

Social Security Administration

# Language Access Plan



**Social Security Administration  
Language Access Plan  
Fiscal Years 2024-2026**

**Prepared by the:**

Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity

**Submitted to the:**

Federal Coordination and Compliance Section  
Civil Rights Division  
U.S. Department of Justice

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## A Message from the Deputy Commissioner

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I am pleased to present the Social Security Administration's Language Access Plan (Plan). Social Security's Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity worked closely with the Office of Communications and the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Steering Committee to create the agency's first comprehensive plan. The Plan is a critical part of the agency's commitment to provide substantially equal and meaningful access to Social Security benefits and services to all people, regardless of their English proficiency.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit entities receiving federal financial assistance from discrimination on the bases of, race, color, national origin, and disability. Consistent with these authorities, the Social Security Administration is dedicated to ensuring that persons with LEP have meaningful access to their programs and activities. Obligations to take steps to provide meaningful access to individuals with LEP also apply to subrecipients of federal financial assistance, who must similarly comply with all applicable civil rights laws.

The Plan describes our language access policy, strategy, and program. It underscores our ongoing pledge to:

- communicate with members of the public in a language they understand,
- make language access programs available, and
- provide language assistance at no cost to individuals who have limited English proficiency.

In keeping with the agency's mission, the Plan reflects our commitment to foster an equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment that respects individual differences. We value all of our customers, and strive to serve them all.

The Plan is a living document. We will continue to update it, as well as our policies, to best meet the needs of people we serve.

Sincerely,

*Claudia Postell*

**Claudia Postell**  
**Deputy Commissioner**  
**Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity**

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# GENERAL LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

## 1. Agency Mission

The mission of the Social Security Administration (SSA) is to ensure equity and accessibility in delivering Social Security services by improving the customer experience and addressing systemic barriers to participation in our programs. Embedded in this mission is the value of customer diversity, and SSA's commitment to foster an equitable, inclusive, and accessible environment that respects individual differences.

## 2. Policy Statement

- a. SSA is committed to advancing equity for all, including historically underserved individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), through meaningful language access to SSA benefits, information, and services in accordance with Executive Orders (EO) 13166,<sup>1</sup> 13985,<sup>2</sup> 14031,<sup>3</sup> and 14091.<sup>4</sup>
- b. SSA, its components, and employees are required to plan for, and take reasonable steps, to provide timely, accurate, and meaningful access to all programs or activities conducted both by SSA and by entities receiving federal financial assistance from SSA for individuals with LEP.
- c. This policy reflects that it is SSA's responsibility, and not that of an individual seeking services, to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to all SSA programs and activities and to foster equity for individuals who interact, or may interact, with SSA over the phone, in writing, in person, or via electronic methods.
- d. SSA employees shall take reasonable steps to effectively inform the public, in a language they understand, of the availability of language accessible programs and activities and to provide language assistance at no cost to individuals with LEP.
- e. SSA and its components must comply with Section 504<sup>5</sup> of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires SSA to take appropriate steps to ensure that its communications with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HOH), blind, or have speech disabilities are as effective as its communications with others. This Language Access Plan (LAP or Plan) includes discussion of language access for individuals who are D/HOH because many individuals who are D/HOH use American Sign Language (ASL),<sup>6</sup> a language separate and distinct from the English language, while other individuals may use other types of sign language. Components must ensure effective communication for individuals who are D/HOH who use ASL, other sign language interpreting, or auxiliary aids and services consistent with the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

- f. SSA is committed to ensuring access to quality services and program benefits regardless of an individual's ability to communicate in English by:
  - i. Working to improve service delivery options for persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH.
  - ii. Providing education and awareness to employees, contractors, and federally funded program providers, which supports their ability to take all reasonable steps to inform the public about our language accessibility services.
  - iii. Ensuring that the public has access to SSA programs and services, regardless of their English proficiency.

### 3. Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to ensure that SSA components and employees take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to SSA benefits, services, information, and other important aspects of SSA's programs and activities for individuals with LEP and who are D/HOH. Persons with LEP are defined as individuals who do not speak English as their primary language, and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Individuals who are D/HOH also can have limited proficiency in spoken or written English and may not be proficient in ASL or any other recognized sign language.

### 4. Legal Authority

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in the delivery of services or benefits funded by the Federal government. Under this law, recipients of federal financial assistance must ensure that persons with LEP have meaningful access to their programs and activities and thus do not violate Title VI's prohibition against national origin discrimination.

Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, dated August 16, 2000, provides further direction requiring that Federal agencies provide meaningful access to federally conducted programs and activities for persons with LEP. The Executive Order requires that Federal agencies create plans to provide persons with LEP with meaningful access to federally conducted programs and activities. In May 2011, the Department of Justice (DOJ) issued guidance to assist agencies in devising and implementing their language access plans.<sup>7</sup>

United States Attorney General's *Memorandum for Heads of Federal Agencies, General Counsels, and Civil Rights Offices regarding Strengthening the Federal Government's Commitment to Language Access* (November 21, 2022)<sup>8</sup> highlights Executive Order 13166 and affirms the Federal government's need to engage effectively with all members of the public and ensure full participation by communities

with LEP. The Attorney General emphasized that the Justice Department, and specifically the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, is committed to working with agencies to strengthen and improve access of persons with LEP to federally conducted and assisted activities. Since then, the DOJ has engaged with federal agencies to share best practices and exchange information about language access initiatives and efforts.

### Statutes:

- a. Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d) (Title VI).<sup>9</sup>
- b. Sections 504 and 508<sup>10</sup> of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- c. Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2022.<sup>11</sup>

### Executive Orders

- a. Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, 65 Fed. Reg. 159, 50121 (Aug. 16, 2000).<sup>1</sup>
- b. Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, 86 Fed. Reg. 14, 7009 (Jan. 20, 2021) (Persons with LEP could be considered “underserved communities” and this Order asks agencies to consider “[p]otential barriers that underserved communities and individuals may face to enrollment in and access to benefits and services in Federal programs”).<sup>2</sup>
- c. Executive Order 14031, *Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders*, 86 Fed. Reg. 105, 29675 (June 3, 2021) (“Linguistic isolation and lack of access to language assistance services continue to lock many AA and NHPI individuals out of opportunity”).<sup>3</sup>
- d. Executive Order 14091, *Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, 88 Fed. Reg. 35, 10825 (Feb. 16, 2023) (“ [I]mprove language access services to ensure that all communities can engage with agencies’ respective civil rights offices, including by fully implementing Executive Order 13166”).<sup>4</sup>

### DOJ Attorney General Directives:

- a. United States Attorney General’s *Memorandum to Heads of Department Components Regarding Language Access Obligations Under Executive Order 13166* (June 28, 2010).<sup>12</sup>
- b. United States Attorney General’s *Memorandum to Heads of Federal Agencies, General Counsels, and Civil Rights Heads Regarding Federal Government’s Renewed Commitment to Language Access Obligations Under Executive Order 13166* (Feb. 17, 2011).<sup>13</sup>

- c. United States Attorney General’s *Memorandum for Heads of Federal Agencies, General Counsels, and Civil Rights Offices regarding Strengthening the Federal Government’s Commitment to Language Access* (November 21, 2022).<sup>14</sup>

### Other Relevant DOJ Guidance:

These guidelines are designed to ensure greater consistency between federal agency implementation of Executive Order 13166 and the application of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to recipients of federal funds, such as those described in:

- a. DOJ’s LEP Guidance, *Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, 65 Fed. Reg. 50123 (Aug. 16, 2000).<sup>15</sup>
- b. DOJ’s LEP *Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons*, 67 Fed. Reg. 41455 (June 18, 2002).<sup>16</sup>

### SSA Directives and Policy:

- a. SSA Agency Strategic Plan (March 2022).<sup>17</sup>
- b. SSA Equity Action Plan in Agreement with EO 13985 (February 10, 2022).<sup>18</sup>

## 5. Scope of Policy

This Plan sets forth guidance for SSA components and employees to ensure that SSA-wide language access policies, standards, and procedures are implemented consistently. This Plan will be distributed to the agency’s workforce and should be used as a guide for agency employees’ interactions with customers with LEP.

## 6. Definitions

Key terms used in this plan are defined in **Appendix A**.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

This plan is carried out by the Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity, the LEP Executive Steering Committee (Committee), and agency components. Their corresponding roles and responsibilities are described in **Appendix B**.

## 8. Mechanism to Receive Feedback or Complaints

Direct comments, questions, or complaints of discrimination regarding language access services or this Plan to [dccreo.ccm@ssa.gov](mailto:dccreo.ccm@ssa.gov) or by mail to:

Social Security Administration  
Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity  
Center for Compliance Management  
6401 Security Boulevard  
3350 West High Rise Bldg.  
Baltimore, MD 21235

## 9. Language Access Plan Review and Update

This LAP will be updated in unison with the Agency Strategic Plan and in consultation with the DOJ, the Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity, the Committee, and stakeholders as appropriate.

# LANGUAGE ACCESS STRATEGY

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SSA's language access strategy to meet the needs of persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH and who face barriers to services and benefits, is illustrated below. This is followed by a detailed overview of the strategic approach SSA will adhere to.

### i. Language Policy Directives

- a. Set forth standards, operating principals, and guidelines that govern the delivery of language appropriate services.
- b. Institute requirements on the agency and its employees to ensure meaningful access.
- c. Available to the public so that claimants and beneficiaries with LEP can understand that in-language assistance is accessible.

### ii. Language Access Implementation Plan

- a. Helps management and employees understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to overcoming language barriers for persons with LEP and those who are D/HOH.
- b. Serves as a management document that outlines how SSA will define language assistance tasks, set deadlines and priorities, assign responsibility, and allocate the resources necessary to come into or maintain compliance with language access requirements.

- c. Describes how SSA will effectuate the service delivery standards delineated in the policy directives.

### iii. Language Access Procedures

- a. Provide the “how to” for employees. They specify the steps to provide language services, gather data, and deliver services to persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH.
- b. Set forth procedures in the Program Operations Manual System (POMS), Hearing, Appeals, and Litigation Law (HALLEX) manual, Teleservice Center Operating Guide (TSCOG), and other internal guides.

## 1. Language Policy Directives

It is SSA’s policy to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to provide persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in services, activities, programs, and other benefits. This policy applies to all employees, particularly those in contact with the public.

SSA accommodations include providing qualified (also referred to as authorized) interpreters and translators, and other aids necessary to comply with this policy without cost to the person with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH. SSA policy includes providing oral interpretation or written translation of vital documents (see definition in **Appendix A**) and other information to persons with LEP, upon request or when needed, to ensure SSA accommodates the person with LEP. Further, SSA will inform persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH, and their authorized representatives, about this policy and the availability of such assistance.

SSA shall consider the needs of persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH early in the process of designing programs, services, and activities. All SSA components shall adopt the policies and principles discussed herein.

## 2. Language Access Implementation Plan

Implementation of the agency-wide plan includes, but is not limited to:

- a. **Recruitment** – Standardize the way bilingual and multilingual employees are recruited, identified, assessed, and trained.
- b. **Guidance and Policy** – Provide updated guidance to SSA employees on how to identify customers with LEP (focus on languages of lesser diffusion, which include select American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and other Indigenous languages, and language variants).

- c. Employee Training** – Add training to the curriculum of public-facing employees focused on:
  - Working effectively with an interpreter in person or on the telephone.
  - Interpreter ethics.
  - Tracking the use of language assistance services.
  - Accessing SSA’s centralized electronic repository of LEP policies and procedures.
  - Tips on providing effective assistance to persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH.
- d. Notices** – Provide free interpreter services information in, or multi-language insert to, all vital notices to alert the public about the availability of language assistance services.
- e. Website** – Enhance usability and access to multi-language information on the agency’s website, in keeping with current Federal recommendations and guidelines.
- f. Monitor Implementation** – Monitor implementation and efficacy of this Plan. Identify primary channels of contact for communities with LEP or those who are D/HOH (whether by phone, in person, correspondence, online, etc.) and component specific language data.
- g. Procurement** – Provide quality control during the procurement process for interpreter and translation services.

### 3. Language Access Procedures

The SSA, state Disability Determination Services (DDS), and Office of Hearings Operations’ (OHO) language access procedures for employees specify the steps to provide language services, gather data, and deliver services to persons with LEP by:

- i.** Establishing guidelines to identify persons with LEP.
- ii.** Identifying the preferred language, both spoken and written, of persons with LEP.
- iii.** Providing guidance to employees in POMS, HALLEX manual, TSCOG, and other internal guides on how to use language services to assist customers.

Furthermore, in 2023, SSA reconstituted the LEP Communication Hub (Hub) for employees. The Hub is an internal website, which compiles LEP policy, procedures, guidelines, training, resource materials, data, and more for ease of reference and was included in an Acting Commissioner of Social Security broadcast to all employees on October 30, 2023.

You can find references to language access procedures in *Appendix C*.

## **LANGUAGE ACCESS PROGRAM**

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The following topics are the elements of SSA's language access program.

1. Identification of Individuals with LEP or who are D/HOH
2. SSA Offices that Provide Federal Financial Assistance
3. Oversight and Quality Assurance
4. Community Outreach Initiatives
5. Allocation of Resources
6. Language Assistance Services
7. Multilingual and Accessible Digital Content
8. Training
9. Interagency Agreements
10. Performance Measurement
11. Data Analytics and Report

### **1. Identifications of Individuals with LEP or who are D/HOH**

SSA takes advantage of opportunities to identify and record customers' language preferences and needs. Employees use this data to request services in the person's preferred language and ASL. The agency is firmly committed to ensuring the data accurately reflects the preferences of customers' language and needs. To fulfill this commitment, the agency consistently:

- Reviews business processes for data collection.
- Emphasizes the importance of language collection accuracy to personnel.
- Conducts ongoing data reviews to ensure reliability.
- Invests resources to address data quality.

Additional language preference information or indication of LEP needs are contained in multiple agency-related forms including the application for disability benefits, medical evidence of record, and statements from appointed representatives or third parties.

### **2. SSA Offices that Provide Federal Financial Assistance**

When providing financial assistance to an entity, SSA requires recipients, and any sub-recipients, to provide access to persons with LEP in accordance with Title VI.

Recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure that people with LEP have meaningful and equitable access to their programs and activities. SSA offices that provide federal financial assistance to state and local governments and other entities, whether by way of funding, in-kind assistance, training, detail of personnel, or other assistance, should take reasonable efforts to ensure that recipients of such assistance are complying with their Title VI nondiscrimination obligations.

### **3. Oversight and Quality Assurance**

SSA's oversight and quality assurance efforts help the agency monitor the efficiency of language access services. In addition, SSA ensures compliance with applicable Federal laws and regulations. These efforts include:

- Reviewing policy and agency directives concerning language access services.
- Reviewing procurement.
- Reviewing data quality.
- Conducting customer satisfaction surveys.
- Obtaining advocate and customer feedback.

SSA's analysis of the feedback and data helps to enhance LEP service delivery and training. Each Social Security office takes reasonable steps to ensure that employees and contractors who provide language access services follow policy guidelines.

### **4. Community Outreach Initiatives**

SSA maintains external partnerships with advocates and third-party organizations. These advocates and third parties assist applicants and recipients who face barriers to our services, including persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH. The agency conducts external outreach to promote the availability of its training on disability claims and provides training on disability claims to third-party organizations who assist people who face barriers to agency services.

SSA actively collaborates with a wide range of language access advocates and government entities. SSA established cooperative relationships with diverse populations with LEP and their advocates within our 10 regions. These relationships help assess the need for modifications to agency policies and procedures. The agency also considers recommendations from advocates to maintain and constantly improve basic language access training.

SSA gauges the needs of communities with LEP and who are D/HOH and ensures the agency has a broad perspective. SSA uses this information to determine the best way to serve our customers with LEP and who are D/HOH.

The Committee hosts up to three meetings a year with national language advocacy groups and obtains their feedback and perspectives about our language access service delivery. SSA's External Affairs Team maintains regular communications with advocates. The agency uses these opportunities to listen and share updates about the needs of customers with LEP and who are D/HOH.

Additional information about priority languages is located in distinct servicing areas at census.gov<sup>19</sup>, LEP.gov<sup>20</sup>, and local advocacy groups.

## 5. Allocation of Resources

SSA carefully considers the needs of persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH to determine budgetary requirements under service delivery. The agency reviews language service usage regularly to help the agency prioritize workloads.

## 6. Language Assistance Services

SSA delivers services through a nationwide network of more than 1,500 offices that include:

- Regional offices.
- Local offices (includes Social Security card centers).
- Teleservice centers.
- Processing centers.
- Hearing offices (includes satellite offices, national hearing centers, and national case assistance centers).
- The Office of Appellate Operations.
- Headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland.

Local offices and card centers are the primary points of contact for in person support. Teleservice centers handle telephone calls to the agency's national 800 number. Employees in processing centers primarily handle Social Security retirement, survivors, and disability payments.

SSA relies on state DDSs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico. DDS makes disability determinations on Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) claims.

Administrative law judges and administrative appeals judges decide appeals of determinations and decisions.

SSA provides quality service in more than 200 languages through:

- A team of bilingual and multilingual employees.
- National telephone interpreter service.
- Translator service contracts.

These services also are available through the state DDS offices, which may or may not have their own bilingual and multilingual employees. In addition, a DDS can use a state contracted interpreter service. Persons with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH can access SSA's services in person, by telephone or TTY, online, and through video service delivery.

### Direct In-Language Communications

The agency's bilingual and multilingual public-contact employees help to provide quality customer service to persons with LEP. SSA's personnel in Puerto Rico are bilingual in Spanish and English. SSA provides services and access to benefits to persons with LEP in Puerto Rico consistent with this Plan. Where available, SSA provides direct in-language communications.

SSA identifies needs to hire bilingual or multilingual employees based on national trends in demographics and language preferences. The agency advertises bilingual-skilled positions to hire individuals with the language skills necessary to communicate with SSA's customers with LEP.

SSA recognizes that it often requires more time to conduct business in languages other than English. The agency encourages its managers to consider this factor when they assign work and assess employee productivity. Likewise, Social Security policies encourage the state DDSs to use bilingual and multilingual medical examiners for consultive examinations, where available.

### Interpreter Services

SSA provides an interpreter free of charge to any person who requests language assistance or whom the agency believes could benefit from an interpreter. To ensure quality interpretation, SSA encourages customers to use its free interpreter services. SSA also must give primary consideration to the method of communication preferred by an individual who is D/HOH. Consistent with this approach, the individual can request another auxiliary aid or service (e.g., Sight Translation, refer to definition in **Appendix A**).

SSA widely disseminates the message below to its customers in print and online. The message describes how to access free interpreter services, and is available online in 16 languages:<sup>21</sup>

SSA provides free interpreter services to help you conduct your Social Security business. These interpreter services are available whether you talk to us by phone or in the Social Security office.

To access our free interpreter services, call our toll-free number, **1-800-772-1213**. If you need service in Spanish, press 7 and wait for a Spanish-speaking representative to help you. For all other languages, stay on the line and remain silent during our English voice automation prompts until a representative answers. The representative will contact an interpreter to help with your call. If your business cannot be completed by phone, we will make an appointment for you at a local Social Security office and arrange for an interpreter to be there at the time of your visit.

SSA widely disseminates the message below to its customers in print and online. It describes how to communicate with the agency if D/HOH:

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call our toll-free TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

If a customer with LEP or who is D/HOH prefers to use their own interpreter, SSA must determine if the customer's preferred interpreter meets agency interpreter requirements. A customer may prefer interpreter help from a family member, friend, or other third party. Given the nature and complexities of SSA's business processes, SSA generally does not permit anyone under the age of 18 to serve as an interpreter. Refer to Qualified Interpreter definition in [Appendix A](#).

In some instances, the agency could deem it necessary for customers to use SSA interpreters to ensure adequate language access.

## Translations Services

SSA provides written educational materials about Social Security programs and benefits in 18 languages to improve access and knowledge about SSA programs for people with LEP. These languages are:

1. العربية – Arabic
2. հայերեն – Armenian
3. 中文 (繁體中文) – Chinese (Traditional)
4. 中文 (简体中文) – Chinese (Simplified)
5. ىسراف – Farsi
6. Français – French
7. Ελληνικά – Greek
8. Kreyòl ayisyen – Haitian-Creole
9. Italiano – Italian
10. 한국어 – Korean
11. Polski – Polish
12. Português – Portuguese
13. Русский – Russian
14. Soomaali – Somali
15. Español – Spanish
16. Tagalog – Tagalog
17. Українська – Ukrainian
18. Tiếng Việt – Vietnamese

SSA translates auxiliary and evidentiary documents received from the public to English. SSA's contractor can translate more than 200 languages and dialects to English. Some languages include:

Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bengali, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cambodian/Khmer, Catalan, Chinese, Creole, Czech, Danish, Dari Eritrean, Dutch, Estonian, Farsi, Finnish, Flemish, French, Gaelic, Georgian, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian-Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Kazakh, Kirundi, Korean, Kurdish, Laotian, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malaysian, Marathi, Nepalese, Norwegian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Pushtu, Rumanian, Russian, Sanskrit, Serb/Croatian, Singhalese, Slovak, Slovene, Somalian, Spanish, Sri Lanka, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tibetan, Tigrinian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, and Vietnamese.

Other non-English languages may include languages spoken in remote regions of the world, dialects of common languages, and derivatives of other languages.

SSA translates vital documents based on assessments of need and capacity as identified by our data analysis of telephone interpreter services usage, visitor intake process, and multi-language publication usage data. Different translation strategies will result for different products. All vital documents, regardless of language, must be easy to understand by the targeted audiences. SSA must consider matters of plain language and literacy for all documents, which include vital documents both in English and the translated language.

There are two distinct types of vital documents:

1. Public information. Examples:
  - Press Releases.
  - Public outreach or educational materials (including web-based materials).
2. Documents that are specific communication regarding a claim or matter between an individual and the agency. Examples:
  - Claim or application forms.
  - Benefit Determination Notices.
  - Adverse Action Notices.

The DDSs are generally required to obtain verbatim translation of medical records received or submitted in connection with a claim. The DDS has access to internal translation resources including authorized DDS translators and the SSA Translation and Priority Workload Unit (TPWU) providing in-house translation services in French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish. Other languages are contracted to vetted third party sources.

SSA sends notices in English and Spanish. Most notices are available in full Spanish versions for people with a Spanish language preference, and a Spanish cover letter is included with English-only notices. SSA and DDSs include a multi-language insert<sup>22</sup> in some manually generated SSA notices and automatically generated DDS notices for all people identified with LEP or non-English preference. The multi-language insert provides information about our free help to understand the English letter in the 18 most common languages used by claimants.

SSA continually identifies materials that require translation. SSA continuously conducts data analysis and monitors the translation requests from the advocacy community and LEP customers to develop a priority order for translations, allocation of resources, and translations workloads. SSA regularly reassesses the materials that require translation to ensure that the agency maintains current and effective public information materials.

## 7. Multilingual and Accessible Digital Content

The Multi-Language Gateway<sup>23</sup> includes detailed instructions in several languages to help people access SSA's free interpreter services. Additionally, this site includes links to publications in languages other than English. These publications and instructions are available from the SSA.gov<sup>24</sup> home page when selecting the:

- "Español" link at the top of each SSA.gov webpage.
- "Other languages" link in the footer of each SSA.gov webpage.
- "Publications" link in the footer of each SSA.gov webpage.

SSA maintains a Spanish language website, [segurosocial.gov](http://segurosocial.gov).<sup>25</sup> Recipients can view the website and all the publications with a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

The Multi-Language Gateway site provides additional translated materials in Arabic, Armenian, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Farsi, French, Greek, Haitian-Creole, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Tagalog, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

SSA holds a contract with a multi-language translation vendor to translate public information materials. The Multi-Language Team curates the contract and continuously works with the vendor to update products and materials on the multi-language website.

## 8. Training

SSA provides front line employees with reminders about access to the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) and the associated business processes for proper application and use in serving individuals with LEP. Accordingly, ad hoc updates, training, and resource guides are released throughout the year to ensure employees maintain an understanding and are properly implementing these interpreter resources in their daily operations.

SSA's employees are required to know how to identify customers with LEP and the procedures to access our language assistance services. SSA trains direct service personnel to ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures, which include services to customers with LEP.

The agency develops and reviews training materials on an ongoing basis. SSA also considers recommendations from advocates and customers with LEP to maintain and further improve basic language access training. Some of the offerings include training on how to:

- Identify customers with LEP, take appropriate action, and use available resources to assist them effectively.
- Implement policies and procedures to provide effective language access services to persons with LEP.
- Identify, assess, and record the language preferences of customers with LEP at the earliest point of contact.
- Access language assistance through multilingual services, which include qualified in-house bilingual interpreters, authorized translators, and telephone interpreter services.
- Request translations of non-English documents.
- Identify language needs of LEP communities.

SSA uses and maintains the LEP Communications Hub, a centralized electronic repository, which contains all LEP policy and procedure references. These resources are available to state DDS and SSA employees on the agency internal website.

## 9. Interagency Agreements

SSA encourages collaboration with other federal agencies to share resources, improve efficiency, and standardize federal terminology through interagency agreements. For example, an agreement with the Department of State provides interpreter services for meetings with foreign officials. SSA supports sharing promising practices across government and participates in multilingual working groups and communities of practice.

## 10. Performance Measurement

The Committee re-examines priorities and assesses SSA's language access services, policies, and procedures on an annual basis. SSA also reviews the language access policies periodically to ensure alignment with this document, our Agency Strategic Plan,<sup>17</sup> and the current needs of the public.

SSA conducts constant reviews of the language access services contracts to ensure that contractors provide quality LEP services. In the reviews, SSA ensures that contracts and interagency agreements:

- Contain language that adequately describe the language needs, requirements, and quality expectations.

- Include a means to assess whether agency contractors meet language quality standards.
- Can hold contractors accountable to meet SSA's quality standards.
- Incorporate to the extent possible requests received from external stakeholders to provide essential services to persons with LEP.
- Have sufficient resource allocations for translations and interpreter services.

This framework allows SSA to respond quickly to any issue that could arise about language access services, policies, and procedures.

## 11. Data Analytics and Reports

Data Analytics includes monitoring for trends or areas that could benefit from improvement, a change in policy, or new or amended resources. Through data analytics, SSA explores methods to address the accessibility of agency information by persons with LEP or individuals who are D/HOH to gather and use information about the experience of individuals at the intersection of multiple identities. These methods will capture data on the experience of persons with LEP, and their overlapping identities, in accessing SSA conducted and assisted programs, services, and activities. SSA collects and tracks agency LEP data at the national, regional, and local levels to determine the needs of the community and to allocate resources accordingly.

SSA monitors and uses various internal reports, such as:

- Frequently requested languages.
- Feedback from our employees.
- Customer surveys.
- Customer complaints.

Reports are part of SSA's transparency efforts. SSA continues to expand its data transparency efforts and publish annual and quarterly data for spoken language preferences. These methods include, but are not limited to:

- Collecting and analyzing local demographic data.
- Analyzing census tracts that surround areas with higher concentrations of people of demographics that comprise less than half of the population for the languages primarily spoken in each geographical area.
- Gathering input from outside stakeholders, such as persons with LEP and groups that work with the LEP communities.

Such analyses allow the agency to determine the top language needs and languages that SSA personnel may encounter by region and state. Data is reviewed annually to

ensure the needs of the public are met.

The agency fosters transparency, participation, and collaboration in its programs and activities. SSA has a long history of collecting data. Since 2009, the agency has identified high-value data of particular interest to the public. Data is about people—their identifying information, language preference, and more. SSA posts this data on its Open Government website.<sup>26</sup> Refer to [Appendix D](#).

## APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

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The Social Security Administration uses the following terms as defined below for the purposes of this Plan:

**Bilingual** — A person who reads, writes, speaks, and understands English and one other language fluently.

**Bilingual Employee** — A Social Security employee who reads, writes, speaks, and understands English and another language fluently. In addition, their Social Security office authorizes them to provide language support.

**DDS** — State Disability Determination Service.

**Deaf/deaf (D/d)** — Uppercase Deaf denotes a particular group of people who are deaf and share a language and a culture; lowercase deaf refers to the audiological condition of not hearing. An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing (D/HOH) also may have limited proficiency in spoken or written English and may not be proficient in ASL or any other recognized sign language.

**Direct In-Language Communication** — Monolingual communication in a language other than English (e.g., Korean to Korean) between a bilingual or multilingual staff and a person with LEP.

**Effective Communication<sup>27</sup>** — For communication disabilities, it refers to aids and services to ensure that communication with people with disabilities, such as people who are D/HOH, is as effective as communication for people without disabilities.

**Equity<sup>28</sup>** — The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islander and other persons of color; members of religious groups that constitute less than half of the population; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality; and individuals who belong to multiple such communities.

**Hard of Hearing (HOH)** — Someone experiencing hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing (D/HOH) also may have limited proficiency in spoken or written English and may not be proficient in ASL or any other recognized sign language.

**Interpretation** — The act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning and not interjecting personal opinion. For individuals who are D/HOH, this can include understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed communication in the source language and conveying that information into a spoken or signed target language while retaining the same meaning and not interjecting personal opinion.

**Language Assistance Services** — Oral and written language services used to provide individuals with LEP meaningful access to, and an equal opportunity to participate fully in, the services, activities, and other programs administered by the SSA.

**Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** — Describes individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. 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. For example, 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 D/HOH also may have limited proficiency in spoken or written English and may not be proficient in ASL or any other recognized sign language.

**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.

**Methods of Communication** — People who are deaf or hard of hearing use a variety of ways to communicate. Some rely on sign language interpreters or assistive listening devices; some rely primarily on written messages. Many can speak even though they cannot hear.

**Multilanguage Gateway**<sup>23</sup> — SSA's Multi-Language Gateway with information in multiple languages about our programs and services.

**Multilanguage Resources** — SSA's internal intranet site (also known as the LEP Communications Hub or Hub) for employees who serve customers with limited English proficiency. This site is only available to state DDS and SSA employees.

**Multilingual** — A person who reads, writes, speaks, and understands English and two or more other languages fluently.

**Multilingual Employee** — A Social Security employee who reads, writes, speaks, and understands English and at least two other languages fluently. In addition, their Social Security office authorizes them to provide language support.

**OCREO** — The Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity.

**Primary Language** — The language in which an individual most effectively communicates when interacting with SSA. An individual's primary language may be particular dialect or variation of their language.

**Qualified Interpreter<sup>29</sup>** — An authorized SSA employee, contractor, or another individual whom the agency qualified. This person reads, speaks, understands, and demonstrates fluency in both English and another language, and meets the criteria below:

- Demonstrates competence to interpret from one spoken or signed language into another.
- Demonstrates knowledge of professional standards, and adherence to the corresponding professional code of ethics, as well as familiarity with required SSA terminology.
- Agrees to comply with SSA's requirements about confidentiality and disclosure of information.
- Has no personal stake in the outcome of the customer's Social Security business that would create a conflict of interest.
- Agrees to provide an accurate interpretation of both SSA's questions and the customers responses.
- Does not assume or infer facts or dates that the customer does not provide.

**Qualified Translator<sup>30</sup>** — An authorized SSA employee, contractor, or another individual whom the agency qualifies. This person reads, writes, understands, and demonstrates fluency in both English and another language, and meets the criteria below:

- Demonstrates competence to translate written text from one language to another.
- Demonstrates knowledge of professional standards, and adherence to the corresponding professional code of ethics, as well as familiarity with required SSA terminology.

**Quality Assurance** — The process to ensure accuracy, consistency, quality, and reliability of language assistance services.

**Sight Translation** — 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 Language** — Method of communication for people who are D/HOH 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.

**SSA** — The Social Security Administration.

**Telephone Interpreter Services (TIS)** — A contracted agency-wide service that provides interpreter services by phone in more than 200 languages and dialects.

**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.

## APPENDIX B: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### a. Office of Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity (OCREO)

- i. OCREO spearheads collaboration with the Committee and the DOJ to determine whether SSA:
  - a. Can further update language access policies and plans.
  - b. Is effectively reaching individuals with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH when disseminating information about federal resources, programs, and services.
  - c. Has considered updates or modifications to guidance to federal financial assistance recipients regarding their obligations to provide meaningful language access under the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its implementing regulations.
  - d. Is adapting digital communications to welcome individuals with LEP.
- ii. OCREO ensures:
  - a. SSA's Plan is consistent with DOJ criteria.
  - b. SSA makes reasonable efforts to provide timely assistance services to people with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH.
  - c. People with LEP and individuals who are D/HOH have substantially equal and meaningful access to our programs, benefits, and services.
- iii. OCREO's Center for Compliance Management (CCM):
  - a. Provides oversight and program management of the agency's civil rights obligations to the public, including Executive Order 13166 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
  - b. CCM ensures compliance with laws, policies, executive orders, and regulations that safeguard the public's equal rights and opportunities.
  - c. Processes civil rights complaints from members of the public.
  - d. Ensures grant recipients of Federal funds comply with anti-discrimination civil rights provisions.

## **b. LEP Steering Committee**

The Committee, led by the Office of Communications and in partnership with OCREO, conducts LEP oversight for the agency. The Committee ensures that SSA integrates language access into our regular business processes and maintains focus on our services. The Committee is responsible for:

- i.** Ensuring consistent agency-wide compliance with Executive Order 13166, SSA's Equity Action Plan,<sup>18</sup> and any other relevant agency-wide mandates on language access.
- ii.** Developing an agency-wide initiative on language access.
- iii.** Leading the implementation of the Plan.
- iv.** Developing, leading, and promoting uniformity of policies and best practices related to language access within the agency.
- v.** Leading efforts to develop and promote internal guidance, resources, and materials to expand language access across the agency.
- vi.** Researching and incorporating innovative approaches to engaging, collaborating with, and serving individuals with LEP and those who are D/HOH.
- vii.** Facilitating engagement with external stakeholders to increase access to SSA services by individuals with LEP and those who are D/HOH.

## **c. LEP Working Groups**

In 2022, the Committee established the following three working group:

- i.** Plan, Review, and Implementation Workgroup
  - a.** Manages the overall planning and execution of the Language Access Plan and the LEP Implementation Plan.
- ii.** Stakeholder Outreach Workgroup
  - a.** Focuses on education, awareness, and engagement with enhanced internal and external communications to improve employee knowledge and awareness within LEP communities about Social Security services and benefits.
  - b.** Coordinates the agency's outreach and communication plan efforts, which include:
    - i.** External Communications

1. Coordinating up to three LEP advocate meetings per year.
2. Increasing awareness among communities with LEP about Social Security services and benefits by providing public information materials in 18 languages.
3. Implementing the LEP Communications Plan to further promote the agency's Telephone Interpreter Services (refer to definition in **Appendix A**) and the Multi-Language Gateway.<sup>23</sup>

ii. Internal Communications

1. Educating employees about LEP initiatives and resources.
2. Developing a one-stop shop resource for employees that includes related policies, guidance, training, and resources.

iii. Data Analytics Workgroup

- a. Reviews and analyzes LEP data and provides recommendations for effective language assistance services through ongoing data analysis on LEP products and services.
- b. Cross-references internal data available with mapping resources on LEP.gov<sup>20</sup> and consults with community organizations and stakeholders to ensure SSA adequately reaches all communities, regardless of language spoken.

## d. Agency Components

- i. Agency components with public-facing activities take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access by:
  - a. Identifying and addressing any gaps in language assistance services for individuals with LEP and those who are D/HOH.
  - b. Planning for and providing meaningful access to programs, services, and activities for individuals with LEP and those who are D/HOH.
  - c. Maintaining, reviewing, and updating component-specific processes and policies for providing services to individuals with LEP and those who are D/HOH.
  - d. Designating at least one executive component representative to participate on the Committee.
  - e. Designating at least one employees-level component representative to participate on the LEP Working Groups.
  - f. Training employees according to the agency's mission as it relates to language access.

## APPENDIX C: LANGUAGE ACCESS PROCEDURES

Language access procedures for the Social Security Administration (SSA), state Disability Determination Services (DDS), and Office of Hearing Operations (OHO).

### Policy

- GN 00301.330 *Overview of Translation Process*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301330>.
- GN 00301.335 *Responsibilities and Duties of Translators*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301335>.
- GN 00301.340 *Authorized Translators*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301340>.
- GN 00301.345 *Authorization of SSA Translators*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301345>.
- GN 00301.355 *Translation and Priority Workload Unit (TPWU)*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301355>.
- GN 00301.370 *Documents Not Requiring Referral to an Authorized Translator*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301370>.
- GN 00301.390 *Procedure to be Followed by SSA Translators*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301390>.
- GN 00301.391 *Procedure to be Followed by an SSA Translator Adjudicating a Claim*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301391>.
- GN 00307.015 *Office of International Operations (OIO) Translation Requests*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0200307015>.
- GN 01704.600 *Completing Requests for Translation*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0201704600>.
- GN BOS00301.345 *Authorization of SSA Translators*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.NSF/lnx/0200301345BOS>.

### Translation of Non-English Documents

- DI 23045.001 *Translation of Foreign-Language Documents*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0423045001>.
- DI 43515.001 *Translation of Foreign Documents*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0443515001>.
- GN 00301.330 *Overview of Translation Process*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301330>.

- GN 00301.395 *Verbatim Translations*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/links/0200301395>.
- GN 00301.410 *Translations - Identifying Alterations or Corrections*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/links/0200301410>.
- GN 00301.425 *Translator's Notes*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/links/0200301425>.
- GN 00301.430 *Items Included in the Translation of Most Documents*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/links/0200301430>.
- GN 00301.435 *Translating Documents Submitted as Proof of Age and Relationship*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301435>.
- GN 00301.440 *Translating Documents Submitted as Evidence of Death*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301440>.
- GN 00301.445 *Translating Types of Evidence*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301445>.
- GN 00307.185 *Calendar Month Translations – Exhibit*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200307185>.
- GN DEN00301.125 *Foreign Document Identification Guide*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301125DEN>.

## Non-SSA Translation Service

- GN 00301.351 *Purchase of Non-SSA Translation Services*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.NSF/lnx/0200301351>.

## Obtaining Non-English Language Documents

- GN 00301.095 *Social Security Administrations (SSA's) Certification of Photocopies*, <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301095>.
- GN 00312.000 *Sources of Vital Statistics Records outside of the U.S.*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0200312000>.

## Situations Requiring an Interpreter

- GN 00203.016 *iAppointments (iAppt)*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0200203016>.
- SI 00601.060 *Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Interviewing*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0500601060>.
- SSR 03-3p: *Policy Interpretation Ruling - Titles II and XVI: Evaluation of Disability and Blindness in Initial Claims for Individuals Aged 65 or Older*, available at [https://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/rulings/di/01/SSR2003-03-di-01.html](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/rulings/di/01/SSR2003-03-di-01.html).

## State DDS

- *Consultative Examination Guide for Medical Professionals*, available at <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/greenbook/ce-guidelines.htm>.
- DI 23040.001 DDS: *Interpreters for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or Individuals Requiring Language Assistance*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0423040001>.
- DI 33010.030 *Disability Hearing Unit (DHU): Interpreters for Beneficiaries (or Recipients) with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or Individuals Requiring Language Assistance*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0433010030>.

## OHO

- HALLEX I-2-1-70 - *Foreign Language Interpreters*, available at [https://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-1-70.html](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-1-70.html).
- HALLEX I-2-6-10 - *Hearing Procedures - Foreign Language Interpreters*, available at [https://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-6-10.html](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-6-10.html).
- HALLEX I-2-5-76 - *Obtaining Assistance in Processing Foreign Claims and Evidence*, available at [https://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-5-76.html](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-5-76.html).
- HALLEX I-2-3-45 - *Spanish Language Forms and Notices*, available at [https://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-3-45.html](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-3-45.html).

## APPENDIX D: OPEN GOVERNMENT LEP DATA SETS

Category	Name	Description
LEP Language Preferences	Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) <i>Call Counts (Annual Data) Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-Onward</i> , available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/TIS-call-counts.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/TIS-call-counts.html</a>	This data set displays our yearly national TIS call volume for fiscal years 2019 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Bilingual Employees - Asian Pacific Islander (API) Languages (Annual Data) FY 2011-Onward</i> , available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/AAPI--yearly-BE.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/AAPI--yearly-BE.html</a>	This data set displays our yearly national number of bilingual or multilingual employees who volunteer their services as an interpreter or translator in their identified API language. We have over 1,700 self-identified employees who are bilingual or multilingual in more than 50 Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) languages and dialects. The report shows data for fiscal years 2011 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Bilingual Employees - API Languages (Semi-Annual Data) FY 2013-Onward</i> , available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/AAPI--semi-annual-BE.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/AAPI--semi-annual-BE.html</a>	This data set displays our semi-annual national number of bilingual or multilingual employees who volunteer their services as an interpreter or translator in their identified API language. We have more than 1,700 self-identified employees who are bilingual or multilingual in more than 50 AAPI languages and dialects. The report shows data for fiscal years 2013 onward.

Category	Name	Description
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of Social Security Retirement and Survivor Claimants (Annual Data) FY 2023-Onward</i> , available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-RSI-Claimants.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-RSI-Claimants.html</a>	This data set provides annual volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for Retirement and Survivor benefits for federal fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of Social Security Retirement and Survivor Claimants (Quarterly Data) FY 2023-Onward</i> , available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-RSI-Claimants.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-RSI-Claimants.html</a>	This data set provides quarterly volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for Retirement and Survivor benefits for fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Medicare Claimants (Annual Data) FY 2023-Onward</i> , available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-ESRD-Medicare-Claims.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-ESRD-Medicare-Claims.html</a>	This data set provides annual volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for ESRD Medicare benefits for federal fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of ESRD Medicare Claimants (Annual Data) FY 2023-Onward</i> , available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-ESRD-Medicare-Claims.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-ESRD-Medicare-Claims.html</a>	This data set provides annual volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for ESRD Medicare benefits for federal fiscal years 2023 onward.

Category	Name	Description
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of ESRD Medicare Claimants (Quarterly Data)</i> FY 2023-Onward, available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-ESRD-Medicare-Claims.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-ESRD-Medicare-Claims.html</a>	This data set provides quarterly volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for ESRD Medicare benefits for fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of Social Security Disability Insurance Claimants (Annual Data)</i> FY 2023-Onward, available at <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-DI-Claims.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-DI-Claims.html</a>	This data set provides annual volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for disability insurance benefits for federal fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of Social Security Disability Insurance Claimants (Quarterly Data)</i> FY 2023-Onward, <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-DI-Claims.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-DI-Claims.html</a>	This data set provides quarterly volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing initial claims for disability insurance benefits for fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Disabled Applicants (Annual Data)</i> FY 2023-Onward, <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-Blind-Disabled-Applicants.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-Blind-Disabled-Applicants.html</a>	This data set provides annual volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for SSI Blind and Disabled benefits for federal fiscal years 2023 onward.

Category	Name	Description
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of SSI Blind and Disabled Applicants (Quarterly Data) FY 2023-Onward,</i> <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-Blind-Disabled-Applicants.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-Blind-Disabled-Applicants.html</a>	This data set provides quarterly volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for SSI Blind and Disabled benefits for fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of SSI Aged Applicants (Annual Data) FY 2023-Onward,</i> <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-Aged-Claimants.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-Aged-Claimants.html</a>	This data set provides annual volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for SSI Aged benefits for federal fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of SSI Aged Applicants (Quarterly Data) FY 2023-Onward,</i> <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-SSI-Aged-Applicants.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Quarterly-Spoken-Language-SSI-Aged-Applicants.html</a>	This data set provides quarterly volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for SSI Aged benefits for fiscal years 2023 onward.
LEP Language Preferences	<i>Spoken Language Preferences of SSI Blind and Disabled Applicants (Annual Data) FY 2023-Onward,</i> <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-Blind-Disabled-Applicants.html">https://www.ssa.gov/open/data/LEP-Yearly-Spoken-Language-Blind-Disabled-Applicants.html</a>	This data set provides annual volumes for language preferences at the national level of individuals filing claims for SSI Blind and Disabled benefits for federal fiscal years 2023 onward.

# Endnotes

- 1 *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, Exec. Order No. 13166, 65 Fed. Reg. 50121 (Aug. 16, 2000), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2000-08-16/pdf/00-20938.pdf>.
- 2 *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, Exec. Order No. 13985, 86 Fed. Reg. 7009 (Jan. 20, 2021), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD-202100054/pdf/DCPD-202100054.pdf>.
- 3 *Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders*, Exec. Order No. 14031, 86 Fed. Reg. 29675 (Jun. 3, 2021), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-06-03/pdf/2021-11792.pdf>.
- 4 *Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, Exec. Order No. 14091, 88 Fed. Reg. 10825 (Feb. 22, 2023), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-02-22/pdf/2023-03779.pdf>.
- 5 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) prohibits discrimination based on disability in federally assisted and federally conducted programs and activities. 29 U.S.C. § 794. For purposes of employment discrimination, Section 504 applies the same standards as those applied under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act. 29 U.S.C. § 794(d). For other purposes, Section 504 is interpreted to apply the same substantive requirements as Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 6 National Association of the Deaf, *Community and Culture – Frequently Asked Questions - What is the difference between a person who is “deaf,” “Deaf,” or “hard of hearing”?*, available at <https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/community-and-culture-frequently-asked-questions>.
- 7 *Common Language Access Questions, Technical Assistance, and Guidance for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs* (May 11, 2011), available at [https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/081511\\_Language\\_Access\\_CAQ\\_TA\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/081511_Language_Access_CAQ_TA_Guidance.pdf).
- 8 Office of the Attorney General, *Memorandum for Heads of Federal Agencies, Heads of Civil Rights Offices and General Counsels Regarding Strengthening the Federal Government’s Commitment to Language Access* (Nov. 21, 2022), available at <https://www.justice.gov/media/1260736/dl?inline>.
- 9 Recipients of federal financial assistance are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, or national origin in their programs or activities. Denial of meaningful access to an individual with LEP is considered discrimination based on national origin. In *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974), the Supreme Court held that a federal funding recipient’s denial of an education to a group of non-English speakers violated Title VI and its implementing regulations. In its ruling, the Court explained, “[i]t seems obvious that the Chinese-speaking minority receive fewer benefits than the English-speaking majority from respondents’ school system which denies them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program—all earmarks of the discrimination banned by the regulations.” *Id.* at 568.
- 10 Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 508) requires federal agencies and departments to give employees and members of the public who are disabled access to information comparable to the access available to others, subject to certain limitations. 29 U.S.C. § 794d. See also U.S. Access Board, *Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 Federal Electronic and Information Technology*, available at <https://www.access-board.gov/law/ra.html#section-508-federal-electronic-and-information-technology>.
- 11 Public Law 117-337- Durbin Feeling Native American Languages Act of 2022 (January 5, 2023), available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-117publ337/pdf/PLAW-117publ337.pdf>.
- 12 Office of the Attorney General, *Memorandum to Heads of Department Components Regarding Language Access Obligations Under Executive Order 13166* (June 28, 2010), available at [https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2012/05/04/language\\_access\\_memo.pdf](https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2012/05/04/language_access_memo.pdf). Further information, guidance, and technical assistance on the implementation of Executive Order 13166 can be found at [www.LEP.gov](http://www.LEP.gov).

- 13 Office of the Attorney General, *Memorandum to Heads of Federal Agencies, General Counsels, and Civil Rights Heads Regarding Federal Government's Renewed Commitment to Language Access Obligations Under Executive Order 13166* (Feb. 17, 2011), available at <https://www.justice.gov/media/735081/dl?inline>.
- 14 Office of the Attorney General, *Memorandum for Heads of Federal Agencies, Heads of Civil Rights Offices and General Counsels Regarding Strengthening the Federal Government's Commitment to Language Access* (Nov. 21, 2022), available at <https://www.justice.gov/media/1260736/dl?inline>.
- 15 U.S. Department of Justice, *Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 — National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, 65 Fed. Reg. 50123 (Aug. 16, 2000), available at <https://www.justice.gov/crt/fcs/TitleVI>.
- 16 U.S. Department of Justice, *Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons*, 67 Fed. Reg. 41455 (June 18, 2002), available at <https://www.justice.gov/crt/doj-final-lep-guidance-signed-6-12-02>.
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- 18 Social Security Administration (SSA) *Equity Action Plan in Agreement with EO 13985* (February 10, 2022), available at <https://www.ssa.gov/open/materials/SSA-EO-13985-Equity-Action-Plan.pdf>.
- 19 United States Census Bureau, *Measuring America's People, Places, and Economy*, available at <https://www.census.gov>.
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- 22 Social Security Administration, *Multi-Language Insert*, available at [https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/public/pomsimages.nsf/gfx\\_num/G-NL\\_10601.225-1/\\$File/G-NL\\_10601.225-1.pdf](https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/public/pomsimages.nsf/gfx_num/G-NL_10601.225-1/$File/G-NL_10601.225-1.pdf).
- 23 Social Security Administration, *Multi-Language Gateway*, available at <https://www.ssa.gov/site/languages/en>.
- 24 Social Security Administration, *Official Social Security Website*, available at <https://www.ssa.gov>.
- 25 Social Security Administration, *Official Spanish Social Security Website*, available at <https://www.ssa.gov/es>.
- 26 Social Security Administration, *Open Government Website*, available at <https://www.ssa.gov/open>.
- 27 U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, *ADA Requirements: Effective Communication*, available at <https://www.ada.gov/resources/effective-communication/>.
- 28 *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* (Jan. 20, 2021), *supra* note 3.
- 29 Social Security Administration's interpreter qualification criteria:
  - a. HALLEX I-2-1-70, *Foreign Language Interpreters*, available at [https://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-1-70.html](https://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/hallex/I-02/I-2-1-70.html).
  - b. POMS DI 23040.001, *DDS: Interpreters for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or Individuals Requiring Language Assistance*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0423040001>.

30 Social Security Administration's translator policies and authorization criteria:

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- b. POMS GN 00301.340, *Authorized Translators*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301340>.
- c. POMS GN 00301.345, *Authorization of SSA Translators*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301345>.
- d. POMS GN 00301.350, *Authorizing Non SSA Translator*, available at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps10/poms.nsf/lnx/0200301350>.



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