

Illinois Racing Board Language Access Plan

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

Overview

The Illinois Racing Board (“Board” or “IRB”) has prepared this Language Access Plan (“LAP” or “Plan”) that sets forth the actions we are taking to ensure that individuals who identify as limited English proficient (“LEP”) have meaningful access to agency services, programs, and activities at no additional cost to the individual. In developing this plan, we understand LEP individuals to be persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

The Illinois Racing Board was created by the Illinois Horse Racing Act of 1975. The purpose of the Act and the mission of the Board is to support and enhance the Illinois horse racing industry; ensure that the industry remains competitive with neighboring state racing jurisdictions; stimulate growth within the Illinois horse racing industry; promote growth of tourism; encourage the breeding of thoroughbred and standardbred horses in Illinois; and ensure public confidence in the integrity of Illinois horse racing.

The Board maintains its main office in Chicago and has staff employed at two racetracks.

Hawthorne Race Course is located in Cicero, Illinois. Hawthorne conducts both Standardbred and Thoroughbred racing. Hawthorne’s backstretch is year-round home to many individuals who care for or train the horses engaged in racing. The families that reside on the backstretch attend local Cicero schools.

Fairmount Park in Collinsville, Illinois conducts Thoroughbred racing generally from April through October.

The Board, through its personnel, regulates and/or provides oversight for all aspects of horse racing involved in pari-mutuel wagering.

Board staff interaction with the public centers around the issuance or renewal of occupational licenses allowing employment in the racing industry; and the supervision, regulation and administration of racing activity and pari-mutuel wagering activities. Chicago central office-based staff interaction with the public is very limited.

SECTION 2 – POLICY AND AUTHORITY

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the IRB to provide timely, meaningful access for LEP persons to all IRB services, programs and activities for which they are engaged. The IRB shall provide free language assistance services to LEP individuals whenever an LEP person requests language assistance services. Upon request, IRB personnel will inform members of the public that language assistance services are available free of charge to LEP persons, and that the IRB will provide those services to them.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish effective guidelines, similar to the guidance provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, for IRB personnel to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, persons who have Limited English Proficiency, as the IRB recognizes the value and importance of providing access to any IRB Program, Service, and Activity.

- Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act stipulates that no person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
- Revised regulations under Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act affect how public entities (state and local governments) and private businesses must provide effective communication with individuals with disabilities. These regulations require public and private entities to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to make sure that individuals with speech, hearing and vision disabilities understand what is said or written and can communicate effectively. Auxiliary aids and services must be provided in accessible formats, in a timely manner, and in a way that protects the privacy and independence of the individual with a disability. A public entity or private business cannot impose a surcharge on an individual with a disability to cover the costs of the auxiliary aid or service provided.

Examples of common auxiliary aids and services include:

- qualified sign language interpreters in person or through video remote interpreting (VRI) services;
 - written materials;
 - voice, text, and video-based telecommunications products and systems, including text telephones (TTYs), videophones, and captioned telephones or equally effective telecommunications device;
 - taped texts;
 - audio recordings;
 - Brailled materials and displays,
 - large print materials;
 - accessible electronic and information technology.
- The Illinois Language Equity and Access Act (P.A. 103-0723), in conjunction with the Governor's Office of New Americans, seeks to ensure that language is not a barrier to equal access to State services and that persons of limited English proficiency are not excluded from equitable access to State information, programs, services, and activities. The Act proscribes the development of the following by state agencies:

Language Access Plan

- Each language access plan should describe: the population of LEP persons the agency serves, the policy and programmatic actions the agency will implement to ensure meaningful access, and the metrics the agency will use to measure compliance with the Act.
- Among other requirements, each plan will describe how the agency will provide:
 - translation and interpretation services to LEP persons,
 - vital document translation services depending on the size of the LEP population served as specified by the Act.
- **Complaint and Review Process**
 - Each State agency will develop an internal complaint and review process specific to the provision of language assistance services.
- **Tracking and Reporting**
 - Agencies will create mechanisms to track aggregate data on the number of bilingual employees, by title and language spoken, the number and percentage of LEP persons who use the services of the State agency, as applicable, and aggregate data on the number of complaints filed and the status or resolution of the complaints.
- **Language Access Coordinator**
 - Each State agency shall designate a Language Access Coordinator who is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the agency's language access plan.

The IRB is committed to providing LEP persons meaningful access to any Program, Service, and Activity although they may be limited in their English language proficiency including the deaf and hard of hearing. This Plan describes the IRB's policies and practices to provide language access services to LEP persons. Pursuant to this Plan, the IRB seeks to continue to eliminate or reduce - to the maximum extent practicable - Limited English Proficiency as a barrier to accessing any Program, Service, and Activity, as such, IRB will review and update this Plan, on a biennial (two year) basis.

This Plan serves to (a) inform IRB staff, licensees, and supporting organizations about language access services and support; (b) designate key staff tasked with supporting languages access services for the benefit of the IRB; and (c) offer opportunities to further the reach of IRB language access provisions.

Goals

To achieve the goal of meaningful access to any IRB program, service, and activity by LEP persons, IRB will:

- Perform a needs and capacity assessment;
- arrange for oral language assistance, as appropriate;
- translate IRB Vital Documents in languages other than English;
- update LAP policies and procedures;
- monitor access to language assistance; and
- provide staff training on language services provisions.

Definitions

Bilingual Staff - A staff person who has demonstrated proficiency in English and reading, writing, speaking, or understanding at least one other language. For the purposes of this plan, a bilingual staff member is a staff member hired under a position description that requires the use of sign language, Braille, or another second language.

Effective Communication - Communication sufficient to provide the LEP person with substantially the same level of services received by persons who are not LEP. For example, staff must take reasonable steps to ensure communication with an LEP person is as effective as communication with English proficient persons when providing similar programs and services.

Interpretation - The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language) while retaining the same meaning.

Language Access Plan Coordinator - IRB staff who is responsible for providing Meaningful Access to any of its Program, Service, and Activity to LEP persons.

Language Assistance Services – All oral and written language services needed to assist LEP persons to communicate effectively with staff, and to provide LEP persons with Meaningful Access to, and an equal opportunity to participate fully in, the Program, Service, and Activity administered by the IRB.

Limited English Proficient - Persons whose primary language is not English and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. LEP persons may be competent in certain types of communication in English (e.g., speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing). Similarly, LEP designations are context-specific: a person may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting but may find these skills are insufficient in other situations. If a person identifies themselves as an LEP person needing services, the Agency typically should accept that designation and provide appropriate services.

Meaningful Access - Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and Effective Communication at no cost to the LEP person. For LEP persons, Meaningful Access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior as compared to any Program, Service, and Activity provided to English proficient persons.

Primary Language - A person's native tongue or the language in which a person most effectively communicates. Staff should avoid assumptions about an individual's primary language. For example, not all individuals from predominantly Spanish-speaking countries speak Spanish fluently. Staff should make every effort to ascertain a person's primary language to ensure effective communication.

Program, Service, and Activity - All of the operations of the IRB.

Translation - The replacement of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language).

Vital Document - Paper or electronic material that contains information that is critical for accessing IRB Programs, Services, and Activities, or as required by law.

SECTION 3 - LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

Assessing Language Needs

To fulfill the IRB's commitment to social responsiveness, IRB staff understands the language needs of those accessing the Program, Service, and Activity within the IRB's jurisdiction as being critical to its mission. Annual assessment can help the IRB determine if it communicates effectively with LEP persons and appropriately manage its language access program planning.

Upon review of the IRB's language access needs, our Licensing division reported a total of 478 instances of Spanish-speaking LEP individuals between January of 2024 and February of 2025. No other languages were recorded during this period. The total possible service population detailed below is further narrowed by the unique industry and qualifications of the individuals seeking assistance through our Licensing division. This population is generally recurring, in that they return annually to renew their licenses with the IRB.

The majority of interactions with Spanish-speaking licensees who require language assistance occur at the beginning of the calendar year (when licenses expire), and more specifically (94%) at the Cicero, IL racetrack.

The estimated total number of individuals in our service area is: Approximately 12,671,821, the Illinois population in 2019. Of those, approximately 9,853,946 are over the age of 18 and thus eligible to participate in activity conducted, regulated or under Board oversight.

The top five languages spoken by LEP individuals that our agency serves or could potentially serve are as follows:

Language	Estimated Number of LEP Individuals Who Speak this Language
Spanish	694,457
Polish	90,066
Chinese	52,736
Tagalog	23,742
Arabic	19,749

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey.

We use the following resources to determine the top five languages spoken by LEP individuals:

- U.S. Census data (including American Community Survey);
- Agency data on client contacts;
- Information from community organizations that serve LEP individuals;
Names of organizations: Racing Industry Charitable Foundation (RICF).
- Information from other Illinois government resources.

Providing Language Access

The IRB's Plan is overseen by the Language Access Plan Coordinator and will be implemented throughout the Agency to provide Meaningful Access to persons limited in their English language

proficiency. A self-assessment began in January of 2024 of Agency Language Assistance Services, including both oral and written language services. The following information was collected regarding language services available for Spanish-speaking LEP licensees.

Various IRB staff have in-person and/or telephonic encounters with LEP individuals. IRB staff record in-person encounters with LEP individuals with unique language preferences and submit report data monthly to the Language Access Coordinator. Spanish is the language encountered and is the focus of the Board's efforts to provide the broadest range of access for LEP individuals.

Points of significant contact include:

- Board Licensing offices and Detention Barns at two (2) Board regulated racetracks: Hawthorne Racecourse in Cicero and Fairmount Park in Collinsville, where LEP individuals work or reside during the race meets;
- Administrative hearings related to individual occupational license denial, suspension or revocation or racing rules infractions.

Spanish-speaking LEP licensees of the IRB historically have been assisted in multiple ways:

- A bi-lingual employee of the IRB,
- A bi-lingual racing official of the racetrack,
- Another licensee,
- A friend or family member.

Effective Communication with LEP persons requires the IRB to have Language Assistance Services in place. There are two primary types of Language Assistance Services: oral and written. Oral Language Assistance Services may come in the form of "in-language" communication (a demonstrably qualified Bilingual Staff member communicates directly in an LEP person's language) or Interpretation. Translation is the replacement of written text from one language into another. A translator also must be qualified and trained.

Presently, the IRB provides for multilingual "I Speak" cards to be readily available at reception in conjunction with translated Language Access Complaint Forms. If an individual believes he/she/they have been denied benefits of this Language Access Plan, a complaint may be submitted. Once an LEP individual has been identified and the types of translation or interpretation services has been determined, the staff member shall obtain the appropriate language access services for the LEP person.

Oral Language Assistance

Each Program, Service, and Activity of the IRB identified as warranting language measures will arrange for timely oral language assistance to LEP persons in face-to-face and/or telephone contact. Such assistance may take the form of Bilingual Staff, oral interpreters, or telephone Language Access Services.

The IRB identifies existing staff that are linguistically, culturally, and technically able to deliver services in a language other than English and/or to serve as interpreters as well as receive bilingual supplemental pay to do so. To better serve LEP individuals accessing the Agency's services throughout Illinois, IRB is working with CMS to establish language assessments for new candidates

for public-facing positions. This enables the IRB hiring opportunities that assist in identifying qualified bilingual candidates.

Walk-in LEP individuals can utilize either an on-site bilingual employee of the IRB or the racetrack or, if an in-house interpreter is unavailable, IRB staff will coordinate a 3-way call between IRB staff, the LEP individual, and an interpreter from a designated Language Service. Signs will be posted about language assistance services in public areas at regulated facilities.

The Board will maintain a menu on its main telephone line that incorporates Spanish. The menu will enable LEP individuals to access a voicemail box for purposes of leaving a message to request assistance in their language.

Competency of Bilingual Staff or Contractors - Bilingual Staff or contractors will be assessed for bilingual proficiency, Interpretation skills, and sensitivity to the special confidentiality issues raised by interpreting for others. Components should ensure that individuals providing interpretative services possess a level of fluency and comprehension appropriate to the specific nature, type, and purpose of information at issue.

Unacceptable Practices – IRB staff should not use family members or friends to translate or interpret for LEP persons. If the LEP customer insists upon using a friend or family member, it should be allowed only after language services have been offered and refused. Minor children should never be used to interpret, except in emergencies.

Securing Sufficient Resources - Each IRB Program, Service, and Activity identified as warranting language assistance measures should strive to budget for language services to ensure that adequate resources exist for interpreters, Translation and review of documents, and outreach. Notwithstanding, any limitations of current budget, program should include language assistance resources as items in their future budget requests. Program should be prepared to justify any failure to request funding for language assistance where the data indicate a clear and evident need for such assistance.

Teletype Device (TTY)/Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)

A Teletype Device (“TTY”) and Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (“TDD”) are auxiliary aids and services for individuals with hearing impairments. A TTY is basically the same thing as a TDD. The phrase TTY, or Teletype device, is how the deaf community used to refer to the extremely large machines they used to type messages back and forth over the phone lines. A TDD operates in a similar way but is a much smaller desktop machine. Since the deaf community has used the phrase "TTY" for so many years, it is still commonly used interchangeably with "TDD."

The IRB utilizes NexTalk software which is managed by DoIT, and is available by calling the IRB’s TDD line at 866-323-0273.

Document and Website Translation

The IRB shall identify and translate Vital Documents to provide Meaningful Access to LEP persons. Each IRB Program, Service, and Activity shall translate its Vital Documents into languages other than English where a significant number or percentage of the customers served,

are LEP. Currently, the most requested language translation is Spanish. The IRB will translate all vital documents into Spanish, with other language translations provided upon request.

The IRB's website manager works in partnership with DoIT to ensure the IRB website is updated regularly to comply with all accessibility and translation protocols required by the State of Illinois.

Public Service Announcements posted at facilities will be posted in English and Spanish. Information to obtain services in additional languages will be posted, directing the public to the Board's website.

- The Boards' website will include information about free language assistance services and steps to take to report a complaint relative to Language Access services. The website is currently set up to be read in the following languages, in addition to English: Arabic, Hindi, Polish, Mandarin, Spanish, and Tagalog. This translation feature is at the top, right side of the IRB web page.
- In addition, the Board will provide a copy of the multi-lingual "This is an Important Document" flyer with all written documents mailed to existing, new and perspective licensees to alert them to the availability of free interpretation services should they not understand the contents of the documents they are being asked to sign.

Vital Documents

How to Identify Language Access Vital Documents:

- Department of Justice LEP.gov notes <https://www.lep.gov/commonly-asked-questions>:
 - A document will be considered vital if it contains information that is critical for obtaining services and/or benefits, or is required by law
 - Vital documents must be translated when a significant number or percentage of the population eligible to be served, or likely to be directly affected by the program/activity, needs services or information in a language other than English to communicate effectively. For many larger documents, translation of vital information contained within the document will suffice and the documents need not be translated in their entirety
 - Generally, entire websites need not be translated, as only the vital information within the website might need translation
 - Agencies should proactively translate vital written documents into the frequently encountered languages of LEP groups eligible to be served or likely to be affected by the benefit program or service.

The process for ensuring documents are written in plain language before they are translated into other

languages will be as follows:

- The LAC will meet with the area requesting a translated document to review the document being submitted and recommend changes, where necessary, to ensure brevity and clarity of the message and/or the instructions being conveyed.

The following is a list of documents identified as Vital Documents.

General Public:

- Report Illegal Activity poster
- Responsible Gaming poster

Licensees

- Affidavit of Guarantor (Minors)
- Authorized Agent Form
- Fingerprint Consent Form
- Fingerprint Certification
- Hearing Notices
- License Application
- Registration Application (Partnership, Stable, Estate, Trust)
- SSN Notice
- Temporary Application
- Trainer Employee List
- Workers' Compensation Affidavit

The IRB will continue to identify additional Vital Documents for translation. Any documents determined to be vital during the course of this plan will be timely translated.

The agency's Language Access Coordinator will maintain a list of written translation resources that will be available to staff, which includes:

- Names and contact information for all resources.
- Names and locations of staff members who are available to provide oral translations of written documents.
- Languages in which each translation service is qualified.
- Procedure for accessing each translation service.

SECTION 4 – TRAINING, PROCEDURES, AND ASSISTANCE

Training

The IRB will train front-line and managerial staff on the policies and procedures of its LAP annually. Front-line staff will be employees whose routine duties include interactions with licensees and other state agencies. Staff will receive training on the policies and procedures of language assistance and on how to determine whether Language Assistance Services are needed by a customer. In addition, staff will receive

training on how to secure Language Assistance Services for a customer, and on how to work with interpreters and translators via the developed standard operating procedures.

Training will be conducted via online State training module resources, with content provided either by the Office of New Americans or from the Language Access Coordinator.

Policies and Procedures

If applicable, when a specific IRB Program, Service, and Activity is identified as warranting Language Assistance Services, then the Agency will develop specific written policies and procedures related to Language Assistance Services applicable to that Program, Service, and Activity.

Written policies and procedures may address the following areas:

- a. provision of language services generally;
- b. identification and assessment of language needs;
- c. oral Language Assistance Services;
- d. written translations;
- e. oral and written notification of the availability of language services;
- f. staff training on language service provision; and
- g. monitoring access to language assistance.

Language Assistance Access Monitoring

To the extent applicable, each IRB Program, Service, and Activity identified as warranting Language Assistance Services will institute procedures to monitor the accessibility and quality of language assistance activities for LEP persons.

Data collection and record keeping are key to an effective monitoring and compliance system. To determine the validity of any language assistance complaints, it may be necessary to analyze and review data that reflects how the program provides services to LEP persons. Data collection also allows the program to obtain an overview of how its services are provided.

To the extent applicable, each IRB Program, Service, and Activity identified as warranting Language Assistance Services will maintain a data collection system that assures the availability of data which includes the Primary Language of the LEP person. The system will include tracking the usage of contractual services for interpretation and translation services. Additionally, and to the extent possible, employees in key service areas will continue using existing spreadsheet reporting to identify areas of bilingual interactions with licensees by IRB employees.

Such data should include the data upon which the program has based the language needs assessment; the number of LEP persons, by language group, who received language services; names and categories of staff receiving training; and dates of training.

SECTION 5 – ADMINISTRATION

Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure compliance with the Plan, the LAC will monitor its implementation as follows:

The Language Access Plan Coordinator will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this plan and make updates accordingly. To do this, the Language Access Plan Coordinator will make use of the following mechanisms:

- * Survey staff on how often Language Assistance Services are used and how they could be improved.
- * Monitor the Agency's response rate to suggestions or requests by LEP persons.
- * Maintain a record of available services for LEP persons and the frequency of their use.
- * Maintain a record of funds and staff time spent on Language Assistance Services.

Each individual utilizing LEP services in-person will be provided with a feedback form. Additionally, feedback forms are posted on Board websites. All forms received are reviewed and analyzed by the LAC. The LAC also requests location reviews to ensure Language Access materials are prominently featured in all publicly accessible areas.

Complaints

The IRB will provide information to the public advising them of the right to file a complaint if they feel that they have been the subject of discrimination. The information provided will describe how and/or where to file a complaint. The IRB does not retaliate or take other adverse action because an individual has filed a complaint alleging discrimination based on LEP status or needs.

Language Access Plan Committee

The LAP Committee is composed of IRB staff representatives: (1) the Language Access Plan Coordinator/HR Director; (2) the Executive Director; (3) the General Counsel; and (4) the Licensing Manager. The LAP Committee will meet biennially or as needed to develop or lead Agency wide language access initiatives, including those designed to leverage resources and improve services to LEP persons.

CONCLUSION

The Illinois Racing Board is committed to providing Meaningful Access to any of its Program, Service, and Activity. The Agency Language Access Coordinator will review and modify this plan annually based on input and feedback from the Agency and LAP Working Group, and other information received that the Agency views as critical to enhancing this plan's effectiveness.

We will display information on the right to file a complaint, and the procedures to file a complaint, in the following manner:

Standardized complaint forms will be available on the Board website. Additionally, information on the right to file a complaint will be posted in the top five languages in areas likely to be seen by the public.

We will handle complaints made to the agency regarding the provision of language assistance services in the following manner:

All standardized complaint forms will be routed to the Board's Ethics Officer, who will notify the LAC of all complaints. The LAC will be responsible for coordinating the investigation of complaints and making recommendations to the Ethics Officer on the appropriate resolution of complaints.

Language Access Coordinator

Jackie Clisham
Jackie.clisham@illinois.gov
312-814-5032

Executive Director

Domenic DiCera