

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice POLICY/PROCEDURAL – LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN	Number	062
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	Effective	April 30, 2026
Subject Language Access Plan		

I. POLICY

A. Authority

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

B. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Department of Juvenile Justice that it will take reasonable steps to provide limited English proficient (LEP) individuals with meaningful access to all programs, activities, or services conducted by the Department. The Department will provide individuals with limited English proficiency meaningful access to Department information, rules, policies; and ensure transparency.

C. Goals

DJJ will:

- i. Perform a needs and capacity assessment.**
- ii. Arrange for oral language assistance, as appropriate.**
- iii. Translate DJJ Vital Documents in languages other than English.**
- iv. Update LAP policies and procedures.**
- v. Monitor access to language assistance.**
- vi. Provide staff training on the language service provision.**

D. Self-Assessment – FY2024

DJJ is a non-public facing agency. All facilities are closed to the public and monitored by security staff.

DJJ encountered 47 interactions with LEP individuals over the last fiscal year. All interactions were phone call (Spanish) translations handled by certified, bilingual staff. DJJ encountered 0 Public facing interactions. DJJ had no recorded use of the State’s Telephonic Interpreter Service.

DJJ received no complaints from LEP individuals for FY2025, complaint form is available on DJJ’s Website.

DJJ’s Website translates into 7 different languages.

DJJ continues to Identify and translate vital documents and is currently translating documents for

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the Aftercare Division.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to make reasonable efforts to eliminate or reduce LEP as a barrier to accessing Department of Juvenile Justice programs, activities, or services. This bulletin establishes a strategy for ensuring meaningful access by individuals with LEP to Department administered programs, activities, and points of contact.

B. Applicability

This bulletin is applicable to all youth center and program sites within the Department.

C. Facility Review

A facility review of this bulletin shall be conducted at least annually.

D. Designees

Individuals specified in this bulletin may delegate stated responsibilities to another person or persons unless otherwise stated.

E. Definition

Direct “In-Language” Communication – Monolingual communication in a language other than English between a multilingual staff and an LEP person (e.g., Korean to Korean).

Effective Communication – Communication sufficient to provide the LEP individual with substantially the same level of access to services received by individuals who are not LEP. For example, staff must take reasonable steps to ensure communication with an LEP individual is as effective as communications with others when providing similar programs and services.

Interpretation – The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language) while retaining the same meaning.

Language Assistance Services – Oral and written language services needed to assist LEP individuals to communicate effectively with staff, and to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to, and an equal opportunity to participate fully in, the services, activities, or other programs administered by the Department.

Limited English Proficient (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 individuals may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing).

Meaningful Access – Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the LEP individual.

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Multilingual staff or employee – A staff person or employee who has demonstrated proficiency in English and reading, writing, speaking, or understanding at least one other language as authorized by his or her component.

Primary Language – An individual’s primary language is the language in which an individual most effectively communicates.

Program or Activity – The term “program or activity” and the term “program” mean all of the operations of the Department.

Qualified Translator or Interpreter – An in-house or contracted translator or interpreter who has demonstrated his or her competence to interpret or translate through court certification or is authorized to do so by contract with the Department or by approval of his or her component.

Sight Translation – Oral rendering of written text into spoken language by an interpreter without change in meaning based on a visual review of the original text or document.

Translation – The replacement of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).

Vital Document – Paper or electronic written material that contains information that is critical for accessing a component’s program or activities or is required by law.

F. General Provisions

1. Department staff should take reasonable steps to provide language assistance services to LEP individuals when they encounter or have reason to believe that they may encounter LEP individuals. Department staff should take reasonable steps to provide language assistance services upon request by an LEP person who wishes to access Department programs, services, or activities or to whom Department staff wishes to communicate.

2. The **LAC** shall assess the language assistance needs to implement language assistance services that increase access to programs, activities, and services. This assessment may include identifying the non-English languages spoken by the population likely to be accessing the agency’s services, and whether barriers – including literacy barriers – exist that hinder effective oral and written communication with individuals with LEP.

The following demographic analysis done by the University of Illinois Chicago in Partnership with ONA is used by DJJ to properly identify underserved communities with LEP.

- In Illinois, 1.0 million residents speak English less than "very well," and speak a language other than English at home. Both federal and state policies recognize that these individuals have a right to equitable access to government services, which includes information and communication in a language they understand.

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- Eleven languages have more than 10,000 limited-English speakers in Illinois, including:

Largest Language Groups and Largest Limited-English Language Groups in Illinois: 2018-2022			
Largest Language Groups		Largest Limited-English Language Groups	
	# of Speakers		# of Speakers
Spanish	1,638,222	Spanish	616,760
Polish	169,308	Polish	73,843
Chinese*	106,399	Chinese*	51,494
Filipino, Tagalog	86,051	Filipino, Tagalog	23,198
Arabic	67,017	Arabic	20,342
Urdu	56,122	Korean	20,165
Gujarati	50,196	Gujarati	18,762
Hindi	47,274	Russian	17,649
Russian	44,211	Vietnamese	13,966
Korean	39,624	Urdu	13,893
French	36,728	Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Little Russian	11,817

- The predominant language other than English in many Illinois counties may be Spanish, but closer examination of the most common non-English languages shows that immigrants and migrants come to Illinois from many places. For example, in Champaign County, the top language spoken in limited English households is Mandarin, and in Macon County, it is Tagalog. Additionally, in Cass and Knox counties, the second language is French/Haitian/Cajun. In Madison County, it's Tagalog. In Cook, DuPage, and Kane counties, the second language category is Slavic. In Boone County, "other Asian Pacific Islander" is second to Spanish.
 - A statewide map of persons who don't speak English very well shows that the largest numbers of such persons are in the metro Chicago area. Nevertheless, significant numbers of up to 9 thousand are in townships across the state and are often located near metro areas such as St. Louis, Springfield, Champaign, and Rock Island. There are also notable populations in relatively rural townships in counties such as Cass, Douglas, or Union.
 - After years of decline, the number of Illinois residents who don't speak English very well is on the rise. In examining ten years, from 2014 to 2023, this population fell by 79,000 people between 2014 and 2019. But since a low of 1.0 million in 2019, the most recent data, for the year 2023, shows about 1,082,000 people, for a gain of some 82,000.
3. Identify gaps where language assistance services are inadequate to meet a need and identify ways to enhance language assistance services.

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4. The **LAC** shall take reasonable steps to ensure that all staff or contractors who serve as translators, interpreters, or who communicate “in-language” with LEP individuals are competent to do so. Considerations of competency may include:
 - a. Demonstrated proficiency in and ability to communicate information accurately in both English and the other language.
 - b. Identifying and employing the appropriate mode of interpreting (e.g., consecutive, simultaneous, or sight translation), translating, or communicating fluently in the target language.
 - c. Knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts particular to the component’s program or activity and of any particularized vocabulary used by the LEP individual.
 - d. Understanding and following confidentiality, impartiality, and ethical rules to the same extent as Department staff; and
 - e. Understanding and adhering to their role as interpreters, translators, or multilingual staff.

5. The Chief Administrative Officer shall also take reasonable steps to ensure that all staff or contractors who serve as translators are briefed by component staff on the context and intended audience for the translated text.

6. Absent exigent circumstances, the Department should avoid using family members (including children), neighbors, friends, acquaintances, and bystanders to provide language assistance services.

G. Requirements

1. Each youth center and program site shall provide oral language assistance, in both face-to-face and telephone encounters. Each youth center and program site Chief Administrative Officer shall appoint a point of contact for individuals with LEP.
 - a. The Department will proactively inform individuals with LEP that language assistance services are available at no cost. Notification methods may include multilingual posters, signs, and brochures, including electronic forms such as agency websites.
 - b. Language assistance may be provided through a variety of means, including qualified bilingual and multilingual staff, contract interpreters (including telephonic interpretation), interpreters from community organizations or volunteer programs.
 - c. The youth center point of contact shall coordinate oral language assistance services at each youth center and program site so that agency staff can refer people to a designated individual.
 - d. If a youth center does not have a bilingual or multilingual staff member at the time an LEP individual requests services, the point of contact shall contact the

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other youth centers or program sites to find a bilingual or multilingual staff who can provide language assistance.

2. Maintain a list of qualified bilingual and multi-lingual staff capable of providing competent interpreter services in languages other than English.
3. Establish a list of all contacts and other resources that provide direct, telephonic, or video language assistance to individuals with LEP seeking information or access to agency programs and activities.
4. The Department shall, translate, and make documents accessible in various formats, including print and electronic media and in languages other than English.
5. Translation of Department Texts

a. **Vital Documents**

- (1) The Department will continue to review, identify, and translate vital documents, to ensure it is taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to its programs and activities. Documents which currently have been identified/considered for translation (Spanish) include:
 - i. Consents for medical treatment
 - ii. Aftercare release notifications and violation reports
 - iv. Youth Grievances
 - v. Youth visitation
 - vi. consent for youth interviews
 - vii. host site agreements
- (2) The appropriate Deputy Director shall exercise his or her discretion in creating a process for identifying and prioritizing documents or texts to translate. The appropriate Deputy Director should also ensure that all translations are completed by qualified translators.
- (3) If an LEP individual requests a document that is not translated, the individual shall be directed to contact the Language Access Coordinator.
- (4) DJJ staff can access, or request, translated vital documents from their designated supervisor and or the LAC.

b. **Translating the Department's Web Content**

- (1) The Department shall take reasonable steps to translate public website content and electronic documents that contain vital information about agency programs, services, and activities. The LAC shall identify the

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appropriate languages for translation. Translations of web content may include web pages that contain important information intended for the general public, such as information about the Department's mission, information about how to file a complaint, information about how to contact the Department, and information designed to educate individuals.

- (2) If an LEP individual requests information from the website that is not translated, the individual shall be directed to contact the Language Access Coordinator.

- 6. Department staff shall, at the point of first contact with an LEP individual, make reasonable efforts to conduct or arrange for an initial assessment of the need for language assistance services, and make reasonable efforts to obtain services if they are needed to effectively communicate with the individual. Department staff can determine whether a person needs language assistance in several ways:
 - a. Self-identification by the non-English speaker, LEP individual or companion.
 - b. Inquiring as to the primary language of the individual if they have self-identified as needing language assistance services.
 - c. Asking a multilingual staff or qualified interpreter to verify an individual's primary language; or
 - d. Using an "I Speak" language identification card or poster.

H. DJJ – 27 Certified Spanish, 2 – Spanish Speaking Positions.

- a. All onboarding, Spanish speaking staff are welcome to take the Spanish Test. Passing the test enrolls staff as a DJJ Certified Spanish Translator.

Employees who are bilingual, passed the Spanish test, or who have the ability to use sign language, but whose job descriptions do not require they do so, shall be paid temporary assignment pay when required to perform such duties. Employees shall be paid 5% above their monthly rate of pay or \$100, whichever is greater, prorated by the number of hours the employee is required to perform the duties. The temporary assignment of bilingual duties of less than a half day shall be considered one-half day and the temporary assignment of bilingual duties for more than one-half day but less than a full day shall be considered a full day. Each department payroll office has been provided with a tool that calculates an employee's hourly bilingual rate of pay.

- b. The Department encourages staff to solicit current employees who may have the ability to speak Spanish and who would be willing to volunteer to translate and be eligible for bilingual pay. Once you have identified the employees who wish to be considered, please provide their information so that the Office of Affirmative Action can arrange testing to verify the employees can speak Spanish.

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- c. All TA bilingual service requests must be approved by management. Ideally, there should be someone on staff for each shift that can approve a request for Bilingual Services. Each facility must develop a process for tracking requests and payment hours.
 - (1) Staff shall consult the Department list of certified multilingual staff.
 - (2) Staff identified to provide interpretation services an accurate and competent manner.
 - (3) If the staff identified as the interpreter cannot provide services in a accurate and competent manner, then he or she shall cease providing services and find an alternative way to provide services.

- d. Identifying an interpreter of the LEP individual's choosing in exigent circumstances. No youth shall interpret for their LEP friend or family member.

- e. Use of the State's Telephonic Interpreter Services though the State's master contract. Propio is available to staff for telephonic interpreter services.
 - (1) Connect to Propio Language Services by dialing 1-866-282-3280.
 - (2) When prompted enter the following access code: ****
 - (3) Enter the 2-digit language code for desired language.
 - (4) Provide the agent with the following:
 - (a) Caller's first name and first initial of last name.
 - (b) Phone number including area code.
 - (5) Click conference to merge the caller, interpreter, and Department into one call.

- f. Use of TTY and/ or TDD.
 - (1) Staff shall utilize one of the two allotted TTY devices located at each youth center.
 - (2) Staff utilizing NextTalk shall dial 1 (800) 526-0844 to connect to the TTY system.
 - (3) Once connected, staff shall utilize the chat box to communicate with the LEP.

- g. American Sign Language (ALS) services provided though the State's master contract. All ALS services shall be scheduled one to two weeks in advance.

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I. Staff Training

All onboarding DJJ Staff shall be trained on the policy of the LAP, this directive shall be issued to each new DJJ team member. The LAC will train new staff as part of the Pre-Service Training, required for all new DJJ staff within 6 months of hire.

The LAC and working group are developing a LAP training to be implemented into the required, annual One Net trainings for all DJJ employees. We hope to have this process completed in the spring of FY2026.

- a. The LAC Shall ensure that all staff are trained on the content of this plan.
- b. Training may include, but is not limited to:
 - (1) Identifying the language needs of an LEP individual.
 - (2) Working with an interpreter in person or on the telephone.
 - (3) Requesting documents for translation.
 - (4) Accessing and providing language assistance services through multilingual employees, in-house interpreters and translators, or contracted personnel.
 - (5) Duties of professional responsibility with respect to LEP individuals. Interpreter ethics.
 - (6) Tracking the use of language assistance services; and
 - (7) Tips on providing effective assistance to LEP individuals.

Multilingual Staff

- a. The Department may identify and develop the language skills of Department employees who could serve as multilingual employees.
- b. All, youth centers and divisions within the Department shall take reasonable steps to develop quality control procedures to ensure that Department employees who communicate or correspond in a non-English language with LEP individuals do so in an accurate and competent manner.
- c. Multilingual employees with frequent interaction with LEP individuals or whose job description includes the provision of language assistance services are encouraged to undergo language assessment by the Department of Central Management Services.

J. Procurement

If a youth center, program site or division within the Department elects to procure language

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assistance services, the appropriate Chief Administrative Officer or Deputy Director shall contact the procurement office for assistance.

K. **Language Access Working Group**

1. Dominique Newman, Chief of Communication
2. Nick Altgilbers, Director of Human Resources
3. Dr. Omar Jamil, Senior Policy Advisor
4. Dr. Marna Satlak, Chief of Staff
5. Jim Crowley, (LAC) EEO/AA Officer

Language Access Coordinator (LAC), Jim Crowley – EEO/AA Officer

The LAC has assembled a team of staff members to work in a group, responsible for advising, overseeing LAP Policy Directives and data collection from DJJ facilities that relates to translation services and encounters. DJJ facilities shall record each bilingual service translation, and or situation that requires bilingual staff. A spreadsheet has been provided to DJJ facility HR Representatives for the purpose of data collection.

The LAC will monitor the plan’s performance each fiscal year and update the plan accordingly.

The Language Access Coordinator oversees the Agency’s LAP initiatives, and works closely with the LAP Working Group.

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Authorized by:

 4/30/26
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