



Transforming lives

Language Access Plan SFY22-24

Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Communication Assistance

Communication assistance such as interpreters, written information in other languages, and alternate formats (large print, Braille, audio, video, electronic) are available free of charge. Call 800-737-0617 Option 4 (TRS: 711).

Amharic

እንደ አስተርጓሚ፣ በሌላ ቋንቋዎች የተዘጋጁ የጽሑፍ መረጃ፣ እንዲሁም አማራጭ ቅርጾች (በትልቁ የተዘጋጀ ጎትመት፣ ብራይል፣ አዲዮ፣ ቪዲዮ፣ ኤሌክትሮኒክ) የመሳሰሉ የተግባባሪ አርዳታ በነጻ ማግኘት ይቻላል። ወደ 800-737-0617 አማራጭ 4 (TRS: 711) ይደውሉ።

Arabic

إن المساعدة في التواصل مثل: المترجمين الفوريين والمعلومات المكتوبة بلغات أخرى والتنسيقات البديلة (الطباعة بحروف كبيرة وطريقة برايل وملفات الصوت والفيديو والإلكترونية) متوفرة مجانًا. ويرجى الاتصال برقم 800-737-0617 الخيار 4 (TRS: 711).

Cambodian

ជំនួយទំនាក់ទំនង ដូចជា អ្នកបកប្រែផ្ទាល់មាត់ ព័ត៌មានជាលាយលក្ខណ៍អក្សរជាភាសាផ្សេងទៀត និងទ្រង់ទ្រាយផ្សេងៗ (អក្សរពណ៌ អក្សរជនពិការភ្នែក អូឌីយ៉ូ វីដេអូ អេឡិចត្រូនិច) គឺអាចរកបានដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ។ សូមហៅទូរស័ព្ទទៅលេខ 800-737-0617 ជម្រើស 4 (TRS: 711)។

Chinese – Simplified

免费提供诸如口译员等交流协助、其他语言的书面信息，以及替代格式（大号印刷体、盲文、音频、视频、电子）。请拨打800-737-0617，选择选项4 (TRS: 711)。

Chinese – Traditional

免費提供諸如口譯員等交流協助、其他語言的書面資訊，以及替代格式（大號印刷體、盲文、音訊、視訊、電子）。請撥打800-737-0617，選擇選項4 (TRS: 711)。

Farsi

کمک در زمینه برقراری ارتباط، نظیر مترجمین شفاهی، اطلاعات کتبی به زبان‌ها و فرمت‌های دیگر (چاپ با حروف بزرگ، خط بریل، صوتی، تصویری، الکترونیک) به صورت رایگان ارائه می‌شود. با شماره 800-737-0617 گزینه 4 (TRS: 711) تماس بگیرید.

Korean

통역사, 다른 언어의 서면 정보 및 대체 형식(큰 활자, 점자, 오디오, 비디오, 전자) 등의 의사 소통 지원이 무료로 제공됩니다. 800-737-0617 옵션 4 (TRS: 711)번으로 전화하십시오.

Laotian

ການຊ່ວຍເຫລືອດ້ານການຕິດຕໍ່ສື່ສານເຊັ່ນວ່ານາຍແປພາສາ, ຫນັງສືຮາຍຮະອຽດເປັນພາສາອື່ນ, ແລະຮູບແບບແນວອື່ນ (ຕົວຫນັງສືພິມໃຫຍ່, ຫນັງສືຄົມຕາບອດ, ໂອດີໂອ, ວິດີໂອ, ເອເລັກໂຕຣນິກ) ຈະມີໄວ້ໃຫ້ໂດຍບໍ່ຄິດຄ່າແນວໃດ. ໂທຫາເລກ 800-737-0617 ທາງເລືອກ 4 (TRS: 711).

Punjabi

ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ, ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਖਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਦਲਵੇਂ ਰੂਪਾਂ (ਵੱਡਾ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਆਡੀਓ, ਵੀਡੀਓ, ਇਲੈਕਟ੍ਰਾਨਿਕ) ਵਰਗੀ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਮੁਫਤ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।
800-737-0617 ਵਿਕਲਪ 4 (TRS: 711) 'ਤੇ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ।

Russian

Помощь в осуществлении коммуникации, такая как услуги устных переводчиков, письменная информация на других языках и в альтернативных форматах (крупный шрифт, шрифт Брайля, аудио, видео, электронная информация) доступна бесплатно. Позвоните по телефону 800-737-0617 Опция 4 (TRS: 711).

Somali

Caawimaad war-isgaarsiin sida turjumaanno, macluumaad ku qoran luuqado kale, iyo qaabab kale (qoraallo far waaweyn ku qoran, Braille, maqal, muuqaal, elektaroonik) ayaa si bilaash ah loo heli karaa. Wac 800-737-0617 Ikhtiyaarka 4aad (TRS: 711).

Spanish

Tenemos disponible asistencia para la comunicación sin costo alguno, como intérpretes, información escrita en otros idiomas, y formatos alternativos (letra grande, braille, audio, video, electrónicos). Llame al numero 800-737-0617, opción 4 (TRS: 711).

Tagalog

Magagamit nang libre ang tulong sa komunikasyon tulad ng mga tagasalin, nakasulat na impormasyon sa ibang mga wika, at mga kahaliling format (malalaking naka-print, Braille, audio, video, elektroniko). Tumawag sa 800-737-0617 Opsyon 4 (TRS: 711).

Tigrigna

ከም ኢስተርጓማይ፣ ብካልዕ ቋንቋታት ዝተዳለዉ ናይ ጽሑፍ ሓበሬታታት፣ ከምኡውን ኣማራጺ ቅጥፂታት (ዓቢ ህታም፣ ብራይል፣ ኡዲዮ፣ ቪዲዮ፣ ኤሌክትሮኒክ) ዝኣመሰሉ ናይ ርክብ ሓገዛት ብናጻ ምርካብ ይካኣል እዩ።
ናብ 800-737-0617 ኣማራጺ 4 (TRS: 711) ደውሉ።

Ukrainian

Скористайтесь безкоштовною мовною підтримкою, зокрема послугами усних перекладачів, а також можливістю отримання письмової інформації іншими мовами та в альтернативних форматах (крупним шрифтом, шрифтом Брайля, у вигляді аудіо-, відеозаписів або в електронному вигляді). Телефонуйте 800-737-0617, опція 4 (TRS: 711).

Vietnamese

Trợ giúp giao tiếp như phiên dịch viên, thông tin bằng văn bản bằng các ngôn ngữ khác và định dạng khác (chữ in lớn, chữ Braille, âm thanh, video, điện tử) hiện có miễn phí. Gọi 800-737-0617 Chọn 4 (TRS: 711).



Communication assistance such as sign language interpreters and assistive communication technology, including portable loop and auxiliary aids, are available free of charge. Contact the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at odhh@dshs.wa.gov or 360-339-7382.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	3
Purpose and Authority	4
Guiding Principle Statement	5
Scope.....	6
Contact.....	6
Language Access Plan (“LA Plan”) Strategic Objectives.....	7
1. Update Department administrative policies.....	7
2. Improve language access procedures.....	8
3. Simplify the language access services request process.	9
4. Expand the types of language access services provided.....	10
5. Improve public notices.....	10
6. Adopt a Department-wide approach for translation of vital written communications.....	11
7. Improve DSHS websites.	12
8. Increase staff support and training.	13
9. Improve language access data collection and analysis.....	15
10. Evaluate and improve the DSHS Language Testing and Certification Program.	16
11. Update the Master Language Codes Crosswalk.	17
12. Improve the current civil rights complaint process.	18
13. Improve quality assurance for language access services.....	19
14. Improve contract compliance reviews and contract management.....	20
15. Support language access in emergency planning.	20
16. Embed stakeholder engagement.....	21
17. Support accountability measures.	21

Purpose and Authority

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) encounters and serves **persons requiring language access**. DSHS recognizes that “persons requiring language access” includes persons with limited English proficiency (“persons with LEP”)¹ and persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, or have other communication disabilities and require equally effective communication in sign language under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Two distinct legal standards must be met with this approach:

- “A person with LEP” is defined as a person who does not speak English as their primary language and has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. A person with LEP requires language access in a spoken or written language other than English. DSHS must take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to persons with LEP encountered without significant delay.
- DSHS must take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, members of the public, and companions with disabilities are as effective as communication with others. DSHS is required to provide appropriate sign language interpreter services where necessary to afford qualified individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity.²

The purpose of the DSHS Language Access Plan (“LA Plan”) is to document the Department’s compliance with applicable Federal and state legal obligations and provide a framework for serving persons requiring language access. Applicable Federal and state legal obligations arise from, but are not limited to:

- Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI” and “Title VII”)
- *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) LEP Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance Recipients
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) LEP Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance Recipients
- U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) LEP Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance Recipients

¹ DSHS will take reasonable steps to identify culturally appropriate non-English equivalent terms for “persons with limited English proficiency” for translation and interpretation purposes.

² **Please note:** The Department’s legal obligations to provide equally effective communication extend beyond providing sign language interpreter services. Providing communication in alternate formats and other auxiliary aids and services (e.g., Large Print transcription, Braille transcription, audio recordings, and screen readers) will be addressed in the DSHS ADA Plan. The DSHS ADA Self-Evaluation is currently ongoing.

- Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (“ACA”)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (“WIOA”)
- *Reyes v. Thompson* Consent Decree (1991) (“Reyes Consent Decree”)
- Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Pre-Determination Settlement Agreement (1983)
- Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Pre-Determination Settlement Agreement (1987)
- Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”)
- ADA Title II Regulations Subpart E – Communications
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”)
- Chapter 49.60 RCW (“Washington State Law Against Discrimination”)
- RCW 74.04.025
- RCW 39.26.300
- RCW 41.56.510
- Chapter 388-271 WAC
- Chapter 388-03 WAC
- Collective Bargaining Agreement (“CBA”) between the State of Washington and the Washington Federation of State Employees, AFSCME, Council 28, AFL-CIO for Language Access Providers

Guiding Principle Statement

DSHS is united by a single mission: to transform lives. 1.8 million clients or nearly one in four Washingtonians engage yearly with our services, many of whom are persons requiring language access.³ DSHS is committed to serving persons requiring language access in our programs, activities, services, and employment.

DSHS shall provide language access services that are free of charge, accurate, accessible, effective, impartial, timely, and protect the privacy and independence of persons requiring language access. No person requiring language access is required to accept language access services that are offered.⁴ However, DSHS shall collaborate with persons requiring language access until language access services for the most effective communication between the parties is identified.

DSHS does not exclude, treat persons differently, or otherwise discriminate on the basis of limited English proficiency or disability. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental DSHS values. DSHS recognizes language access as an essential component of culturally competent and responsive service delivery.

³ [DSHS Our Future Transformed](#).

⁴ This should not be read to prohibit staff from requesting language access services when they are not confident they can communicate effectively with a client.

The LA Plan is a high-level overview of the action steps the Department will take to provide required language access. Implementation of the LA Plan is dependent on available resources, which are subject to change. DSHS will take steps to seek and obtain necessary resources if available resources are insufficient.

Scope

The LA Plan covers all operations of the [DSHS Office of the Secretary](#), Administrations, and [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation \(DVR\)](#) for State FY2022 – 2024 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024). DSHS Administrations include:

- [Aging and Long-Term Support Administration \(ALSA\)](#)
- [Behavioral Health Administration \(BHA\)](#)
- [Developmental Disabilities Administration \(DDA\)](#)
- [Economic Services Administration \(ESA\)](#)
- [Facilities, Finance and Analytics Administration \(FFA\)](#)

The LA Plan does not cover operations outside of DSHS.

Contact

[DSHS Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(OEDI\)](#) is responsible for the development, review, update, and monitoring of the ADA Plan. Please send comments and/or questions regarding the ADA Plan to:

OEDIMailbox@dshs.wa.gov

(360) 664-6038

TRS: 711 or 1-800-833-6384

This LA Plan was specifically developed for DSHS use. External entities should contact ODI before using the LA Plan as a resource.

Language Access Plan (“LA Plan”) Strategic Objectives

In January 2019, ODI and the DSHS Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) initiated a Department-wide self-evaluation of language access policies, practices, and procedures. The results of the self-evaluation informed the LA Plan Strategic Objectives below. DSHS plans to take the action steps below by the end of SFY2024 (June 30, 2024). Implementation plans will be developed upon adoption of the LA Plan.

1. Update Department administrative policies.

a. **Objective: Update Department administrative policies to provide current and clear directives to all staff for the provision of language access services.⁵**

b. **Action Plan:**

- Incorporate recent legislative and regulatory changes.
- Ensure terminology is consistent with applicable laws and implementing regulations.
- Clarify language access definitions and scope.
- Require the identification and recording of a client’s primary preferred language(s) for oral, written, and sign language access purposes in case management systems to ensure integration into the DSHS Client Registry.⁶
- Establish American Sign Language (ASL) as a DSHS supported language.⁷
- Clarify the assignment of responsibility for costs to translate DSHS forms and publications.
- Clarify document retention policy of translated documents.

⁵ Updates will primarily be made to DSHS Administrative Policy 7.20 and 7.21. However, other impacted administrative policies, style guides, and standards will need to be updated to align with 7.20 and 7.21.

⁶ DSHS will include notes in client files to identify different preferred oral, written, or sign languages if databases only allow for one language code to be used (e.g., client whose primary preferred oral language is English, but their primary preferred written language is Korean).

⁷ ASL is being included to support the Department’s compliance with ADA. Recorded ASL videos will be provided for equally effective communication of vital written communications when required. Current DSHS supported languages include: Khmer (Cambodian), Chinese, Korean, Lao (Laotian), Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali. Translations in DSHS supported languages are a mandatory minimum. Translations in non-supported languages are provided by request and as determined by Administrations and DVR.

- Clarify the simultaneous issuance requirement of English and corresponding non-English vital written communications in all DSHS supported languages unless there is an emergent situation.⁸
 - Identify ODI as the owners of all DSHS request forms for language access services for persons with LEP.
- c. **Success Measure:** Revisions to applicable Department administrative policies are approved and in effect by the end of SFY2022.⁹

2. Improve language access procedures.

a. **Objective: Improve language access procedures to provide consistent and effective instructions to all staff for the provision of language access services.**

b. **Action Plan:**

- Partner with stakeholders¹⁰ to improve and/or develop Department model procedures for:
 - Identifying and recording primary preferred language(s) for language access needs (oral, written, and sign) of persons requiring language access upon initial contact in person, over the phone, and in writing.¹¹
 - When to use State master contracts to provide language access services.
 - When to provide language access services off-State master contracts and appropriate payment.
 - Providing language access services in emergent situations.
 - Utilizing DSHS document databases to provide already translated vital written documents.
 - Collaborating with persons requiring language access to identify the most appropriate language access services under the circumstances.
- Provide model procedures to all DSHS Administrations and DVR to adapt to their needs.

c. **Success Measures:**

⁸ In compliance with the Reyes Consent Decree.

⁹ Applicable DSHS administrative policies include, but may not be limited to, 7.02, 7.20, 7.21, 14.10, 15.18.1, and 18.81.

¹⁰ DSHS shall ensure that stakeholders include impacted communities requiring language access, which includes persons with LEP and persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, or have other communication disabilities requiring equally effective communication.

¹¹ Procedure and questions on forms will be in compliance with the Reyes Consent Decree and culturally responsive.

- Completion of all action plan steps by the end of SFY2022 (June 30, 2022).
- At least 90% of survey respondents indicate in the next Department-wide Language Access Self-Evaluation¹² that language access procedures are consistent and effective across the Department.

3. Simplify the language access services request process.

a. **Objective: Simplify the language access services request process to provide required language access and increase efficiency.**

b. **Action Plan:**

- Identify Constituent Services as the central DSHS phone number and email address to request spoken language access services.¹³
- Identify Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing for communication assistance such as sign language interpreters and assistive communication technology, including portable loop and auxiliary aids free of charge at odhh@dshs.wa.gov and 360-339-7382.
- Designate an employee or employees within each Administration and DVR to coordinate the fulfillment of language access service requests.
- Create a directory on ODI's Intranet page of all Administration and DVR language access services coordinators, assigned areas, and contact information.

c. **Success Measures:**

- Completion of all action plan steps by end of SFY2022.
- At least 90% of survey respondents indicate that:
 - Making a request for language access services was simple.
 - The language access services request was fulfilled on their first attempt.
 - Responses to requests were timely.

¹² Projected to begin January 2023. ODI will continue to lead the regularly scheduled Department-wide Language Access Self-Evaluation for LA Plan updates.

¹³ Please note that DSHS client requests for language access services are primarily received and fulfilled by program staff. Staff should work within their respective Administration or Division to fulfill language access services requests instead of using the central number and email address. The central number and email address are intended for use by persons requiring language access who are not yet clients or members of the public seeking information or access to services, programs, activities, and employment. Requests received will be routed to the appropriate language access services coordinator within the Administration or Division if needed.

4. Expand the types of language access services provided.

- a. **Objective:** Expand the types of language access services provided to comply with recent legislative changes and meet the current needs of requesters and persons requiring language access.
- b. **Action Plan:**¹⁴
 - Ensure that DSHS has access to CBA-compliant contracts to provide in-person, over-the-phone, and video remote spoken language interpreting (VRI).
 - Contract to provide video remote sign language interpreting services (VRI).¹⁵
 - Create a DSHS vlog (video blog) to communicate vital communications in ASL.
 - Provide open/closed captioning for all DSHS videos and vlog (video blog).
 - Educate staff about how to utilize DES Master Contract 03116 to provide Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) services for meetings and events where language access needs are known.
 - Contract to provide ASL videos for vital written communications.
- c. **Success Measure:** Completion of all action plan steps by the end of SFY2023.

5. Improve public notices.

- a. **Objective:** Improve public notices indicating the availability of language access services free of charge to ensure persons requiring language access are appropriately notified.
- b. **Action Plan:**
 - Update the current DSHS Nondiscrimination Notice.
 - Provide the updated DSHS Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice as posters and brochures and place them in visible and easily accessible areas where Department staff interacts with employees and the public (e.g., break rooms, lobbies, and front desk).
 - Update the current DSHS Nondiscrimination Policy webpage to include the updated DSHS Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice, downloadable Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) versions in all DSHS supported languages with non-English tags (e.g., “tiếng Việt/Vietnamese” instead of “Vietnamese”), and ASL videos.

¹⁴DSHS shall ensure that impacted communities are consulted. Where possible and appropriate, DSHS will engage stakeholders in the contracting and procurement process.

¹⁵ Video remote sign language interpreting services (VRI) shall be in compliance with ADA Title II Regulations and Section 1557 of the ACA.

- Develop a Communication Assistance Taglines Document (“Taglines Document”) indicating the availability of language access services free of charge, how to request language access services, contact information, and other relevant information translated into the top 15 languages spoken by LEP populations served or eligible to be served.¹⁶
- Provide the Taglines Document in or with all vital written documents and electronically generated vital written communications.
- Distribute the updated DSHS Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice and Taglines Document to community-based organizations and other stakeholders.
- Develop a standard Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice tagline for meeting and event invitations and advertising.

c. **Success Measure:** Completion of all action plan steps by the end of SFY2022.

6. Adopt a Department-wide approach for translation of vital written communications.¹⁷

a. **Objective: Adopt a Department-wide approach for translation of vital written communications to promote consistency, efficiency, and provide required language access.**

b. **Action Plan:**

- Establish mandatory minimum vital written communication translation lists in Department administrative policy (see Strategic Objective 1):¹⁸
 - Vital written document categories that must be provided as full translations in the individual’s primary preferred language and include the Taglines Document.

¹⁶ The Taglines Document will be developed to support compliance with RCW 74.04.025(7) and implementing regulations of Section 1557 of the ACA. See e.g., [Washington State Health Care Authority \(HCA\) taglines document](#). The top 15 spoken languages list must include Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian (Khmer), Laotian (Lao), and Chinese in furtherance of RCW 74.04.025(8)(b). DSHS shall ensure that the best available data is used to accurately and equitably identify true language access needs of those served or eligible to be served, including the needs of historically marginalized communities. DSHS shall review the data and the top 15 languages list as part of its regularly scheduled self-evaluation and update of the LA Plan every three fiscal years.

¹⁷ Where possible and appropriate, public-facing materials will be written at approximately a fifth grade reading level.

¹⁸ DSHS shall review this list in light of obligations under the Reyes Consent Decree.

- Vital written document categories that must be provided as full translations in all DSHS supported languages and include the Taglines Document.
- Vital written document categories that must be provided as ASL videos and include the Taglines Document.
- Vital electronic written communication categories that must include the Taglines Document and ASL video.
- Improve DSHS document databases by:
 - Using non-English tags;
 - Providing translated navigation instructions in all DSHS supported languages including ASL for publically-accessible databases;
 - Uploading all translated vital written documents in the appropriate documents database;
 - Creating an ASL video database that is publically accessible; and
 - Adding search by language features.
- Evaluate feasibility of:
 - Transitioning ownership and maintenance of the TransServe system to better support Department-wide and interagency service.
 - Establishing a Department-wide TransServe policy, procedure, and training.
- Conduct a self-evaluation of SOLTRA Translation Application to identify needed improvements.
- Establish a Department-wide emergency translation procedure.
- Standardize language-naming conventions for all DSHS documents.

c. Success Measures:

- All Administrations and DVR submit to ODI a list of vital written documents and vital electronic communications identified for translation in accordance with new Department requirements as part of their respective implementation plans within six (6) months of LA Plan adoption (see Strategic Objective 17).
- Completion of all other action plan steps by the end of SFY2023 (June 30, 2023).

7. Improve DSHS websites.

a. Objective: Improve DSHS websites to provide required language access to online information.

b. Action Plan:

- Create a visible footer viewable on all DSHS public-facing webpages with non-English tag links for the top 15 identified spoken languages and tag link

for ASL. Tag links will direct visitors to a DSHS Communication Assistance Available webpage.¹⁹

- Create a DSHS Communication Assistance Available webpage with taglines in top 15 identified spoken languages and ASL indicating the availability of language access services free of charge and contact information. Webpage will include recorded ASL video of the tagline information. The webpage will also include information for reporting abuse and neglect, link to the ODI main webpage for the LA Plan, information about how to file a complaint, link to the ODHH vlog (video blog), and translated document databases, and link to the updated DSHS Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice webpage.²⁰
- Update the ODI main webpage to include the LA Plan available for download as PDF versions in all DSHS supported languages using non-English tags.

c. Success Measures:

- Completion of all action steps by the end of SFY2022.
- At least 90% of survey respondents indicate that it is simple to find information about available language access services on DSHS websites.

8. Increase staff support and training.

a. Objective: Increase staff support and training to raise awareness and strengthen organizational capacity to provide language access services.

b. Action Plan:

- Complete an assessment of ongoing assignment pay for current bilingual employee positions per DSHS Administrative Policy 18.82.²¹
- At least quarterly monitoring of the percentage of persons requiring language access and number of bilingual employees to ensure adequate delivery of language access services.²²
- Evaluate the procedure for recruiting and hiring bilingual employees.

¹⁹ See e.g., [HHS main page footer](#).

²⁰ See e.g., [HHS Get Help in Other Languages - Spanish](#). DSHS shall ensure that the Language Access Services Available page is easily accessible and navigable from the main DSHS page.

²¹ Bilingual employees are DSHS employees certified or authorized to provide direct services to clients and employees with LEP and/or clients and employees who are Deaf or DeafBlind. Factors to be considered and the requirement for an assessment at least every two years is specified in Sections A.2. and A.7.

²² In furtherance of the Reyes Consent Decree.

- Provide all employees with a copy of the updated DSHS Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice.
- Develop an online language access staff training video with captions. Topics covered will include, but will not be limited to:
 - Language access terms in the LA Plan and administrative policy
 - Legal standards
 - Organizational commitment to providing language access
 - How to obtain language access services
 - Considerations when working with persons requiring language access
 - Working with interpreters and translation services
 - How to respond to telephone calls from telecommunication and video relay services in the same manner that they respond to other telephone calls.
- Include the online language access staff training video in required Department-wide annual training.
- Review and update language access training provided in DSHS new employee orientation.
- Develop relevant training and make available for the following staff categories:
 - Bilingual employees;
 - Staff who hire and work closely with bilingual employees;
 - Language access services coordinators;
 - Language Access Advisors;
 - Civil rights complaint coordinators; and
 - Other staff who are likely to serve persons requiring language access.
- Develop and/or improve resources to help staff serve persons requiring language access effectively (e.g., language identification tools, posters, cards, reference guides, desktop displays, etc.).²³
- Develop resources to help staff serve persons with low literacy.
- Evaluate compliance with Reyes Consent Decree training requirements for bilingual employees and contracted interpreters.²⁴

c. Success Measures:

- By the end of the SFY2022:
 - 100% of employees received the updated DSHS Nondiscrimination and Accessibility Notice.
- By the end of SFY2024:

²³ In furtherance of the Reyes Consent Decree.

²⁴ DSHS may consider the use of such trainings as the [National CLAS Standards Training](#) developed by the Washington State Board of Health.

- 100% of new employees received language access training at DSHS new employee orientation.
- 100% of employees completed the online language access staff training video.
- 100% of Administrations and DVR report information about the number of bilingual employee positions discontinued, maintained, and added, and their certified or authorized language(s) since the start of SFY2022.
- At least 90% of survey respondents indicate that they receive sufficient training to provide required language access services to persons needing these services.
- Resources for serving persons requiring language access are available on ODI's Intranet page.

9. Improve language access data collection and analysis.

a. **Objective: Improve language access data collection and analysis to identify and meet required language access needs.**²⁵

b. **Action Plan:**

- Collect Department-wide data related to the following factors:
 - 1) The number or proportion of persons requiring language access served overall, persons requiring language access who would be eligible for different aspects of DSHS programs and activities, and the specific language needs of those individuals;
 - 2) The frequency of contact with persons requiring language access or would have if eligible persons requiring language access were able to access DSHS programs and activities;
 - 3) The nature and importance of the various aspects of DSHS programs and activities;
 - 4) Resources available and costs associated with different language access options;
 - 5) Barriers or gaps in access to DSHS services by LEP population and service area; and
 - 6) Outcomes of persons requiring language access served by DSHS.
- Conduct an analysis of the factors described above to help inform LA Plan updates.

²⁵ DSHS will take steps to determine the feasibility of an enterprise-level information technology solution and develop a project plan with internal stakeholders. Where possible, data will be derived from currently available DSHS systems (e.g., client information systems) and other sources (e.g., Agency Financial Reporting System and data reports from contracted language access services vendors).

- Establish Department-wide reporting requirements for language access data to ensure DSHS is meeting language access needs and inform strategic planning.
- Collect voluntarily disclosed data on primary preferred language(s), language access, and/or ADA auxiliary aids and service needs of employees, job applicants, interns, work-study students, and volunteers for language access purposes.²⁶
- Develop an efficient Department-wide system to collect names, addresses, and other contact information for language access providers contracted directly (not on State master contracts) to meet the RCW 41.56.510 requirement.²⁷

c. Success Measures:

- ODI consolidates collected spoken language interpreter contact information annually by January 30.
- On an annual basis, and updated each year after, 100% of employees, job applicants, interns, work-study students, and volunteers are provided an opportunity to voluntarily disclose primary preferred language(s), language access and/or ADA-auxiliary aids and service needs.
- Results of the Department-wide four-factor analysis are available for use in the next scheduled DSHS Language Access Self-Evaluation.

10. Evaluate and improve the DSHS Language Testing and Certification Program.

a. Objective: Evaluate and improve the Language Testing and Certification Program to effectively meet the needs of DSHS clients served by bilingual employees, certified/ authorized interpreters and translators.

b. Action Plan:

- Update Language Testing and Certification database to:
 - Improve usability for staff and the public.
 - Improve communication with and retention of certified and authorized interpreters and translators.
 - Reduce staff manual data entry time.

²⁶ DSHS will take steps to utilize existing systems, including the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) and NEOGOV.

²⁷ For example, a more efficient system may include converting DSHS Form 17-123 (Spoken Language Interpreter Service Appointment Record) into a smart form that automatically collects language access provider contact information. “Language access providers” are defined in RCW 41.56.030 as any independent contractor who provides spoken language interpreter services, whether paid by a broker, language access agency, or the respective department. Language access providers do not mean a manager or employee of a broker or a language access agency. The Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) has access to contact information for language access providers on contracts currently utilized by DSHS.

- Reduce human error in record keeping.
- Improve data security.
- Evaluate Language Testing and Certification tests:
 - Determine and re-evaluate employee test standards.
 - Review current employee study materials and determine whether updates are needed.
 - Research to determine if additional employee tests would be beneficial. If so, recommend employee test instrument and pilot testing.
 - Evaluate passage rates and potential barriers.
- Evaluate the feasibility of a point system for test applicants based on training, education, life experiences, and other relevant factors.
- Update the Language Testing and Certification SharePoint site to provide better information on employee testing and use of certified bilingual employees.
- Begin WAC Chapter 388-03 revision with stakeholder input, including review of the Interpreter Code of Ethics and other rules in light of advancements in language access.
- Identify gaps in interpreter availability for DSHS appointments and establish recruitment opportunities for interpreter testing based on those gaps.
- Establish a plan for data collection, reporting, and analysis of the program.

c. Success Measures:

- Complete new database by the start of SFY2022.
- Publish results of employee test evaluation by end of SFY2022.
- Pilot new employee tests and make updated employee study materials available for employee testing if warranted by SFY2023.
- Update LTC SharePoint site by SFY2023.
- At least 90% of survey respondents report that information provided by Language Testing and Certification on bilingual employee testing and post-testing use of bilingual employees is easy to find and understand.
- Complete WAC revision by end of SFY2024.

11. Update the Master Language Codes Crosswalk.

a. Objective: Update the Master Language Codes Crosswalk to ensure auto-generated client letters are translated into the correct primary preferred languages.

b. Action Plan:

- Update the Master Language Codes Crosswalk to include new languages encountered since the last update and ensure all internal and external client

information systems interacting with DSHS have an appropriate corresponding code for each language encountered.

- Correct or remove codes corresponding to incorrectly named languages and duplications.
- Add new [International Organization for Standardization \(ISO\) 639 language codes](#) to the Master Language Codes Crosswalk where possible for new languages that have been encountered since the last update.
- Convene a Master Language Codes Crosswalk Committee comprised of managers of each system included in the Crosswalk with the authority to make system changes.
- Establish a standardized process for requesting changes to the Master Language Codes Crosswalk, review, and approval.
- Establish a standardized process for the coordinated distribution of the Master Language Codes Crosswalk with internal and external stakeholders.
- Update DSHS IT Standard 23.1 and DSHS administrative policy accordingly.

c. **Success Measure:**

- Completion of all action plan steps by the end of SFY2023.

12. [Improve the current civil rights complaint process.](#)

a. **Objective: Improve the current civil rights complaint process to ensure prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.**

b. **Action Plan:**

- Adopt a new Department-wide civil rights complaint procedure.
- Create a new DSHS webpage for the new DSHS Civil Rights Complaint Procedure with translated PDF versions in all DSHS supported languages with non-English tag links and ASL video.
- Update Department-wide civil rights complaint forms and provide in all DSHS supported languages in print, ASL video, and as a fillable PDF or Microsoft Word option on the DSHS Civil Rights Complaint Procedure webpage.
- Develop a civil rights online complaint portal option²⁸ on the DSHS Civil Rights Complaint Procedure webpage with navigation instructions available in all DSHS supported languages with non-English tags and ASL video. Provide complainants the opportunity to submit complaints in their primary language, including recorded ASL videos.²⁹

²⁸ In compliance with web accessibility requirements.

²⁹ See, e.g., [HCA ADA and Language Accessibility Complaint Form](#).

- Ensure civil rights complaint coordinators receive sufficient training to provide language access services and ADA auxiliary aids and services to complainants if requested.
- Adopt a Department-wide civil rights complaint processing manual for use by all civil rights complaint coordinators.
- Ensure information about how to request a final determination review is clear, accessible, and transparent.
- Regularly review outcomes of civil rights complaints to ensure they were appropriately processed and the correct legal standard was applied.
- Track and regularly analyze data to inform continuous improvement efforts.

c. Success Measures:

- Completion of all action plan steps by the end of SFY2023.
- At least 90% of survey respondents indicate that they received required language access to the civil rights complaint process (if applicable).
- At least 90% of survey respondents indicate that the civil rights complaint process was clear and easily accessible.

13. Improve quality assurance for language access services.

a. Objective: Improve quality assurance for language access services to ensure they are accurate and timely.

b. Action Plan:

- Create public notices to inform customers about how to submit complaints about the quality of language access services.
- Establish a central location and contact information to submit complaints about the quality of language access services routed to the appropriate contract manager.
- Contract managers of language access service contracts regularly report actions taken because of complaints.
- Staff regularly solicit feedback from language access service users about the quality of language access services.
- Ensure all language access service contracts include quality assurance and cultural competency requirements.
- Develop and include language access services quality assessment portion in the biennial Social and Health Services Client Survey.
- Ensure the Social and Health Services Client Survey is available in all DSHS supported languages and non-supported languages when requested.

c. Success Measures:

- At least 90% of survey respondents indicate that:

- They were satisfied with the quality and timeliness of language access services received.
- They were treated with dignity and respect.
- The quality of language access services was good or very good.
- Ethics shown in interpreter encounters was good or very good.

14. Improve contract compliance reviews and contract management.

a. **Objective: Improve contract compliance reviews and management to ensure contracted DSHS service providers are providing language access services.**

b. **Action Plan:**

- Develop contract compliance review tools and staff training to regularly assess DSHS service provider language access compliance.
- Educate contractors about their legal obligation to provide language access services as DSHS service providers.
- Ensure contracted DSHS service providers provide clients with information about their rights, how to request language access services, and how to file a complaint with DSHS in all supported languages.
- Increase contract management training for language access services (interpreter and translator) contracts.
- Review contracts annually to ensure that they are consistent with industry standards and that they identify barriers to language access and are informed by stakeholder input.
- Each Administration or Division utilizing contracted service providers will develop and make available relevant language access trainings for contractors.

c. **Success Measures:**

- 100% of DSHS service providers reviewed are in compliance with requirements to provide information about client rights, how to request language access services, and how to file a civil rights complaint with DSHS in all supported languages by the end of SFY2024.
- 100% of DSHS Language Access Advisors and language access services coordinators received training on language access services contracts, management, and monitoring by the end of SFY2024.

15. Support language access in emergency planning.

a. **Objective: Support language access in emergency planning to effectively address the needs of persons requiring language access during emergencies or disasters.**

b. **Action Plan:**

- Develop Department-wide emergency management plan guidelines for language access in collaboration with persons requiring language access.
- Ensure emergency communications are provided to the community in all DSHS supported languages, including ASL.
- Update DSHS Administrative Policies accordingly.
- Collaborate with the Emergency Management Division (EMD) to review the statewide Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan as it relates to DSHS roles and responsibilities.

c. Success Measures:

- All building emergency management plans are updated to comply with the language access guidelines by the end of SFY2023.
- Completion of all action steps by the end of SFY2024.

16. Embed stakeholder engagement.

a. Objective: Embed stakeholder engagement to increase the effectiveness of LA Plan efforts.

b. Action Plan:

- Increase DSHS participation in interagency stakeholder meetings to improve State master contracts for language access services.
- Develop a DSHS language access stakeholder distribution list to solicit comments on proposed LA Plan updates.
- Work with external partners to develop a communication plan for disseminating vital emergency information to communities with persons requiring language access.
- Increase engagement with recipients of language access services and organizations within LEP communities for regularly scheduled self-evaluation and update of the LA Plan.

c. Success Measure:

- Completion of all action plan steps by the end of SFY2023.

17. Support accountability measures.

a. Objective: Support accountability measures to ensure LA Plan Strategic Objectives are successfully met.

b. Action Plan:

- Identify a DSHS Language Access Plan Manager to lead the ongoing implementation and update of the LA Plan across the Department. The individual must have expertise in language access and language access services, including,

but not limited to, the legal framework, best practices in language services, cultural competency, service modalities, how the language industry operates, and commitment to access and inclusion.

- The Language Access Plan Manager will:
 - Establish a Language Access Advisors training program and require Language Access Advisors to participate.
 - Conduct a Department-wide Language Access Self-Evaluation and update of the LA Plan every three fiscal years.
 - Track LA Plan implementation progress and report regularly to DSHS Cabinet (e.g., quarterly or semiannually).
 - Support Language Access Advisor updates to their respective Administration or Division leadership to discuss language access needs and keep leadership informed of LA Plan implementation.
- Maintain active Language Access Advisors from each Administration, DVR, and ODHH. All Language Access Advisors must be qualified. Language Access Advisors will be responsible for:
 - Coordinating the fulfillment of their Administration, Division, or Office's language access service requests.
 - Supporting the DSHS Language Access Plan Manager.
 - Serving as a representative on the LAAC.
 - Leading the development of implementation plans for successful LA Plan implementation for their respective Administration or Division.
- Update job descriptions for all employees assigned to help implement the LA Plan.

c. Success Measures:

- 100% of Administrations and DVR maintained at least one qualified Language Access Advisor to serve on the LAAC from the start of SFY2022 to the end of SFY2024.
- LAAC meetings are convened at least every quarter.
- LA Plan implementation progress reports are provided to DSHS Cabinet and the LAAC at least every fiscal year.
- 100% of Administrations and DVR submit respective implementation plans to DSHS Language Access Plan Manager within six (6) months of LA Plan adoption.