



Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

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DEPARTMENTAL LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN (DLAP)



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DEPARTMENTAL LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN (DLAP)

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

A. Department Mission

The Mission of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is to partner with the community to proactively prevent crime, enforce the law fairly and enhance the public's trust through transparency and accountability. Our unwavering commitment to serving the diverse communities of Los Angeles County includes working to remove barriers to effective communication for speakers of languages other than English. Providing equitable language access will help improve life outcomes for all County residents.

The Language Access Workgroup is currently comprised of sworn and civilian personnel, and can be reached at LanguageAccessWorkgroup@lasd.org.

B. Department Priority Languages

- Spanish
- Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese)
- Korean
- Tagalog
- Armenian
- Farsi
- Vietnamese
- Russian

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department offers public safety services throughout Los Angeles County. The determination of this language selection was made based on 2022 US Census American Community Survey data and the [L.A. County Language Diversity](#) equity explorer. The [Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act](#) establishes the requirement of maintaining effective communication between the public and government entities.

SECTION 2: DEPARTMENT'S LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

C. General Policy Statement

- It is the policy of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to provide accurate and effective communication with members of the public regardless of their level of English proficiency. The Department shall strive to eliminate or reduce, to the maximum extent practicable, the limited English proficiency of community members as a barrier to accessing assistance or utilization of Department programs and services.

D. Scope of Policy

- This policy applies to employees of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department who work in facilities, stations, and units that interact with the public. These employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to assist individuals with limited English proficiency in accessing Department services—at no cost to those individuals. This is in line with both federal and state mandates, Department Policy, and the Board of Supervisors' [Countywide Language Access Policy](#) from April 2024.

SECTION 3: KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Manual of Policy and Procedures section 3-09/004.00 – Limited English Proficiency and Language Assistance Plan uses the term **Limited English Proficiency** (LEP). LEP individuals are defined as persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. LEP individuals may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding) but may still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing).
- **Translation** is rendering written communication into another language while preserving meaning. **Interpretation** is rendering spoken or signed language into another language while maintaining the meaning and tone of the language.

SECTION 4: PROCEDURES

This section is intended to set expectations with the public about the level of language assistance they might expect and the types of language assistance they may encounter.

Major Points of Contact	Procedures	Available Resources
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911 calls	-Determine preferred language -Connect 3 rd party language service provider onto the call	VOIANCE Language Services. Patrol Station-specific phone number and access code have been emailed to each station's operations, training, and desk personnel.
Station Counter	-Determine preferred language -Follow Department policy on LEP by locating a qualified bilingual person	-Department bilingual personnel identified through contacting Sheriff's Information Bureau -3 rd party agreement vendors through ISD
Arrest/Booking	-Determine preferred language -Follow Department policy on LEP by locating a qualified bilingual person	-Department bilingual personnel -3 rd party agreement vendors through ISD
Courts	-Determine preferred language -Follow Department policy on LEP by locating a qualified bilingual person	-Department bilingual personnel identified through contacting Sheriff's Information Bureau -3 rd party agreement vendors through ISD

E. Identifying Preferred Languages

- Department members shall take reasonable steps to ensure effective and accurate communication with a LEP individual when providing assistance or Department programs and services. This can include use of the "Spoken Language" card to which an LEP individual can point to the language they speak. Deputies can carry these cards on their person. Station lobbies, units with public counters, and custody facilities have access to a poster that facilitates communication with members of the public.
- To communicate with LEP individuals, Department members should proceed as follows:
 - First, engage in direct in-language communication (i.e., without interpretation or translation between English and the non-English language) with the individual if the member is: a) a

qualified bilingual in the relevant non-English language; or b) is self-identified as proficient in the relevant non-English language. Each Sheriff's station shall maintain separate lists of members who are either qualified bilingual or self-identified as proficient in a non-English language.

- If the member is unable to engage in direct in-language communication, he/she shall obtain interpretation assistance of a Department member who is qualified as bilingual or self-identified as bilingual in the relevant non-English language.
- If unable to engage in either of the above, and for the limited purpose of obtaining preliminary information in the field, a department member may use bilingual family, friends, or bystanders for interpreting in very informal, non-confrontational contexts. If follow-up information or an investigation is needed, within a reasonable amount of time, the Department member or supervisor should contact the LEP individual using a qualified bilingual member, self-identified bilingual members, or VOIANCE Language Services to confirm the preliminary information collected and to obtain additional information.
- Department members should be aware that using bilingual family, friends, or bystanders to interpret could result in a breach of confidentiality, a conflict of interest, or an inadequate interpretation. Department members should avoid using persons biased for or against one of the parties and minor children under the age of 12 to assist in interpretation unless there is no available alternative. Department members should also avoid using a family member as an interpreter in a matter involving domestic violence absent exigent circumstances.
- If the above options are unavailable, use the non-emergency number for VOIANCE LANGUAGE SERVICES.
- Each patrol station's VESTA 9-1-1 system also allows for connectivity to VOIANCE and the use of a qualified, vetted, and trained 3rd party interpreter during emergent calls.
- The Department is currently in development of a Bilingual Index app that facilitates the quick identification of Department bilingual speakers. The tool will allow users to identify speakers by Language and Unit of Assignment and will provide additional contextual information on the bilingual employees' cultural and/or regional aptitude.

- In extremely emergent situations where there is no time to connect with language services providers, Department members will use any means necessary, including mobile phone applications/AI to facilitate communication.

F. Vital documents

- The Department shall prioritize the translation of vital forms including Public Complaint forms, Inmate Complaint forms, Miranda Rights cards, Inmate Services forms, and Order to Disperse cards. These are the vital documents identified in the Department's LEP and Language Assistance Plan policy 3-09/004.00.

G. Policy on Untrained Interpreters (if one already exists)

- Personnel will use qualified bilingual persons as translators and interpreters as set forth in the Manual of Policy and Procedures. A "qualified" bilingual person as used in this plan is a qualified County interpreter (MPP 3-02/180.00, Bilingual Bonus), including employees or persons available through the civilian volunteer program or persons available through the Sheriff's Information Bureau's bilingual services program who have passed the Los Angeles County fluency examination for the language involved. Immigration authorities shall not be used as interpreters for law enforcement matters relating to individuals in Department custody, even if otherwise qualified. Language assistance should be provided at a time and place that avoids the effective denial of assistance, service, or rights to the LEP person.

Section 5: Notification of Language Assistance

The public facing nature of the Department necessitates the provision of language access at many points of contact. Static or digital signage advising of the availability of language access will be displayed at station lobbies, booking areas, and service desks in units that interact with the public. The policy currently reads as such:

- Station Facilities

Each station, in the respective booking/detention areas, shall prominently display signage, printed in English as well as the prevalent spoken language(s) for that Department station service area as determined by the unit commander, detailing information regarding access to the Bail

Commissioner, the Public Defender's Office, information on minor childcare, and the prisoner's right to complete three phone calls. In the event an LEP individual indicates they cannot read the posted information, Department personnel will make reasonable efforts to provide appropriate language services.

- Custody Facilities

To maintain consistency and uniformity, each facility shall post both the English and Spanish versions of the Custody Services Division Inmate Rules and Regulations as listed in Custody Division Manual section 7-33/000.00, "Inmate Rules and Regulations." For those inmates who are unable to read English or Spanish, provisions shall be made for the jail staff to verbally instruct them or provide them with material, in an understandable form, regarding jail rules and disciplinary procedures and penalties.

Section 6: Monitoring Language Assistance Effectiveness

This section speaks to how your Department will regularly assess the quality of language assistance provided to LOTE speakers.

H. Evaluation of Language Assistance

- The Department currently has 4,148 certified bilingual employees. There are currently 10 bilingual language examiners covering the languages of Armenian, Bengali, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Thai.
- Bilingual Certification is initiated by the Unit/Division based on the assignment which requires a fluency in both English and at least one foreign language as defined in Section 6.10.140 of the Los Angeles County Code. Personnel requesting bilingual certification undergo a testing process through Personnel Administration Bureau's-Professional Examinations Unit that assesses whether the candidate can read, speak, and/or write in the selected language. The Examination Material is provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources.
- We await direction from the Office of Immigrant Affairs as to how we can test and vet bilingual examiners for additional languages.

- Absent a certified Department language speaker, the Department utilizes vendors with Master Agreements through the Internal Services Department (ISD). The Department does not currently measure or gauge their qualifications in a quantifiable manner as we rely on ISD to select effective and qualified vendors.
- The Department will begin a pilot program to track the effectiveness of language access. The Department has created a form that personnel will complete once they encounter a LEP individual who requires Department services. As personnel complete the form and response are tallied, the Department will have more context as to the nature, location, and disposition of the request and the level of service provided.

I. Complaint Process

- In general, public complaints about personnel matters involving the Department can be made online at lasd.org/public-complaint, in person, by calling 1-800-698-TALK, or writing to any Sheriff's station, jail or facility. Complaints are taken on a form called the Watch Commander's Service Comment Report and, in most cases, are handled at the station or unit level. This mechanism can theoretically be used for language access complaints.
- The Department will investigate the complaint and speak with the involved personnel. Once the matter has been reviewed to conclusion, the complainant (reporting party) will receive a response. Should the Department find that the complaint is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action with respect to the involved employee(s) will take place.
- When filing a [complaint](#), language access complainants are encouraged to specify that their concerns involve language access and use the verbiage one of these categories:
 1. I didn't know I could ask for an interpreter or translation help.
 2. Information was not available regarding County programs and services in my language.
 3. The written translation was hard to understand.
 4. No County staff spoke my language to help me.
 5. The interpreter did not translate correctly.

Section 7: Training

- This DLAP will be disseminated to LASD employees from their executives in their chain of command.
- Any updates to the Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures, as necessitated by this DLAP, will be made per Department protocols through Field Operations Support Services (FOSS). The Office of Constitutional Policing will also have a role in ensuring the language access policy is prioritized by the Department.
- The Language Access Workgroup has worked with the Department's Video Production Unit to produce a short training video that explains the Department's language notification and access responsibilities. The video will be included in LMS and will outline the Department's legal responsibilities and procedures for securing an interpreter.
- A Sharepoint for language resources will be created and accessed Department wide.
- The AV-USDOJ settlement agreement requires specific compliance with LEP provisions. Antelope Valley personnel must sign an acknowledgement form that they understand the Department's Limited English Proficiency and Language Assistance Plan and understand that they will be held accountable for policy violations related to LEP.

Section 8: Community Outreach & Engagement

- The Department shall take reasonable steps to translate the LASD.org website into multiple languages, reflecting the communities served. The public-facing website can currently be translated into 21 languages at this time.
- The Sheriff's Department's service areas cover over 4,000 square miles. Effective policing necessitates the decentralized nature of most of our public safety services. When the Department hosts town halls and open houses, efforts will continue to be made to include Department language speakers that mirror the languages spoken in those particular communities. The language ARDI equity explorer will be shared with stations and public counters, especially the community relations deputy position, so that they remain aware of the priority languages in their jurisdiction. Community relations deputy positions will continue to liaise and engage with local business owners and community organizations specific to their station reporting district in an ongoing effort to understand and support language groups.
- The Department recognizes that there are ample opportunities to connect with our multicultural linguistic communities and enhance public trust with our law

enforcement agency, even outside of stations. This is true both for uniformed personnel *and* volunteers, such as community advisory council representatives, who are capable of fluently speaking other languages and understanding cultural colloquialisms.