346.01 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Language barriers can sometimes inhibit or even prohibit individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) from gaining meaningful access to, or an understanding of important rights, obligations and services. It is the policy of this department to take all reasonable steps to ensure timely and equal access to all individuals, regardless of national origin or primary language.

346.02 POLICY

The Bilingual Service Program provides on-scene language interpretation for Grand Junction Police Department, Mesa County Sheriff’s Office, Palisade Police Department, Fruita Police Department and the Colorado State Patrol. Assistance may be requested by an Officer or other department personnel. The program will consist of trained “volunteer” interpreters not sworn officers. The program will be available for all shifts based on volunteer availability.

346.03 DEFINITIONS

Authorized Interpreter
Any volunteer of the Mesa County area who is bilingual and has successfully completed the Department’s interpreter training and is authorized to act as an interpreter or translator.

Bilingual
The ability to communicate in two languages fluently, including the ability to communicate technical and law enforcement terminology.

Interpretation
The act of listening to a communication in one language and orally converting it to another language while retaining the same meaning.

Translation
The replacement of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text (target language).
The following protocol is established in order to facilitate providing an interpreter for Mesa County Law Enforcement.

- The Officer or other authorized personnel will request the interpreter through dispatch. After it is determined which language is needed, dispatch will contact the appropriate interpreter from the volunteer list.

- Once information (requesting officer and location) is obtained from dispatch, the interpreter should arrive on scene within a reasonable amount of time. Under some limited certain circumstances the interpreter may handle the situation over the phone with supervisor approval.

- Upon arriving on scene, the volunteer will notify dispatch and make contact with the officer. The Officer will brief the volunteer of the situation and introduce them to the non-English speaking person. All information communicated will be given to appropriate law enforcement personnel.

- The Officer will instruct what information needs to be asked of the non-English speaking person. The Officer will remain on scene at all times with the interpreter.

- The interpreter will give any paperwork to the Officer.

- The Interpreter may not, except for purposes directly connected with the program and duties as assigned, solicit, disclose, or make use of any information, names or circumstances concerning cases or persons involved with any Department.

The Volunteer Interpreter shall not be used for court testimony and other court related activities. It is the responsibility of the City Prosecutor and/or Deputy District Attorney to make such arrangements with the presiding Judge and the Defendant’s Attorney.
346.05 ON-CALL REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEER INTERPRETERS

Volunteer Interpreters are not required to be on call at specific times. A list will be maintained by the Volunteer Coordinator for dispatch of all interpreters and the language(s) for which they are proficient.

After it has been determined what language is needed, dispatch will then call the next available interpreter of that language, for assistance.

346.06 INTERPRETER SELECTION AND TRAINING

Individuals wishing to become a volunteer interpreter will be required to submit a volunteer application and undergo a background check prior to acceptance. All volunteer interpreters are required to complete the following:

- Classroom instruction
- Officer ride-a-long
- Dispatch sit-a-long

The Volunteer Interpreter will be assigned an ID Badge that must be worn at all times when providing service for any of the Departments.

346.07 STRUCTURE

All volunteer Interpreters will report directly to Volunteer Service Coordinator.