

Serving crime victims with language access needs (e.g., limited English proficiency, deaf or hard of hearing) requires multilayered strategies. Ensuring language access while addressing critical needs¹ can assist victims with exercising their rights and participating in the criminal justice process. Overcoming language access barriers enhances investigations, the prosecution of crimes, and public safety.²



Safety – Physical, emotional, and psychological safety after victimization

- Can agency personnel communicate about victimization in languages used in the community?
- Are qualified, trained, objective interpreters available for people to safely report crimes and express their needs?



Support – Connection to ongoing assistance and inclusion of support persons chosen by victims

- When victims request assistance with criminal justice processes (e.g., exercising victims' rights, understanding prosecution decisions), do agency personnel include qualified, trained, objective interpreters in calls and meetings?
- Do agency personnel offer victims the option of having support persons accompany them during key interactions (e.g., investigative interviews, forensic examination/photography), and are qualified, trained, objective interpreters included?



Information – Rights, resources, future points of contact

- Has information about victims' rights and resources been translated into languages used in the community?
- Is other public-facing information (e.g., building signs, webpages) available in languages used in the community?



Access – Opportunities to participate in decisions and processes

- Are qualified, trained, objective interpreters used when communicating with victims throughout the criminal justice process?
- Are agency personnel able to provide regular case updates in languages used in the community?

¹ The seven critical needs of victims provide a foundation for implementing enhanced victim response in law enforcement agencies. For more information, see [Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims \(ELERV\)](#).

² Language access plans should include communication in spoken languages, sign language, and braille.



Continuity – Collaboration among criminal justice system professionals and processes

- Do agency personnel share translated material about agency processes with partners?
- Do agency personnel prepare victims with language access needs for the processes of other agencies?



Voice – Opportunities to be heard and to ask questions

- Can victims effectively interact with the agency by phone (cell phones and landlines), online, and through personal contact?
- Do the agency's policies and procedures address how to meet the language access needs of victims?



Justice – Resolution and accountability

- Does the agency use language access services to ensure equitable response to victims with limited English proficiency?
- Do agency personnel seek input and views on case resolution from victims with language access needs?



Resources:

[*Critical Language Access Needs of Victims - Webinar*](#) (IACP)

[*Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking: Language Access Protocol Checklist*](#) (IACP)

[*LEP.gov*](#) (Department of Justice)

[*Sample for Discussion Purposes Planning Tool: Considerations for Creation of a Language Assistance Policy and Implementation Plan for Addressing Limited English Proficiency in a Law Enforcement Agency*](#) (Department of Justice)

[*Language Access, Interpretation, and Translation*](#) (Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence)