

# Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking Language Access Protocol Checklist

This checklist provides a list of components Enhanced Collaborative Model anti-human trafficking task forces should consider when developing a language access protocol. Per OVC definition, A language access plan is an organizational document that contains a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that ensure that limited English proficient individuals will have meaningful access to that agency’s programs, services, and products. This checklist can be used as a guide for the development of a strong protocol. While it is not mandatory to include all items, it is important that task force members discuss and agree what should be included specific to their local task force.

Developing a language access protocol will allow task force members to:

- 1 **Demonstrate** compliance with language access requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- 2 **Establish** standards and procedures on language assistance measures for task force members; and
- 3 **Minimize** language access barriers for human trafficking victims with limited English proficiency (LEP).

**Instructions:** Review and discuss this list of considerations to include when developing a language access protocol with task force members.

## Task Force Self-Assessment

Conducting a self-assessment within a multi-disciplinary task force is the first step to ensuring effective communication at all points of contact between a victim with limited English proficiency (LEP) and your agency and partners. The self-assessment (1) identifies languages needed; (2) identifies and evaluates language resources currently used; (3) identifies language resources available; and (4) identifies gaps and barriers to language access.

Components	✓
Identify potential interactions task force members may have with LEP individuals	✓
Review available data on LEP populations in service area using data from federal, state, local government, community, and faith-based organizations. Languages spoken by victims may vary from data collected from the Census or other sources.	✓
Identify current resources used to provide language access (e.g., bilingual staff, in-person interpreters, telephonic interpreters, volunteers, and translation services)	✓
Identify current gaps or barriers to language access	✓

## Policy Statement

A policy statement provides the purpose and expectations of the task force member agencies and their employees in providing language access.

### Components



Rationale for task force language access protocol

Statement specifying a commitment to providing meaningful language access

Every task force member agency's obligation to provide free language assistance to LEP individuals

Requirement of employees to inform individuals of their right to an interpreter, at no cost to the LEP individual

Individuals who assisted in developing the protocol (includes representatives from law enforcement, victim services, and prosecution)

Statement on how the protocol supports the mission of the task force

## Legal Authorities

This section provides the legal basis for the language access protocol and how the protocol supports the mission of the task force.

### Components



Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(deaf/hard of hearing\)](#)

*Optional Additional Legal Authorities*

Safe Streets Act

Executive Order 13166

State/local/tribal statutes

Preexisting task force agency policies

Department of Justice grant conditions

## Definitions

Provide an explanation for any terms or standards referenced in the protocol. Clear definitions establish standards across the task force, ensuring that the quality of interpretation/translation is consistent at every point of contact. Definitions should clearly define what level of skill, training, or certification is appropriate for interpreters/ translators/bilingual staff based on the context of the interaction. *(Note: The use of untrained interpreters jeopardizes victim safety, investigations, and successful prosecutions. A trained and qualified interpreter will interpret accurately without bias. An untrained/unqualified interpreter will summarize, leave out details, make mistakes that can impact victim safety and jeopardize prosecutions, and could be biased or have a conflict of interest.)*

Components	
Limited English proficiency	
Interpretation/interpreter	
A. Specifications of a qualified versus certified interpreter	
B. Telephonic interpreter	
C. <i>Optional</i> : consecutive, simultaneous modes of interpretation	
Confidentiality	
Trauma-informed	
Translation/translator	
Bilingual staff/law enforcement officer/volunteer	
Deaf vs. deaf*	
Vital documents that require translation	

## Policies & Protocols

This section details the implementation of policies and procedures for providing language access services and the resources available to task force members to communicate effectively with LEP victims and survivors. Policies should include steps to ensure trained and impartial interpreters are used at each point of contact. There should be a strict prohibition against the use of bystanders, victims, suspects, or potential suspects to interpret at any point beyond exigent circumstances. If bilingual staff and law enforcement officers will be interpreting, there should be a detailed description of the training provided to bilingual staff and officers on interpretation skills-building, the interpreter’s role, when investigations can be conducted in another language (assigned investigator is bilingual), and ethics. This section should also detail the training provided to the interpreters on working with human trafficking victims, including terminology, trauma-informed interpretation, and ethics.

Components	↙
<i>Implementation and Funding</i>	
Identification and description of person(s) in charge of implementation of the plan. The description should detail the chain of command for authority and oversight, implementation timeline, and explain the coordination of language access among task force members.	
Identification of funding sources for language access resources	
<i>Language Identification/Notification of Language Access</i>	
Signage in offices/lobby/waiting areas includes language identification and availability of free interpretation services	
“I Speak” cards and world map	
Telephonic language service	
<i>Using Language Access Services (Site-Specific and On-Site versus Off-Site)</i>	
How to contact bilingual staff/volunteers/personnel	

## POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS Continued

How to contact in-person interpretation services

How to contact telephonic interpretation services

How to handle requests for translated materials

When to use which resource (bilingual staff vs. interpreter)

Prohibition on the use of children, family members, bystanders as interpreters

Prohibition on the use of victims as interpreters

Prohibition on the use of suspects as interpreters

Standards/guidance for using mechanized interpretation/translation

### *Complaint Process for Poor Interpretation*

How/to whom to report complaint

Guidelines for information to be gathered (date, identification number, language, issue, etc.)

Protocols for investigation and resolution of complaint

### *Training*

When and how staff/volunteers/interpreters/other personnel will be trained on language access protocols and working with interpreters

When and how staff/volunteers/interpreters/other personnel will be trained on the language access plan

Description of training offered on interpretation skills-building if bilingual staff or law enforcement officers are used as interpreters

Other types of training staff/volunteers/interpreters/other personnel will receive

## Monitoring and Compliance

An explanation on how task force members will evaluate how they provide services to LEP individuals; how they monitor plan performance; and the process for reviewing and modifying language access plans, policies, and procedures.

### Components



Date of review (and updating) of protocol (at least annually)

Examination of protocol to ensure efficiency and identify needed improvements

Assessment of languages used in the community to ensure resources are adequate

Plans for implementing training, future translations, hiring of bilingual staff, etc.

Staff position, workgroup, or committee that will be responsible for monitoring and compliance

List of service area's most commonly spoken languages and most frequently encountered languages

## Appendices

Appendices should include any supporting documents or products resulting from the language access protocol

Components	
Memorandum of understanding with task force partners	✓
Contact sheet: bilingual staff/volunteers/personnel, interpreters, and translators	
List of translated materials/documents (type, language, future needs)	
Interpreter code of ethics	
Confidentiality protocols	
Release of information	
Translated glossaries/terms	
Signage for lobby/waiting areas	
“I Speak” Card	
<i>Optional:</i> world map	
Interpreter/translator confidentiality agreement	
Other Considerations	
Components	
Ensure the protocol is well organized, sections make sense, and new task force members can find things easily	✓
Ensure the protocol applies universally across different programs, sites, and shifts	
Fluency in another language does not mean a bilingual person is able to interpret or translate accurately. Requesting bilingual staff to perform duties which they are not trained or skilled to perform jeopardizes victim safety. A statement allowing for bilingual staff to decline external agency requests to interpret/translate should be included.	

**\*Deaf vs. deaf:** Using a lower case “d” when using the word deaf refers to the medical condition of having hearing loss. Using a capital “D” when using the word Deaf refers to a cultural distinction that defines a group of people who are deaf and identify themselves as members of a linguistic and cultural group. This Deaf identity is akin to other ethnic groups, such as Hispanic, African American, or Pacific Islander. This distinction is made based on how the individual self-identifies and impacts the language access tools used.