

Introduction

The *Limited English Proficiency Plan* has been prepared to address Jefferson Parish Department of Community Development's responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English language skills. It is the policy of Jefferson Parish Department of Community Development (JPCD) to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to its programs and activities for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). This policy is to ensure that staff will communicate effectively with LEP individuals and that LEP individuals will have access to important programs and information. JPCD is committed to complying with federal requirements in providing meaningful access to its programs and activities for its LEP clients.

WHO IS LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP)

LEP individuals do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

- Many LEP persons are in the process of learning English and may read, write, speak, and/or understand some English, but not proficiently.
- LEP status may be context-specific – an individual may have sufficient English language skills to communicate basic information (name, address etc.) but may not have sufficient skills to communicate detailed information (e.g., program requirements, policies and procedures) in English.

BACKGROUND

Federal law prohibits discrimination based on national origin. National origin discrimination includes discrimination based on a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English. Recipients of federal funds must provide meaningful access to LEP persons in federal and federally assisted programs and activities.

- On August 11, 2000, Executive Order 13166, titled, "**Improving Access to Services by Persons with Limited English Proficiency**," was issued. Executive Order 13166 requires federal agencies to assess and address the needs of otherwise eligible persons seeking access to federally conducted programs and activities who, due to LEP cannot fully and equally participate in or benefit from those programs and activities. Section 2 of the Executive Order 13166 directs each federal department or agency "to prepare a plan to improve access to...federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons...."

FRAMEWORK FOR DECIDING WHEN LANGUAGE SERVICES ARE NEEDED

JPCD will take steps to ensure meaningful access to its programs, services and activities for LEP individuals in a manner that balances the following four factors:

Four-Factor Analysis:

1. *The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be serviced or likely to be encountered by JPCD:*

The most relevant data in determining the level of English proficiency among persons that maybe served or are likely to encounter Jefferson Parish Community Development programs come from the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2010 the census did not ask participants to provide information on their linguistic background so instead it is necessary to rely upon estimates provided by the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS).

In the last several years, the entire country has seen a large increase in the number of Spanish speaking individuals and Jefferson Parish is no different. Spanish is the foreign language most commonly spoken at home. Large Vietnamese and French speaking populations are also found in Jefferson Parish, but they are much smaller than the Spanish speaking community.

Table 1. Language Spoken at Home in Jefferson Parish by Population over 5 Years Old: 2010

	#	%
Total Population:	403,440	100%
Speak only English	341,209	85%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	37,904	9%
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	4,165	1%
Vietnamese	7,334	2%
Arabic	2,683	1%
Chinese	2,170	1%
Other	7,975	2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

The 2011 Census Bureau's ACS has data on the language spoken at home by residents in Jefferson Parish and their ability to speak English. The Census asked respondents to indicate their ability to speak English using four categories: "very well," "well," "not well," or "not at all." FTA guidance states that the total number of LEP persons can be obtained by totaling the persons indicating they speak English "well," "not well," or "not at all." The following table shows ability to speak English by language spoken at home.

Table 2. Population 5 Years and Over by Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English in Jefferson Parish: 2011

	#	%
Population 5 years and Over	404,525	100%
Speak only English	336,276	83%
Speak only English or "very well"	372,829	92%
Speak a language besides English	68,249	17%
Spanish	42,886	100%
Speak English "very well"	21,584	50%
Speak English "well"	9,244	22%
Speak English "not well"	7,777	18%
Speak English "not at all"	4,281	10%
Other Indo-European	9,776	100%
Speak English "very well"	7,028	72%
Speak English "well"	1,391	14%
Speak English "not well"	1,319	13%
Speak English "not at all"	38	0%
Asian and Pacific Island	11,992	100%
Speak English "very well"	5,384	45%
Speak English "well"	3,910	33%
Speak English "not well"	1,796	15%
Speak English "not at all"	902	8%
All other	3,595	100%
Speak English "very well"	2,557	71%
Speak English "well"	473	13%
Speak English "not well"	525	15%
Speak English "not at all"	40	1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

2. *The frequency in which LEP persons come in contact with JPCD programs, activities or services:*

The Department of Community Development assessed the frequency in which staff have or could have contact with LEP persons. To date, one request has been made to the Parish's Community Development provider to translate information regarding the department's Homeless Prevention program in Chinese.

3. *The nature and importance of the JPCD programs, activities, or services provided to the LEP population:*

The Parish provides a variety of services and programs to its citizens. To date, Jefferson Parish staff members have not yet been put in a situation in which language barriers prevented a service from being provided. In the event that a program beneficiary does not speak English very well, s/he has typically been accompanied by a friend or family member that serves as an interpreter. In the event that a person of limited English proficiency is in need of service and is not accompanied by an interpreter, Parish staff will provide translation services of vital documents and free language assistance services as requested.

4. *The resources available to JPCD, and the costs associated with different language options:*

To increase service to LEP population without generally impacting the budget, JPCD conducts translation work in-house using Fluent Spanish-speaking staff. For projects that are beyond staff expertise as well as Vietnamese translations, JPCD utilizes established community service organizations such as Boat People SOS. Additionally, JPCD's website uses Google to translate the site into Spanish and Vietnamese.

Most residents of Jefferson Parish and recipients of Community Development program funds within Jefferson Parish are English speakers. JPCD has worked to provide interpreters and translations when possible, and has not received any additional requests for translation services. Therefore, meaningful access is most likely being currently provided to the LEP population in Jefferson Parish.

MONITORING, EVALUATING, AND UPDATING PLAN

JPCD will review and update this plan yearly, or in the event of a marked influx of LEP persons to the area. The review and update will consist of the following:

1. The number and nature of request received from LEP persons annually.
2. Determination of LEP population in the service areas using American Community Survey one-year data sets.
3. Review any complaints that have been received concerning the department's failure to meet the needs of LEP persons.
4. Determine whether JPCD has fully complied with the goals of LEP plan.
5. Access the sufficiency of staff training and budget for language assistance.

JPCD will also continue to monitor the future availability of grant funding for improvements in services to LEP persons.

DISSEMINATION of the JPCD LEP PLAN

The language assistance plan will be available on our website, www.jeffparish.net

Alternatively, any person may request a copy of the plan via telephone, fax, mail, or in person, and shall be provided a copy of the plan at no cost. LEP individuals may request copies of the plan in translation which Jefferson Parish will provide, if feasible.

Questions or comments regarding the LEP Plan may be submitted to Jefferson Parish Department of Community Development as follows:

Attention: Tamithia Shaw, Director
Jefferson Parish Department of Community Development
1221 Elmwood Park Boulevard – Suite 605
Jefferson, LA 70123