

# Language Access Plan



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## Introduction

As part of ensuring meaningful access to programs and services, the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS) adopted a Language Access Policy on May 22, 2023, which requires each CalHHS department or office's programs to develop a Language Access Plan. The goal of this work is to ensure that CalHHS and its departments and offices provide meaningful access to information, programs, benefits, and services to people with limited English proficiency (LEP) and ensure that language is not a barrier to accessing vital health and social services.

This document is the Language Access Plan for the CalHHS Office of the Secretary and CalHHS's five offices: the Center for Data Insights and Innovation (CDII), the Office of Law Enforcement Services (OLES), the Office of Technology and Systems Integration (OTSI), the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR), and the Office of the Surgeon General.

In developing this 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, and how we currently provide information and services in languages other than English.

## CalHHS Programs and Services

CalHHS oversees 12 departments and five offices that provide a wide range of services in the areas of health care, mental health, public health, substance use disorder services, income assistance, social services, and assistance to people with disabilities.

Our mission is to work together with counties, cities, and communities, as well as our public, private, faith, and educational partners to make California a healthy, vibrant, inclusive place to live, play, work, and learn.

Most CalHHS programs and services are administered by the departments we oversee. This plan does not address those programs and services, but rather the programs, services, and information provided directly to the public by the CalHHS Office of the Secretary and five associated Offices. These are:

- **The Office of Law Enforcement Services (OLES).** OLES provides independent oversight of investigations conducted by the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) that involve State personnel at State Hospitals and Developmental Centers. OLES accepts complaints from the public concerning allegations of misconduct at DSH and DDS facilities via the OLES hotline phone number or online using the OLES Complaint Form.
- **The Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR)** promotes trauma responsive, culturally informed, gender honoring, and developmentally appropriate services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system that support the youths' successful transition into adulthood. In addition to data collection and technical assistance to counties and other stakeholders, OYCR interfaces directly with the public primarily

through the Ombudsperson. The OYCR Ombudsperson helps youth in a juvenile justice facility in California solve problems with how they are being treated. The Ombudsperson is an independent problem-solver responsible for investigating complaints and works to resolve them for the people involved.

- **The Center for Data Insights and Innovation (CDII)**. CDII works to improve the lives of all Californians by turning data into insights, knowledge, and equitable action. CDII produces Health Care Quality Report Cards that show the quality of health care for Californians who get their care through Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs). The target audience is Californians with commercial or Medicare coverage who want information to help them choose better quality health care. CDII also operates the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, which serves as the institutional review board for CalHHS. The role of the CPHS is to ensure that research involving human subjects is conducted ethically and with minimal risk to participants. Additional CDII programs interface primarily with other government entities, health care providers, and vendors, and do not provide services to the public or program participants.
- **The Office of Technology and Systems Integration (OTSI)**, procures, manages and delivers technology systems that support the delivery of health and human services to Californians. OTSI interfaces primarily with other state departments and vendors in its operations and does not provide services directly to the public or program participants.
- **The Office of the Surgeon General** advises the Governor and serves as a spokesperson on matters of public health in California.

## Language Access Requirements

In planning for how to provide meaningful language access moving forward, CalHHS reviewed the following four factors for each of our programs:

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 our agency and costs of language services.

We have also considered the specific requirements in the CalHHS Language Access Policy and any other program-specific laws or requirements.

Please note that this plan does not address CalHHS or its Offices' reporting on the biennial language survey required under the Dymally Alatorre Bilingual Services Act.

## Providing Notice to People with LEP and Identifying Language Preference

This section includes how CalHHS and its Offices will notify the public about available language access services. Below is a check list of tools we will use to notify the public of these services.

- Translated notices in public waiting areas in the following languages:
  - **Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Korean.**
- Translated taglines on English language forms
- Translated taglines on Office websites

For services that CalHHS Offices provide directly to individuals (i.e., the OYCR Ombudsperson's Office and the OLES complaint intake process), Office staff, or the relevant complaint or intake form, collects an individual's language preference upon intake or request for services. This information is recorded in an individual's case file or client record.

## Language Services

This section includes the actions CalHHS will take to provide information and services in languages other than English. These services include:

- Direct in-language communication, where a state staff person communicates directly with a member of the public in a non-English language;
- Interpretation, where spoken or signed language is converted from one language to another to facilitate real time communication between state staff and a member of the public;
- Translation, where written text is converted from one language to another.

### Direct In-Language Communication

Only certified bilingual staff are permitted to communicate with the public in languages other than English. The human resources functions, including bilingual staff certification, for CalHHS Offices are provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). CDSS staff assess employees' verbal fluency for the following languages: Armenian, Cantonese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Employees' bilingual fluency for other languages, including American Sign Language, is evaluated by a contractor or another department. CDSS follows the California Department of Human Resources' (CalHR) process for bilingual oral fluency examination and certification. For certification, employees must pass a language fluency exam, conducted in accordance with applicable standards, with results that correlate to the Interagency Language Roundtable scale.

### Interpretation

Public contacts are any in-person, video, or telephone-based interactions with members of the public. Oral and sign language interpretation is provided on request for any public contact

through on-demand vendors via telephone or video remote interpretation, and public contact staff are trained in how to access these services. In-person or video interpretation may also be provided through contracted vendors for public meetings or other events, also through contracted vendors. Interpretation requires a higher level of language proficiency and specialized skill than direct in-language communication. Certified bilingual staff at CalHHS are not qualified to provide interpretation services, as no additional testing or training is provided beyond the bilingual certification that qualifies bilingual staff to engage in direct in-language communication. As such, when interpretation between English and another language is needed, CalHHS relies only on vendor-provided interpreters.

### Translation

Each CalHHS Office is responsible for identifying and translating its vital documents and essential website content in accordance with the CalHHS Language Access Policy and the four-factor analysis under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Vital documents for CalHHS Offices include but are not limited to complaint forms, posters, brochures, and other materials notifying individuals of their rights and responsibilities. Staff involved in creating new documents will be trained in how to identify whether a document is vital and the process for document translation.

CalHHS Offices are responsible for identifying and translating their essential website content. At a minimum, this includes an introductory page with basic information about each Office and its programs or services, as well as taglines advising of the availability of free oral interpretation services and written translations of English language content. This content will be translated into at least the top 5 languages spoken by people with LEP in California, per the CalHHS policy. In addition, this content will be provided in the form of ASL video clips on Offices' websites.

Translation of CalHHS vital documents and essential website content will be provided by qualified translation vendors or certified bilingual staff of the Department of Social Services, Translation Services Section, in accordance with [CalHR requirements](#). In the event that communications from members of the public are received in languages other than English, those communications and any necessary responses will be translated by qualified vendors or certified bilingual staff from the Department of Social Services, Translation Services Section.

## Training Staff

This section includes information on how CalHHS staff are trained to provide language access services to the public.

### Training Plan

#### Public Facing Employees

Language access training will be provided to all current public-facing employees no later than December 1, 2024, and at least annually thereafter. New staff hired into public contact positions will receive language access training within their first three months of employment.

Public-facing employee training will include, at a minimum:

- The CalHHS language access policy
- How to identify an individual's language preference
- Processes and procedures for providing language assistance services, including how to access interpretation and translation assistance
- How to work effectively with interpreters (in person, telephone, video, as applicable)

#### Non-Public Facing Employees

Certain employees who are not in public contact positions may also need to receive language access training. Specifically, employees who are involved in the development of public-facing documents or other materials, those involved in developing and updating CalHHS websites, and those involved in planning and executing public meetings will receive training on the definition of vital documents and essential website content, as well as process and procedures for providing language assistance services, including how to access interpretation and translation assistance. This training will be provided annually.

## Monitoring and Updating LAP

This section describes how CalHHS will monitor language access services and update this Language Access Plan at least every two years. This information will ensure that we are in compliance with the CalHHS Language Access Policy and address processes and procedures being used to deliver meaningful language access to members of the public and recipients of services.

CalHHS will create a monitoring program or process to ensure implementation of details included in the Language Access Plan. This process will entail:

- Identification of training needs
- Assessing training effectiveness
- Assessing employee awareness of language access policies and procedures
- Assessing effectiveness of interpretation and translation services
- Check-in with community partners and stakeholders
- Tracking costs of providing language access services
- Data collection

Every two years, CalHHS will generate and update the list of minimum threshold languages for the translation of vital documents and essential web content. Consistent with CalHHS Policy, the CalHHS Language Access Plan will be reviewed, revised if necessary, and resubmitted to CalHHS every two years. Revisions will address any changes in the Title VI four-factor analysis; whether existing policies and procedures are meeting the needs of LEP individuals; whether staff is sufficiently trained; and whether identified resources for assistance are up-to-date, available, accessible, and viable.



Reevaluations will incorporate, as appropriate, new programs, new legal requirements, additional vital documents, and community input on the Language Access Plan.

## Complaint Process

Members of the public or recipients of services should direct complaints regarding language access to:

Complaint Process Contact Name: **Maureen Keffer**

Email: **[Maureen.keffer@chhs.ca.gov](mailto:Maureen.keffer@chhs.ca.gov)**

## Document List

The following is a list of CalHHS's vital documents. Included are the five languages required by the CalHHS Language Access Policy and any others identified as threshold languages pursuant to analyses under Title VI, Dymally-Alatorre and any program-specific language access laws. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all documents CalHHS translates; rather, this is a list of all documents determined to be vital pursuant to Title VI.

Program or Service Name	Form #	Form Name	Spanish	Chinese (traditional)	Chinese (simplified)	Tagalog	Vietnamese	Korean	Additional Languages
OYCR Ombudsperson		<i>Youth Bill of Rights</i>	✓	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	
OLES		<i>Complaint Form</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	
OLES		DDS Posters	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	
OLES		DSH Posters	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	
CDII - Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects		Participant's Bill of Rights for Medical Research	✓	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	
CDII - Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects		Participant's Bill of Rights for Non-Medical Research	✓	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	<i>In Progress</i>	