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Countywide Language Access Departmental Language Access Plan

DEPARTMENTAL LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN (DLAP)

Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office Language Access Plan

Contact person: Ismael Zepeda
izepeda@da.lacounty.gov

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

A. Department Mission

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is dedicated to protecting and serving our community and safeguarding the rights of crime victims and the accused alike through an unrelenting pursuit of justice. That pursuit of justice will ensure that not just the result but the process itself reflects the highest standards of fairness, impartiality, and integrity. This Office will seek to be a leader in bringing safety to our community while steadfastly upholding its legal and ethical obligations to each member of our community.

Achieving justice requires not only a fair outcome but also a process that is impartial and grounded in integrity. Language access is essential to fulfilling this mission. By ensuring that every member of our diverse community can understand, be understood, and fully participate in the justice process, we uphold the highest standards of fairness and equity.

We recognize that meaningful access to information is essential, and we are committed in our responsibility to communicate clearly, inclusively, and respectfully with all members of our community.

B. Department Priority Languages

- Spanish
- Chinese
- Korean
- Tagalog
- Armenian
- Vietnamese

- Russian
- Arabic
- American Sign Language

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is committed to providing meaningful language access by identifying and prioritizing the languages spoken by the people in Los Angeles County. We use Los Angeles County Census demographic data, historical language service requests, and community input to anticipate and meet language needs. We evaluate our priority languages periodically to ensure we are identifying changing language access needs.

SECTION 2: DEPARTMENT'S LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

C. General Policy Statement

Department Language Access Policy Statement

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is committed to ensuring language access for all people, in alignment with our mission to protect and serve the public while safeguarding the rights of crime victims and the accused through an unrelenting pursuit of justice.

As part of this commitment, we recognize that effective communication is essential to ensuring fairness, transparency, and trust in the justice process. Language should not be a barrier to accessing information, services, or support. The District Attorney's Office has implemented the following measures to meet the needs of language access.

- We will make every reasonable effort to provide free services in the primary languages spoken by the populations we serve.
- Provide interpretation and translation services at key points of contact to ensure that individuals who speak a Language Other Than English (LOTE) can fully understand and participate in the judicial process.
- Conduct refresher training on recognizing language access needs and how to utilize appropriate resources to ensure effective communication.
- We will evaluate and update our language access procedures to meet the evolving needs of our community.

This policy reaffirms our commitment to meeting the language access needs within our community.

D. Scope of Policy

This policy statement applies to all LADA employees and Community Advisory Boards.

SECTION 3: KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

LADA: Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

DLAP: Departmental Language Access Plan

Speaker of a Language Other Than English ("LOTE"): Also known as Limited English Proficiency or English Language Learner, this designation refers to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and do not read, write, or speak English.

Preferred Language: The primary language in which an individual prefers to read, write, and speak.

Language Access: Providing free language assistance to LOTE speakers in their preferred language, including through interpretation and translation services, to help enable reasonable access to and an opportunity to fully participate in the criminal and juvenile justice systems in the County.

Interpretation: Rendering spoken or signed language into another language while maintaining the meaning and tone of the language.

Translation: Rendering written communication into another language while preserving meaning.

Vital Documents: Documents that affect crime victims' rights and services as well as benefits and services for all residents of Los Angeles County.

ASL: American Sign Language

CBO: Community Based Organization

Language Access Complaint: Common scenarios include but are not limited to the availability of language services not communicated to the public when language services were not provided when requested, and when the quality of language services did not meet the needs of the LOTE speaker.

SECTION 4: PROCEDURES

E. Identifying Preferred Languages

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is committed to providing meaningful access to services for all individuals, regardless of the language they speak. As part of our ongoing efforts to serve the diverse population of Los Angeles County, we have implemented procedures to identify and respond to language needs equitably. During the initial point of contact, all staff are trained to ask individuals whether they require language assistance and to document their preferred language. Once language needs are

identified, staff must make every reasonable effort to provide free language services in the requester's primary language. This includes offering interpretation services throughout the interaction. Staff must use approved translation and interpretation resources to ensure effective communication at all points of contact. Additionally, multilingual signage is prominently displayed in public areas, and public-facing materials are written in plain language for clarity.

Staff receive mandatory training on language access, cultural competence, legal requirements, and the use of plain language, and they are encouraged to provide feedback to improve procedures. By consistently applying these practices, our department ensures effective communication, inclusion, equity, and justice in serving the diverse communities of Los Angeles County.

F. Vital documents

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) is committed to providing meaningful language access by identifying and translating vital documents. We are actively reviewing and classifying documents under the control of LADA as vital, based on established criteria. As part of this process, we are working to ensure alignment with the linguistic needs of the communities we serve.

Additionally, we provide a range of brochures in multiple languages to inform crime victims and the general public about available services and programs. These materials include topics such as child abuse prevention and reporting, mandated reporting responsibilities, crime victims' rights under Marsy's Law, hate crimes, human trafficking, financial fraud prevention, sexual assault resources, and more.

We recognize the importance of using plain language in all source documents and ensuring the accuracy of translations. Therefore, LADA is developing quality control processes for long-term translation efforts, including protocols for ensuring humans validation and review of materials that have been machine-translated ensuring accuracy, clarity, and cultural appropriateness. Where possible, on-demand translation services will also be utilized to meet immediate language access needs.

By implementing these practices, we aim to provide consistent, high-quality language access to all communities we serve.

G. Policy on Untrained Interpreters (if one already exists)

N/A

Section 5: Notification of Language Assistance

In all Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office facilities where the public interacts with staff and requests services, signage is displayed to inform LOTE individuals of the availability of free language assistance services. When staff cannot accommodate a

LOTE speaker directly due to language barriers, they utilize other county resources such as Language Line to assist in the individual's preferred language.

LADA brochures and pamphlets are available in facility lobby and are translated into various languages; these materials can also be downloaded from the LADA website. The department prioritizes recruiting multilingual staff to reflect the county's diversity and enhance service delivery.

LADA supports the workforce with training and professional development focused on language access and cultural competency. In addition to engaging with Community Advisory Boards, LADA partners with community-based organizations to distribute information about programs and services. These organizations include:

- Chinatown Service Center
- Monterey Park Resiliency Center
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California
- Cambodian Association of America Cambodian Consulate
- Korean American Family Services
- C.I.E.L.O
- The Red Cross

Section 6: Monitoring Language Assistance Effectiveness

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) is continuously monitoring and improving the effectiveness of its language access effort. We evaluate our services through feedback and data gathered from staff input and language access-related complaints, and input from community partners. We have established a platform for clients to submit complaints and concerns specifically related to language access, which allows us to identify areas for improvement and implement responsive solutions.

LADA will conduct ongoing staff training of our language access policy, in alignment with the county-wide policy, to promote equitable access for all clients. We also collaborate closely with the Office of Immigrant Affairs to adopt best practices in language access and incorporate these improvements into our operations, reporting, and policy refinement processes.

Section 7: Training

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office (LADA) is ensuring that all staff are trained and equipped to provide meaningful access to services to LOTE individuals, language access, as well as refresher training when policy updates occur, or as operational needs arise. This training is designed to build awareness of linguistic needs across the communities we serve and to ensure staff understand and comply with both LADA-specific and countywide language access policies.

The following topics will be reviewed in the LADA Language Access Training:

- The importance of language access.
- Background and overview of the LADA's Language Access Policy.
- How to identify language access needs and procedures for recording the primary language.
- Procedures for providing language assistance.
- Recordkeeping requirements, including tracking of language assistance provided.
- Monitoring and compliance procedures, including how LADA evaluates the effectiveness of language access services.
- Staff responsibilities in supporting language access efforts and accessing additional resources, tools to assist in meeting linguistic needs.
- Contact information for the designated Language Access Liaison.

Section 8: Community Outreach & Engagement

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's is working to eliminate any language barriers to ensure language access and support for all communities.

LADA will make every effort to ensure that community outreach and engagement activities are conducted in an equitable, culturally responsive, and linguistically accessible manner. To achieve this, the department will implement the following strategies:

- Develop and disseminate culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach materials, including signage for public spaces informing our communities of the availability of free language access services, website content, brochures, and pamphlets that align with the County's goal of providing accessible, user-friendly information to all.
- Distribute these materials across Los Angeles County DA facilities, ensuring the information is of high quality, easy to understand, and available in the languages most frequently spoken by our communities.
- Enhance the LADA website to include features for reporting language access issues or complaints and provide a platform for community members to share feedback and suggestions regarding language services.
- Maintain ongoing communication and collaboration with Los Angeles County's diverse communities, ensuring a sustained effort to improve language accessibility across all interactions, services, and outreach efforts.
- Ensure all staff are trained and equipped to meet the language access needs of the communities we serve, including access to translation and interpretation services, in-house resources.
- Coordinate with partner agencies, particularly law enforcement, to identify LOTE victims and ensure their preferred language is noted and accommodated when providing services, making referrals, or connecting them with an attorney or victim advocate.

We will continue to evaluate our language access efforts, seek community input, and implement improvements to better serve the diverse populations of Los Angeles County.