



State of Nevada

Board of Examiners for Social Workers

4600 Kietzke Lane, #O-264, Reno, NV 89502

(775) 688-2555

Language Access Policy

Effective 11/01/2024

Purpose

The State of Nevada, through Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) Chapter 232 and federal guidance on Title VI, shall address the barriers persons with limited English proficiency face in accessing governmental programs and services.

The Board of Examiners for Social Workers (BESW) is an Occupational Licensing Board and does not provide programs and services directly to the public. The BESW role is in the licensing and oversight of social work practice within the State Nevada.

Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) require and deserve meaningful, timely access to government services in their preferred language. Moreover, it is the responsibility of government to provide that access: State and local agencies and entities that receive public money have an obligation to provide meaningful, timely access for persons with limited English proficiency to the programs and services of those agencies and entities.

BESW does not receive any "public money" nor any money from the State of Nevada General Fund. BESW is solely funded by the fees from applications for and renewals of social work licenses.

BESW is committed to embracing the expectations within NRS 232.0081 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561at seq. (Act 172 of 2006) to ensure meaningful access to the licensing services provided by the Board for individuals with limited English proficiency.

The purpose of this document is to establish an effective plan and protocol for employees of BESW to follow when interacting with individuals who have limited English proficiency. Following this plan and protocol assists BESW to be successful in its the mission to protect public health, safety and welfare by ensuring that only competent social workers are licensed in the state.

General Policy

BESW recognizes that the population served by the Board may include limited English proficiency individuals. BESW will adopt the following policies and procedures to ensure that LEP individuals can gain equal access to the licensing services the BESW provides.

BESW's policy is to grant access to social work licensure to every person eligible for licensure regardless of their ability to speak, understand, read, or write English. BESW intends to take all reasonable steps to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to its licensing services.

The Board endorses the following policies:

- BESW is committed to equity and will take all reasonable steps to provide limited English proficient (LEP) individuals with meaningful access to all its licensing services.
- BESW rather than the LEP individuals, bears the responsibility for providing appropriate language services, regardless of the LEP individual's preferred language, at no cost to the LEP individual.

It is not clear whether BESW is expected to fund the use of translation services. As noted above BESW does not receive any General Fund monies. This will need to be clarified before the plan can be finalized.

- Staff at the initial points of contact has the specific duty to identify language needs for someone seeking licensing services.
- Use of informal interpreters such as family, friends of the person seeking service, or other customers is not allowed. Minor children are prohibited from acting as interpreters.
- Staff may not suggest or require that an LEP individual provide an interpreter in order to receive BESW licensing services.

Board of Examiners for Social Workers Language Access Coordinator:

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Profile of Customers of the Nevada Board of Examiners for Social Workers

Our preliminary assessment is that BESW has a limited LEP constituency. Our primary "service" is licensing and regulating social work practice within the State of Nevada. All applicants must meet educational and national exam requirements for social work licensure. No matter the background of the applicant or licensee, there must be a common language to promote continuity of care for clients. That accepted common language between social workers is English. Licensure examination is done through the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) which only offers exams in English.

BESW collects specific demographic information from individuals applying for a license; however current demographic information does not include a licensee's preferred language(s) and whether they identify as indigenous or as a refugee. BESW will add these questions to the initial applications for licensure, effective 11/01/2024.

BESW will track the languages preferred for communication among the individuals with LEP whom the Board serves, to increase effective and efficient to the Board's licensing services without regard to any language impediments. The preferred language of the public and individual receiving licensing services from the Board is English. The most common method for the public to access services are through the BESW website and email communication.

Language access Services and Procedures

The Board does not have staff who can provide language assistance services. The Board does not have any known LEP applicants or licensees. Currently it is not known whether any applicants or licensees identify as indigenous or refugee. The Board has never received a request for translation or American Sign Language Services for LEP applicants, licensees or the public.

Language access needs will be addressed in the following manner. BESW will research and compare costs of the active statewide contracts for translation and interpreter services offered by the state, which can be found here:

https://purchasing.nv.gov/Contracts/Documents/Translation_ Interpretation/

in anticipation of needing to develop a contracted relationship with one of the vendors.

If fiscally possible, BESW will be providing Notice of Language Assistance Services. All staff will be made aware of appropriate language assistance services. Those seeking licensing services may also request language assistance by contacting the Board by email which is posted on the Board's website.

Implementing The Language Access Services

To fulfill the goals of this Plan, the Language Access Coordinator will provide staff with the necessary training to ensure that staff are familiar with the Language Access Plan and its related policies. This training will include:

- How to respond to LEP individuals via phone, writing, or in person.
- How to seek assistance with internal or state sanctioned language access resources.
- How to document the mode of communication and preferred language of an LEP individual to better understand the needs of those accessing licensing services and ensure that equitable access is available throughout the duration of their interactions with the Board.
- How to report these interactions to the Language Access Coordinator.
- BESW will use the internal and state sanctioned resources to provide information in languages other than English.

Evaluation of the Recommendations for the Language Access Plan

BESW is committed to providing our limited English proficient individuals full access to our licensing services and is committed to monitoring the policies and procedures stated above to ensure that LEP Nevadans are receiving equitable access to Board licensing services.

The Language Access Coordinator will continue to develop and monitor this plan, and update it biennially based on applicant data and language accommodation requests documented by staff and demographic data obtained through surveys. BESW will also track any costs we may incur by using external, state sanctioned resources.

BESW is exempt from the State Budget Act; all expenses are paid from fees received from licensed individuals.