



CITY OF ELMIRA, NEW YORK

Department of Community Development

**Helping to Build a Vibrant Community and Neighborhoods by
Reversing the Trends of Blight and Poverty through
Partnership**

Language Assistance Plan

Prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
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Introduction

The Language Assistance Plan was prepared to address the Department of Community Development's responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance, as related to the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP).

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and an August 11, 2000 Executive Order 13166 (Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency), Housing and Community Development must provide meaningful access to Limited English Proficiency persons and thus comply with Title VI regulations forbidding funding recipients from "restrict[ing] an individual in any way in the enjoyment of any advantage or privilege enjoyed by others receiving any service, financial aid, or other benefit under the program or from utiliz[ing] criteria or methods of administration which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin, or have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program...."

On January 22, 2007, HUD issued a Notice in the Federal Register presenting Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons.

This plan sets forth the action for the Department of Community Development to ensure that persons with LEP have meaningful access to the services provided by the department.

Plan Summary

The City of Elmira's Department of Community Development has developed this Language Assistance Plan to assist persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) when accessing services through the department. The plan outlines how to identify a person who may have limited language proficiency, the ways assistance may be provided, the training staff may be required to complete, and notification to LEP persons regarding the assistance.

Four-Factor Analysis, Elmira, New York

- **The Number /Proportion of the population with limited English proficiently (LEP).** The population in Elmira, based upon the July 2018, US Community Survey, US Census, is 27,204. The population is estimated at 76.7% White alone; 15% Black or African American alone; American Indian and Alaska Native, alone .2%; Asian alone, .4%; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone Less than 1%; Two or

More Races 6.5%; Hispanic or Latino 5.2%; White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, 74.3%.

An estimated, 2.5% of the population is foreign born. Additionally, an estimated 4% of the population within the City speak a language other than English within their home.

The American Community Survey estimates that there are 1,047 Spanish speakers within the City and 1,357 persons speaking another Indo-European language. ***Of that population, an estimated 101 individuals have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English less than “very well” or “not at all”.***

Others whom may be seeking assistance include the blind and deaf population; 15.8% of the population under the age of 65 has a disability.

Based upon this data and past experience, Community Development estimates that sign-language, braille, and Spanish are the major language needs within the City of Elmira. Based upon these statistics, the department estimates that between 150-250 individuals may require language assistance from the department.

- **Frequency LEP persons encounter the programs.** Overall, the Department of Community Development infrequently encounters a client with limited language ability, hearing impaired, blind, or is limited in a mental or physical capacity. It is estimated this has occurred three times in five years. Overall, staff currently has limited interaction with LEP persons.
- **The nature and importance of the service.** The Department of Community Development directly provides owner-occupied home rehabilitation services to low-moderate income residents living and owning a home within the City of Elmira. Community Development also provides grants to first-time homebuyers purchasing a home within the City of Elmira. Sub-grantees provide clients with access to public services including food delivery and after-school programs.

While these are important human and social service programs, which support strong neighborhoods and communities within the City, these are not emergency services, legal, medical, or public safety (fire/police) related programs. Additionally, these are value-added services and the Department of Community Development wants to ensure that all clients

can access these opportunities regardless of language ability and usage and will avoid any policy limiting client access.

- **Resources available to the Department of Community Development.** The Department of Community Development is a small department with a part-time home inspector, grant administrator, finance director, administrative assistant, and executive director. The department functions with a limited operating budget, with restrictions on administrative expenses.
- **The resources available to LEP person.** “I Speak...” language cards are located within the department to support staff when working with community members who speak a foreign language. Additionally, renters’ rights and responsibilities handbooks are available in both English and Spanish. All HUD FHEO Limited English Proficiency documents are accessible to clients and staff.
- Nonprofit and governmental partners have higher capacity levels and are able to provide language access services on site. The department can provide referrals to volunteers and partner organizations for language translation and sign language assistance. Because of strong partnerships, internal departmental needs for language assistance is low. Department activities are supplemented through shared services agreements and strong community partnerships.

Language Assistance Plan

A person for whom English is not a primary language and who has limited ability to read, write, or speak and understanding of English is considered to be a Limited English Proficient person. Language assistance can include translation services (written transfer from one language to another) and interpretation (oral or spoken transfer from one language to another).

Identifying LEP Persons and Need

- Based upon the completed four-factor analysis, the Department of Community Development determined the greatest foreign language need is Spanish. Additionally, staff encounter hearing and vision impaired clients and many elderly clients, creating a possible need for sign-language and braille.

How department staff will identify the client and community need:

- Training will be provided to department staff.
- Staff can use language identification cards to assist in the language services.
- Periodically, the executive director will survey and review with staff the overall language needs of clients they are serving.
- The department will utilize the Community Advisory Committee around this topic to gain insight on community needs.
- The department will connect with any existing advocacy/support groups for the target language populations.

Although there is a low percentage of LEP individuals in the Department of Community Development's service area, the department will take the following actions:

- HUD FHEO forms and documents will be made easily accessible to staff working directly with clients.
- "I Speak..." language cards will be provided to all staff interacting with the public.
- Client files will be maintained and updated include notes on client language needs.
- "Know Your Rights" guides are accessible to clients in both English and Spanish.
- Staff will receive training on how to interact with LEP populations.
- The department will organize a list of volunteers and community members who can provide interpretation services for the clients.

Language Interpretation Services

- The department will make a best effort to provide free interpreter services for clients. This will be done through partnerships and volunteer language interpreters.
- The department will not allow minor children as interpreters.
- Clients' family or friends will be allowed as interpreters.
 - This will be an appropriate option where application of the language needs assessment lead staff to believe that the provision of interpretation services is not necessary and the transaction will not affect the LEP person's access to services or programs.

Translation of Vital Documents

- All HUD FHEO Limited English Proficiency documents are accessible to clients and staff.

- The Department of Community Development weighed the cost and benefits of translating other documents for potential LEP groups. Considering the expense of translating documents, the likelihood of frequent changes in documents and other relevant factors, the department has determined that it is an unreasonable burden to translate documents at this time.

Phone Services

The New York Relay Service is a statewide service that connects standard (voice) telephone users with deaf, hard of-hearing, deaf-blind, speech-disabled, or late-deafened people who use text telephones (TTYs) or voice carry-over (VCO) phones.

- This service allows TTY or VCO users to communicate with standard telephone users through specially trained Relay Operators. Calls can be made to anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with no restrictions on the number, length, or type of calls. The New York Relay Service may be reached by calling **2-1-1** or **1-800-346-2211**. Staff will contact the relay service when calling a client with speech or hearing impairments.

Staff Training

All staff that interacts with LEP clients will be trained on this Language Assistance Plan and how to utilize the language access resources that are available to the department.

The Department of Community Development shall ensure that all current employees receive a copy of the Language Assistance Plan.

All new employees shall receive a copy of the Language Assistance Plan when hired.

All contractors or subcontractors performing work for the department of Community Development are required to follow the Title VI/LEP guidelines.

Updating and Reviewing the Plan

The department will update the LEP Plan as required. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed and updated when recent data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey is available, or when it is clear that higher

concentrations of LEP individuals are present in the service area. Updates to the LEP Plan will include the following:

- The number of documented LEP contacts encountered annually
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed
- Determination of the current LEP population numbers in the service area (census data, surveys, information from community-based organizations)
- Determination as to whether the need for translation services has changed
- Determination of the effectiveness of language assistance efforts
- Determination of the adequacy of the financial resources to fund language assistance resources
- Determination of any LEP complaints or grievances

Dissemination of the LEP Plan

The Department of Community Development will choose from the following actions:

- Post signs in public areas informing LEP persons of the LEP Plan and how to access language services.
- Notify LEP persons of the availability, upon requests of documents in other languages.
- On the department website, post the LEP Plan.
- Distribute copies to advocacy groups and other organizations serving LEP populations.

Policy for Recruiting Minority & Women Owned Businesses

The City of Elmira encourages the use of minority and/or women owned businesses (MWBES). The Department of Community Development is always looking to add certified and insured MWBES to the list of contractors which is provided to homeowners who participate in the CDBG/HOME housing rehabilitation programs.

Information pertaining to the recruitment and creation of MWBE's is posted on the City of Elmira's Department of Community Development website. Periodically, advertisements are placed in the local newspaper, the Star Gazette, seeking certified MWBES to register with the Department of Community Development's contractor list for the housing rehabilitation program.

The Department of Community Development also retains a list of New York State, Empire State Development, certified MWBE contractor firms within the region.