

STATE OF VERMONT AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS	Language Access Services	Page 1 of 14						
CHAPTER: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES - GENERAL	#210	Supersedes: New						
<b>Local Procedure(s) Required:</b> No <b>Applicability:</b> All staff (including contractors and volunteers) <b>Security Level:</b> "B" – Anyone may have access to this document.								
<b>Approved</b>  <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><u>SIGNED</u></td> <td style="border: none;"><u>03/18/2026</u></td> <td style="border: none;"><u>04/02/2026</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Jon Murad, Commissioner</td> <td style="border: none;">Date Signed</td> <td style="border: none;">Date Effective</td> </tr> </table>			<u>SIGNED</u>	<u>03/18/2026</u>	<u>04/02/2026</u>	Jon Murad, Commissioner	Date Signed	Date Effective
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## Policy #210, Language Access Services

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Vermont Department of Corrections' (DOC's) process for providing linguistically accessible services.

### AUTHORITY

28 V.S.A. § 101

### DEFINITIONS

Individual with a Language Access Need: An individual who: has a preferred language other than written or spoken English, including sign language; has a low literacy rate; or is identified by staff as not being able to effectively communicate or comprehend English.

Interpret: Accurately conveying spoken or signed messages between individuals who use different languages or communication styles, while maintaining the speaker's intent, tone, and cultural context, to facilitate communication.

Plain Language: A form of communication that is clear, concise, and well-organized. Plain language allows quick and easy understanding, without being patronizing or simplistic.

Qualified Interpreter: A live or remote interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially to meet bi-directional language access and communication needs. Qualified interpreters include sign language or Deaf interpreters, sight translators, and spoken language interpreters. Interpreters contracted through the Agency of Human Services (AHS) are considered qualified interpreters.

Sight Translation: Orally converting a written text from one language into another, in real-time.

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Target Language: Any language other than spoken English that an individual uses to communicate and may require translation or interpretation.

Translate: Converting material from one written language into another written language.

### **POLICY**

The DOC's policy is to provide accessible services to all individuals in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC, regardless of their preferred language (including sign language). Accessible services may extend to families, friends, constituents, visitors, and victims/survivors navigating the correctional system.

The DOC complies with:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin,
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, and
- The Agency of Human Services (AHS) Policy 1.02, Language Access. The DOC provides translations for vital documents in accordance with AHS policies and guidance.

The DOC acknowledges that, in Vermont, some languages are spoken by a relatively small number of people, which may make it more difficult to provide language access resources. The DOC provides linguistically appropriate resources as available. The DOC is accountable for providing language access services at no cost to those accessing these services.

The DOC recognizes that limited communication or understanding due to language barriers or a low literacy rate may be stressful and isolating for individuals residing in a correctional facility and may have detrimental consequences. The DOC mitigates communication barriers by standardizing processes for staff to meet language access and communication needs of all individuals.

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### ALL DOC STAFF GENERAL PROCEDURES

#### A. General Procedure

1. When providing language access services, staff shall adhere to the following:
  - a. Use DOC or State approved language identification tools and resources upon recognizing that an individual in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC may have language access needs, to identify and meet those needs.
  - b. Document the target language of anyone identified as needing language access services in the Offender Management System (OMS).
  - c. Use language access services in accordance with DOC and AHS language access guidance. Examples of this include calling interpretation services or getting documents translated.
  - d. Follow the procedure outlined in [Section B., Translation of Documents](#) under this Heading to request translations.
  - e. Follow DOC policies on the ADA and effective communication for individuals with hearing, vision-related, or other disabilities.
2. Staff shall use approved interpreter and translation services and are advised not to use any online language services (e.g., Google Translate), in accordance with AHS and DOC language access guidance.
3. When a DOC staff member requests an in-person interpreter, the staff member shall ensure the in-person interpreter is not left alone with an individual in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC.
4. Staff shall not ask the following people to interpret or translate for individuals in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC:
  - a. Individuals in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC;
  - b. Community members, unless they are qualified interpreters with no conflict of interest; or
  - c. Family members.
5. Staff who speak multiple languages:
  - a. Shall not translate or interpret for individuals in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC regarding legal matters; and
  - b. May converse with individuals in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC in the shared language when it aligns with

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their direct service and job duties, but shall not serve as interpreters or translators, unless:

- i. It is an outlined job duty; and
  - ii. They are trained and certified to serve as qualified interpreter.
6. The Health Equity Program Director shall assess language access and communication needs on an annual basis and provide updates to DOC staff, as needed.

### B. Translation of Documents

1. When a document needs to be translated, staff shall:
  - a. Confirm the translated document is not already available, by checking the central repository on the Language Access page on the SharePoint site; and
  - b. Use the translation request form on the language access SharePoint page to submit a translation request.
2. The Health Equity Program Director shall:
  - a. Assess the translation feasibility;
  - b. Arrange for translation of the requested document or coordinate other appropriate language access services; and
  - c. Ensure translations, other than personally identifiable information (PII) or personal health information (PHI), are available to all staff. Processes for handling PII or PHI shall be followed, in accordance with AHS guidance.
3. The Health Equity Program Director shall normally provide translations within three to four business days. There may be times when additional time is needed for the translation (e.g., translating a lengthy document, translating a request in a less commonly encountered language language).
4. If a translation is needed before a document can be provided to an individual in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC, staff shall:
  - a. Send the original document to an interpreter for a sight translation;
  - b. Read the document aloud through an interpreter; or
  - c. Be granted extra time on any deadlines, to account for the translation.

### C. Vital Documents

1. The DOC is required to translate vital documents into the most common encountered languages identified, in accordance with AHS Policy 1.02,

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Language Access. Translations shall be available on a case-by-case basis.

Vital documents include:

- a. All forms intended for use by incarcerated individuals, including:
    - i. Consent forms;
    - ii. Sick slips;
    - iii. Grievance forms; and
    - iv. Request forms;
  - b. Appeal rights information;
  - c. Letters about DOC appointments;
  - d. Program requirements;
  - e. Incarcerated individual handbooks;
  - f. Policy documents related to:
    - i. The constitutional rights or liberty interests of individuals in the custody and under the supervision of the DOC; or
    - ii. How to access services or significant functions of the services provided (e.g., access to courts, PREA, grievances);
  - g. Notices of decisions (e.g., case staffings, hearings, grievances);
  - h. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA);
  - i. Privacy notifications; and
  - j. Any other document identified as vital.
2. Whenever possible, staff shall write vital documents in plain language.
  3. The Health Equity Program Director shall, annually:
    - a. Review all translated documents to ensure they are up to date; and
    - b. Review the most commonly encountered languages to ensure the DOC is providing required language access services.

### D. DOC Staff with Language Access Needs

1. Staff members who have a language access need, may:
  - a. Ask their supervisors about available resources, trainings, or programs related to the language access need; or
  - b. Request accommodations, in accordance with the Vermont Department of Human Resources (DHR) Policy 3.2, Reasonable Accommodation.
2. Supervisors may reference DHR guidance on the performance management system for assistance with cultural awareness for language and communication.

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### FACILITY LANGUAGE ACCESS NEEDS

#### A. Intake Process

1. When an individual is first admitted into a correctional facility, the Corrections Officer (CO) assigned to admissions control (AC), or “AC Officer,” shall:
  - a. Ask all incarcerated individuals their preferred language. The AC Officer shall use a language identification poster or other available resources, if necessary;
  - b. Document the incarcerated individual’s target language in OMS;
  - c. Call an interpreter line as needed and request the target language of the incarcerated individual, in accordance with AHS and DOC language access guidance. Staff may need to call multiple interpreter lines to find one that can provide interpreter services for the target language;
  - d. Once the interpreter is on the line, inform the incarcerated individual how staff will primarily communicate with them (e.g., telephone interpreters) and verify whether the incarcerated individual reads and writes in the target language;
  - e. Instruct the incarcerated individual to follow facility staff’s direction in emergencies, as an interpreter may not be provided until after the emergent situation is resolved;
  - f. Inform the incarcerated individual of the name and location of the correctional facility, including state and town;
  - g. Inform the incarcerated individual of any language-access technology available to be issued to the individual, if applicable;
  - h. Provide the incarcerated individual with linguistically appropriate information. If the linguistically appropriate information is not available, the AC Officer shall request the translation in accordance with [Section B., Translation of Documents](#) under this Heading;
  - i. Notify the court of the language access need;
  - j. Notify the ADA Coordinator of the incarcerated individual’s target language and if the individual reads and writes in the target language;
  - k. Complete the intake process; and
  - l. Verify, through the interpreter, that the incarcerated individual understands the information provided.

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2. If the incarcerated individual does not read or write in the target language, the ADA Coordinator shall arrange for an interpreter to provide sight translation of any appropriate documents into spoken language. If further assistance is needed, the ADA Coordinator may reach out to the Health Equity Program Director for guidance.
3. If the incarcerated individual is admitted on the weekend or a holiday, the AC Officer shall provide the appropriate translated handbook and facility rules, if available. If the appropriate translated handbook and facility rules are not available, the AC Officer shall:
  - a. Provide any available tools in the individual's target language (e.g. the Basic Info for Incarcerated Individuals with Language Access Needs); and
  - b. Request a translation of the handbook in the individual's target language, in accordance with [Section B., Translation of Documents, under the All DOC Staff General Procedures Heading](#).
4. If any necessary translations are not available at intake, or if the individual is unable to read the materials as given, the AC Officer shall arrange for sight translation of the appropriate paperwork and ensure the written translations are provided as soon as they become available.

### B. Orientation Process

To perform the orientation process with an incarcerated individual who has language access needs, the Corrections Services Specialist (CSS) shall:

1. Arrange for an interpreter, in accordance with AHS and DOC language access guidance, or provide assistive technology for Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals, as needed;
2. Determine if any additional translated documents are necessary and obtain the translations in accordance with [Section B., Translation of Documents, under the All DOC Staff General Procedures Heading](#). If necessary written translations are unavailable, the CSS shall arrange for sight translation;
3. Complete the orientation process; and
4. Verify, through the interpreter, that the incarcerated individual understands the information provided.

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### C. Language Access Needs Process

1. COs shall utilize all language access resources available at their posts when communicating with incarcerated individuals with language access needs. If a CO needs additional support, the CO shall reach out to the ADA Coordinator for assistance.
2. If the CO needs further guidance or assistance, the CO shall:
  - a. Contact the CSS to provide language access services. The CSS shall arrange for the incarcerated individual to access an interpreter.
  - b. If it is after business hours or there are no other options available, contact the Correctional Facility Shift Supervisor (CFSS) to provide language access services. The CFSS shall:
    - i. Use a State-issued cell phone to call the interpreter line; or
    - ii. Arrange for the incarcerated individual to otherwise access an interpreter.
3. Prior to meeting with an incarcerated individual with language access needs, facility staff may schedule an in-person or remote interpreter.

### D. Visitation

1. Prior to visiting an individual at a correctional facility, a visitor with a language access need may reach out to the ADA Coordinator to request an accommodation.
2. The ADA Coordinator shall document approved accommodations, in accordance with the OMS technical guide.
3. Upon entering a correctional facility, a visitor with a language access need may point to a sign or otherwise indicate the language access need.
4. Facility staff shall immediately notify the CFSS when a visitor with a language access need arrives.
5. The CFSS shall use resources, such as the language identification poster, to establish any language access needs for the visitor at the door. When appropriate, the CFSS shall:
  - a. Call the interpreter line and provide language access services to the individual; or
  - b. Use technology (e.g., Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), videophone, Video Relay Service (VRS), closed captioning) or other available resources to communicate with individuals who have hearing or vision-related sensory disabilities.

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### FIELD LANGUAGE ACCESS NEEDS

#### A. Communications with the Court

1. Field staff may view a supervised individual's target language on the Judiciary's public portal.
2. Once a language access need is identified, the field staff member shall document or verify the individual's target language in OMS.
3. As soon as reasonably possible, the court should provide the supervised individual with conditions of supervision translated into the target language.
4. If the court does not provide translated conditions of supervision before intake, field staff shall:
  - a. Confirm the court's timeline for translating the conditions of supervision into the target language;
  - b. Use interpreter services to provide sight translation of the conditions of supervision, in accordance with AHS and DOC language access guidance; and
  - c. Ensure the supervised individual receives a translated copy of the conditions of supervision.
5. If the court modifies the conditions of supervision, field staff shall ensure the supervised individual receives an updated translation from the court.

#### B. Intake Process

1. When a supervised individual who has a language access need reports to the probation and parole office for intake, field staff shall:
  - a. Ask all supervised individuals their target language and field staff shall use a language identification poster or other available resources if necessary;
  - b. Document or verify the target language in OMS;
  - c. Call an interpreter line and request the target language of the supervised individual, in accordance with the AHS and DOC language access guidance. Staff may need to call multiple interpreter lines to find one that can facilitate in the target language;
  - d. Once the interpreter is on the line, inform the supervised individual how staff will primarily communicate with them (e.g., telephone interpreters) and verify whether the supervised individual reads and writes in the target language;

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- e. Inform the supervised individual to follow field staff's directions in emergencies to the best of the individual's abilities, as an interpreter may not be provided until after the emergent situation is resolved;
  - f. Use the interpreter to complete the intake process. If an interpreter is not immediately available, the field staff member shall schedule a time to complete the intake with an interpreter; and
  - g. Verify, through the interpreter, that the supervised individual understands the information provided.
2. Field staff shall ensure that all necessary supervision documents are translated. This may include Parole Board conditions, court-ordered conditions, DOC-issued conditions of supervision, the supervision contract, case plans, and any other necessary documentation.
  3. The DOC is responsible for translating documents that originate with or are created by the DOC. Field staff shall request the translated documents and provide them to the supervised individual, in accordance with [Section B., Translation of Documents, under the All DOC Staff General Procedures Heading](#).
  4. If any required translations are not available during intake, field staff shall arrange for sight translation of the appropriate paperwork and provide the written translations as soon as they are available.

### C. Supervision

1. When supervising an individual with a language access need, the field officer shall ensure the appropriate language services are provided to the supervised individual.
2. If the supervised individual is on remote compliance monitoring:
  - a. The supervised individual shall select the target language; and
  - b. The system may produce a document for the supervised individual that is not in the individual's target language. If this happens, the field officer shall request its translation as outlined in [Section B., Translation of Documents under the All DOC Staff General Procedures Heading](#).
3. If the supervised individual is on risk management supervision, the field staff member shall:
  - a. Whenever possible, instruct the supervised individual to report to the assigned probation and parole office for in-person meetings, and schedule an interpreter for these meetings; or

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- b. Prepare for field contacts by determining:
  - i. Language access needs of the supervised individual and other members of the household;
  - ii. The type of interpretation services needed and how available resources will be used. These resources may include translated check-in forms or an in-person interpreter when cell service is not available; and
  - iii. What documents will need translation and into which languages, allowing for translation time in advance of supervised meetings.
4. If written documentation will not adequately meet language access needs, field staff shall plan for sight translation.
5. Field staff may schedule an in-person or remote interpreter to help with case management.
6. Field officers shall utilize resources and technology to facilitate communication with supervised individuals with hearing or vision-related sensory disabilities (e.g., whiteboard, notepad, cellphone, assistive listening systems and devices, TRS, closed captioning).

### **D. Language Access Services for Community Members**

1. When a community member who has a language access need comes into a probation and parole office, field staff shall identify the language, using the Language Identification Poster as needed, and communicate with them through an interpreter line, in accordance with AHS and DOC language access guidance.
2. When field staff encounter community or family members who have a language access need in the course of their duties, field staff shall use the appropriate language access service, in accordance with AHS and DOC language access guidance.

### **E. Emergency Situations**

1. Whenever possible in emergencies involving a supervised individual with language access needs, including arrests, field staff shall use contracted language access services to communicate with the supervised individual.
2. If an interpreter was not used during the emergency, field staff shall contact an interpreter to facilitate explaining the situation to the supervised individual as soon as reasonably possible.

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### FACILITY AND FIELD PROCEDURES

#### A. Grievances

If the Grievance Coordinator receives a grievance in a language other than English, the Grievance Coordinator shall:

1. Forward the grievance for translation, in accordance with the process outlined in [Section B., Translation of Documents under the All DOC Staff General Procedures Heading](#);
2. Arrange to have all responses translated into the individual's target language, in accordance with the process outlined in [Section B., Translation of Documents under the All DOC Staff General Procedures Heading](#); and
3. Ensure the grievance, and all responses and translations, in both English and the individual's target language, are signed and uploaded into the grievance tab in OMS.

#### B. Parole Board

1. When completing required parole processes for an individual in the custody or under the supervision of the DOC who has a language access need, the CSS or Probation and Parole Officer (PPO) shall:
  - a. Immediately inform the Parole Board of the language access need at the beginning of the process; and
  - b. Work with the Parole Board to:
    - i. Determine which forms and paperwork need to be translated into the supervised individual's target language, in accordance with [Section B., Translation of Documents under the All DOC Staff General Procedures Heading](#);
    - ii. Determine if an interpreter is needed for a Parole Board hearing; and
    - iii. Ensure that the supervised individual receives all the required translations.
2. The Parole Board is responsible for translating the supervised individual's conditions of release into the target language. If the conditions were not translated, the PPO or CSS shall request that the Parole Board provide the translation.