



**American Battle Monuments Commission
Language Access Plan
2024**

Introduction

The purpose of the American Battle Monuments Commission is to commemorate the U.S. Armed Forces by maintaining the national legacy of their service in the world's consciousness.

In 1923, Congress recognized the need for a federal agency with the mission to honor America's fallen armed forces abroad and to oversee the construction of military monuments and markers that celebrated the service and sacrifice of our military. That year, Congress enacted legislation to create the American Battle Monuments Commission. The Commission is an independent agency of the Executive Branch of the Federal government.

ABMC is responsible for commemorating the service, achievements, and sacrifice of American armed forces in the U.S. and where they have served overseas since April 6, 1917 (the date of U.S. entry into World War I), through the erection of suitable memorial shrines; for designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining permanent American military burial grounds in foreign countries; for controlling the design and construction of U.S. military monuments and markers in foreign countries by other U.S. citizens and organizations, both public and private; and for encouraging the maintenance of such monuments and markers by their sponsors.

In performing these functions, the Commission administers 26 permanent overseas American military cemeteries and 31 separate memorials, monuments, and markers, of which only three are in the United States. Nearly 208,000 U.S. war dead from World War I and World War II are buried or memorialized on Walls of the Missing at ABMC sites. Additionally, more than 8,200 war dead listed as missing from the Korean War and 2,500 from the Vietnam War are memorialized at ABMC's Honolulu Memorial.

ABMC also administers three cemeteries not associated with the world wars: Mexico City National Cemetery, Corozal American Cemetery in Panama, and Clark Veterans Cemetery in the Philippines. More than 15,000 veterans and others are interred in these sites. Corozal American Cemetery, located outside Panama City, Panama, and Clark Veterans Cemetery in the Philippines are the only active cemeteries the Commission maintains.

The Commission's mission is primarily overseas: 27 of 28 staffed sites are overseas; our headquarters is in Arlington, Virginia. Of our 500 employees, 85 are in the Federal service; the other 415 are foreign service nationals in the 10 countries within which we operate.

Language Access and Policy Implementation

a. Goal

In furtherance of ABMC's efforts to advance equity through identifying and addressing barriers to equal opportunity that underserved communities may face due to government policies and programs, the goal of this Language Access Plan is to make reasonable efforts to eliminate or reduce language as a barrier to accessing ABMC services, programs, and activities for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

b. Purpose and Authority Statement

This Plan describes ABMC's policies and practices to provide language access services to individuals with limited English proficiency. The Plan also outlines anticipated future actions to assist LEP individuals. Pursuant to this Plan, ABMC seeks to continue to eliminate or reduce - to the maximum extent practicable - limited English proficiency as a barrier to accessing ABMC programs or activities.

This Plan establishes guidelines in accordance with Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), which requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with LEP, and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningfully access those services consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of the agency.

Current Foreign Language Access

ABMC primarily operates in an overseas environment and is sensitive to the need to provide information and services in multiple languages. Accordingly—

- a. Exhibit text in our cemetery visitor centers is presented in English and host nation language.
- b. Cemetery visitor brochures at our cemeteries are available in six languages.
- c. An internal newsletter is printed in six languages to accommodate our locally engaged staff overseas.
- d. Cemetery superintendents and assistant superintendents, who by public law must be U.S. citizens, must demonstrate language proficiency in the language of the host nation as a requirement for employment, enabling them to interact with their locally engaged staff, community leaders and vendors, and host nation visitors.
- e. Our U.S. presence is limited to our Arlington, Virginia, headquarters office, which is not public facing. While we host occasional visitors, we do not offer public services from the office.

Language Assistance Services

While it is impractical to offer exhibit text in more than English and the host nation language due to space and design constraints, we will—

- a. Continue to produce visitor brochures in multiple languages, based on user demographics.

- b. Continue to produce our internal newsletter in the languages of the countries within which we have locally engaged staff.

Quality Control and Accuracy of Language Assistance Services

ABMC shall ensure that staff or contracted personnel who are employed in overseas locations and perform duties that include routine and regular interaction with local host nation individuals:

- a. Demonstrate proficiency in and ability to communicate information accurately in both English and in the host nation language.
- b. Have English and host nation knowledge of any specialized terms or concepts peculiar to the ABMC mission or military operations associated with the Commission's cemetery and monument sites.

Language Access Assessment

The American and foreign publics engage with ABMC at the agency's 26 cemeteries and through two public websites at www.abmc.gov and www.wwiregistry.abmc.gov. Periodic review of Visitor surveys reflects that 38% of visitors to ABMC cemeteries speak French, 32% speak English, 18% speak Dutch, 8% speak Italian, and 4% speak Spanish or other languages.

Future Plan of Action

1. ABMC maintains two public facing website platforms at www.abmc.gov and www.wwiregistry.abmc.gov. The content on these platforms is currently limited to English language. To provide meaningful access to ABMC's programs and activities to members of the public who are limited in their English proficiency—
 - a. We will enable a multiple language support function on our two public facing websites by the end of FY 2024.
 - b. We will explore the possibilities and resource requirements for translating electronic vital documents and captioning videos offered on our two public facing websites in FY 2024.
 - c. Additionally, we will work toward including multilingual material on agency social media channels in FY 2024.
 - d. The agency is sensitive to the possibility that individuals with LEP may also have disabilities that require accommodation in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
2. ABMC shall continue to gather data on language use through periodic visitor surveys to ensure that information products provided at the Commission's cemeteries are available in the appropriate language.

Definitions

1. Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Describes individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.
2. Language Assistance Services. Oral and written language services are used to provide individuals with LEP meaningful access to, and an equal opportunity to participate fully in, the services, activities, and other programs administered by the agency.
3. Primary Language. The language in which an individual most effectively communicates when interacting with the agency. An individual's primary language may be a language variant.
4. Translation. The process of converting written text from a source language into an equivalent written text in a target language as fully and accurately as possible while maintaining the style, tone, and intent of the text, while considering differences of culture and dialect.
5. Vital Document. Paper or electronic written material that contains information that is critical for accessing a component's programs or activities or is required by law.

Point of Contact

Questions or comments concerning the Commission's language access plan may be submitted to the ABMC Chief Diversity Officer, Priscilla Rayson, who can be reached at raysonp@abmc.gov.