

St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Departmental Policy	Function
	Community Development
Subject: Language Access Plan for Limited English Proficiency Residents	Effective Date: August 8, 2023

PURPOSE

The County of St. Clair, Intergovernmental Grants Department (Department) is committed to ensuring equal opportunity for all persons, including limited English proficiency residents, to all programs and services. The Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and implementing regulations; Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (Section 1557) and implementing regulations provides that no person shall "on the ground of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and disability" be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." This may apply to persons for whom English is not the primary language and who may encounter barriers to receiving federal financial assistance and services due to limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

POLICY

This Language Access Plan (LAP or Plan) consists of this procedure and is prepared by the Department as identified below. This Plan is consistent with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National 'Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons'. It is also consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is applicable to all City sub-recipients and contractors, and each will be required to have their own plan for implementation of these provisions.

Four Factor Analysis

This Plan was developed using the four factors recommended by HUD in its final guidance to assess language needs:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service area;
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program; and
4. The resources available to the County or recipient and costs.

Based on extensive experience in providing services to LEP persons and based on the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Information provided by HUD (https://www.huduser.gov/portal/affht_pt.html, data as of November 8, 2016), the Department has determined that Spanish is the language most likely to be encountered by County staff and sub-recipients when providing services.

According to data for the St. Clair County Area, 2014 Spanish speaking residents have "Limited English Proficiency." HUD guidance for the development of a LAP includes a recommendation that vital or commonly used written documents should be translated if the size of the LEP language group exceeds five percent of the population.

Some persons speaking as their first language Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic and a number of others in the Metro Area also speak English less than "very well." However, none of these groups constitute more than 0.3% of the Metro Area LEP population, and the potentially program-eligible applicants from these language groups cannot be determined to exceed 1000. Nevertheless, the County will provide free oral interpretation services to these groups and will translate vital documents as needed

or requested, with adequate notice.

PROCEDURES

Department staff will follow the procedures and provide the services of language interpretation as needed or requested, with adequate notice (5 days in advance). This may include instructions on in-person translation, phone-mediated translation, translation of vital documents (into Spanish and into other languages upon request), and Spanish translation at public meetings (and other languages upon request). Clients requesting language services should contact:

St. Clair County IGD, CDBG Coordinator, 19 Public Square, Suite 200, Belleville, IL 62220. Attn: Christina Anderson, or Christina.Anderson@co.st-clair.il.us, or 618-825-3218.

Training, Hiring, Monitoring, and Updating of the Plan

The Department will train customer-facing staff at least annually on LEP policies and procedures. New staff or staff whose job descriptions change to add contact with the public, must be trained on LEP policies and procedures. The Department will retain records of all such training.

The Department will continue to facilitate the hiring of bilingual staff as the primary method for providing interpretation and translation services.

An LEP Coordinator for the Department will be designated to regularly monitor and update the LAP no less frequently than upon the publication of new decennial Census data. The LEP Coordinator will modify new documents and services as needed to maintain accessibility for LEP persons.

The LEP Coordinator will consider:

- a. Requests for service by members of the LEP population, their representatives, and service organizations;
- b. Whether members of the LEP population are disproportionately underrepresented in the facilities and services provided by the Department;
- c. Changes in the LEP population, in the service area, or population affected or encountered;
- d. Changes in the frequency of encounters with LEP language groups;
- e. Changes in the nature and importance of activities to LEP persons;
- f. Changes in resources including new technologies, additional resources, and budget availability;
- g. Effectiveness of existing languages assistance to LEP persons;
- h. Staff knowledge of the Department's LAP and how to implement it;
- i. Whether identified sources for assistance are still available;
- j. Changed language abilities available among Department staff;
- k. Whether the need exists to add additional languages for consideration in hiring staff;
- l. Whether the need exists to hire an interpreter on staff;
- m. Whether the need exists to contract for additional interpreter services;
- n. Whether there have been any complaints filed because of language access problems.

Formal Complaint Process

If an LEP resident believes meaningful access to services was not provided to them, they may choose to file a complaint with the Department LEP Coordinator. The Department has developed a formal complaint process of how to file a complaint. A complaint form is posted online at <https://www.co.st-clair.il.us>. The Department LEP Coordinator will respond to the complaint within 30 days, and the records will be maintained as public records.

Approved:

Rick Stubblefield
Executive Director

Date_____