



TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

SUPPLEMENTARY UPDATE

Covering Fiscal Years 2020-2022

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

To Provide Language Services to Limited English Proficient Persons.



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I. Introduction and Agency Background

The Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement (CRL/OTE) office developed this update to TSA's 2015 Language Access Plan. This plan is published on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) [Language Access](#) resources webpage. This update details TSA's ongoing language access programs and initiatives in accordance with Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency* (EO 13166). The goal of this update and future plans is to ensure TSA communicates effectively with Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons.

TSA, an agency under DHS, was created as part of the Aviation and Transportation Security Act in 2001. TSA's mission is to protect the nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement of people and commerce. TSA envisions itself to be an agile security agency, embodied by a professional workforce, that engages its partners and the American people to outmatch a dynamic threat.

II. Policy Statement

It is the policy of DHS, and in turn TSA, 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. TSA recognizes the obligation to comply with EO 13166.

III. Executive Summary

TSA is committed to the core values of integrity, respect, and commitment. With more than 60,000 employees, TSA delivers public-facing security, custody, and customer service programs and activities worldwide. More than 43,000 TSA Officers screen more than 2 million passengers each day at nearly 440 federalized airports. An average of 145,000 individuals seek the services of over 400 TSA Pre✓[®] application centers each month. In addition, the TSA Contact Center (TCC) responds to more than one million inquiries from the public each year.

This language access update was conducted pursuant to an August 15, 2018, memorandum from the DHS Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (DHS Memorandum), directing all Components to update their language access plans to promote compliance with EO 13166. To collect data and develop this update, CRL/OTE developed a working group of representatives from offices with public-facing services, activities or programs, focusing on offices that have the most frequent interactions with the public. We will discuss below the data collection process, policies, and processes currently in place to serve LEP individuals. As for the type of interactions, TSA's airport screening programs are in-person interactions, however, many of the customer service type of activities (*e.g.*, TSA Contact Center, TSA Pre✓[®] enrollment activities, claims, and [tsa.gov](#)) tend to occur via telephone, the Internet, or electronic correspondence. We will present TSA's Language access programs in the following sections.

IV. Language Access Plan Evaluation and Update

a. Component Language Access Working Group

As background, TSA has engaged in multiple restructuring efforts since 2015 and is currently in the process of another one. As a result of this ongoing restructuring effort, CRL/OTE focused on specific offices that have the most frequent interactions with the public for this update. This working group included representatives from the following programs and offices:

- Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement
- Security Operations
- Chief Counsel
- Global Strategies
- Strategic Communications and Public Affairs
- Federal Air Marshal Service
- Transportation Worker Identification Credential Program and TSA Pre✓[®]

CRL/OTE requested, and received, points-of-contact (POC) from each office who would be responsible for language access and assist it with data collection. The need for data collection and the importance of language access for LEP persons was explained. The DHS Memorandum was included in this request along with a copy of the 2015 TSA Language Access Plan to provide context for the request. This request was followed by multiple phone conversations and follow-up emails and in-person conversations to help the respective POCs further understand the background and context of the data request and its impact on how the agency serves the public. The language access priorities are based on the information provided by and discussed with the LAWG. Currently, the LAWG meets on an ad hoc basis. The members of the LAWG are not language experts, but rather execute language services in their respective offices.

During this period of establishing contact with the programs and offices listed above, CRL/OTE also developed a survey tool to collect data. This survey on language access was sent to these offices and programs (Appendix A). The questions in the survey were based on the language access assessment and planning tool developed by the Department of Justice. The purpose of the survey was to collect data that would provide a comprehensive view of how TSA conducts its language access programs and how LEP persons interact with TSA. The survey also helped identify gaps in services. The data collected were qualitative and quantitative responses to the survey included in Appendix A and through follow-up emails and phone calls with individual to clarify and gather additional information. The survey was sent to the offices listed above in IV. a., in September of 2018. The responses are presented in each section detailing the offices' response. This allows TSA to develop future plans to ensure meaningful access through better communication with and service to LEP persons.

b. Current Language Access Activities

Currently, TSA leverages multiple avenues to provide language access to LEP individuals, as detailed in the following sections. Each program office has developed a system that works for

the type of services and programs they provide. The following sections provide further details about processes in place to communicate effectively with LEP persons.

i. Civil Rights & Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement

The TSA Contact Center (TCC), managed by CRL/OTE, is the main contact point for public inquiries. The communications to TCC mainly include airport screening-related questions and, among other things, inquiries and applications for traveler redress, Freedom of Information Act requests, and information about TSA Pre✓®. The TCC has a general phone number (866-289-9673, Federal Relay 711), which features an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that provides recorded information on frequently asked questions in eleven languages. The top languages accessed through IVR are: Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, French and Vietnamese. In addition to IVR, TCC provides live Spanish language interpretation through a third party provider. The TCC is working to include provision of translation and interpretation in other languages besides Spanish. Having this centralized resource for language access will further enhance TSA communications with LEP members of the public.

CRL/OTE also engages, through its Multicultural Branch, with the Security Operations and Training and Development offices to provide training for the workforce on effective communication with LEP persons. Importantly, CRL/OTE and Training and Development are finalizing new *Public-Facing Interactions* training, which will be mandatory for all TSA employees at headquarters and in the field. This training covers EO 13166 and how to comply with its requirements. Language access is one of the scenarios included in the training. The training is expected to be launched by the first quarter of FY 2020.

ii. Security Operations

Security Operations creates the policies, procedures, and guidance for screening checkpoints operations at the nearly 440 airports across the nation. They continue to promote TSA's Language Access Program to and through the officers at security screening checkpoints nationwide. The two primary methods of providing language access to the traveling public through the Security Operations-implemented Language Access Program are the Language Access Binder and the self-certified Language Access Program volunteers.

At some airports there are screening-related signs posted in languages other than English. While this is not a nationwide practice, some airports, for example, TSA's field office in Los Angeles International Airport has signage in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean specific to TSA's K-9 program at the international terminal. Similarly, San Francisco International Airport Authority has signage in the international terminal in Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

The Language Access Binder includes written universal graphics and translations of security screening advisements, the Prohibited Items List, and key infographics. The translated material is housed in a specifically-marked binder. Each airport received a complete copy, and can have additional copies available using the original material or versions available on TSA's intranet site. Airports are encouraged to create additional, customized binders for their local operations that reflect languages most commonly encountered in each airport location. Security Operations provides written translations of screening advisements, captioned infographics, the Prohibited Items List, and related information in the 25 most often needed non-English languages. In

alphabetical order, they are: Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese Traditional (Mandarin), Chinese Simplified (Cantonese), Farsi, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Polish, Portuguese (European), Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese. These languages were determined based on a list from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 2014. In addition, the screening advisements are also available in Braille and graphics only format to serve as a non-textual aid.

The Language Access Program volunteers are TSOs at airport security screening checkpoints who wear a specific language access nameplate on a voluntary basis identifying themselves as proficient in a language(s) other than English, including American Sign Language. These volunteer officers have identified themselves to their leadership and can volunteer to, or be asked to, provide language assistance when on duty and as the flexibility of checkpoint requirements allows. The proficiency of the volunteer officers is self-certified and has not been tested by TSA. Officers may use casual conversation to convey basic screening processes to facilitate the traveler's screening experience.

Security Operations established a network of 125 field personnel from each TSA hub airport and many of the spoke airports around the country. It is also known as the local language access program network. This network works with the Security Operations POCs at headquarters on Language Access Program initiatives to provide support for local implementation of the program. Through this network, information on relevant resources is disseminated on a regular basis. For example, updated or additional translations are effectively disseminated and acquisition of additional language nameplates is facilitated. Since the inception of this program, Security Operations has ordered over 5,000 Language Access Program volunteer officer nameplates.

The local language access program network also maintains local resources and related records, distributes training materials as needed, and supports program-related communications and training with volunteer officers. TSA Operations Directive (OD) 400-50-1-27 - Language Access Program (LAP), signed 3/13/14, provides direction on using the LAP resources. The OD is supported with training materials produced by the TSA Training and Development office, which are updated as needed and available on the LAP SharePoint site. Security Operations houses all the language access program documents and resources on an internal intranet site (LAP iShare) that is accessible to all field staff.

Notably, as of August 2018, TSA's Passenger Support Specialist (PSS) Program is a mandatory part of the Transportation Security Officer (TSO) career progression. There are three parts to the PSS training - A, B, and C. Part A is a general overview of the PSS program, Part B specifically trains TSOs to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Part C focuses on ensuring airport security screening policies, procedures and TSO interactions at the security screening checkpoints protect the civil rights and civil liberties of the traveling public. The Part C training covers language access requirements in security screening activities to promote compliance with EO 13166. CRL/OTE delivers the training for Parts B and C.

iii. Chief Counsel

Chief Counsel responds to personal injury and property damage claims from the public.

Typically, Chief Counsel staff communicates with members of the public in English. The non-English languages that this program encounters are Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic. At this time, this office does not have a data collection process to determine how often it encounters non-English languages.

iv. Global Strategies

Global Strategies engages with nations across the world to ensure implementation of effective transportation security worldwide in recognition of an evolving risk environment, while ensuring compliance with international and TSA standards. They utilize Locally Employed Staff positions in overseas locations at U.S. Embassies and Consulates to provide translations for TSA employees and stakeholders from non-English speaking countries or to LEP persons. Global Strategies also utilizes translation services from the National Virtual Translation Center contract for Government-to-Government official documents and correspondences.

v. Strategic Communications and Public Affairs

Strategic Communications and Public Affairs is currently working on a plan to integrate language access into its programs and activities. The REAL ID requirements will be published in languages other than English. In addition, they are working with the Resource Management Office (a recent organizational change to centralize all business management resources) to explore options to develop a centralized language access resource for TSA.

vi. Federal Air Marshal Service

The Federal Air Marshal Service provides multiple resources in the international mission packets. This includes information on English speaking representatives from the other country available to assist when interacting with and carrying out necessary duties overseas; information on known speakers on the team available to assist with communications; and access to government issued cell phones in which translation resources are available, if needed. In addition, Federal Air Marshals engage with airline personnel to receive in-flight interpretations if needed.

vii. Transportation Worker Identification Credential Program and TSA Pre✓®

While these are two different programs, they both use the same contractor, MorphoTrust, to manage their programs and engage directly with the public. The most frequently encountered non-English language is Spanish. While the programs do not track metrics in terms of service requests, they are able to identify program enrollments where Spanish was selected by the customer as the preferred language. The enrollment system has Spanish as a language option for the enrollment process. Also, enrolling applicants are allowed to bring an interpreter or someone who is proficient in the language of the applicant to assist during the enrollment process and at enrollment appointments. Enrollees can also receive assistance through a call center at 855-347-8371 (Federal Relay 711), where customer service representatives can answer questions and are trained on the software to use the Spanish option for enrolling applicants. In addition, the call center provides Spanish speaking customer service representatives.

c. Language access priorities for Fiscal Year 2020 and FY 2022

Based on the information collected for this update, TSA's priorities for the coming two years include:

- Conducting a survey by Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 of select airports to further assess the extent to which TSOs are using the Language Access Binders, the usefulness of the binders, whether additional languages are necessary, and whether personnel have a need for other language resources;
- Supporting the TSA Contact Center's effort to update the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) by FY 2021, including interpretation in languages other than Spanish;
- Exploring options to consolidate resources used for language access to make it easier for users across the agency to access them in a timely manner, by FY 2021;
- Continually exploring options to monitor, evaluate and update the plan while collecting reliable data on language access needs expressed by the public in their encounters with TSA;
- Ensuring Title VI assurances language is incorporated into all contractual documents by FY 2021;
- Providing notice to members of the public about availability of language services; and providing this notice in languages other than English;
- Exploring the use of technology to support TSA's language access efforts;
- Coordinate translation of REAL ID signage and factsheet in the top five frequently requested languages based on the IVR requests as above, by end of FY 2021.

Appendix A: TSA Language Access Questionnaire

Office Name:
POC:
Date:
MB Team Member:

1.	What are the non-English languages that your office encounters on a regular basis?
2.	How do you track use of non-English language service requests?
3.	What resources do you use to provide language assistance services?
4.	How do you let members of the public know about language assistance services?
5.	What type of training do you receive in terms of language assistance services?
6.	What procedures do you have in place for quality control?
7.	How do you monitor and measure performance?
8.	What kind of outreach do you conduct with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) communities?

Appendix B: Multilingual IVR Access – Fiscal Year 2018

Language	Number of times IVR was accessed
Arabic	1026
French	533
German	187
Japanese	238
Korean	252
Mandarin	2320
Portuguese	295
Punjabi	104
Russian	205
Spanish	20245
Vietnamese	629
Total	26034