



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

November 1, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Department Heads

FROM: Linda Chu Takayama, Chief of Staff *Linda Chu Takayama*
Office of the Governor

SUBJECT: Ensuring Language Access During COVID-19 Emergency

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted nearly every aspect of our lives and has reached into nearly every community in Hawai'i. Our ability to keep one another safe and healthy depends on all residents having access to credible, timely information about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the types of supports and services available, and how to comply with federal, state and county emergency orders. This requires us to pay particular attention to how we communicate with limited English proficiency (LEP) communities.

Federal and state law require departments to provide meaningful access to services, programs and activities, and language assistance services for LEP persons in Hawai'i.

To ensure that we are meeting our obligations, I am asking each department to review its Language Access Plan, assess the efficacy of its plan during the pandemic, and update the plan, as needed. This process should address but not be limited to the following elements:

- Translations of vital agency-specific information related to COVID-19.
- Telephonic interpretation services.
- Website notices in major 14 languages of the right to free interpretation services and a telephone number within the department to request interpreter services. These 14 languages are those that are spoken by at least 5% of the state population or 1,000 people.
- Availability of dual- and multi-lingual employees in the department who may be called upon to provide emergency translation, interpretation, or other duties related to language access.

- Staff training needs with respect to language access.

Please send your assessments by November 30, 2021 to Aphirak (AP) Bamrungruan, Executive Director of the Office of Language Access, at aphirak.bamrungruan@doh.hawaii.gov. As always, the Office of Language Access is available to provide technical assistance and training to state and state-funded agencies in the establishment and implementation of their language access plans. You may contact the office at (808) 586-8730 or via email at the address above.

Thank you for removing language barriers to vital information related to COVID-19 and for your continued commitment to the people of Hawai'i.