can provide meaningful, timely access to services.

Mail Services Division 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%

4. LAP SERVICES AND PROCEDURES

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

A. Oral and Sign Language Services

- As requested, the Mail Services Division will provide spoken and sign language translation services utilizing two resources. The State's bi-lingual list or contracted vendors through the statewide contract #99SWC-S1847 held by the Purchasing Division for the State of Nevada.
- In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Mail Services Division will not discriminate against any individual based on disability and will make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity to access programs and 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) 4
- **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. These employees and their contact information are available on the Mail Services S: Drive.
- **Statewide Contract #99SWC-S1847** makes 21 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 Mail Services Division 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. Community Outreach and Engagement**

For our customers Mail Services Division will share their commitment to providing services to those with limited English proficiency.

- **D. Providing Notice of Language Assistance Services**

The Mail Services Division will provide notification of the relevant points of contact within its division and online on its website.

5. IMPLEMENTING MAIL SERVICES LAP

In order to implement LAS for clients who have limited English proficiency, Mail Services Division requires staff to follow the policies and procedures referenced below to ensure meaningful access to available language services. The Division 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 Mail Services Division mission.

Language Access Procedures

To promote diversity and inclusion of all individuals who receive services from Mail Services Division, the division will facilitate all types of language access for LEP individuals who are served by Mail Services Division. Mail Services Division will provide notice of its available language services to LEP individuals at the relevant points of contact, at no cost to the LEP individuals.

Identifying Client Language Needs and Preferred Language

In order to understand Mail Services Division's client language access needs, Mail Services Division will gather and assess data, and update the LAP as needed. This will include Mail Services Division 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 Mail Services Division staff through all their interactions with LEP clients

Accessing Appropriate Oral and Sign Language Services

Mail Services Division staff recognize 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.

Accessing Appropriate Written Language Services

A determination of "vital" documents will be based on front-line interactions with LEP clients and an evaluation of Mail Services 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 Mail Services and individuals accessing services.

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

Language Services Quality Assurance

The Division 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.

- Mail Services Division staff 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.
- Mail Services Division will use vendors contracted through statewide contracts by the Purchasing Division for the State of Nevada.

Staff Training Policies and Procedures

The Division 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, Mail Services will ensure that its staff completes cultural competency training and are familiar with its LAP for providing services.

6. EVALUATION/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LAP

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

- **Processes for Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Language Access Coordinators will solicit qualitative and quantitative data biennially from the Division of Human Resource Management and review statistical data to determine LAP needs and program compliance.

- **Evaluation Outcomes and Proposed Changes**

The Mail Services Division will evaluate LAP data and propose changes to LAP policy and procedures as necessary.

- **Proposed Budgetary Implications**

Additional funding needs are currently being identified.

- **Suggested Legislative Amendments**

No suggestions at this time.

