



Language Access Plan

Version 1

Record of Changes

Change Number	Date of Change	Page or Section	Summary of Change
1	3/1/25	Base LAP Plan	Document Creation
2			
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1. Purpose and Authority

Nevada Revised Statute 232.0081 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 affirm that language should not create a barrier to accessing government services.

NRS (NRS 232.0081) states that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language and that state and local agencies that receive public money have an obligation to provide this access.

The Nevada Division of Emergency Management (NDEM) is committed to complying with NRS 232.0081 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ensure meaningful access to state services and programs for individuals with limited English proficiency.

This document establishes a plan and protocol for NDEM personnel to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, individuals who have limited English proficiency, to ensure the success of NDEM's mission.

2. Acronyms and Definitions

For the purposes of this plan reference this section to understand how the following acronyms, terms and corresponding definitions are used within NDEM's Language Access Plan.

Term	Definition
Bilingual Fluency	The ability to speak and understand two languages easily and accurately. Bilingual fluency does not always mean that a person can serve as an interpreter or translator.
Certified Interpreter	Certified translators are linguists who have passed an exam which assesses their ability to accurately translate from one language into another. The exam is usually given by a professional association such as the American Translators Association.
Dual-role Interpreter	A multilingual employee that has been tested for language skills and trained as

	an interpreter; and is engaged in interpreting as part of their job duties.
Language Access	Effective strategies to engage and communicate with people acknowledging that language is not a barrier.
Language Access Coordinator (LAC)	NDEM staff have been delegated the responsibility of developing and implementing language access strategies as identified in the Language Access Plan.
Language Access Plan (LAP)	A document that identifies how to effectively provide services to LEP individuals.
Limited English Proficiency	A person with limited English proficiency may be unable to speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits them to interact effectively with NDEM staff, or engage in NDEM programs or services. Individuals who communicate through American Sign Language are included in this definition. Meaningful Access When language assistance provides.
Meaningful Access	Language assistance should be accurate, timely, and effective at no cost to the LEP individual. The LEP individual needs the ability to access, apply for, and receive resources without significant restrictions from language barriers.
Nevada Division of Emergency Management (NDEM)	The State of Nevada agency whose mission is to help people before, during, and after disasters.
Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS)	Current codified law of the State of Nevada.
Vital Documents	Documents that provide essential information. Examples include

	applications, consent, and complaint forms, notice of rights, notice of activities, and notices advising of the availability of free language assistance.
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3. General Policy

NDEM recognizes and ensures that the population eligible to receive meaningful access to its services includes LEP individuals. It is the policy of NDEM to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals. NDEM has adopted the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals gain equal access to NDEM services and can communicate effectively. This Plan applies to all NDEM's programs and services including, but not limited to:

- Programmatic including all Portfolios
 - Fiscal/Administrative Portfolio
 - Grants Portfolio
 - Resilience Portfolio
 - Mission Support Portfolio
 - Preparedness Portfolio
- Public Facing Services including all Portfolios
- Commissions, Committees, Councils, Boards, and Working Groups
 - **Nevada Commission on Homeland Security:** Established under Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 239C, this commission plays a pivotal role in coordinating homeland security efforts across the state. It brings together various stakeholders, including law enforcement, fire services, emergency medical services, healthcare, intelligence sectors, the Nevada National Guard, and media representatives. The commission's collaborative approach ensures comprehensive strategies for the prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery from security threats and emergencies. Includes the Homeland Security Committee on Finance.
 - **Nevada Resilience Advisory Committee (NRAC):** This committee plays a pivotal role in advising on matters related to homeland security and emergency management. NRAC evaluates and prioritizes grant proposals, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to address the state's most pressing security and emergency needs.
 - **Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee:** Established under NRS 414A, this committee facilitates mutual aid agreements among Nevada's political subdivisions, promoting efficient resource sharing during emergencies.

- **Board of Search and Rescue:** Operating under NDEM, this board oversees search and rescue operations within the state, ensuring coordinated and effective responses to incidents requiring such services.
- **Nevada Tribal Emergency Coordinating Council (NTECC):** Established by the 28 federally recognized Tribes in Nevada in collaboration with the Nevada Division of Emergency Management (DEM), the NTECC provides support in all-hazards emergency management. It serves as an advisory body to the Chief of DEM, focusing on policy development, grant distribution, and promoting the creation of Tribal Emergency Response Commissions and Community Emergency Response Teams.
- **Emergency Preparedness Working Group (EPWG):** This group oversees the distribution of funds derived from the disposal of classified low-level and mixed low-level waste at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). Since its inception, over \$15.1 million has been allocated through the State of Nevada Division of Emergency Management to counties such as Clark, Elko, Esmeralda, Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine. These funds enhance emergency preparedness and response capabilities in the respective regions.
- **Nevada Hazard Mitigation Working Group (NHMWG):** Focus on identifying and mitigating potential hazards within the state. Collaborate with various stakeholders to develop strategies aimed at reducing the impact of natural and man-made disasters.
- **Cyber Security Task Force (CSTF):** Convened to address the growing concerns of cybersecurity within the state, the CSTF collaborates with various agencies to develop and implement strategies that protect Nevada's digital infrastructure. The task force provides guidance on best practices, threat mitigation, and incident response to enhance the state's cyber resilience.
- **State Disaster Identification Coordination Committee (SDICC):** This committee focuses on improving processes related to disaster victim identification and coordination. Recent discussions have highlighted the need to update protocols to allow healthcare providers to share protected health information with emergency responders during incidents, facilitating effective reunification efforts.

It is Nevada's policy to grant access to services or programs to every person regardless of their ability to speak, understand, read, or write English. NDEM intends

to take all reasonable steps to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to its services and programs. NDEM seeks to reduce barriers by increasing its capacity to deliver services and benefits to people in their preferred languages.

NDEM LAP principles:

- NDEM is committed to equity and will take all reasonable steps to provide limited English proficient (LEP) individuals with meaningful access to all its services, programs, and activities.
- The agency, rather than the LEP individual, bears the responsibility for providing appropriate language services, regardless of the LEP individual's preferred language, at no cost to the LEP individual.
- Staff at the initial points of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs.
- Use of informal interpreters such as family, friends of the person seeking service, or other customers is not allowed. Minor children are prohibited from acting as interpreters.
- No staff may suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive agency services.

NDEM Language Access Coordinator:

Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) Heather Lafferty

Email: heatherlafferty@dem.nv.gov

Phone: 725-296-4128

Language Access Coordinator (LAC) will monitor the implementation of the plan to confirm we are in compliance. The LAC will ensure the LAP and budget is reviewed and revised biennially to ensure up to date information, resources, and services are available at our agency. Currently, NDEM does not have staff capacity to dedicate a full-time employee to develop and implement NDEM's Language Access Plan. Until additional staff capacity increases are realized NDEM LACs will be Portfolio Managers who will be tasked to take on additional duties as the Division LAC in addition to their regular duties.

The LAC reports to NDEM's Deputy Administrator, Sharon Luce.

Organizational Structure:

Each Portfolio Manager with NDEM is responsible for coordinating and budgeting for language access for programs, services, communications, and materials produced by

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their portfolio, and for proactively coordinating with the NDEM Language Access Working Group to ensure language access for all Portfolios.

- Language Access Working Group include the Chief Resilience Officer, the Chief Communications Officer, the Executive Administrative Assistant, Finance Portfolio Representative.

The following list includes all the LAC's and LAC Workgroup essential duties and responsibilities:

- Manage and respond to emails from LEP individuals, interpreters, organizations, and vendors in a timely fashion.
- Staff at the initial points of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs by processing and managing online and in person interpreter and translator requests.
 - Work with interpretation/translation services to fill online requests, including scheduling and assigning the interpreter or translator, troubleshooting, and invoices to be paid by the agency, as no staff may suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive agency services.
 - Solicit and evaluate feedback regarding program policies and practices from interpreters and service providers.
 - Process the submission of invoices from interpreter and translation services. When invoices have not been submitted in a timely fashion, send reminders to interpreters.
- Oversee NDEM's Language Access Plan and Resources page online.
- Conduct research on language access resources.
- Assist with the implementation and coordination of language access training for NDEM staff, if needed.
- Solicit public comment concerning the LAP developed in order to effectively make recommendations to the Nevada Legislature concerning any statutory changes necessary to implement or improve NDEM's LAP.
- Manage LAP budget and estimates of additional funding required to meet the agency's LEP clients' language access needs.
- Engage with the Governor's Office for New Americans for any updated tools or resource to enhance the current LAP

4. Profile of NDEM's LEP Clients

NDEM is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among our limited English proficient (LEP) clients so that we can better provide meaningful,

timely access to our services and programs without regard to any language impediments. NDEM does not currently have a digitally based tracking system in place to identify and track the total LEP clients served, total indigenous served, total refugees served, literacy level of individuals, and/or the services/programs these groups of individuals are accessing. To effectively track, collect and maintain the categorical information cited above, NDEM will need to acquire the resources necessary to contract the development of a new client tracking system as funding becomes available. Until the time that NDEM can do so we will use census data, survey tools, and a variety of other resources and means to understand the needs of the public we serve.

US Census Bureau

Data:https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=language%20spoken%20at%20home%20Nevada&tid=A_CSST5Y2020.S1601 NDEM serves all the public and not just those with a customer profile and recognizes that around 20% of people in Nevada are Limited English Proficient (LEP) or 80% of LEP individuals' preferred language is Spanish, and is the second most common language in Nevada, according to the most recent U.S. Census.

In February 2025, the Division conducted an agency-wide internal survey directed to staff who interact with customers, clients, or members of the public to help the Department better understand how the agency currently serves LEP individuals.

Initial internal LAP Survey results from February 2025.

- In the 12 months immediately preceding the survey NDEM staff estimates interactions with approximately 12 LEP individuals.
- Most staff interacted with LEP individuals over the phone (50%), in-person (27%) and online (16%).
- 30% of staff in the last year provided a customer, client, or member of the public with professional services (written translations, oral/sign translations, interpretation services, etc.) or arranged for professional services to be provided to them.
- When asked, "Do you know what professional services (written translations, oral/sign translations, interpretation services, etc.) NDEM provides its customers, clients, and members of the public?" staff answered:
 - No - 58%
 - Yes - 42%

- NDEM staff provided or arranged for professional translation services to 7 people in the last year.
- Only 1 NDEM employees self-identified as bilingual that employee answered No to considering becoming a certified interpreter.
- 30% of staff answered Yes to interacting with customers, clients or members of the public who relied on a friend or family member to help translate for them.
- No staff track how many customers, clients, or members of the public request professional services (written translations, oral/sign translations, interpretation services, etc.) or translated materials.
- Responses regarding focus areas that would provide the greatest benefit to our customers, clients, and members of the public were as follows:
 - Hiring more certified bilingual staff (10%)
 - Having publications and/or other printed materials translated into Spanish (28%)
 - Translating website pages into Spanish (28%)
 - Training staff on how to connect people to professional interpretation services (32%)

5. NDEM Language Access Services and Procedures

Identified vital documents include the following:

- Emergency Communications and Evacuation Alerting
- Preparedness and Safety materials
- Planning Guidance issued to clients for NRS required plans
- Public Signage (i.e. evacuation, sheltering, disaster resource center signage deployed by the Division)
- Office Signage

The following items are not considered “vital documents” but to best serve LEP individuals, NDEM seeks to translate the following information into Spanish should funds be made available.

- Informational letters sent to customers
- Outreach pamphlets and related materials
- Website
- Portfolio-related information (i.e., Awards)

- Meeting notices and support material upon request (Meeting Date, Time and Location will automatically be translated on website for each meeting. Customers can request translated support material.)

Currently the only means for the Division to have documents translated for LEP individuals is to contract the appropriate professional translation services. The Division has identified the most appropriate documents for translation which include any safety-related information, essential forms, and public signage.

NDEM Bilingual Staff

NDEM has one Bilingual Staff as of February 2025. This employee is not a certified translator.

NDEM Dual-Role Staff

The Division will explore increasing staff capacity to (2) dual-role administrative staff employees. A dual-role assistant PIO is recommended.

Oral/Sign Language Services

When oral/sign language services are requested, the Division utilizes state approved contractors that specialize in interpretation and translation services. The State of Nevada background checks and approves contractors ensuring they are fully capable of providing the services requested.

Written Language Services

When written language services are requested, the Division utilizes state approved contractors that specialize in written translation services. The State of Nevada background checks and approves contractors ensuring they are fully capable of providing the services requested.

Community Outreach and Engagement

NDEM is committed to ensuring that the LEP community is aware of and able to access all available language services. NDEM will explore a variety of options to better publicize improved language services in the community. The Division will also be looking for opportunities to better engage LEP individuals by increasing staff capacity to meaningfully engage the LEP community.

Procedures and Resources for LEP Community Outreach:

Using a variety of means the Division seeks information to better understand and serve the public. Examples of LEP community outreach and engagement.

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- Plan Ahead Nevada translated in Spanish.
- Created Evacuation preparedness materials in Spanish.
- When attending tabling events in which staff expect to encounter LEP individuals bilingual staff translate handouts into Spanish to be shared at tabling events.
- The Division actively seeks out groups and agencies that work with LEP communities to seek out advice as to how to better serve LEP communities.

Providing Notice of Language Assistance Services

The Division will provide notification of the language services it provides at all relevant points of contact including but not limited to offices, and on the NDEM website.

Cultural Competency Resources

The Division does not currently own or have access to relevant resources or training materials in relation to cultural competencies. The Division will explore opportunities to acquire these resources and training materials. The Division will also request that the State of Nevada draft and develop these resources for agency use.

6. NDEM Language Access Services

NDEM requires its staff to follow the procedures described below to ensure meaningful access to available language services.

Language Access Procedures

Identifying Client Language Needs and Preferred Language: The following procedures should be adhered to when interacting with LEP individuals.

1. Interact appropriately with LEP clients.
2. Determine clients' preferred language.
3. Inform clients of the availability of language services.
4. Record and track LEP client language preferences so that the data will follow them throughout their interactions with NDEM.

Accessing Appropriate Oral/Sign Language Services:

Staff should seek appropriate oral/sign language services as outlined below.

- The preferred method of serving LEP clients is by using competent bilingual staff able to provide services directly to the clients in their preferred language.
- Staff should seek assistance from state-approved contractors that specialize in professional translation services when a customer, client, or member of the public requires translations services that staff cannot provide.
 - Staff should recognize that certain circumstances may require specialized interpretation and translation services even when staff with bilingual abilities are available.
 - Please use this [link](#) to find State-approved translation services.
- If there are no competent bilingual staff or professional translation services available at the time of the request, staff must make a sincere effort to accommodate customers as quickly as possible to make sure LEP individuals are provided meaningful, timely access to the services NDEM provides.

Accessing Appropriate Written Language Services:

Any customer, client or member of the public may request any documents be translated into a language other than English to meet their language preference needs. NDEM will make a sincere effort to provide those translated documents and notices as quickly as possible.

Language Services Quality Assurance:

NDEM utilizes state-approved contractors that specialize in interpretation and translation services.

7.Evaluation of and Recommendations for NDEM's Language Access Plan

At a minimum, NDEM will review, evaluate, and update its LAP biennially.

Parties Responsible for LAP Maintenance:

The Language Access Coordinator will work with Division Leadership and staff to ensure the LAP is reviewed on a biennial basis and updated as needed.

Criteria and Methods for LAP Evaluation: NDEM will track and monitor how often translation services are utilized, will work to increase staff capacity to better serve LEP individuals and will review any comments from the public to make any necessary revisions to the plan, if needed.

Performance Monitoring Data: NDEM will add any pertinent data and information in subsequent versions of the LAP. The Division will also continue to collect and analyze staff feedback to help determine how effectively we are serving LEP individuals.

Performance Monitoring Data:

The Nevada Division of Emergency Management will add pertinent data and information in subsequent versions of the LAP. The Division will also continue to collect and analyze staff feedback to help determine how effectively we are serving LEP individuals.

8. Costs to Implement NDEM LAP

The Nevada Division of Emergency Management will identify, assess, and implement any proposed changes to the LAP as part of its biennial LAP revision process.

Top Languages Identified for translation of vital documents and high priority are:

1. Spanish
2. Tagalong
3. Mandarin Chinese
4. Cantonese
5. Arabic
6. Vietnamese
7. Korean

NDEM Client Tracking System

NDEM does not currently have a client tracking system developed to capture and track total LEP clients served, total indigenous served, total refugees served, language preferences of individuals, literacy level of individuals, and/or the services/programs these groups of individuals are accessing. NDEM does not currently have the staff or funding to support a client tracking system.

Estimated Cost for Implementation of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management Implementation NRS 232.0081		
Service Provided	Up-Front Cost in Dollars	Annual Cost in Dollars
Vital Documents	7,000	10,000

Translation and Production of Division Publications (Regulations) (start in FY27)	(start in FY27)	30,000
Transcription Services	600	600
Total Cost		40,600

Total Up Front Costs - \$7,600

Total Annual Costs - \$40,600

The Division has built in a 15% contingency in the proposed Language Access Plan Work Program for unforeseen challenges, which brings the anticipated cost for FY27 and FY28 to: \$53,590. NDEM was unable to include this request in the 2025-2026 legislative budget. We will seek funding through a future Interim Finance Committee (IFC) request.