

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS - LANGUAGE ACCESS

You Have a Right to Services in Your Own Language

Under U.S. law and under New Mexico law, you must receive assistance in your language if you seek services funded by the U.S. government or state government. This includes (among others):

- Federal, State, and Local Courts
- Immigration Services
- Police Departments
- Public Benefits Office (Food Stamps, Childcare Assistance, and Medicaid)
- Child Welfare Offices (Children, Youth and Families Department)
- Department of Workforce Solutions (Unemployment and Wage Claims)
- Social Security Administration
- Medical Services (Clinics, Hospitals, and Health Insurance)
- Schools



What Does Language Access Mean?



- Some agencies and organizations that provide government-funded services, such as hospitals and healthcare providers, are required to provide language access and must provide interpreters to all people, regardless of their preferred language.
- Documents that are required to receive services must be translated into the most common languages of the area, depending on the type of service that the agency provides.
- If translation of documents is not required, you have the right to speak to an interpreter so that they can explain the documents to you.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



- You can't be denied services simply because you don't speak English.
- You can't be forced to provide your own interpreter or pay for an interpreter.
- Ask for an interpreter if you need one. Use the "I Speak" Card.
- Service providers must honor your request for an interpreter.
- You do not have to agree to anything that you do not understand.
- Family and friends should not be asked to interpret for you.
- If you are denied language access, or for more information, contact the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty.



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What does denial of access to services mean?



If a federally or state funded organization does not provide an interpreter or translation, and for that reason you cannot communicate with a service provider, you have been denied access to services. This doesn't always mean turned away.

CONTACT US

If you have questions or are denied language rights, call the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty and ask for Verenice Peregrino Pompa.

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