

Language Access in DCPS

Guidance for Partner Organizations on Communicating with Limited English Proficient Families

DCPS is committed to serving students and families from diverse languages and backgrounds and strives to give families information in a language they understand to ensure equitable access. In compliance with the DC Language Access Act, partner organizations that receive District funding must communicate information to Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents and guardians in a language they can understand about any service or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English. This includes, but is not limited to, information related to registration for programs and services.

Document Translations

Ensure that documents are available in Spanish and any other languages spoken by at least 3% of the school's population. The languages that currently meet this threshold in several DCPS schools are Amharic, Chinese, and Spanish. To obtain a specific school's language breakdown for translations, email language.access@k12.dc.gov

Interpretation for In-person, Over-the-phone, or Virtual Communications

Partner organizations are required to offer interpretation services either over the phone or in person in the primary languages of LEP individuals, even if it is not one of the threshold languages. When communicating with LEP families in person or remotely, you are encouraged to use competent bilingual staff to facilitate communication (children are **not** appropriate interpreters). If bilingual staff are not available, staff can use an over-the-phone, no-cost interpreter by dialing Language Line; see details below.

Language Line

To access Language Line:

Call: 1800-367-9559

Enter Client ID: 511049

[Click here](#) for a brief video on how to use Language Line.

General Best Practices for Staff when Using Language Line

- Have the Language Line number and code easily accessible.
- If you receive a call from an LEP individual, immediately conference in Language Line.
- To place a call to an LEP individual, dial Language Line first. Give the Language Line interpreter the LEP individual's phone number. The interpreter can then place the call to the individual and start the conference call.
- When connected to the interpreter, provide the interpreter with background on the matter.
- Minimize the use of jargon and acronyms.
- Use short sentences and pause every 2-3 sentences to give the interpreter a chance to convey the message to the family.
- Prior to hanging up, recap and ask student or family if they have any questions.

Request Translation, Interpretation, or Staff Training

Partner organizations can request translation, interpretation, and interpreter headsets through the DCPS Language Access Unit by emailing language.access@k12.dc.gov. Please send requests at least 7 business days in advance whenever possible. Organizations with large or frequent anticipated projects and events are **strongly** encouraged to set aside funding in their respective budgets to ensure language service needs are met.

For questions or guidance, please contact language.access@k12.dc.gov or (202) 868-6508.