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 needs 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.

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.
Critical Language Access Needs of Victims

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)
- 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)

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