

Language Access Plan

for Persons with Limited English Proficiency



Plan Introduction

1. Introduction

Most individuals in CASE Credit Union's (CASE) greater-Lansing service area read, write, speak and understand English. However, there is a portion of the population whose primary language is not English. Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English can be limited English proficient, or "LEP". Another category of people requiring meaningful language access are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HOH). These language barriers may prevent individuals from accessing CASE's services and benefits. CASE takes reasonable actions to provide timely and meaningful access to its services for LEP and Deaf and HOH persons, as detailed in this plan. CASE employees proactively provide free language assistance services to LEP individuals whom they encounter or when an LEP person requests language assistance services. CASE informs members of the public that language assistance services are available free of charge to LEP persons.

2. Purpose and Authority

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, this policy establishes guidelines for providing language accessible services to individuals that are limited English Proficient and/or Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

3. Four Factor Analysis

CASE will consider four factors when assessing language needs and determining what steps should be taken to ensure consistent and meaningful access for LEP persons:

- a. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by CASE's programs, products or services
- b. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with CASE programs, products, or services;
- c. The nature and importance of CASE's programs, activities, or services; and
- d. Level of resources available to CASE for LEP-related costs.

4. Definitions

- Limited English Proficient (LEP) individual means any individual whose primary language is not English, and has limited or no ability to speak, understand, read, or write English.
- Primary language means the language that an individual communicates most effectively in.
- Interpretation is the process of orally rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another language.
- Translation is converting written text from one language into written text in another language.
- Sight Translation is the rendering of material written in one language, completely and accurately into spoken speech in another language.
- A qualified interpreter or translator is a trained professional who is a neutral third party with the requisite language skills, experienced in interpretation or translation techniques, and knowledgeable in specialized content areas and technical terminology to effectively facilitate communication between two or more parties who do not share a common language.
- Vital documents: the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) defines vital documents as "documents that affect access to, retention in, or termination or exclusion from a recipient's program, services or benefits."
- American Sign Language (ASL) is a signed language commonly used by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in the US, though it's not the only effective means of communication.
- Braille is not a language, but a code by which many languages may be written and read. Braille is a system of raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or who have low vision.

Plan Components

1. Identifying LEP Individuals Who Need Language Assistance

- a. Staff at the initial point of contact will assess the need for language assistance and notify the individual of the right to an interpreter at no cost. Staff members who have subsequent contact will continue to assess the need for language assistance.
 - To assess the need for language assistance, staff should ask open-ended questions and avoid asking questions that would allow for yes or no responses. For example, asking: “how may I be of assistance?” instead of “do you need help?”
 - The LEP individual may speak more than one language or may have limited proficiency in a secondary language. Staff shall identify the primary language of the LEP individual, and work to provide language assistance in the primary language of the individual.
 - A Deaf individual may also be limited English proficient and not be proficient in American Sign Language. Staff shall work to identify the primary language of the Deaf individual and provide language assistance in the primary language of the individual.
- b. The need for language assistance may also be determined if the LEP individual or companion requests such assistance.

2. Identifying Primary Language

Some options for identifying an individual's primary language include:

- a. Staff may use “Interpretation Services Available” printed materials.
- b. Staff may request the individual or companion to identify the language of the LEP or Deaf individual.
- c. Staff may request vetted bilingual staff or vetted volunteers to identify the primary language.
- d. Staff may use in-person, video remote interpreters, or telephonic interpreters to identify the language.

3. Language Assistance Measures

- a. Bilingual Staff
 - Any staff speaking a language other than English shall be assessed for their proficiency in their languages before they can be deemed as bilingual and added to a list of bilingual staff. Language Proficiency test only determines the level of proficiency and not interpreting abilities. Therefore, bilingual staff may only communicate with LEP members and shall not be asked or volunteer to interpret.

Bilingual staff are under no obligation to provide language assistance services, unless it is specifically included in job duties and they are tested and vetted to do so. Bilingual staff may use the contracted Bromberg & Associates, LLC language assistance services. For example, a staff member who speaks Spanish, would have to be first tested for their language proficiency in Spanish and added to the bilingual staff list. Then they can communicate with Spanish speaking LEP people directly within their job description scope. If another staff member is communicating with a Spanish-speaking person, that staff member would need to obtain language assistance services through Bromberg & Associates and not through their Spanish-speaking bilingual colleague.

- Staff may contact the Internal Language Access Contact, **Liberty Kyser**, at **lkyser@CASECU.org** for a current list of bilingual staff. The Internal Language Access Contact will determine if staff are available to assist in each circumstance:
- If available and applicable, bilingual staff may provide the following services:
 - o Identification of the primary language of the individual
 - o Direct communication in the primary language of the individual
 - o Identification of the need for additional language assistance services
- b. Telephonic/Video Remote Interpreters
 - Staff may access qualified interpreter assistance through Bromberg & Associates, LLC to provide interpreter services
 - Staff may contact **Bromberg & Associates, LLC** at **844-233-3280** (PIN/ Account Number: 27753 for audio only calls (240 languages available). For other languages, please contact **scheduler@brombergtranslations.com**

4. Notice of Language Services to LEP Persons

CASE will provide reasonable notification to eligible LEP individuals so that they understand that language services are available. For effective outreach, CASE will:

- a.** Consider and apply the appropriate mix of outreach and advertising across a variety of print and digital media
- b.** Partner with community organizations who serve LEP and Deaf and HOH populations to create wider access to CASE's programs and services (including language assistance services).
- c.** At branch locations CASE will also ensure that:
 - Signage is placed in visible locations notifying individuals of the right to request an interpreter at no cost to the individual. Signage will be translated into the languages most frequently encountered by the organization.
 - At the initial point of contact, staff will notify individuals of their right to an interpreter at no cost.
 - Staff will use "I Speak" cards as well as Language Identification posters to encourage individuals to identify their primary language.

5. Unacceptable Practices

- a.** Staff are prohibited from using minor children to interpret, absent emergency circumstances. Members shall be advised of their right to an interpreter at no cost.
- b.** Staff shall not use Goggle Translate or other similar free apps, as they have a high rate of errors and are not considered a meaningful language access solution.

6. Staff Training

- a.** CASE employees must know their obligation to provide access to information and services for LEP persons, and to effectively implement this LAP. For this purpose, CASE will disseminate instructional materials to supervisors, managers, and employees expected to implement the language assistance services set out in this plan. Staff will receive training as a part of their onboarding and thereafter on an annual basis on:
 - The content of the language access plan
 - How to identify the need for language access services
 - Accessing and navigating Bromberg & Associates, LLC's audio and video services
 - How to request prescheduled services
 - How to plan document translations needs
 - Providing language accessible services in a culturally sensitive manner
 - Internal reporting and tracking use of language assistance services

Internal Language Access Contacts

The Internal Language Access Contact, Liberty Kyser, will support training, compliance, tracking/documentation, and analysis of this Language Access Plan. The Internal Language Access Contact will work with all managers and supervisors to implement this policy.

Monitoring, Assessment and Updating the Plan

CASE will evaluate and monitor implementation of this plan on a biennial basis to ensure that the scope and nature of the language services provided under the plan reflect updated information on relevant LEP populations and their language assistance needs. This includes examining external data sources such as the US Census and American Community Survey, and internal data sources such as phone inquiries, requests for interpretation and/or translation services, tracking forms, staff and LEP member feedback.

Staff will track use of assistance services and provide required information to CASE's Internal Language Access Contact within thirty (30) days of use of the assistance service.

CASE shall collect information such as the type of language assistance needed (interpretation, translation, other), primary language of clients, method of language assistance service used.

The biennial review process will include the following inquiries:

- How many LEP people were encountered?
- Is the existing language assistance meeting the needs of LEP persons?
- What is the current LEP population in AFCU's service area?
- Has there been a change in the types of languages where services are needed?
- Have available resources, such as technology, staff and finances changed?
- Were any Title VI or ADA complaints received?
- Do new staff members understand the LAP plan and procedures?
- How many bilingual staff members were vetted via language proficiency testing?

Additionally, CASE will monitor and report on whether bilingual staff possesses the required levels of bilingual proficiency as well as whether contractors performing language services possess the required levels of bilingual proficiency and interpretation and translation skills.

CASE will take reasonable steps to ensure that it provides high-quality interpretation and translation services through individuals who are competent to provide those services at a level of fluency, comprehension, and confidentiality appropriate to the specific nature, type, and purpose of the information at issue.

Changes will be made to this plan as needed and based on the monitoring and assessment process.

Dissemination of Language Assistance Plan Policy

CASE will post its Language Assistance Plan on its website. Copies of the plan will be provided to any person or agency requesting a copy. LEP persons may obtain copies and/or translations of the plan upon request. Any complaints, questions or comments regarding this plan should be directed to Liberty Kyser at lkyser@casecu.org:

Complaint Process

- 1.** A complaint regarding the denial of language accessible services, or regarding the quality of language accessible services, including interpreters or translated materials, may be made in person, or in writing. As the complaint form shall be considered a vital document, it shall be translated into top volume languages and made available on the website and in branches.
- 2.** The complaint should specify the date, individuals involved, and the nature of the complaint (i.e. the interpreter was summarizing, or an LEP individual or Deaf individual was denied services because they did not bring their own interpreter).
- 3.** All complaints will be directed to the Language Access Contact
- 4.** The Language Access Contacts will notify the parties within 30 days upon receipt of the complaint of the outcome.
- 5.** Staff will notify individuals of the complaint process.