

**Administration for Children and Families
2024 Language Access Plan**



Table of Contents

I.	LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY	3
II.	LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PRINCIPLES	3
III.	OVERVIEW, MISSION, AND LANGUAGE ACCESS GOALS OF THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF)	4
	A. Overview	4
	B. Vision and Mission	5
	C. Language Access Goals	5
IV.	SPECIFIC ELEMENTS FOR ACHIEVING LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE GOAL	6
	Element 1-Assessment Needs and Capacity:.....	6
	Element 2- Interpretation Language Assistance Services:.....	6
	Element 3-Written Translations:.....	6
	Element 4 - Policies, Procedures, and Practices	6
	Element 5 - Notification of the Availability of Language Assistance at No Cost.....	6
	Element 6-Staff Training:	6
	Element 7 - Assessment & Accountability: Access, Quality, Resources, Reporting:	7
	Element 8 - Consultation with Human Services Partners:.....	7
	Element 9-Digital Information:.....	7
	Element 10 - Grant Assurance and Compliance by Recipients of HHS Funding	7
V.	LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN NARRATIVE: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES BY ELEMENT AND AGENCY PROGRAM	7
	Element 1 - Assessment: Needs and Capacity	7
	Element 2 - Interpretation Services.....	9
	Element 3 - Written Translation:	11
	Element 4 - Policies, Procedures, and Practices	12
	Element 5 - Notification of the Availability of Language Assistance at No Cost.....	13
	Element 6 - Staff Training	13
	Element 7 - Assessment and Accountability: Access, Quality, Resources, Reporting.....	14
	Element 8 - Consultations with Health Care and Human Services Partners	15
	Element 9 - Digital Information.....	16
	Element 10 - Grant Assurance and Compliance by Recipients of HHS Funding	17
	APPENDIX A: Definitions	18

I. LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) strives to make reasonable efforts to support language access in ACF-funded programs. This policy ensures that programs receiving ACF funding implement approaches responsive to the language access needs of communities served. This responsiveness promotes equity in access to services as outlined in Executive Order 13985 and applicable civil rights law¹ which emphasizes the promotion of equitable delivery of government benefits and equitable opportunities.

II. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PRINCIPLES

Adoption of the following language assistance principles should be considered when assessing and addressing situations in which individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)² seek a language access service:

- ACF will take reasonable steps, as appropriate, to ensure that it provides interpretation services through competent individuals at a level of fluency, comprehension, and confidentiality appropriate to the specific nature, type, and purpose of information at issue.
- ACF will endeavor to expand the range and quality of language assistance measures (including providing services or informational material in languages other than those specified in this plan). This will occur whenever changes in target or service population demographics or new program-specific data indicate that the failure to do so may result in a denial of substantially equal and meaningfully effective services to a significant LEP population served.
- To the maximum extent practical, LEP shall not act as a barrier or otherwise limit access to vital information, i.e., information publicly available in English as to when, where, or how to access benefits or services from a component.

¹ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act prohibit entities receiving federal financial assistance from discrimination on the basis of, among other things, race, color, national origin, and disability.

² [HHS](#) defines Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as individuals who do not speak English as their preferred language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

III. OVERVIEW, MISSION, AND LANGUAGE ACCESS GOALS OF THE ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF)

A. Overview

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is a division of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ACF is responsible for the federal stewardship of over 60 programs with a budget of over \$70 billion. ACF programs aim to:

- Empower families and individuals to increase their economic independence and productivity.
- Encourage strong, healthy, supportive communities that positively impact quality of life and child development.
- Create partnerships with front-line service providers, states, localities, and tribal communities to identify and implement solutions that transcend traditional program boundaries.
- Improve access to services through planning, reform, and integration; and
- Address the needs, strengths, and abilities of linguistically diverse populations.

ACF's broad array of human services programs includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Head Start, Child Care and Development Fund, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance, Child Support Services, Refugee Resettlement, Native American Social and Economic Development, Prevention of Child Abuse, Adoption, and Foster Care, and Support for Community Action Programs, among others. These programs, carried out by state, county, city, and tribal governments and public and private agencies, are designed to promote the economic and social well-being of pregnant people, families, children, individuals, and communities. Through our grants administration, research, technical assistance, and policy guidance, we seek to support national, state, tribal, and local efforts to strengthen families and communities and promote economic mobility.

ACF is comprised of 23 offices, including the Office of Regional Operations, which represents 10 regional offices around the country:

- Immediate Office of the Assistant Secretary (IOAS)
- Office of Administration (OA)
- Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)
- Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO)
- Office of Communications (OC)
- Office of External Affairs (OEA)
- Office of Legislative Affairs and Budget (OLAB)
- Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation (OPRE)
- Office of Regional Operations (ORO)
- Administration for Native Americans (ANA)

- Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF)
- Children's Bureau (CB)
- Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)
- Office of Child Care (OCC)
- Office of Child Support Services (OCSS)
- Office of Community Services (OCS)
- Office of Family Assistance (OFA)
- Office of Family Violence and Prevention Services (OFVPS)
- Office of Head Start (OHS)
- Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR)
- Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)
- Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP)

Many offices administer formula and discretionary grants to states, tribes, and community entities. Some offices, such as OLAB and OA, support the agency. Program offices, such as the Office of Head Start, provide funding to grant recipients who shape early care and comprehensive services based on communities' strengths and needs, including responsiveness to language access needs.

Across ACF programs, Spanish is primarily spoken by stakeholders with LEP. Other top languages include Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Somali, Nepali, French, Farsi, Hindi, Hokkien, Tagalog, German, Bengali, etc. In addition, some Native American languages are spoken by constituents such as Austronesian, Athabaskan, or EskimoAleut.

B. Vision and Mission

ACF is guided by the vision of “children, youth, families, individuals, and communities who are resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure.” ACF’s mission is to foster health and well-being by providing federal leadership, partnership, and resources for the compassionate and effective delivery of human services.

C. Language Access Goals

ACF shall provide timely, quality language assistance services to individuals with LEP. ACF’s policy is to give individuals with LEP meaningful access to the agency’s programs and activities in which they may be individually eligible to participate.

This plan establishes a strategy for ensuring meaningful access by individuals with LEP to ACF-administered programs, services, and activities in accordance with EO 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government; EO 13995, Ensuring an Equitable Pandemic Response and Recovery; EO 14031, Advancing Equity, Justice,

and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders; and EO 14091, Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government Further Advancing Racial Equity; Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government; the 2023 HHS Language Access Plan and other EO language assistance services requirements specifically established for the various programs within the agency.

This plan is intended only to improve the internal management of the agency. It does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its offices or employees, or any person. Whenever possible and appropriate, the actions of this plan will be implemented in conjunction with other agency initiatives to increase access to human services and health care and services.

IV. SPECIFIC ELEMENTS FOR ACHIEVING LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE GOAL

HHS considered the following ten elements essential for achieving its overall goal of providing access to timely, quality language assistance services to individuals with LEP. ACF will strive to implement each element and associated action steps and establish priorities to best meet the needs of individuals with LEP.

Element 1 - Assessment Needs and Capacity: ACF is committed to proactively identifying and assessing the language assistance needs of its current and potential customers. This commitment is reflected in the processes it has in place to regularly assess the agency's capacity to meet these needs according to the elements of this plan.

Element 2 - Interpretation Language Assistance Services: ACF will ensure the provision of LEP.

Element 3 - Written Translations: ACF will produce vital documents in languages other than English where a significant number or percentage of the customers served or eligible to be served have LEP. These written materials may include paper and electronic documents such as publications, notices, correspondence, websites, and signs.

Element 4 - Policies, Procedures, and Practices: ACF will develop written policies, procedures and practices relating to each plan element and the designated staff responsible for implementing activities relating to these policies.

Element 5 - Notification of the Availability of Language Assistance at No Cost: ACF will proactively inform customers with LEP of the availability of multilingual statements.

Element 6 - Staff Training: ACF will provide employee training as necessary to ensure management and staff understand and can implement the policies and procedures of this plan and their respective agency language access plans.

Element 7 - Assessment & Accountability: Access, Quality, Resources, Reporting:

ACF will regularly assess the accessibility and quality of language assistance activities for individuals with LEP, maintain an accurate record of language assistance services, and implement or improve LEP outreach programs and activities in accordance with customer needs and agency capacity. The findings from this assessment will be reported at a determined cadence.

Element 8 - Consultation with Human Services Partners:

ACF will collect and utilize stakeholder input to identify language assistance needs of individuals with LEP; implement appropriate language strategies to ensure that persons with LEP are afforded meaningful access to programs and services, in accordance with assessments of customer need and agency capacity; and conduct ongoing evaluation of progress.

Element 9 - Digital Information:

ACF will set objectives and develop policies to ensure that digital information is accessible to eligible individuals with LEP in need of language assistance, in accordance with assessments of LEP needs and agency capacity.

Element 10 - Grant Assurance and Compliance by Recipients of HHS Funding:

ACF will ensure that grant recipients understand and comply with obligations related to language access under relevant civil rights statutes and regulations enforced by HHS.

V. LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN NARRATIVE: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES BY ELEMENT AND AGENCY PROGRAM

Element 1 - Assessment Needs and Capacity

ACF will have processes in place to regularly identify and assess the language assistance needs of its current and potential customers and to assess the agency's capacity to meet these needs according to the elements of this plan.

Program/Project Name

ACF Language Needs Assessment

Program/Project Description

ACF will coordinate an annual assessment of program activities to identify the language assistance needs of current and potential constituents and stakeholders. Based on this assessment, the agency will evaluate the resources needed to ensure access to individuals with LEP.

Action Steps We Will Take

- Designate the Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary (Senior Advisor) as the responsible official for overseeing the agency’s Language Access Plan, and coordinating, among other things, the annual assessment.
- Establish an ACF Language Access Working Group, which a Senior Advisor will lead. The Senior Advisor will attend the HHS Language Access Steering Committee and will designate a proxy when unable to attend.
- Update the agency’s existing Self-Assessment Questionnaire to ensure an analysis of the agency’s needs and resources—considering each program’s authority/limitations to identify individuals with LEP.
- Review, update, and disseminate existing policies and procedures.
- Coordinate an annual consultation with internal and external experts on best practices for assessing and implementing language assistance in the agency.
- Coordinate annual listening sessions or participate in the HHS LEP listening session.
- Develop and implement awareness and buy-in activities and disseminate information on available resources through agency media sources.

ACF staff will determine whether a person needs language assistance in several ways:

- Voluntary self-identification by the individual with LEP or their companion
- Affirmative inquiry regarding the individual's primary language if they self-identify needing language assistance services.
- Engagement by a qualified multilingual staff or qualified interpreter to verify an individual’s primary language.
- Use of an “I Speak” language identification card or poster.
- Not making assumptions about an individual’s primary language based on race, color, or national origin
- Additional considerations when identifying language include asking the individual about their region, municipality, village, or specific community to ensure the correct language identification.

Cost Estimate

Current staff and budget resources will be utilized to complete this task.

Monitoring

- Language Access Self-Assessment Questionnaire: Programs will complete the questionnaire annually. The Language Access Working Group will analyze the information. The agency will then share best practices, and protocols and procedures will be updated based on the identified needs and concerns.
- Annual Consultation: Feedback from internal/external experts and stakeholders will be used to update the agency’s policies and procedures.

Element 2 - Interpretation Services

ACF will ensure the provision of language assistance for customers with LEP.

Program/Project Name

Interpretation Services

- *ACF Language Bank (Agency-Wide/Direct Public Contact)*
- *Head Start 800# Hotline (Program-Specific, Direct Public Contact)*
- *Refugee Social Services (Program-Specific, Direct Public Contact)*
- *Immediate Disaster Case Management Services (Program-Specific, Direct Public Contact)*
- *National Domestic Violence Hotline (Program-Specific, Direct Public Contact)*
- *ACF Language Access Resource for persons with disabilities such as communication using American Sign Language interpretation services.*

Program/Project Description

- *ACF Language Bank:* ACF will update and expand the existing list of bilingual/multilingual staff that can be used as a resource for in-house direct interaction with individuals with LEP.
- *Head Start 800# Hotline:* This call-in number, managed by the Office of Head Start website provider, is used by stakeholders to locate Head Start programs, ask questions, and obtain resources. It has Spanish-speaking customer service representatives who can provide telephone and e-mail assistance.
- *Refugee Social Services:* Funding supports social services for newly arrived refugees, asylees, and entrants with LEP—Services include medical assistance, cash assistance, employability services, child care for children, case management services, citizenship and naturalization preparation services and information, referral services, etc... Funding also supports the development of language access tools, including direct/telephone interpretation, video orientations/training, English language instruction, and others.
- *Immediate Disaster Case Management:* OHSEPR, through its national contractor, can provide case management services to disaster victims with LEP. The cadre of disaster case managers and supervisors includes Spanish speakers who can provide face-to-face services. For clients with other language needs, OHSEPR uses telephonic interpretation services or other appropriate professional interpretation services.
- *National Domestic Violence Hotline:* ACF provides funding for the ongoing operation of a 24-hour, national, toll-free telephone hotline that provides information and assistance to adult and youth victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, family and household members, and other persons such as domestic violence advocates, government officials, law enforcement agencies, and the public. Assistance is available in

English and Spanish, and there is access to more than 170 languages through telephonic interpreter services.

Action Steps We Will Take

- *ACF Language Resources:*
- Ensure each program office receives guidance on the requirements for qualified translators in addition to internal resources that are available for translation.
- *Head Start 800# Hotline:*
- Continue providing information in Spanish to stakeholders with LEP.
- *Refugees Social Services:*
- Continue developing language access tools for refugees and asylees with LEP.
- *Immediate Disaster Case Management Services:*
- Continue providing services to clients with LEP.
- *National Domestic Violence Hotline:*
- Continue providing services to domestic violence victims with LEP.

Cost Estimate

- *ACF Language Bank:* Current staff and resources will be utilized to complete this task.
- *OHS 800# Hotline:* Current staff and resources will be utilized to complete this task. This service is provided and managed by the OHS website provider. OHS currently allocates approximately \$530,000 annually for 4.5 full-time employees (4 full-time, including 3 bilingual information specialists and ½ manager/librarian roles). On average, for the contract period to date, 15% of calls made to the Customer Service Center are in Spanish.
- *Refugees Social Services:* Current staff and resources will be utilized to complete this task.
- Each jurisdiction allocates funds for language assistance-related services depending on their respective needs and priorities.
- *Immediate Disaster Case Management Services (IDCM):* Current staff and resources will be utilized to complete this task. IDCM services are provided using Stafford Act funding provided by FEMA via a Mission Assignment Subtask in an actual disaster. In a disaster requiring Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) to disaster victims with LEP, ACF would instruct the contractor to provide services in the needed languages, and the associated cost would be an eligible reimbursement cost.
- *National Domestic Violence Hotline:* Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) grant funds will continue to be allocated to provide crisis hotline services for domestic violence survivors.

Monitoring

- *ACF Language Bank:* The Language Access Working Group will analyze this information. The agency will share best practices, and protocols and procedures will be updated based on identified needs or concerns.

- *OHS 800# Hotline*: We will evaluate the contractor's regular reports to determine whether language access needs are met.
- *Refugees Social Services*: Regular grantee reports will be evaluated to determine if language access needs are being met.
- *Immediate Disaster Case Management Services*: The contractor's regular reports will be evaluated to determine whether language access needs are being met.
- *National Domestic Violence Hotline*: The contractor's regular reports will be evaluated to determine whether language access needs are met.

Element 3 - Written Translation

ACF will produce vital documents in languages other than English where a significant number or percentage of the customers served or eligible to be served have LEP. These written materials may include paper and electronic documents such as publications, notices, correspondence, websites, and signs.

Program/Project Name

- *ACF Translations* (Agency-Wide, Indirect Public Contact)
- *ACF Website* (Agency-Wide, Indirect Public Contact)

Program/Project Description

- *ACF Translations*: ACF will ensure that its programs, grantees, and contractors provide vital documents in languages other than English where a significant percentage of constituents served or eligible are LEP. These written materials may include paper and electronic documents such as publications, notices, correspondence, and websites.
- *“ACF Website*: ACF offers website translation in over 40 languages.

Action Steps We Will Take

a. ACF Translations

Ensure that translation services are available for documents such as the ACF Program Directory, ACF Resource Guide, and selected program-specific documents.

b. ACF Website

Ensure documents such as the ACF Program Directory, ACF Resource Guide, and selected program-specific documents are translated.

Cost Estimate

- *ACF Translations*: Current staff and resources will be utilized to complete this task.
- *ACF Website*: Translation automation will be utilized to complete this task.

Monitoring

- *ACF Translations:* Through the annual Language Access Self-Assessment Questionnaire, programs will provide and evaluate the availability and quality of written translations and identify needs and gaps. Stakeholder satisfaction surveys will measure if the agency provides the needed language assistance.
- *ACF Website:* ACF will monitor which web pages are most frequently accessed and adjust its web content strategies accordingly.

Element 4 - Policies, Procedures, and Practices

ACF will develop written policies and procedures for each plan element, and the designated staff will be responsible for implementing activities related to these policies.

Program/Project Name

ACF Language Access Initiative (Agency-Wide; Direct/Indirect Public Contact)

Program/Project Description

Currently, ACF provides services such as the Domestic Violence Hotline and the Head Start 800# Hotline, and hosts or funds websites such as the Child Welfare Information Gateway, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/spanish/#tab=general>; and Adopt Kids para familias, <http://www.adoptuskids.org/para-familias>, which provide resources in Spanish. Efforts are being made to establish and develop resources addressing the needs of consumers with LEP, such as, the Office of Child Support Services Hispanic Outreach Toolkit <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/child-support-professionals/working/hispanic-outreach>; and the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence.

Action Steps We Will Take

- Expand the initial language questionnaire to further identify gaps and needs and update an inventory of available resources and language tools.
- Maintain non-English language web services and tools such as multilingual hotlines and 800 # and include a “Contact Us” section for assistance requests, concerns, and complaints.

Cost Estimate

ACF will continue to use existing resources and staff to provide language assistance.

Monitoring

- Annual Language Assistance Self-Assessment Questionnaire

- Annual Stakeholders' and Experts' Consultation
- Annual Review of the Language Access Plan

Element 5 - Notification of the Availability of Language Assistance at No Cost

ACF will proactively inform customers with LEP of free language assistance services through multilingual statements.

Program/Project Name

ACF Language Access Outreach Initiative

Program/Project Description

ACF will strengthen its outreach to inform stakeholders with LEP of the availability of free language assistance services.

Action Steps We Will Take

- Regularly inform LEP communities and LEP-serving organizations of free language assistance services availability through blogs, newsletters, non-English language radio outlets, e-blasts, and list serves

Cost Estimate

ACF will continue to use current staff and existing resources to complete this task.

Monitoring

ACF will periodically conduct satisfaction surveys among targeted populations to evaluate the competence of language assistance services provided. Surveys, assessments, or consultations involving non-federal staff may be subject to the OMB Paperwork Reduction Act.

Element 6 - Staff Training

ACF will provide employee training as necessary to ensure management and staff understand and can implement the policies and procedures of this plan and their respective agency language access plan.

Program/Project Name

Staff Training

- In-House Cultural Competence Training (Agency-Wide/Indirect Public Contact)
- ACF Language Bank (Agency-Wide/Direct Public Contact)

Program/Project Description

- *In-House Cultural Competence Training:* ACF is committed to upgrading its capacity to make a difference for all families and communities. Under its strategic initiatives, it is enhancing the organizational culture and strengthening its workforce through orientations, training, and special events.
- *ACF Language Bank:* ACF will update and expand the existing list of bilingual/multilingual staff that can be used as a resource for in-house direct interaction with individuals with LEP.

Action Steps We Will Take

- *In-House Cultural Competence Training:*
We will continue scheduling special events such as workshops on cultural competence and demographics.
- *ACF Language Bank:*
We will update the qualified bilingual/multilingual staff list to include all programs and offices, disseminate the list across ACF, and update and disseminate a list of LEP POCs per office.

Cost Estimate

- *In-House Cultural Competence Training:* Existing staff and resources will be used.
- *ACF Language Bank:* Existing staff and resources will be used.

Monitoring

- *In-House Cultural Competence Training:* Satisfaction surveys will be conducted after each training, workshop, and/or special event.
- *ACF Language Bank:* The Language Access Work Group will analyze this information. The agency will share best practices, and protocols and procedures will be updated based on identified needs or concerns.

Element 7 - Assessment and Accountability: Access, Quality, Resources, Reporting

ACF will regularly assess the accessibility and quality of language assistance activities for individuals with LEP; maintain an accurate record of language assistance services; and implement or improve LEP outreach programs and activities in accordance with customer needs and agency capacity.

Program/Project Name

Assessment and Accountability

Program/Project Description

ACF will coordinate an annual assessment of program activities to identify the language assistance needs of current/potential constituents/stakeholders by program office. Based on this assessment, the agency will evaluate the resources needed to ensure access to individuals with LEP. ACF will encourage offices to assess where they could expand language access services to be responsive to the needs of individuals with LEP.

Action Steps We Will Take

- Update the agency's existing Self-Assessment Questionnaire to ensure an in-depth analysis of the agency's needs and resources.
- Update and disseminate existing policies and procedures.
- Coordinate inventory of existing surveys of beneficiaries and stakeholders
- Develop and implement Awareness/Buy-In activities and disseminate information on available resources through agency media sources.
- Develop a regular cadence for reporting adherence to this plan.

Cost Estimate

Current staff and resources will be utilized to complete this task.

Monitoring

Programs will complete the self-assessment questionnaire annually. The Language Access Working Group will analyze the information. The agency will then share best practices and update protocols and procedures based on the identified needs and concerns. Feedback from internal/external experts and stakeholders at the annual consultation will be used to update the agency's policies, practices, and procedures.

Element 8 - Consultations with Health Care and Human Services Partners

ACF will collect and utilize stakeholder input to identify the language assistance needs of individuals with LEP; implement appropriate language strategies to ensure that people with LEP are afforded meaningful access to programs and services in accordance with assessments of customer need and agency capacity; and conduct ongoing evaluation of progress.

Program/Project Name

ACF Annual LEP Consultation

Program/Project Description

ACF will gather internal and external experts and stakeholders to discuss access to programs and services by individuals with LEP and other underserved/underrepresented populations.

Action Steps We Will Take

- Designate the Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary as the official responsible for coordinating the annual consultation in collaboration with the Language Access Working Group
- Identify internal experts on cultural and linguistic competency services and appropriate external experts.
- Coordinate follow-up meetings, including supplemental webinars as needed.

Cost Estimate

Existing staff and resources will be used to complete this task.

Monitoring

Feedback from internal/~~external~~ experts and stakeholders will be used to update the agency's policies and procedures.

Element 9 - Digital Information

ACF will set objectives and develop policies to ensure that digital information is accessible to eligible individuals with LEP who need language assistance, in accordance with assessments of LEP needs and agency capacity.

Program/Project Name

ACF Language Access Initiative

Program/Project Description

ACF will continue to expand the use of social media and websites to enhance accessibility to individuals with LEP.

Action Steps We Will Take

- Continue to expand the translation of vital documents to be placed on ACF's website.
- Continue to offer the ACF website translated in approximately 40 languages.

Cost Estimate

We will use current staff and resources to accomplish these tasks.

Monitoring

ACF will monitor which web pages are most frequently accessed and adjust its web content strategies accordingly.

Element 10 - Grant Assurance and Compliance by Recipients of HHS Funding

ACF will ensure grant recipients understand and comply with obligations under relevant civil rights statutes and regulations that HHS enforced regarding language access.

Program/Project Name

Division of Grants Policy's Language Access Initiative

Program/Project Description

The Division of Grants Policy (DGP) within the Office of Administration/Office of Financial Services provides agency-wide guidance on grants management policies and procedures. DGP will ensure grantees have the necessary information about their obligations regarding access to individuals with LEP.

Action Steps We Will Take

- Review and update written guidance, including standard Notice of Funding Opportunity Announcement language and general Policy Notes, to include specific language and information regarding compliance with civil rights requirements, particularly regarding the provision of meaningful access to persons with LEP.

Cost Estimate

Existing staff and resources will be used to complete these tasks.

Monitoring

Feedback from the usability survey will be used to identify needs and challenges.

APPENDIX A: Definitions¹

Note: Any related definitions that may be issued under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act will complement or supersede the broad working definitions set forth below.

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Agency	Agency refers to HHS Operating Divisions (such as CDC, FDA or NIH) and Staff Divisions (such as the Office for Civil Rights or the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs). Operating Divisions focus on specific programs and activities as authorized by Congress. Staff Divisions are part of the Office of the Secretary and serve in a coordinating role for the Department.
Applicant	Any person who inquires about or submits an application for public assistance benefits under any program or service.
Auxiliary Aids and Services	Tools or assistance provided to communicate with people who have communication disabilities.
Beneficiary	Anyone who has applied for and is receiving Medicare, Medicaid, or other health benefit.
Bilingual/Multilingual Staff	<p>A staff member who has advanced proficiency (e.g., proficiency at or above the Federal Interagency Language Roundtable (https://www.govtilr.org/https://www.govtilr.org) level 3 in listening, reading, and speaking or above the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages “Superior” level in listening, reading, and speaking)) in English and at least one other language and has knowledge of and experience with specialized terminology necessary for meaningful communication. A staff member who only has a rudimentary familiarity with a language other than English shall not be considered Bilingual/Multilingual Staff.</p> <p>Bilingual/Multilingual Staff should not interpret or translate unless they have separately met the requirements of being a qualified interpreter or translator. Bilingual/Multilingual Staff must be given clear roles and expectations regarding whether they are performing their job duties in-language or serving as qualified interpreters or translators.</p> <p>A distinction should be made between Bilingual/Multilingual Staff who provide services directly in a non-English language (e.g., call center staff) and those who interpret, as the assessment and skills required for each differ.</p>
Certificate	An academic recognition demonstrating the successful completion of a program of study, usually based on amount of instructional time and a minimum grade.

¹ The Definition of Terms is attribute to the 2023 HHS Language Access Plan

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Certification	Institutional recognition demonstrating successful passing of an examination that tests knowledge, skills, and abilities related to an occupation.
Contractor	Any entity that performs work or provides services on behalf of an agency or division under a contractual agreement with reimbursement.
Customer	Individuals, businesses, and organizations that interact with an HHS agency or program. The term customer is inclusive of beneficiaries and health care and human services partners.
Digital Information	Information, as defined in OMB Circular A-130, which the government produces and provides digitally to help individuals access HHS conducted programs and activities for which they are individually eligible to participate. OMB Circular A-130 defines digital information as any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts, data, or opinions in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms.
Direct “in-language” communication	Monolingual communication in a language other than English between a multilingual staff and a person with LEP (e.g., Korean to Korean).
Disaggregated Data	Data that separates out subgroups to provide the most descriptive and detailed information possible; for example, rather than using data about “Asian languages” or “Native American languages,” disaggregated data would indicate which specific languages are spoken by an individual or at the community level. Disaggregated data may also include information about varied dialects, as well as more specific national origin information.
Effective Communication	For communication disabilities, it refers to aids and services to ensure that communication with people with disabilities, such as people who are deaf or hard of hearing, is as effective as communication as for people without disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services must be provided when needed to achieve effective communication.
Health Care and Human Services Partner	Beneficiaries, including recipients of federal financial assistance, contractors, vendors, advocacy groups, religious institutions, nongovernmental organizations, hospital administrators, health insurers, translators, interpreters, community health clinics, and representatives from a broad cross-section of the language access community, individuals with disabilities, etc.

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Interpretation	The act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then faithfully orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning. For individuals with certain disabilities that affect communication, this can include understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed communication in the source language and faithfully conveying that information into a spoken or signed target language while retaining the same meaning.
Intersectional Data	Data that combines or otherwise includes information about more than one demographic or other characteristic; for example, intersectional data would include data regarding national origin and LEP status, and/or data regarding Native American women (thus analyzing data about the intersection of race and gender). It may also include data about literacy rates, poverty rates, familial status or other characteristics relevant to social determinants of health.
Language Access	The ability of individuals with LEP to communicate with HHS employees and contractors, and meaningfully learn about, apply for, or participate in HHS programs, activities, and services.
Language Assistance Services	All oral, written, and signed language services needed to assist individuals with LEP and people with disabilities to communicate effectively with HHS staff and contractors and gain meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in the services, activities, programs, or other benefits administered by HHS.
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	An individual who does not speak English as his or her preferred language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English in a manner that permits him or her to communicate effectively with HHS and have meaningful access to and participate in the services, activities, programs, or other benefits administered by HHS. Individuals with LEP may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but have limited proficiency in English in other areas (e.g., reading or writing). LEP designations are also context-specific; an individual may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting (e.g., conversing in English with coworkers), but these skills may be insufficient in other settings (e.g., addressing court proceedings). An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing may also have limited proficiency in spoken or written English.
Machine Translation	Automated translation that is text-based and provides instant translations between various languages, sometimes with an option for audio input or output.

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Meaningful Access	Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the individual with LEP needing assistance. Meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English-proficient individuals.
Participant	Any person who has applied for and is receiving public assistance benefits or services under any HHS program or service.
Plain Language	Plain language as defined in the Plain Writing Act of 2010 is writing that is “clear, concise and well organized.”
Preferred/Primary Language	The language that LEP individuals identify as the preferred language that they use to communicate effectively. The language that LEP individuals identify as the preferred language that they use to communicate effectively.
Qualified Interpreter or Translator	A bilingual/multilingual person who has the appropriate training and experience or demonstrated ability to fully understand, analyze, and process and then faithfully render a spoken, written, or signed message in one language into a second language and who abides by a code of professional practice and ethics. In the context of disabilities, a qualified interpreter is one who can interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. A child shall not be considered a qualified translator or interpreter, nor shall a family member or employee who does not meet the minimum qualifications specified above.
Sight Translation	The oral or signed rendering of written text into spoken or signed language by an interpreter without change in meaning based on a visual review of the original text or document.
Sign Languages	Languages that people who are deaf or hard of hearing use in which hand movements, gestures, and facial expressions convey grammatical structure and meaning. There is no universal sign language. Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) is a different language from ASL, and Americans who know ASL may not understand BSL.
Sub-recipient	An entity that, on behalf of and in the same manner as a recipient of federal financial assistance, provides services to and has contact with applicants to and participants in a program administered by a recipient of federal financial assistance, but does not include an individual applicant or participant who is a beneficiary of the program.

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Tagline	Brief message that may be included in or attached to a document. Taglines in languages other than English are used on documents (including websites) written in English that describe how individuals with LEP can obtain translation of the document or an interpreter to read or explain the document. Section 1557 and Title VI will prescribe the languages that must be included in such tagline notices but covered entities may also add more languages.
Translation	The process of converting written text from a source language into an equivalent written text in a target language as fully and accurately as possible while maintaining the style, tone, and intent of the text, while considering differences of culture and dialect.
Vital Document	Paper or electronic written material that contains information that is critical for accessing a component's programs or activities or is required by law. Vital documents include, but are not limited to: critical records and notices as part of emergency preparedness and risk communications; online and paper applications; consent forms; complaint forms; letters or notices pertaining to eligibility for benefits; letters or notices pertaining to the reduction, denial, or termination of services or benefits that require a response from an individual with LEP; written tests that evaluate competency for a particular license, job, or skill for which knowing English is not required; documents that must be provided by law; and notices regarding the availability of language assistance services for individuals with LEP at no cost to them.