



NJ DIVISION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Language Access Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is Language Access?

Under New Jersey's language access law, State agencies need to help people who are not fluent in English access government programs and services. The government must translate certain documents about those programs in the most commonly spoken languages in New Jersey.

Why does Language Access matter?

Language barriers often prevent people from accessing important services, including those provided by the government. According to the last Census, almost 40% of foreign-born New Jersey residents speak and read English "less than very well." In New Jersey, the most common languages spoken and read by limited English-proficient residents are Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, and Arabic.

What services does the New Jersey Division on Civil Rights (DCR) provide?

DCR is the state agency charged with enforcing New Jersey's anti-discrimination laws: the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), the Fair Chance in Housing Act, and the New Jersey Family Leave Act. DCR works to prevent, eliminate, and remedy discrimination and harassment based on someone's protected category (including race, national origin, ancestry, nationality, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more) in housing, employment, and places open to the public. On DCR's website, njcivilrights.gov, under the "[Resources](#)" tab, you can find detailed fact sheets that explain these rights and protections in 14 languages.

You can request to file a complaint on the [NJBIAS](http://bias.njcivilrights.gov) portal, located at bias.njcivilrights.gov, if you think your civil rights have been violated. You may be able to receive compensation and other forms of relief, if DCR finds a violation of your civil rights.

On NJBIAS, how does DCR offer interpretation and translation services?

Our complaint portal, NJBIAS, is currently available in Spanish. DCR also has bilingual Spanish-speaking staff who are ready and able to help people with filing a civil rights complaint.

DCR is making the NJBIAS system multilingual. In the meantime, any individual seeking to file a complaint or respond to one can request an interpreter by emailing LanguageHelp@njcivilrights.gov in English or their primary language. Simply write:

*I want to file (or respond to) a civil rights complaint.
I need an interpreter in _____ (write your language).
My e-mail is: _____
My phone number is: _____."*

If you can, please provide additional information so that DCR staff know how to help you.

For example:

I am blind and need help completing an Intake Form in Portuguese.

I speak Korean. I want to file a complaint.

I have a complaint against me. I want a Spanish interpreter.

DCR staff will respond to requests for interpretation help within 72 hours.

Does DCR provide free and confidential interpretation and translation services?

Yes, DCR staff arranges for free professional interpretation and translation services to provide clear and effective communication throughout the complaint process. There are no costs to file a complaint or to language assistance. Professional interpreters and translators understand all relayed information is confidential.

Will DCR help me if I am not a U.S. citizen?

Yes. DCR's services are available to all. We do not ask about citizenship or legal status or share private information with the federal government.

How does the NJ Law Against Discrimination (LAD) protect immigrants and others, who may be targeted because of their, actual or perceived, national origin?

A housing provider, an employer, or any place open to the public (including medical centers, schools, police precincts, etc.) may not discriminate against or harass persons because of their race, national origin, ancestry, nationality, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other protected categories listed in the LAD. Learn more about the protections the law offers by visiting our [website](#).

How can DCR help me if I face retaliation after filing a civil rights complaint?

The LAD prohibits retaliation against a person for complaining about discrimination or harassment. For example, a manager cannot fire someone for reporting national origin discrimination to their employer, and a housing provider cannot evict someone for reporting housing discrimination to DCR. Please notify DCR immediately if you feel that you have been retaliated against for speaking out against discrimination or filing a complaint with DCR.