December 12, 2016

To: Cooperative Extension Staff
From: Dominic J. Ledesma, Language Access Coordinator & Bilingual Editor

Subject: Information and protocol for language access needs

Purpose
This communication provides all Cooperative Extension (CES) staff with general information on language access accommodations for individuals with limited English proficiency and how to request assistance for support. Please share the information in this document with colleagues and keep a copy on file as part of your existing Civil Rights accountability protocols and reporting records.

What is language access?
Institutional studies and internal reporting structures like Recording Results consistently identify language barriers alongside other access barriers to CES's programs, activities, and services. Language barriers inhibit equitable access to educational programming for individuals and communities with limited English proficiency or a communicative disability. Language barriers also limit staff's ability to implement programming that meaningfully engages and includes a larger number of individuals from underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable populations.

Language access is an equity-minded approach to communicating and engaging with speakers of different languages and diverse linguistic needs. It is about providing meaningful access to CES services, activities, and programs for individuals with limited English proficiency. Through the use of translation, interpretation, and other language support services, CES staff can appropriately address language access issues in educational programming and remove different types of communication barriers.

Language access accountability for individuals with limited English proficiency
Individuals with limited English proficiency are a protected audience under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As a recipient of federal financial support, CES is accountable to policies and guidance for providing meaningful access to programs, activities, and services for persons with limited English proficiency. By providing the means to effectively address language barriers and other issues of language access, we are complying with an important part of our Civil Rights Title VI responsibilities for expanding access to legally protected audiences.

Requesting support for language access needs
Starting January 23, 2017, all CES staff will be able to access and request support for language access using an online form. This tool is being made available to offer direct, centralized support to CES staff with their language access needs and questions.

This form is intended to supplement and enrich, rather than replace, CES staff's efforts to meet their ongoing language access needs for greater inclusion of individuals with limited English proficiency.

Staff is welcome to continue using any existing protocols and resources found to be effective locally to meet the language access needs of linguistically diverse populations in their program area.

What is the process for requesting support?
Follow the link below, and fill out the online form with initial information related to your program, project, or specific need. Language Access staff will receive your request, review the information, and follow up with the contact person.

Where can CES staff find the link to the online request form?
  ➢ Copy and paste the following link: **Language Support Request Form**
  ➢ Cooperative Extension's Civil Rights page:
    https://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/civilrightsleadership/protected-audience-resources/
  ➢ Email: languageaccess@ces.uwex.edu

This information will also be housed on a CES website for Language Access & Support that is currently in the process of development.

What type of support is offered through the online request process?
Support with language access needs is a collaborative process. Here are the ways we can support you and your staff:
  ➢ **Translation projects**
    o We help coordinate your translation project to help make text-based materials available in more than one language. This includes working directly with the project point person and with professional translators and service vendors to source appropriate talent, obtain price quotes, answer questions, and ensure quality of the finished product.
  ➢ **Interpretation**
    o We help CES staff identify and coordinate the use of interpreters during meetings, programs, or services offered in person to help remove verbal language barriers. This includes 1) working with the event point person and with professional interpreters and service vendors to help source appropriate talent based on the language and programming content, and 2) helping CES staff understand their role in creating the conditions that help facilitate an appropriate language accommodation.
  ➢ **Project consultation**
    o We help talk through programming projects and ideas during their initial stages of inception. We help identify language access needs, discuss potential barriers, and offer suggestions on strategies that contribute to educational programming for underserved populations that is both culturally responsive to their needs *and* linguistically appropriate.
  ➢ **Simultaneous interpretation equipment use**
    o In some cases, CES staff already has an interpreter contracted for their event but may need the support of technical equipment. We have two, one-way transmitter systems with 24 receivers that can be used together or separately. We are working to make this equipment available to loan CES staff for programming needs.

If CES staff makes an online request for services, how will the costs be covered?
Program areas should continue to rely on their existing practices and procedures for funding language access needs. However, we will work to accommodate language support requests whether or not a funding source is already available. Our immediate priority as an institution is to meet the current and emerging language access needs of our respective communities.

We are currently exploring different cost-sharing models and funding structures for language support and will share more information once an appropriate process has been determined.

Do programming projects need to be approved prior to requesting a translation or an interpreter?
Consulting with your unit supervisor, program area, or regional director is strongly recommended prior to submitting an online request. The planning and funding of language support projects may involve administrative considerations and decisions. This is especially important if a protocol in your area for requesting translation or an interpreter currently exists.

Language access projects can vary significantly in their scope, size, and nature. We are currently exploring possible administrative structures for identifying a language access point person in different programming areas. The goal is to have a designated person who can help aid administrative decisions related to language access projects and their respective needs.

What about language access accommodations for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing?
Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The UW Colleges/UW Extension Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (http://inclusion.uwex.uwc.edu/) is our institutional coordinator for this protected audience and manages accommodation requests through a separate process. However, we are committed to working collaboratively with the OEDI to ensure that any request for a language accommodation, regardless of the audience or type of barrier, is met with the appropriate institutional response.

Who can administration and staff contact if they have questions related to language access accountability, support requests, or any other information shared in this communication?

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