

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Transportation Security Administration



Draft Language Access Plan

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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 format so as to provide Section 508 compliance.

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 1.7 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 tested a language access initiative that intends to: (1) facilitate better communication with individuals needing language assistance at the checkpoints; (2) enhance screening compliance during pat-down and headwear screening procedures; and (3) improve 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), as primary communication output portal, uses various media to communicate with internal and external audiences, including daily media relations, print collateral, internal and external web portals, and social media.

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 and Liberties, Ombudsman, and Traveler Engagement (CRL/OTE) has multiple divisions that interact directly with the public. The TSA Contact Center (TCC) is the primary point of contact to TSA for the general public via telephone and electronic mail. The Disability and Multicultural Division processes complaints from the public on civil rights and civil liberties issues, and maintains an open dialogue with members of a coalition of public advocacy groups.

Office of Security Policy and Industry Engagement:

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

Language Access Considerations

The act of listening to communication in one language (source language) an 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: 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 represent 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.

The TSA Contact Center (within CRL/OTE) has a general telephone number for the public (1-866-289-9673). One feature of this telephone number leads 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 Contact Center has Spanish speaking agents to assist. The TCC also has several template responses for email inquiries available for agents to provide a response back to the customer in Spanish.

OSO's advisement translation initiative is in direct response to the critical need to communicate fully with customers as part of a multi-layered risk-based, security program. TSOs will be provided with translated (printed) passenger advisements such as the Standard Pat-down, the Resolution Pat-down, the Modified Pat-down, Non-form-fitting headwear screening, and other screening related materials. In addition, a language identification badge is being considered to identify officers who fluently speak multiple languages. This badge would be worn on a voluntary basis.

TSA's security threat assessment programs like TWIC, HME, and Aviation Workers interact with many diverse transportation workers and take language access into consideration. For example, the TWIC Program's Disclosure Form (which all applicants are required to complete) in addition to being available in English, is available in twelve (12) other languages: 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.

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

Contact Center 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 top 10 most frequently encountered languages for TSA. TSA gathered this information over the past four years through various internal surveys. These top 10 languages will continue to be updated periodically.²

1. Arabic
2. Chinese (Mandarin)
3. French
4. German
5. Japanese
6. Korean
7. Punjabi
8. Russian
9. Spanish
10. Vietnamese

Tracking of Frequently Encountered Languages

The following are the methods TSA uses 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.
- OSO's advisement translation initiative will collect 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.
- 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, as each Office moves toward providing or supporting language services, each Office will create an

² OSO currently is preparing 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.

appropriate tracking mechanism. 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 10 additional languages beyond English and Spanish: Arabic, Chinese, French, Korean, Japanese, German, Russian, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Punjabi.
- OSO has piloted the use of translations of passenger advisements for pat-down and headwear screening into TSA's top 10 languages, as well as English, with positive results. A national roll-out of translated advisements is being prepared and will be disseminated by the end of Fiscal Year 2013.
- 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 some universal checkpoint signage/info graphics 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 currently being planned:

- OSO is expanding the advisement translations into the following additional languages based on the results of the pilot initiative: 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, Vietnamese
- TWIC is translating an updated Disclosure Form into Spanish.

Language Access Project ideas for the future:

- SCPA will continue to modify universal checkpoint signage/info graphics to assist in overcoming potential language barriers as needed and review for quality improvement.
- SCPA will create an internal communications awareness campaign to educate workforce about Language Access.
- 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.
- SCPA will review checkpoint signage and other relevant TSA information posted in airports for quality improvement and review purposes.
- The Multicultural Branch will translate the civil rights/civil liberties complaint form into the TSA top 10 languages and post them on TSA's website.
- 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 plans to provide standard procedures that give specific instructions to the workforce on how to use the written advisement translations.

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 will not add new responsibilities for TSOs. Translation materials and standard procedures for use of the translations will be provided to assist TSOs in carrying out their current duty to provide such advisements as required.

Training

TSA will ensure that all of its employees receive training on language access responsibilities, e.g., using the advisement translations. 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 will be a sign 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.

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 are recorded and reviewed weekly by on-site quality control agents. In addition, TSA headquarters staff 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, the 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 has cultivated relationships with TSA’s Coalition members and plans to conduct outreach for the purpose of assessing TSA’s language services in the next calendar year.

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

There will be occasional internal 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.

Acronyms

CRL/OTE	Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, Ombudsman, and Traveler Engagement
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
HME	Hazardous Materials Endorsement Program
IVR	Interactive Voice Response
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
OHC	Office of Human Capital
OSO	Office of Security Operations
SPCA	Office of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs
TCC	TSA Contact Center
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
TSO	Transportation Security Officer
TWIC	Transportation Worker Identification Credentialing