

GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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Correctional Services
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DCS LANGUAGE POLICY

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**TOGETHER BUILDING A CARING CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM THAT
TRULY BELONGS TO ALL**

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
LANGUAGE POLICY**

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DCS LANGUAGE POLICY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Language is one of the barriers to employment opportunities and upward mobility for the majority of people within different organisations in South Africa. English and Afrikaans continue to be the dominant languages spoken within the Department of Correctional Services' environment at the expense of other official languages.

The Department of Correctional Services is committed to the realization of equality regarding the promotion and use of multilingualism as required by section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The eleven (11) official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be equitably treated. Over and above complying with the Constitution, the DCS must comply with the newly enacted 'Use of Official languages Act', 2012.

The Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998, section 6(1) prohibits any unfair discrimination, directly or indirectly, against employees in any employment policy or practice on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.

In line with the RSA Constitution and the Use of Official Languages Act, (Act 12 of 2012), the DCS deemed it necessary to develop a language policy that aims to regulate language usage within its work environment. The policy also ensures that no official language is discriminated against or disrespected in any way within the Department.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accounting Officer means the Head of Department or National Commissioner

Constitution means the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

Department means the Department of Correctional Services.

Business Language means the language of choice for the Department which will be used as a medium of communication.

DCS Community means DCS employees and offenders.

Discrimination means a just and unjust distinction in the treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.

Indigenous language means previously marginalized original official South African Language.

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Language Unit means a language unit established in terms of section 7 of the Use of official Languages Act.

Multilingualism means the practice of using multiple languages particularly those identified in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 as official languages of South Africa.

Official Language means an official language contemplated in section 6(1) of the Constitution.

Previously marginalized language means an official language either than English and Afrikaans.

Sign language means an official language used primarily by people belonging to the deaf community.

3. ACRONYMS

NC means National Commissioner

AC means Area Commissioner

A/C HR means Area Coordinator Human Resources

A/C SP means Area Coordinator Special Programmes

CDC means Chief Deputy Commissioner

DC means Deputy Commissioner

DIR means Director

DCS means Department of Correctional Services

DD means Deputy Director

DRC means Deputy Regional Commissioner

FT means Functional Training

HR means Human Resource

HRD means Human Resource Development

NC means National Commissioner

RC means Regional Commissioner

REM means Regional Equity Manager

R/H HR means Regional Head Human Resource

4. BACKGROUND

Historically, English and Afrikaans were the most widely used languages within the working environment of the Department of Correctional Services, although Afrikaans was the more dominant of the two languages during the military era. This was as a result of the previous dispensation where the use of indigenous African languages was discouraged in formal work settings. Even communication with inmates was mostly in Afrikaans. Furthermore, no provision was made for Sign language and this resulted in discrimination against people with disabilities. This practice continued beyond the

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declaration of the eleven official languages in the post democratic era, with English becoming the predominant medium of communication.

A survey was conducted in 2006 by the DCS. The survey findings indicated that the majority of the DCS community (personnel and inmates), prefer English as a business language. Although English came up as the preferred business language, the findings further suggested that the challenge facing the Department is that the quality of written and verbal communication in English is very poor. Eighty one percent (81%) of participants in the survey had at least NQF level 1 or (grade 7) proficiency in English. Two other preferred official languages were also identified by the survey for each Region and these differ from Region to Region.

The 2011 census findings were also considered during the review process. The census report indicated that “in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal the most dominant spoken languages are IsiZulu followed by English, while in the Eastern Cape, IsiXhosa is the most often spoken language and the second most dominant language in the Western Cape.

In the Free State, SeSotho is the predominant language whilst Setswana is predominantly spoken in the North West. In the Northern Cape and Western Cape, Afrikaans is the language most often spoken and the second most often spoken languages in the Free State and Eastern Cape”. Nationally, the census report indicates that IsiZulu is the most spoken language at 23%, followed by IsiXhosa at 16%, Afrikaans at 14% and English at 10%.

The challenge confronting the DCS as is the case with other national departments is how to promote the previously marginalized indigenous languages including sign language in light of practicalities that may be experienced. In compliance with the Use of Official Languages Act, policy procedures have been developed to guide the department on how to gradually phase in the use of indigenous languages in promoting multilingualism.

5. LEGAL MANDATES

- a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- b) The Use of Official Languages Act, (*Act 12 of 2012*)
- c) The Employment Equity Act, 1998 (*Act 55 of 1998*)

6. POLICY STATEMENT

The Language Policy aims to regulate language usage within the DCS work environment in an effort to ensure that no official language is discriminated against or disrespected in any way by the Department.

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7. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- a) To promote multilingualism.
- b) To regulate and manage official language usage.
- c) To create an enabling environment that facilitates equitable practices regarding language Usage.
- d) To give substantive effect to Constitutional and legislative requirements.

8. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The Language Policy shall be guided by the following principles:

- 8.1 English shall be the business language of the Department.
- 8.2 DCS shall promote multilingualism.
- 8.3 Language units shall be established to facilitate the implementation process and other issues concerning language usage.

9. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 The Policy will be implemented in accordance to policy procedures which shall provide detailed guidelines on how to phase in the various official languages.
- 9.2 The DCS shall promote multilingualism using the 'Preferred Language Survey Findings' and the 2011 Census Language Findings.
 - 9.2.1 English shall be used as the business language of the department as per survey findings or as chosen by the DCS Community.
 - 9.2.2 Regionally, over and above English, the two identified official languages (preferred) by each region shall be used on a rotational basis for services identified in the policy procedures. (Refer to policy procedures)
 - 9.2.3 Nationally, over and above English the three top languages as identified by census 2011, namely; IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and Afrikaans shall be used on a rotational basis for services identified in the policy procedures. *(Census findings do not differ from the preferred languages survey findings conducted by the DCS).
 - 9.2.4 Sign Language shall be recognized and used by the DCS.
 - 9.2.5 Each Branch shall within 2 years of approval of this policy identify additional services that need translation/interpretation.
- 9.3 The Language Units under Communications, once established shall be responsible for effective implementation of the policy within the Department.
- 9.4 Each Branch Head shall be responsible and accountable for effective implementation of the policy in his /her Branch.

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- 9.5 Each Regional Commissioner shall be responsible and accountable for effective implementation of the policy in her/his region.
- 9.6 The National Commissioner shall be accountable for proper implementation of the policy in the Department.
- 9.7 The Branch Finance shall ensure adequate funding for implementation of the policy including the establishment of language units and their staffing, advocacy and awareness programmes, training of officials and translation services.

10. POLICY MONITORING

- 10.1 The Department shall establish integrated employment equity structures for purposes of guidance on implementation and monitoring of the language policy.
- 10.2 The Human Resource Branch Head/ Gender and Equity Directorate as custodians of the policy shall work closely with the Language Unit, in ensuring that the language policy is effectively implemented and monitored within the Department.
- 10.3 Regional Commissioners and DRC/ HR Heads shall monitor implementation in the Regions and shall submit feedback quarterly to the Branch HR/ Directorate Gender and Employment Equity and to the Language Units once established.
- 10.4 Branch Heads shall monitor implementation in their respective branches and shall provide feedback quarterly to the Branch HR/ Directorate Gender and Employment Equity and Language Units once established.
- 10.5 Management areas shall submit quarterly progress reports to their Regions with regards to the promotion of multilingualism and use of official languages.
- 10.6 The Directorate Gender & Employment Equity shall compile annual reports on progress and challenges experienced during the implementation phase, make necessary recommendations/ interventions and submit to the Accounting Officer.
- 10.7 Branch HR shall conduct audits/ inspections annually for the first two years of implementation and bi- annually thereafter.

*DCS LANGUAGE POLICY***11. POLICY REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed, within a year after approval to cater for necessary amendments and every 2nd year thereafter to determine the extent of its application and compliance with legislation.