

Advocating for Language Access for Crime Survivors with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

If an agency receives any federal funding, they are required to provide meaningful language access for people with Limited English Proficiency under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 13166.

Meaningful language access means access in the survivor's language that is timely, accurate and effective. It may involve interpreters, bilingual staff and translated materials.

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Helping those who help others

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If your client is denied language access:

Step 1

remind the agency about their legal obligation under federal law

Step 2

ask to speak with a supervisor

The survivor has the right to file a complaint against the agency in the event of a language access violation.

Visit reachingvictims.org for more resources.

Useful phrases for language access advocacy

- The survivor needs a qualified _____ (language) interpreter and all relevant materials in _____ (language).
- My role as an advocate is to provide advocacy services in language, but I do not have the skill level to interpret. Also, it is not possible to perform effectively the roles of advocate and interpreter at the same time.
- Do you have this form/ document in _____ (language)? If not, the survivor needs a qualified interpreter to go over the document in their language.
- Can you provide an estimate of when the survivor will receive services in their language? If not, can I speak with a supervisor.
- The survivor's child/family member /friend should not interpret unless there are exigent (emergency) circumstances. Please provide a qualified interpreter.
- The survivor looks confused and I believe she is not understanding the interpreter. Let's check with her if there's any communication barrier. We may need a different interpreter.

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