

OLA QUARTERLY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS, STATE OF HAWAII
Winter 2007 * 'O Ka 'Ōlelo Ke Ola - Language is Life

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If you would like to contribute to future publications or have any questions or comments regarding the OLA Quarterly, please feel free to contact us.

Message from the Executive Director

OLA is pleased to welcome you to the release of this first issue of its quarterly newsletter. Its purpose is twofold - to educate and to inform. First, the newsletter will educate the public, particularly the limited English proficient (LEP) population, about language access, the requirements and their rights under the law. Second, it will inform agencies and the public alike about the latest developments and what OLA is doing to promote language access in the State.

We have adopted "'O ka 'ōlelo ke ola - Language is life" as OLA's motto. It reflects the importance of language and how language serves as the life-line for people. The motto also embodies the spirit of equality behind Hawai'i's language access laws. Language should be a tool, not a barrier, to the pursuit of a better life. We, at OLA, look forward to collaborating with government, the private sector and the community in making this possible.



With much aloha,
Jun Colmenares

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About OLA [\(back to topics\)](#)

In 2006, the Legislature recognized and acknowledged that language is a barrier for those living in Hawai'i who have identified themselves as being limited English proficient ("LEP"). Thus, the Legislature passed Act 290 ("Language Access Act", later codified in sections 371-31 to 371-37, Hawai'i Revised Statutes), to ensure that LEP individuals have access to state-provided and state-funded services. Under the Act every State agency and state-funded organization that provides services to the public, must establish a language access plan on how they will provide equal, meaningful language access of their agency's essential government services to Hawai'i's population, regardless of what language they speak.

OLA's Role [\(back to topics\)](#)

OLA's functions include the following:

- Ensure that Hawai'i's LEP population has equal access to state-provided and state-funded public services by ensuring that state agencies and state-funded organizations have a plan to and actually do provide language access services, if it is reasonable;
- Provide assistance to and oversee agencies as they develop and implement their plans;
- Serve as a resource for language access; and
- Investigate and work to resolve public complaints of agencies' and organizations' noncompliance

Language Access Advisory Council Members Confirmed [\(back to topics\)](#)

The Language Access Advisory Council, which serves as an advisory body to OLA, was organized during its first meeting on July 5, 2007. The Council has 11 members, including Bill Hoshijo, Director of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission, and OLA's Executive Director as ex-officio members. The Council meets every first Tuesday of the month. Council meetings are open to the public. The nine appointive members, who were confirmed during the 2007 Second Special Session of the Legislature on October 26, 2007, are as follows:

Dominic Inocelda (*Chair*)

Inter-Agency Council for Immigrants & Refugees and Susannah Wesley Community Center

Gerald Ohta (*Vice Chair*)
Department of Health

Lito Asuncion
Hawaii County Office on Aging

Alohalani Boido
Hawai'i Interpreter Action Network

Sr. Earnest Chung
Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Canisius Filibert
Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

Nāmaka Rawlins
'Aha Pūnana Leo and UH-Hilo Hawaiian Language Center

Dr. Tin Myaing Thien
Pacific Gateway Center

Dr. Suzanne Zeng
UH Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies

Did you know that limited English ability not only is a language barrier for many residents who seek to fully participate in the community, but also undermines their efforts to become self-sufficient and productive

Update: Language Access Plans [\(back to topics\)](#)

Following OLA's start of operations in April 2007, and the addition of staff in July 2007, OLA was quickly brought up to speed to ensure that the legislative-mandated deadlines for the completion of initial language access plans were met. OLA provided consultation to agencies, and in August and September of 2007, conducted 19 workshops statewide in an effort to inform state agencies and state funded organizations of the Language Access Act and its requirements, especially requirements for the language access plans. As of this date, 21 of 25 state agencies, 2 county agencies, and 14 state funded organizations have completed their plans. *See list below.*

OLA applauds the state agencies and state funded organizations that have completed their initial plans! This is a huge first step in making language access the "norm" in the provision of state and state funded services in Hawai'i. If you have not yet submitted your language access plan, it is not too late. Please feel free to call our office at 586-8730 and we can provide you with examples, and further explain the elements of the language access plan and requirements of the law.

State Agencies – Approved Plans

1. Department of Accounting & General Services
2. Department of Agriculture
3. Department of the Attorney General
4. Department of Budget and Finance
5. Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
6. Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs
7. Department of Defense
8. Department of Education
9. Department of Hawaiian Homelands
10. Department of Health
11. Department of Human Resources Development
12. Department of Human Services
13. Department of Labor & Industrial Relations
14. Department of Land & Natural Resources
15. Department of Public Safety
16. Department of Transportation
17. Hawai'i State Judiciary
18. Office of the Governor
19. Office of Hawaiian Affairs
20. Office of the State Librarian (Public Libraries)
21. University of Hawai'i System

State Agencies – Plans Under Review

1. Department of Taxation
2. House of Representatives
3. Office of the Lieutenant Governor
4. The Senate

Counties – Plans Submitted

1. Department of Community Services (City & County of Honolulu)
2. Department of Facility Maintenance (City & County of Honolulu)

State-Funded Organizations – Plans Submitted

1. Aloha House
2. Aloha United Way
3. Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation
4. Hawai'i Family Support 360 Project
5. Honolulu Family Therapy Centre, Inc.
6. Institute for Human Services
7. Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children
8. Kaua'i Foodbank
9. North Shore Mental Health, Inc.
10. Planned Parenthood of Hawai'i
11. Po'ailani, Inc.
12. Project Professional, LLC.
13. The Paxen Group, Inc.
14. Waimanalo Health Center

Elements of a Language Access Plan

If you are an entity that receives funding from the State, it is not too late to submit a Language Access Plan to OLA. There are eight basic elements that need to be included in your Language Access Plan if you are a State funded organization; State plans have ninth requirement to hire bilingual personnel. The elements for a covered entity's Language Access Plan are:

1. Guidelines for Determining Meaningful Access
2. Procedure and Plan for the Provision of Oral Language Services
3. Procedure and Plan for Translation of Vital Documents
4. Notice of the Provision of Language Services
5. Data Collection and Reporting System
6. Evaluation Process
7. Training for Staff
8. Language Access Contact or Coordinator

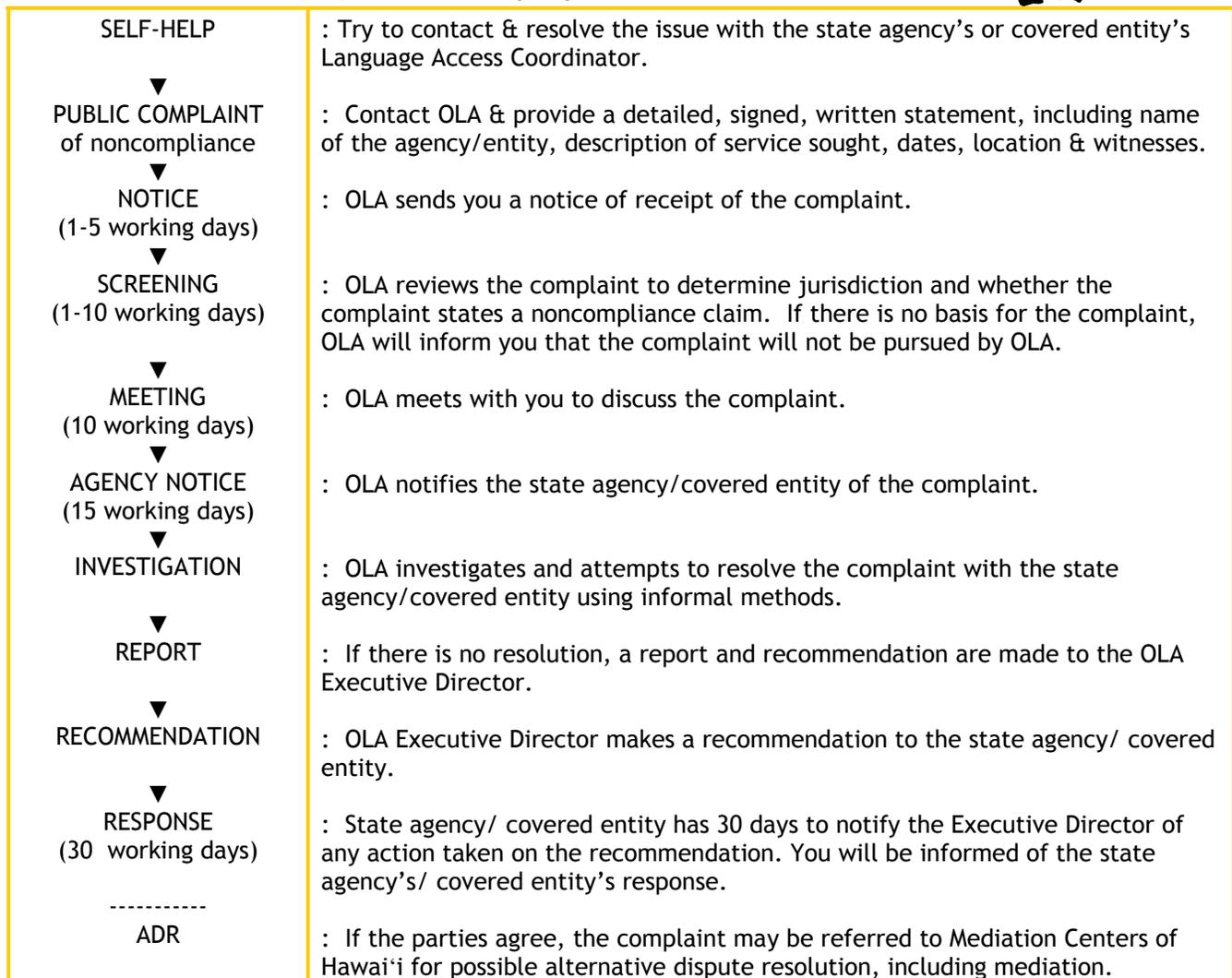
If you need assistance with your plan, please feel free to call our office, 586-8730. We can provide you with examples, and further explain the elements of the language access plan and requirements of the law.

LEP Focus: Public Complaint Process Overview

[\(back to topics\)](#)



What can I do if I am not provided language access services?



Discrimination or Other Complaints. You may be able to file a discrimination or other complaint with other state & federal government offices while your public complaint is pending with OLA.

Withdrawing a Complaint. You may withdraw your public complaint at any time by contacting OLA.

Save the date...



Hawai'i Conference on Language Access:
Laulima – Working Together to Ensure Language Access in Hawai'i,
March 28-29, 2008,
Hawai'i Imin International Conference Center,
East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i

With the completion of most initial language access plans from state agencies behind us, OLA is pleased to announce its first statewide conference on language access. On March 28-29, 2008, this conference will bring together participants throughout the State of Hawai'i to learn and share knowledge on language access policies, best practices, and issues.

Who Should Attend?

Those who are interested in and affected by language access, including:

- Public Contact Personnel
- Language Access Coordinators
- Interpreters
- Translators
- Students
- Administrators and
- Public Access Service Providers (State, State-funded, Nonprofit, Private) in the following areas: Advocacy, Crimes (such as Sexual Assault, Trafficking), Domestic Violence, Education, Emergency Services, Family Law, Government Services, Health Care, Housing, Immigration, Law Enforcement, and Public Benefits.

Goals for the Conference:

- Educate users and administrators (state agencies/state-funded organizations) on the development and implementation of language access plans and how to use and work with interpreters and translators
 - Recruit and train interpreters and translators on best practices, ethics, certification, and cultural competence
 - Learn about the latest developments in language access technology
 - Learn about the functions and operations of a statewide centralized language bank
- Registration fee: Regular (\$100); student (\$25). Limited scholarships available; to apply, please contact OLA at 586-8730. **(back to topics)**

OLA Logo Contest



OLA's current logo.

OLA is changing its logo and we need your help! Please send us your design of OLA's new logo no later than January 31, 2008. A surprise gift awaits the winner. **Note:** An electronic copy of the winning logo design must be available. Designs must be able to be reduced without losing their resolution quality. Please call OLA, 586-8734, for details on the contest.

Dates to Remember **(back to topics)**

- December 31, 2007 - Deadline for submission to OLA of all language access plans (OLA's internal deadline).
- January 9, 2008 - Language Access Coordinators' Meeting, 10:00 a.m. @ DLIR, 830 Punchbowl Street, Conference Rooms 310-314. Please call OLA, 586-8730, for more information.
- January 16, 2008 - Opening Day, Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawai'i, Regular Session of 2008, State Capitol. **REMINDER:** You can request oral language services for public meetings or public hearings held by the legislature at least 48 hours in advance (HRS § 371-35).
- January 31, 2008 - Deadline for submission of logo in OLA's contest. Please call OLA, 586-8730 for more information.
- March 28-29, 2008 - Language Access Conference, @ Hawai'i Imin International Conference Center, 1777 East-West Road, East-West Center, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Limited scholarships available. For information, please call OLA, 586-8730.

Best Practices: Tip on Working with an Interpreter



When working with an interpreter, remember to speak directly to the client, not the interpreter.

Look for more best practices in upcoming issues of OLA Quarterly, or attend the Conference on Language Access on March 28-29, 2008, to learn more about working with interpreters. **(back to topics)**