



Standards for Translators and Interpreters

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Recommendations on improving meaningful access to the legislative process for limited English proficiency (LEP) populations

1. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment
 - gathering input from LEP communities, stakeholders, and experts in language access
 - identify the specific barriers the LEP populations face
2. Research and evaluate best practices from other legislative bodies that have implemented LA programs
 - identify proven strategies for ensuring equitable participation
 - real-time interpretation services during legislative sessions,
 - translating key documents and information into multiple languages,
 - offering training for legislators on cultural competency
 - working with diverse populations
 - recommend solutions that are practical, cost-effective, and sustainable
3. Ensure these recommendations are effective and actionable
 - collaborate with lawmakers, government agencies, and community organizations
 - align recommendations with legislative priorities and available resources
 - provide clear guidance on implementation, including timelines, responsible parties, and mechanisms for accountability

What is Language Access?

- “Language access” means providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) people with reasonable access to the same services as English-speaking individuals.

[Language Access - Migration Policy Institute](#)

What is the meaning of language access?

Language access means that people who don't speak English very well or at all, are able to use and benefit from a wide range of services. Yes. If you receive federal assistance, then you are bound by federal requirements.

[Information on Language Access - NCCC](#)

What is language access in the US?

- The Office for Access to Justice Language Access Program is dedicated to breaking down the barriers that prevent linguistically marginalized communities and those with limited proficiency in English, including those who are Deaf and hard of hearing, from reporting a crime, understanding their rights, navigating a court ...
- [Language Access Program - Department of Justice](#)

Asking chatgpt

Language access refers to the provision of services and resources that enable individuals with limited proficiency in a dominant language to effectively communicate and participate in various settings, such as healthcare, legal, educational, or governmental services. It ensures that people who do not speak or understand the primary language of a country or institution can access important information and services in their own language.

- Key components of language access include:
- **Translation** of written materials into multiple languages.
- **Interpretation services** to facilitate real-time spoken communication.
- **Culturally appropriate communication** that considers not only language but also cultural nuances.

Language access is critical for promoting **equity and inclusivity**, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in society, especially in vital areas like healthcare, legal rights, and public services. Many countries have laws and standards (such as the U.S. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act) that mandate language access for individuals with limited English proficiency, ensuring they receive the necessary accommodations to access public services.

Without effective language access, individuals may face significant **barriers** to essential services, leading to misunderstanding, unequal treatment, or exclusion from important decisions that affect their lives.

Translation VS Interpreting ~ Translators VS Interpreters



Translators

We translate written text.

books contracts websites

This infographic features a light blue background. At the top left is a cartoon illustration of a man with a beard and a blue shirt. To his right, the word "Translators" is written in a bold, dark blue font. Below this, a white thought bubble contains the text "We translate written text." At the bottom, three circular icons are arranged horizontally: an open book, a document with lines of text, and a computer monitor displaying a website. Below each icon is its corresponding label: "books", "contracts", and "websites".



Interpreters

We interpret spoken or sign language.

medical appointments court proceedings conferences

This infographic features a white background. At the top left is a cartoon illustration of a woman with black hair wearing a headset with a microphone. To her right, the word "Interpreters" is written in a bold, dark blue font. Below this, a light blue speech bubble contains the text "We interpret spoken or sign language." At the bottom, three circular icons are arranged horizontally: a stethoscope, a gavel, and a microphone. Below each icon is its corresponding label: "medical appointments", "court proceedings", and "conferences".



COLORADO

Department of
Regulatory Agencies

Colorado regulates many professions, occupations and businesses to support a fair marketplace and protect consumers.

The Colorado Office of Policy, Research & Regulatory Reform (COPRRR) reviews proposed regulatory programs to determine if they are needed, and it also reviews existing programs and functions of government to ensure they are necessary, fair, effective and efficient.



COLORADO

Department of
Regulatory Agencies

Colorado Office of Policy, Research &
Regulatory Reform

**2017 Sunrise Review:
Language Interpreters**



COLORADO

Department of
Regulatory Agency

Recommendation – Do not regulate language interpreters in Colorado.

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programs and functions of government to ensure they are necessary, fair, effective and efficient.

**2017 Sunrise Review:
Language Interpreters**



Conclusion

*The very services that form the foundation of **language access** - such as **interpretation** and **translation** - often remain **unregulated** and are frequently treated as **mere labor services** rather than **specialized, professional work**.*

This lack of regulation and barrier to entry creates challenges in ensuring consistent quality and equitable access, especially in critical sectors like healthcare, legal systems, and public services.

Why?

Conclusion

*When bilingualism **alone** is used as a qualifier
~ without proper vetting or professional standards ~
individuals may gain access to roles they are not fully equipped for,
especially in specialized fields like interpreting and translation, where
more than just language skills are legally required!*

**Lack of
Regulations**

**What's the
Problem?**

Inconsistent Quality

**Lack of Professional
Recognition**

**Impact on Language
Access**

Efforts Toward Regulation



ISO and ASTM standards

- Set guidelines for interpreting and translation services
- Adherence is voluntary, not mandatory
- Certifiable standards

Advocacy by Professional Organizations:

- American Translators Association (ATA)
- National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC)
- Association of Language Companies (ALC)
- American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education (AAITE)
- National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)
- And many more...

Language Access Laws

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
2. Executive Order 13166 (2000)
3. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
4. Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
5. State and Local Laws
6. The Voting Rights Act (VRA) – Section 203



Why Standards

- Requirements standards *prescribe* workflows to use to be certified as compliant.
- Guidance standards *describe* recommended workflows, not prescriptive
- Both be used as best practice for benchmarking

Standards

- cover products and services
- define key concepts and coin key terminology
- define competence and qualification requirement



Lack of standardization causes lack of clarity > leads to miscommunication > creates inefficiencies > inefficiencies cost money.



Standards

Regulations

Are standards on translation and interpreting services effective?

- Establish clear guidelines for qualifications, processes, and ethical considerations.
- Define high-quality services, improve consistency, and meet client expectations.
- ANSWER: YES, when applied
- **CAVIAT**: effectiveness can vary depending on the level of awareness and implementation across sectors.

Are these standards enforceable?

- Standards are **voluntary** and not legally enforceable **unless** incorporated into contracts, regulations, or laws.
- Not included in the mandate of Language Access laws

A stack of books with a blue spine and a yellow spine. The top book has a white label with the word 'Standards' in black. The bottom book has a white label with the word 'Regulations' in black. A black pen lies on a white sheet of paper in front of the books. The entire image has a torn, irregular right edge.

Standards

Regulations

Are they enough to ensure language access is provided?

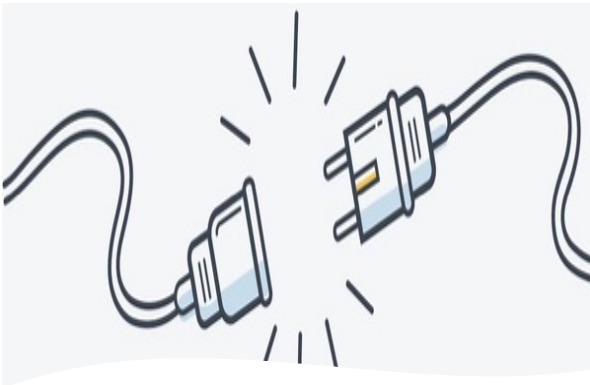
- NO
- The existence of a standard does not guarantee compliance or universal access unless it is paired with enforceable regulations, oversight, and dedicated funding for language services.

Do You Recognize this?

- shift the culture
- deterioration of safety steps
- lethal consequences



The Disconnect



Mandates, Regulations,
Policy, Laws


Professional Certifications
& Degrees

ISO & ASTM Standards

Something about me



- *ISO, TC37/SC5 for T&I Standards, Chief of US delegation, PL Leader (18841) & Editor (13611)*
- *US ASTM F43, Interpreting & Translation Standard Committee, Member*
- *Standards Committee & Education & Pedagogy Committee, ATA*
- *Advocacy and Language Access Committees, ALC*
- *CoreCHI, Legal Interpreter*
- *The Community Interpreter®[®], Co-Author and Trainer of Trainers*
- *AAITE, Chair and Founding Member*
- *Honorary Consul of Italy*
- *Cesco Linguistic Services, Founder*
- *ETI Graduate, Geneva, Switzerland*

A hand holding a wooden block with the word "CERTIFICATION" written on it. The block is tilted and the hand is positioned as if presenting it. The background is a blurred blue and white gradient.

Credentials: Certifications & T&I Degrees

Medical / Healthcare Interpreting Certifications:

Certified Healthcare Interpreter (CHI®) and Core Certified Healthcare Interpreter (CoreCHI™) by CCHI (The Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters)

National Certification for Medical Interpreters (CMI) by NBCMI (The National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters)

Legal Interpreting Certifications:

Federal Court Interpreter Certification

State Court Interpreter Certification

Translators' Certification by American Translators Association (ATA)

Certification for Sign Language Interpreters by RID (The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf)

T&I Degrees at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

Definitions by ISO & ASTM

Interpreting (ISO)

Rendering a spoken or signed message into another spoken or signed language, preserving the register and meaning of the source language content.

—International Organization for Standardization

*(ISO) ISO 13611: 2024. Interpreting:
Guidelines for Community interpreting*

Interpreting (ASTM)

The process of first fully understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed message and then faithfully rendering it into another spoken or signed language.

—ASTM International, F2089: *Standard
Practice for Language Interpreting*, 2015

ISO Standards ~ Interpreting



- **ISO 23155:2022(en)**
Interpreting services — Conference interpreting — Requirements and recommendations
- **ISO 20228:2019(en)**
Interpreting services — Legal interpreting — Requirements
- **ISO 21998:2020(en)**
Interpreting services — Healthcare interpreting — Requirements and recommendations
- **ISO 13611:2024(en)**
Interpreting services — Community interpreting — Requirements and recommendations
- **ISO/DIS 17651-3(en)**
Simultaneous interpreting — Interpreters' working environment — Part 3: Requirements and recommendations for interpreting hubs
- **ISO 18841:2018(en)**
Interpreting services — General requirements and recommendations
- **ISO/TS 6253:2024(en)**
Requirements and recommendations for training programmes in community interpreting
- **ISO 24019:2022(en)**
Simultaneous interpreting delivery platforms — Requirements and recommendations
- **ISO 20539:2023(en)**
Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary



ISO Standards ~ Translation

ISO 17100:2015(en)

*Translation services — Requirements
for translation services*

ISO 11669:2024(en)

Translation projects — General guidance

ISO 20771:2020(en)

Legal translation — Requirements

ASTM Standards ~

Translation, Interpreting & Interpreting Performance Testing



F2089-15

Standard Practice for Language Interpreting

F3516-22

Standard Guide for Testing Interpreting Performance

F2575-23e2

Standard Practice for Language Translation

What's the Elephant in the Room?



1 Setting & Hook

Background on current situation, character(s) & hook

2 Rising Insights

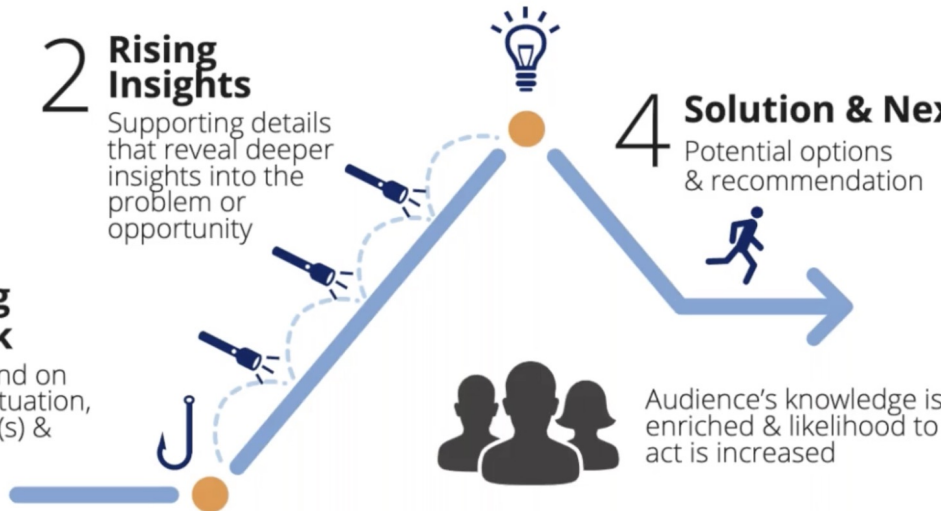
Supporting details that reveal deeper insights into the problem or opportunity

3 Aha Moment

Major finding or central insight

4 Solution & Next Steps

Potential options & recommendation



Audience's knowledge is enriched & likelihood to act is increased

Data Tell The Story

Quick & Cheap Solutions

-
- *Sub-par services*
 - *Remote Interpreting*
 - *Google Translate*
 - *AI*
(www.safeaitf.org)



Quality
Services drive
Return on
Investment

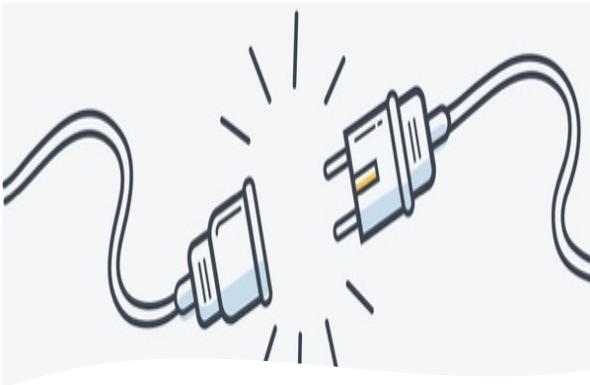
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Mandates, Regulations,
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Professional Certifications
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ISO & ASTM Standards

Stores

The ISO Online Browsing platform
Reference to descriptions and
terminology, with links to the ISO Catalog

<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui>

ASTM Catalog

<https://www.astm.org/products-services/catalogs.html>





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