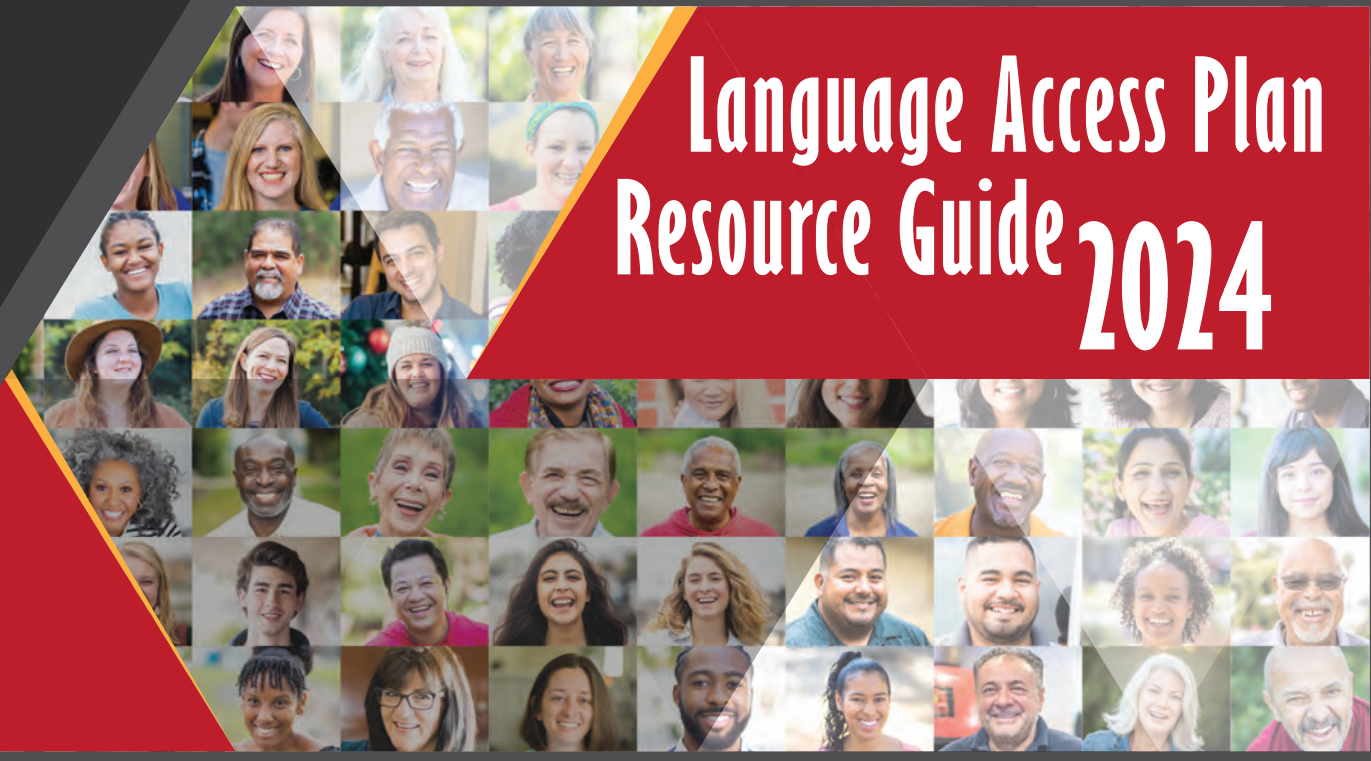




DIVISION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
AND ADULT LEARNING

DIVISION OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE



Language Access Plan Resource Guide 2024

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INTRODUCTION

This Language Access Plan Resource Guide is a resource complementary to the DWDAL and DUI Language Access Plan, which can be accessed on the Labor website at: <https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/wioa.shtml>.

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or “LEP.” These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.¹



APPLICABLE LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES

Three main laws, regulations, and policies undergird the requirements for services to LEP individuals. The below items are summaries and are further detailed in the *DWDAL/DUI Language Access Plan* found on the Labor website at <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/wioa.shtml>.

Executive Order 13166 Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Requires recipients of federal financial assistance to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals.

WIOA Section 188

Prohibits discrimination against all individuals in the U.S. on the basis of race, . . . national origin (including limited English proficiency. . . in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

Md. Code Ann., State Gov't. § 10-1103 “Equal Access to Public Services for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency”²

It is the policy of the State that State departments, agencies, and programs shall provide equal access to public services for individuals with limited English proficiency.

¹ LEP.gov

² Executive Order 13166 <https://www.justice.gov/crt/executive-order-13166>

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 <https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964>

WIOA Implementation <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-29/subtitle-A/part-38>

Equal Access to Public Services <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/2018/state-government/title-10/subtitle-11/section-10-1101/>

STRATEGIES TO ASSESS LANGUAGE NEEDS

It can be difficult to figure out whether a customer needs language assistance. Below are some strategies to utilize to assess what type of language assistance a customer may need. Two main categories are detailed in the table below: Customer Self-Identification and Staff Recognized Barrier to Communication. Please note: these are not exhaustive lists as each customer interaction is unique; however, they may help guide you in providing language assistance services.

Customer Self-Identifies at Initial Contact	Staff Recognized Barrier to Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A customer may request language services at the beginning of an interaction by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Asking if staff speaks another language Asking for an interpreter Pointing to an I-Speak card, see examples below An accompanying family member requesting interpretation Once the request has been made, staff should immediately offer the free assistance and provide the appropriate language assistance service*: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Telephonic Interpretation In-person Interpretation <p><i>*Details on these services are below.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff may recognize that a customer may need language assistance services if: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The customer brings a family member to assist with interpretation The customer seems to not understand what staff is saying The customer's answer to a question does not match the question asked The customer is unable to read or write in English If staff recognizes a possible need for language assistance services, staff should immediately offer the free assistance and provide the appropriate language assistance services*: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Telephonic Interpretation In-person Interpretation <p><i>*Details on these services are below.</i></p>



In addition to identifying spoken language needs, it may also be necessary to understand written translation language needs. Your office may already have documents that have been translated into other languages. If so, you can ask the LEP individual if he or she would like the document in his or her native language or another known language. Do not assume that the LEP individual can read his or her native language. For LEP individuals who speak more than one language, they may also request a written document translated into a different language than used for interpretation. This often happens because there are far more language options for telephonic interpretation, and typically, written documents are translated into a few top languages. For example, a LEP individual may request a phone interpreter in Swahili, but may be able to read and understand documents written in French, and would prefer French documents over English ones.

BEST PRACTICES IN WORKING WITH LEP CUSTOMERS AND INTERPRETERS

Every customer interaction is unique, and as such, the following best practices are a guide for how to work with LEP customers and interpreters. Please note: these are not exhaustive lists and staff should assess the customer interaction to provide the best service possible.

Working with LEP Customers	Working with Interpreters
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interact respectfully and patiently• Assess the language need• Speak slowly and clearly• Use plain language, avoiding acronyms and jargon• Avoid assumptions and ask for clarification as needed• Never rely on a minor child for interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remember you are in control of the interaction and the interpreter is there to facilitate the communication• Speak directly to the customer• Speak at a clear, normal pace• Ask one question at a time• Use plain language, avoiding acronyms and jargon• Allow the interpreter to take notes• Never leave the customer and interpreter alone• Allow time for breaks• Remember some languages do not have equivalents

LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES

The Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has procured services for telephonic interpretation, in-person interpretation, and written translation through the Statewide Foreign Language Interpretation/Translation Services (FLITS) contract. Further details can be found at: <https://dbm.maryland.gov/contracts/Pages/contract-library/Services/Language2019.aspx>

Below is more detailed information about how to request each of these services. Please contact your Language Access Coordinator (*page 11*) for assistance with connecting with the vendors. Additionally, state staff should contact their Language Access Coordinator for the Client ID and Access Codes required to request services.

TELEPHONIC INTERPRETATION

Telephone interpretation services allow staff to serve a customer through the assistance of an external, third party interpreter. Staff can speak to the customer in English over the telephone and the interpreter relays the staff's speech back to a client in his or her preferred language.



This flowchart will help to determine which vendor to use. Non-state staff should consult with a supervisor regarding which vendor to use.

Language Line Solutions is the State of Maryland contractor for telephonic interpretation services. Language Line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and has a repertoire of 240 languages.

To set up an account or if you have questions, contact:

Joe Matthews, Account Executive

Phone: 800-316-5493

Email: jmatthews@languageline.com

Or, for general questions, call Customer Service: 800-752-6096

To access an interpreter via Language Line Solutions:

1. Call 1-866-874-3972
2. Provide Client ID (For state staff this can be obtained from your Division's Language Access Coordinator)
3. Indicate the language needed
4. Provide Access Code (Access Codes for state staff can be obtained from your Division's Language Access Coordinator)
5. You will be connected to an interpreter

IN-PERSON INTERPRETATION

In-person interpretation is a real-time, face-to-face oral interpretation service option that allows customers to receive information in their preferred language incorporated with cultural and syntactic context. Service is delivered on site by a certified interpreter.



This flowchart will help to determine which vendor to use. Non-state staff should consult with a supervisor regarding which vendor to use.

Ad Astra is the State of Maryland contractor for in-person interpretation services and is located in Silver Spring, Maryland. It has a repertoire of 250 languages.

To set up an account or if you have questions, contact:

Chris Elznic, Client Success Manager

Phone: 301-408-4242 Ext. 106

Email: chris@ad-astrainc.com

Or, for general questions: 301-408-4242

To schedule an in-person interpreter, use one of the following methods:

1. Email: interpreting@ad-astrainc.com
2. Call: 301-408-4242 (choose option 2)
3. Online: www.scheduleinterpreter.com/ad-astra.

*Please contact Chris Elznic, if you wish to use the system, but do not have your login credentials.

Information you will need to place in-person interpreting requests:

- Date & time of the assignment
- Length of the assignment
- Location of the assignment (full address, suite #, room #, dept. name, etc.)
- Name and phone number of an on-site Point of Contact
- Name of the Customer
- Language of the Customer (including regional dialect or country of origin, if known)
- Type of appointment (social services, legal/court, medical, training, etc.)
- Any other details that would be helpful for Ad Astra staff

WRITTEN TRANSLATION

Translation refers to having written and print items, including online content, be written in other languages.



This flowchart will help to determine which vendor to use. Non-state staff should consult with a supervisor regarding which vendor to use.

Ad Astra is the State of Maryland contractor for translation services. Ad Astra is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, and offers prompt translation services in over 120 languages.

State staff who wish to obtain document translation - please contact your Division's Language Access Coordinator who partners with Ad Astra to provide this service.

To set up an account or if you have questions, contact:

Lynn Dixon, Translation Operations Manager

Phone: 301-408-4242

Email: lynndixon@ad-astrainc.com

Or, for general questions, call Customer Service: 301-408-4242

To submit a request for document translation, use one of the following methods:

1. Email: translation@ad-astrainc.com
2. Call: 301-408-4242, press option 4
3. Online: <http://adastra.plunet.com/index.jsp>.

*Please contact Lynn Dixon, if you wish to use the system, but do not have your login credentials.

According to Labor's Office of Fair Practices (draft) LEP Plan, vital documents are those that convey information that critically affect the ability of the program recipient to make decisions about his or her participation in the program. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Applications
- Public notices
- Consent forms
- Letters containing important information regarding participation in a program
- Eligibility rules
- Notices pertaining to the reduction, denial, or termination of benefits or right to appeal
- Notices advising of the availability of language assistance
- Outreach and community education materials

Maryland code also specifies what languages vital documents should be translated, giving a three percent threshold:

Reasonable steps to provide equal access to public services include...the translation of vital documents ordinarily provided to the public into any language spoken by any limited English proficient population that constitutes 3% of the overall population within the geographic area served by a local office of a State program as measured by the United States Census.

Md. Code Ann., State Gov't. § 10-1103(b)(2i)

Going further than the Maryland state law, DWDAL and DUI's Language Access Plan strongly recommends that all sites consider the language needs of their customer or student populations and offer translated vital documents for the populations exceeding three percent of their total participant population.

BABEL NOTICES

A Babel Notice is a short tagline added to a document that advises non-English speakers who they may contact to receive the information in their preferred language. These tag lines should briefly explain that the information is important and should include a telephone number or website.

Example:

Currently DWDAL and DUI utilize the following Babel Notice which is available in Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese:

IMPORTANT! This document contains important information about your rights, responsibilities and/or benefits. It is critical that you understand the information in this document, and we will provide the information in your preferred language at no cost to you. Call (xxx) xxx-xxxx for assistance in the translation and understanding of the information in this document.

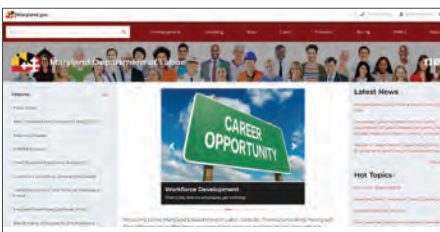
AVAILABLE RESOURCES

In addition to providing interpretation and translation services, there are additional resources to assist LEP individuals.



Maryland Workforce Exchange

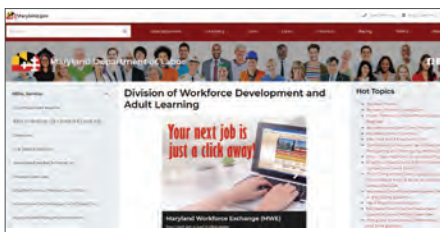
The Maryland Workforce Exchange website is available in 133 languages. When signing in at <https://mwejobs.maryland.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>, choose the “Select Language” drop-down under the “Sign In/Register” button. You can immediately choose English or Spanish, or if a different language is preferred, choose “Other Languages.”



Translated Resources on MD Labor's Website

There are a number of resources for LEP individuals available on MD Labor's website: <https://labor.maryland.gov/>

The entire MD Labor website can be translated into more than 100 languages using an embedded Google Translate tool. The “Translate” button is in the upper-right hand corner of the website. While this is an excellent resource, Google Translate is not always the most accurate, and individuals may still have questions.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/>

DWDAL's homepage contains information in English and Spanish.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/spanish/>

The “Ayuda en Español” page contains basic information about the Department of Labor and its divisions in Spanish. On this page, there are also a number of links to additional resources in Spanish.



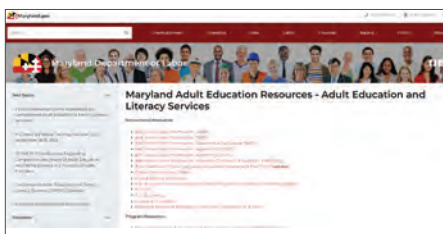
<https://labor.maryland.gov/spanish/desempleo.shtml>

The Division of Unemployment Insurance has a web page with information in Spanish about how to file an unemployment insurance claim.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/oeope/equalsp.shtml>

The Office of Fair Practices “Equal Opportunity is the Law” is available in Spanish.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/gedmd/resources.shtml>

Literacy, Adult and Community Education System (LACES) forms for use by Adult Education Providers are available in 11 languages.

OTHER RESOURCES

There are a number of resources for LEP individuals and staff on DWDAL’s New Americans page:



<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/newamerwrkforce.shtml>



<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/newamerjobs.shtml>

Registered Apprenticeship Brochures are available in 13 languages.



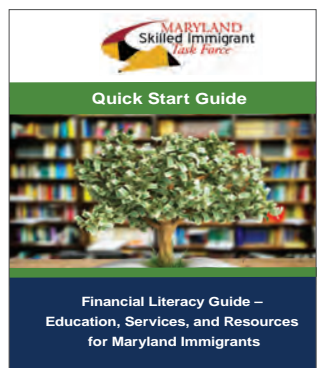
<https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/careerpatheng.pdf>

A guide to assist foreign-trained engineers return to the engineering profession in Maryland.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/skilledimmigrantguide.pdf>

A resource guide of service providers across Maryland who serve New Americans is available.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/skilledimmigrant.shtml>

A financial education guide with detailed information about financial services available across Maryland is available in 12 languages.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/newamerres.shtml>

The Common Guide to Work Authorization Documents for New Americans was created as a reference tool for Maryland workforce development staff to use when verifying work authorization.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/gedmdl/programs.shtml>

The DWDAL-sponsored ESL class interactive locator page is organized by county and Local Workforce Development Area.



<https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/skilledimmigrant.shtml>

The Resource Guide for New American Job Seekers was created to provide helpful nationwide, statewide, and local resources with descriptions of services, phone numbers, and links and is available in 9 languages.



Additionally, DUI has the following resources on their website:

DUI's claimant portal, BEACON, is available to claimants in English and Spanish. If assistance is needed for a language other than Spanish, the potential claimant would call (667) 207-6520 for interpretation assistance. BEACON allows a claimant to select their preferred language to allow DUI staff to communicate with them in their preferred language. <https://beacon.labor.maryland.gov/> (English)

LANGUAGE ACCESS TRAINING

To request language access training, please contact your Division's Language Access Coordinator.

LANGUAGE ACCESS COORDINATORS

If you have further questions, please contact your Division's Language Access Coordinator:

DWDAL Language Access Coordinator:
Joana Winningham
New Americans Initiative Coordinator
joana.winningham@maryland.gov
(410) 767-2822 (office)

DUI Language Access Coordinator:
Crystal Powell
Unemployment Insurance Advances Professional
crystals.powell@maryland.gov
410-767-2671 (office)