

# U.S. Department of Homeland Security

## U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



# Draft Language Access Plan

September 3, 2014

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## Introduction

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USCIS is the component within DHS responsible for adjudicating immigration and citizenship benefits. USCIS also promotes awareness and understanding of citizenship, ensures the integrity of the nation's immigration system, and provides accurate and useful immigration information to its customers. USCIS has 18,000 employees and contractors in 250 offices across the globe and is comprised of the following Directorates that adjudicate applications and petitions for immigration benefits: (1) Service Center Operations; (2) Field Operations; and, (3) Refugee, Asylum and International Operations. USCIS also has directorates and program offices that do not adjudicate benefit applications. Instead, these offices manage specific programs, lead communications and engagements with the public, and support DHS and USCIS as a whole. See the [Appendix](#) below for a detailed description of USCIS's public-facing program offices and directorates, and the specific goals and activities that each has undertaken to address the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals.

[Executive Order \(EO\) 13166](#) directs each federal agency to “examine the services it provides and develop and implement a system by which LEP individuals can meaningfully access those services consistent with, and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of the Agency,” (65 Fed. Reg. 50, 121 (Aug 16, 2000)). The Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Civil Rights Division issued guidance that defined LEP persons as “[i]ndividuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English,” (67 Fed. Reg. 41,455, 41,459 (June 18, 2002)). The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Language Access Plan requires each Component to draft its own plan. Accordingly, USCIS drafted this Plan in support of the DHS Language Access Plan and USCIS's continued efforts to provide LEP persons with meaningful access to USCIS services in a manner that is consistent with the USCIS mission, without creating an undue burden on the Agency.

USCIS regularly interacts with customers in languages other than English through interpreters and translated materials. USCIS has an established practice of producing educational and outreach materials in multiple languages, making these translated materials publicly available on [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov) and [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol), and hosting public engagement sessions in other languages. Applicants may bring an interpreter with them to field offices to assist in interviews and other interactions. USCIS is examining its policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter in interviews. Receipt notices for USCIS applications currently instruct applicants to bring their own interpreters. USCIS continues to assess customers' needs and develop resources and policies that reflect the needs of LEP individuals.

This Plan establishes goals and guidelines, consistent with [EO 13166](#) and the [DHS Language Access Plan](#) for USCIS personnel's interactions with LEP individuals. This Plan summarizes USCIS's current efforts to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals and provides an analysis of language access at USCIS. The USCIS Language Access Plan will be posted to USCIS's multilingual resources page ([www.USCIS.gov/multilingual](http://www.USCIS.gov/multilingual)) and on the USCIS intranet for USCIS personnel.

## USCIS Policy Statement

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*USCIS follows the DHS-wide language access policy in the DHS LAP, and will take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency to its services, resources, activities, and programs, consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the agency's fundamental mission. USCIS will incorporate language access considerations in its routine strategic and business planning, identify and translate documents into the most frequently encountered languages, provide interpretive support or guidance where appropriate, and educate its personnel about language access responsibilities and how to utilize available language access resources.*

## Component Interactions with the Public

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DHS OIG mainly interacts with the persons most likely served by LEP policies through ongoing operations of the OIG Complaint Hotline and our investigative activities. Hotline correspondence often takes the form of letters or web-based complaint submissions from detainees and/or telephone calls. Ongoing investigative operations can involve interviews of witnesses, complainants, and confidential informants. Potentially, DHS OIG personnel conducting an audit or inspection may interact with the public in need of LEP services.

## Definitions

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- i. *Interpretation* – The act of listening to communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language) while retaining the meaning of the source language.
- ii. *Language Assistance Services* – Oral and written language services provided to help LEP individuals communicate effectively with USCIS staff and to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to services, activities, or other programs administered by USCIS. Language assistance may be provided in the form of translated materials, competent interpreters or interpreter monitors provided by USCIS to monitor the interpretation services of the interpreter provided by the applicant or petitioner.
- iii. *LEP Individuals* – Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. LEP persons may be competent in certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but may still be considered LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing).
- iv. *Meaningful Access* – Reasonable language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication between an LEP individual and USCIS.
- v. *Bilingual staff or employee* – A USCIS staff person who is fluent in speaking, reading or writing English and one other language and is able to conduct the business of the workplace in either of those languages. This is to be distinguished from proficiency in more than one language. An individual who is proficient in a language may, for example, be able to greet an LEP individual in his or her language, but not conduct agency business in that language.
- vi. *Primary Language* – A person's primary language is the language in which the person communicates most effectively.

- vii. *Translation* – The conversion of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).

## **Current Efforts to Provide Language Access**

USCIS takes seriously its obligation to provide LEP persons with meaningful access to its services. USCIS continues to find new ways to meet the needs of LEP persons by providing public engagement sessions hosted in other languages, translating documents, and conducting self-assessments of language access efforts.

### **Language Access at USCIS Field Operations Interviews**

USCIS domestic field offices handle scheduled interviews on non-asylum related applications. In 2010, the Field Operations Directorate (FOD) conducted an informal survey that revealed that among the customers who required an interpreter, the languages most commonly spoken were Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, Haitian Creole, Korean, Punjabi, and Urdu.

Field offices supplement the information provided by the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) telephone line and [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov) by providing information and customer service through brochures and in-person information counter appointments scheduled through the InfoPass system, which is available in 12 languages. Field Operations uses the resources of the Customer Service and Public Engagement (CSPE) Directorate as well as the translated documents provided by CSPE and the Office of Communications (OCOMM) to provide resources and support services to LEP persons in USCIS field offices and when responding to InfoPass appointments.

Bilingual staff, contractors, and personnel from other DHS offices and federal partners provide support, as needed, at information counters at field offices in languages other than English. Applicants may bring an interpreter with them to field offices. USCIS is examining its policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter in interviews. Receipt notices for USCIS applications currently instruct applicants to bring their own interpreters.

### **Language Access at USCIS Asylum Division Interviews**

Individuals making affirmative asylum claims in the U.S. apply through USCIS. Regulations currently require affirmative asylum seekers to provide their own competent interpreters at scheduled interviews, at no expense to the Government. The interpreter must be at least 18 years of age and fluent in both the native language of the applicant, or other language in which the applicant is fluent, and English. The interpreter may be a family member, friend, or other person associated with the LEP person. Neither the applicant's attorney or representative, nor a representative of the applicant's country of nationality or last habitual residence, nor witness testifying on behalf of the applicant may serve as the interpreter. The Asylum Division also uses a telephonic interpretation service to monitor the affirmative asylum interviews in order to ensure the quality and integrity of the interpretation. The Asylum Division has blanket purchase agreements (BPAs) with two selected firms to provide monitoring services for asylum-related interviews. Apart from providing monitoring services for affirmative asylum interviews, the Asylum Division provides interpretation services to individuals in the credible fear, reasonable

fear and safe third country screening processes. Regulations or Asylum Division procedures mandate that the Government provide interpreters to individuals undergoing each of these processes when they receive an orientation, when they are interviewed for protection screening determinations, and at the time that the Government issues them their decisions. The Asylum Division evaluates legal requirements, USCIS policy, available funding, and customer service needs to establish BPAs for interpretation services to support the Asylum Division's mission of enabling trained asylum officers to conduct interviews as described above. The public is apprised of the availability of translated documents and other information and resources on [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov) and through regularly scheduled meetings with nongovernmental organization representatives.

### **Contact with LEP Persons Outside the Interview Environment**

**Bilingual Customer Service:** The NCSC provides nationwide telephone assistance to customers calling from within the United States about immigration benefits and services. All callers are immediately informed that all levels of call support are available in Spanish. USCIS conducts monthly surveys and quarterly focus groups to assess customer satisfaction and determine the most common primary languages of the USCIS customer base. USCIS has conducted multiple self-assessments that indicate that Spanish is overwhelmingly the most frequently-cited primary language of non-English callers to the NCSC.

**Bilingual Website:** USCIS maintains a Spanish-language website, [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol), with content relevant to the Spanish-speaking audience. Since its launch in 2009, this website has consistently been one of the top-ranked federal websites in customer satisfaction, as recorded through the American Customer Satisfaction Index's online survey. More than 7,000 users visit the site each day, and the number continues to grow.

**Multilingual Issue-based Outreach:** USCIS regularly hosts multilingual engagements to allow the LEP community to engage with USCIS in person, by teleconference and via live streaming on a variety of issues. USCIS hosts quarterly Spanish events (*Enlace*), biannual Chinese engagements (*Jiao liu*) and an annual Vietnamese event (*Giao tiep*). Topics included petitioning for an immediate relative, citizenship, and immigration fraud and prevention. These events are supplemented by extensive multilingual outreach conducted by USCIS field offices, and reach more than 10,000 participants a year.

**Multilingual Media Outreach:** USCIS regularly disseminates materials to foreign language media and disseminates translated material in Spanish, such as press releases and fact sheets, to Spanish-language media outlets. USCIS also uses social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, to disseminate translated messages in Spanish and Chinese.

**Multilingual Resources and Fact Sheets:** USCIS regularly translates informational brochures into other languages to facilitate LEP individuals' access to USCIS resources. USCIS launched the webpage [www.USCIS.gov/multilingual](http://www.USCIS.gov/multilingual), where all materials available in different languages are centralized for easier accessibility. Information on program-specific materials, like E-Verify, the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program, citizenship, and the unauthorized practice of immigration law, is available in different languages on the multilingual

resource page. In FY 2011, USCIS developed brochures in 14 languages on the unauthorized practice of immigration law, all of which are available on the USCIS website and four of which (English, Spanish, Chinese, and Haitian Creole) are available in hard copy.

InfoPass and Counter Appointments: Customers may use one of 12 languages to make appointments to visit their local USCIS office through an online program called InfoPass. InfoPass is available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Russian, Portuguese, French, Korean, Polish and Arabic. A survey of InfoPass use showed that during the third quarter of FY 2011, 92% of customers chose English, 5% chose Spanish, and the remaining ~2.5% chose one of the other offered languages when scheduling appointments.

Translation of Form Instructions: USCIS will produce Spanish translations of the instructions for four form types that are most commonly filed by individuals of limited English proficiency: Forms I-765, I-485, I-131, and N-400. To make this determination, USCIS assessed information on application receipts and the countries of origin of the applicants. USCIS will create and release the Spanish translation of these documents after the updated English versions of these forms and form instructions are released. USCIS will assess the utility of these translations and consider additional translations, as needed.

Translations for Outreach and Education Documents: Through CSPE, USCIS maintains a contract with a certified translation company to provide written translation services, as needed. This language contractor supports other program offices and directorates that request translated written materials, such as brochures, educational materials, and issue-awareness posters. CSPE continues to assess which additional documents should be translated based on feedback from surveys, internal assessments, and input from other USCIS program offices and directorates. When possible, CSPE identifies a bilingual USCIS employee to review the translation for quality control.

Additional materials: See the [Appendix](#) below for a detailed description of USCIS's public facing program offices and directorates and the specific goals and activities each has undertaken to address the needs of LEP persons.

## Development of USCIS Language Access Plan

To develop this LAP, USCIS created a Language Access working group comprised of representatives from each of the program offices and directorates that interact with the public. The working group collected information on USCIS's interactions with LEP persons and examined the results from the most recent informal survey of Field Operations offices' interactions with LEP customers. While drafting this plan, USCIS continued translating material for public distribution, conducting multilingual public engagement sessions, and examining how to expand the range of services available to LEP persons. In support of USCIS's goal of reaching LEP communities, USCIS conducted two focus groups to more closely examine the reach of our services and message within LEP communities.

USCIS used resources provided by DOJ and DHS and applied the four-factor analysis set forth in guidance issued with [EO 13166](#). The four-factor analysis is a flexible and fact-dependent

standard that is used to determine the appropriate language assistance services needed to ensure an LEP individual has meaningful access to that agency's programs and activities. The four-factor analysis considers the: (1) number or proportion of LEP persons eligible for services or likely to be encountered by the program; (2) frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program; (3) nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives; and, (4) resources available to the program and costs.

#### Factor 1: Number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered by USCIS

LEP persons interact with USCIS in a variety of ways. Individuals applying for asylum, adjustment of status, and naturalization are interviewed by a USCIS Immigration Services Officer in field offices or by an Asylum Officer in asylum offices. Individuals interact with USCIS by submitting paper applications and petitions. USCIS also serves LEP individuals by providing free, public information about the immigration and application process.

In 2010, USCIS conducted an informal, direct survey of language services in its Field Operations offices. Over a two-week period, USCIS assessed the number of people encountered or served who did not speak English well or proficiently. The survey revealed that of the combined total of 37,000 adjustment of status and naturalization interviews that occurred during this time period, 17% of customers brought an interpreter with them. The survey also revealed that of 41,000 scheduled InfoPass appointments, 22% of customers brought an interpreter with them. USCIS conducts quarterly assessments of the NCSC and, in part, its performance for LEP individuals. In the first quarter of FY 2012, 40% of surveyed persons identified English as their primary language, while 28.3% identified Spanish as their primary language. The remaining individuals spoke one of 17 other languages.

#### Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with USCIS

USCIS does not formally collect data on how frequently LEP customers come into contact with USCIS. However, LEP individuals regularly interact with USCIS in a variety of ways, including during in-person interviews, via the NCSC 1-800 telephone line, through InfoPass appointments, and at educational public engagement sessions. Based on the results of the 2010 field office study, the most frequent languages spoken by customers who required an interpreter were Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Russian; however, the proportional use of these languages was not captured in this survey.

#### Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service USCIS provides

USCIS is responsible for adjudicating immigration and citizenship benefits. USCIS also promotes awareness and understanding of citizenship, ensures the integrity of the nation's immigration system, and provides accurate and useful information to its customers. All of these functions are important to LEP individuals who are in contact with USCIS. The accuracy of the interpretation of a customer's responses to questions during a benefit interview is important because this information can determine whether or not the applicant will be approved or denied an immigration benefit.

#### Factor 4: The resources available to USCIS and the costs

USCIS is a fee-based agency. As such, USCIS must analyze whether providing interpreters for all interviews is cost-effective for the Agency and for the applicants.

For asylum interviews, USCIS uses a telephonic interpreter to monitor the interpreters that applicants bring to their asylum interviews. This system aims to balance the need to detect potential fraud and ensure accuracy in interpretation, and the regulatory prohibition on providing interpreters at a cost to the Government. As stated above, the Asylum Division has blanket purchase agreements with two interpreter services firms who provide telephonic monitoring of the third-party interpreter brought by the applicant. USCIS provides interpreter services in credible fear, reasonable fear, and safe third country screening interview procedures, as required by federal regulations. Interviews conducted by the Asylum Division are a fraction of the total number of interviews conducted by USCIS field offices. Based on this information from the Asylum Division, USCIS can approximate the cost of providing interpreters at other field office interviews.

Because USCIS is a fee-based agency, any extra costs incurred to provide interpreters for all interviews would be funded by increased application fees. To avoid increasing application fees to pay for USCIS-provided interpretation services at interviews, USCIS will continue to allow and encourage LEP individuals to bring qualified, impartial interpreters with them to provide language assistance during interactions with USCIS. USCIS is working to clarify its policy on who may serve as an interpreter in Field Operations interviews in order to incorporate customers' needs for meaningful access with USCIS's commitment to ensuring the integrity of the immigration system.

## Implementation and Evaluation of the Plan

To implement this Plan, USCIS will maintain the Language Access working group comprised of representatives from USCIS program offices and directorates. These representatives will serve as language access coordinators for their respective offices and directorates. Each language access coordinator will identify annual goals that will further the objectives of USCIS's Plan. The working group representatives will discuss language access issues and will be responsible for implementing the Plan in their program offices and directorates and reporting progress on the implementation.

The USCIS Deputy Director designated a representative from the Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate as the interim working group Chair. The Chair will convene working group meetings with the Deputy Director at least biannually to monitor and report progress on USCIS' goals. The selection of the Chair will reflect USCIS's current LEP priorities.

In addition to the biannual meetings, the working group will meet periodically to report and consult on LEP issues and complaints, consider USCIS-wide language access issues, and draft an annual language access report for the Deputy Director with goals, accomplishments, self-assessments, and when appropriate, results of surveys and research studies. Each program office and directorate that leads communications and engagements with the public will provide the

working group representatives with the information necessary to complete the language access report.

## Use

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This plan is intended only to improve the internal management of USCIS's language access program and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or employees, or any person.

# USCIS Goals

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## 1. Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate

CSPE is comprised of the Customer Service Division and the Public Engagement Division.

CSPE engages with customers and stakeholders to share information and solicit feedback on USCIS programs, policies, and operations, and to respond to customer questions and concerns. Through its outreach and customer service efforts, CSPE seeks to engage in dialogue that promotes participation and feedback from the stakeholder and customer communities to help inform USCIS operations, assess organizational performance and set USCIS priorities. This effort extends beyond the traditional stakeholder community to include outreach to individuals—including those with limited English proficiency—who lack access to USCIS information and immigration service providers and may be vulnerable to immigration scams and other predatory practices that threaten the immigrant community and the integrity of the immigration system.

CSPE oversees the NCSC, which provides nationwide telephone assistance to customers calling from within the United States about immigration benefits and services. All levels of call support are available in Spanish and English, and callers are informed of the bilingual services immediately. CSPE tracks the primary languages spoken by USCIS customers through quarterly surveys of NCSC callers. Survey results for the third quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2011 indicate that NCSC callers spoke the following languages (in order of usage): English, Spanish, “Other,” Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Tagalog, French, Hindi, German, and Portuguese. Approximately 40% of the callers identified English as their primary language and approximately 28% of the callers identified Spanish as their primary language. The remaining customers spoke one of more than 17 languages. In FY2015, USCIS will conduct a cost benefit analysis to determine the feasibility of adding telephonic interpretation services in languages other than English and Spanish to assist customers calling the NCSC.

Customers may use one of 12 languages to make appointments to visit their local USCIS office through an online program called InfoPass. InfoPass is available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Russian, Portuguese, French, Korean, Polish, and Arabic. A survey of InfoPass use showed that during the third quarter of FY 2011, 92% of customers chose English, 5% chose Spanish and the remaining ~2.5% chose one of the other offered languages when scheduling appointments.

USCIS regularly has Spanish-language engagement sessions, called *Enlaces*, on themes relevant to the Spanish-speaking community. At these events, customers may ask questions in Spanish by telephone, via the internet, or in person. USCIS has held 12 *Enlace* engagements since 2011, and plans to continue to host four *Enlace* sessions every year. In February 2012, USCIS hosted its first Chinese-language engagement session, called *Jiao Liu*, in Mandarin and Cantonese with the theme, “How to Become a U.S. Citizen.” Over 2,000 customers participated in this engagement in San Francisco and in field offices across the country. This was followed by two more *Jiao Liu* engagements in October 2012 and September 2013, as well as the first Vietnamese engagement, hosted at the Santa Ana Field Office in February 2013. In January 2014, USCIS hosted its first national Creole language engagement, followed by the first national Korean

language event in August. In FY15, USCIS anticipates hosting national engagements in Arabic and Tagalog, as well. USCIS currently leverages bilingual staff to deliver and support multilingual engagements and routinely co-hosts local outreach events with community partnerships with language capacity.

USCIS chooses topics, languages, and locations for its multilingual outreach events by using statistics from the USCIS Customer Service Survey, as well as public information, including U.S. Census and community survey data. CSPE tracks the number of in person, phone, and web participants in each multilingual engagement and routinely solicits feedback from USCIS community relations officers and external stakeholders, including: community and faith-based organizations, advocacy groups, English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship preparation teachers, and other government and community partners.

CSPE maintains a contract with a certified translator company to provide written translation services, as needed. This language contractor supports other program offices and directorates that request translated written materials, such as brochures, educational materials, and issue-awareness posters. CSPE continues to assess which additional documents should be translated based on feedback from surveys, internal assessments, and input from other USCIS program offices and directorates. When possible, CSPE identifies a USCIS employee to review the translation for quality control.

The Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIL) initiative is one of USCIS's priority initiatives. To educate the public about how to avoid potential immigration services scams, CSPE created educational brochures, posters, and public service announcement scripts in multiple languages. The brochures are available in 14 languages, and the posters and pre-recorded audio public service announcements for the UPIL initiative are available in English and Spanish. All translated material is available online at [www.USCIS.gov/avoidscams](http://www.USCIS.gov/avoidscams) and [www.USCIS.gov/eviteestafas](http://www.USCIS.gov/eviteestafas). In addition, brochures on the immigration options available to victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, and other crimes are available in Spanish, Russian, and Chinese. *How Do I* customer guides are available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

**UCSIS Goal 1: Continue to develop outreach materials and translate these materials into Spanish and other languages.**

- USCIS's *How Do I* informational brochures are available in English and Spanish. In FY 2012, CSPE translated 13 brochures into Chinese and published them on [www.USCIS.gov/multilingual](http://www.USCIS.gov/multilingual). A limited number have been printed and made available in selected field offices.
- In FY 2012, USCIS translated the *How Do I* brochure on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals into Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- In FY 2013, USCIS translated UPIL brochures into 14 languages and handouts on the immigrant fee into 9 languages.

**UCSIS Goal 2: Post the Spanish scripts used by the NCSC to [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov).**

- In FY 2012, CSPE translated all 15 NCSC script guides into Spanish and will post them to the Reading Room of [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov).

**UCSIS Goal 3: Increase understanding of customers' language assistance needs.**

- In FY 2012, CSPE partnered with the USCIS Office of Policy and Strategy (P&S) to conduct two focus groups to discuss language access issues. One focus group sought the opinions of Spanish-speaking LEP applicants and the second group sought the opinions of advocates who serve Spanish-speaking LEP applicants. These focus groups provided CSPE with additional insight into challenges faced by LEP communities when seeking information on USCIS programs and services. In FY 2013, CSPE hosted three additional focus group sessions on language access in Los Angeles, one for stakeholders, one for English speaking customers and one for Spanish speaking customers.
- CSPE will continue assessing language preference and other customer needs through monthly surveys of NCSC customers and quarterly in person focus groups.

**USCIS Goal 4: Conduct additional multilingual engagement sessions in Spanish and other languages.**

- In FY 2012, CSPE hosted four multilingual engagements in Spanish (November 2011 and March, June, and August 2012) and one in Chinese (February 2012).
- In FY 2013, USCIS hosted six Spanish language engagements (December 2012 and February, April, May, June, July, and August 2013); two engagements in Chinese (October 2012 and September 2013) and one in Vietnamese (February 2013).

**2. Enterprise Services Directorate, Verification Division**

USCIS's Verification Division manages the E-Verify and SAVE programs that are used to verify work authorization and immigration status. E-Verify is an internet-based system that allows businesses to determine the eligibility of their employees to work in the United States. E-Verify compares the information an employee provides on Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, against government records from the Social Security Administration and DHS.

The Verification Division has a robust outreach program that communicates with employers and workers through a variety of methods. USCIS has prepared many multilingual resources on E-Verify, SAVE, and Self Check, which are available at [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol) and [www.USCIS.gov/multilingual](http://www.USCIS.gov/multilingual). In August 2011, USCIS launched Self Check in [Spanish](#). Self Check is a service of E-Verify that allows individuals to check their employment eligibility in the United States.

The E-Verify webpage, [www.USCIS.gov/everify](http://www.USCIS.gov/everify), contains information for employees on rights and responsibilities, how to resolve a tentative non-confirmation, and how to report violations. This employee section includes a [Foreign Language Resources](#) section with translated material and videos in English and Spanish.

To promote understanding and participation in the E-Verify and Self Check programs in Spanish-speaking communities, USCIS ran newspaper and radio advertisements in Spanish-

language mediums in Atlanta, GA; Miami and Orlando, FL; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Houston, TX; Raleigh, NC; and, El Paso, TX. The Verification Division maintains a telephone help line where employees and employers may ask questions in English and Spanish. The Verification Division currently has a contract that provides interpretation services to support the E-Verify and Self Check programs. Although the contractor specializes in 22 languages, the most commonly used language is Spanish. The brochure, *You Should Know Your Rights and Responsibilities under E-Verify*, is available in nine languages: Chinese, Haitian Creole, English, French, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. The Form I-9 is available in both English and Spanish for employees and workers in Puerto Rico at <http://www.USCIS.gov/i-9> and the Spanish translation can be used in the U.S. (outside of Puerto Rico) but only as a means to guide employers and workers in completing the form in English. The educational video on *Employee Rights and Responsibilities* is available in the [Foreign Language Resources](#) section in English and Spanish. The videos are also available free to the public upon request and are disseminated at all outreach events. The Tentative Nonconfirmation Notice and Referral Letter is available in the following languages: Arabic, Carolinian, Chamorro, Chinese, French, German, Haitian Creole, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Marshallese, Palauan, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

SAVE is an intergovernmental initiative designed to aid benefit-granting agencies in determining an applicant's immigration status. Individuals can find translated materials on SAVE by visiting [www.USCIS.gov/save](http://www.USCIS.gov/save) and clicking on the section called, *For Benefit Applicants*. From that webpage, individuals can click on the [Multilingual Resources for Benefit Applicants](#) section to find translated materials. SAVE provides information to benefit applicants regarding applying for benefits and correcting their records in 17 languages: Arabic, Creole, German, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Spanish, Urdu, French, Hindi, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Tagalog, Gujarati, and Vietnamese.

**USCIS Goal 1: Provide information on the Tentative Nonconfirmation Notice and Referral Letter in nine additional languages.**

- In FY 2012, USCIS posted the Tentative Nonconfirmation Notice and Referral Letter in nine additional languages: Arabic, French, German, Italian, Chamorro, Carolinian, Marshallese, Palauan, and Portuguese.
- At the end of FY 2011, the Verification Division acquired an interpretation contract to expand interpretation services to more than 50 languages, including the top 20 most commonly spoken languages in the United States.

**USCIS Goal 2: Translate additional SAVE documents, such as the agency participation poster, the benefit applicant brochure, and postcard into 18 languages.**

- By the end of FY 2012, the Verification Division translated and made available SAVE documents such as the agency participation poster, benefit applicant brochure, and postcard into six languages. The Verification Division will translate additional SAVE documents into Spanish, including the SAVE program and user guides, and SAVE FAQs.

### **USCIS Goal 3: By FY 2012, USCIS will expand resources in Spanish for employers.**

- The Verification Division posted the Spanish E-Verify Overview PowerPoint deck on the English and Spanish versions of the E-Verify public website. In addition, the Verification Division expanded the employer helpdesk line to provide services in Spanish. The Verification Division posted Spanish versions of the M-274, The Handbook for Employers, and [I-9 Central](#).

### **3. Office of Citizenship**

The Office of Citizenship (OoC) is a public education, training, and outreach office responsible for developing educational products and resources to welcome immigrants. OoC uses the immigration process to provide immigrants with important information regarding citizenship and naturalization eligibility requirements.

OoC's goals include:

- Promoting English language learning and education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
- Preparing immigrants for naturalization and active civic participation;
- Leading initiatives to promote citizenship awareness and clarify the naturalization process for aspiring citizens; and
- Conducting training workshops, and enhancing professional development and classroom resources for educators and organizations preparing immigrants for citizenship.

OoC regularly works with ethnic media and collaborates with nongovernmental organizations that work with LEP persons. OoC works with certified translation services as needed, translating materials based on immigration flow, demonstrated community need, and DHS or USCIS guidance. Using these criteria, OoC provides materials in Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Urdu. OoC notifies the public about the availability of translated materials through USCIS community relations officers, USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program recipients, social media, and GovDelivery notifications to subscribers.

Speaking, reading, writing, and understanding English are requirements to become a naturalized citizen. Accordingly, OoC's citizenship preparation materials are primarily developed in English. However, OoC seeks to engage immigrants at all stages of the immigration process and provides a variety of translated materials:

- *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* is available in English and 13 additional languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu, and Vietnamese. All new permanent residents are informed on how to obtain the publication, which is available at: [www.USCIS.gov/newimmigrants](http://www.USCIS.gov/newimmigrants).
- *Naturalization Resources in Spanish*, an informational webpage, is available at [www.USCIS.gov/ciudadania](http://www.USCIS.gov/ciudadania).
- *100 Civics Questions and Answers* for the naturalization test are provided in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. These materials are available in the

[Information in Other Languages](#) section of [www.USCIS.gov/citizenship](http://www.USCIS.gov/citizenship), which offers translated materials organized by language, and at [www.USCIS.gov/multilingual](http://www.USCIS.gov/multilingual).

- Several educational videos and a short film on the USCIS naturalization interview and test are available with translated subtitles at [www.USCIS.gov/citizenship](http://www.USCIS.gov/citizenship).
- The [Citizenship Public Education and Awareness Initiative](#) was launched in May 2011 to highlight the availability of USCIS educational products and resources to permanent residents and immigrant-serving organizations. This initiative features print and radio advertisements in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. These materials are available at [www.USCIS.gov/citizenshipawareness](http://www.USCIS.gov/citizenshipawareness).

#### **USCIS Goal 1: Release additional multilingual information on citizenship.**

- In FY 2012, OoC produced citizenship eligibility and informational flyers in Chinese and Vietnamese, released the USCIS Civics Flash Cards in Spanish, and published the 100 civics questions and answers for the naturalization test in Arabic and Korean.

#### **USCIS Goal 2: Expand the number of training and professional development opportunities provided to adult educators, volunteers, and other immigrant-serving organizations.**

- In FY 2012, OoC conducted 32 training workshops for adult educators, volunteers, and teachers across the country. Approximately 1,960 teachers participated in these workshops. A list of upcoming events is available at [www.uscis.gov/teachertraining](http://www.uscis.gov/teachertraining).
- In early 2014, OoC plans to release an online training module outlining basic strategies for volunteers who teach English and citizenship in an adult education setting.

#### **4. Office of Communications**

The Office of Communications uses traditional and social media outlets to inform the public about USCIS operations and developments. OCOMM also manages a Spanish-language website, USCIS en Español, at [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol). This site is not an exact copy of the English site, but it contains content relevant to the Spanish-speaking audience. Since its launch in 2009, [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol) has consistently been one of the top-ranked federal websites in customer satisfaction, as recorded through the American Customer Satisfaction Index's online survey. More than 7,000 users visit the Spanish site each day, and that number continues to grow.

OCOMM disseminates materials, such as press releases and fact sheets, to foreign-language media outlets, primarily in Spanish. Most of these products are translated in-house by bilingual OCOMM staff, with quality control processes in place to ensure accuracy. OCOMM can also contract out for document translation. In addition to press materials, content managers for [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol) are continually adding new and expanded web content.

OCOMM also uses social media, such as Twitter and YouTube, to disseminate messages in Spanish and Chinese. OCOMM developed USCIS's multilingual resources webpage which will centralize links to all materials available in other languages on [www.USCIS.gov/multilingual](http://www.USCIS.gov/multilingual).

OCOMM currently offers most web content available on the English site in Spanish, translates most blog posts into the dedicated “Compás” Spanish-language section, has a dedicated Spanish-language Twitter feed, is beginning to tweet in Korean on the English-language twitter feed, and also occasionally posts to Facebook in Spanish. OCOMM also has a handful of YouTube videos in Spanish. In addition, OCOMM has outreach videos in both Mandarin Chinese (Jiao Liu) and Vietnamese (Giao Tiep).

Due to resource constraints OCOMM is currently unable to expand to other languages. OCOMM will look into partnering with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other government entities to expand Asian language reach.

**USCIS Goal 1: Maintain USCIS’s web presence in Spanish at [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol).**

- In FY 2012, OCOMM increased the translated content of the website, began a Spanish-language Twitter feed and blog, and continued to maintain the Spanish website, [www.USCIS.gov/espanol](http://www.USCIS.gov/espanol).

**USCIS Goal 2: Continue media outreach efforts in Spanish and other languages.**

- In FY 2012, the OCOMM media team completed an assessment of USCIS outreach to non-English speaking media outlets at both the headquarters and regional/local levels. OCOMM expanded existing relationships and built new relationships with non-English speaking reporters with the goal of reaching more audiences across the United States.

**USCIS Goal 3: Consolidate existing multilingual resources available on [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov) into an easily accessed location.**

- In FY 2012, OCOMM launched [www.USCIS.gov/multilingual](http://www.USCIS.gov/multilingual), which lists the various multilingual resources available to USCIS customers, including videos, fliers, and *How Do I* guides.

## **5. Field Operations Directorate**

USCIS Field Operations handle scheduled interviews on non-asylum related applications. Field Operations offices interact with LEP persons at interviews and at the front intake area. Field Operations offices provide information and customer services to supplement the information available through the NCSC telephone line and [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov).

FOD uses translated documents and other resources provided by CSPE and OCOMM to support services to LEP persons during interviews and when responding to InfoPass appointments. Bilingual staff, contractors, and personnel from other DHS offices and federal partners provide support, as needed, at information counters at field offices in languages other than English. Applicants may bring an interpreter with them to Field Operations offices. Receipt notices for USCIS applications adjudicated by FOD currently instruct applicants to bring their own interpreters for interviews.

**USCIS Goal 1: Analyze current practices and learn from the best practices of other program offices and directorates that have experienced success in providing meaningful access to LEP customers.**

- FOD is partnering with the Office of Policy and Strategy to review an informal field survey conducted in 2010. The survey provides a snapshot of the Field Operations offices' self-assessments of available language assistance services and customer needs. The Office of Policy and Strategy will review data collected from the NCSC telephone line and publicly available data to make a comprehensive assessment of USCIS language services.

**USCIS Goal 2: USCIS will draft policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter for applications and petitions adjudicated by FOD.**

- To achieve greater consistency, Policy and Strategy is working with FOD to draft two items: (1) a policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter; and (2) an oath and confidentiality notice to be used during domestic interviews when an interpreter is used.

**6. Refugee, Asylum, and International Operation**

The Refugee, Asylum, and International Operation is comprised of three divisions: Refugee Affairs Division, International Operations Division, and Asylum Division.

Refugee Affairs Division

The Refugee Affairs Division is responsible for providing the humanitarian benefit of refugee resettlement to applicants in need of protection while conducting necessary national security screening. It's interactions with applicants occur outside the United States with individuals who, for the most part, do not speak English. The more commonly spoken languages include Arabic, Karen Dialects, Chin Dialects, Nepali, Somali, and Spanish.

Applicants are able to communicate with staff through interpreters provided by the Resettlement Support Centers (formerly known as Overseas Processing Entities). This is part of a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State. USCIS employs bilingual Spanish-speaking refugee officers to conduct protection screening interviews for migrants at sea and to conduct refugee interviews in Latin America and the Caribbean. Document translations are submitted by the applicant or by interpreters provided by Resettlement Support Centers under a cooperative agreement with the Department of State.

International Operations

International Operations operates 28 international field offices around the world. Overseas adjudication officers are responsible for adjudicating a variety of petitions and applications filed overseas, providing information services, issuing travel documents, and engaging in fraud detection and deterrence strategies, including field verifications.

Approximately 50% of the overseas USCIS customer base is LEP. Approximately 40% of the entire staff are foreign nationals who speak at least two languages fluently. These employees are fluent in both English and their native language, and provide an invaluable service in providing translation and interpreter services. Some applicants choose to bring interpreters with them to help interpret during interviews, particularly if they speak a language not spoken by USCIS staff (for example, Nepali in India). The most common languages spoken by these international customers are Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Fuzhou Chinese, Haitian Creole, and German.

## Asylum Division

The Asylum Division interacts with LEP applicants when they arrive in the domestic Asylum field offices for affirmative asylum interviews and interviews related to the suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA § 203). The Asylum Division also interacts with LEP applicants when conducting credible fear and reasonable fear interviews, which generally take place outside of the asylum field offices.

By regulation, asylum applicants are required to provide their own interpreters at their scheduled affirmative asylum interviews. The Asylum Division staff uses a telephonic interpretation service to monitor the interpretation at all affirmative asylum interviews with an interpreter. The Asylum Division has blanket purchase agreements with two interpreter services firms to provide interpreter monitoring services for asylum-related screenings. The Asylum Program provides these interpretation services to individuals in the credible fear, reasonable fear and safe third country screening processes. USCIS provides interpreters by telephone in the expedited removal process when a credible fear interview is conducted and in reasonable fear interviews.

Affirmative asylum applicants must bring to their asylum interviews an interpreter who is at least 18 years of age, and fluent in both the native language of the applicant or other language in which the applicant is fluent, and English. The interpreter may be a family member, friend or other person associated with the LEP person. The applicant's attorney or representative, a representative of the applicant's country of nationality or last habitual residence, or a witness testifying on behalf of the applicant may not serve as the interpreter.

The Asylum Division evaluates legal requirements, USCIS policy, available funding, and customer service needs to establish BPAs for interpretation services to support the Asylum Division's mission of enabling trained asylum officers to conduct interviews. The public is advised of the availability of translated documents and other information and resources through [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov), and through regularly-scheduled meetings with nongovernmental organization representatives.

At the Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Division Combined Training course, asylum officers receive training on working with LEP applicants, interpreters, telephonic interpreter monitors, and on culturally sensitive communication. New asylum officers receive approximately four hours of training on how to conduct interviews and communicate effectively through the use of an interpreter. This training module, called "Working with an Interpreter," includes written materials and several hands-on practical exercises that help officers identify ways to facilitate proper interpretation, identify signs of misinterpretation and ways to take corrective action, and instruct the interpreter on his or her role and responsibilities during an interview.

An applicant's failure to provide a competent interpreter without good cause may result in ineligibility for employment authorization. All applicants are given a second opportunity to provide a competent interpreter; however, an interview can only be rescheduled once. USCIS provides the applicant with a written notice explaining the consequences of failing to bring a competent interpreter.

During the asylum interview, the officer places the applicant, the interpreter, and the interpreter monitor under oath. The officer instructs the interpreter to interpret the applicant's words verbatim, without condensing, elaborating, or engaging in conversation with the applicant.

**USCIS Goal 1: Pilot customer satisfaction surveys in several languages.**

- In FY 2012, the Asylum Division conducted and International Operations prepared to pilot customer satisfaction surveys and translate the survey, depending on customer need and available resources. The Asylum Division translated the customer satisfaction survey into its top 11 languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, French, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Nepali, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Tigrinya. International Operations intends to translate the survey into the top 16 languages.

**USCIS Goal 2: Publish additional translated information sheets.**

- The Asylum Division aims to translate information sheets associated with updated approval and referral notices once those notices are have been finalized. However, these changes have not yet been scheduled for release and it is not known when the notices and translated information sheets can be deployed.

The Asylum Division will continue to translate and post select forms and informational documents on [www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov) and [www.USCIS.gov/asylum](http://www.USCIS.gov/asylum).

- The Asylum Division has translated the following documents for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and USCIS Asylum Officers to distribute during relevant credible fear and reasonable fear orientation procedures. The following information sheets on the following topics are available for LEP applicants:
  - The credible fear interview process (Form M-444) are available in Albanian, Arabic, French, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Serbo-Croatian Cyrillic, Serbo-Croatian Latin, Somali, and Spanish;
  - Parole eligibility and the parole process for credible fear applicants are available in Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, French, Somali, Spanish, and Tigrinya; and
  - The reasonable fear interview process (Form M-488) is available in Spanish.
- For affirmative asylum cases, the Asylum Division has translated Pick-Up Notices and Decision Letters in Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Nepalese, Russian, and Spanish.
- Information regarding benefits adjudicated by the Asylum Division is included on the USCIS website in both English and Spanish at [www.USCIS.gov/asylum](http://www.USCIS.gov/asylum). Signs and posters are provided in public access locations in languages other than English based on the location and local population.
- An “Information Guide for Prospective Asylum Applicants” is available in English, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Haitian Creole, French, Indonesian, Nepali, Russian, and Spanish in the [Resources](#) section of the asylum webpage at [www.USCIS.gov/asylum](http://www.USCIS.gov/asylum).

## Acronyms

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BPA	Blanket Purchase Agreement
CSPE	Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FOD	Field Operations Directorate
FY	Fiscal Year
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
NCSC	National Customer Service Center
OoC	Office of Citizenship
OCOMM	Office of Communications
SAVE	Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements
UPIL	Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services