

Limited English Proficiency Plan



Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization

Adopted by the MPO Policy Board 08/08/2012

INTRODUCTION

The Limited English Proficiency Plan has been prepared to address the Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency language skills. The purpose of the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) is to ensure accessibility to programs and services to persons who are not proficient in the English language.

The Longview MPO is responsible for providing cooperative, continuing and comprehensive transportation planning for the Longview Metropolitan area. The Longview MPO utilizes federal funding to plan for future transportation projects and does not provide any service which requires vital or immediate assistance, such as medical treatment or services for basic needs, such as food and shelter. Involvement by any citizen with the MPO's public meetings and other activities is voluntary.

Inclusive public participation is a priority for the Longview MPO as it develops transportation plans, program and studies. The impact of transportation improvements resulting from these planning activities has an impact on all residents. Understanding and continued involvement are encouraged throughout the process. The MPO is concerned with input from all stakeholders and every effort is taken to make the planning process as inclusive as possible.

The Limited English Proficiency Plan has been prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin. On August 11, 2000, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency", which further clarifies Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The executive order requires federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those services, so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. It is expected that agency plans will provide for such meaningful access consistent with, and without unduly burdening the fundamental mission of the agency. The executive order states that individuals with a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

The Limited English Proficiency Plan applies to all state and local agencies which receive federal funds. The LEP identifies the compliance standards that recipients of federal funding must follow to ensure that their programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to LEP persons and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin in violation of Title VI's prohibition against national origin discrimination.

PLAN SUMMARY

The Longview Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has developed this Limited English Proficiency Plan to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) to ensure access to the planning process and information published by the Longview MPO. As defined in Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

This plan outlines how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which language assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available.

In order to prepare this plan, the Longview MPO used the four-factor LEP analysis which considers the following factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served by the Longview MPO.
2. The frequency with which the LEP persons come in contact with the Longview MPO services.
3. The nature and importance of services provided by the Longview MPO to the LEP population.
4. The interpretation services available to the Longview MPO and overall cost to provide LEP assistance.

MEANINGFUL ACCESS: FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served by the Longview MPO.

As defined by the 2010 United States Census, a LEP individual is a person who speaks a language at home other than English as their primary language and who speaks or understand English "not well" or "not at all". The Longview MPO staff reviewed the 2010 U.S. Census Report and determined that there were approximately 86,577 residents in the planning area, with 12,405 persons of that population speaking a language other than English. Of those 12,405 persons 6,177 have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English "not well" or "not at all." This represents about 7% of the overall population in the service area. In the Longview MPO service area, of those persons with limited English proficiency, 94% speak Spanish, 2.4% speaks Asian or Pacific Islander languages, 4.1% speaks Indo-European languages, and <1% speaks other languages.

(Data: American Fact Finder - ACS 2006-2010 5-year Estimates)

2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with the Longview MPO services.

The Longview MPO staff reviewed the frequency with which the Policy Board, Technical Committee, and office staff have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries or office visits. To date, the Longview MPO has had no requests for interpreters and no requests for translated program documents.

3. The nature and importance of services provided by the Longview MPO to the LEP population.

There is no large geographic concentration of any type of LEP individuals in the service area for the Longview MPO. The overwhelming majority of the population, 83.5%, speaks only English. As a result, there are few social, service, professional and leadership organizations within the Longview MPO service area that focus on outreach to LEP individuals. The Longview MPO Policy Board, Technical Committee, and office staff are most likely to encounter LEP individuals through office visits, phone conversations, and attendance at meetings.

4. The resources available to the Longview MPO, and overall costs to provide LEP assistance.

The Longview MPO reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance, which of its documents would be most valuable to be translated if the need should arise, and what interpreter services are readily available. A City of Longview employee that speaks Spanish and English is available as an interpreter when needed. This bilingual employee is conveniently located in the Development Services Building, where the MPO offices are located. In addition, there are designated City of Longview employees who are bilingual and speak Spanish also available to MPO staff. For other languages, a telephone interpreter would be contacted.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

A person who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English may be a Limited English Proficient person and may be entitled to language assistance with respect to Longview MPO services. Language assistance can include interpretation, which means oral or spoken transfer of a message from one language into another language and/or translation,

which means the written transfer of a message from one language into another language.

How the Longview MPO staff may identify an LEP person who needs language assistance:

- Post notice of LEP Plan and a notice that indicates when free language assistance is available with advance notice.
- All Longview MPO staff will be informally surveyed periodically on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.
- When the Longview MPO sponsors an informational meeting or event, an advanced public notice of the event should be published including special needs related to offering a translator (LEP) or interpreter (sign language for hearing impaired individuals). Additionally, a staff person may greet participants as they arrive. By informally engaging participants in conversation it is possible to gauge each attendee's ability to speak and understand English. Although translation may not be able to be provided at the event it will help identify the need for future events.
- MPO staff has identified a list of available interpreter services that will be kept on file for use when needed.

Language Assistance Measures

Although there is a very low percentage (less than 1% of the population) in the Longview MPO of LEP individuals, that is, persons who speak English "not well" or "not at all", it will strive to offer the following measures:

- The Longview MPO staff will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to LEP clients who have difficulty communicating English.
- Volunteer interpreters for the Spanish language are available and will be provided within a reasonable time period.
- Language interpretation will be accessed for all other languages through a telephone interpretation service.

- Public notification for major revisions to the Transportation Improvement Program and Metropolitan Transportation Plan will be published in the East Texas Review, a free community newspaper and in Spanish in the free newspaper, LaOpinion, as well as the Longview News Journal.

STAFF TRAINING

The following training will be provided to all staff:

- Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities.
- Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
- Documentation of language assistance requests.
- How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

All contractors or subcontractors performing work for the Longview MPO will be required to follow the Title VII LEP guidelines.

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

The Longview MPO weighed the cost and benefits of translating documents for potential LEP groups. Considering the expense of translating the documents, the likelihood of frequent changes in documents and other relevant factors, at this time it is an unnecessary burden to have any documents translated.

Within the Longview Metropolitan area, a very small local LEP population exists (less than 1% of the population). Translation resources have been identified and are limited in this region. However, when and if the need arises for LEP outreach, the Longview MPO will consider preparing the documents, meeting notices, flyers, and agendas in an alternative language based on the known population.

MONITORING

The Longview MPO will update the LEP Plan as required. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed and updated when data from the next U.S. Census is available, or when it is clear that higher concentrations of LEP individuals are present in the Longview MPO service area. Updates will include the following:

- The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually.
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Determination as to whether the need for translation services has changed.

- Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.
- Determine whether the Longview MPO financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
- Determine whether the Longview MPO fully complies with the goals of this LEP Plan.
- Determine whether complaints have been received concerning the agency's failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals.
- Maintain a Title VI LEP complaint log to document complaints, determine issues and the basis of complaints.

DISSEMINATION OF THE LONGVIEW MPO LEP PLAN

- Post signs at accessible locations notifying persons of the LEP Plan and how to access language services.
- State on agendas and public notices, in the language that a LEP person would understand, that documents are available in another language upon request at 903-237-1005.

TITLE VI/LEP COORDINATOR FOR THE LONGVIEW MPO

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