

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

State Agency: Adirondack Park Agency

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This document is our agency’s **Language Access Plan**.

A **Language Access Plan** explains how we provide services to people who have limited English proficiency.

This **Language Access Plan** includes information about:






	<p>The population with Limited English Proficiency (“LEP”) in our service area.</p>
	<p>How we notify the public about language access services.</p>
	<p>Our resources and methods for providing language access services.</p>
	<p>How we train our staff to provide language access services to the public.</p>
	<p>How we monitor language access services and respond to complaints.</p>



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PART 1 – Our Agency’s Services



We prepared this Language Access Plan (“Plan”) to comply with New York State Executive Law Section 202-a, which establishes New York’s Statewide Language Access Policy. This Plan explains how we make sure that people with Limited English Proficiency (“LEP”) have meaningful access to agency services, programs and activities.

In this Plan, individuals with LEP are understood as people who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

Our agency’s services to the public include:

The mission of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA) is to protect the public and private resources of the Adirondack Park through the exercise of the powers and duties of the Agency as provided by law. The Adirondack Park Agency was created in 1971 pursuant to Article 27 of the Executive Law (the Adirondack Park Agency Act) as an independent agency in the Executive Department. According to Section 801 thereof, the basic purpose of the Act is “to insure optimum overall conservation; protection; development and use of the unique scenic, aesthetic, wildlife, recreational, open space, historic, ecological and natural resources of the Adirondack Park.”

The Regulatory Programs Division implements the statutory and regulatory provisions of the Adirondack Park Agency Act; the Freshwater Wetlands Act; and the Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers System Act. Staff provides pre-application project guidance and assessment; determines application completeness; and applies review standards and prepares permits, variance or denial orders. Staff also processes permit applications by meeting face-to-face with applicants in the Agency offices, over the telephone, and by making field visits to the actual application site and walking through the property with an applicant or an applicant’s representative.

The Agency’s Planning Division is responsible for local government services; updates and amendments to the Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan Map; State lands coordination; Park policy; Geographic Information System; cartographic services; and website management. The Planning Division also reaches out to the public via the local government program. The Local Government Services Unit assists individual towns in the Park to develop local planning and zoning laws as well as to administer Agency-approved local land use programs. Staff attends community meetings, provides written advice, and designs training workshops. State Land Program staff of the Planning Division works with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to prepare and review Unit Management Plans consistent



with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan (SLMP); provides guidance and interpretation regarding the SLMP to DEC staff and the Agency's Board; consults with DEC on long-range plans for the future of State lands; reviews proposed DEC projects on State lands to ensure conformance with the SLMP; and works with DEC to develop staff proposals for the classification or reclassification of State lands.

The Jurisdictional Inquiry Unit, part of the Legal Division, interacts with the public daily by providing advice to landowners and potential project sponsors regarding Agency jurisdiction, including informal phone advice and written jurisdictional determinations. The public's first point of contact with the Agency is often a letter or a phone call handled by the Jurisdictional Inquiry Unit. Staff within this Unit provides advice to landowners and others regarding Agency jurisdiction. Staff helps citizens determine if an Agency permit or variance is required for proposed land use and development or the subdivision of land within the Park. Determinations often require a full deed history and other legal and factual research. This is the Agency's initial and most common point of contact with the public; hence, a high priority is placed on prompt and accessible responses.

The Enforcement Unit seeks to resolve violations of the laws the Agency is charged to administer. The Unit interacts with the public by telephone, written correspondence and site visits with the potential violator or their representative.

The Resource Analysis and Scientific Services Division provides scientific and technical analysis supporting all Agency transactions. The Agency's scientists provide expertise on engineering, soils analysis, forestry, invasive species, wildlife habitat, wetlands and other aquatic systems. Staff performs valuable field services including wetland delineations, mean high water mark determinations, structure height determinations, deep-hole test pit determinations, on-site waste- water treatment system review and storm-water management analysis.

PART 2 – The Population with Limited English Proficiency in Our Service Area



The Statewide Language Access Policy requires state agencies to translate vital agency documents into the top 12 most commonly spoken non-English language among New Yorkers with limited English proficiency. Our agency uses U.S. Census data (including data from the American Community Survey) to determine the top 12 languages most commonly spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State.

The top 12 languages spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State are:

#	Language	Estimated Number of Speakers with LEP (ACS 2018-2022)
1	Spanish	1,198,032
2	Chinese	377,524
3	Russian	124,422
4	Yiddish	90,199
5	Bangla	74,342
6	Haitian Creole	51,947
7	Korean	48,581
8	Arabic	42,907
9	Italian	41,155
10	French	34,304
11	Polish	33,122
12	Urdu	29,983

New York’s language access law also provides agencies, in consultation with the Office of Language Access, the option to add up to four more languages of translation beyond the top 12. The assessment about whether to include additional languages must be based on factors that are identified in the language access law. Our agency, in consultation with the Office of Language Access, has made the following determination with regard to the addition of languages beyond the top 12:

At this time the Agency hasn’t identified the need to add languages but will continue to monitor services, request and relevant information to reassess if needed.



Our agency tracks encounters of individuals with LEP in the following ways:

Contact with individuals with LEP occurs through multiple channels, including in-person; over the telephone; and written interaction. Contact may occur once or be long-term and ongoing, depending on the individual’s application(s) or request(s). Data from APA’s contacts of individuals with LEP are collected and reported on a quarterly basis to the APA Language Access Coordinator (LAC).



PART 3 – Public Outreach About the Availability of Language Access Services

Our agency informs individuals with LEP about their right to free language assistance services in the following ways, using at least the top 12 languages shown in Part 2 of this Plan:

- Individuals with LEP are directly informed by our staff
In which ways? Individuals with LEP are informed over the phone and in-person through an interpretation contractor.
- Signs posted about language assistance services
 - In areas operated by the agency and open to the public
- Information is published on our agency’s website in at least the top 12 languages spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State
- Outreach and presentations at schools, faith-based groups, and other community organizations
What are the populations with LEP targeted?
- Local, non-English language media directed at individuals with LEP in their languages
What are the populations with LEP targeted?
- Social media posts directed at individuals with LEP in their languages
What are the populations with LEP targeted?
- Telephonic voice menu providing information in non-English languages
In which languages?
- Other (describe)



PART 4 – Provision of Language Access Services

A. Determining the Need for Services

During *in person* encounters, our agency uses the following tools to determine whether an individual has LEP, and what their primary language is:

- Language Identification posters or visual aids that provide information about free interpreting services in multiple languages
- Reception staff make those determinations based on training and experience
- Bilingual staff members, where available, assist in identifying the language of individuals with LEP
- Other (describe)

On *telephone calls*, our agency uses the following tools to find out if an individual has LEP, and what their primary language is:

- Reception staff make those determinations based on training and experience
- Bilingual staff members, where available, assist in identifying the language of individuals with LEP
- Telephonic interpreting service
- Other (describe)

Our agency’s protocols for assessing whether an individual needs *oral interpreting* services in different service situations is as follows:

- During office in-person encounters:** The individuals with LEP may self-identify their preferred language. Also, the Agency utilizes the Language Identification poster to assist staff in identifying the language needed and provides oral interpreting services via the interpretation contractor.
- At initial contact in the field:** The Agency contacts all individuals prior to a site visit to determine if any language assistance is required. In addition, staff carry “I Speak” palm cards and utilize a cell phone to access oral interpreting services when in the field, if cell phone service is available. If oral interpretation is required but cell service is unavailable, the site visit will be rescheduled.



When speaking on the telephone: The Agency provides individuals with LEP with information using a contracted interpreter service. Staff also utilize the contracted interpreter service when having conversations via telephone with an individual with LEP.

For pre-planned appointments of individuals with LEP: If in the field, the Agency contacts all individuals prior to a site visit to determine if any language assistance is required. In addition, staff will carry “I Speak” palm cards and utilize a cell phone to access oral interpreting services when in the field, if cell phone service is available. If oral interpretation is required but cell service is unavailable, the site visit will be rescheduled. If in the office, the Agency staff will utilize oral interpreting services via the contracted interpreter service.

Other (describe):

Our agency records and maintains documentation of language assistance needs of individuals with LEP as follows:

All Agency staff utilize a spreadsheet that tracks the individual’s LEP language, the services requested, and the response. Each encounter, when completed, is forwarded to the LAC.

B. Oral Interpreting Services

Our agency has made the following resources available for oral interpreting requests:

Bilingual staff members who work directly with individuals with LEP

Number of staff and languages spoken:

Bilingual staff members who provide oral interpreting services on a volunteer basis

Number of staff and languages spoken:

Telephonic interpreting service

Number of contractors and languages spoken: APA has one contractor, under the NYS Office of General Services Statewide Administrative Services Contract for telephonic interpretation, in approximately hundreds of languages.

Contracts or other arrangements with school and community organizations

Number of contracts or other arrangements and languages spoken:

Other (Describe)



Our agency protocols for informing individuals with LEP that free interpreting services will be provided and that they do not need to provide their own interpreters is as follows:

During office in-person encounters: Staff, using a contracted interpreter, inform individuals with LEP that they do not need to provide their own interpreters and that free interpreting services will be provided.

At initial contact in the field: The Agency contacts all individuals prior to a site visit to determine if any language assistance is required. Staff, using a contracted interpreter, inform individuals with LEP that they do not need to provide their own interpreters and that free interpreting services will be provided.

When speaking on the telephone: Staff, using a contracted interpreter, inform individuals with LEP that they do not need to provide their own interpreters and that free interpreting services will be provided.

For pre-planned appointments of individuals with LEP: Staff has already identified an individual’s language need and made the necessary arrangements through an interpretation contractor.

Other (describe):

Our agency’s protocols for obtaining interpreting services in a timely manner is as follows:

Once an individual with LEP is identified, Agency staff contacts an interpretation contractor immediately. For pre-planned appointments, arrangements are made in advance for an interpreter.

If an individual with LEP insists on having a family member, friend, or other person interpret, our protocols for deciding whether to accept or decline such an arrangement is as follows:

Individuals with LEP that encounter our Agency will be informed of the availability of free interpreting services. Generally, an individual with LEP may not have a family member, friend, or a minor interpret. However, **during emergencies** an individual with LEP may be permitted to have a minor, a family member or friend interpret. Upon request, an individual with LEP may also be permitted to have a minor, a family member or friend interpret for routine matters, such as asking the location of the office, hours of operation or rescheduling an appointment. Where the interaction with individuals with LEP occurs at the agency’s office and an individual is permitted to use an interpreter of their choosing, they must fill out a written consent/waiver form. Where individuals with LEP are engaged in official business with the Agency, the Agency will always provide an independent interpreter.



Our agency provides information to all staff members who have contact with the public about how to obtain oral interpreting services. Our protocol in this regard is as follows:

The Agency provides training to all staff on how to assist individuals with LEP, which includes contacting the Language Access Coordinator for assistance. In addition, all staff members who have contact with the public have a palm card or an information sheet that explains how to connect to the telephonic interpreting service. If the call is received by the Agency switchboard, the switchboard staff make the direct contact to the outside contractor for telephonic interpretation to determine how the call needs to be routed within the Agency.

The agency’s Language Access Coordinator (“LAC”) maintains a list of oral interpreting resources that are available to staff. This resource list includes:

- Names and contact information for all resources
- Names and locations of staff members who are available to act as interpreters or provide services directly in the primary language of an individual with LEP
- Languages in which each interpreter or service is qualified
- Procedures for accessing each interpreter or service

Our agency records and maintains documentation of oral interpreting services provided to individuals with LEP at each encounter. Our protocol in this regard is as follows:

All Agency staff utilize a spreadsheet that tracks the individual’s language, the services requested and the response. Each encounter, when completed, is forwarded to the Language Access Coordinator.

Cultural Competence and Confidentiality

Our agency makes sure interpreters are culturally competent¹ in the following ways:

The Agency utilizes interpretation contractors. The contractor, under the terms and conditions of the contract, is expected to implement quality assurance standards to guarantee that its interpreters are trained and are linguistically and culturally competent. Issues regarding interpreters’ competence and/or professionalism are reported back to the interpretation contractor via their online reporting system and on a monthly contractor deficiency report.

¹ Cultural Competence is defined as *a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals that enables effective interactions in a cross-cultural framework.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. 2000. Assuring Cultural Competence in Health Care: Recommendations for National Standards and an Outcomes-Focused Research Agenda. Extracted from: https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/Assets/pdf/checked/Assuring_Cultural_Competence_in_Health_Care-1999.pdf



Our agency makes sure interpreters follow state and federal confidentiality protocols in the following ways:

The training provided to staff addresses the importance of confidentiality. Furthermore, interpretation contractors under the terms and conditions of the contract are expected to adhere to standards of confidentiality in accordance with NYS Law.

C. Translations of Documents

At least every two years after the effective date of this Plan, our agency determines and reassesses vital documents² that must be translated. This process is accomplished in the following ways:

The Agency’s executive staff reviews each new document, as it is developed, to determine if the document is “vital” and therefore needs to be translated into the top 12 languages as required by the language access law.

Our agency’s process for making sure documents are written in plain language³ before they are translated into other languages is as follows:

The Agency utilizes its public information staff to ensure that plain language is used in materials before translation to ensure information is accessible to a range of literacy levels.

Our agency has the following resources available for translation of documents:

- Contractors for translation services
Number of contractors: One contractor pursuant to the NYS OGS Statewide Administrative Services Contract.
- Contracts or other arrangements with schools and community organizations
Names of schools/organizations:
- Translation of documents by bilingual staff member
- Other (describe)

² Vital Documents is defined as any paper or digital document that contains information that is critical for obtaining agency services or benefits or is otherwise required to be completed by law.

³ The [Plain Writing Act of 2010](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-111publ274) defines plain language as writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience. Extracted from: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-111publ274>



The agency’s Language Access Coordinator (“LAC”) maintains a list of translation resources that are available to staff. This resource list includes:

- Names and contact information for all resources
- Names and locations of staff members who are available to provide translations of documents
- Languages in which each translation service is qualified
- Procedures for accessing each translation service

Our agency translates documents that individuals with LEP submit in their primary languages in a timely manner. Our protocol in this regard is as follows:

The Agency forwards the documents to an OGS approved translation service in a timely manner.

The following non-exhaustive list of documents are currently translated or in the process of translation by our agency in the languages indicated. Documents with an asterisk (*) are determined by the agency to be vital documents.

- *AR: Arabic*
- *BA: Bangla*
- *CH: Chinese*
- *FR: French*
- *HA: Haitian-Creole*
- *IT: Italian*
- *KO: Korean*
- *PO: Polish*
- *RU: Russian*
- *SP: Spanish*
- *UR: Urdu*
- *YI: Yiddish*

Form #	Name	Top 12 Languages												Additional Languages
		AR	BA	CH	FR	HA	IT	KO	PO	RU	SP	UR	YI	
	APA Citizen’s Guide	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	



New documents identified for translation after the signing of this Plan and before the 2-year reassessment will be translated in a timely manner.

The process for ensuring that translations are accurate and incorporate commonly used words is as follows:

The Agency, through its contractor (where applicable), will ensure that proofing/editing for correctness and cultural sensitivity are a component of the translation services provided by any contractor under contract as part of the publication process. The Agency will also ensure that plain language is used in materials produced before translation to ensure information is accessible to a range of literacy levels.



PART 5 – Staff Training

The person in the agency who is responsible for training staff in language access services is:
The Agency’s Language Access Coordinator.

The staff training includes the following components:

- The agency’s legal obligations to provide language access services
- The agency’s resources for providing language access services
- How to access and work with interpreters
- Cultural competence and cultural sensitivity
- How to obtain translation services
- Maintaining records of language access services provided to individuals with LEP

The methods and frequency of training are as follows:

Mandatory Language Access training is given to all staff annually via the Statewide Learning Management System. Refresher training will be provided as necessary.



PART 6 – Monitoring the Plan and Responding to Complaints

A. Monitoring

Our agency’s Language Access Coordinator (“LAC”) will monitor implementation of the Plan to make sure we are in compliance. Our protocols in this regard are as follows:

The LAC reviews the Agency’s Language Access Plan to determine if any updates are necessary, including updates to the staff training materials, frequency of trainings and list of vital documents.

The LAC also conducts spot checks to review that the necessary Language Access signs are appropriately posted in the public areas of the Agency building. The LAC also reviews and addresses any complaints filed by individuals with LEP and assesses the staff training for any necessary updates.

B. Complaints

We provide information to the public in at least the top 12 most commonly spoken non-English languages in the state, advising members of the public of their right to file a complaint if they feel that they have not been provided adequate language access services or have been denied access to services because of their limited English proficiency. We do not retaliate or take other adverse action because an individual has filed a language access complaint.

We display information on the right to file a complaint, and the procedures for filing a complaint, in the following manner:

The standardized complaint forms, along with the procedures for filing a complaint, are available in the top twelve languages in our public offices upon request. They are also available for download or online submission through our website. Additionally, information on the right to file a complaint is posted in the top twelve languages on our website and in our offices in areas where it can be easily seen by the public.

We handle complaints made to the agency regarding the provision of language assistance services in the following manner:

Anyone who wishes to lodge a complaint about language access services is directed to our complaint form and provided information about how to submit a complaint. All complaints received on the prescribed form are provided to the LAC who will review and obtain additional information, if necessary. The completed form, any additional information, and the



Anyone who wishes to lodge a complaint about language access services is directed to our complaint form and provided information about how to submit a complaint. All complaints received on the prescribed form are provided to the LAC who will review and obtain additional information, if necessary. The completed form, any additional information, and the recommended response are provided to the Agency’s Executive Director. The Executive Director will then review the information and will issue a written decision to the complainant within two weeks of the date of receipt of all material with a copy to the Language Access Coordinator.

All complaints must be timely forwarded to the Office of Language Access.

 **PART 7 – Signatures**

 Recoverable Signature


X Barbara Rice

Signed by: 8f7573e3-e1e1-49f5-bd06-fc31af5709f7

Executive Director

10/01/2024

Head of Agency **Title** **Date**

 Recoverable Signature


X Elaine Caldwell

Signed by: 8f7573e3-e1e1-49f5-bd06-fc31af5709f7

Deputy Director, Administration

10/01/2024

Agency LAC **Title** **Date**

X 

Executive Director, NYS Office of Language Access

10/23/2024
Date