



Language Access Plan 2024

Office of the Director | Office of Equal Opportunity

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I. Introduction

The Department of Economic Security (“DES” or “Department”) ensures that its programs, services, and activities are accessible to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and ensures quality and timely language assistance services to its LEP customers.

Executive Order 13166, issued on behalf of the President on June 28, 2010, requires that federal agencies take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) to all federally conducted programs, services, and activities¹. The Department of Justice issued a memorandum on February 17, 2011, directing federal agencies and subrecipients to reaffirm their commitment to language access obligations under Executive Order 13166². Subsequently on November 21, 2022, the Department of Justice indicated a need for federal agencies and subrecipients to self-assess how well language assistance services are being provided and ensure that digital communications welcome individuals with LEP³. As a Recipient of federal funds, DES is required by these regulations to take reasonable steps to ensure accessibility to DES’ programs and services by LEP persons. The following sets forth the measures to prevent discrimination on the grounds of national origin and ensure that individuals with LEP are not denied equal access to benefits and services for which such persons qualify.

This Language Access Plan (“Plan”) represents the Department’s commitment to provide quality customer service to all individuals and to ensure meaningful access to the programs and services provided by the Department to all persons, regardless of an individuals’ ability to speak or understand English. The Plan establishes the framework, and sets forth the standards and steps, the Department utilizes to ensure meaningful access and prevent discrimination on the grounds of national origin and ensure that individuals with LEP are provided equal access to benefits and services for which such persons qualify. The Plan was constructed in compliance with the Executive Order 13166 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 200d et. seq.; 45 CFR § 80.1 et. seq.; and 28 CFR §§ 42.101-42.112) and other federal nondiscrimination regulations. It is the policy of the Department that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any, of its Federally funded programs and activities.

1. Purpose

This Plan applies to all individuals and families seeking or receiving services from DES and its employees and contractors. The purpose of this Plan is to eliminate barriers for accessing Department services and ensure that all Department programs, services, and interactions are provided without regard for an individual’s ability to communicate in English. The Department recognizes that language can be a barrier to access the Department’s services and this Plan identifies the measures that are in place to increase access to individuals with Limited English Proficiency. The Department will provide language assistance to individuals with LEP in a fair and timely manner and will ensure that LEP individuals maintain meaningful access to the Department’s services.

1 https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/language_access_memo.pdf

2 https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/AG_021711_EO_13166_Memo_to_Agencies_with_Supplement.pdf

3 https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2022/11/21/attorney_general_memorandum_-_strengthening_the_federal_governments_commitment_to_language_access_508-2.pdf

2. Overview

As a recipient of funding from several Federal agencies, the Department must ensure that individuals with LEP are provided meaningful language access when utilizing the Department's services. The Department's mission is to strengthen individuals, families, and communities for a better quality of life by serving Arizonans with integrity, humility, and kindness and prioritizing the people it serves to achieve the best and most equitable outcomes.⁴

The Department provides an integrated approach to human services through a wide variety of programs, services, and activities. As one of the largest agencies in state government, DES invests approximately \$7.5 billion annually to provide critical and beneficial services to more than 3 million Arizonans through its programs that address their social and economic needs.⁵ The staff of more than 8,000 team members strives daily to provide timely, accurate, and beneficial services to assist those in need.^{6,7} DES works with families, community organizations, advocates, and state and federal partners to realize the collective vision of a thriving Arizona.⁸ As Arizona's agency for human services, the mission of the Department of Economic Security is to strengthen individuals, families, and communities for a better quality of life.⁹

DES is comprised of the following divisions and programs which administer a wide variety of state and federally funded programs and services:

- Child and Community Services Division (CCSD)¹⁰
- Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)
- Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility (DBME)
- Division of Child Support Services (DCSS)
- Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
- Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS)

Each division within DES has evaluated its language services to meet program and client needs. Additionally, the Department conducts semiannual reviews of the Department's efforts to evaluate the provision of language services for continuous improvement.

DES's programs are further administered through a wide variety of public, non-profit, and private entities, including municipalities, tribal governments, community action agencies, and other non-profit agencies, each with varying resources, responsibilities, and staff capacities. Hence, a single detailed Language Access Plan applicable to all parties administering programs under contract with DES would not appropriately address language access issues across DES' programs. Therefore, this Plan describes the general guiding principles governing DES' approach to language access and provides the minimum expectations for all programs. Program-specific protocols may be set forth in other plans, directives, or procedures as applicable.

4 <https://des.az.gov/about-des/welcome-to-des>

5 <https://des.az.gov/file/33582/download>

6 <https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/DES-1139A.pdf>

7 <https://des.az.gov/about-des/welcome-to-des>

8 <https://des.az.gov/about-des/welcome-to-des>

9 <https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/DES-1139A.pdf>

10 Effective August 2024, the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AZEIP), the Division of Community Assistance and Development (DCAD), and the Division of Child Care (DCC) were consolidated into one division: CCSD.

3. Key Terms

Division LEP Contact: The designated Employee within a Division responsible for ensuring LEP compliance for the Division.

Language Access Plan (LAP): A written management tool that provides an administrative blueprint for compliance with LEP requirements.

Limited English Proficient (LEP): A term referring to an individual who does not speak English as the individual's primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

LEP Coordinator: The designated Employee within OEO responsible for administering and overseeing agency LEP compliance.

Recipient: A non-federal entity to whom federal financial assistance is extended for any program or activity, or who otherwise participates in carrying out such program or activity.

Subrecipient: Any public or private agency, institution, organization, or other entity to whom federal financial assistance is extended, through a Recipient, for any program or activity, or who otherwise participates in carrying out such program or activity.

Vital Document: A document that DES or a DES Subrecipient routinely provides in English conveying information that affects a customer's access to, retention of, or termination or exclusion from a DES program, service, or activity. Vital written documents include, but are not limited to, consent and complaint forms; intake and application forms with the potential for important consequences; written notices of rights; notices of denials, losses, or decreases in benefits or services; notice of disciplinary action; signs; and notices advising LEP Customers of free language assistance services.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Department's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) is responsible for monitoring each division's LEP activities to ensure consistency and compliance with the Department's LEP policy, which defines responsibilities to ensure that individuals with LEP can communicate effectively. DES has identified an LEP Coordinator, working out of the OEO, who will at a minimum complete the following regarding the DES Language Access Plan:

- Oversee the development and maintenance of the DES Language Access Plan;
- Coordinate with Division LEP Contacts to ensure DES provides appropriate language assistance to LEP Customers;
- Guide Division Employees and Contractors in developing a program-specific Language Access Plan when required by federal law or regulation;
- Develop and maintain LEP notices; and
- Regularly assess and seek to improve the language assistance program.

II. Four Factor Analysis

The Department has developed the following Four Factor Analysis and Language Access Plan for individuals with LEP. In developing this Plan, DES modeled its approach for identifying the needs of the LEP population to the Four Factor Analysis set forth in the Department of Justice (DOJ) LEP Final Guidance.¹¹ According to the DOJ, a Four Factor Analysis establishes a starting point for the Department’s efforts in providing meaningful access to federally funded programs for individuals with LEP. The Four Factor Analysis completed by DES addresses the following:

- The number or proportion of individuals with LEP eligible to be serviced or likely to be encountered by DES;
- The frequency with which individuals with LEP using a particular language come in contact with DES;
- The nature and importance of the DES program or activity provided to the individual’s life; and
- The resources available to DES, and costs associated with providing LEP services.

1. Factor One | Data

DES’ service area consists of the entire State of Arizona. To determine the LEP population of Arizona, DES reviewed the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Data Table S1601 to find the primary languages for people that spoke English less than “very well”.¹² The Census Bureau estimated that 546,894 (8.1%) Arizonans over age five (5) did not speak English well.

The Census Bureau data also reflected that the most common primary language spoken by LEP residents is Spanish. A total of 427,826 residents speak Spanish, which equals 78.2% of the LEP population. In addition, the data reflected that 50,467 LEP residents primarily speak Asian and Pacific Island languages, 39,560 speak other languages, and 29,041 speak Indo-European languages. The data demonstrates that the Spanish speaking population is by far the largest LEP population in Arizona; and therefore, is the LEP population most likely to be encountered by DES in its provision of services.

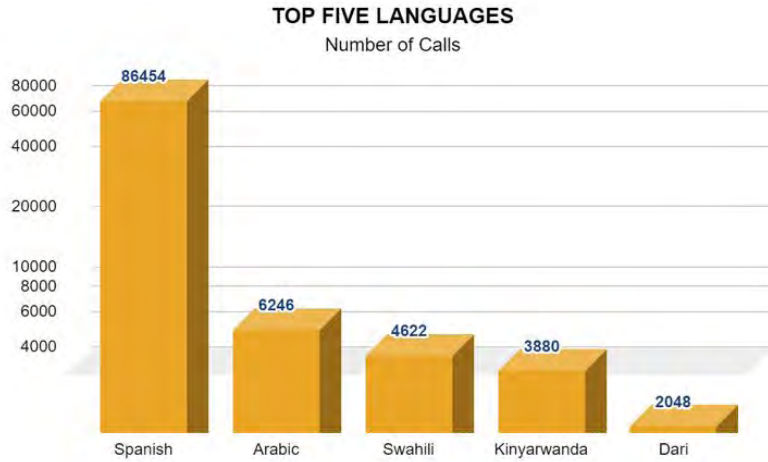
Primary Language and Limited English-Speaking Households				
Language	Speak a Language other than English		Speak English Less Than “Very Well” (LEP Population)	
	#	%	#	%
Population 5 years and over	1,788,984	--	546,894	--
Spanish	1,355,303	20%	427,826	78.2%
Asian and Pacific Islander	136,569	2%	50,467	9.2%
Other	160,896	2.4%	39,560	7.2%
Other Indo-European	136,216	2%	29,041	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. "Language Spoken at Home for the population 5 years and over." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1601, 2022.

An additional Four Factor Analysis was conducted to determine the languages most utilized when seeking DES’ services. The graph below represents the top five languages used by persons when contacting DES and the corresponding number of calls received for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

¹¹ <https://www.justice.gov/crt/doj-final-lep-guidance-signed-6-12-02>

¹² [U.S Census Bureau \(2020\). Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the population 5 years and over](#)



2. Factor Two | Frequency

The total number of participants, applicants, or others assisted by the Department from January 2023 to December 2023 was 3,164,709. Of these, the number who identified a language other than English as their primary language was 510,989, which reflects 16% of the total number of individuals assisted by DES. Below is a table identifying DES programs and the corresponding number of individuals with LEP served by those areas.

Total Number of DES LEP Interactions from January 2023 – December 2023

Division ¹³	Number Served	Number of LEP	Percentage
AZEIP	14,297	1,143	7.9
DAAS	40,534	2,654	6.5
DBME	2,368,323	351,172	14.8
DCAD	73,490	2,135	2.9
DCC	42,031	1,918	4.5
DCSS	373,367	120,127	32.1
DDD	105,612	23,470	22.2
DEERS	101,611	3,744	3.6
OIG	54,097	3,353	6.1

¹³ Effective August 2024, AZEIP, DCAD, and DCC were consolidated into the Child and Community Services Division (CCSD).

3. Factor Three | Nature and Importance

As Arizona's agency for human services, the mission of DES is critical and aims to strengthen individuals, families, and communities for a better quality of life. The Department understands that the more important the program or service, the more likely language services are needed. As such, materials regarding the below-mentioned programs are routinely available in English and Spanish. DES will strive to continue to provide meaningful access to individuals with LEP. Following is a basic overview of each program area through which DES administers state and federally funded specialized services.

Child and Community Services Division (CCSD)

Effective August 2024, the Department's Arizona Early Intervention Program (AZEIP), Division of Community Assistance and Development (DCAD), and Division of Child Care (DCC), were consolidated into the CCSD, which provides the following services:

- Statewide early intervention services for families of infants and toddlers, from birth through two years of age, with developmental disabilities or delays. Access to services can enhance the capacity of families and caregivers to support the learning and growth of the child.
- Programs to assist with utility costs including the Arizona Rental Assistance Program (ARAP), the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Assistance is offered in all areas of the State, except for those cities, counties, and/or Tribes which administer their own federally funded programs.
- Childcare programs funded with state and federal monies to help eligible families with the cost of childcare, and which enable parents to participate in Arizona's workforce or special education and training activities related to employment.

Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)

DAAS supports at-risk Arizonans to meet their basic needs and to live safely, with dignity and independence. Services and programs reach a diverse population of Arizonans from homeless youth to older adults.

Division of Benefits and Medical Eligibility (DBME)

DBME supports the Department of Economic Security's mission through the administration of, and eligibility determination for, several programs to help Arizona's individuals and families meet their basic needs. The Family Assistance Administration (FAA) and Disability Determination Services Administration (DDSA) promote the safety, well-being and self-sufficiency of individuals and families.

Division of Child Support Services (DCSS)

DCSS helps families to establish legal paternity for children, establishes and enforces child support orders, and helps locate non-custodial parents. DCSS encourages family responsibility and works to ensure that children are supported by their parents by connecting them to resources that remove barriers and support self-sufficiency.

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

DDD provides individuals with developmental disabilities and their families services and supports that are flexible, high quality, and member- driven. These services provide individuals with opportunities to exercise their rights and responsibilities of independent decision-making and engagement in the community.

Division of Employment and Rehabilitation Services (DERS)

DERS plays an integral role in improving Arizona's workforce by assisting individuals who are unemployed and underemployed, and those with barriers to employment, to prepare for and obtain gainful employment. DERS supports Arizona employers with recruitment assistance by connecting them to a skilled workforce.

Office of Inspector General (OIG)

OIG is responsible for overseeing, supervising, and coordinating the assessment and monitoring of the Department's compliance with federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and DES policies and procedures. Within OIG, the Appellate Services Administration (ASA) conducts administrative hearings for DES programs and adjudicates disputes from decisions affecting client eligibility.

4. Factor Four | Available Resources

DES will continue to use available resources to accommodate translation and interpretation requests free of cost, regardless of the language. DES will maintain its efforts on improving accessibility to the programs and services available to individuals with LEP.

- DES currently offers all vital documents in Spanish and in any other language upon request. DES is looking to increase its ability to provide forms and other documents in multiple languages through the internet, mail, and in-person contact in a timely manner.
- DES' Website currently contains web pages translated entirely in Spanish and the Department offers a translation tool which allows the website to be readily available in more than 100 languages.
- DES provides information about benefits and services in multiple languages. DES contracts with language service providers that offer oral translations in up to 380 languages and dialects.
- State employees hired by the Department, who are bilingual and able to communicate in other languages, will assist as interpreters and/or translators if needed. These employees are evaluated for their skill set and receive a bilingual stipend.

III. Language Services

DES is dedicated to ensuring meaningful access to individuals with LEP. Materials translated into Spanish are available throughout the agency. However, to ascertain that the Department meets the needs of individuals with LEP, DES offers interpretation and translation services in over 380 languages free of charge.

The Department's programs will promptly identify the language and communication needs of individuals with LEP by using language identification posters, flyers, or binders to determine an individual's language. When interacting with individuals by phone, the Department's staff have been trained to contact language service providers when an individual's language is unknown. The Department maintains records of an individual's language preference and arranges for language services when conducting oral interactions with the individual. Vital documents are translated into Spanish and will be translated into other languages as requested.

For calendar year 2023, the Department’s total annual cost for contracted language services (both oral and written translations) amounted to \$2,064,037 demonstrating the Department’s commitment to provide language assistance to individuals with LEP.

The following graph depicts total LEP costs by division:¹⁴



The Department provides language assistance for individuals with LEP in the following ways:

1. Interpretation

Interpreter services are provided to individuals with LEP through identified contractors and qualified DES staff who deliver interpretation telephonically and in-person. DES does not require, suggest, or encourage individuals with LEP to use friends, family members or minor children as interpreters.

- Phone Interpretation

DES’ interactions with individuals with LEP include direct communications and communications using a call center system. Employees identify and meet language needs by utilizing contracted language interpretation services. The Department actively contracts with multiple language contractors who provide a range of services for language assistance from face-to-face interpretation to video interpretation. Included in DES’ list of verified vendors is LanguageLine Solutions® (“Language Line”), a voice interpreting service offering interpretation in more than 380 languages and available 24 hours a day.

- In-person Interpretation

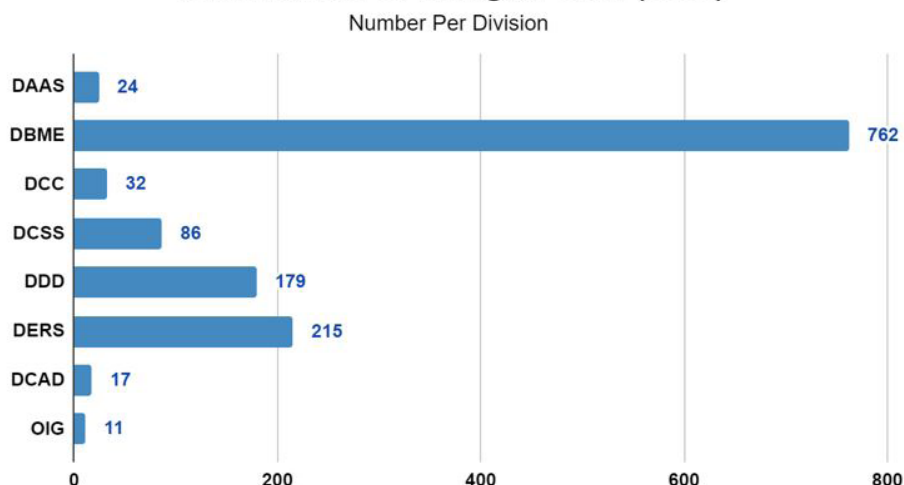
DES offers bilingual incentive pay to employees who desire to provide interpretation/ translation services and can demonstrate proficiency in a specified language. The division in which the employee works demonstrates a need for the service and funds the cost of the bilingual pay incentive.

DES currently has a total of 1326 employees receiving bilingual stipends. The following graph displays a breakdown by division¹⁵ of employees receiving the bilingual stipend.

¹⁴ Effective August 2024, AZEIP, DCAD, and DCC were consolidated into the Child and Community Services Division (CCSD).

¹⁵ Effective August 2024, AZEIP, DCAD, and DCC were consolidated into the Child and Community Services Division (CCSD).

Total Number of Bilingual Staff (1326)



2. Translation

To ensure that the Department meets the language needs of the populations it serves, the Department is committed to ensuring translation of its Vital Documents. The LEP Safe Harbor Threshold stipulates that DES must provide translation of its Vital Documents for each LEP language group that constitutes 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population to be served.

As a result of the Department's analysis outlined in Section II of this Plan, the State of Arizona's Spanish-speaking residents have reached the federal threshold.¹⁶ DES has translated agency-designated Vital Documents into the Spanish language and posted these notices on the DES Internet.¹⁷ Each division in DES will continue to review its list of identified Vital Documents to ensure that any documents not yet translated into Spanish as required by federal requirements are translated within the next calendar year. DES will review division data semiannually to monitor the most frequently encountered languages and make adjustments accordingly to expand translation of its Vital Documents. Additionally, Division management will assess if programmatic forms require translation into other languages based on the areas and populations it serves.

DES is committed to ensuring meaningful access to its programs, services, and information and has tasked the Department's Graphics and Design Unit with translating Vital and non-Vital Documents into Spanish. DES also contracts with language service providers to translate administrative and programmatic forms into alternative languages.

3. Notification

DES provides notification to individuals with LEP of the availability of free language services (both interpretation and translation) through public notices and via the DES website. DES also utilizes taglines on printed and electronic documents, phone menus in different languages, provides notices at outreach events, and expands on its outreach efforts with the provision of interpreters for public meetings. In addition, the Department developed the following methods to provide notice of language services available to individuals with LEP.

¹⁶ [U.S Census Bureau \(2020\). Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the population 5 years and over.](#)

¹⁷ <https://des.az.gov/documents-center>

- Title VI/ADA Non-Discrimination Notice to the Public (Lobby) ([OEO-1009A](#))
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Poster ([PPP-1122A](#))
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Flyer ([PPP-1122B](#))
- Language Identification - I Speak - LEP Binder Materials ([DES-1071A](#))

The DES Internet website provides information regarding Language Assistance services for individuals with LEP (<https://des.az.gov/>). The site includes:

- A translation tool which translates the website into more than 100 different languages.
- A link at the bottom of every web page that directs users to the LEP web page which provides information about language services.
- Contact information for the Department's LEP Coordinator.

4. Training

DES employees routinely interact with the public and are aware of their obligations to provide meaningful access to information and services to individuals with LEP. DES ensures that staff are trained on providing language assistance by implementing the following measures:

1. New Employee Orientation sessions which incorporate language assistance requirements, including applicable law and resources.
2. Mandatory LEP Computer Based Training (CBT) which instructs staff on the importance of providing language assistance and required actions to take when interacting with individuals with LEP.
3. Virtual Lunch & Learn sessions to encourage information sharing and ensure staff are knowledgeable on LEP requirements.
4. LEP Gemba Walks to ensure staff are capable of providing language assistance and that notification about the availability of LEP services is provided at each point of entry. Additionally, technical assistance is provided to staff during these visits.
5. Division-specific training to ensure staff understanding of how to utilize procedures tailored to Division-specific processes.

IV. Evaluation and Monitoring

The LEP Coordinator will review and reassess the Plan annually to ensure the accessibility and quality of the Department's LEP services and ensure that the scope and nature of language assistance services provided under the Plan reflect updated information on relevant LEP populations, their language assistance needs, and their experience under this Plan.

The LEP Coordinator will consult with each Division to obtain LEP-related data including the total number of LEP customers who received language services, the number of bilingual staff, the number of Vital Documents, and the total cost the program expended on language services. The LEP Coordinator summarizes the information annually and submits an updated Plan to the Director or Director's Designee.

1. Client Feedback

DES is dedicated to assessing the effectiveness of language access across its program areas. The DES Feedback page¹⁸ solicits input from participants and recipients of DES services and allows them to provide feedback about their experience acquiring language services.

Additionally, DES distributes surveys at outreach events to clients to obtain feedback on the Department's provision of language assistance services. The Department also provides clients an opportunity to provide feedback on the Department's language assistance efforts by making the client survey available on the DES Internet.

2. Complaints

Individuals who believe they were not provided meaningful access to a Department service, program, or activity can file a formal complaint with DES using its established complaint process. The complaint process provides DES an opportunity to receive feedback from individuals to ensure that programs and services are accessible, regardless of language barriers.

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to discrimination may submit a complaint on the basis of national origin, which includes LEP, to OEO in accordance with the Office of Equal Opportunity - Client Complaints Policy ([DES 1-01-14](#)) and accompanying procedures ([DES 1-01-14-01](#)). Individuals may file a written complaint by completing the Client Discrimination Complaint ([J-020](#)) form or by writing their own statement and submitting it to the OEO using any of the following methods:

Mail: Office of Equal Opportunity
P.O. Box 6123
Mail Drop 1119
Phoenix, AZ 85005-6123

Fax: (602) 364-3982

Email: officeofequalopportunity@azdes.gov

Staff that receive a formal or informal complaint regarding LEP services are required to forward the complaint to the Office of Equal Opportunity. The submission of a complaint will not affect an individual's ability to apply for, receive, or participate in the Department's benefits or services.

¹⁸ <https://des.az.gov/about-des/contact-us/web-site-feedback>

3. Reporting

The LEP Coordinator will annually compile, evaluate, and assess data submitted by each Division LEP Contact and submit an updated Plan to the Director or Director's Designee. The LEP Coordinator will review the effectiveness of this Plan by factoring and considering the following elements:

1. The Department's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy ([DES 1-01-34](#)) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Procedures ([DES 1-01-34-01](#)).
2. The results of the most current Four Factor Analysis.
3. An assessment of the needs of current and prospective LEP Customers, which may include data collected for the Four Factor Analysis.
4. A description of the types of LEP services DES provides at the agency and Division levels.
5. The notifications DES provides to LEP Customers regarding LEP services.
6. A description of DES courses, schedules, and intended audiences for LEP training.
7. Any other components identified by the LEP Coordinator.

V. Conclusion

Without appropriate interpretation and translation services, it can be difficult to communicate effectively with individuals with limited English proficiency. Ineffective provision of language services can result in violations of Federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of national origin. DES is committed to ongoing assessment and evaluation of its provision of language services. DES will evaluate and monitor the Language Access Plan to ensure that the Plan continues to work effectively for the Department and for the LEP population it serves.

For questions or concerns regarding this Plan or information about the Department's LEP services, please contact:

Department LEP Coordinator
Office of Equal Opportunity
Arizona Department of Economic Security
oeolepcoordinator@azdes.gov
602-364-3976

VI. Appendix

1. **DES Policies**
 - a. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Policy ([DES 1-01-34](#))
 - b. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Procedures ([DES 1-01-34-01](#))
 - c. Office of Equal Opportunity: Client Complaints Policy ([DES 1-01-14](#))
 - d. Office of Equal Opportunity: Client Complaint Process ([DES 1-01-14-01](#))
2. **Facility Required Posters**
 - a. Title VI/ADA Non-Discrimination Notice to the Public (Lobby) ([OEO-1009A](#))
 - b. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Poster ([PPP-1122A](#))
3. **Signage and Notifications**
 - a. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Flyer ([PPP-1122B](#))
 - b. Language Identification - I Speak - LEP Binder Materials ([DES-1071A](#))

The documents referenced in these appendices are available from the DES Document Center: <https://des.az.gov/documents-center>.



Equal Opportunity Employer / Program • Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities • TTY/TDD Services 7-1-1

OEO-1029A PAMENG (05/25)