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AGENDA ITEM

For Possible Action

Information Only

Date: February 20, 2024

Item Number: VII

Title: Language Access Implementation Plan & Proposed Public Comment Period

PURPOSE

Exchange Board of Directors consideration for approval of a proposed public comment period to satisfy regulatory requirements for the implementation of a Language Access Plan per Senate Bill 318 (2021) & NRS 232.0081.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Senate Bill 318 (SB318), signed into law during the 2021 Nevada Legislative Session, requires all state agencies to create a Language Access Plan (LAP) to improve access to government services, programs, and information for Nevadans with limited English proficiency.

The Governor’s Office for New Americans (ONA) is requiring each state agency to develop and update their LAPs. Along with the Northern NV International Center, ONA is assisting state agencies in further develop their LAPs since the 2021 Legislative Session.

As outlined in Senate Bill 318 (2021) & NRS 232.0081:

- The head of each agency of the Executive Department shall designate one or more employees of the agency to be responsible for **developing and biennially revising** a language access plan for the agency.
- A language access plan must assess the existing needs of persons served by the agency for language services and the degree to which the agency has met those needs. The plan must include recommendations to expand language services if needed to improve access to the services provided by the agency.
- Each agency of the Executive Department shall: Solicit public comment concerning the language access plan.
- Make recommendations to the Legislature concerning any statutory changes necessary to implement or improve a language access plan.
- Include any funding necessary to carry out a language access plan, including, without limitation, any additional funding necessary to meet the needs of persons with limited English proficiency served by the agency.

The Exchange will be innovative and proactive in engaging individuals from different cultures, backgrounds, and businesses throughout its programs and activities. Among the state’s existing population, the following language groups have been identified as being the most relevant to Nevadans with limited English proficiency: Spanish; French; German, or other West Germanic languages; Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages; other Indo-European languages; Korean, Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese), Vietnamese, Tagalog (incl. Filipino), or other Asian and Pacific Island languages; and Arabic.

The Exchange continues to enhance its language access resources to better serve this diverse community. In a proactive step towards inclusivity, the agency is currently in the process of translating the Nevada Health Link fact sheet into the top spoken Asian languages in Nevada, including Tagalog, Chinese, and Cantonese; aiming to ensure crucial information about what Nevada Health Link is and offers is accessible to a wider audience. Furthermore, the Exchange is extending its efforts by translating all GetInsured platform notices into Spanish, recognizing the significance of this language within Nevada’s enrollee population. These measures are just two examples of the Exchange’s continued commitment to fostering clear communication and accessibility for all Nevadans.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD GUIDELINES:

Proposed Public Comment Time Period:

The Exchange is proposing a public comment period for the public and stakeholders to provide feedback on the Exchange’s existing Language Access Plan, which has been posted to the Nevada Health Link website for public review. The comment period will open on February 21, 2024, and close on May 1, 2024. Please direct all feedback, comments, and questions to Kaitlyn Blagen, the Exchange’s Training Specialist and Marketing Assistant, at kblagen@exchange.nv.gov, and include the words “Language Access Plan” or “LAP” in the Subject line.

In addition, the Exchange will be hosting two different virtual workshops—the first from 1-3pm on April 3, 2024, and the second from 1-3pm on May 2, 2024—with the goal of soliciting comments from the general public and other Exchange stakeholders. Written comments submitted by email will be read at the beginning of each workshop, allowing those who are unable to attend to provide commentary which will inform the

discussions. Details for each workshop will be posted to notice.nv.gov in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting laws.

Next Steps after Public Comment Period Has Concluded:

Feedback gathered during the Public Comment Period will be incorporated into a revised version of the Language Access Plan. The revised plan will then be submitted for review and possible approval at the Exchange's next board meeting, currently scheduled for June 18th, 2024.

Exchange Board Consideration for Approval:

The Exchange is requesting that the Board consider for approval the open public comment period and the two workshops to be held on April 3, 2024 and May 2, 2024, which are intended to satisfy the Exchange's statutory obligation to solicit public comment concerning its Language Access Plan.