U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Transportation Security Administration

Language Access Plan

June 30, 2015

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Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to provide meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency to operations, services, activities, and programs that support each Homeland Security mission area by providing quality language assistance services in a timely manner. DHS components, therefore, should incorporate language access considerations into their routine strategic and business planning, identify and translate crucial documents into the most frequently encountered languages, provide interpretive services where appropriate, and educate personnel about language access responsibilities and how to utilize available language access resources.[1]

Public: The Language Access Policy Statement and the Language Access Plan will be posted to the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) external website (www.tsa.gov), linked to relevant social media, and disseminated to TSA's Coalition members electronically, in an accessible, Section 508-compliant format.

Internal: The Language Access Policy Statement and the Language Access Plan will be posted to TSA's internal website and disseminated through the available employee communications networks, including the TSA Language Access Working Group. The DHS Language Access Plan (February 2012) was distributed to the workforce through the Assistant Administrators.

Interactions with the Public

The offices that have the most frequent interaction with the public, especially communities with limited English proficiency, are the following:

Office of Security Operations:
The Office of Security Operations (OSO) supervises the Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) who screen 2.1 million passengers daily at airports nationwide and encounter individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals who have language-based or sensory disabilities, particularly at international gateways. OSO launched a language access initiative that: (1) facilitates better communication with individuals needing language assistance at the checkpoints; (2) enhances screening compliance during pat-down and headwear screening procedures; and (3) improves the overall checkpoint screening process for individuals with limited English proficiency.

Office of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs:
The Office of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs (SCPA) uses various media to communicate with internal and external audiences, including daily media relations, print collateral, internal and external web portals, and social media.

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[1] http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/crcl/crcl-dhs-language-access-plan.pdf

Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, Ombudsman & Traveler Engagement:
The Office of Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement (CRL/OTE) has multiple divisions that interact directly with the public. The TSA Contact Center (TCC) is the primary TSA point of contact for the general public via telephone and electronic mail. The Multicultural Branch and Disability Branch process complaints from the public on civil rights and civil liberties issues, and maintain an open dialogue with members of a coalition of public advocacy organizations.

Office of Security Policy and Industry Engagement:
The Office of Security Policy and Industry Engagement, which heads credentialing programs like the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, the Hazardous Materials Endorsement (HME) program, aviation workers, and the Alien Flight Student Program, interacts with all transportation sector workers.

Language Access Considerations

The incorporation of language access considerations into TSA strategies and business objectives will be reviewed periodically in accordance with the TSA Language Access Plan. Currently, TSA's offices have included the following in business planning for language access:

SCPA interacts with various media sources, employees, industry stakeholders, other federal agencies and the general public on a daily basis via the following media: the internet, translated infographic materials (signage, flyers, etc.), videos, and social media (including the TSA Blog, Twitter, and soon Facebook). The office also interacts with several media outlets that utilize a variety of languages. SCPA will conduct airport site visits, as needed, to review checkpoint signage and other relevant TSA information posted in airports, for quality improvement in language access messaging.

The TSA Contact Center (TCC), within CRL/OTE, has a general telephone number for the public (866-289-9673). One feature of this telephone number is a link to an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that allows callers to receive recorded information on frequently asked questions interpreted into Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, Korean, Japanese, German, Russian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, and Vietnamese. If Spanish-speaking callers seek additional information beyond the IVR recordings, the TCC has Spanish-speaking agents to assist. The TCC also has several template responses for email inquiries available for agents to provide a Spanish response to the customer. Callers who are deaf or hard of hearing may use Federal Relay 711.

OSO's Language Access Program was developed in direct response to the need to communicate fully with travelers as part of a multi-layered, risk-based security program. TSOs have access to print versions of translated passenger advisements for procedures such as the standard pat-down, the resolution pat-down, Advanced Imaging Technology screening, and non-form-fitting headwear screening, and other screening related materials. In addition, a language identification badge is available to identify officers who proficiently speak multiple languages. This badge is on a voluntary basis.

TSA's security threat assessment programs like TWIC, HME, and Aviation Workers interact with many diverse transportation workers and routinely consider language access in their work. For example, the TWIC Program's Disclosure Form, which all applicants are required to complete, is available in 12 languages in addition to English: Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Farsi, Filipino/Tagalog, Hindi, Khmer, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

The Multicultural Branch of CRL/OTE can receive, process, and respond to written complaints from the public on civil rights and civil liberties issues in almost any written language. The Multicultural Branch online complaint form will soon be available in ten languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Punjabi, Spanish, and Vietnamese.. The Multicultural Branch is also translating relevant civil rights and liberties portions of the public website into these same ten languages.

Pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and in accordance with DHS Directive 065-01-001 (March 13, 2015) requiring that persons with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, TSA's security screening activities, the Disability Branch of CRL/OTE is coordinating the development, production, and distribution of a Braille version of the English language chapter for inclusion in the existing Language Access Binders at all of the 450+ airports. The existing English language chapter and the Braille version of the chapter will serve as valuable resources to facilitate communication between officers and individuals who may be limited English proficient due to having a disability or medical condition including, but not limited to, persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or have low vision, deaf and blind, and persons with developmental, cognitive, or intellectual disabilities.

Responsible Personnel/Offices and Oversight

The Assistant Administrator of the Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, Ombudsman, & Traveler Engagement serves as the Language Access Coordinator for TSA. The Multicultural Branch of CRL/OTE is responsible for coordinating the Language Access Plan. The Multicultural Branch also serves as TSA's representative on the DHS Language Access working group and the DHS Efficiency Review working group on Language Services Acquisition.

The activities presented in the Language Access Plan will be implemented by the office(s) most appropriate to provide subject-matter expertise, and the Language Access Working Group will coordinate between offices.

The offices represented in TSA's Language Access Working Group are as follows:

Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, Ombudsman, & Traveler Engagement
    Customer Service Branch
    Disability Branch
    Multicultural Branch
Office of Human Capital
Office of Law Enforcement/Federal Air Marshal Service

Office of Security Capabilities
Office of Security Operations
    Security Procedures Branch
Office of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs
Office of Security Policy and Industry Engagement
Office of Training and Workforce Engagement

TSA's Language Access Working Group is responsible for periodically developing and updating the TSA Language Access Plan.

Most Frequently Encountered Languages

The following are the 10 most frequently encountered languages for TSA. TSA gathered this information over the past four years through various internal surveys.
1. Arabic
2. Chinese (Mandarin)
3. French
4. German
5. Japanese
6. Korean
7. Punjabi
8. Russian
9. Spanish
10. Vietnamese

The most frequently encountered languages will be updated periodically.[2] In fact, based on comments solicited from the public in late 2014, TSA will specifically consider Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati, and Hmong.

Tracking of Frequently Encountered Languages

TSA uses the following methods to obtain and track information about currently available language services and encounters with persons with limited English proficiency:

- The TCC tracks the use of all Spanish-language services, including the number of callers requesting live assistance in Spanish, self-service in Spanish (IVR usage), and the number of times a Spanish email template has been utilized. Currently, the TCC maintains data regarding contact with Spanish-speaking members of the public in the TCC v3.0 database and the IVR Reporting tool.

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[2] OSO has created translation materials for use in security screening of individuals and their accessible property in a total of 25 foreign languages based on feedback from the airports.

- OSO's advisement translation initiative collected data through internal surveys to assess the usage of the tools being tested and the value of the tools in order to provide more effective communication with passengers. These surveys will occur periodically.

- The Office of Human Capital (OHC) launched an initiative in March 2013 to identify instances of work-related interactions with persons with limited English proficiency by the HRAccess Help Desk. Due to the low volume of such calls received by the HRAccess Help Desk, OHC will be creating the reports manually on a monthly and quarterly basis, instead of providing an automated means of collecting this data.

Currently, other offices do not track the provision of language assistance services. However, appropriate tracking mechanisms will be created as each office provides or supports new language services. The overall maintenance of language access data is task-driven and will be updated in the Plan as projects arise.

Projects: Implemented, Current, and Future

Language Access Projects that have been implemented are as follows:
- The TCC has expanded its IVR to include ten languages beyond English and Spanish: Arabic, Chinese, French, Korean, Japanese, German, Russian, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Punjabi.
- OSO has expanded the use of translations of passenger advisements based on the results of the pilot initiative into 25 languages, as well as English, with positive results: Arabic, Cambodian, Cantonese, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish, Thai, Urdu, and Vietnamese. SCPA has contracted for translation services for the public website, www.tsa.gov.
- CRL/OTE has cultivated relationships with its coalition members and routinely gives updates and solicits feedback regarding language access.
- SCPA has created universal checkpoint signage/infographics to assist in overcoming potential language barriers.
- OHC launched an initiative in March 2013 to identify instances of work-related interactions with persons with limited English proficiency at the HRAccess Help Desk.

Language Access Projects that are being planned:
- TWIC is translating an updated disclosure form into Spanish.
- The Multicultural Branch is translating the online civil rights and liberties complaint form into the ten most frequently encountered languages.
- The Disability Branch is coordinating the development, production, and distribution of a Braille version of the English language chapter for placement in the existing Language Access Binders. Use of graphics and advisements in the English language chapter to create a Braille version of the chapter was preferred over use of American Sign Language (ASL) pictorials. This is because ASL has different dialects based on region in the United States, and visual pictures of how to sign words depicted on paper are difficult to read and/or translate consistently. Using graphics or pictorials with concise advisements, and

ensuring this material also is available in Braille, may allow a broader range of persons with disabilities and medical conditions, who may also be limited English proficient, to have an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, TSA's security screening activities.

Language Access Project ideas for the future (FY15-17):
- SCPA will continue to modify universal checkpoint signage/infographics to assist in overcoming potential language barriers as needed and review for quality improvement in language access messaging.
- SCPA will create an internal communications awareness campaign to educate the TSA workforce about Language Access.
- The Multicultural Branch will translate the Language Access Plan into TSA's ten most frequently encountered languages.
- The Disability Branch would like to have "American Sign Language" added as a nameplate option for those proficient in the language to identify themselves to the public.
- SCPA will post both the Language Access Statement and policy to internet (www.tsa.gov) and intranet portals. SCPA will use social media to disseminate the link to the agency's Language Access Statement.
- TSA will be developing protocols on how to identify persons needing language access and how to obtain the language services reasonably available.
- The TCC will continue to track trends in data. If there is an increase in frequency in Spanish calls regarding a certain topic, the email template that addresses the topic will be translated into Spanish.

Language Access Procedures/Protocols

When CRL/OTE encounters written correspondence in a language other than English, it is translated, processed in English, and the response is translated back into the original language. Both the English and translated response are sent to the writer.

OSO has issued a directive that outlines procedures to the workforce on how to use the Language Access tools, which include the Language Access Binder and its translations as well as the language identification badges.

Employee Duties and Development

Currently, there is no language requirement in any TSA job description. TSA may begin assessing job descriptions by first conducting a survey of all 450+ airports to identify where the need for language requirements would be most beneficial, and to develop a strategic plan to address that need (as applicable).

The use of written translations of specific passenger advisements does not add new responsibilities for TSOs. Translation materials and standard procedures for use of the translations have been provided to assist TSOs in carrying out their current duties to provide such advisements as required.

Training

TSA has provided a job aid for use by TSOs who use the Language Access tools. An internal campaign, starting with the TSA Language Access Plan, will be the first step in providing the workforce information on the services available, how to identify a need for the services, and how to provide them to the public.

Resources

TSA is participating in the DHS Efficiency Review Initiative on Language Services Acquisition, in which a cross-component Integrated Project Team is developing a portfolio of vehicles to acquire language services, including a DHS-wide Blanket Purchase Agreement. The TSA Language Access Working Group will be kept advised of any developments as they arise since the Language Access Working Group Coordinator is also on this DHS Efficiency Review working group.

Currently, only some TSA offices have a budget line item specifically for language access provisions, including language training, through existing resources.

Notice to LEP Persons

The TCC provides notice in the introductory message on the general call-in number that assistance is available in English and Spanish.

There are signs stating, "Written Translations Available," translated into the available languages, posted in the screening checkpoint area to inform individuals that translations are available in these languages for specific screening advisements or procedures.

The Civil Rights and Liberties Online Complaint Form notifies the public that TSA is able to handle complaints that are submitted in different languages.

Procedures for Quality Control

TSA measures quality control in translation contracting by requesting back-to-front translations in each translation contract, which means that the document will be translated from English to another language and from that language back to English by different people. The DHS Efficiency Review Initiative will also review quality control in contracting.

The TCC's bilingual agents' conversations are recorded and reviewed weekly on-site. In addition, staff at TSA headquarters conduct quality reviews for and evaluate the level of service of the Spanish language calls and emails.

Due to the low volume of such calls at the HRAccess Help Desk, OHC will be creating the reports manually on a monthly and quarterly basis, instead of providing an automated means to collect this data.

Outreach to LEP Communities

CRL/OTE conducts outreach and engagement with TSA's Disability and Multicultural Coalition, including regarding TSA's language services.

Representatives of OSO who attend working groups of passenger stakeholders and customer service personnel in airports regularly hear issues and gather important information and feedback from the traveling public. OSO will provide information related to ongoing efforts to improve language services to CRL/OTE and members of the TSA Language Access Working Group.

Monitoring and Performance Measures

TSA will review this plan and related policies and procedures at a minimum of every two years. There will be occasional internal field surveys to monitor and evaluate the use of the advisement translations by OSO. TSA will also seek public feedback as part of its efforts to monitor language access.

Contact Information and Assistance

The Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement may be contacted by email at TSA-CRL@tsa.dhs.gov for more information about TSA's Language Access Plan. You may also contact us by writing to the following address:

> Multicultural Branch
> Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement
> Transportation Security Administration
> 701 South 12th Street
> Arlington, VA 20598-6006

To file a complaint using the online complaint form, visit https://www.tsa.gov/content/civil-rights-andor-civil-liberties-complaint-form.

Complaints about language access in TSA programs and activities may be filed with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL). For more information about filing complaints with CRCL, see www.dhs.gov/crcl, or call CRCL at (202) 401-1474 or (866) 644-8360. Complaints may be filed in any language.

Acronyms

DHS	Department of Homeland Security
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
OSO	Office of Security Operations
TSO	Transportation Security Officer
SCPA	Office of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs
CRL/OTE	Office of Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement
TCC	TSA Contact Center
TWIC	Transportation Worker Identification Credential
HME	Hazardous Materials Endorsement
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
CAT X	Category X airports (largest in size)
OHC	Office of Human Capital