

Legislative Coordinating Commission Policy on Language Translation and Interpretation Services

Approved Date: October 15, 2024

Policy

The Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC), to the extent resources are available, will provide translation and interpreting services in Hmong, Somali, Spanish, and other languages, when practical, for official legislative activities. These services are available to members of the legislature and legislative staff to assist in communicating with the public.

Translation of written materials will be limited to those authorized by the House, Senate, and the directors of joint offices and commissions. All member communications must comply with the policies of the House and Senate.

Scope

This policy applies to members and employees of the Minnesota Legislature who may interact with individuals requesting language assistance for hearings, meeting with members and staff, or communicating electronically or by phone. It encompasses all forms of communication including written translation and verbal interpretation.

Definitions

Translation: The process of converting written text from one language to another.

Interpretation: The process of orally converting spoken language from one language to another.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP): Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Qualified Translator/Interpreter: A person who has been certified or otherwise proven competent to provide accurate and reliable translation or interpretation services.

Identification of Language Needs

The LCC will develop a process for members and staff to request language services. Members and staff will submit all requests through the LCC designated process. The LCC will review requests to determine if the request complies with this policy, identify the language service needs, and determine if translators and/or interpreters are available.

The LCC will review census information to identify and remain apprised of changing trends in commonly spoken languages throughout the state and prioritize services for these languages as necessary and within available resources.

Members of the public may not request language services directly from the LCC. All requests must be made by a legislative member or staff person.

Provision of Translation Services

Written materials essential to accessing information from the Minnesota Legislature will be translated into the primary language requested if the materials have been authorized to be translated by the House, Senate, or joint office or commission. The primary languages for translation services are Hmong, Somali, and Spanish. Other languages will be available when translation services can be practically provided as determined by the LCC.

Materials include, but are not limited to, forms, notices, informational brochures, surveys, and pamphlets.

Provision of Interpretation Services

Interpretation services will be provided for interactions, including but not limited to, in-person meetings, phone calls, testifying at hearings, and virtual communications.

Interpretation services can be provided through various means, including in-person interpreters, telephone interpreter services, or video remote interpreting (VRI) systems.

Training and Resources

The LCC will provide all staff and members information on how to access language services and where to obtain information on the process for requesting translation or interpretation services.

Resources and access to the LCC process will be available to members when engaged in official legislative activities and for staff to assist in arranging language access services.

Quality Assurance

Translation and interpretation services will be provided to the legislature under a contract with a vendor. Translation will be performed by qualified translators to ensure accuracy and cultural relevance. Only qualified interpreters will be used to ensure effective communication and confidentiality.

The LCC will regularly assess the quality and effectiveness of its translation and interpretation services. Feedback from staff and individuals using these services will be collected and used to improve language services.

Periodic reviews will be conducted to ensure compliance with this policy and to update procedures as necessary.

Confidentiality and Professionalism

All translators and interpreters acquired under contract by the vendor are expected to adhere to strict confidentiality agreements to protect the privacy of individuals and confidentiality requirements will be included in agreements to perform this work.

Professional conduct is mandatory, and any breach of confidentiality or professionalism will result in appropriate action which may include but is not limited to, a pause in service, or discontinuing work with the agency, translator, or interpreter.