

Polk County Board of County Commissioners

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

Richard L. Bradford

Polk County BoCC

Equal Opportunity Administrator

Introduction

The purpose of the Polk County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (LEP) is to clarify our responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and implement a plan detailing our responsibilities to LEP persons, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This LEP plan was prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000d, et seq., and its implementing regulations provide that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. It also complies with Executive Order 13166 "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," reprinted at 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000), which directs each Federal agency that is subject to the requirements of Title VI to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying that obligation. Executive Order 13166 further directs that all such guidance documents be consistent with the compliance standards and framework detailed in the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Policy Guidance entitled "Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – National Origin Discrimination Against Persons with Limited English Proficiency" (See 65 FR 50123, August 16, 2000 DOJ's General LEP Guidance). Different treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write, or understand English may be a type of national origin discrimination.

It is the intent of the BOCC, that in providing language services to persons with limited English proficiency, the process achieves, a balance that ensures meaningful access to programs and services, while not incurring undue burden on resources of the organization. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak right or understand English.

This plan details how the BOCC identifies people who may need language assistance the ways in which Assistance may be provided, how did notify LEP persons that assistance is available and information for future plan updates.

Who is the plan is intended to assist?

This Limited English Proficiency plan applies to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language, and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. For example, the scope of the plan would not extend to the following:

The hearing or visually impaired, sign language, interpretation and braille text, are accommodations provided under the Americans with disabilities act.

Illiteracy – the inability to speak read or write English and conditions that may trigger language assistance under Title VI are distinguished with a key factor. A LEP person cannot speak. Read or write English, but primarily speaks read, or write in a language, other than English.

Four factor analysis

To help determine the BOCC's extent of obligation to provide LEP services, the BOCC follows the US Department of Transportation, four factor LEP analysis, which considers the following: 1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the county to be served, are likely to encounter a BOCC program, activity or service; 2) the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with a BOCC program; 3) the nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the BOCC to the LEP population; and 4) the resources available to the BOCC, and overall cost to provide LEP assistance. A brief description of these considerations is provided in the following section.

The number or proportion of LEP persons, eligible to be served, or likely to encounter a BOCC program, activity or service.

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The BOCC, examined the US, Census Bureau's American community survey data, included as appendix, A, and determined that approximately 18.9% of, or 106,519 people in Polk County age 5 and older spoke a language other than English at home and 8%, or 45,055, stated they speak English less than very well. Hispanics comprise the largest non-English-speaking language group. There were 198,663 Hispanic/Latinos or 27.4% of the Polk County population in spoken language other than English at home and 6.6% of the population said they speak English less than very well.

The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with BOCC program, activity or service

The BOCC assesses the frequency at which staff house or could possibly have contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries and serving public meeting attendees.

The nature of importance of the program activity or service provided by the BOCC to LEP community

It is our intent to educate the LEP community about our unified planning work program. (PWP), transportation, improvement, program (TIP), and Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Based on data obtained from the census, we expect to likely come in contact with Spanish, German, Haitian, Creole, or French speakers with the Spanish community, being the largest population, and growing the fastest in Polk County.

The resources available to the BOCC and overall cost to provide LEP Assistance

The BOCC assess the following available resources that could be used for providing LEP Assistance:

Identifying what staff and volunteer language, interpreters are readily available.

How much professional turbos and/or translation service would cost.

Identifying which documents should be translated.

Taking an inventory of available organizations that the bill cc could partner with for outreach in translation efforts.

Examining which financial and in-kind sources could be used to provide assistance in what level of staff training is needed.

BOCC will utilize current staff and volunteer language interpreters and/or translators as needed. Should need for additional translation or interpretation rise, BOCC could utilize language services available through www.serviceescape.com if necessary. The BOCC could also use personal interpreter services through www.languageline.com if necessary.

The following the BOCC materials are currently available in Spanish: Advisor brochure, Aging in Place and Transit infographic, 2035 Polk Mobility Vision Plan newsletter. Should the need to arise for additional translation services, BOCC will analyze cost, and resources to provide LEP Assistance

The BOCC has identified the following community groups who could aid in outreach in translation efforts: the Puerto Rican/Hispanic, Chamber of Commerce, the German-American Club of Lakeland, the French-American Business council of West Florida, and the Haitian American Chamber of Commerce of Florida.

How to identify a LEP person who needs language

After analyzing these four factors, the BOCC has developed the plan outlined in the LEP plan:

BOCC staff will set up a sign-in sheet at BOCC sponsored at workshops and or conferences. The sign-in table will be staffed by our bilingual representative to greet and briefly speak to each attend. To informally gauge the attendee's ability to speak and understand English, ask a question that requires a full sentence reply.

BOCC staff will have the Census Bureau's "I speak cards" at the workshop or conference signing table. All staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at this meeting, the cards are in an excellent tool to identify language needs for future meetings. Also, have the cards available at the BOCC office reception area.

Language assistance measures

When an interpreter is needed, in person, or on the telephone, the BOCC shall first determine what language is required. Polk County staff can provide Creole, German, Haitian, Hindi, Filipino, Spanish, and Vietnamese in formal verbal interpretation. Appendix B details which Polk County employees can

be contacted for immediate translation service in a variety of languages. Staff may be able to assist with written communications and BOCC document translation request from LEP persons. Spanish teletypewriter (TTY) relay service is available through Florida relay service at 800-955-8771

BOCC staff has been provided with a “how to respond to a Spanish caller index card.” This index card will provide a simple phrase in Spanish for BOCC staff to instruct a Spanish caller to hold while your call is being transferred to our Bilingual Transportation Planner.

BoCC staff training

BOCC staff are provided with the LEP plan and educated on procedures and services available. This information also be part of the BOCC staff orientation process for new hires.

Providing notice of available language service to LEP persons

BOCC will post signs that language Assistance is available to the public before public meetings. Our website www.polk-county.net is equipped with a language translator for Spanish, French, German and Haitian Creole. We'll see. Staff will continue to monitor request for additional languages and make modifications to this plan as needed.

Outreach techniques

For the strategies outlined in the Bill, cc public participation plan (PPP), his staff knows they will be presenting a topic that could be a potential importance to a LEP person, or staff will be hosting a meeting or a workshop in a geographic location with a non-concentration of LEP, persons, meeting, notices, flyers, advertisements and agendas will be printed in an alternative language, such as Spanish

When placing a general public meeting notice, staff will insert “un traductor del idioma Español estará disponible.” This means “A Spanish translator will be available.” Or if not sure of the need, staff should insert, “Si usted necesitating la ayuda de traductor del idioma español, pot favor cominiquese con Mianne Nelson al teléfono (863) 534-6090, por lo menos 48 horas antes de la junta” which asks persons who need Spanish language assistance to make arrangements with the BOCC within two days of the publication notice. Spanish-speaking staff, or a hired interpreter should be on hand at public meetings, intended for gathering public input on a topic or meeting location themes it appropriate.

Dissemination of the BOCC Limited English Proficiency plan

The LEP plan is posted at www.polkcounty.net. Any person, including social service, nonprofit and law-enforcement agencies and other community partners with Internet access will be able to access the plan. For those without personal Internet service, all Polk County libraries offer free Internet access.

Copies of the LEP plan are provided to the Florida Department of transportation, Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and any person or agency, requesting a copy. Each BOCC sub recipient is provided a copy and informed of the importance of providing language assistance. LEP persons may obtain copies/translations of the plant upon request by calling 863-534-6075 or it can be download it at www.polk-county.net.

Monitoring and updating the plan

At a minimum the BOCC will follow the title six program update schedule for the LEP plan. The question is listed below will be considered in updating the plan.

How many LEP persons were encountered?

Were their needs met?

Has there been any change in the type of language where translation services are needed?

Have the BOCC available resources, such as technology, staff, and financial costs changed.

Has the BOCC fulfilled the goals of the LEP plan?

Were any complaints received?

Any questions or comments regarding this plan should be directed to

Richard L. Bradford

BOCC Equal Opportunity Administrator

863-534-6075 or email richardbradford@polk-county.net