



EAC Clearinghouse Checklist

Helping America Vote

Language Access Program Checklist

In 2019, 26.9 million people in the U.S. had limited English proficiency, and 67.8 million people spoke a language other than English at home. 331 jurisdictions and 3 states are currently covered by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, which requires jurisdictions to provide language access for communities that meet certain criteria. Of these 331 jurisdictions, an additional 68 are newly covered under Section 203 in 2021. This checklist is intended to assist election officials in their role in “enab[ling] members of the applicable language minority groups to participate effectively in the electoral process.” 28 CFR § 55.2(b)



Timeline



- December 2021:** Section 203 requirements take effect immediately upon publication in the Federal Register. These requirements are applicable to primary and general elections, as well as special elections including bond, referenda, municipality, and school district elections.

Budget Considerations

New language requirements can increase costs for several aspects of election administration, including:

- Translating and printing ballots, envelopes, voter instructions, and voter guides.
- Ballot programming, including, audio recording, proofing, and testing the ballots in each required language.
- Staff salaries for conducting voter outreach activities.
- Implementation and evaluation of new policies and procedures.

Community Outreach and Engagement

- Make announcements over the language community's radio or television stations and social media.
- Publicize notices in language community newspapers.
- Partner with community organizations to conduct voter outreach at community events.

Written and Other Materials

- Conduct a comprehensive review of election materials that must be translated.
- Leverage existing resources such as the EAC's Glossaries of Election Terminology and National Voter Registration Form.
- Network and coordinate with peer election officials and other stakeholders.
- Ensure accurate translation of election materials and invite community organizations to be part of the review process.
- Determine whether a language is considered written or unwritten. Unwritten languages require oral assistance and publicity.



Voters



Election
Officials



Poll
Workers



Voter
Registration



In-Person
Voting



Mail-In
Voting



Accessibility



Election
Security

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Poll Worker Recruitment & Training

- Ensure adequate recruitment of bilingual poll workers and training on language assistance and cultural sensitivity.
- Explore partnerships with churches, schools, and colleges to recruit bilingual poll workers.
- Invite community organizations to provide presentations and workshops as part of poll worker training.
- Include training related to the intersection between language access and accessibility for voters with disabilities.



General Practices

- Be proactive in anticipating and developing plans for assistance for your jurisdiction's language needs.
 - Use demographic data, including federal, state, and local data sources, to monitor language access needs.
- If you have a jurisdiction with reduced coverage, consider developing a transition plan to continue to serve that constituency.
- Hire a language outreach coordinator to monitor language access efforts and needs within the community.
- Continuously assess, analyze and improve language programs.



Resources

- Language Access**—The EAC website includes a page that compiles resources related to language accessibility. This includes links to resources from federal, state, and local governments. The page also includes videos and presentations from EAC events on language access, including its 2016, 2017, and 2018 Language Access for Voters Summits.
- EAC's Glossaries of Election Terminology**
- EAC's National Voter Registration Form**
- U.S. Department of Justice**—Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act
- U.S. Department of Justice**—Guide explaining the requirements under Section 203 for local elections officials.
- The Federal Regulations (28 CFR § 55) related to Section 203**
- U.S. Census Bureau**—Section 203 Language Provisions
- U.S. Government's Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**—offers a wealth of information, including multilingual materials, data and language maps, guides, and language access planning resources

