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Public Notice

**Department of Public Safety
Office of Criminal Justice Assistance**

RE: Opening of Public Comment Period – 2026 Language Access Plan (LAP)

The Nevada Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Assistance (OCJA), announces that the public comment period for the 2026 OCJA Language Access Plan (LAP), attached, is officially open.

Comment Period: **8:00 am Friday, June 26, 2026, through 5:00 pm Sunday, July 26, 2026**

Members of the public, stakeholders, community-based organizations, and state and local partners are invited to review the draft LAP and submit comments, recommendations, or feedback.

Comments may be submitted via email to: **ocja@dps.state.nv.us**

As the State Administering Agency for U.S. Department of Justice criminal justice grant programs, OCJA is committed to transparency and to ensuring meaningful access to its programs, services, and funding opportunities. The public comment process is an important part of this commitment and helps ensure that OCJA's Language Access Plan reflects the needs of Nevada's diverse communities, including individuals with limited English proficiency.

Purpose of Public Comment

The public comment period serves as a forum for stakeholders and community members to:

- Provide input on policies and procedures detailed in the LAP
- Recommend improvements to language access services
- Share lived experiences that may strengthen the plan
- Contribute to OCJA's ongoing effort to support equitable access to its programs

Guidance for Providing Effective Public Comments

When preparing comments on the LAP, OCJA encourages the public to consider the following tips to ensure their feedback is constructive, clear, and actionable:

- Support your comments with data, facts, experiences, or informed opinions. When possible, include your lived experience to illustrate your perspective.
- Clearly identify the section number or specific part of the LAP you are commenting on. Comments may be short or long, there is no required length.
- If you disagree with a proposed policy or procedure, consider suggesting an alternative and explain how it may better meet the objectives of the LAP.
- Where applicable, include pros, cons, and trade-offs. Reflect on possible impacts, positive or negative, on your community, your work, or your personal experience.

OCJA appreciates your time, insight, and partnership as we work to ensure meaningful, timely language access to all individuals served by the Office of Criminal Justice Assistance.

Respectfully,

Jazzmine Betancourt

Jazzmine Betancourt, Administrator
Office of Criminal Justice Assistance



Nevada Department of
Public Safety
Office of Criminal Justice Assistance

**Nevada Department of Public Safety
Office of Criminal Justice Assistance
Language Access Plan
2026**

Section 1: Purpose and Authority

The purpose of this plan is to establish an effective plan and protocol for Nevada Department of Public Safety (“DPS” or the “Department”) Office of Criminal Justice Assistance (“OCJA” or the “Division”) personnel to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, individuals who have limited English proficiency (“LEP”).

Following this plan and protocol is essential to the success of our mission to provide assistance in obtaining and administering federal funds in order to enhance the criminal justice system so that Nevada is a safer place for residents and visitors. This plan will support and empower OCJA employees by encouraging diversity in the workforce, result-oriented service, productivity and meaningful career growth. OCJA is committed to achieving the highest standards of excellence through the use of comprehensive training programs and progressive technology, as well as through federal, state and local government partnerships with interagency cooperation to ensure the safety of all citizens and visitors in Nevada. To fulfill our mission, it is a priority for us to be able to communicate and share information effectively with all of those we serve. This plan and its implementation will help us fulfill our mission and better serve our public.

Nevada’s Senate Bill 318 (“SB318”), which was subsequently codified as NRS 232.0081, and the federal guidance on Title VI both agree that language should not be a barrier to accessing governmental programs and services. As SB318 puts it, “Persons with limited English proficiency require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language.” Moreover, it makes it clear that it is the responsibility of government to provide that access:

[S]tate 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.

OCJA is committed to compliance with SB318 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.

Section 2: General Policy

OCJA recognizes that the population eligible to receive its services includes LEP individuals. It is the policy of OCJA to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals. OCJA adopts the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to services and communicate effectively. This Plan applies to all Division programs and services. Programs and services the Division provides the public include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Grant Administration and Oversight
- Technical Assistance to Applicants and Subgrantees
- Program Monitoring and Compliance
- Fiscal Stewardship and Reporting
- Strategic Planning and Needs Assessments
- Criminal Justice Systems Coordination
- Public Information and Resource Sharing
- Support for Capacity Building
- Point of Contact Law Enforcement Support Office 1033 Program

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

To best serve LEP individuals, OCJA endorses the following policies:

- OCJA is committed to equity and will take all reasonable steps to provide 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 will make every effort to attain and record individuals' language needs.
- Staff will not encourage individuals to use informal interpreters.
- No staff may suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive agency services.

OCJA Language Access Coordinator(s):

Department of Public Safety
Office of Criminal Justice Assistance
j.betancourt@dps.state.nv.us
775-687-1501

The OCJA Language Access Coordinator ("LAC") will develop and implement OCJA's LAP. The LAC is appointed by the DPS director and can be replaced at the director's discretion at any point in time. Currently, OCJA does not have staff capacity to dedicate a full-time employee to develop and implement OCJA's LAP. Until additional staff capacity increases are realized, OCJA's LAC will be the Division Administrator who will be asked to take on additional duties, in addition to their regular duties.

Section 3: Profile of OCJA's LEP Clients

OCJA is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among our LEP clients so that we can better provide meaningful, timely access to our services and programs without regard to any language impediments.

OCJA does not currently have a digitally based tracking system in place to identify and track the total LEP clients served, total indigenous served, total refugees served, language preferences of individuals, literacy level of individuals, and/or the services/programs these groups of individuals are accessing as identified in SB318. To effectively track, collect and maintain the categorical information cited above, OCJA will need to acquire the resources necessary to contract the development of a new client tracking system. Until the time that OCJA can do so, we will use census data, survey tools, and a variety of other resources and means to understand the needs of the public we serve.

OCJA recognizes that of the LEP individuals in Nevada, 80% of such individuals' preferred language is Spanish, which is the second-most common language in Nevada, according to the most recent U.S. Census.

Section 4: OCJA Language Access Services and Procedures

OCJA is committed to providing LEP individuals with timely and meaningful access to programs and services at no cost to the LEP individual. In this section, the Division outlines the variety of means it uses to make sure language is not a barrier to LEP individuals.

Vital Documents

The Division did not previously have processes and procedures in place to identify vital documents. However, through the creation of the LAP, Division staff have deemed that a subset of OCJA publications, notices, and announcements are vital documents. Currently, the only means for the Division to have these documents translated for LEP individuals is to contract the appropriate professional translation services. The State of Nevada vets and approves of contractors to ensure that they are fully capable of providing the services requested. When circumstances present themselves that vital documents need to be translated into another language for an LEP client, customer, or member of the public, the Division will contract the appropriate professional services using state approved contractors to make sure language is not a barrier to any LEP individual, at no cost to the LEP individual. The Division will be exploring options to increase staff capacity to hire staff that can translate our vital documents into Spanish.

OCJA Bilingual Staff

Although we have bilingual staff, the Division does not yet have a process in place to determine the fluency of our bilingual staff.

OCJA Dual-role Staff

The Division does not currently employ any certified interpreters or certified translators. However, as part of the LAP, the Division will be exploring opportunities to accommodate any bilingual staff wishing to become certified interpreters or translators, with compensation.

Oral/Sign Language Services

When oral/sign language services are requested, the Division utilizes state-approved contractors that specialize in interpretation and translation services. The State of Nevada vets and approves of contractors to ensure that they are fully capable of providing the

services requested. In situations where there are customers, clients and members of the public who prefer to engage in a language other than English, and bilingual Division staff are on hand, such staff will help interpret/translate to the best of their ability. At this current point in time the Division does not have procedures in place to determine the fluency level of the Division's bilingual staff. As identified by the LAP, the Division will be exploring ways to determine the fluency of self-identified bilingual staff that are able and willing to provide professional translation or interpretation services to clients, customers or members of the public that request oral/sign language services.

Written Language Services

When written language services are requested, the Division utilizes state-approved contractors that specialize in written translation services. The State of Nevada vets and approves of contractors to ensure that they are fully capable of providing the services requested. As part of the Division's LAP, OCJA will be exploring a variety of options to better publicize improved language services in the community. The Division will be looking to provide notification of the language services it provides at all relevant points of contact. The Division will also be looking for opportunities to better engage LEP individuals by increasing staff capacity to meaningfully engage the LEP community. When staff capacity increases are realized, the Division will identify effective means to engage LEP individuals.

Community Outreach and Engagement

OCJA is committed to finding avenues to ensure that the larger LEP community is aware of, and able to access, all available language services. As part of the Division's LAP, OCJA will be exploring a variety of options to better publicize improved language services in the community. The Division will be looking to provide notification of the language services it provides at all relevant points of contact, including, but not limited to the OCJA website, media partners, and social media platforms.

The Division will also be engaging LEP individuals in our current outreach programs, utilizing promotional items in multiple languages to facilitate conversations leading to determining services needed.

Procedures and Resources for LEP Community Outreach

OCJA continues to be committed to meaningfully engaging with broad, diverse groups of Nevada's public including Nevada's LEP communities.

The Division participates in multiple community events regularly across the State of Nevada. The Division notes the local participants are often LEP citizens.

When available, the Division seeks to provide a Spanish speaking individual for our Spanish language media partners.

Providing Notice of Language Assistance Services

The Division will provide notification of the language services it provides at all relevant points of contact, including, but not limited to the OCJA website.

Cultural Competency Resources

The Division does not currently own or have access to relevant resources or training materials in relation to cultural competency. The Division currently conducts training regarding culturally diverse and emotionally disturbed persons, implicit bias training, and cultural awareness. We will continue to stay current on the latest practices and will add training for civilians as well.

Section 5: Implementing OCJA's Language Access Services

OCJA is committed to providing LEP individuals full access to our services and programs. Towards this end, OCJA requires its staff to follow the procedures described below to ensure meaningful access to available language services. Moreover, OCJA is committed to compliance with these procedures and provides the staff with the training described below to help ensure that all staff are familiar with these procedures and recognize their importance to OCJA's mission.

Language Access Procedures

Identifying Client Language Needs and Preferred Language: The following procedures should be adhered to when interacting with LEP individuals.

1. Interact appropriately with LEP clients
2. Determine clients' preferred language
3. Inform clients of the availability of language services

Accessing Appropriate Oral/Sign Language Services: Staff should seek appropriate oral/sign language services as outlined below.

- The preferred method of serving LEP clients is by using competent OCJA bilingual staff able to provide services directly to the clients in their preferred language.

- Available, trained, competent bilingual staff may be used for in-person or telephone interpreting to support other staff.
- Staff should seek assistance from state-approved contractors that specialize in professional translation services when a customer, client, or member of the public requires translation services that staff cannot provide.
 - Staff should recognize that certain circumstances may require specialized interpretation and translation services, even when staff with bilingual abilities are available.
- If there are no competent bilingual staff or professional translation services available at the time of the request, staff must make a sincere effort to accommodate customers as quickly as possible to make sure LEP individuals are provided meaningful, timely access to the services OCJA provides. This would include taking a message and calling back when services are available.

Accessing Appropriate Written Language Services: OCJA plans to explore options to provide all vital documents in both English and Spanish. At this current time, the Division lacks the necessary staff capacity and funding to complete this task.

Any customer, client or member of the public may request any documents be translated into a language other than English to meet their language preference needs. Staff will make a sincere effort to provide those translated documents and notices as quickly as possible with a contractor.

Language Services Quality Assurance: OCJA is committed to ensuring that all language service providers it uses are qualified and competent to provide those services. The Division utilizes state-approved contractors that specialize in interpretation and translation services. The State of Nevada vets and approves of contractors to ensure that they are fully capable of providing the services requested.

Staff Training Policies and Procedures

OCJA believes that the appropriate provision of language services is vital to the fulfillment of its mission. The Division ensures that its staff will become familiar with its language access policies and the above procedures for providing said services. Staff will track professional translation services provided, and any associated costs, and will identify whether those interactions occurred in-person or over the phone using a shared document. This document will be used to make sure the Division is effectively serving LEP customers, clients, and members of the public.

Section 6: Evaluation of and Recommendations for OCJA’s Language Access Plan

OCJA is committed to monitoring the performance of the above policies, procedures, and resources to ensure that its LAP is responsive to the needs of both OCJA and the public it serves. At a minimum, OCJA will review, evaluate, and update its LAP biennially.

Processes for Monitoring and Evaluation

Parties Responsible for LAP Maintenance:

The OCJA LAC will review the LAP on a biennial basis and updated as needed.

Criteria and Methods for LAP Evaluation:

The OCJA LAC will track and monitor how often contract translation services are utilized, will work to increase staff capacity to better serve LEP individuals, and will review any comments from the public to make any necessary revisions to the plan, if needed.

Evaluation Outcomes and Proposed Changes

Performance Monitoring Data:

OCJA will add any pertinent data and information in subsequent versions of the LAP. The Division will attempt to collect and analyze staff feedback generated from internal & external survey tools to help determine how effectively we are serving LEP individuals.

Section 7: Proposed LAP Revisions and Costs to Implement OCJA LAP

OCJA will identify, assess, and implement any proposed changes to the LAP as part of its biennial LAP revision process. Additionally, OCJA will address any challenges regarding implementation on a quarterly basis.

Proposed Changes to SB 318

Suggested Legislative Amendments: Based on OCJA’s experience as it pertains to developing an LAP in accordance with SB318, the following revisions and the associated costs to fully realize this LAP in practice are as follows:

- The Division requests that civilian staff shall also be included to receive pay for providing bilingual services under SB318 and current NAC.

- The Division requests that if requested funding is denied or future costs in accordance with implementing the LAP are not within the Division's budget, that it will no longer be required to provide those services.
- The Division does not deem it appropriate to request a customer, client, or member of the public to share whether they are a refugee with Division staff. This information does not help the Division more effectively provide meaningful, timely language services.
- The Division does not deem it appropriate to request a customer, client, or member of the public to share with Division staff whether they are indigenous. This information does not help the Division more effectively provide meaningful, timely language services.
- The Division requests that if state agency staff are required to attend cultural competency training that the State of Nevada provide said training to the Division free of charge.

Estimated costs to implement OCJA LAP as currently proposed:

As part of OCJA's LAP development, the Division has begun investigating the costs of having the OCJA website, publications, and other materials translated into Spanish. The associated costs are identified below and summarized in the subsequent table.

OCJA Website + Document Translation Costs

- PDF or Word Documents up to 450 words per page - \$300/page
 - Approximately 500 PDF or Word Document Pages - \$150,000
- Webpage up to five sections or 500 words - \$450/page
 - Approximately 20 webpages - \$9,000
- Total Upfront Website Translation Costs - \$159,000
- Annual Website Translation Costs - \$15,000
- Replacement of the Ektron website with ongoing operating updates on languages - \$?

OCJA Notices, Announcements and Press Releases, Community Outreach and Engagement Materials Translation Costs:

OCJA Publication Translation Costs •

- PDF or Word Documents up to 450 words per page - \$300/page
- Average length of publication is 60 pages, OCJA publishes 2 – Annual publications each year
- Annual Publication Translation Costs - \$36,000 per year
- Educational Outreach and Education Items - \$5,000 per year

OCJA In-Person and Over the Phone Language Services

- In-person and Over-the-Phone Language Services - \$8,000 per year
- Pocket Talk devices - \$300 per employee (estimate 6 employees)

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