

STATE OF NEVADA

JOE LOMBARDO
Governor



DR. KRISTOPHER SANCHEZ
Director

PERRY FAIGIN
NIKKI HAAG
MARCEL F. SCHAEERER
Deputy Directors

ADAM SCHNEIDER
Executive Director

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY OFFICE OF NEVADA BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COUNCILS STANDARDS NEVADA STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY

Language Access Plan

I. Purpose and Authority

Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 232 and federal guidance on Title VI address the barriers persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) face in accessing governmental programs and services. Persons with LEP require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language. To that end, 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 Nevada State Board of Optometry (herein "the Board") is committed to complying with NRS 232.0081 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006) to ensure meaningful access to State services and programs for individuals with LEP. The purpose of this document is to establish an effective plan and protocol for employees of the Board to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, individuals who have LEP. Following this plan and protocol is essential to the success of our mission to protect the public health, safety and welfare by ensuring that only competent practitioners of optometry are licensed in this State.

II. General Policy

The Board recognizes that the population eligible to receive its services may include individuals with LEP. It is the policy of the Board to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals. The Board will adopt the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to the services the Board provides and regulates.

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 LEP 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. The Board endorses the following policies:

- The Board is committed to equity and will take all reasonable steps to provide LEP

individuals with meaningful access to all its services, programs, and activities.

- The Board, rather than the LEP individual, bears the responsibility for providing appropriate language services, regardless of the LEP individual's preferred language, at no cost to the LEP individual.
- Staff at the initial points of contact have the specific duty to identify and record language needs.
- Use of informal interpreters such as family, friends of the person seeking service, or other customers is not allowed. Minor children are prohibited from acting as interpreters.
- Staff may not suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive Board services.

Board's Language Access Coordinator:

Executive Director
775-883-8367
director@nvoptometry.org

III. Profile of Clients of the Board of Optometry

The Board's preliminary assessment is that it has a limited LEP constituency. The Board's primary "service" is licensing and regulating optometrists. All applicants for licensure must meet eligibility requirements, including graduation from an accredited institution, and passing scores of national and state examinations.

The Board currently collects limited demographic information from individuals applying for a license. Instituted in 9/2024 for the Board's initial licensure applications, license by endorsement applications, and biennial licensure renewal applications, that demographic information now includes the definition of LEP as stated in NRS 232.0082(5)(c) in order to educate the applicant, along with sought information listed in NRS 232.0081(1)(b) specific to preferred language, if the individual identifies as indigenous, and if the individual identifies as a refugee:

Pursuant to NRS 232.0081(1), do you consider yourself a person of "limited English proficiency"? (NRS 232.0082(5)(c) defines "limited English proficiency" as "a person who reads, writes or speaks a language other than English and who cannot readily understand or communicate in the English language in written or spoken form, as applicable, based on the manner in which information is being communicated.")

Pursuant to NRS 232.0081(1)(b)(2), what is your preferred language?

Pursuant to NRS 232.0081(1)(b)(4), do you consider yourself an indigenous person?

Pursuant to NRS 232.0081(1)(b)(5), do you consider yourself a refugee?

The Board's renewal period occurs from November of odd numbered years through February of even numbered years and allowance for a late renewal period through May of even numbered years, and most recently occurred from 11/1/2025 – 2/28/2026 and then to 5/31/2026. Of the approximately 550 license renewals applicants who have submitted any one of the above listed applicant types, no applicant has answered in the affirmative to any of the above sought information.

In addition to licensing and regulating optometrists, the Board interacts with, responds to inquiries from, and accepts complaints against optometrists from members of the public. Of the approximately two dozen or so complaints received by the Board on an annual basis in the prior 24 months, none have requested non-English translation services but this does not preclude such requests occurring in the future; hence the below regarding translation services and implementation of such services.

IV. Language Access Services and Procedures

The Board does not have staff who can provide language assistance services, and it does not have any known LEP applicants, registrants, or licensees.

The Board has never received a request for translation or American Sign Language Services from LEP applicants, registrants, licensees, or the public, but this does not mean that such requests will not occur in the future, hence the below regarding translation services and implementation of such services. The Board is aware that according to the US Census, 20% of Nevadans speak Spanish at home, and therefore it would likely aid the public's access to the Board's services if the Board's public-facing materials, FAQs, and forms were available in Spanish.

The Board will address language access needs by:

- using one of the active statewide contracts for translation/interpreter services offered by the State, found at: https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_Interpretation/ including but not limited to: 1) United Language Group, STNV# T29045110; 2) GLOBO, STNV# T29047125; 3) Volatia, STNV# T32013574; or 4) Language Link T32000889.
- providing Notice of Language Assistance Services

Although the Board consists of one full time equivalent employee, all staff at present or hired in the future will be made aware of appropriate language assistance services. Those seeking services may also request language assistance by contacting the Board by email which is posted on the Board's website.

The Board is committed to tracking the languages preferred for communication among the individuals with LEP whom the Board serves, so that the Board can better provide meaningful, timely access to the Board's services without regard to any language impediments. The preferred language of the public and individual receiving services from the Board is US English. The most common methods for the public to access services are through the Board's website, email communication, and telephone calls to the Board office. The Board has never received a request for translation or American Sign Language Services for LEP applicants, licensees or the public.

All staff will be made aware of appropriate language assistance services. Those seeking services may also request language assistance by contacting the Board at admin@nvoptometry.org which is posted on the Board's website.

V. Implementing The Language Access Services

In order to fulfill the goals of this Plan, the Language Access Coordinator will provide staff with the necessary training to ensure that staff are familiar with the Language Access Plan and its related policies. This training will include:

- How to respond to LEP individuals via telephone, writing, or in person.
- How to seek assistance with internal or state sanctioned language access resources.
- How to document the mode of communication and preferred language of an LEP individual to better understand the needs of those accessing services and ensure that equitable access is available throughout the duration of their interactions with the Board.
- How to report these interactions to the Language Access Coordinator.

In addition to staff training, the Board will use the internal and state sanctioned resources to provide information in languages other than English.

VI. Evaluation of and Recommendations for the Language Access Plan

The Board is committed to providing LEP individuals full access to its services and is committed to monitoring the policies and procedures stated above to ensure that LEP 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. The Board will also track any costs it may incur by using external, state sanctioned resources.

The Board is exempt from the State Budget Act; all expenses are paid from fees received from licensees and applicants seeking to become a licensee.

Suggested Legislative Amendments:

Independent regulatory Boards that do not have staff capacity to perform language access roles could benefit from a State-assigned liaison that works for the Governor's Office of New Americans to provide those duties for the Boards on an as needed basis, similar to an assigned Deputy Attorney General (DAG).