

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

State Agency: New York State Insurance Fund (NYSIF)

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This document is our agency’s **Language Access Plan**.

A **Language Access Plan** explains how we provide services to people who have limited English proficiency.

This **Language Access Plan** includes information about:






	<p>The population with Limited English Proficiency (“LEP”) in our service area.</p>
	<p>How we notify the public about language access services.</p>
	<p>Our resources and methods for providing language access services.</p>
	<p>How we train our staff to provide language access services to the public.</p>
	<p>How we monitor language access services and respond to complaints.</p>



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PART 1 – Our Agency’s Services



We prepared this Language Access Plan (“Plan”) to comply with New York State Executive Law Section 202-a, which establishes New York’s Statewide Language Access Policy. This Plan explains how we make sure that people with Limited English Proficiency (“LEP”) have meaningful access to agency services, programs and activities.

In this Plan, individuals with LEP are understood as people who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

Our agency’s services to the public include:

NYSIF is the largest workers' compensation insurer in New York State and among the ten largest nationwide. NYSIF covers 2 million workers and insures 200,000 employers in New York State. NYSIF's mission is to guarantee the availability of workers' compensation, disability insurance and paid family leave at the lowest possible cost to New York employers while maintaining a solvent fund. Since its inception 110 years ago, NYSIF has fulfilled this mission by competing with other insurance carriers to ensure a fair marketplace while serving as a guaranteed source of coverage for employers who cannot secure coverage elsewhere. NYSIF strives to achieve the best health outcomes for injured workers and be an industry leader in price, quality, and service for New York employers.

PART 2 – The Population with Limited English Proficiency in Our Service Area



The Statewide Language Access Policy requires state agencies to translate vital agency documents into the top 12 most commonly spoken non-English language among New Yorkers with limited English proficiency. Our agency uses U.S. Census data (including data from the American Community Survey) to determine the top 12 languages most commonly spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State.

The top 12 languages spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State are:

#	Language	Estimated Number of Speakers with LEP (ACS 2018-2022)
1	Spanish	1,198,032
2	Chinese	377,524
3	Russian	124,422
4	Yiddish	90,199
5	Bangla	74,342
6	Haitian Creole	51,947
7	Korean	48,581
8	Arabic	42,907
9	Italian	41,155
10	French	34,304
11	Polish	33,122
12	Urdu	29,983

New York’s language access law also provides agencies, in consultation with the Office of Language Access, the option to add up to four more languages of translation beyond the top 12. The assessment about whether to include additional languages must be based on factors that are identified in the language access law. Our agency, in consultation with the Office of Language Access, has made the following determination with regard to the addition of languages beyond the top 12:

At this time the agency hasn’t identified the need to add languages but will continue to monitor services, requests, and relevant information to reassess if needed.

Our agency tracks encounters of individuals with LEP in the following ways:

NYSIF determines the frequency of contacts with individuals with LEP by acquiring data from NYSIF staff in the claims department, the contact center, and our district offices. We cross-reference with the data received from the selected contractors. Encounters are also tracked by the annual monitoring report and NYSIF's over the phone interpretation tracking log.



PART 3 – Public Outreach About the Availability of Language Access Services

Our agency informs individuals with LEP about their right to free language assistance services in the following ways, using at least the top 12 languages shown in Part 2 of this Plan:

Individuals with LEP are directly informed by our staff

In which ways? NYSIF implemented the use of the NYS Language Identification Tool (I-Speak Poster). This allows individuals with LEP to alert our staff of the need for language assistance. This aids our staff in making a determination about an individual with LEP while maintaining cultural sensitivity to the individual with LEP's needs. NYSIF staff is then able to refer to the NYS Language Identification Tool or inform the individual with LEP via an interpreter that the service is free of charge. Additionally, NYSIF staff is trained and will continue to receive enhanced methodologies on how to best identify individuals with LEP and their needs.

Signs posted about language assistance services

In areas operated by the agency and open to the public

Other (describe)

Information is published on our agency's website in at least the top 12 languages spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State

Outreach and presentations at schools, faith-based groups, and other community organizations

What are the populations with LEP targeted?

Local, non-English language media directed at individuals with LEP in their languages

What are the populations with LEP targeted?

- Social media posts directed at individuals with LEP in their languages

What are the populations with LEP targeted?

- Telephonic voice menu providing information in non-English languages

In which languages?

Spanish option is available in our Interactive Voice Response System.

- Other (describe)

NYSIF displays the NYS Language Identification Tool ("I Speak" poster) at all events. The LAC also provides a Language Access checklist to our staff attending the event, on how to reach an interpreter if needed. The events that the agency participates in include, but are not limited to, The NYS Fair, Trade Shows, MWBE Events, Career Fairs, Forums, Expos and virtual events. Our agency's website contains information regarding the availability of language assistance services.



PART 4 – Provision of Language Access Services

A. Determining the Need for Services

During *in person* encounters, our agency uses the following tools to determine whether an individual has LEP, and what their primary language is:

- "I Speak" posters or visual aids that provide information about free interpreting services in multiple languages

- Reception staff make those determinations based on training and experience

- Bilingual staff members, where available, assist in identifying the language of individuals with LEP

- Other (describe)

On *telephone calls*, our agency uses the following tools to find out if an individual has LEP, and what their primary language is:

- Reception staff make those determinations based on training and experience

- Bilingual staff members, where available, assist in identifying the language of individuals with LEP

- Telephonic interpreting service

Other (describe)

Our agency's protocols for assessing whether an individual needs *oral interpreting services* in different service situations is as follows:

During office in-person encounters:

NYSIF has implemented the use of the NYS Language Identification Tool (I Speak poster). This allows individuals with LEP to alert our staff of the need for language assistance. This aids our staff in making determinations about an individual with LEP while maintaining cultural sensitivity to the individual's needs. While NYSIF no longer accepts walk ins at our office locations, the NYS Language Identification Tool (I Speak poster) is visible in public areas.

At initial contact in the field:

NYSIF staff via the interpreting contractor will inform our clients that interpreters are provided and that the service is free of charge.

When speaking on the telephone:

NYSIF staff using the interpreting contractor informs our clients that interpreters are provided and that the service is free of charge.

For pre-planned appointments of individuals with LEP:

NYSIF staff has already identified an individual's language need and made the necessary arrangements via the interpreting or translation contractor, and informs our clients that interpreters are provided and that the service is free of charge.

Other (describe):

Our agency records and maintains documentation of language assistance needs of individuals with LEP as follows:

NYSIF has developed a metric for compiling data for in person and telephonic encounters. Staff has and will continue to receive training on how to use the metric to ensure accurate reporting. NYSIF also has selected contractors available for telephonic and in person encounters. Any data related to claims is also tracked by NYSIF and our contractors. We have instructed NYSIF staff to inquire about language needs, of stakeholders, employers, medical provider, etc., during initial work-up of a new claim. WCB has taken a proactive approach by including the following question in our C-3 form: "Will you need a translator if you have to attend a Board hearing? If yes, for what language?" NYSIF also looks at that form to arrange language assistance services.

B. Oral Interpreting Services

Our agency has made the following resources available for oral interpreting requests:

- Bilingual staff members who work directly with individuals with LEP

Number of staff and languages spoken:

- Bilingual staff members who provide oral interpreting services on a volunteer basis

Number of staff and languages spoken:

- Telephonic interpreting service

Number of contractors and languages spoken:

- Contracts or other arrangements with school and community organizations

Number of contracts or other arrangements and languages spoken:

- Other (Describe)

NYSIF utilizes selected contractors under the NYS Office of General Services (OGS) Statewide Administrative Services Contract for oral, in-person interpretation.

Our agency protocols for informing individuals with LEP that free interpreting services will be provided and that they do not need to provide their own interpreters is as follows:

During office in-person encounters: While NYSIF no longer accepts walk ins at our office locations, the NYS Language Identification Tool ("I Speak" poster) is visible in public areas.

At initial contact in the field: NYSIF staff via the interpreting contractor will inform our clients that interpreters are provided and that the service is free of charge.

When speaking on the telephone: NYSIF staff contacts our interpreting service contractor if the caller self-reports a language need or if staff needs help identifying the caller's language.

For pre-planned appointments of individuals with LEP: NYSIF staff has already identified an individual's language need and made the necessary arrangements via the interpreting or translation contractor informs our clients that interpreters are provided and that the service is free of charge.

- Other (describe):**

Our agency's protocols for obtaining interpreting services in a timely manner is as follows:

NYSIF staff has been trained to assess the need for interpreter services. Once a determination has been made that a client needs such services, NYSIF staff contact our selected contractor in a timely manner. If needed, NYSIF selected contractors are well equipped to handle the languages well above the top 12.

If an individual with LEP insists on having a family member, friend, or other person interpret, our protocols for deciding whether to accept or decline such an arrangement is as follows:

Individuals with LEP will be informed of the availability of free interpreting services. Generally, individuals with LEP may not have a family member, friend, or a minor interpreter. However, **during emergencies**, an individual with LEP may be permitted to have a family member, friend, or a minor interpreter. Upon request, an individual with LEP may also be permitted to have a family member, friend or a minor interpreter for routine matters, such as asking the location of the office, hours of operation or rescheduling an appointment. Where the interaction with the individual with LEP occurs at the agency's office, and an individual is permitted to use an interpreter of their choosing, they must fill out a written consent/waiver form. Where an individual with LEP is engaged in official business with the agency, the agency will always provide an independent interpreter.

Our agency provides information to all staff members who have contact with the public about how to obtain oral interpreting services. Our protocol in this regard is as follows:

The agency's Language Access Coordinator ("LAC") maintains a list of oral interpreting resources that are available to staff. This resource list includes:

NYSIF provides a Language Access Checklist on how to reach an interpreter. All staff can access these instructions on the NYSIF Intranet at any time. This checklist is also provided to all staff participating in events such as NYS Fair, MWBE events, Career Fairs, Trade Shows and virtual events.

- Names and contact information for all resources
- Names and locations of staff members who are available to act as interpreters or provide services directly in the primary language of an individual with LEP
- Languages in which each interpreter or service is qualified
- Procedures for accessing each interpreter or service

Our agency records and maintains documentation of oral interpreting services provided to individuals with LEP at each encounter. Our protocol in this regard is as follows:

NYSIF has a tracking log for over the phone interpretation. NYSIF staff maintain a list of in person encounters. The LAC has an inventory of written translations.

Cultural Competence and Confidentiality

Our agency makes sure interpreters are culturally competent¹ in the following ways:

NYSIF utilizes independent interpreting services. The contractor will implement quality assurance standards to guarantee that its interpreters are trained and are linguistically and culturally competent.

Our agency makes sure interpreters follow state and federal confidentiality protocols in the following ways:

Where NYSIF utilizes independent interpreting services, the contractor will implement quality assurance standards to guarantee that its interpreters are trained and are linguistically and culturally competent.

C. Translations of Documents

At least every two years after the effective date of this Plan, our agency determines and reassesses vital documents² that must be translated. This process is accomplished in the following ways:

The vast majority of vital documents encountered by NYSIF are promulgated by the New York State Workers' Compensation Board. NYSIF will reassess at least annually to determine if other documents need to be added to its vital document listing. A master spreadsheet of all vital documents will be maintained. NYSIF's documents will be reviewed annually to determine if any changes have occurred.

Our agency's process for making sure documents are written in plain language³ before they are translated into other languages is as follows:

NYSIF runs a plain language test to ensure that the reading level of the document is appropriate. NYSIF uses appropriate software to determine the document meets the reading level test. NYSIF uses documents that do not exceed 8th grade reading levels.

Our agency has the following resources available for translation of documents:

Contractors for translation services

¹ Cultural Competence is defined as *a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals that enables effective interactions in a cross-cultural framework*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. 2000. Assuring Cultural Competence in Health Care: Recommendations for National Standards and an Outcomes-Focused Research Agenda. Extracted from:

https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/Assets/pdf/checked/Assuring_Cultural_Competence_in_Health_Care-1999.pdf

² Vital Documents is defined as any paper or digital document that contains information that is critical for obtaining agency services or benefits or is otherwise required to be completed by law.

³ The [Plain Writing Act of 2010](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-111publ274) defines plain language as writing that is clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience. Extracted from: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-111publ274>

Number of contractors: NYSIF uses one primary translation services contractor that’s under the NYS Office of General Services (OGS) Statewide Administrative Services Contract and covers over 50 languages.

Contracts or other arrangements with schools and community organizations

Names of schools/organizations:

Translation of documents by bilingual staff members

Other (describe)

NYSIF uses one contractor to translate the website. The top 12 languages can be found on the language switcher at the footer of nysif.com for translation.

The agency’s Language Access Coordinator (“LAC”) maintains a list of translation resources that are available to staff. This resource list includes:

Names and contact information for all resources

Names and locations of staff members who are available to provide translations of documents

Languages in which each translation service is qualified

Procedures for accessing each translation service

Our agency translates documents that individuals with LEP submit in their primary languages in a timely manner. Our protocol in this regard is as follows:

LAC contacts NYSIF’s primary translation contractor for written translations.

The following non-exhaustive list of documents are currently translated or in the process of translation by our agency in the languages indicated. Documents with an asterisk (*) are determined by the agency to be vital documents.

- AR: Arabic
- BA: Bangla
- CH: Chinese
- FR: French
- HA: Haitian-Creole
- IT: Italian
- KO: Korean
- PO: Polish
- RU: Russian
- SP: Spanish
- UR: Urdu
- YI: Yiddish

Form #	Name	AR	BA	CH	FR	HA	IT	KO	PO	RU	SP	UR	YI	Add'l Langs
	Child Labor One Pager	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

	Long Covid Info for Employers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Claimant Info Packet	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Policyholder Walk In Info Sheet	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Paid Family Leave Checklist	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	PBM Notice to post	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Workers' Comp Direct Deposit Form	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Disability Benefits Direct Deposit Form	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Help for New Yorkers (Covid Related)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	PBM Prescription Services	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	Long Covid Survey and Cover Letter										x			
	NYSIF Procurement One Pager										x			
	About NYSIF One Pager										x			
	Online Safety Resources										x			
PFL-1	Request for Paid Family Leave										x			

OC-110a	Claimant Auth to Disclose Workers' Comp Records	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
WA-1	Work Activity Report	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
C-300.5	NYSWCB Stipulation Form										x			
E-99.16	Questionnaire for Consideration of Section 32										x			

New documents identified for translation after the signing of this Plan and before the 2-year reassessment will be translated in a timely manner.

The process for ensuring that translations are accurate and incorporate commonly used words is as follows:

NYSIF, through its contractor (where applicable), will ensure that proofreading/editing for correctness and cultural sensitivity are components of the translation services provided by any contractor under contract as part of the publication process. NYSIF will also ensure that plain language is used in materials produced before translation to ensure information is accessible to a range of literacy levels.



PART 5 – Staff Training

The person in the agency who is responsible for training staff in language access services is:
Robin Irons, Director of Training

The staff training includes the following components:

- The agency’s legal obligations to provide language access services
- The agency’s resources for providing language access services
- How to access and work with interpreters
- Cultural competence and cultural sensitivity
- How to obtain translation services

- Maintaining records of language access services provided to individuals with LEP

The methods and frequency of training are as follows:

All frontline staff is required to complete the mandatory Language Access training developed by the Office of Employee Relations annually. All staff will also verify annually with the NYSIF Training Department that they have read and understood our Language Access policies and procedures. Training will be ongoing and refresher courses will be given as needed. Any new hires will be required to take training within 30 days of their start date.



PART 6 – Monitoring the Plan and Responding to Complaints

A. Monitoring

Our agency’s Language Access Coordinator (“LAC”) will monitor implementation of the Plan to make sure we are in compliance. Our protocols in this regard are as follows:

The LAC is readily available for all NYSIF staff. The LAC monitors the NYSIF Intranet to make sure it is continually updated with the most recent Language Access information to ensure that staff is up to date with our Language Access Plan and all Language Access services. Email reminders are also sent by the LAC to NYSIF staff. LAC will report monthly deficiencies and provide an annual monitoring report to the NYS Office of Language Access.

B. Complaints

We provide information to the public in at least the top 12 most commonly spoken non-English languages in the state, advising members of the public of their right to file a complaint if they feel that they have not been provided adequate language access services or have been denied access to services because of their limited English proficiency. We do not retaliate or take other adverse action because an individual has filed a language access complaint.

We display information on the right to file a complaint, and the procedures for filing a complaint, in the following manner:

The standardized complaint forms are available to the public upon request in all 12 languages and through our website. Additionally, information on the right to file a complaint is posted in areas where it is easily seen by the public in the top 12 languages.

We handle complaints made to the agency regarding the provision of language assistance services in the following manner:

