



MEMORANDUM

TO: Executive and Small Agency Cabinet

FROM: Governor Jay Inslee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee".

DATE: April 29, 2020

SUBJECT: Language Access Plan During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted nearly every aspect of our lives and has reached into nearly every community in our state. Our ability to keep one another safe and healthy depends on every Washingtonian having access to credible, trusted information about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the types of supports and services available, and how to comply with federal, state, and local orders. This requires us to pay particular attention to how we communicate with limited English proficiency communities and Washingtonians with disabilities. This pandemic does not discriminate, and neither can our methods of communications.

We know certain communities are disproportionately at-risk or impacted by this pandemic and one way we can shift that injustice is by communicating in ways that are accessible and culturally- and linguistically-relevant. My office has worked hard to make this process easier for our agencies. We have consulted with the Joint Information Center and the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) to develop a Language Access Plan and secure resources to help state agencies meet the language needs of Washingtonians experiencing significant barriers to accessing state services related to COVID-19 due to a lack of translated materials and information.

All organizations receiving any federal support are legally required to ensure their customers with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency have access to vital information. Specifically, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, agencies must ensure meaningful access to information and provide language assistance services.

This Language Access Plan is designed to make sure that our agencies are able to comply with Department of Justice recommendations that, at a minimum, entities translate vital information for each language group with limited English proficiency that constitutes 5 percent of a jurisdiction's population or 1,000 people (whichever is less).

This plan includes the following components:

Translations: Working with experts at our Joint Information Center (JIC), all agencies must identify vital agency-specific information related to COVID-19. This includes new programs and services created in response to COVID-19, changes to hours of operations and accessibility to



the public, and other information that is pertinent to immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) Washingtonians. Once this information is identified, we have established a process that allows agencies to send those documents and information to DES. The DES will coordinate translating the materials into 37 languages with a Master Contract vendor who will expedite the translations. I have authorized funding for the state to cover the costs of these translations. Once the materials are translated and approved by each agency, the information will be available on the agency's website as well as at coronavirus.wa.gov.

Telephonic Interpretation: All agencies must have a contract in place with a telephonic interpretation service, which is available under DES Master Contract 02819. Agencies may already have this in place, but if not, contact DES for assistance. Once an agency signs a telephonic interpretation service contract, the agency must list information about the availability of telephonic interpretation service on the agency website.

Dual- and Multi-lingual Employee Pool: To better utilize the expertise and skills within our state agencies, all agencies must coordinate with OFM State HR to compile a list of employees who are dual- or multi-lingual. Agencies must send a list of employees that are certified translators, certified interpreters, or others who receive dual language pay as part of their job. These employees may be called on to provide emergency translation, interpretation, or other duties related to language access.

Next Steps

The JIC and DES will provide support to agencies as they begin to implement the Language Access Plan. I expect each agency to comply with this directive.

Implementation Checklist:

Cabinet Agency Responsibilities	Timeline
Identify Single Agency Representative Identify a single point of contact to coordinate with the COVID-19 Response Language Access Lead and submit their name to JIC3@mil.wa.gov .	By May 1, 2020
Attend Language Access Plan Implementation Webinar (optional) The Joint Information Center's Community Engagement Task Force will host a webinar for all interested agencies to learn about how to implement this Language Access Plan. Send list of participant names to COVID-19 Response Language Access Lead at JIC3@mil.wa.gov . Agencies can send up to 10 staff members.	Live options: May 4, 2020 2:30-3:30 PM May 5, 2020 2:30-3:30 PM May 6, 2020 12:00-1:00 PM *Slide deck will be available for those unable to attend.

Identify Staff for Dual- and Multi-lingual Employee Pool See Section 5 of the Language Access Plan for more information. State HR will reach out to directly to agencies, supervisors, and staff to share the process for building this pool. Contact: shrcovid@ofm.wa.gov .	By May 8, 2020
Implement telephonic interpretation services and ensure this service is set-up for all COVID-19 related hotlines and main phone lines. Send list of any hotlines to COVID-19 Response Language Access Lead at JIC3@mil.wa.gov .	By May 8, 2020
Identify all agency vital information related to COVID-19. Submit a list of topics and documents that will be translated to COVID-19 Response Language Access Lead at JIC3@mil.wa.gov .	By May 15, 2020
Prep vital information for translation and upload to the Translation Web Portal The Department of Enterprise Services will coordinate the services of a Master Contract vendor to provide translations for all cabinet agencies seeking assistance.	By May 22, 2020
Share, post, and distribute translated materials Upload translated materials to your agency website and distribute to partners. Share links to translated materials with the Joint Information Center at JIC3@mil.wa.gov so that links are added to the coronavirus.wa.gov web portal.	As materials are returned from translation vendors

Attached is the full Language Access Plan with more detailed information and best practices related to language access. My hope is that by developing a streamlined process for translation and providing the financial resources for enhanced language access, we have made it as easy as possible for your agency to communicate with all Washingtonians.

I expect all agencies to fully comply with the Language Access Plan. Our goal is to make sure that every Washingtonian has access to vital information related to COVID-19. Your compliance is critical and necessary if we are to reach our goal.

Thank you for your commitment.