
CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE ACCESS

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Purpose

In response to Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Nevada Secretary of States Office is implementing this strategy specifically to respond to the functions of Elections Division and the forthcoming election cycles. The intent meshes the urgency of ensuring that all eligible voters avail accessibility to elections related information in languages which afford the most opportunity for comprehension, while providing literature, video and other relevant communications that respond to a range of literacy levels posed within the statewide population. The ability to “meet people where they are at”, is the intent of the Language Access & Voter Education initiative as meshed with the need to deploy quality non-partisan and non-candidate leaning communications that empower voters with critical tools to effectively participate at the polls with dignity and respect.

Further, this plan responds to ensure compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act, The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (1984), The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (1986) and the Civil Rights Act of 1870, amended in 1957, 1960 and 1964.

This designed practice of promoting elections participation is based on Literacy vs Orality, essentially advocating for information delivery through a multiplicity of mediums at consistent but non-imposing frequencies. With interest in content comprehension, it is anticipated that voters will be able to make data driven and informed decisions at the polls. Understanding that the history of elections information has yielded development of content typically created by and for individuals holding post-graduate acumen. The time-honored use of jargon and verbose language at these levels often blatantly ignores the reality that a large proportion of the nation’s highly productive citizenry has completed the equivalent to, or often less than, a high school diploma. As such, much of the content which has been available for consumption, is not easily understood nor attention grabbing, which may reasonably repel those desiring to participate due to content aesthetics or presentation.

Literacy vs. Orality in Ballot Decisions

Orality in this elections space is referring to the use of spoken language as a key mechanism of information sharing. A common utilization is “word-of-mouth” conveyance, which can transfer insights between individuals based on perception, experience or opinion. Literacy is defined, in the ballot decision space, as gaining knowledge or competence of the information presented, through personal contemplation and possible investigation.

Individuals who participate in the Elections proceedings culminate the process by casting their selection based on candidate and ballot question information derived from a variety of sources. Some individuals actively research items on the ballot, taking part in town halls, debates, engaging with candidates, literature and obtain answers to their specific questions prior to casting their ballot.

Yet another subset of the eligible voter population, is strongly impacted by information received from a potential voters’ social circles, family, friends, enthusiasts or election deniers and is heavily impacted by orality. In these situations, the opportunity for mis- or dis-information holds an increased likelihood and may impact voter decision and /or participation.

Other key sources of information consumption include delivery via news media and information shared through public facing mediums which may be expressed via both partisan and non-partisan sources. Clearly, independent research may or may not be at the helm of all voters decision-making processes. Of course, whether an active voter or eligible non-voter, the need to avail accurate information is essential, and the comprehension of such information is the crux of effective democracy.

Service & Content Offerings

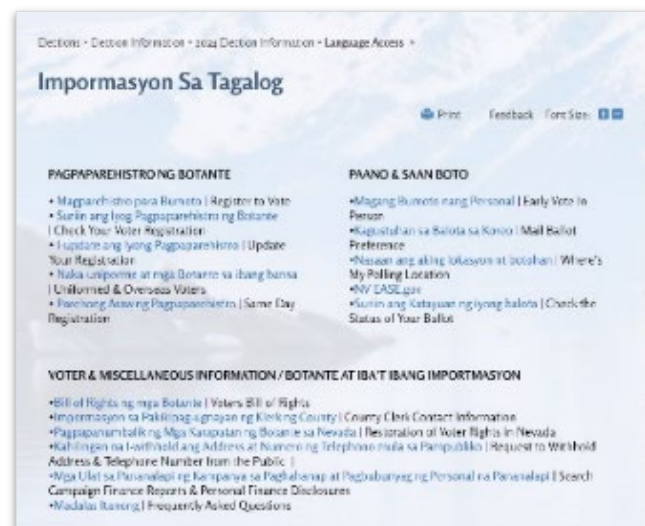
The [Language Access](#) page on the Nevada Secretary of State houses a variety of detailed information on voter participation and insights to help constituents understand the electoral landscape. Additionally, we provide access to interpretation services, guidance on voting procedures, and support for overcoming barriers to voting.

Language Specific Pages

These pages follow a similar format as the English language pages, specifically for 2024 Election Information.

Information is available (as of June 2024) in the following languages...

[Spanish](#) [Tagalog / Filipino](#) [Vietnamese](#)
[Chinese – Simplified](#) [Thai](#) [Korean](#)
(Coming Soon)



Interpretive Language Services



Established in April 2024, the agency began supporting telephonic interpreters' services specific to Elections content.



Self-Directed Services

The service avails constituents the ability to communicate with Nevada Elections Subject Matter Experts via telephonic interpreter in over 200 languages. The service, available Monday – Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm, is an opportunity to get specific questions answered in the languages that best serve the individual PRIOR to the actual election day activities from the comfort of their own home and own telephonic device.

This service is FREE to constituents as they dial a local phone number to connect to the interpreter bank.

On-Site Services

For those needing interpretation services at the polling locations, they are able to download “I Speak” print and cut card, and present to their polling official to access the same or similar services provided at the county level. “I Speak” cards, are available on each of the respective language pages, with an English branded fill-in available for other language inclusion.



Video ASL Interpretation

For those requiring interpretive assistance via American Sign Language, video interpretation services can also be accessed via the Language Line mechanisms.

Outreach Events

Establishing a physical presence at community events, the team presents one-to-one engagement with constituents, availing questions on participation, literature (multi-departmental), promotional items. Staff attempt to incorporate inquiry on primary vs general participation and knowledge sources for both candidates and ballot issues.

Information presented on tables may be generic to Elections, or specific to the intended special populations. Use of displays with QR codes for appointment setting (other divisions), Voter Registration, Ballot Trax or Language Access pages is prominently displayed, encouraging the availability of multi-lingual in person and telephonic services.



Monitoring & Evaluation of Services

Measurement and full accountability of the efforts of this program include the use of spreadsheet tallies, surveys, timeline and production tracking as baselines. It is critical to ensure that the services offered through the Language Access Initiative involve analysis of a variety of mechanisms.

Language Specific Consumer Interactions

The provision of a monthly summary including the following indicators will serve as the baseline for initial year operations. Indicators are noted below...

Telephonic Interpretation & Interactions:

Telephonic interactions with in-house staff offering direct interpretation can be logged via tally sheet or electronic form for tracking interactions. Language specificity should be denoted.

- Center Contacted / Area Code Jurisdiction Indicator
- Language Preference
- Date, Time & Duration of Call
- Staff Accessed
- Interpreter Accessed

Website Interactions:

Coordination with SOS IT Team to include use of Google Analytics or other validated tracker to track user accessibility.

- Counts of clicks or document downloads by Language
- Specific Page Accessibility by Language.

Video Access:

For departments making use of video content on website or third-party site, tracking of views, likes and subscribes per video will offer insight.

Community Concerns:

Tally of information requests from pertinent advocacy bodies for documentation or other language specific information requests.

- Email Concerns sent to nvelect@sos.nv.gov
- Telephonic Concerns contacting (775) 684-5705
- Qualitative Comments/Suggestions/Grievance Form

Social Media:

Usage of existing platform tool or interim manual count to establish baselines.

- Quantitative Insights - # of Comments, Views, Likes, Follows, Subscribes, Shares of Post Specific Content.
- Qualitative Insight – Review and analysis of specific Comments parsed between types, (general, specific topic, complaint, mis – dis information, other).

Outreach Engagement:

Community event engagement with distribution of materials, question answering opportunity and distribution of materials/promotional items.

- Event Type & Targeted Audience
- Sponsor / Promoter
- Location and Geographic Region of Events / Span of Influence

Specific Interest Populations:

Populations which have been pre-designated for purposes of Elections inclusion, identify challenges faced in the election's participation process, operative work arounds and participatory inclusion.

- Tribal Nations
- Veteran and Active Military (UOCAVA)
- Individuals with Disabilities

Stakeholders & Gatekeepers Engagement:

Communications, Meetings or Participation in Community and Faith Based relationships to potentially build collaboration and awareness opportunities.

- Date, Contact and Entity
- Span of Audience Influence (Entities Target Population)
- Discussion Point & Potential Engagement Opportunities

Internal Operational Indicators

Identifying systematic and systemic processes that have either promoted or hindered operation flow are also of importance. In most instances these are internal and can be classified as promising practices or lessons learned or procedural challenges. Establishing qualitative review on the following may be beneficial to the program as well.

- **Language Acculturation:** Ensuring that translation takes into consideration cultural nuances. Example: English to Spanish, but the variations of word use in a dialect traditionally used in Mexico, versus the same word as presented in a South American country found to be offensive.
- **Contracted Translator vs. Artificial Intelligence.** Consistency of use across languages, and contractual requisites regarding technological inclusion. Are comments or questions being presented that may reflect challenges with either method.
- **Concise Text:** Is the information being presented in a 5th-8th grade literacy level. Is the level of translation in one language appropriate for other languages as well, or might it be considered offensive. Is the text being parsed into smaller portions to gain better understanding by the reading audiences. Are visual indicators, infographics and culturally relevant imagery being included in the presentations.
- **Visual Appeal:** Is the content aesthetically pleasing and inviting reflective of the geographic regions within the state or exemplifying traditional canned appeal. Is the mechanism of delivery appropriate for the target audience.

Other Pulse Points for Consideration

- Consistency in Reporting and Tracking of Outcomes
- Timely Translation and Circulation of Content
- Flourishing Engagement with Finance/Accounting on Contracts and Issues Solved Promptly
- Quality Documentation for Presentation in Legislative or Conference Settings

Surveys

Surveys are a valuable tool for capturing the pulse of the community regarding their individualized knowledge of the elections process. By conducting surveys, organizations and governments can gather data on voters' understanding of key election topics, such as voter registration requirements, polling locations, and candidate platforms. Surveys will also provide insights into voters' attitudes and perceptions towards the electoral process, helping to identify areas for improvement and tailor outreach efforts.

Additionally, surveys can help gauge voter turnout intentions and inform targeted voter education campaigns, ultimately leading to a more informed and engaged electorate.

Grievance / Suggestions

Efforts to create a viable Language Access program require insights from the constituents themselves. Whether content, delivery or notification, establishing a warm and inviting mechanism for candid commentary, will help the agency to better serve the public. Each department within the SOS agency, avails relevant contact information to submit concerns identified. The SOS site currently avails a grievance / suggestion complaint form specific to Language Access in the Elections division content.