

# Language Access for Advocates

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# Chicanos Por La Causa/De Colores



**Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.**

A PROMISE OF OPPORTUNITY

## **MISSION:**

We Drive Political and  
Economic Empowerment

## **VISION:**

Empowered Lives

# Raksha, Inc.

- Promoting a stronger and healthier South Asian Community through confidential support services, education, and advocacy
- Serving South Asian community since 1995
- Based in Atlanta, GA



# Casa de Esperanza



national **latin@** network

- Our Mission: To mobilize Latin@ communities to end domestic violence.
- Served through our five core values:
  - Latin@ leadership
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Organizational excellence
  - Living free of violence
  - Community-driven solutions

# Objectives

- Share lessons learned and experiences from the field around ensuring meaningful and effective communication with all survivors even with scarce resources.
- Review the legal and ethical mandates for language access; strategies for language advocacy both within and outside one's organization.
- Share how meaningful collaboration is essential to language accessibility.

# Quick Review:

## Language Access Terminology

- Interpretation is Spoken
- Translation is Written



# Explore Our Roles as Advocates

## **Poll (chatbox):**

- What is your role at your organization?
- What is your role in ensuring language access for survivors both in and outside your organization?

# Whiteboard Activity:

Why is language access important?



# Why Language Access

- Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI: The law for federal and some state funded programs.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Language access **saves lives**; accessibility to healing and safety.
- It helps you understand the survivor you are working with.
- It helps create better outcomes for survivors and their families.

# Language Access Makes Communication Possible

- Individuals with LEP are individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English.
- It is important to assess for level of literacy in their native language. While they may understand and speak their language, it does not mean they can read their own language or read at high levels.

# Language Access Makes Communication Possible (2)

- Deaf (uppercase 'D') refers to an identity with its own culture, language and diverse communities. ASL is predominant.
- Deaf and hard of hearing often misunderstood as a disability issue, is also a language access issue.

# Whiteboard Activity

- What are consequences for lack of meaningful language access?

# Why Provide Meaningful Language Access?



Daisy and daughters Daniela, 2, and Yoselin, 1.

# Intersections: DV/SA and LEP

A National Survey revealed that 36 percent of the Spanish-speaking callers (who had also previously sought services) stated that they had encountered problems due to language access.

*“The closest shelters don’t offer services in Spanish. The police gave me a list of shelters, but they didn’t specify which ones might be able to help me in Spanish.”*

# Immigrant Barriers

- Lack of knowledge about U.S. systems and services.
- Fear of police, judicial systems, social services, child welfare agencies, immigration etc.
- Linguistic and cultural barriers
- Discrimination
- Economic challenges
- Isolation

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# Legal Obligation: Who is a Recipient of Federal Assistance?

- Federal financial assistance includes grants and training.
- Recipients of federal funds range from state and local agencies, to nonprofits and other organizations.
- Sub-recipients of federal funds are included under the laws and regulations regarding LEP.
- Includes partners who are part of Federal MOU's and receiving in-kind services such as training.



# Requirements of Recipients of Federal Assistance:

- Recipients of federal assistance and federal agencies are required to take **reasonable steps** to ensure **meaningful access** to their programs and activities by LEP persons.
- The starting point is an individualized assessment that balances the following four factors:

# Individualized Assessment

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or grantee
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives
4. The resources available to the grantee/recipient or agency, and costs

See [LEP Policy Guidance](#) issued by different federal agencies.

# Group Question

- Are you required to provide language access outside of the main languages spoken in your community?
- For culturally specific organizations, are we required to provide language access outside of the languages of our culturally specific community by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

# Reasonable Steps For Meaningful Access

Refers to being committed and prepared to provide critical services that support the well-being and safety of survivors by:

- Having a **proactive** plan in place to address the needs of survivors with LEP.
- Recognizing that the bar of what is considered “reasonable” increases with time.



# As an Advocate, What Can I Do?

- Remind organizations, coworkers and supervisors about our federal obligation to provide language access.
- Remind our partner programs and other organizations who call us for help.
- Discuss with leadership the possibility of seeking technical assistance to increase language accessibility at your organization.

# Cultural Responsiveness And Responsibility



# Cultural Responsibility For Advocates

We have a moral and ethical responsibility to meet clients where they are at, provide quality services to all, ensure equal access keeping in mind that there is not a one-size fits all approach to service provision.

# Cultural Responsiveness

- “**Cultural responsiveness** is the ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people of your own **culture** as well as those from other **cultures**.”
- Each individual we work with has multiple identities and experiences.
- We need to work with each person based on how they identify and their realities even if they differ from our own.



# Language Access and Intersectionality

An advocate's experience.

Did the advocate take reasonable steps to provide language access?

# Language Access as a Part of Culturally Responsive Services

- Language Access is not just a contract with language line.
- Language Access is not just having one bilingual staff .
- Language Access is more than translating materials.
- It is a commitment to the community and meeting their needs.
- It is seeing the survivor as a whole and creating meaningful collaborations to address their needs.

# What if We Have Limited Resources?

- Language Access means equal access to safety and healing for all.  
Turning a survivor away is not an option.
- Take reasonable steps; what is considered “reasonable” increases with time.
- Budget to ensure access and be proactive.
- Have conversations about access with supervisors and leadership.
- Language access can be achieved through a multilayered approach.

# A Multilayered Approach to Language Access Resources

- Develop a relationship with an interpreting agency.
- Identify bilingual staff with demonstrated language proficiency in L2 providing culturally relevant services in language.
- Develop partnerships with culturally-specific organizations.
- Contract interpreters for hearing or video remote sign language interpreters.
- Language access is an evolving process.

# Providing Language Access: Being Proactive

We are required to have LEP plans but:

- Does everyone in your agency have the info by phone and appropriate training?
- How do we identify languages we might not be familiar with ( i.e. indigenous languages, dialects, and languages from countries our organizations might not serve)?
- What kind of training is there for language identification and provision?

# Language Identification

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# How Do You Find Languages That Are Prevalent In Your Community ?

- Explore census.gov for information about your city/county/state.
- Review the court's LEP plan for relevant data.
- Look at public school data for languages spoken.
- Call a local hospital and see what languages are most often requested
- Identify 3-5 languages (not English) spoken by clients who in your program.
- Remember things change, so reevaluate over time.

# Language Identification Matters

- *Estar embaraçada* (to be embarrassed) in Portuguese, is different from *estar embarazada* (to be pregnant) in Spanish. In fact, to describe being pregnant in Portuguese you use the word *grávida*.
- *Camisinha*, in Portuguese means “condom” and not “T-shirt” as many Spanish speakers would assume.



# Preparing Survivors to Access Other Services

- Community education on language rights.
- Practice asking for an interpreter.
- Provide *I Speak Cards* for clients to carry with them.
- If needed call with survivor to shelter/service to ensure language access.
- State that you are not a certified interpreter and cannot play both roles.
- If bilingual - make sure interpreter is doing a good job.

# Language Identification: “I speak cards” or I Speak Booklets

2004 Census Test	United States Census 2010
<b>LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION FLASHCARD</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> ضع علامة في هذا المربع إذا كنت تقرأ أو تتحدث العربية.	1. Arabic
<input type="checkbox"/> Ինչպե՞ս ենք հարկում կատարել այս բառակազմում, կրկն կառուցում կամ կարգում եք հայերեն:	2. Armenian
<input type="checkbox"/> যদি আপনি বাংলা পড়েন বা বলেন তা হলে এই বাক্সে দাগ দিন।	3. Bengali
<input type="checkbox"/> ឈ្មោះបញ្ជាក់ក្នុងប្រអប់នេះ បើអ្នកអាន ឬនិយាយភាសា ផ្សេង ។	4. Cambodian
<input type="checkbox"/> Motka i kahhon ya yangin untungnu' manaitai pat untungnu' kumentos Chamorro.	5. Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> 如果你能读中文或讲中文，请选择此框。	6. Simplified Chinese



[Sample I Speak Cards](http://lep.gov) can be found at lep.gov.

# What if My Client Does Not Recognize Their Language in the Language ID Card?

- What are some creative ways that you can meet the needs of the survivor?
- Where can you ask for help?

# Sampling of Asian Languages

- Hindi -India
- Urdu- Pakistan
- Japanese- Japan
- Mandarin- China
- Korean-Korea
- Bengali/Bangla – India/Bangladesh



# Sampling of European Languages

- Romanian – Romania
- Estonian – Estonia
- Slovak – Slovenia
- Albanian – Albania
- Gaelic – Ireland, Scotland
- Serbian – Serbia

# Sampling of Latin American Indigenous Languages

- Mayan: Yucateco, Mam, K'iche, Kaqchikel– Mexico and Guatemala
- Mazatec – Mexico
- Aymara – Bolivia and Peru
- Náhuatl – Mexico
- Mapudungun – Chile
- Mixteco – Mexico

# Language Provision

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# Assessing Whether Client Who Speaks In English Needs Interpretation

- English as a second language.
- Easier to talk about traumatic events in native language.
- Communication through a qualified interpreter may be more accurate.
- Qualify if limited ability to read, write, speak, understand.
- May speak, but not read or write in English.
- Assess their level of education in native language.

# How Do I Know When I Need an Interpreter?

- You are unable to effectively communicate with the client.
- Client cannot communicate to you the facts of the incident.
- Client cannot understand the terminology, resources, or relief available.
- Client cannot understand the brochures, forms, pleadings, letters or any other document.
- Client cannot understand the court procedures and process.

# Factors To Be Aware of When Securing Interpreters

- If living in small community, be aware of conflict issues and confidentiality.
- Be sure to get interpreter's name before meeting with client. We do not know if they are from same community or if the interpreter knows the batterer/family. This is important for safety, avoiding conflict, and confidentiality.
- Some words may be difficult to translate because words may not exist in that language, i.e. domestic violence, rape.

# Factors To Be Aware of When Securing/Working With Interpreters

- Be aware that there are different dialects and regional differences.
- Client may feel more comfortable with interpreter/advocate speaking same language.
- Set up boundaries; don't be afraid to ask what they are talking about.
- Client may not be used to talking about private issues due to background.
- Ensure interpreter does not speak at higher level of literacy than that of the client.
- Professionalism is important; it is equally important to be empathetic.

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# Factors To Be Aware of When Securing/Working With Interpreters (2)

- Ensure that everything is interpreted for court proceedings and meetings.
- Record conversations between the interpreter and client to ensure accuracy.
- Interpreters may not work with family violence & sexual assault issues and may not be comfortable talking about rape or sex.
- Provide a list of commonly used terms.

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# Strategies for Language Provision: DOs and DON'Ts

## **DO USE:**

- In-person, qualified language services.
- Bilingual staff with language proficiency.
- Certified interpreters.
- Telephonic or video-remote interpreting.
- Translated written materials.
- Pre-recorded materials.

# Strategies for Language Provision: DOs and DON'Ts (2)

- **DON'T USE:**

- Informal or unreliable methods of communication such as:
- Machine translation.
- Family members, friends, children, bystanders.
- Staff with limited proficiency in the target language.
- Lip reading.
- Exchanging notes.

# Quality Interpretation and Translation Matter

About 134,000 results (0.56 seconds)

Did you mean: me pincho con **un** cuchillo in english

Spanish - detected    English

me pincha con una cuchillo Edit    he punches me with a knife

[Open in Google Translate](#)    [Feedback](#)

[http://](#) Search for **English** results only. You can specify your search language in references

Spanish - detected    English

me pincho con un cuchillo Edit    I skewer with a knife

[Open in Google Translate](#)    [Feedback](#)



# Poll:

Should bilingual staff or volunteers interpret?

# Bilingual Staff v. Interpreters: Avoiding Role Confusion

- An interpreter is a conduit for communication, not an advocate or cultural broker.
- Must transmit exactly what the survivor and other parties say, at all times.
- It is a skill, someone who is bilingual may not have skills or training to be an interpreter.
- For bilingual staff, serving as an interpreter undermines their main role as an advocate for the survivor.

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# Whiteboard Activity (2):

This agency keeps asking me to interpret for them. What should I do?

# Systems Advocacy

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# Being An Advocate Means Working Towards Greater Access

## If no meaningful language access is provided:

- Appeal to agency efforts to be accessible and responsive to the community.
- Educate the agency that if they receive **federal funding**, they are obligated to provide language access services.
- Identify the process for filing a complaint  
<http://ojp.gov/about/ocr/complaint.htm>

## If an interpreter is not qualified or is behaving unethically:

- Check the LEP plan for the organization to identify the process to file complaints.  
Document to use a different interpreter next time.

# Systems Advocacy for Meaningful Access for LEP Individuals

Ensuring meaningful language access should be part of a coordinated community response:

- Among DV/SA/CBO service providers
- Police
- Prosecutors
- Courts
- Social service providers
- Hospitals/Mental Health Providers/Therapists

# Resources

- Casa de Esperanza/National Latin@ Network
- The Culturally Specific Resource Centers – CASA Esperanza , Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence (APIGBV) , VERA
- Deaf Hope
- Consul Generals

# Resources (2)

- Statewide Coalitions (Arizona is a great example )
- AYUDA Language Bank
- Asian Women's Shelter Multi Language Access Model (MLAM) Program
- Cherokee Family Violence Program Statewide Hotline for Spanish Speakers





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