



DES 1-01-34
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The policy of the Department of Economic Security (the Department) is to provide quality and timely language assistance services to customers with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to ensure meaningful access to programs, services, and activities. Each affected work unit of the Department shall:

- Develop and adhere to specific written procedures;
- Perform a needs and capacity assessment;
- Arrange for oral language assistance, as appropriate;
- Determine which of the Department documents meet the definition of a vital document;
- Translate vital documents into languages other than English;
- Provide notification to customers of the availability of language assistance services;
- Evaluate current Department Web sites for LEP compliance;
- Develop and implement standards to ensure LEP compliance on all future Web pages;
- Train all staff who are likely to have contact with Department customers and the management staff who support them;
- Develop and incorporate an accessible issue resolution process; and
- Monitor customer access to language assistance.

II. AUTHORITY

This LEP policy, in its entirety, applies to all Department entities and contractors who provide direct Department services to Department customers. The Department and all work units who provide services, information, or assistance to Department customers shall be responsible for development of procedures to ensure compliance with the Department LEP policy. Areas that do not provide services, information, or assistance to Department customers are not responsible for developing procedures but, at a minimum shall designate an LEP contact to ensure compliance.

The DES Director's Office of Equal Opportunity (DOEO) and the DES Policy and Planning Administration's (PPA) Policy Unit are responsible for review and approval of work unit LEP procedures. This review will be limited to ensuring the work unit LEP procedure is consistent and in compliance with the Department LEP policy.

III. PROCEDURES

This policy is supported by a departmental procedure which identifies how action related to this policy will be conducted, including responsibilities, time frames, and required actions. To view this procedure, access the link below.

[DES 1-01-34-01](#) [Limited English Proficiency Procedures](#)

In addition, specific Division procedures can be found at this intranet Web page:
<http://intranet.azdes.gov/main.aspx?menu=84&id=14558>.

IV. AUTHORITY

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.
Arizona Constitution, Article 28

Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d *et seq.* states, “No person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Regulations implementing Title VI provide in part at 45 C.F.R. Section 80.3 (b):

- (1) “A recipient [the Department is a ‘recipient’ under this law] under any program to which this part applies [generally any program that receives federal funds] may not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, on ground of race, or color, or national origin:
 - (i) Deny an individual any service, financial aid, or other benefit provided under the program;
 - (ii) Provide any service, financial aid, or other benefit to an individual which is different, or is provided in a different manner, from that provided to others in the program;
- (2) A recipient, in determining the types of services, financial aid, or other benefits, or facilities which will be provided under any such program or the class of individuals to whom, or the situations in which such services, financial aid or other benefits, or facilities will be provided ... *may not directly, or through contractual or other arrangements, utilize criteria or methods of administration which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination, because of their race, color or national origin, or have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishments of the objectives of the program with respect to individuals of a particular race, color, or national origin.*” (emphasis added)

V. DEFINITIONS

Customer: Any applicant, claimant, or recipient of Department services, including LEP customers.

Executive Leader: The Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, or their designee, with authority over a programmatic or administrative work unit.

Interpret: Providing a verbal translation between two or more persons in a language other than English. This may be done by on-site trained Department staff, contractors, or through commercially available resources, including but not limited to telephonic interpretation services.

Language Used Significantly: A language, other than English, that is used by five percent or 1,000 persons (whichever is smaller) who are eligible for a Department service or are likely to be directly affected by a Department program or activity in a specific geographic area.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Contact: The person within a work unit who is responsible for ensuring their program or administrative work unit is LEP compliant.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Customer: Any prospective, potential, or actual recipient of benefits or services from the Department who cannot speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits effective interaction with the Department. This includes LEP parents or guardians of minor children who are customers or LEP customers.

Non-Vital Documents: Documents that are not critical to access Department benefits and services.

Translate: Providing a written document in a language other than English.

Vital Document: A document that conveys information that affects the ability of the customer to make decisions about his or her participation in the program. The decision of whether a document is vital may depend upon the importance of the program information, encounter, or service involved, and the consequence to the LEP person if the information is not provided accurately or in a timely manner.

Work Unit: A program or administrative area within the Department. Work unit includes all Department work units as well as its contractors that provide direct service to Department customers.

VI. STANDARDS

A. Overview

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, requires that agencies take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities for persons with limited English proficiency. For the purposes of this Policy, individuals with LEP are defined as individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

The Department's LEP policy ensures that the Department and all Department services, regardless of funding source, comply with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by setting out standards for its work units to follow. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin by any entity receiving federal financial assistance. The Department prohibits administrative methods or procedures that have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination or defeating the objectives of these regulations.

In order to avoid discrimination on the grounds of national origin, all programs or activities administered by the Department shall take adequate steps to ensure that their procedures do not deny, or have the effect of denying, individuals with LEP equal access to benefits and services for which such persons qualify. This Policy defines Departmental responsibilities to ensure that individuals with LEP can communicate effectively.

B. General Statement

All Department staff shall provide services to Department customers in a manner that ensures the customer has meaningful access to their programs and activities for all persons, including those persons who have limited English proficiency.

C. Compliance and Enforcement

It is the responsibility of each Executive Leader overseeing a Department work unit, program, or administrative area to ensure that activities within the Executive Leader's work unit are conducted consistent with both the Department LEP policy and the specific work unit LEP procedures.

D. Work Unit Procedures

Each work unit identified as warranting language assistance services shall develop specific written procedures related to language assistance services applicable to its program activities. These procedures must be consistent with the standards listed in the Department LEP policy. Written procedures shall address the following areas:

1. Provision of language services generally;
2. Identification and assessment of language needs;
3. Oral language assistance services;
4. Written translations;
5. Oral and written notification of the availability of language services;
6. Issue resolution rights;
7. Staff training on language service provision; and
8. Monitoring access to language assistance.

E. Needs And Capacity Assessment

The Department shall employ a four-step process to determine the need and capacity for LEP services. Specifically, each work unit shall determine and indicate in writing if it has direct contact with Department customers. If a work unit determines that it does, then:

1. ***Each work unit shall identify the steps in their service delivery process and identify the anticipated number of customer interactions that occur at each of these steps.*** These steps could include points of contact with Department staff where customers get information or staff take an action that affects a customer's ability to meaningfully participate in a Department program or activity. These points of contact include Department offices, telephone numbers regularly used by the public, outreach activities, informational and operational Web sites, and written notices. These contacts may be face-to-face, telephonic, written, or electronic.

2. ***The Department shall identify the languages used by the populations it serves. Both the Department and each work unit shall use this information to determine the incidences in which the Department and work unit expect to interact with customers in various languages other than English.*** The Department shall use the most recent census data to determine overall language trends in Arizona. Other demographic data sources include information from other state agencies, commercial marketing data, school systems, community organizations, national ethnic organizations, the Internet, and internally gathered Department data. These trends will be used to determine the LEP population's alternative language needs. The Department will update this information with the issuance of new census data.
3. ***Each work unit shall annually assess the language assistance needs of its LEP customers and the capacity of its programs to meet these needs.*** Work unit procedures shall include the methods used to conduct this assessment, including areas where it intends to use departmentally produced data, and the frequency with which it will complete the assessment.
4. ***Each work unit shall implement a process for gathering and recording LEP customer language preferences:***
 - a. The work unit procedures shall include sufficient detail to identify how the work unit gathers language preference information, where it stores the information, and how it will make the information readily available for future contact with LEP customers and for statistics-gathering purposes.
 - b. Each work unit procedure shall include the use of an [LEP language binder](#) containing language preference materials in each local office. These [LEP language binders](#) are designed to provide an opportunity for LEP persons to self-declare their language preference during local office contacts. The Department shall prominently display the [LEP language binders](#) in all its offices in which customer interaction is anticipated. These binders are developed, transmitted, and maintained as a departmental function.

F. Oral Language Assistance

1. ***Each component, program, or administrative work unit of the Department shall arrange for oral language assistance to LEP customers in face-to-face and telephone contact:*** Work unit procedures shall identify the processes for providing oral language assistance and the method for obtaining these services. The oral language assistance portion of the work unit procedures for identifying individuals with LEP shall be consistent with those outlined in this policy. LEP services shall be provided free of charge upon the request of the customer. Work units may identify approaches specific to their work unit, but all procedures shall include the minimum Department standard of ensuring that the provision of bilingual/interpretive services is prompt and without undue delays. Necessary time frames may vary based upon the nature and importance of the service. For example, time frames for emergency services may be different from those time frames for non-emergency services. In most circumstances, this requires language services to be available within reasonable time frames during all operating hours by:

- a. Establishing interpreter service contracts. The Department maintains contracts with multiple vendors to provide verbal interpretation. The Office of Procurement shall provide direction to all work units on how to access and use contracts for interpreter services. Work units shall, in their procedures, identify how they shall request and coordinate these services. In addition, services through commercially available telephonic interpretation services shall be available when needed.
 - b. Implementing a means to compensate bilingual staff. Subject to the availability of funds, the Department shall have a bilingual stipend program in place that compensates bilingual staff who meet required standards for performing verbal interpretation services. Work unit procedures shall identify the offices in which a need for bilingual staff has been established and which languages are needed.
 - c. Orally translating vital documents into languages other than English for LEP customers.
2. ***Location and Accessibility of LEP Services:*** Work units shall ensure that their procedures include provisions that respond to the language needs of the populations in each area in which the work unit provides services. Each work unit shall determine the most efficient and effective means to meet these needs. Accommodations such as translations of commonly requested documents, bilingual staff, and telephone interpreter services should be made available at locations that are readily accessible to the public, such as information desks, security checkpoints, and public information telephone lines.
3. ***Use of Bilingual Staff: The Department will make reasonable efforts to recruit and have bilingual staff*** employed in programs and activities where the number or percentage of LEP customers or potential LEP customers is statistically significant, or where the frequency of contact with such persons makes the employment of bilingual staff a more cost effective, efficient, and effective mode for communication:
- a. Each work unit shall make a decision to employ bilingual staff after a needs assessment, with due consideration given to the budgetary, personnel, and other constraints of the work unit.
 - b. Bilingual staff or contractors must be assessed for bilingual proficiency. Work units should ensure that individuals providing interpretative services possess a level of fluency and comprehension appropriate to the specific nature, type, and purpose of information at issue.
4. ***Unacceptable Practices:*** Work units should only use family members or friends to interpret for LEP customers if the LEP customer insists on using the friend or family member after Department-provided language services have been offered. Minor children should never be used to interpret, except in emergencies. If additional services are required, any information obtained utilizing a minor child as the interpreter shall be verified through an approved interpreter after the emergency situation has closed.

G. Translation of Written Materials

- 1. ***Each work unit shall identify its vital documents.*** Vital documents include, but are not limited to, the following for any service, benefit, program, or administrative work unit provided by or contracted with the Department:

- a. Applications;
- b. Recertification or renewal applications;
- c. Documents that require a response;
- d. Letters or other written documents that contain information regarding participation in a program;
- e. Notices of eligibility criteria, authorization or denial, applicant or participant rights, benefit or service changes, hearings, and actions affecting parental custody or child support;
- f. Consent and complaint forms;
- g. Appeal rights and grievance procedures;
- h. Written tests that do not assess English language competency but test competency for a particular license, job, or skill for which knowing English is not required.
- i. Notices advising LEP persons of free language assistance; and
- j. Any other document that the work unit deems vital due to the importance of the program, information, encounter, or service involved and the consequence to the LEP person if the information in question is not provided accurately or in a timely manner.

2. ***Each work unit shall translate its vital documents according to the requirements outlined in the [DES Translation Requirements](#) document. Documents identified as vital shall be translated into languages used significantly by its LEP customers.*** The Department maintains two approved processes for having written material, including required posters and signs, translated to languages other than English:

- a. The Department Office of Graphics and Design; or
- b. A state-approved translation contract.

Using one of these two processes ensures the quality of the translation activity. Department documents for official public use may not be translated using any other method. Work unit procedures shall identify which method for translation will be used within the work unit. The work unit procedure shall also include a listing of the documents that meet the definition of a vital document.

3. ***Each work unit shall respond to written communications from LEP customers in a manner that is consistent with this policy.*** Work unit procedures shall address a process to ensure that LEP customer case records are noted as LEP when work unit staff receive information from a customer in a language other than English. Work unit staff shall interact with the individual in a manner consistent with the Department LEP policy unless the customer indicates otherwise.

4. ***Each work unit should be sensitive to the literacy levels of the LEP public.*** There are situations in which the use of translated written material may not meet the needs of some Department LEP customers. Some languages are historically unwritten or some LEP customers may be illiterate in their native language. Work unit procedures must ensure that staff use the most effective means to communicate with LEP individuals. This may include either verbal or written communication.

H. Institutional Considerations for Translation

1. ***Each work unit shall ensure that the public is aware of available interpretation and translation assistance.*** Each work unit shall include on all documents that are not translated into a language other than English a statement in each significantly used language indicating that all persons have the right to free language assistance and how the assistance can be obtained. This notification shall be included on all documents that are routinely disseminated to the public, including electronic text. This language shall be placed near the front of the document in a format that brings attention to it.
2. ***Each work unit shall ensure that its electronic sources for providing vital information are LEP compliant.*** The Department and each work unit shall ensure that its Web sites and other electronic sources for vital information or documents provide this information in significantly used languages other than English. Web sites shall prominently display access to non-English versions of this information on any page that may be used as the initial point of contact for LEP individuals. Web sites shall also identify methods to access language assistance free of charge.
3. ***The Department shall produce and each work unit shall readily make available to its customers, an LEP Rights pamphlet in English and all other significantly used languages.*** The pamphlet shall explain that LEP services are available from the Department free of charge and shall explain procedures for accessing these services.
4. ***Each work unit may translate non-vital documents into languages other than English, except to the extent prohibited by the Arizona Constitution, Article 28, English as the Official Language.***

I. Training

Training shall include a consistent message explaining why it is important for the Department to ensure that LEP customers are served in a manner consistent with this policy. Persons with specific knowledge of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the requirements contained therein shall develop this training. Training shall include, but not be limited to:

1. ***General training.*** For all staff on the importance of providing services for individuals with LEP.
2. ***Work unit-specific training.*** To ensure that work unit staff that deal with or are likely to have contact with Department customers are trained on the LEP policies and procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, specific training for staff who have LEP customer contact to work effectively with in-person and telephone interpreters.

3. ***Technical assistance training.*** For LEP contact staff.
4. ***Management level training.*** For supervisors and administrative staff assisting staff with direct customer contact.

J. Providing Notice to LEP Customers of the Availability of Language Assistance Services and Outreach

Work unit procedures shall identify how to inform LEP customers of the availability of free language assistance services. The work unit shall make the notification at the first point of contact. Notification includes signs in intake areas or other customer entry points, outreach documents such as brochures or booklets, LEP posters and pamphlets, and telephone menus in significantly used languages:

1. The work unit shall provide the notification of free language assistance in the language of the LEP customer. LEP persons should also be advised that they may use an interpreter of their own choosing at their own expense.
2. Consistent with its commitment to partnership and outreach, the Department engages in comprehensive outreach to ensure awareness by LEP persons of its programs and activities. Outreach includes the use of ethnic media such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, Web sites, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations at local levels that provide social services, healthcare, and classes. Work unit procedures shall acknowledge its commitment to support the Department's outreach efforts in relation to the programs it administers and the services it provides.
3. Work unit procedures shall include provisions to ensure that Web pages accessible to members of the general public include information on the availability of language assistance.
4. The Department shall maintain copies of written documents such as flyers or pamphlets intended to be used to notify the public of language assistance. Pamphlets shall be maintained in locations in which direct service to Department customers is provided and shall be readily available to customers without the need of Department staff intervention.

K. Monitor Access to Language Assistance

1. ***Each work unit shall institute procedures to monitor the accessibility and quality of language assistance activities for LEP customers.*** Work unit procedures shall include specific time frames and methods to reassess language assistance activities to ensure that the services provided by the work unit address the actual needs of the LEP customers based on actual experiences of the work unit. Work unit procedures shall ensure that such monitoring is completed no less than every 12 months. Work unit procedures should include a process for obtaining community and customer feedback in this activity through surveys, questionnaires, or other means. Data collection and record keeping are key to an effective monitoring and compliance system. In order to determine the validity of any language assistance complaints, it may be necessary to analyze and review data that reflect how the work unit provides services to LEP customers. Data collection also allows the work unit to obtain an overview of how their services are provided. The work unit procedure shall include data collection and record keeping requirements to ensure that these assessments are fact-based and reflect actual current activity. The work unit shall assess the effectiveness of its LEP policies based on:

- a. Current LEP populations in service areas or population or specific populations encountered;
 - b. Frequency of encounters with LEP customers;
 - c. Nature and importance of activities to LEP customers;
 - d. Availability of resources, including technological advances, additional resources, and the costs imposed;
 - e. Whether existing assistance is meeting the needs of the LEP customers;
 - f. Whether staff know and understand the LEP procedures; and
 - g. Whether identified sources for assistance are still available and viable.
2. ***Each work unit shall develop and maintain a data collection system that ensures the availability of data that includes the race and ethnicity of, customers served in its programs, the frequency of contact, and the primary language of those persons.*** Work unit procedures shall require the collection of data on which the work unit has based language needs assessment; the number of LEP customers, by language group, who received language services; names and classifications of staff receiving training and dates of training. Work unit procedures shall include activities that are designed to ensure that the work unit:
- a. Has up-to-date information on language needs in the communities it serves;
 - b. Has an adequate number of oral translators to ensure timely compliance with LEP needs;
 - c. Translates vital written documents into the languages needed by the communities being served;
 - d. Has adequate supplies of translated materials;
 - e. Trains those staff required to be trained in LEP activities; and
 - f. Keeps notification material up-to-date.

Work unit procedures shall also reflect those activities that it must perform in order to comply with overall Department monitoring practices.

L. Provision of Technical Assistance

Each work unit shall identify an LEP contact for work unit staff. Work unit procedures shall include a process to ensure that LEP-related questions that arise are addressed in a timely and efficient manner. The LEP contact shall be available to coordinate efforts towards compliance with the Department's LEP policy and the work unit's LEP procedures. Work unit procedures shall, at a minimum, include a process for direct service staff to elevate LEP questions to their LEP contact. The work unit procedure shall also include time frames for the LEP contact to respond or to elevate the question to the DOEO. The DOEO shall provide technical assistance to the LEP contact or solicit additional assistance from the Director's Office or the Office of the Attorney General.

M. Issue Resolution

1. **Work unit level process:** Work units shall create a procedure outlining an LEP issue-resolution process that shall be used to resolve a concern or dispute arising from any action or inaction taken by Department staff in administering programs or providing services. The work unit process shall be the Level I resolution process.
 - a. **Level I:** The Level I procedure shall require that Department customers are advised in writing of the appropriate procedure to raise an LEP-related concern. This notification also advises the customer of their right to file a complaint at any point in time with the federal agency responsible for the program for which they are applying.
 - b. Work units shall ensure that any forms needed to request review of LEP-related decisions are available at any location in which work unit customers may receive services.
 - c. The work unit shall conduct the Level I procedure in a language that is understandable by the person raising the concern. The work unit shall make appropriate use of interpreter services, contracted provider services, or other resources needed to facilitate the dispute resolution process.
 - d. The Level I process shall include the following:

The manager in charge at the site where an LEP-related concern is filed or his or her designee will review the complaint with the assistance of the work unit LEP contact. Staff shall reduce oral complaints to writing and shall place them in the appropriate case record. At any point in the process, the manager is empowered to resolve the complaint using methods and practices outlined in the Department LEP policy and the work unit LEP procedures. It is the intention of the Department and the work unit that most LEP issues will be resolved at this level. The Level I resolution process shall be completed no later than three days following the day of receipt of the complaint unless the LEP customer requests a delay in the process. The manager shall ensure that all reasonable measures are pursued to immediately verbally notify the LEP customer of the outcome of the issue resolution. The Department shall provide a written confirmation of the decision within five business days.
2. **Department Level Process:** The Department process is initiated whenever a LEP customer expresses in writing to the Department that the work unit attempt to resolve the issue at the Level I process has not met their need. This LEP issue escalation process ensures the rights of LEP customers to have concerns resolved in their preferred language. Inherent in this process is the availability of the DOEO to assist either the Department or the LEP customer in resolving a concern. This process conforms to other issue resolution/grievance processes in regard to required time frames, based upon the program(s) from which the LEP customer is seeking service.
 - a. **Level II:** If no resolution can be reached at Level I, the notification to the LEP customer shall include the right to pursue the grievance, the time frames, and the process to request verbally or in writing an Executive Leader review and decision. The Executive Leader may request assistance from the DOEO with the cooperation of the work unit LEP contact. Level II action shall occur within five working days of receipt of the request for review of the Level I decision from the LEP customer.

The Executive Leader shall ensure that the LEP customer receives written notice of the outcome of the Level II review and advises the LEP customer of the method and time frame to obtain a Level III review.

- b. **Level III:** In the rare instances where no resolution can be accomplished at the Level II review, the LEP customer may request a final decision from DOEO. If the LEP customer is not satisfied with the DOEO-proposed resolution, the DOEO will again inform the LEP customer of their rights to file with the appropriate federal agency. This process will be completed within five working days of receipt of the request for review of the Level II decision from the LEP customer.

N. Reporting

Work units shall submit no less than annually a report to the DOEO detailing the information required in Section VI.K. of this policy. Work units shall utilize the departmental monitoring survey instrument, which identifies all mandatory points of review for each work unit. The DOEO shall report the results to the Director and the Department's Policy and Planning Administration (PPA).