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## NEVADA BOARD OF PAROLE COMMISSIONERS

### Language Access Plan NRS 232.0081

#### I. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

Nevada's Senate Bill 318 (SB318 of the 81st Legislative Session) and the federal guidance on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006) both agree that language should not be a barrier to accessing governmental programs and services. Per SB318, "Persons with limited English proficiency require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language." Moreover, SB318 makes it clear that it is the responsibility of government to provide that access:

"State and local agencies and entities that receive public money have an obligation to provide meaningful, timely access for persons with limited English proficiency to the programs and services of those agencies and entities."

The Board of Parole Commissioners (Board) is committed to compliance with NRS 232.0081 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006) in ensuring meaningful access to State services and programs for individuals with limited English proficiency. Limited English proficiency inmates will continue to be served in compliance with Chapter 213 of NRS.

The purpose of this document is to establish an effective plan and protocol for Board personnel to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, individuals who have limited English proficiency. Following this plan is essential to the success of the Board's mission to render fair and just decisions on parole matters based on the law, the impact on victims and the community, and with the goal of successfully reintegrating offenders back into society.

This document is tailored to the Board.

#### II. GENERAL POLICY

The Board recognizes that the population eligible to receive its services include individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is the goal of the Board to ensure meaningful access to all individuals. The Board intends to take all reasonable steps to provide limited English proficiency individuals with meaningful access to its services and programs. The Board seeks to reduce barriers by increasing its capacity to deliver services and benefits to people in their preferred languages. This Language Access Plan applies to all Board programs and services, including, but not limited to:

- Programs related to parole and parole violation hearings.
- Programs related to victims.

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- Programs of Lifetime Supervision.
- Programs related to accessing forms on the Board’s website.

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 all reasonable steps to provide limited English proficiency individuals with meaningful access to its services and programs. The Board seeks to reduce barriers by increasing its capacity to deliver services and benefits to people in their preferred languages.

Toward this end, the Board of Parole Commissioners endorses the following policies:

1. The Board is committed to equity and takes all reasonable steps to provide limited English proficiency individuals with meaningful access to its services, programs, and activities.
2. The Board, rather than the limited English proficiency individual, bears the responsibility for providing appropriate language services, regardless of the limited English proficiency individuals’ preferred language, at no cost to the limited English proficiency individual.
3. Board staff at the initial points of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs.
4. Use of informal interpreters at parole hearings, such as family members, friends, or other acquaintances of persons with limited English proficiency who have no formal training in interpreting is not allowed, with the exception of inmate interpreters assisting and appearing as a representative during a parole hearing at a state institution. Minor children are prohibited from acting as interpreters.
5. No Board staff may suggest or require that a limited English proficiency individual provide an interpreter to receive agency services.

### Parole Board Language Access Coordinator:

Kathi Baker, Executive Director, [kjbaker@parole.nv.gov](mailto:kjbaker@parole.nv.gov) or 775-687-6566

The Language Access coordinator will review and update the Board’s Language Access Plan as necessary.

### III. PROFILE OF CLIENTS OF THE BOARD OF PAROLE COMMISSIONERS

The Board is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among our limited English proficiency members of the public so that we can better provide meaningful timely access to our services and programs without regard to any language impediments.

Parole Board services are offered online through the Parole Board website, in person, via email, telephone, or via remote platforms (e.g., Zoom, TEAMS). The public is encouraged to contact Board staff if they are unable to access Board services electronically.

The preferred language of the public receiving services from the Board is U. S. English. The Board currently does not track the relevant demographics of individuals that visit our Carson City or Las Vegas offices to attend hearings, call, email, or individuals who visit the Board’s website. It is unknown if any of these individuals identify as Indigenous or Refugee.

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The Board does not track vital information, in regard to inmates. The Department of Corrections (NDOC) tracks the relevant demographics of inmates. The Board sends a Notification of Parole Hearing form to inmates that appear on the monthly NDOC parole eligibility list. Inmates indicate if they need an interpreter on the hearing notification form.

As directed in NRS 213.131, during hearings to consider inmates for parole, the Board shall allow inmates to have a representative present to confer with and to speak on their behalf if they wish. If a Spanish interpreter is needed for an inmate's parole hearing, the caseworker is first contacted to determine if the inmate has an interpreter at the institution. This representation may include an attorney, NDOC staff, family members, friends, or another inmate. Inmates with physical communication disabilities are entitled to the services of an interpreter per NRS 213.128 at which an interpreter is scheduled at no expense to the inmate through the use of the State of Nevada's Master Services Agreement vendors.

Limited English proficiency members of the general public observing hearings may bring an English speaking family member.

Implementation of the Language Access Plan tools and resources may be dependent upon the Board receiving adequate funding from the Interim Finance Committee pursuant to Assembly Bill 480 (AB 480) of the 82nd Nevada Legislative session.

With the help of the webmaster, the Board will explore the possibility of adding a button to the parole.nv.gov website that will translate the website to the user's preferred language and find out if there is a way to track the use of the translation button.

#### IV. LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES AND PROCEDURES

The Board of Parole Commissioners believes that the appropriate provision of language services is vital to the fulfillment of its mission. Towards that end, the Board ensures that its staff are familiar with its language access policies and procedures.

Board staff will be apprised of Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts and SB318 and NRS 232.0081. Board staff will be informed of any changes as necessary.

Language access needs for the general public will be addressed in the following manner:

##### Oral/Sign Language Services:

Utilizing the mandatory vendors contracted with the State of Nevada through the Department of Administration, Purchasing Division, the Board will obtain all necessary translation services for limited English proficiency members of the public.

[https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/)

##### Written Language Services:

The Board does not have employees who are trained or certified to provide written language services in languages other than English for members of the public. If the need arises, the Board will contract with a State-approved vendor for written language services. The Board will use the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website.

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Community Outreach and Engagement

The Board does not have employees who are trained or certified to provide language services in-house for languages other than English. The Board will take steps to publicize the availability of language access services on the parole.nv.gov website.

Procedures and Resources for limited English proficiency Community Outreach:

Currently, telephone calls received by limited English proficiency individuals who speak Spanish are transferred to the Las Vegas office to a staff member fluent in Spanish, but not certified. The Board has one other staff member that is fluent in German. If a limited English proficiency individual speaks a language not readily available to the Board, then the Board will contract with a State-approved vendor for language services.

The Board is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among our (limited English proficiency) clients so that we can better provide meaningful, timely access to our services and programs without regard to any language impediments. A five year average of requested inmate interpreters contracted with a State-approved vendor for language services indicates the top five languages encountered are Spanish, American Sign Language (ASL), Farsi, Mandarin and Korean.

V. IMPLEMENTING THE LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES

The Parole Board is committed to providing Limited English Proficient members of the public full access to our services and programs. Board staff will follow the procedures described within this policy.

If language access services are requested, staff will inform the Parole Board's Language Access Coordinator and/or designated staff. The Language Access Coordinator and/or designee will take the appropriate steps as outlined in this document to secure a qualified person to provide the needed service(s).

Accessing Appropriate Oral/Sign Language Services: If sign language services are needed, employees will inform the Board's Language Access Coordinator and/or designated staff. The Language Access Coordinator and/or designated staff will secure a qualified person to provide the needed services by utilizing the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website.

[https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/)

Accessing Appropriate Written Language Services: Written translation services will be provided on the Board's website. If written language services are needed, staff will inform the requesting party that the documents are available for translation on the Board's website. The Board will continue working with the DPS Webmaster to ensure all documents are available for translation.

Language Services Quality Assurance: The Board is committed to ensuring that all the language service providers it uses are qualified and competent to provide those services. The Board will secure qualified professionals by utilizing the list of approved vendors located on the Department of Administration's Purchasing Division website.

[https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation\\_Interpretation/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/)

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Staff Training Policies and Procedures: The Board believes that the appropriate provision of language services is vital to the fulfillment of its mission. Towards that end, the Board will ensure that staff are familiar with its language access policies, the Language Access Plan, and the above procedures for providing said services.

**VI. EVALUATION OF AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN**

The Board is committed to monitoring the performance of the above policies, procedures, and resources to ensure that the Language Access Plan is responsive to the needs of both the Board and the people it serves. The Language Access Coordinator will review, evaluate, and update (if needed) its Language Access Plan as necessary.

Processes for Monitoring and Evaluation: The Board's Language Access Coordinator will be responsible for reviewing and updating (if needed) the Parole Board's Language Access Plan.

Evaluation and Outcomes and Proposed Changes:

The Board is committed to providing our limited English proficient individuals 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 demographic data obtained through surveys. We will also track any costs we may incur by using external, state resources.

Proposed Budgetary Implications: In the past, the Board has had minimal requests for interpreters from the general public. Funding may be needed to provide translation for the conversion of PDF files on the Board's website which may include the services of a webmaster. The Board will continue to work with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Webmaster to determine the cost.

Suggested Legislative Amendments: A liaison that works for Office of New Americans could be assigned to provide language access roles for an agency on an as needed basis.