

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO

Distributing Washington County iSpeak Cards

Thank you for being a partner in supporting language access and distributing Washington County iSpeak Cards!



Why are these cards important in our community?

One of every four Washington County residents speaks a language other than English at home. According to the 2020 Census, eleven (11) languages or language groups are spoken by more than 1,000 people each. As a government striving to serve everyone equitably, we honor that diversity by helping to assure individuals have access to governmental services in their preferred language.

This is good community service; it is also the law. Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, public agencies are obligated to provide competent language assistance to individuals with limited English proficiency. Washington County is committed to assuring quality language assistance to individuals in our community who are accessing services the County provides.

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act applies to **any government or any entity receiving federal funding**, so people who prefer to receive services in a language other than English are entitled to qualified language assistance in other governmental jurisdictions and possibly with other service providers, as well. The iSpeak card can be shared wherever an individual needs to access government funded services.

For further clarification of their obligations to provide language access services, agencies can contact these federal agencies for guidance.

- Social and health services agencies may call:
HHS Office of Civil Rights
1-800-368-1019
- Food Stamp and WIC agencies may call:
USDA Office of Civil Rights
1-888-271-5983
- All other agencies may call:
U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
1-888-848-5306

To whom should these cards be distributed?

The iSpeak Cards should be distributed to individuals **who speak/read limited English or prefer to hear or read information in a language other than English** and need to access governmental services.

How should these cards be distributed?

If you speak the individual's language, please explain the following to them: The iSpeak card is an important piece of paper that should be kept in a wallet, purse, or somewhere it is easily accessible to show a staff person when in need of services. The service is provided free of charge.

Please share the following information when you distribute an iSpeak card to clients, community members, and the public:

- The iSpeak card is a way to ensure you have access to government services. Free interpretation is a right, not a privilege. Asking for interpretation should only improve your access to services. You should continue to expect respectful, humane, and timely services in your preferred language.
- If you feel you are being denied services or receiving lower quality services due to a language barrier, you have the right to share feedback with the service provider or make a complaint. This is not considered disrespectful; it helps us improve our service delivery and our ability to serve and honor a very diverse community. Making a complaint should also not negatively impact your access to services.
- If you have trouble accessing Washington County programs, services and employment opportunities because of a language barrier, please contact Latricia Tillman by email at latricia_tillman@co.washington.or.us, or submit a complaint on the EthicsPoint website at this link: https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/report_company.asp?clientid=30894&override=yes&agreement=no. Select the OTHER option. Clients can choose whether they want to submit the complaint anonymously.