

Community Services Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP)

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Inquiries on Civil Rights, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Civil Rights Coordinator

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Purpose

The following document serves as Washington County Community Services' plan to meet the legal obligation of limited English proficiency requirements in compliance with:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; 42 U.S.C. § 2000 et seq; 45 CFR §80, Nondiscrimination Under Programs Receiving Federal Financial Assistance Through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Office of Civil Rights Policy Guidance, 65 Fed. Reg. 52762 (2000), Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights (OCR), Policy Guidance on the Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination As it Affects Persons With Limited English Proficiency (August 30, 2000); OCR Website: www.hhs.gov/ocr/lep/
- Department of Justice Regulation, 28 CFR § 42.405(d)(1), Department of Justice, Coordination of Enforcement of Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, Requirements for Translation.
- Program administration and personnel requirements, 7 CFR §272.4.

Policy and Procedures

A. Persons Covered by LEP Plan

Washington County Community Services' Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan is being updated based on an increasing need for interpreter services to serve our customers, prospective customers, and their families who do not speak English or who speak limited English.

B. Definitions:

LEP Person An individual has Limited English Proficiency (LEP) if they are not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with Human Services staff.

Interpretation is defined as a spoken or visual explanation provided to enable two or more individuals who do not speak the same language to communicate with each other.

Translation is defined as a written version of a document that is provided in a language different than that of the original document.

C. Commitment to Meaningful Access

No person will be denied access to Washington County Community Services program information or programs because they do not speak English or communicates in English on a limited basis.

Washington County will help all customers with LEP in obtaining necessary interpreter services for him/her to effectively communicate with staff. Customers will be provided with meaningful access to programs and services in a timely manner and at no cost to the customer.

D. Offering Language Assistance Services

Monitors in our reception area include interpreter services access to assist our LEP customers. Staff will initiate an offer for language assistance to customers who have difficulty communicating in English, have difficulty reading their spoken language, or when a customer asks for language assistance. Staff must offer, without charge, interpretation and/or translation services to people with LEP in a language they understand, in a way that preserves confidentiality, in a timely manner.

Staff will appropriately code state computer system language fields with clients preferred language to ensure identification of individuals potentially requiring LEP services.

E. Telephone Interpreter Services – Non-English

Attachment A. Staff will become familiar with how to use this service. Being familiar with the service will help staff act quickly when customers need interpreter assistance.

F. Telephone Interpreter Services - Hearing Impaired

For customers who are hearing impaired, **Minnesota Relay** is available by dialing **711**. If in-person assistance is required, please refer to Attachment A for additional support options.

G. Documents or Communications to/from People We Serve

Documents going to or from people will be translated as requested – see Attachment A.

H. In-Person Interpreter Services

In-person meetings where an interpreter is requested – see Attachment A.

I. Procedure for Using and/or Distributing Forms – Non-English

Washington County Community Services has access to several forms from DHS which are available in languages other than English. Staff also have access to forms on the MAXIS system and through DHS at: www.dhs.state.mn.us/Forms.

J. Bilingual Staff

To enhance our ability to provide culturally appropriate services, Washington County employs bilingual staff in a variety of positions that may interact with people in their primary language.

K. Using Adult Family and/or Friends as Interpreters

Staff should never require, suggest, request, or encourage a customer with LEP to use family or friends as interpreters. Use of family or friends could result in a breach of confidentiality or reluctance on the part of the customer to reveal personal information that may be critical to their situation. Family or friends may not be competent to act as interpreters because they may not be proficient enough in both languages, may lack training in interpretation, or have little familiarity with specialized program terminology. If the LEP person declines this service, the worker will document in case notes that services were offered and declined.

L. Using Minor Children as an Interpreter

Minor children should never be used as interpreters.

M. When Customer Declines Services

When a customer declines services, note this in the case notes.

Competency Standards for Interpreters

Agencies have provided documentation that will provide competent and experienced interpreters.

Competency includes:

- Being bilingual and fluent in both English and the language of the LEP client
- Accuracy and completeness
- Impartiality
- Confidentiality
- Accreditation when appropriate

Interpreters will have training/orientation that includes:

- The skills and ethics of interpreting
- Basic knowledge in both languages of specialized program terms or concepts
- Sensitivity to the customer’s culture

Notice of Rights to Language Assistance

Washington County Community Services staff will inform all customers with LEP of the right to free interpreter services and that these services must be provided in a timely manner during normal business hours.

Washington County Community Services staff will use I Speak cards to help customers with LEP to be able to identify their language needs for staff. Posters will also be used in the agency to inform customers that language interpreters are available to them at no cost.

LEP Training

Washington County Community Services will distribute the LEP plan to all staff once approved by DHS so they can learn the policies and procedures required to make language assistance available to our customers with LEP. Included in this plan are Guidelines for Working with an Interpreter. New employees will have the LEP plan incorporated into their New Employee Orientation.

LEP training will include legal obligation to provide language assistance to customers with LEP, policies and procedures to access language assistance services and how to properly document information about the customer's language needs in the case file. All staff with ongoing customer contact are required to receive LEP updates annually.

Monitoring of the LEP Plan

An evaluation will be conducted annually to determine the overall effectiveness of the plan. It will assess the current language needs of these customers to determine if these needs are being met. It will assess if our staff understand the LEP policies and procedures, know how to carry them out, and whether language assistance resources are still current and accessible.

A. LEP Plan Posted for Public Review

The Washington County Community Services LEP plan will be posted to the public in the reception area. The LEP plan will be available in English, but interpreters will be available to translate the plan for those who do not speak English who wish to read it.

B. Distribution of LEP Plan

Immediately upon approval, the Washington County Community Services LEP plan will be communicated and available to all staff.

ATTACHMENT A

INTERPRETER INSTRUCTIONS

[Piedmont Global Language Solutions \(PGLS\)](#)

855-712-7709

[Propio](#)

651-401-4961 (Back-up service line: 1-866-386-1284)

Global Language Connections (GLC)

888-316-8598

[Weaving Cultures](#)

763-432-3225

[Multilingual Connections](#)

(Back up service line: (866) 386-1284 use if interpreter is unavailable at number above)

COMMUNICATION TO/FROM PEOPLE WE SERVE - Email one of the providers below and attach the document in the email (subject SECURE):

- Global Language Connections - email translations@globallanguageconnections.com
- Piedmont Global Language Solutions (PGLS) - email translation@pglsinc.com
- Weaving Cultures - email translations@weavingcultures.com
- Propio - email translate@propio.com

For in-person interpreter services:

- **Piedmont Global Language Solutions (PGLS)**
- **Global Language Connections**
- **Keystone Interpreting Solutions** Directly email Keystone Interpreting Solutions to schedule info@kisasl.com
- **Weaving Cultures**

Guidelines for Working with an Interpreter

General Guidelines:

- Be sure to speak directly to your customer, not the interpreter.
- Use words, not gestures, to convey your meaning.
- Speak in an audible tone and speak slowly.
- Explain jargon and technical terms to the interpreter when necessary.
- Use simple vocabulary.
- Speak in short sentences and pause to allow the interpreter to speak.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Control of the environment.

To assist the customer, if appropriate:

- Ask your customer if they feel they understand your question and if they need to ask any questions themselves.
- Ask your customer if there is something in their culture

that makes this situation different, hard to understand, difficult or embarrassing

- Ask your customer if they need anything re-explained and if your message is not understood, be prepared to say it differently.
- If you think that your message may not be fully understood by your customer, double check by saying "Tell me what you understand."

To assist the interpreter:

- Allow the interpreter to stop you and seek clarification when necessary.
- Allow the interpreter to take notes if things get complicated.
- Allow the interpreter to clarify cultural issues if appropriate.