

Civil Rights Department Language Access Plan



California Civil Rights Department
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Introduction

The California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency (BCSH) adopted Language Access Plan Guidelines on January 14, 2025. The guidelines require each BCSH department to develop a Language Access Plan. This work is part of ensuring meaningful access to programs and services.

BCSH and its departments will provide access to information, programs, and services to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). The plan will ensure that language is not a barrier to accessing complaint, interview, conciliation, conflict resolution, or enforcement services provided by our department.

In developing this Language Access Plan, we have reviewed:

- our programs and services for the public.
- the ways we communicate with members of the public and the people we serve.
- how we currently provide information and services in languages other than English.

Civil Rights Department Programs and Services

The Civil Rights Department (CRD) is the state department charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. Its mission is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, business establishments, public accommodations, state-funded or state-administered programs and activities, bias-motivated violence, and human trafficking.

CRD consists of the following programs: Enforcement, Dispute Resolution, Legal, Executive Programs, Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs, Administration, Information Technology Services Division, and Public Affairs.

The Enforcement Division receives, investigates, and conciliates complaints of civil rights violations. It is divided into specialized teams that focus on various aspects of California's civil rights laws, including with respect to housing and employment. The division also runs the department's Contact Center, which responds to general inquiries from the public and provides language support and accommodations for interactions with the department.

The Dispute Resolution Division provides free mediation services for a wide range of complaints filed with CRD. Staffed by trained, neutral mediators,

the division helps parties work together to reach mutually agreeable resolutions to civil rights complaints.

The Legal Division supports priority investigations, engages in mediation, secures settlements, and, when necessary, prosecutes civil actions, including complaints of systemic discrimination impacting people across California. The division also provides legal guidance to the department and processes requests for records under the California Public Records Act.

The Executive Programs Division conducts legislative and regulatory affairs, public outreach and education, internal training and staff development, as well as supports the Civil Rights Council and Commission on the State of Hate, reviews administrative appeals, and responds to requests for support in certain immigration proceedings.

The Strategic Initiatives and External Affairs team plays a lead role in state anti-hate initiatives and community mediation, including through California vs Hate and by supporting the work of CRD's Community Conflict Resolution Unit to constructively resolve community conflict and minimize the potential for violence.

The Administrative Division provides critical human resources, contracting, fiscal management, and procurement services for the department.

The Information Technology Services Division manages technological infrastructure and security and plays a vital role in running CRD's data collection systems.

The Public Affairs Division executes CRD's communications strategy, including by issuing press releases, communicating with the public through social media and newsletters, and fielding requests for information from the media.

In addition to the program areas, the Civil Rights Council and Commission on the State of Hate are housed within CRD. The Civil Rights Council promulgates regulations that implement California's civil rights laws, conducts inquiries, and holds hearings on civil rights issues confronting the state, among other responsibilities. The Commission on the State of Hate works to advance the state's efforts to stop hate by conducting research, developing policy and programmatic recommendations, and engaging with California's diverse communities.

CRD is the institutional centerpiece of California's broad anti-discrimination policy. Today, CRD is the country's largest state civil rights department

operating out of six offices throughout California: Sacramento (Headquarters), Bakersfield, Fresno, Los Angeles, Oakland, and Riverside.

CRD staff interview complainants, witnesses, and respondents during the intake, investigation, conciliation, and mediation processes, and prosecution of complaints alleging violations of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, the Ralph and Unruh Civil Rights Acts, and the Disabled Persons Act, among other civil rights statutes enforced by the department. CRD also engages in public outreach and education efforts to inform the public of their rights and responsibilities under the laws enforced by the department.

Language Access Requirements and Language Identification

CRD used one of the following methods to identify the most common languages the department comes into public contact with:

- Method 1: The Top 5 Languages identified by the American Community Survey Data of the U.S. Census Bureau (C16001). Departments will ensure alignment with threshold languages determined spoken by individuals surveyed under the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (Dymally-Alatorre Act), when applicable.
- Method 2: Languages identified by the Civil Rights Act Title VI Four-Factor Analysis.

CRD also considered other program-specific laws or requirements. These include but are not limited to:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Executive Order 13166
- The Unruh Civil Rights Act
- California Government Code Section 11135

Please note that this plan does not address CRD's process for conducting or reporting on the biennial language survey required under the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act.

Language Services

This section includes the actions CRD will take to provide information and services in languages other than English.

Direct In-Language Communication

CRD provides direct telephone services in English and Spanish through our toll-free public contact number, 800-884-1684, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except on State holidays. CRD also provides telephone interpretation services in over 200 languages for other LEP callers.

Certified bilingual and multilingual staff and/or contracted private interpreters will provide language services to individuals with LEP. Language services will be provided free of charge. Private interpreter services will not be reimbursed by CRD when visiting our offices.

We discourage using an unofficial interpreter, including family members or friends. Exceptions for unofficial interpreters include:

- Emergency situations
- Getting non-essential information, like identifying the person's preferred language
- Public events or when a qualified interpreter is not readily available.
- Departments that administer licensing examinations may set their own interpreter guidelines, standards, and requirements for examinations.

CRD currently employs 52 qualified and certified multilingual employees in public contact positions designated as bilingual. These employees are tested by a contracted service for proficiency in listening and speaking skills at ILR Level II. CRD does not currently provide certification testing for document translation. CRD also uses video remote interpretation services for those who may be unable to use telephone services. All CRD offices have "I Speak" cards at public counters to assist the public in requesting services in their primary languages.

Interpretation

CRD provides toll-free telephone access to the public with an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system in English and Spanish. Additional telephone assistance is available on-demand in over 200 languages. CRD staff can preschedule the same level of professional language access for telephone conferencing or video remote appointments. Staff submit service requests to the language services team through an online request form.

CRD provides closed captioning at CRD Council meetings. When requested, CRD will provide interpretation services at Council meetings, including American Sign Language (ASL), and translation of public notice documents in advance of public meetings.

Translation

CRD uses the Title VI four-factor analysis to identify languages that vital documents shall be translated into by analyzing and balancing the following factors to ensure meaningful access for Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served by CRD. This is determined by tracking the number of LEP persons we encounter through telephone, email, and online contact, and LEP attendance at events sponsored by CRD, and by the primary language data provided on intake forms and through requests for interpreters.
2. The frequency in which LEP persons come into contact with CRD or request document translation.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by CRD. Importance is determined by the effect on LEP persons, and the opportunities provided to LEP persons and the department by the availability of documents in specific languages.
4. The resources available and costs to CRD in the provision of the documents.

CRD will translate vital documents for statewide use into the languages spoken by 4.5% or more of the population we serve, as identified by this process. These vital documents include but are not limited to critical outreach materials explaining CRD's services, intake forms used to submit complaints to the department, posters that all California employers are required to display, and correspondence regarding the status of investigations.

Complaint [intake forms](#) are currently available in English, Spanish, Chinese Traditional, Chinese Simplified, Korean, Vietnamese, and Punjabi, as are most fact sheets. Some vital documents, such as the Immigrant Rights Fact Sheet, are available in additional languages deemed critical to the program, including Arabic, Hmong, Mixteco, and Trique.

LEP individuals may request translation of public meeting notices into their primary language or Braille, by submitting a request through our toll-free Contact Center, by email to accommodations@calcivilrights.ca.gov, or through any public contact staff member, at least five business days before a meeting.

Additional notice may be required for Braille translation, to allow for delivery through the United States Postal Service.

CRD considers its home page and all information accessible from the home page essential content. [CRD's website](#) has a Google Translate widget that will translate the website into 110 different languages. The translation feature applies to web pages only; it does not translate pdf documents and other outreach materials. Those documents are translated separately and are available only in the languages in which they are formatted and presented. CRD is developing a process for evaluating future translation needs, such as creation of ASL videos.

CRD certifies that its website complies with Government Code Section 11546.7, including compliance with Government Code Section 7405 (incorporating Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act), Government Code Section 11135, and World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1, Level AA. These guidelines explain how to make web content more accessible for people with disabilities.

When CRD receives written communication from LEP individuals in languages other than English, Language Access staff send the documents out for translation into English. CRD's responses to the LEP individuals are also professionally translated from English into the individual's primary language.

Language Access Coordinator

This section includes how CRD's Language Access Coordinator was identified. This section outlines their role in overseeing the Language Access Plan.

CRD's Language Access Coordinator was appointed through her role in managing the Department's Contact and Support Services Unit, which includes the language access program.

Language Access Coordinator Name: Mimi de Ville
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The Language Access Coordinator's responsibilities include:

- Acting as the point of contact for language access and services related inquiries.
- Establishing and implementing operational procedures to ensure compliance.
- Overseeing the department's Language Access Plan.
- Maintaining a database of certified bilingual and multilingual employees, in coordination with Human Resources as required or needed.

- Identifying training for staff on how to utilize language assistance services for the individuals they serve.
- Monitoring and evaluating budget resource needs to support departmental language assistance services.
- Regularly assessing and improving the language assistance program.
- Implementing and maintaining a Language Access Complaint process.
- Coordinating translation and interpretation services, including qualified sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, and written information in alternate formats, such as Braille, large print, and audio formats.
- Securing language service contracts through a competitive bid process.
- Training public contact staff on the provision of language services.

Providing Notice to Individuals with LEP

This section includes how CRD will notify the public about available language access services. Below is a list of tools CRD will use to notify the public of these services:

- “I Speak” cards and language services availability posters in public office spaces.
- Translated notices.
- Translated taglines on department program websites.
- Department-sponsored outreach events.
- Public meeting announcements.
- A language services page on CRD's website
- Through CRD's toll-free Contact Center

CRD works with the public to identify and document each individual's language preference through voluntary demographic inquiries on complaint intake forms and through its public-facing case management system. Both forms of complaint submission ask the consumer if they need an interpreter to interact with department representatives. Primary language data is also captured by Contact Center staff when callers request the assistance of an interpreter. Those language preferences are documented each month through system-generated reports and contractor invoices.

Monitoring, Quality Control, and Updating Language Access Plan

This section describes how CRD will monitor language access services. CRD will update the Language Access Plan at least every two years. CRD will be compliant with BCSH's Language Access Plan Guidelines. CRD will assess processes and procedures to deliver meaningful language access.

Monitor and Quality Control Process

CRD will create a monitoring program to ensure implementation of details. This process will entail:

- Contracts with bilingual and multilingual contractors.
 - Review contractors' performance on a continual basis and address any deficiencies immediately.
- Work with staff certified by California Department of Human Resources.
- Assess monthly reports on interpretation and translation services to determine changes in the languages spoken by the populations we serve.
- Translate vital documents into languages that align with the languages spoken by the populations we serve

Updating Language Access Plan

Every two years, CRD will generate and update its list of minimum threshold languages. Vital documents and essential web content will be updated accordingly. CRD will review and resubmit their Language Access Plan to BCSH every two years.

Revisions will address:

- Any changes in the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Service Act language survey, when applicable and/or Title VI four-factor analysis.
- Whether existing policies and procedures are meeting the needs of individuals with LEP.
- Whether staff is sufficiently trained.
- Whether identified resources for assistance are up-to-date, available, and accessible.
- Whether future language contracts need improvement or extra criteria/requirements.

Reevaluations will incorporate, as appropriate:

- New programs
- New legal requirements
- Additional vital documents
- Community input on the Language Access Plan

Training Staff

This section includes information on how CRD trains staff to provide language access services to the public.

Public Facing Employees

Language access training will be provided to all current public-facing employees no later than **December 31, 2025**. Training will occur at least annually thereafter. New staff hired into public contact positions will receive language access training within their first six months of employment.

Staff will be trained on the availability, accessibility, and appropriate use of translation and interpreting department resources. Training topics include:

- Review of the regulations that inform our language service policy, including BCSH guidelines
- Instruction on identifying an individual's language preference
- Review of CRD's language service contracts
- Process and procedure for requesting language services
- Guidelines on how to work effectively with interpreters through telephone, video, and in-person services
- Review of changes in language access data

Non-Public Facing Employees

This section describes CRD's plan for training non-public facing employees.

The department's training program for non-public facing employees will cover:

- Familiarization with CRD's Language Access Plan.
- How to identify vital documents and request vital document translation.

Complaint Process for Language Services and Access

Public members and service recipients can make complaints related to language services. Complaints about language access services are accepted through:

Electronic

Email

- Languageaccess@calcivilrights.ca.gov

Physical Mail

- Link to printable form: [LangAccessComplaintFormEnglish-Oct-2024.pdf](#)

Mail to:

Civil Rights Department
Attn: Language Access Coordinator
651 Bannon Street, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95811

Phone Call

- 844-821-3465

CRD will notify public member and services recipients when:

- their complaint is received.
- when the outcome is available.

Language Access complaints will be investigated and responded to within 10 business days of receipt.

Document List

The following is a list of CRD's vital documents. Included are the six languages identified as threshold languages. The languages were identified by the American Community Survey Data of the U.S. Census Bureau and supplemented with additional demographic data provided by LEP individuals served by CRD, and language data collected through program-specific events.

Program or Service Name	Form #	Form Name	Spanish	Chinese	Korean	Punjabi	Tagalog	Vietnamese
Enforcement		Complaint Intake Form	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outreach & Education	CRD-E07P	California Law Prohibits Workplace Discrimination and Harassment	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Outreach & Education	CRD-E04P	Transgender Rights in the Workplace poster	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Outreach & Education	CRD-E09P	Your Rights and Obligations as a Pregnant Employee	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Outreach & Education	CRD-100-21	Family Care and Medical Leave and Pregnancy Disability Leave poster	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Outreach & Education	CRD-185P	Sexual Harassment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Definitions

Individual with Limited English Proficiency (LEP): Individuals who do not speak English as their preferred language and/or who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Individuals with LEP may be competent in English for certain types of communication but have limited proficiency in English in other areas. An individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal and/or has another disability(ies) and/or serious health condition(s), may also have limited proficiency in spoken or written English.

Effective Communication: Communication sufficient to provide the LEP individual with substantially the same level of access to services received by individuals who are not LEP. For example, staff must take reasonable steps to ensure communication with an LEP individual is as effective as communication with others when providing similar programs and services.

Oral Interpretation (or Interpretation): The act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning.

- Modes of Interpretation:
- Consecutive: The interpreting technique whereby the interpreter speaks only during gaps when the facilitator/participant pauses to allow for interpretation.
- Simultaneous: The interpretation of a speaker's words into another language at the same time the speaker is talking, without pauses or interruptions. The reading of a text by the interpreter from the source text into the target text simultaneously and in a manner in which the content of the document can be easily understood by the audience.
- Sight Interpretation: The practice of an interpreter reading a document written in one language aloud or signed into another language simultaneously and in a manner in which the content of the document can be easily understood by the audience.
- American Sign Language (ASL): ASL is the predominant visual language used by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing in the United States. With signing, the brain processes linguistic information through the eyes. The shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements, all play important parts in conveying information. ASL has its own grammar and syntax rules.

Meaningful Access: Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the LEP individual. For LEP

individuals, meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English-proficient individuals.

Plain Language: Straightforward language that avoids technical terms as much as possible and uses a coherent and easily readable style. (Gov Code §6219)

Primary Language: An individual's primary language is the language in which an individual most effectively communicates.

Program or Activity: A program or activity is defined to include any project, action, or procedure undertaken directly or indirectly by the department through others by contracts, arrangements, or agreements, with respect to the public generally or with respect to any private or public entity. The term "program or activity" and the term "program" mean all the operations of the department.

Proper Certification: For certification of state employees to provide service in non-English languages, CalHR requires language fluency testing. A test result indicating a language skill equivalent to "2" on the Federal Interagency Language Roundtable's (ILR) scale in the areas of listening and speaking establishes fluency certification.

Public Contact Employee: An employee whose duty statement specifies that they will have contact with the public and/or fills a position that meets, contacts, or deals with the public in the performance of the department's functions. Public contacts include in-person, emails, faxes, letters, telephone, social media, and TTY/TTD.

Title VI four-factor analysis: An assessment used to identify which languages are spoken by 5% or more of the public served by departments' programs and to determine how departments can best provide language assistance services needed to ensure meaningful access to individuals with LEP. Guiding questions for the Title VI four-factor analysis include:

1. What is the number or proportion of individuals with LEP who are eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by this program or service and what languages do they speak?
 - What data do you currently have on languages spoken by program participants (i.e., what languages are spoken by program participants; how many participants speak each language; and what percentage of program participants speak each language)?
 - What do other data sources (e.g., U.S. Census, California Department of Education data, academic research, community

input, etc.) tell you about the languages spoken by people who are eligible to be served by your program but that your program may not currently be reaching?

2. How frequently will individuals with LEP be in contact with this program or service? (For example: daily, weekly, monthly, rarely, etc.).
3. What is the nature or mission of this program or service? What is the target audience for this program or service? (For example: pregnant and nursing mothers or low-income families). How important is this program or service to people's lives?
4. What resources are currently available for the provision of language access services? (For example: bilingual staff, contracted or volunteer interpreters, translation contracts, or a specific budget amount).

Translation: The rendering of a written text from one language (source language) into another language (target language).

Vital Document: Paper or electronic written material that contains information that is critical for accessing CRD's program or activities or is required by law.