



## Steps to Start your Own Plan

**Step 1: Gather and Commit.** Gather a small, multi-departmental team of staff. Write down two organizational commitments:

- ✓ Commit to never turning anyone away because they do not speak English.
- ✓ Commit to improve your capacity every year to serve individuals with Limited English Proficiency and ensure that they have meaningful access to your services.

**Step 2: Write down what you already do to provide language access.**

Almost every organization already does something to provide language access. Ask your staff what it is, and write it down.

- (Do you know a language line phone number that you can use?)
- Do you provide brochures in other languages?
- Do you have at least one staff or volunteer that speak another language that is common in your area?)

**Step 3: Assess where you can grow and strengthen your language access policies and practices.**

Assess who are the individuals with limited English proficiency that have come to your program. Review community demographics and identify key languages that you should proactively plan to serve. Record this information in your Language Access Plan.

**Step 4: Plan for the Future.**

The key measures of "reasonable steps" and "meaningful access" are highly dependent on the demographic makeup of your community, the services you provide, the frequency with which individuals with limited English proficiency contact you for services, and the resources available to you. If the number of survivors with LEP in your program does not reflect the demographic make-up of your community, this may be because there are barriers for these individuals to access your program – for example, they are not aware of your program or believe your program is not accessible to them.

### Examples of immediate steps

1. Post "I Speak card" <https://www.lep.gov/i-speak-card>, near entrances to assist visitors with identifying which language they speak.
2. Post notices that inform people of their right to an interpreter. <http://www.masslegalservices.org/content/interpreter-poster-editable>
3. Develop a handout to help staff quickly connect to language access resources. Make this handout easily available near phones and public entrances to the building, and anywhere staff are likely to first welcome or meet with persons with LEP.
4. Translate vital documents into the languages most frequently utilized by participants and community members with limited English proficiency. If local programs in your state use the same intake form or other materials, consider collaborating to develop translated versions.