



## Language Access Plan (DRAFT)

### **I. Purpose and Authority**

Nevada's Senate Bill 318 (SB318) and the federal guidance on Title VI both agree that language should not be a barrier to accessing governmental programs and services. As SB318 states, "Persons with limited English proficiency require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language." Moreover, it makes it clear that it is the responsibility of government to provide that access:

State and local agencies and entities that receive public money have an obligation to provide meaningful, timely access for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) to the programs and services of those agencies and entities.

The Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) is committed to compliance with SB318 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006) in ensuring meaningful access to State services and programs for individuals with limited English proficiency.

The purpose of this Language Access Plan (LAP) is to establish a reasonable and effective plan and protocol when providing services to, or interacting with, LEP individuals. Following this plan and protocol will ensure Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) is inclusive as it strives to meet its mission and statutory requirements.

**Mission:** To enhance, conserve and protect Nevada's ecosystems and communities through vegetation stewardship and wildland fire management.

#### **Statutory requirements:**

NRS 472: State Forester Firewarden,  
NRS 474: County Fire Protection Districts,  
NRS 527: Protection and Preservation of Timbered Lands, Trees, and Flora,  
NRS 528: Forest Practice and Reforestation, and  
NRS 209.231 & 209.457: Program for Operating Conservation Camps

Additional responsibilities are codified in:

NRS 477.030: NDF and Fire Marshal Cooperation on roofing materials and vegetation management codes  
NAC 477.283.4.h: NDF vegetation plan review for local planning committees permitting

NDF Membership is required for the following bodies:

State Fire Marshal State Board of Fire Services (NRS 477.073)  
Division of Emergency Management Board of Search and Rescue (NRS 414.170);  
DCNR State Environmental Commission (NRS 445B.200)

## **II. General Policy**

NDF recognizes that LEP individuals may contact the agency for data or other services, and NDF is committed to ensuring meaningful access to LEP individuals. This LAP applies to all NDF programs and services,

NDF will use the following procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to NDF services and communicate effectively.

- NDF will take all reasonable steps to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to its services.
- Staff at the initial points of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs.
- No staff may suggest or require that a LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive agency services and the agency, rather than the LEP individual, bears the responsibility for providing appropriate language services, regardless of the LEP individual's preferred language, at no cost to the LEP individual.
- Due to the scientific and technical nature of our work, use of informal interpreters of any kind is not allowed to minimize misinterpretation.

### **NDF Language Access Coordinator**

Eric Antle, Deputy Administrator, [eantle@forestry.nv.gov](mailto:eantle@forestry.nv.gov), 775-684-2522  
Language Access Coordinator will review and update (if needed) the NDF LAP biennially. All NDF staff will report language access needs to the Language Access Coordinator.

## **III. Profile of NDF's LEP Clients**

NDF is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication with potential LEP clients so that we can better provide meaningful, timely access to our services and programs without regard to any language impediments.

NDF will maintain a database of LEP individuals that contact the agency to request information. The agency does not currently know how many of the individuals that request information are LEP or requested translation or American Sign Language services. It is unknown if any of these individuals identify as Indigenous or Refugee.

In the agency's history, NDF has never had a request for translation or American Sign Language services from LEP individuals.

With the help of its website maintenance contractor, NDF will explore the possibility of adding a button to the forestry.nv.gov website that will translate the website to the user's preferred language and if there is a way to track the use of the translation button.

#### **IV. NDF Language Access Services and Procedures**

NDF does not have any known LEP clients; therefore, does not have full-time or on-demand language access services. Any future language access needs will be addressed in the following manner:

**Oral/Sign Language Services** – NDF does not have employees that are trained or certified to provide language services. If the need arises, NDF will contract with a State-approved vendor for oral and sign language services. NDF will use the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website. [https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_ Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_ Interpretation/)

**Written Language Services** – NDF does not have employees that are trained or certified to provide written language services in languages other than English. If the need arises, NDF will contract with a State-approved vendor for written language services. NDF will use the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website. [https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_ Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_ Interpretation/)

#### **Community Outreach and Engagement**

NDF does not have employees that are trained or certified to provide language services in-house for languages other than English. NDF will take steps to publicize the availability of language access services on the forestry.nv.gov website.

NDF will utilize translation services from approved vendors to produce information pamphlets and handouts when requested.

NDF will provide resources for its staff to improve their cultural competency and ability to work with diverse groups by utilizing the educational materials and tools on the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Cultural Literacy Strategies website.

<https://dhhs.nv.gov/Programs/CHA/MH/Toolkit/culturalliteracystrategies/>

#### **V. Implementing NDNH's Language Access Services**

If language access services are requested, employees will inform the NDF Language Access Coordinator. The Language Access Coordinator will take the appropriate steps as outlined in this document to secure a qualified person to provide the needed service(s).

## **Language Access Procedures**

**Accessing Appropriate Oral/Sign Language Services:** If oral/sign language services are needed, employees will inform the NDF Language Access Coordinator. The Language Access Coordinator will secure a qualified person to provide the needed service by utilizing the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website [https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/).

**Accessing Appropriate Written Language Services:** If written language services are needed, employees will inform the NDF Language Access Coordinator. The Language Access Coordinator will secure a qualified person to provide the needed service by utilizing the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website [https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/).

**Language Services Quality Assurance:** NDF is committed to ensuring that all language service providers it uses are qualified and competent to provide those services. NDF will secure qualified professionals by utilizing the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website [https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/).

### **Staff Training Policies and Procedures**

NDF ensures that its staff are familiar with this LAP. All staff will inform the NDF Language Access Coordinator if language access services are requested. The NDF Language Access Coordinator will periodically remind staff about the LAP and the agency's responsibility to provide language access if requested.

### **VI. Evaluation of and Recommendations for NDF's Language Access Plan**

NDF is committed to monitoring the performance of the above policies, procedures, and resources to ensure that its LAP is responsive to the needs of both NDF and the people it serves. NDF will review, evaluate, and update (if needed) its LAP biennially.

### **Processes for Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Parties Responsible for LAP Maintenance:** The NDF Language Access Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing and updating (if needed) the NDF LAP biennially.

**Criteria and Methods for LAP Evaluation:** In the history of the agency, language access has not been a barrier to doing business and the agency has never had a request for translation services. Based on this history NDF will simply track its LAP's performance by tracking the number of requests for language access services using a database.

### **Evaluation Outcomes and Proposed Changes**

**Performance Monitoring Data:** NDF serves hundreds to thousands of individuals with agency services annually. None of these individuals were LEP; therefore, no language access services were needed.

**Proposed LAP Revisions:** This is the first LAP that NDF has prepared. Therefore, there are no proposed revisions.

**Proposed Budgetary Implications:** Based on the lack of need for language access services in the past, NDF does not foresee the need for significant funding for language access services in the FY24/25 biennium. Funding will be needed; however, to provide a translation button on the agency website. It is likely that this can be accomplished under the agency's current website maintenance contract.