

## **WSBA Language Access Policy**

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**Adopted by Executive Director: June 20, 2025.**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to reduce barriers for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) to access the services and information provided by the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA). Washington Supreme Court General Rule 12.2(a) charges the WSBA with, among other responsibilities, providing services to Bar members and the public; promoting an effective, accessible legal system; administering admission, regulation, and discipline of its members in a manner that protects the public; and serving as a statewide voice to the public on matters relating to the legal profession.

While most people in Washington state understand the English language, English is not the primary language for a significant portion of Washington's population. LEP individuals use, and need to access, legal services provided by WSBA members. Much of the information that the WSBA provides about its regulatory functions, services, and other important information is on the WSBA's public website. In addition, WSBA staff regularly receive direct communications from LEP individuals. Providing information online about the WSBA's public-facing services in multiple languages and facilitating direct communications with LEP individuals will ensure individuals are not prevented from accessing WSBA services due to language barriers.

### **II. Scope and Policy**

This policy covers translations of online communications targeted at the public as well as translation or interpretation of communications between the WSBA and members of the public.

*Online communications:* Online communications addressed by this policy include, but are not necessarily limited to, webpages found under the "For the Public" tab located on the WSBA's homepage, information required by law to be provided to the public, and other public safety information.

For the language most commonly spoken in Washington state other than English, the WSBA will provide written translations of online communications falling within communication categories 1-4 in the prioritization matrix below. These translations will be created by a professional, human translator.

Translations of communications in categories 5-8 into the most common non-English language spoken in Washington and translations of communications in categories 1-8 for the five next most common non-English languages will be completed according to the biennial Language Access Plan and prioritization matrix, as described below.

*Other communications:* WSBA staff should make an effort to translate interpersonal communications (e.g. emails, calls, or meetings) in languages other than English if a member of the public has limited English proficiency. Individual departments should make a determination on how to best facilitate translations or interpretations on a case-by-case basis and may refer to the prioritization matrix below for guidance. Individual departments may also seek assistance from the Language Access Coordinator and Work Group (defined in Section III below) for assistance with responses. If, in coordination with individual departments, the Work Group assists with the development of standardized, translated email responses

to help departments meet these needs, staff may use those responses where appropriate when responding to direct communications from LEP individuals.

### III. Language Access Coordinator

The WSBA will designate one staff person as the Language Access Coordinator. The Language Access Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating creation of a biennial language access plan, facilitating implementation of the plan, communicating the plan to WSBA staff, and assisting with translation updates as needed.

### IV. Biennial Language Access Plan

The Language Access Coordinator will convene a Language Access Work Group on a no less than biennial basis to track data and evaluate the WSBA's language access needs, current translation and interpretation use, effectiveness of the existing Language Access Policy, and the current state of validity and accuracy for automated translation services. The Language Access Coordinator will consult with the Executive Leadership Team to select the Language Access Work Group members to ensure a broad cross-section of the organization is represented. The Work Group will memorialize the results of the review in a written report to the Executive Leadership Team. The Language Access Coordinator will engage with the budget process to assess and plan for budgetary capacity for translations, and, using the prioritization matrix below, will create a biennial language access plan identifying the online communications and template email responses to be translated, languages to be used for those translations, and the dates by which those translations will be completed.

### V. Prioritization Matrix

Decisions about how to prioritize translating the WSBA's public communications will be based on three considerations: (1) type of communication, (2) language commonality, and (3) translation method. The WSBA should prioritize translation of communications and languages that are higher on the prioritization scale and should prioritize professional, human translation for higher priority communications and languages.

#### 1. Communication type priorities

| Priority Level | Type of Communication                                                                | Examples <sup>1</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Priority 1:    | Public safety information and information that must be provided to the public by law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health and safety notices for use of WSBA facilities: <a href="#">COVID-19 volunteer policies</a>; <a href="#">COVID-19 in-person attendance policy</a></li> <li>Required ADA notices: <a href="#">Accommodations</a>; <a href="#">Accessibility</a></li> <li><a href="#">Privacy policy</a></li> </ul> |

<sup>1</sup> Contact the Language Access Work Group for pdf versions of any nonfunctioning links.

|             |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaster response notices: <a href="#">Florida Bar Hurricane Information</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         |
| Priority 2: | Information related to the WSBA's regulatory public protection function                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Grievance and complaint information</a>; Client Protection Fund <a href="#">information</a> and <a href="#">application</a>; <a href="#">Unauthorized Practice of Law complaint form</a> and information</li> </ul> |
| Priority 3: | WSBA Member Directory                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Search function</a> to locate WSBA bar members who speak the same language as user</li> </ul>                                                                                                                       |
| Priority 4: | Resources to find legal help                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Find Legal Help page</a></li> <li><a href="#">The WSBA Public Home page</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                              |
| Priority 5: | Legal rights information and educational information                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Finding Lost Wills</a>; <a href="#">Law Links</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                        |
| Priority 6: | General information about WSBA services unrelated to public safety or the WSBA's regulatory protection of the public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Who We Are page</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Priority 7: | WSBA volunteer opportunities                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Public Volunteers page</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Priority 8: | Information on joining the legal profession                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Join the Legal Profession page</a></li> <li><a href="#">LPO information page</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                         |

## 2. Language prioritization

The WSBA will prioritize the non-English languages most commonly spoken in Washington state according to the most recent census or similar data, focusing on the six most commonly spoken non-English languages. Languages spoken by more LEP Washington residents should be prioritized over languages spoken by fewer LEP residents.

## 3. Translation method

While both professional human translation and automated translation, or a combination of automation with human review, may be used, the WSBA will prioritize professional human translation for online communications and languages falling higher on their respective prioritization scales unless and until automated translation technology meets or surpasses human translation in accuracy and validity.

Biennial Language Access Plans may use the priorities for communication type, language, and translation method in various combinations to meet WSBA's needs:

### Prioritization Matrix

|  |                                              |                                                         |
|--|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Priority 1: Most common non-English language | Priority 2: Next five most common non-English languages |
|--|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|

## Language Access Policy

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Priority 1: Public safety information and information that must be provided to the public by law                                 | Translations will be provided using professional human translators.                                                                                                                                                    | Translations will be provided in accordance with the biennial language access plan.                                         |
| Priority 2: Information related to the WSBA's regulatory public protection function                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                             |
| Priority 3: WSBA Member Directory                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                             |
| Priority 4: Resources to find legal help                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                             |
| Priority 5: Legal rights information and educational information                                                                 | Translations will be provided in accordance with the biennial language access plan.<br><br>Professional human or automated translation may be used, with preference for human translation or review whenever possible. | Professional human or automated translation may be used, with preference for human translation or review whenever possible. |
| Priority 6: General information about WSBA services unrelated to public safety or the WSBA's regulatory protection of the public |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                             |
| Priority 7: Volunteer opportunities                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                             |
| Priority 8: Information on joining the legal profession                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                             |