Election Procedures for Bilingual Election Workers

State of Alaska
Division of Elections
Language Assistance Requirements

**Background**

- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 included requirements concerning the conduct of elections in languages other than English if voters in a certain area are limited English proficient and are members of a single language minority group whose language is either Spanish, Tagalog, Native American, Alaska Native, or one of the Asian languages.

- Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act covers those localities where there are more than 10,000 or over 5 percent of the total voting age citizens in a single political subdivision (municipality, borough, city, region such as census area) who are members of a single minority language group, have depressed literacy rates, and do not speak English very well. Determinations are based on data from the most recent Census, and the determinations are made by the Director of the Census every five years.

- In addition, the Voting Rights Act stipulates that a voter requiring assistance may receive it from a person of the voter’s choice except for the voter’s employer or agent of that employer, or officer or agent of the voter’s union.
How does the Voting Rights Act impact Alaska?

- The State of Alaska is covered under Sections 203 of the Voting Rights Act for Alaska Native languages. In addition, some communities along the Aleutian chain are covered for Filipino (Tagalog) and Spanish. **This means we MUST provide language assistance to voters with limited English proficiency at all stages of the electoral process.**

- Alaska has submitted to the United States Department of Justice our minority language assistance program. Alaska’s language assistance plan provides for written translations of election materials in languages that are historically written, and oral translations for languages, such as Alaska Native languages, that are historically unwritten.

- **This means, we need bilingual election workers to serve on Election Day in areas of the state identified as needing language assistance.**

- **This means we must keep track of the number of voters requesting language assistance using the Language Assistance Requests Log.**
General Guidelines for Providing Language Assistance

Follow these guidelines when providing language assistance:

- Be courteous, sensitive, and respectful.
- Wear the “Can I Help You?” badge.

- Don’t wait for the voter to ask for assistance. Provide “active” language assistance by greeting voters in your local Native language and asking them if they would like assistance.

- Help the voter during each step of the voting process. You may go into the voting booth to assist the voter.

- When providing assistance with ballot information, you may not voice your own opinion about candidates or issues appearing on the ballot. Each voter must make their own decisions about who or what to vote for.

For ballot measures, you will need to provide a translation of the ballot measure text as it appears on the ballot. You may not provide your own interpretation of the meaning of the ballot measure. Use the translated sample ballot when providing assistance.

- Using the Language Assistance Requests Log, keep track of the type of assistance provided. Record the type of assistance, not the voter’s name. For example “assisted with reading ballot”.
AND, REMEMBER:

- Federal law allows a voter to have a person of his or her choice provide language or other assistance to the voter.
  - This person may go into the voting booth with the voter to assist them.
  - This person may be an election official, a family member, friend, bystander, campaign worker, etc.
  - This person may not be a candidate for office in the election, the voter’s employer or agent of that employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union.
The following materials will be available for the Bilingual Election Worker in the Language Assistance Worker Packet for use on Election Day:

- Disability Awareness & Voter Assistance Information with “Can I Help You?” Badge(s)
- Language Assistance Requests Log
- Language Assistance Poster
  - You will be provided 2 copies of this poster. Post them in visible places in the polling place.
- Sample Ballots or translation of ballot measure text
  - You will be provided with an English sample ballot.
  - If available, you will be provided with a translated sample ballot or translated text of any ballot measures appearing on the ballot.
  - The translated sample ballot/ballot measure text can be used by any person who is providing language assistance to voters.
- Translated Glossary of Election Terms
- Alaska Native Language “I Voted” stickers
- Election Procedures Handbook for Bilingual Workers (this handbook)
Complete the Language Assistance Requests Log

- The Language Assistance Requests Log allows the Division of Elections to monitor the effectiveness of our minority language assistance program and to help determine where bilingual election workers are needed.

- Please check the box and list the language and type of assistance provided for each voter needing language assistance.

- When completing the log, do not include the voter’s name.

- Please sign and return the log — even if you did not have any voters who needed language assistance.
Voter’s Options for Language Assistance

- The voter has the following options if he or she needs assistance in reading or marking the ballot:
  - Bring a person of his or her choice to the polling place to assist the voter with reading, translating and/or marking the ballot in the voting booth.
  - Have the bilingual election worker provide assistance.
Providing Assistance During the Voting Process

**Precinct Register**

- The precinct register worker will look for the voter's name on the register. If the worker does not personally know the voter, the worker will ask the voter for one of the following types of identification:
  - Driver’s license, state ID card, voter ID card, military ID card, current and valid photo ID, birth certificate, hunting or fishing license, or passport

  **or**, the voter may use one of the following documents if it contains the voter’s name and current address:
  - Current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document

- **The voter must sign the register.** If the voter is unable to sign, the voter may make a mark such as an X.

- If the voter’s name is not on the precinct register or if the voter does not have valid identification explain to the voter that he or she has a right to vote a questioned ballot and escort the voter to the questioned ballot worker.
Ballot Issuing

- The voter will be given a paper ballot by the election board unless the voter indicates he/she would like to vote using the voting tablet.

- **The voter cannot vote both a paper ballot and a voting tablet ballot – they MUST choose one or the other.**

*Note: The Voting Tablet is not used during the REAA School Board Election.*
Voting Paper Ballot

- For the August Primary Election, for each race the voter must completely fill in the oval to the left of their choice. If the voter selects more than one candidate in a race, that section of the ballot will NOT be counted. The sections of the ballot that are properly marked will be counted. During the November General Election only, rank as many or as few candidates as you like. Completely fill in no more than one oval for each candidate or column. Selecting the same rank for multiple candidates within a race will invalidate that race. Posters showing the correct way to mark a ballot is provided and must be displayed.

- The voter will be given an official ballot by the election board.

- The bilingual election worker, or a person of the voter’s choice, may assist the voter with translating and marking the ballot. Remember, the voter must make the voting decision, you may not express your opinion on how the voter should vote.

- Instruct the voter to completely fill in the oval next to the voter’s choice.

- If the voter makes a mistake in voting, DO NOT erase or correct the ballot. The voter may request a new ballot from the election worker. The election worker first records and spoils the incorrect ballot and then issues the voter a replacement ballot. (The voter may request up to two replacement ballots.)

- For the August Primary Election, for each race the voter must completely fill in the oval to the left of their choice. If the voter selects more than one candidate in a race, that section of the ballot will NOT be counted. The sections of the ballot that are properly marked will be counted. During the November General Election only, rank as many or as few candidates as you like. Completely fill in no more than one oval for each candidate or column. Selecting the same rank for multiple candidates within a race will invalidate that race. Posters showing the correct way to mark a ballot is provided and must be displayed.

- When the voter has finished voting, the ballot goes into the ballot box.
Voting a Voting Tablet Ballot

- Most voting tablets have an audio translation of the ballot in the local Native language.
- Ask the voter if he or she would like to listen to an audio translation of the ballot while viewing the ballot on the screen in English.
- If the voter chooses to listen to the audio translation, the voting tablet worker will need to prepare the machine for an audio/visual ballot.
  - Depending on the length of ballot measures appearing on the ballot, the audio can be quite long. It is better for elders to vote using a paper ballot with a person providing language assistance.
- Standard and large print are available as well as color contrast in black and white print.
- To vote, the voter simply touches the screen next to his or her choice or uses the hand held ATI device to vote and move through the ballot.
- At the end of the ballot, a summary screen will appear showing the selections the voter made.
- After the voter views the summary, the voter will print the ballot and verify the paper copy of the ballot before casting the ballot.
Questioned Voting

- If the voter’s name is not on the register or if the voter does not have identification, the voter has the right to vote a questioned ballot.

- The voter must sign the questioned register.
- The voter must complete the questioned ballot envelope.
  - Ask the voter if he or she would like assistance with completing the envelope. DO NOT tear off the yellow flap on the envelope, this is not a receipt for the voter. The information on the outside of the envelope will be used to update the voter’s registration record and to determine voting eligibility.
- The voter will be issued a paper ballot and secrecy sleeve.
- The voter’s voted ballot is placed inside the secrecy sleeve and the secrecy sleeve is then sealed inside the completed questioned ballot envelope.
- The questioned ballot envelope containing the voted ballot is then placed in the ballot box.
- All questioned ballots are returned to the Election Supervisor for review and counting.
Special Needs Voting

- If a voter is unable to come to the polls due to age, disability or serious illness, the voter may ask a person to serve as their representative to bring him or her a ballot.

- **STEP 1** on the Special Needs Ballot Envelope is completed by the voter's representative.
- The election worker gives the representative the special needs ballot envelope, ballot, and secrecy sleeve to deliver to the voter.
- **STEP 2** of the special needs ballot envelope is completed by the voter, with assistance from the representative, and both the voter and representative sign the envelope under **STEP 2**.
- The voter's voted ballot is placed inside the secrecy sleeve and the secrecy sleeve is then sealed inside the special needs ballot envelope.
- The representative returns the ballot envelope containing the voted ballot to the election worker.
Final Comments

- If you have any questions on Election Day, contact your Election Supervisor:

  **Region I Elections Office**
  PO Box 110018
  Juneau, AK 99811-0018
  PH: (907) 465-3021
  Toll Free 1-866-948-8683

  **Region II Elections Office**
  Anchorage
  2525 Gambell St., Suite 100
  Anchorage, AK 99503-2838
  PH: (907) 522-8683
  Toll Free 1-866-958-8683

  **Region III Elections Office**
  675 7th Avenue, Suite H3
  Fairbanks, AK 99701-4542
  PH: (907) 451-2835
  Toll Free 1-866-959-8683

  **Region IV Elections Office**
  PO Box 577
  Nome, AK 99762-0577
  PH: (907) 443-5285
  Toll Free 1-866-953-8683

  **Matanuska-Susitna Office**
  1700 E. Bogard Rd, Suite B102
  Wasilla, AK 99654-6565
  PH: (907) 373-8952

  **Language Assistance**
  Toll Free 1-866-954-8683