



Language Access Policy

Effective Date: July 27, 2023 Policy Number 2023-10

A. PURPOSE

To establish organizational-wide procedures for providing information and services directly to San Diego Community Power's (SDCP) communities in a way that makes them accessible to persons who are not proficient in the English language.

As an agency that may receive federal funding, this policy establishes guidelines for language access that is in compliance with applicable law, including Title VI of the Civil Right Act, the American with Disabilities Act, applicable Executive Orders, as well as applicable state and local laws and ordinances that relate to language access.

B. BACKGROUND

SDCP prioritizes justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. In an effort to close the significant gap in the provision of services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) speakers in our region, establishing this Language Access Policy is essential to the success of our mission and vision to provide meaningful and equitable access to the services, programs, and activities offered by SDCP to its LEP community.

C. POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish effective guidelines for language access services. SDCP shall ensure that notices, services, and offerings are available to our customers without discrimination and confirm meaningful access for most LEP individuals to solidify our commitment to our communities' needs.

Furthermore, it is in the intent of this policy to establish guidelines and procedures for providing effective communication between SDCP and its customers who potentially may have been inadvertently precluded due to a language barrier. Language access shall be accurate, timely, effective, and at no cost to LEP individuals.

D. PROCEDURE

There are two primary types of language access assistance: written and verbal.

1. Written translation

- a. All departments of SDCP shall take reasonable steps to prioritize translation of vital documents or information. "Vital" documents are those that contain information that is critical for obtaining services and/or benefits or is required by law. Documents that may be considered "vital" may include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Administrative complaints, releases, or waiver forms;
 - ii. Application forms;
 - iii. Public outreach or education materials;
 - iv. Written notices of upcoming service or service changes;
 - v. Notices of community meetings or other community outreach;
 - vi. Notices regarding the availability of language assistance services.

- b. SDCP shall provide LEP individuals with translated statutory notices and mailers for SDCP services and program or incentive eligibility in a language they understand upon request. Additionally, SDCP will electronically host translation for the following documents:
 - i. Enrollment Notices
 - ii. Annual Joint Rate Mailers
 - iii. Annual Power Content Mailer
 - c. All translated documents shall be reviewed by another individual who is fluent in the language of the document and who can confirm its accuracy.
 - d. SDCP's website will provide translation and accessibility tools.
 - e. During regularly scheduled Board of Directors and other publicly noticed meetings, closed captioning services will be provided in English via an online virtual meeting platform. Closed captioning in other languages may be provided whenever additional technology automation allows.
2. Verbal interpretation
- a. Interpretation services will be provided via SDCP's Contact Center for customers who call SDCP's toll-free Contact Center.
 - b. During regularly scheduled Board of Directors and other publicly noticed meetings, verbal interpretation services may be made available upon request to the Clerk of the Board within at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting.

E. INTERNAL COMPLIANCE

SDCP will review government census data periodically to determine the prominent languages spoken within its region. Once per year, SDCP will review the SDCP Language Access Policy to determine the Policy's effectiveness and propose any necessary changes.

SDCP staff will receive training on SDCP's Language Access Policy. Training will include an overview of the Policy, overview of applicable federal, state, and local mandates, and the identifying and providing of language services. Recordings of this training will be provided to all staff unable to attend the in-person training.

F. DEFINITIONS

1. Limited English Proficient (LEP): Persons who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) are defined as people who do not speak English as their primary language or who are limited in their ability to read, write, speak, or understand English to an extent that effective communication in English is not possible. This includes people who are deaf or hard of hearing. LEP designations are context-specific; an individual may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting but find that these skills are insufficient in other situations.
2. Preferred or primary language: A customer's preferred or primary language is the language in which they are most comfortable speaking. A customer able to speak English may have a primary language other than English. The preferred or primary language should be chosen by the customer.

3. Interpretation: The process of orally rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another language.
4. Translation: The process of converting written text from one language into written text of another language.
5. Vital Documents: Vital documents are any materials that are essential to an individuals' ability to access services, programs, or incentives provided by SDCP, or are required by law. Classification of a document as "vital" depends upon the importance of each program, information, encounter, or service involved, and the consequence to the individual if the information in question is not provided.
6. Core Languages: Core languages are languages with a substantial number (at least 0.5% of total County of San Diego population) of LEP individuals and are based on San Diego's government census data. SDCP's current core languages are Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic.