

STATE OF NEVADA



BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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Language Access Plan

I. Purpose and Authority

This policy is intended to establish an effective and efficient protocol for employees of the Nevada Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (The Board) to reference when providing services to individuals with limited English proficiency. Furthermore, the Board is committed to complying with NRS 232.0081 to ensure access to our Board's services for individuals with limited English proficiency.

II. General Policy

The Board recognizes that the population eligible to receive its services may include limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals. It is the policy of the Board to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals. The Board will adopt the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to the services the Board provides and regulates.

It is Nevada's policy to grant access to services or programs to every person regardless of their ability to speak, understand, read, or write English. The Board intends to take the needed steps to provide access to Board services to LEP individuals and to reduce barriers by increasing its ability to deliver services to people in their preferred languages.

The Board is committed to equity and will take all reasonable steps to provide limited English proficient (LEP) individuals with meaningful access to all its services, programs, and activities. Furthermore, it is recognized that it is the responsibility of the Board's management, and not the LEP individual, to ensure that appropriate language services are provided at no cost to the LEP

individual.

The following procedural provisions have been identified as key components to the availability of ***

1. Staff at the initial points of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs.
2. Ensure that Staff are properly trained in procedural measures to assist LEP individuals.
3. Ensure that Staff are properly trained to ensure basic cultural competencies when assisting LEP individuals.
4. The use of informal interpreters such as family, friends of the person seeking service, or other customers is only permitted to facilitate initial contact with the LEP individual. Minor children are prohibited from acting as interpreters.
5. Staff may not suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter to receive Board services.

Language Access Coordinator:
Executive Director
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III. Profile of the Public

Our preliminary assessment is that the Board has a limited LEP constituency. Our primary operational activities are focused on licensing and regulating veterinarians, veterinary technicians, euthanasia technicians, veterinary facilities, and other allied professionals. All applicants must meet eligibility requirements for appropriate licensure or registration per NAC 638 and NRS 638.

The Board is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among the individuals with limited English proficiency whom the Board serves. The tracking of such data will assist the Board in providing meaningful, timely access to the Board's services without regard to any language impediments.

The preferred language of the majority of the public and individuals receiving services from the Board is English. The most common methods for the public to access services are through the Board's website, telephone, and email.

IV. Language Access Services and Procedures

The Board does not have staff who can provide language assistance services.

The Board does not have any known LEP applicants or registrants. Currently, it is unknown

whether any applicants or registrants identify as indigenous or refugee. The Board has never received a request for translation or American Sign Language Services from LEP applicants, registrants or the public.

Language access needs will be addressed in the following manner:

a. The Board will utilize one of the active statewide contracts for translation and interpreter services offered by the state, which can be found here:

https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/

The Board will be providing 'Notice of Language Assistance Services' on the Board's website and at the Board's physical location.

All staff will be made aware of appropriate language assistance services and trained in ensuring that the appropriate resources are utilized when assisting an individual with LEP. Those seeking services may also request language assistance by contacting the Board by email, which is posted on the Board's website.

V. Implementation of the Language Access Services

The Language Access Coordinator will provide staff with the necessary training to ensure that staff are familiar with the Language Access Plan and its related policies. This training will include:

- How to respond to LEP individuals via phone, writing, or in-person.
- How to seek assistance with internal or state-sanctioned language access resources.
- How to document the mode of communication and preferred language of an LEP individual to better understand the needs of those accessing services and ensure that equitable access is available throughout the duration of their interactions with the Board.
- How to report these interactions to the Language Access Coordinator.

In addition to staff training, the Board will use the internal and state-authorized resources to provide information in languages other than English.

VI. Evaluation of and Recommendations for the Language Access Plan

The Board is committed to providing LEP full access to our services and is committed to monitoring the policies and procedures stated above to ensure that limited English proficiency Nevadans are receiving equitable access to Board services.

The Language Access Coordinator will continue to develop and monitor this plan and update it biennially based on applicant data and language accommodation requests documented by staff and any demographic data obtained through surveys. We will also track any costs we may incur.

The Board is exempt from the State Budget Act; all expenses are paid from fees received from licensed individuals.

Suggested Changes:

The LAP directs agencies to disallow the use of friends or family members to facilitate interpretation with Board staff. The primary Board service to the public involves veterinary care and animals. After receiving an increase in complaints from members of the community with limited English proficiency, it has been found that for the initial contact where an individual is reporting a consumer protection issue like the death of an animal, unlicensed veterinary practice, or harm to a pet, that disallowing the person from reporting anonymously through a family member or friend who is serving to assist the LEP individual seems overly strict and can dissuade the individual from fully reporting their concern or making a formal complaint. Furthermore, the individual, when reporting a traumatic or emotionally stressful event, is more likely to report to our Board if they are supported by a family member during the initial intake.

It does not serve the Board's mission or the public. I would suggest that upon initial contact with an LEP individual, using a friend of family, the LAP be revised to specify that it can be permitted to facilitate further contact through state-sanctioned language access resources and formal language accommodation.

Staff concurs that interpretation from minor children for Board services should remain prohibited.