Language Access Plan

1. **Purpose and Authority**

The State of Nevada, through Nevada Revised Statute Chapter 232 and Federal guidance in Title VI address the barriers persons with limited English proficiency face in accessing governmental programs and services. Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language. Moreover, it is the responsibility of government to provide that access:

State and local agencies and entities that receive public money have an obligation to provide meaningful, timely access for persons with limited English proficiency to the programs and services of those agencies and entities.

The Administrative Services Division (ASD) is committed to compliance with NRS 232.0081 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006) in ensuring meaningful access to State services and programs for individuals with limited English proficiency.

In general, the ASD provides services to agencies, rather than “persons” as referenced in NRS 232.0081, so much of the statutory guidance is not applicable. However, ASD has created this plan in the spirit of assuring that personnel have protocols to follow when interacting with individuals who have limited English proficiency, order to fulfill our mission to fully provide fiscal services to our client agencies.

1. **General Policy**

The ASD recognizes that from time-to-time individuals who have LEP could seek information related to one of the ASD’s client agencies. In general, the ASD will refer inquiries about each client agency program to the subject agency and rely on client agency Language Access Plans (LAP) to accommodate LEP individual communications.

In cases where this is not possible, the ASD adopts the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to the ASD services, services of client agencies and generally communicate effectively. The ASD will adopt the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to the services the ASD provides.

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

With this goal in mind, the ASD endorses the following policies:

• The ASD 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 a LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive agency services.

**ASD Language Access Coordinator:**

Administrative Services Officer IV

775-531-3151

1. **Profile of the ASD’s LEP Clients**

As stated above, the ASD does not provide services to “persons”. Rather, it provides services to client agencies, who may in turn provide services to “persons”. The ASD’s clients are other state agencies. LEP individuals who might seek assistance from the ASD would be users of client agency services or employees of client agencies. For this reason, there is no demographic information for “persons” served by ASD since these situations cannot be predicted. The ASD will, however, maintain documentation of LEP individuals who seek assistance in order to maintain demographic data related to them. ASD will share this demographic data with applicable client agencies as appropriate.

**IV. The ASD Language Access Services and Procedures** – The ASD does not provide services to the public or to “persons”. ASD acknowledges that a situation could arise wherein a LEP individual requests assistance from the ASD, and the ASD desires to be available and proactive to assist these individuals. For this reason, the ASD has secured the language access services described below to enable LEP individuals to access the information they seek. In every case, the ASD ensures that all language service providers are fully competent to provide these services.

* Client Agency Outreach: The ASD will rely upon applicable client agency LAPs to provide information and assistance to individuals with inquiries about client agency programs and will utilize on-line LAP client agency documents to obtain referral procedures and resource information.
* Oral, Sign Language and Written Language Services: The ASD may have bilingual speakers (both English and Spanish) available telephonically and in-person based in the Carson City office. If these employees are not available and for all other oral/sign languages the ASD will utilize contract translation and interpreter services offered by the state, which can be found here: <https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation>
* Community Outreach and Engagement: The ASD is committed to ensuring that the LEP community as a whole is aware of how to access available language services.
* Providing Notice of Language Assistance Services: The ASD will provide notice of LEP resources within its office and online at the ASD website.

**V. Implementing the ASD’s Language Access Services**

In order to fulfill the goals of this Plan, the ASD will provide staff with the necessary training to ensure that staff are familiar with this document, related policies and resources available for LEP individuals. This training will include:

* How to respond to LEP individuals via phone, writing, or in person.
* How to seek applicable client agency resources for LEP individuals.
* How to seek assistance with internal state sanctioned language access resources.
* How to document the mode of communication and preferred language of an LEP individual and communicate same.
  + This is to allow client agencies to better understand the needs of those accessing services and ensure that equitable access is available throughout the duration of their interactions with the client agency.
* How to report these interactions to the Language Access Coordinator.

**VI. Evaluation of and Recommendations for ASD’s Language Access Plan**

The ASD is committed to providing limited English proficient individuals full access to state services and is committed to monitoring the policies and procedures stated above to ensure that limited English proficiency Nevadans are receiving equitable access to client agency services. The ASD will solicit public comment on this initial Plan and update the Plan if necessary.

The Language Access Coordinator will continue to develop and monitor this plan, and update it biennially based on language accommodation requests documented by staff and any other data obtained through public comment. The ASD will also track any costs that may be incurred by using external, state sanctioned resources.