

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



Draft Language Access Plan

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Introduction

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the component within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsible for adjudicating immigration benefits, promoting citizenship and ensuring the integrity of the nation's immigration system. USCIS has more than 18,000 federal and contract employees in 250 offices across the globe and includes the following Directorates that adjudicate applications and petitions for immigration benefits: Service Center Operations; Field Operations; and Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations. Other directorates and program offices do not adjudicate benefit applications. Instead, they manage specific programs, lead communications and public engagements, and support DHS and USCIS as a whole. See USCIS Goals for a detailed description of USCIS's public-facing program offices and directorates, and the specific goals and activities that each has undertaken to address the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals.

[Executive Order \(EO\) 13166](#) directs each Federal agency to “examine the services it provides and develop and implement a system by which LEP individuals can meaningfully access those services consistent with, and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of the Agency,” (65 Fed. Reg. 50, 121 [Aug 16, 2000]). The Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Civil Rights Division issued guidance that defined LEP persons as “[i]ndividuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English,” (67 Fed. Reg. 41,455, 41,459 (June 18, 2002)). The DHS Language Access Plan requires each component to draft its own plan. Accordingly, USCIS drafted this plan.

USCIS regularly interacts with customers in languages other than English through interpreters and translated materials. USCIS has an established practice of producing educational and outreach materials in multiple languages, making these translated materials publicly available on uscis.gov and uscis.gov/espanol, and hosting public engagement sessions in other languages. Applicants may bring an interpreter with them to field offices to assist in interviews and other interactions. USCIS is examining its policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter in interviews. Receipt notices for USCIS applications currently instruct applicants to bring their own interpreters. USCIS continues to assess customers' needs and develop resources and policies that reflect the needs of LEP individuals.

This plan establishes goals and guidelines, consistent with [EO 13166](#) and the [DHS Language Access Plan](#) for interacting with LEP individuals. This plan summarizes USCIS's current efforts to ensure meaningful access for LEP individuals and analyzes language access at USCIS. The USCIS Language Access Plan will be posted to USCIS's Multilingual Resources Page (uscis.gov/multilingual) and on the USCIS intranet for internal use.

USCIS Policy Statement

USCIS follows the DHS-wide language access policy in the DHS Language Access Plan, and will take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency to its services, resources, activities, and programs, consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the agency's fundamental mission. USCIS will incorporate language access considerations in its routine strategic and business planning, identify and translate materials into the most frequently encountered languages, provide interpretive support or guidance where appropriate, and educate its personnel about language access responsibilities and how to utilize available language access resources.

This policy applies to all USCIS employees who interact with the general public whether in person or by electronic or telephonic means.

Definitions

- i. **Bilingual persons:** Persons who are bilingual are fluent in two languages and are able to conduct the business of the workplace in either of those languages. This is to be distinguished from proficiency in more than one language. An individual who is proficient in a language may, for example, be able to greet an LEP individual in his or her language, but not conduct agency business in that language. Interpretation and translation require the interpreter to be fluently bilingual, and also require additional specific skills as described below in (iii)
- ii. **Interpretation and translation:** Interpretation involves oral communication. Translation involves written communication. Simultaneous interpretation involves the immediate communication of meaning from one language into another. An interpreter conveys meaning orally; as a result, interpretation requires skills different from those needed for translation. Interpreting is a complex task that combines several abilities beyond language competence in order to deliver an effective professional interpretation. From the standpoint of the user, a successful interpretation is one that faithfully and accurately conveys the meaning of the source language orally, reflecting the style, register, and cultural context of the source message, without omissions, additions, or embellishments. Professional interpreters are subject to specific codes of conduct and should be trained in interpretive skills, ethics, and subject-matter language. DHS components using the services of interpreters should request information about certification, assessments taken, qualifications, experience, and training. Interpreters may be physically present, or, in appropriate circumstances, may participate by videoconference or telephone. When videoconferencing or telephonic interpretation are used, options include connecting directly with a specific professional interpreter with known qualifications, or using a company that provides telephonic interpretation services and has in place quality control and privacy safeguards.
- iii. **Language Assistance Services:** Oral and written language services provided to help LEP individuals communicate effectively with USCIS staff and to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to services, activities, or other programs administered by USCIS.

Language assistance may be provided in the form of translated materials, competent interpreters or interpreter monitors provided by USCIS to monitor the interpretation services of the interpreter provided by the applicant or petitioner.

- iv. **Limited English Proficient Persons:** Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.
- v. **Bilingual staff:** A USCIS staff person who has been assessed as fluent in speaking, reading or writing English and one other language and is able to conduct the business of the workplace in either of those languages. This is to be distinguished from proficiency in more than one language. An individual who is proficient in a language may, for example, be able to greet an LEP individual in his or her language, but not conduct agency business in that language.
- vi. **Primary Language:** A person's primary language is the language in which the person communicates most effectively.

Current Efforts to Provide Language Access

USCIS takes seriously its obligation to provide LEP persons with meaningful access to its services. USCIS continues to find new ways to meet the needs of LEP individuals by providing public engagement sessions hosted in other languages, translating materials, and conducting self-assessments of language access efforts.

Language Access at USCIS Field Operations Interviews

USCIS domestic field offices handle scheduled interviews for non-asylum related applications. In 2010, the Field Operations Directorate (FOD) conducted an informal survey that found that among the customers who required an interpreter, the languages most commonly spoken were Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, Haitian Creole, Korean, Punjabi, and Urdu.

Field offices supplement the information provided by the National Customer Service Center (NCSC) telephone line and uscis.gov by providing information and customer service through brochures and in-person information counter appointments scheduled through the [InfoPass](#) system, which is available in 12 languages. Field Operations uses the resources of the Customer Service and Public Engagement (CSPE) Directorate as well as the translated materials provided by CSPE and the Office of Communications (OCOMM) to provide resources and support services to LEP persons in USCIS field offices and when responding to InfoPass appointments.

Bilingual staff, contract employees, and personnel from other DHS offices and federal partners provide support, as needed, at information counters at field offices in languages other than English. Applicants may bring an interpreter with them to field offices. USCIS is examining its policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter in interviews. Receipt notices for USCIS applications currently instruct applicants to bring their own interpreters.

Language Access at USCIS Asylum Division Interviews

The Asylum Division is responsible for adjudicating applications for asylum under section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and requests for suspension of deportation or special-rule

cancellation of removal under section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). In addition, the Asylum Division determines credible fear, reasonable fear and safe third-country screening processes.

Regulations related to asylum adjudication require that asylum seekers provide their own competent interpreters at scheduled asylum interviews, at no expense to the Government. The interpreter must be at least 18 years of age and fluent in both the native language of the applicant, or other language in which the applicant is fluent, and English. The interpreter may be a family member, friend, or other person associated with the LEP person. Neither the applicant's attorney or representative, nor a representative of the applicant's country of nationality or last habitual residence, nor witness testifying on behalf of the applicant may serve as the interpreter.

NACARA applicants who are unable to proceed with the interview in English must provide a competent interpreter, at no expense to the Government, who is fluent in English and a language in which they are fluent, who is not their legal representative or a witness testifying on their behalf. In situations where the NACARA request is associated with an asylum application, the interpreter may not be a representative or employee of the applicant's country of nationality, or if stateless, country of last habitual residence. If at any time the asylum officer believes that the interpreter is not competently interpreting at the interview, the asylum officer may terminate and reschedule the interview. The applicant will receive written notice that he or she will be scheduled for another interview, at which time he or she must bring a competent interpreter. Many NACARA appointment, instructional and decision notices are available in English and Spanish.

The Asylum Division also uses a telephonic interpretation service to monitor the affirmative asylum interviews in order to ensure the quality and integrity of the interpretation. The Asylum Division has blanket purchase agreements (BPAs) with two selected firms to provide monitoring services for asylum-related interviews. Apart from providing monitoring services for affirmative asylum interviews, the Asylum Division provides interpretation services to individuals in the credible fear, reasonable fear and safe third-country screening processes. Regulations or Asylum Division procedures mandate that the Government provide interpreters to individuals undergoing each of these processes when they receive an orientation, when they are interviewed for protection screening determinations, and at the time that the Government issues their decisions. The Asylum Division evaluates legal requirements, USCIS policy, available funding, and customer service needs to establish BPAs for interpretation services to support the Asylum Division's mission of enabling trained asylum officers to conduct interviews as described above. The public is informed of the availability of translated materials and other information and resources on uscis.gov and through regularly scheduled meetings with nongovernmental organization representatives.

Contact with LEP Persons Outside the Interview Environment

Bilingual Customer Service: The National Customer Service Center provides nationwide telephone assistance to customers calling from within the United States about immigration benefits and services. All callers are immediately informed that all levels of call support are

available in Spanish. USCIS conducts monthly surveys and quarterly focus groups to assess customer satisfaction and determine the most common primary languages of the USCIS customer base. USCIS has conducted multiple self-assessments that indicate that Spanish is overwhelmingly the most frequently-cited primary language of non-English callers to the NCSC.

Bilingual Website: USCIS maintains a Spanish-language website, uscis.gov/espanol. Since its launch in 2009, this website has consistently been one of the top-ranked federal websites in customer satisfaction, as recorded through the American Customer Satisfaction Index's online survey. More than 7,000 users visit the site each day, and the number continues to grow.

Multilingual Issue-Based Outreach: USCIS regularly hosts multilingual engagements to allow the LEP community to engage with USCIS on a variety of issues in person, by teleconference, email, Twitter, and via live streaming video. USCIS hosts quarterly Spanish events (*Enlace*), biannual Chinese engagements (*Jiao liu*), an annual Vietnamese event (*Giao tiep*), a Korean engagement (*Sulmyounghwae*) and in FY 2015, an Arabic engagement (*Musharakah*). Topics included petitioning for an immediate relative, citizenship, and immigration fraud and prevention. These events are supplemented by extensive multilingual outreach conducted by USCIS field offices, and reach more than 10,000 participants a year. USCIS offers free webinars to employers about E-Verify and Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, in Spanish, and a free webinar on employee rights in Spanish. USCIS also offers a variety of E-Verify materials in more than 20 languages on its [Foreign Language Resources](#) page.

Multilingual Media Outreach: USCIS regularly disseminates materials to foreign language media and disseminates translated material, such as press releases and fact sheets, to Spanish-language media outlets. USCIS regularly uses social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, to disseminate translated messages in Spanish and in other languages as needed. In FY 2015, the E-Verify program added closed captions in six languages to the E-Verify: [Employee Rights and Responsibilities](#) video which had been available in English and Spanish since 2010.

Multilingual Resources and Fact Sheets: USCIS regularly translates informational brochures into other languages. USCIS launched uscis.gov/multilingual, where all materials available in different languages are centralized for easier accessibility. Information on program-specific materials, like E-Verify, the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program, citizenship, and the unauthorized practice of immigration law, is available in different languages on the [Multilingual Resources Page](#) and on the pages for those programs. In FY 2011, USCIS developed brochures in 14 languages on the unauthorized practice of immigration law, all of which are available on the USCIS website and four of which (English, Spanish, Chinese, and Haitian Creole) are available in hard copy.

InfoPass and Information Counter Appointments: Customers may use 12 languages to make appointments to visit their local USCIS office through an online scheduling program called [InfoPass](#). InfoPass is available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Russian, Portuguese, French, Korean, Polish and Arabic. A survey of InfoPass use showed that during the third quarter of FY 2014, 76.2 percent of customers chose English and

16.5 percent chose Spanish when scheduling appointments.

Translation of Updated Form Instructions: USCIS plans to produce Spanish translations of the instructions for the most commonly filed forms after the updated English versions of these forms and form instructions are released. USCIS will consider additional translations as appropriate.

Translations for Outreach and Education Documents: Through the Customer Service and Public Engagement (CSPE) Directorate, USCIS maintains a contract with a certified translation company to provide services in multiple languages as needed. This company supports program offices and directorates that request translated brochures, educational materials, or other documents. CSPE continues to assess which additional documents should be translated based on feedback from surveys, internal assessments, and input from other USCIS program offices and directorates.

Additional materials: See USCIS Goals for a detailed description of USCIS's public facing program offices and directorates and the specific goals and activities each has undertaken to address the needs of LEP persons.

Development of USCIS Language Access Plan

To develop this plan, USCIS created a Language Access Working Group comprised of representatives from each of the program offices and directorates that interact with the public. The working group collected information on USCIS's interactions with LEP persons and examined the results from the most recent informal survey of Field Operations offices' interactions with LEP customers. While drafting this plan, USCIS continued translating material for public distribution, conducting multilingual public engagement sessions, and examining how to expand the range of services available to LEP persons. In support of USCIS's goal of reaching LEP communities, USCIS conducted two focus groups to more closely examine the reach of our services and message within LEP communities.

USCIS will continue to use resources provided by DOJ and DHS and apply the four-factor analysis in guidance issued with EO 13166 to specific programs and services. This analysis is used to determine the appropriate language assistance services to ensure an LEP individual has meaningful access to an agency's programs and activities. The four-factor analysis considers the: (1) number or proportion of LEP persons eligible for services or likely to be encountered by the program; (2) frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program; (3) nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives; and (4) resources available to the program, and costs. These are some empirical findings USCIS has made through four-factor analysis:

- Over a two-week period in 2010, USCIS informally assessed the use of interpreters by customers in field offices. Of 37,000 interviews for adjustment of status or naturalization, 17 percent of customers brought an interpreter with them. Of 41,000

scheduled InfoPass appointments, 22 percent of customers brought an interpreter. The five languages spoken most frequently by customers who brought an interpreter were Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Russian.

- USCIS conducts quarterly assessments of the National Customer Service Center and, in part, its performance for LEP individuals. In the first quarter of FY 2013 40 percent of surveyed persons identified English as their primary language, while 28.3 percent identified Spanish as their primary language. The remaining individuals – more than 30 percent -- spoke a total of 17 other languages.

The accuracy of the interpretation of a customer's responses to questions during a benefit interview is important because this information can determine whether or not the applicant will be approved or denied an immigration benefit. For asylum interviews, USCIS uses a telephonic interpreter to monitor the interpreters that applicants bring to their asylum interviews. This system aims to balance the need to detect potential fraud and ensure accuracy in interpretation, and the regulatory prohibition on providing interpreters at a cost to the Government. As stated above, the Asylum Division has blanket purchase agreements with two interpreter services firms to provide telephonic monitoring of interpreters brought by applicants.

As required by regulations, USCIS provides interpreter services in credible fear, reasonable fear, and safe third-country screening interviews. However, interviews conducted by the Asylum Division are a fraction of the total number of interviews conducted by USCIS. USCIS must analyze the costs and benefits of the idea of providing interpreters for all interviews where customers require language assistance. Because USCIS is almost completely fee-funded, the agency would have to increase application fees to fund the extra costs. To avoid increasing application fees to pay for interpretation services, USCIS will continue to encourage LEP individuals to bring qualified, impartial interpreters to interviews. USCIS is working to clarify its policy on who may serve as an interpreter in Field Operations interviews in order to incorporate customers' needs for meaningful access with USCIS's commitment to ensuring the integrity of the immigration system.

Stakeholder Input

We have robust collaborative relationships with many stakeholders, and we look forward to building on these partnerships to ensure that our LEP customers can access the services and resources they need. We have made significant strides in improving the LEP population's access to our benefits and services. Noteworthy achievements include:

- Increasing the number of naturalization materials available in Asian American and Pacific Islander languages;
- Working to increase our understanding of the languages spoken by our customers;
- Striving to improve the accuracy and effectiveness of all translations; and
- Increasing the number of form instructions available in Spanish.

Implementation and Evaluation of the Plan

To implement this plan, USCIS will maintain the Language Access Working Group comprised of representatives from program offices and directorates. These representatives will serve as language access coordinators for their respective offices and directorates. Each language access coordinator will identify annual goals that will further the objectives of USCIS's plan. The working group representatives will discuss language access issues and will be responsible for implementing the plan in their program offices and directorates and reporting progress on the implementation.

The USCIS Deputy Director designated a representative from the Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate as the interim working group chair. The chair will convene working group meetings with the Deputy Director at least biannually to monitor and report progress on USCIS's goals.

In addition to the biannual meetings, the working group will meet periodically to report and consult on LEP issues and complaints, consider USCIS-wide language access issues, and draft an annual language access report for the Deputy Director with goals, accomplishments, self-assessments, and, when appropriate, results of surveys and research studies. Each program office and directorate that leads communications and engagements with the public will provide the working group representatives with the information necessary to complete the language access report.

Contact Information

For more information about USCIS's Language Access Plan, the public may call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 (TDD for the hearing impaired: 1-800-767-1833) or email public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov.

Complaints about language access in USCIS programs and activities may be filed with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL). For more information about filing complaints with CRCL, go to dhs.gov/crcl, or call 202- 401-1474 or 1-866-644-8360. Complaints may be filed in any language.

Use

This plan is intended only to improve the internal management of USCIS's language access program and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or employees, or any person.

USCIS Goals

USCIS continues to explore avenues for improving access for LEP customers to its programs and activities. This commitment includes reviewing costs to provide qualified interpreters for additional programs and services, reviewing policies on the use of interpreters, increasing multilingual engagement with underserved LEP communities, assessing language needs through stakeholder input, and providing materials in more languages. USCIS will also work to increase training opportunities for employees in culturally sensitive communication.

USCIS will review these and other issues affecting LEP customers through, among other means, the Language Access Working Group with the support of the Office of the Director.

Deliverables will include:

- Collecting and analyzing costs associated with increased use of interpreters;
- Providing updated interpreter guidance to domestic field offices; and
- Formalizing the use of USCIS bilingual volunteers, assessing their language skills and providing training and/or guidance.

1. Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate

CSPE comprises the Customer Service Division and the Public Engagement Division.

CSPE engages with customers and stakeholders to share information and solicit feedback on USCIS programs, policies, and operations, and to respond to customer questions and concerns. Through its outreach and customer service efforts, CSPE seeks to engage in dialogue that promotes participation and feedback from the stakeholder and customer communities to help inform USCIS operations, assess organizational performance and set USCIS priorities. This effort extends beyond the traditional stakeholder community to include outreach to individuals—including those with limited English proficiency—who lack access to USCIS information and immigration service providers and may be vulnerable to immigration scams and other predatory practices that threaten the immigrant community and the integrity of the immigration system.

CSPE oversees the National Customer Service Center (NCSC), which provides telephone assistance to customers calling from within the United States about immigration benefits and services. All levels of call support are available in Spanish and English, and callers are immediately informed of the bilingual services available. CSPE tracks the primary languages spoken by USCIS customers through quarterly surveys of NCSC callers. Survey results for the third quarter of FY 2013 indicate that callers spoke the following languages (in order of usage): English, Spanish, “Other,” Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Tagalog, French, Hindi, German, and Portuguese. Approximately 40 percent of the callers identified English as their primary language and approximately 28 percent of the callers identified Spanish as their primary language. The remaining customers spoke one of more than 17 languages. In FY 2015, USCIS will conduct a

cost-benefit analysis to determine the feasibility of adding telephonic interpretation services in languages other than English and Spanish.

USCIS regularly conducts Spanish-language *Enlace* engagement sessions, where customers may ask questions by telephone, via the Internet, or in person. USCIS has held 12 *Enlace* engagements since 2011, and plans to continue to host four *Enlace* sessions every year. In February 2012, USCIS hosted its first Chinese-language engagement session, called *Jiao Liu*, in Mandarin and Cantonese with the theme “How to Become a U.S. Citizen.” Over 2,000 customers participated in this engagement in San Francisco and in field offices across the country. This was followed by two more *Jiao Liu* engagements in October 2012 and September 2013, as well as the first Vietnamese engagement, hosted at the Santa Ana Field Office in California in February 2013. In January 2014, USCIS hosted its first national Creole engagement, followed by the first national Korean event in August. In FY 2015, USCIS hosted its first national Arabic engagement, and will host the first national event in Tagalog in September, 2015. USCIS uses bilingual staff for these engagements and routinely co-hosts local outreach events with community partners.

USCIS chooses topics, languages, and locations for its multilingual outreach events by using statistics from the USCIS Customer Service Survey, as well as public information, including U.S. Census and community survey data. CSPE tracks the number of in-person, phone, and Web participants in each multilingual engagement and routinely solicits feedback from USCIS community relations officers and external stakeholders, including community and faith-based organizations, advocacy groups, English as a Second Language and citizenship preparation teachers, and other government and community partners.

The Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIL) initiative is one of USCIS’s priority initiatives. To educate the public about how to avoid potential immigration services scams, CSPE has created educational brochures, posters, and public service announcement scripts in multiple languages. The brochures are available in 14 languages, and the posters and audio recordings of the public service announcements are available in English and Spanish. All translated material is available at uscis.gov/avoidscams and uscis.gov/eviteestafas. In addition, brochures on the immigration options available to victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, and other crimes are available in Spanish, Russian, and Chinese.

UCSIS Goal 1: Continue to develop outreach materials and translate these materials into Spanish and other languages.

- *How Do I* customer guides on various topics are available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. In FY 2012, CSPE translated 13 brochures into Chinese and published them on uscis.gov/multilingual. A limited number have been printed and made available in selected field offices.
- In FY 2012, USCIS translated the *How Do I* brochure on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals into Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

- In FY 2013, USCIS translated UPIL brochures into 14 languages and handouts on the immigrant fee into nine languages. In FY 2014, CSPE translated educational materials on DACA renewal into Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese and translated the highest volume USCIS form instructions into Spanish.

USCIS Goal 2: Post the Spanish scripts used by the National Customer Service Center to uscis.gov.

- In FY 2012, CSPE translated all 15 scripts into Spanish and posted them to the [Electronic Reading Room](#) on the USCIS website.

USCIS Goal 3: Increase understanding of customers' language assistance needs.

- In FY 2012, CSPE partnered with the USCIS Office of Policy and Strategy to conduct two focus groups to discuss language access issues. One focus group sought the opinions of Spanish-speaking LEP applicants and the second group sought the opinions of advocates who serve Spanish-speaking LEP applicants. These focus groups provided CSPE with additional insight into challenges faced by LEP communities when seeking information on USCIS programs and services. In FY 2013, CSPE hosted three additional focus group sessions on language access in Los Angeles: one for stakeholders, one for English-speaking customers and one for Spanish-speaking customers. In FY 2014, USCIS hosted two focus groups (English and Spanish) in Chicago to discuss language access.
- CSPE will continue assessing language preference and other customer needs through monthly surveys of NCSC customers and quarterly in person focus groups.

USCIS Goal 4: Conduct additional multilingual engagement sessions in Spanish and other languages.

- In FY 2012, CSPE hosted four multilingual engagements in Spanish (November 2011 and March, June, and August 2012) and one in Chinese (February 2012).
- In FY 2013, USCIS hosted six Spanish language engagements (December 2012 and February, April, May, June, July, and August 2013); two engagements in Chinese (October 2012 and September 2013) and one in Vietnamese (February 2013).
- In FY 2014, USCIS hosted three national Spanish language engagements (December 2013, April and June 2014) and one Vietnamese language engagement (March 2014). In addition, USCIS hosted its first national Korean (August 2014) and Creole (January 2014) engagements.
- In FY2015, USCIS hosted its first national Arabic language engagement (November 2014) and will host a national engagement in Tagalog (September 2015).

2. Enterprise Services Directorate, Verification Division

USCIS's Verification Division manages the [E-Verify](#) and [SAVE](#) programs. E-Verify is an Internet-based system that allows businesses to determine the eligibility of new employees to work in the United States. E-Verify compares the information an employee provides on Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, against government records from the Social Security Administration and DHS. The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program

is a service that helps federal, state and local benefit-issuing agencies, institutions, and licensing agencies determine the immigration status of benefit applicants so only those entitled to benefits receive them.

The Verification Division has a robust outreach program that communicates with employers and workers through a variety of methods. USCIS has prepared many multilingual resources about Form I-9, E-Verify, SAVE, and Self Check which are available at uscis.gov/espanol and uscis.gov/multilingual. In August 2011, USCIS launched Self Check in [Spanish](#). Self Check is a service of E-Verify that allows individuals to check their employment eligibility themselves. The E-Verify and I-9 Central pages are both available in Spanish.

The E-Verify page, uscis.gov/e-verify, contains information for employees on rights and responsibilities, how to resolve a tentative non-confirmation, and how to report violations. This employee section includes a [Foreign Language Resources](#) section with materials translated in up to 20 languages. In FY 2015, E-Verify translated many of its materials into Somali, Punjabi, and Urdu. In addition, E-Verify published the Employee Rights and Responsibilities videos in French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Throughout 2014, to promote the E-Verify and Self Check programs, USCIS initiated Spanish-language newspaper and radio advertising in Atlanta; Miami and Orlando, Florida; Los Angeles; New York City; Houston and El Paso, Texas; and Raleigh, North Carolina.

- The Verification Division maintains a telephone help line where employees and employers may ask questions in English and Spanish. The Verification Division also has a contract that provides interpretation services to support the E-Verify and Self Check programs. Although the contractor provides support in 22 languages, the most commonly used language is Spanish.
- The brochure *You Should Know Your Rights and Responsibilities under E-Verify* is available in nine languages: Chinese, Haitian Creole, English, French, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- Form I-9 is available in both English and Spanish for employees and workers in Puerto Rico at uscis.gov/i-9; the Spanish translation can be used in the U.S. outside of Puerto Rico but only as a means to guide employers and workers in completing the form in English.
- The educational video *Employee Rights and Responsibilities* is available in the [Foreign Language Resources](#) section in English and Spanish. The English version can be viewed with closed captions in French, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Copies of the videos are also available free to the public upon request and are disseminated at outreach events.
- The Tentative Nonconfirmation Further Action Notice and Referral Letter are available in the following languages: Arabic, Carolinian, Chamorro, Chinese, French, German, Haitian Creole, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Marshallese, Palauan, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu, and Vietnamese.
- In addition, the Employee Form I-9 Information Sheet and the How to Correct Your Records Fact Sheet are available in Arabic, Carolinian, Chamorro, Chinese, French, German, Haitian

Creole, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Marshallese, Palauan, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu and Vietnamese.

You can find translated materials on SAVE by visiting uscis.gov/save and selecting For Benefit Applicants and then Multilingual Resources. SAVE provides information to benefit applicants on applying for benefits and correcting their records in 17 languages: Arabic, Creole, German, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Spanish, Urdu, French, Hindi, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Tagalog, Gujarati, and Vietnamese.

USCIS Goal 5: Provide information on the Tentative Nonconfirmation Notice and Referral Letter in nine additional languages.

- In FY 2015, USCIS posted the Tentative Nonconfirmation Further Action Notice and Referral Letter in Punjabi, Somali, and Urdu, making these documents available in a total of 20 foreign languages.
- In FY 2012, USCIS posted the Tentative Nonconfirmation Notice and Referral Letter in nine additional languages: Arabic, French, German, Italian, Chamorro, Carolinian, Marshallese, Palauan, and Portuguese.
- At the end of FY 2011, the Verification Division acquired an interpretation contract to expand interpretation services to more than 50 languages, including the top 20 most commonly spoken languages in the United States.

USCIS Goal 6: Translate additional SAVE documents, such as the agency participation poster, the benefit applicant brochure, and postcard into 18 languages.

- By the end of FY 2012, the Verification Division translated and made available SAVE documents such as the benefit applicant brochure and postcard into six languages. SAVE now has its Information for Applicants Fact Sheet, benefit applicant brochure and postcard available in 17 languages.

USCIS Goal 7: By FY 2012, USCIS will expand resources in Spanish for employers.

- On July 21, 2014, the Verification Division posted the Spanish E-Verify Overview PowerPoint deck on the [Spanish E-Verify](#) page.
- In addition, the Verification Division expanded the employer help line to provide services in Spanish.
- In 2012 and 2013, the Verification Division posted Spanish versions of M-274, The Handbook for Employers.
- The Verification Division published the following websites in Spanish: Self Check; E-Verify and I-9 Central. [The myE-Verify page will be translated into Spanish.](#)
- The Verification Division offers the E-Verify and Form I-9 overview webinar in Spanish; a live webinar on employee rights in Spanish is offered in collaboration with the Department of Justice's Office of Special Counsel for Unfair Immigration-Related Employment Practices.

USCIS Goal 8: By FY15, USCIS's Verification Division has identified several language access goals:

- Translating the “Know Your Rights” video into Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese using closed captions.
- Translating myE-Verify into Spanish and projected to launch late August 2015.
- Translating the SAVE page into Spanish.
- Posting an E-Verify Spanish/English glossary.
- Translating the Further Action Notice into Somali. E-Verify Further Action Notices provide employees with important information and instructions related to Tentative Nonconfirmations and how to resolve them.
- Translating certain materials into South Asian languages.

3. Office of Citizenship

The Office of Citizenship (OoC) is a public education, training, and outreach office responsible for developing educational products and resources to welcome immigrants and support them on the path to citizenship. OoC provide immigrants with information regarding citizenship and naturalization eligibility requirements.

OoC’s goals include:

- Promoting English language learning and education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;
- Preparing immigrants for naturalization and active civic participation;
- Leading initiatives to promote citizenship awareness and clarify the naturalization process for aspiring citizens; and
- Conducting training workshops, and enhancing professional development and classroom resources for educators and organizations preparing immigrants for citizenship.

OoC regularly works with ethnic media and collaborates with nongovernmental organizations that work with LEP persons. OoC works with certified translation services as needed, translating materials based on immigration flow, demonstrated community need, and DHS or USCIS guidance. Using these criteria, OoC provides materials in Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Urdu. OoC notifies the public about the availability of translated materials through USCIS community relations officers, USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program recipients, social media, and GovDelivery electronic email notifications to subscribers.

Speaking, reading, writing, and understanding English are requirements to become a naturalized citizen. Accordingly, OoC’s citizenship preparation materials are primarily developed in English. However, OoC seeks to engage immigrants at all stages of the immigration process and provides a variety of translated materials:

- *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* is available in English and 13 additional languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu, and Vietnamese. All new permanent residents

are informed about how to obtain the publication, which is available at: uscis.gov/newimmigrants.

- *Naturalization Resources in Spanish*, an informational page, is available at uscis.gov/ciudadania.
- *100 Civics Questions and Answers* for the naturalization test are provided in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. These materials are available in the [Other Languages](#) section of uscis.gov/citizenship and at uscis.gov/multilingual.
- Several educational videos and a short film on the USCIS naturalization interview and test are available with translated subtitles at uscis.gov/citizenship.
- The [Citizenship Public Education and Awareness Initiative](#) was launched in May 2011 to highlight the availability of USCIS educational products and resources to permanent residents and immigrant-serving organizations. This initiative features print and radio advertisements in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. These materials are available at uscis.gov/citizenshipawareness.
- In FY15, OoC worked with CSPED to translate materials for the Task Force for New Americans into Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Tagalog.

USCIS Goal 9: Release additional multilingual information on citizenship.

- In FY 2012, OoC produced citizenship eligibility and informational fliers in Chinese and Vietnamese, released the USCIS Civics Flash Cards in Spanish, and published the 100 civics questions and answers for the naturalization test in Arabic and Korean.
- In FY 2015, the revised *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* is to be translated into 13 languages.
- OoC plans to introduce a new training seminar for approximately 1,000 teachers and administrators of ESL/civics programs across the country. To date, OoC has trained about 750 teachers and plans to train an additional 200 educators by the end of FY 2015.

USCIS Goal 10: Expand the number of training and professional development opportunities provided to adult educators, volunteers, and immigrant-serving organizations.

- In FY 2012, OoC conducted 32 training workshops for adult educators, volunteers, and teachers across the country. Approximately 1,960 teachers participated in these workshops. A list of upcoming events is available at uscis.gov/teachertraining.
- In April 2014, OoC released an online training module outlining basic strategies for individuals who volunteer in English and citizenship programs for adults.

4. Office of Communications

The Office of Communications uses traditional and social media outlets to inform the public about USCIS operations and developments. OCOMM also manages the Spanish-language website USCIS en Español, at uscis.gov/espanol. This site is not an exact copy of the English site, but since its launch in 2009, it has consistently ranked as one of the top federal websites in the American Customer Satisfaction Index online survey. More than 7,000 users visit the

Spanish site each day, and that number continues to grow.

OCOMM disseminates materials such as press releases and fact sheets to foreign-language media outlets, primarily in Spanish. Most of these products are translated in-house by bilingual OCOMM staff, with quality control processes in place to ensure accuracy. OCOMM's Spanish language team also provides translation and quality assurance services for other USCIS and DHS offices and continually adds new content to the Spanish site.

OCOMM also uses social media, such as Twitter and YouTube, to disseminate messages in Spanish, Chinese and other languages. OCOMM worked with CSPED to develop USCIS's Multilingual Resources Page to centralize links to all materials available in other languages at uscis.gov/multilingual.

OCOMM translates most blog posts into Spanish for the [Compás](#) section of The Beacon blog, has a dedicated Spanish-language Twitter feed, has tweeted in Korean and Chinese on the English-language Twitter feed, and occasionally posts to Facebook in Spanish. OCOMM has also worked with the Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate to produce [videos](#) in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese (*Jiao Liu*) and Vietnamese (*Giao Tiep*) as well as videos on specific issues affecting the LEP community such as the Haitian Creole video on the Haitian Reunification Program.

OCOMM will look into partnering with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other government entities to expand Asian language reach. Due to resource constraints, however, OCOMM is currently unable to expand to other languages.

USCIS Goal 11: Maintain USCIS's Web presence in Spanish at uscis.gov/espanol.

- In FY 2012, OCOMM increased the amount of translated content on the website and launched a Spanish-language Twitter feed and blog.
- In FY2014, OCOMM revised the content on its Spanish website and added additional content in sections such as Tarjeta Verde (Green Card), Militares (Military), and Programas Humanitarios (Humanitarian).

USCIS Goal 12: Continue media outreach and general communications efforts in Spanish and other languages.

- In FY 2012, the OCOMM media team completed an assessment of USCIS outreach to non-English speaking media outlets at both the headquarters and regional/local levels. OCOMM expanded existing relationships and built new relationships with non-English speaking reporters with the goal of reaching more audiences across the United States.
- In FY 2013, USCIS launched a Spanish GovDelivery service, enabling customers and stakeholders to sign up to receive USCIS updates in Spanish.
- USCIS routinely disseminates Spanish language messages through social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and the USCIS blog. In FY2015, OCOMM will launch USCIS Facebook page and will have USCIS blog *Compás* in Spanish as an independent communication tool for Spanish-speaking communities.

USCIS Goal 13: Consolidate existing multilingual resources available on uscis.gov into an easily accessed location.

- In FY 2012, OCOMM launched uscis.gov/multilingual, which lists the various multilingual materials and resources available to USCIS customers.

5. Field Operations Directorate

The Field Operations Directorate (FOD) handles scheduled interviews on non-asylum related applications. Field Operations offices interact with LEP persons at interviews and at the front intake area. Field Operations offices provide information and customer services to supplement the information available through the NCSC telephone line and uscis.gov.

FOD uses translated documents and other resources provided by CSPE and OCOMM to support assistance to LEP persons during interviews and when responding to InfoPass appointments. Bilingual staff, contractors, and personnel from other DHS offices and federal partners provide support, as needed, in languages other than English at information counters at field offices. Applicants may bring an interpreter with them to Field Operations offices. Receipt notices for USCIS applications adjudicated by FOD instruct applicants to bring their own interpreters for interviews.

USCIS Goal 14: Analyze current practices and learn from the best practices of other program offices and directorates that have experienced success in providing meaningful access to LEP customers.

- FOD is partnering with the Office of Policy and Strategy to review an informal field survey conducted in 2010. The survey provided Field Operations offices' self-assessments of available language assistance services and customer needs. The Office of Policy and Strategy will review data collected from the NCSC telephone line and publicly available data to make a comprehensive assessment of USCIS language services.

USCIS Goal 15: USCIS will draft policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter for applications and petitions adjudicated by FOD.

- To achieve greater consistency, the Office of Policy and Strategy is working with FOD to draft two items: (1) a policy to clarify who may serve as an interpreter; and (2) an oath and confidentiality notice to be used during domestic interviews when an interpreter is present.

6. Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations

The Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate comprises three divisions: Refugee Affairs Division, International Operations Division, and Asylum Division.

Refugee Affairs Division

The Refugee Affairs Division is responsible for providing the humanitarian benefit of refugee resettlement to applicants in need of protection, while conducting necessary national security screening. Interactions with applicants occur outside the United States with individuals who, for

the most part, do not speak English. The more commonly spoken languages include Arabic, Karen dialects, Chin dialects, Nepali, Somali, and Spanish.

Applicants are able to communicate with staff through interpreters provided by the Resettlement Support Centers (formerly known as Overseas Processing Entities). This is part of a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of State. USCIS employs bilingual Spanish-speaking refugee officers to conduct protection screening interviews for migrants at sea and to conduct refugee interviews in Latin America and the Caribbean. Document translations are submitted by the applicant or by interpreters provided by Resettlement Support Centers under the cooperative agreement with the Department of State.

International Operations

International Operations operates 28 international field offices around the world. Overseas adjudication officers are responsible for adjudicating a variety of petitions and applications filed overseas, providing information services, issuing travel documents, and engaging in fraud detection and deterrence strategies, including field verifications.

Approximately 50 percent of the overseas USCIS customer base is LEP. Approximately 40 percent of the overseas staff are foreign nationals who speak at least two languages fluently. These employees are fluent in both English and their native language, and provide an invaluable service in providing translation and interpreter services. Some applicants choose to bring interpreters with them to interviews, particularly if they speak a language not spoken by USCIS staff (for example, Nepali in India). The most common languages spoken by these international customers are Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Fuzhou Chinese, Haitian Creole, and German.

Asylum Division

The Asylum Division interacts with LEP applicants when they arrive at asylum offices located within the United States for asylum interviews and interviews related to the suspension of deportation or cancellation of removal under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA section 203). The Asylum Division also interacts with LEP applicants when conducting credible fear, reasonable fear, and safe third-country screening interviews, which may take place at asylum offices, detention facilities or both locations through the use of video conferencing.

Regulations require asylum applicants to provide their own interpreters at their scheduled asylum interviews. The Asylum Division uses a telephonic interpretation service to monitor all asylum interviews with an interpreter. The Asylum Division has blanket purchase agreements with two interpreter services firms for asylum-related screenings. The Asylum Division uses these firms for interpretation during credible fear, reasonable fear, and safe third-country screening interviews.

Asylum applicants must bring to their asylum interviews an interpreter who is at least 18 years old and fluent in both English and a language in which the applicant is fluent. The interpreter

may be a family member, friend, or other person associated with the applicant. The interpreter may not be the applicant's attorney or representative, a representative of the applicant's country of nationality or last habitual residence, or a witness testifying on behalf of the applicant.

NACARA applicants who are unable to proceed with the interview in English must provide a competent interpreter, not at the expense of the Government, who is fluent in English and a language in which they are fluent, and who is not their legal representative or a witness testifying on their behalf. In situations where the NACARA request is associated with an asylum application, the interpreter may not be a representative or employee of the applicant's country of nationality, or country of last habitual residence if the applicant is stateless. If at any time the asylum officer believes that the interpreter is not competently interpreting at the interview, the asylum officer will terminate and reschedule the interview. The applicants will receive written notice that they will be scheduled for another interview at which time they must bring a competent interpreter.

The Asylum Division evaluates legal requirements, USCIS policy, available funding, and customer service needs to establish blanket purchase agreements for interpretation services to support its mission of enabling trained asylum officers to conduct interviews. At the Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate Combined Training course, asylum officers receive training on working with LEP applicants, interpreters and telephonic interpreter monitors. They also receive training in culturally sensitive communication. New asylum officers receive approximately four hours of training on how to conduct interviews and communicate effectively through the use of an interpreter. This training module, called "Working with an Interpreter," includes written materials and several hands-on practical exercises that help officers identify ways to facilitate proper interpretation, identify signs of misinterpretation and ways to take corrective action, and instruct the interpreter on his or her role and responsibilities during an interview.

An applicant's failure to provide a competent interpreter without good cause may result in a delay in the processing of the claim. All applicants are given a second opportunity to provide a competent interpreter. USCIS provides the applicant with a written notice explaining the consequences of failing to bring a competent interpreter.

During the asylum interview, the officer places the applicant, the interpreter, and the interpreter monitor under oath. The officer instructs the interpreter to interpret the applicant's words verbatim as much as possible, without condensing, elaborating, or engaging in conversation with the applicant.

USCIS Goal 16: Pilot customer satisfaction surveys in several languages.

- In FY 2012, the Asylum Division conducted and International Operations prepared to pilot customer satisfaction surveys and translate the survey, depending on customer need and available resources. The Asylum Division translated the customer satisfaction survey into its top 11 languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, French, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Nepali, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, and Tigrinya.

USCIS Goal 17: Publish additional translated information sheets.

The Asylum Division will continue to translate and post selected forms and informational documents on uscis.gov and uscis.gov/asylum.

- The Asylum Division has translated the following documents for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and USCIS asylum officers to distribute during relevant credible fear and reasonable fear orientation procedures:
 - Form M-444, about the credible fear interview process, is available in Albanian, Arabic, French, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Serbo-Croatian Cyrillic, Serbo-Croatian Latin, Somali, and Spanish;
 - Form M-488, about the reasonable fear interview process, is available in Spanish; and
 - Information about parole eligibility and the parole process for credible fear applicants is available in Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, French, Somali, Spanish, and Tigrinya.
- For asylum cases, the Asylum Division has translated Pick-Up Notices and Decision Letters in Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Nepalese, Russian, and Spanish.
- Information regarding benefits adjudicated by the Asylum Division is available in English and Spanish at uscis.gov/asylum. Signs and posters are provided in public access locations in languages other than English based on the location and local population.
- An *Information Guide for Prospective Asylum Applicants* is available in English, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Haitian Creole, French, Indonesian, Nepali, Russian, and Spanish in the [Resources](#) section at uscis.gov/asylum.

Acronyms

BPA	Blanket Purchase Agreement
CRCL	Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
CSPE	Customer Service and Public Engagement Directorate
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	Department of Justice
FOD	Field Operations Directorate
FY	Fiscal Year
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
NCSC	National Customer Service Center
OoC	Office of Citizenship
OCOMM	Office of Communications
SAVE	Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements
UPIL	Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services