

Substance Abuse Prevention and Control
24-25 Payment Reform Capacity Building and Incentive Initiative
Improving Workforce Language Assistance Efforts

Language Assistance Plan Needs Assessment Prompts Guide

The purpose of the Language Access Needs Assessment Prompts Guide is to support SAPC network providers in reviewing their Language Access Worksheet and conducting Stakeholder Engagement activities to identify and address gaps, barriers, and opportunities related to providing language assistance services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) or those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This Language Assistance Plan Needs Assessment Prompt consists of two key components:

1. Language Access Worksheet:

The Language Access worksheet you completed in September gathered both quantitative and qualitative data on your current language access policies, procedures, and services. It documented the languages spoken by your patients, the frequency of encounters with LEP individuals, existing staff training, and identified areas where improvements may be needed.

2. Stakeholder Engagement:

In addition to completing the worksheet, we recommend that you engage key stakeholders—LEP patients, direct service staff, front office staff, agency leadership, and community organizations—through interviews. These conversations will provide valuable insights into the real-life experiences of those using and providing language services. The conversations will help uncover challenges, service gaps, and areas where further support is needed, ensuring your Language Assistance Plan is both comprehensive and responsive to the needs of your patients and community.

A more comprehensive needs assessment guidance can be found in the Language Assistance Toolkit.

How to Use the Guide:

By combining the data from the Language Access Worksheet with the insights gathered from stakeholder discussions, you will gain a clear understanding of where your language assistance services are succeeding and where improvements are necessary. This information will help you:

- Identify gaps in service availability or quality.
- Understand barriers that LEP individuals face in accessing your services.
- Determine specific areas where additional resources, staff training, or new technologies are needed to enhance language access.
- Build stronger partnerships with community organizations that can support LEP individuals.

What's in this document:

You already have the responses from your language access worksheet, which provide insights into the current status of language access and highlight key service needs. Use the prompts below to help you reassess or refine your responses.

Use the following question prompts as a guide to engage with stakeholders and gather further insights about the language needs, services, and resources available for LEP individuals within your agency and the community.

Language Access Worksheet Prompts

What additional data do you need to assess your language assistance needs?

a. **Service Gaps and Needs:**

Based on your current language assistance services, are there any specific language groups that you are not reaching effectively? What additional language support might be necessary to meet the needs of these populations?

b. **Staff Capacity:**

Are there any areas where your staff could benefit from additional training or resources to enhance their ability to provide language assistance services?

a. **Data Tracking and Measurement:**

How effective is your current process for tracking and measuring the language needs of your patients, including the frequency of LEP encounters and the success of language assistance services? Are there improvements that could be made in data collection to better assess the impact of language access efforts and inform future planning?

Stakeholder Discussion Prompts

For LEP Patients (preferably in their preferred language, where feasible):

- a. Were language assistance services offered to you at our agency?
- b. What challenges, if any, have you experienced in understanding or communicating with our staff during your visits?
- c. What improvements or changes would you suggest to enhance the language services offered to individuals who are non-English speaking or who speak limited English?

For Direct Service/Front Office Staff:

- a. What challenges have you encountered in providing language assistance to LEP individuals?
- b. What additional resources or support do you think would help improve your ability to offer effective language assistance?

- c. What improvements or changes would you suggest that enhance the language services offered to individuals who are non-English speaking or who speak limited English?

For Agency Leadership:

- a. What is your perception of the agency's current capacity to meet the language needs of our LEP patients?
- b. Where do you see opportunities for improvement in our capacity to serve patients with language needs?
- c. What resources, support, or strategies do you believe are most needed to enhance the agency's capacity to provide effective language access services?

For Community Organizations:

- a. In your experience, what barriers prevent non-English speaking, LEP, and deaf or hard of hearing individuals in the community from accessing behavioral health services?
- b. What strategies have worked well in your organization to improve language access and engagement with LEP individuals?
- c. What improvements or changes would you suggest to ensure adequate language services to individuals who are non-English speaking or who speak limited English?