

Language Access Plan



Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)

Department of Consumer Affairs
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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 Language Access Plan will ensure the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) provides meaningful access to programs and services for all Californians.

DCA and its boards and bureaus will provide access to information, programs, and services to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). This plan will help ensure that language is not a barrier to accessing consumer, licensing, enforcement, licensure verification, or other services provided by DCA.

In developing this Language Access Plan, DCA has reviewed:

- DCA programs and services for the public.
- The ways DCA communicates with members of the public and the people it serves.
- How DCA currently provides information and services in languages other than English.

Department Programs and Services

DCA's Mission is to provide outstanding support services, oversight, and innovative solutions to boards and bureaus that regulate California professionals and vocations so that through this partnership all Californians are informed, empowered, and protected.

The programs and services it provides to the public or target service population are provided by the following:

Acupuncture Board – Protects the public by licensing and regulating acupuncturists and enforcing standards of professional conduct and competence.

Arbitration Certification Program – Certifies and oversees third-party arbitration programs of automobile manufacturers to ensure fair, lawful, and efficient resolution of warranty disputes for California consumers.

California State Athletic Commission – Regulates professional and amateur combat sports in California by licensing participants, overseeing events, and promoting the health, safety, and welfare of athletes.

Board of Accountancy – Safeguards consumers by ensuring only qualified and trustworthy professionals provide accounting services that meet established standards.

Board of Barbering and Cosmetology – Protects consumers by licensing and regulating the barbering and beauty industry, ensuring health, safety, and ethical standards are upheld statewide.

Board of Behavioral Sciences – Protects the public by regulating licensed mental health professionals and enforcing standards for safe and competent practice.

Board of Chiropractic Examiners – Protects the public's health, welfare, and safety by licensing chiropractors and enforcing standards in chiropractic care through education and regulation.

Board of Optometry – Protects the health and safety of California consumers through licensing and regulation of the practices of Optometry and Opticianry.

Board for Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Geologists – Protects public safety by licensing and regulating professionals to ensure competence and integrity.

Board of Psychology – Regulates the practice of psychology in the state through licensing, examination, and enforcement.

Board of Pharmacy – Protects public health and safety by ensuring quality pharmacist care and proper use of pharmaceuticals through licensing, regulation, and enforcement.

Board of Registered Nursing – Protects public health and safety by enforcing statutes and regulations governing nursing practice and education in California.

Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians – Protects the public by licensing competent professionals and ensuring quality patient care through education, regulation, and enforcement.

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education – Protects students and consumers by overseeing private postsecondary educational institutions, ensuring quality programs, and addressing complaints and unlicensed activity.

Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, Office of Student Assistance and Relief – helps students affected by school closures by providing support for transcripts, complaints, tuition relief, and guidance in choosing educational programs.

Bureau of Automotive Repair – Protects California consumers by licensing and regulating the automotive repair industry, administering vehicle emissions and safety programs, and resolving repair-related complaints.

Bureau of Household Goods and Services – Protects consumers and supports businesses by conducting inspections, processing licenses, and ensuring legal compliance in the marketplace.

Bureau of Real Estate Appraisers – Safeguards public trust by ensuring professionalism in the real estate appraisal industry through licensing, education, and enforcement.

Bureau of Security and Investigative Services – Regulates and licenses the alarm, locksmith, private investigator, private security, and repossession industries to protect and serve the public.

California Architects Board – Protects consumers by regulating the architectural profession through licensure, examinations, practice standards, and enforcement of the Architect Practice Act.

California Board of Naturopathic Medicine – Protects consumers by licensing and regulating naturopathic doctors and enforcing the California Naturopathic Doctors Act.

California Board of Occupational Therapy – Regulates and licenses occupational therapists and assistants to ensure they provide effective care in helping individuals develop, improve, or restore daily living skills.

Cemetery and Funeral Bureau – Protects California consumers by licensing and regulating the death care industry to ensure safe, ethical, and transparent end-of-life services.

Contractors State License Board – Protects consumers by licensing and regulating the construction industry to ensure safe, lawful, and ethical building practices in California.

Court Reporters Board – Protects the public by ensuring accurate judicial records and upholding competency standards in the court reporting profession through licensing and oversight.

Dental Board of California – Protects the public by licensing, regulating, and overseeing dental professionals, ensuring they meet the required standards of practice and discipline within the dental field.

Dental Hygiene Board of California – Protects the public by licensing dental hygienists, overseeing educational programs, and ensuring compliance with laws and regulations to maintain high standards of oral health care.

Landscape Architects Technical Committee – Protects public health, safety, and welfare by establishing licensure standards and enforcing regulations for landscape architecture practice in California.

Medical Board of California – Protects consumers by licensing and regulating physicians and allied healthcare professionals and enforcing the Medical Practice Act.

Osteopathic Medical Board of California – Protects the public by ensuring competency, accountability, and integrity in the practice of osteopathic medicine.

Physical Therapy Board of California – Advances and protects the public by effectively administering the Physical Therapy Practice Act.

Physician Assistant Board – Protects consumers by licensing, educating, and enforcing laws and regulations for physician assistants.

Podiatric Medical Board of California – Regulates and licenses podiatric practitioners to ensure safe and competent foot and ankle care through enforcement, education, and transparency.

Professional Fiduciaries Bureau – Protects consumers by licensing, educating, and enforcing standards for non-family member professional fiduciaries, ensuring competency and ethical practices in managing care, finances, and legal matters.

Respiratory Care Board – Ensures safe respiratory care practice by enforcing the Respiratory Care Practice Act and licensing practitioners.

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board – Protects Californians by enforcing standards and regulations to ensure the qualifications and competence of service providers.

Structural Pest Control Board – Protects Californians and the environment by regulating the pest control industry through outreach, education, and enforcement.

California Veterinary Medical Board – Regulates veterinary medicine in California by licensing veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and premises, while enforcing professional standards to protect consumers and animals.

Language Access Requirements and Language Identification

The DCA Language Access Requirements and Language Identification guidelines establish minimum standards for interpretation services and the translation of vital documents. Translation services must be offered in the languages spoken by individuals with LEP in California. Departments determined which languages to provide by using one of the methods below. DCA will be using Method 2.

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 Multilingual Services Act (Dymally-Alatorre Act), when applicable.

Method 2: Languages identified by the Civil Rights Act Title VI Four-Factor Analysis.

In planning for how to provide meaningful language access moving forward, DCA applied the four-factor balancing test set forth in federal guidance for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on a program-by-program basis. These four factors are:

1. Number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or service.
2. Frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the program.
3. Nature and importance of the program, activity, or service; and
4. Resources available to the department and costs of language services.

DCA also considered the specific requirements in the CalHHS Language Access Policy and any other program-specific laws or requirements, including, but not limited to:

- **Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964:** Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives federal funds or other federal financial assistance.
- **California's Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act:** As stated in Government Code Section 7290-7299.8, establishes minimum requirements for language access by requiring public agencies involved in furnishing information or rendering services to the public, to employ a sufficient number of qualified bilingual employees in public contact positions and requires certain written material to be translated into frequently encountered preferred languages.
- **Government Code Section 11135:** Prohibits discrimination under any program or activity that is conducted, funded directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state. Specifically, it states that no person in California shall be unlawfully denied full and equal access to the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, such programs based on:
 - Race
 - National origin
 - Ethnic group identification
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
 - Color
 - Genetic information
 - Disability
- **Americans with Disabilities Act Title II (ADA) of 1990:** Prohibits discrimination based on an individual's disability in services, programs, and activities provided by state and local government entities.
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act:** States that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under" any program or activity that either receives federal financial assistance or is conducted by any executive agency.
- **California Civil Rights Act**, also known as the Unruh Act of 1959: Prohibits discrimination by agencies that receive state funds and requires them to provide equal access to benefits without regard to the individual's race, color, national origin including language, or ethnic group identification among other classifications.

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

Language Services

DCA will take the following actions to provide information and services in languages other than English.

Direct In-Language Communication

Any DCA staff requesting the assistance of a certified bilingual employee can request to view the certified bilingual employee list by emailing the Office of Human Resources Office at OHR.Requests@dca.ca.gov.

To provide a member of the public assistance, please contact the supervisor of the bilingual employee to request direct in-language services.

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

DCA discourages 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.

DCA adheres to the California Department of Human Resources' process for bilingual oral fluency examination and certification. Certified bilingual employees must pass a language fluency exam, conducted in accordance with applicable standards, with results that correlate to the Interagency Language Roundtable scale. DCA coordinates testing in listening/speaking and reading/writing modalities and, where appropriate, may require more advanced or specialized testing to evaluate competency in a non-English language.

Interpretation

DCA primarily provides over-the-phone interpretation services. However, in-person language interpreters can be arranged when necessary to help staff communicate with individuals who have LEP.

Available Services:

DCA's Consumer Information Center (CIC) maintains a 24/7 over-the-phone interpreter service through Global Interpreting Network, offering access to interpreters in over 280 languages, every day of the year.

Accessing Services:

- Staff can access over-the-phone interpretation by visiting the DCA Employee Resources section on the EEO intranet site, where instructions and contact information are provided.
- Staff can also request and access language assistance services by contacting the EEO Office at EEO@dca.ca.gov, the Language Access Coordinator at Rena.Cordova@dca.ca.gov, or CIC at language.services@dca.ca.gov

DCA's EEO office provides American Sign Language (ASL) and Real-Time Captioning (RTC) interpreter services through a third-party vendor to support effective communication with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. These services are available to public contact staff for meetings, events, or other interactions requiring communication access.

Accessing Services:

- **Request Process:**
Staff must complete the Interpreting Services Request Form, available along with detailed instructions on the Sign Language Interpreting Services page of the DCA Intranet and submit the completed form to EEO@dca.ca.gov. Employees should contact the EEO Office directly with any questions. The EEO Office coordinates these services with the designated provider.
- **Advance Notice:**
Due to high demand, requests should be submitted at least five business days before the scheduled event or service.

Translation

DCA maintains a written translation service with a service provider available to all boards and bureaus within the Department. DCA staff may access the service by contacting DCA's Office of Publications, Design, and Editing at document.translations@dca.ca.gov.

Vital documents are paper or electronic written material that contain information that is critical for accessing DCA's boards and bureaus or their activities or is required by law. Examples of vital documents include, but are not limited to:

- Critical outreach materials explaining the availability of services.
- Licensing applications.
- Notices about eligibility or benefits.
- Notices about participant rights and responsibilities.
- Information about free language assistance services.
- Critical information about a declared state of emergency.
- Hearing notices, upon request.

The EEO Office notifies DCA boards and bureaus every two years of DCA's obligation to translate vital documents and provides guidance on how to implement the translation process. At a minimum, DCA will translate vital documents into Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin. DCA may also translate written materials into additional languages. Refer to the attached document at the end of this plan for a list of DCA's vital documents and the languages they are translated into.

Each DCA board, bureau, and office is responsible for providing prompt and linguistically appropriate responses to LEP individuals. Consistent with California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) requirements, only certified bilingual program staff may respond in writing in the language of the LEP individual or translate other staff members' responses from English into that language for their use in responding to the LEP individual.

DCA considers essential website content as information that provides consumers and the public with meaningful access to information and services and ensures language is not a barrier to accessing DCA services. Additionally, DCA provides a Google translate widget on its website.

For written communication from LEP individuals in languages other than English, DCA utilizes contractors to translate and assist in responding. This process includes identifying the individual's preferred language, translating, and understanding the message, crafting simple, clear, and concise responses, reviewing for translation accuracy, providing responses, and offering additional free translation and interpretation services. DCA employees can request assistance communicating with individuals in languages other than English by contacting DCA's Office of Publications, Design, and Editing at document.translations@dca.ca.gov.

Language Access Coordinator

DCA has a Language Access Coordinator to assist the boards, bureaus, and programs.

Language Access Coordinator Name: Rena Cordova
Phone/Email: (916) 574-8284, Rena.Cordova@dca.ca.gov

Language Access Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Acting as the point of contact for language access and service-related inquiries.
- Establishing and implementing operational procedures to ensure compliance.
- Overseeing the Department's Language Access Plan.
- 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 providing qualified sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, and written information in alternate formats (such as braille, large print, and audio formats.)

Providing Notice to Individuals with LEP

Below is a list of tools DCA will use to notify the public about the available language access services:

- “I Speak” cards and language services availability posters in public office spaces.
- Translated notices in public waiting areas.
- Translated taglines on English language forms.
- Translated taglines on Department board, bureau, and DCA websites.
- Ensure current CalHR Language Access posters are clearly displayed, visible, and legible to the public.
- Other: Social media posts directed at LEP individuals in their languages.

DCA will ask for a person's language preference when interpretation or translation is needed, especially if multiple interactions are required to complete a service or submit forms and documents.

Monitoring, Quality Control, and Updating Language Access Plan

DCA will monitor language access services. DCA will update the Language Access Plan at least every two years. DCA will maintain compliance with BCSH's Language Access Plan Guidelines. DCA will address processes and procedures to deliver meaningful language access.

Monitor and Quality Control Process:

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

- Contracting with bilingual and multilingual contractors.
- Reviewing contractors' performance on a continual basis and address any deficiencies immediately.
- Assessing training effectiveness.
- Identification of training needs.
- Assessing employee awareness of language access policies and procedures.
- Assessing effectiveness of interpretation and translation services.
- Checking-in with community partners and stakeholders.
- Tracking costs of providing language access services.
- Data collection.
- Identifying the amount and type of language services (interpreter services, sight translations) available to consumers by boards, bureaus, and DCA.

Updating the Language Access Plan:

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

Revisions will address:

- Any changes in the American Community Survey Data of the U.S. Census Bureau, the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Service Act language survey, 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

DCA's employees will be trained 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 1, 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 DCA's translation and interpreting resources. Training topics include:

- Overview of DCA's Language Access Policy.
- DCA's language access resources and designated points of contact.
- How to identify the language needs of an LEP individual.
- How to request interpretation and translation services.

- How to work effectively with interpreters.

Non-Public Facing Employees

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

- Familiarization with DCA's Language Access Plan.
- Identifying vital documents and requesting vital document translation.
- How to request interpretation and translation services.

Complaint Process for Language Services and Access

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

Electronic:

Email DCA Language Access Coordinator

- Email: EEO@dca.ca.gov

Mail:

Mail DCA Language Access Coordinator

- Mailing Address: 1625 North Market Blvd, Suite N 330, Sacramento, CA 95834

Phone:

Call DCA Language Access Coordinator

- Phone: (916) 574-8280

DCA will notify the member of the public and service recipients immediately when:

- Their complaint is received.
- The outcome is available.

The DCA EEO Office will attempt to resolve the complaint within ten working days. Consumers with questions about the complaint process may contact the DCA EEO Office at (916) 574-8280 or via email at EEO@dca.ca.gov.

Document List

DCA's list of vital documents is available on the [Accessibility page](#) of the DCA website. Included are the five (5) languages identified as threshold languages. The languages were identified under Title VI, Dymally-Alatorre, other program-specific language access laws, and DCA's best practices.

Boards and bureaus will review vital documents translation needs on a biannual basis. This review process ensures alignment with Title VI, the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act, and other applicable language access requirements. Documents will be evaluated during this process to determine whether translation into additional threshold languages is warranted based on updated demographic and usage data.

Definitions

Individual with Limited English Proficiency (LEP): An individual who does 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.

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.

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

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.

Sight Interpretation: The practice of an interpreter reading a document written in one language aloud or signed into another language.

Title VI four-factor analysis: An assessment used to identify which languages are spoken by 5% or more of the public served by a department’s programs and 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 does the department 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 the department about the languages spoken by people who are eligible to be served by the program but that the 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).