

The ability to communicate and understand — and to be understood — is a basic human need and right. However, many public facilities and organizations are not equipped to offer programs and services in multiple languages. [More than 20% of U.S. households](#) reported speaking a language other than English at home in 2019. Providing services in hospitals, schools, and government facilities in the languages spoken and understood by those who need them has become more important, and perhaps more challenging, than ever.

A language access plan (LAP) puts your organization on the path to fulfilling [requirements for federal funding and regulations](#) and providing meaningful access to programs and services. Moreover, clear communication improves your organization's reputation while building trust. This guide lays out the steps to creating an effective language access plan to overcome language barriers for the limited English proficient (LEP) communities you serve.



Become familiar with official guidelines and the original sources of language access mandates

- [Department of Justice](#)
- [National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services \(CLAS\) Standards](#)
- [The Joint Commission](#)



Recruit, encourage, and support leaders who are:

- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Responsive to the populations being served
- Communicating directly with customers



Know what to include in your plan

- Assessment of current services
- Key stakeholders
- Policies, procedures, and directives for staff providing services



Engage appropriate internal stakeholders for LAP implementation

- Procurement
- Providers
- Vendors
- Leadership



Train your staff to identify needs and facilitate connection with language services

- [Courses on Cultural Considerations](#)
- [Language Map](#)
- [Language Identification Poster](#)
- How to request language services



Promote language services to your local community

- [Translation](#) and [localization](#) services
- [In-person](#) and [remote](#) interpreting services
- [Deaf and hard-of-hearing](#) interpreting services
- [More language access resources](#)

Once your LAP is in place, it is essential to monitor and analyze the plan and its effectiveness regularly to maintain success. This can be achieved via direct feedback from LEP individuals, focus groups, and more extensive surveys, such as [HCAHPS surveys](#) for hospitals and healthcare systems.

Creating an effective language access plan for your organization is the first step in meeting federal requirements and offering meaningful access to your programs and services. MasterWord is here to help. Contact [Graciela Zozaya](#) for consultation on your LAP or to request language services for your organization.

Get in Touch



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