

9 - LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

Plan Summary

The APO has developed its LEP plan to identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency who wish to access services provided. As defined in Executive Order 13166, persons with limited English language proficiency 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 assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify persons with limited English language proficiency of available assistance.

In order to prepare this plan, the APO used the four (4) factor LEP analysis which considers the following factors:

1. The number or proportion of persons with limited English language proficiency in the Saint Cloud Planning Area who may be served by the APO.
2. The frequency with which persons with limited English language proficiency come in contact with APO programs or services.
3. The nature and importance of programs or services provided by the APO to the LEP population.
4. The interpretation services available to the APO and overall cost to provide LEP assistance.

A summary of the results of the four (4) factor analysis is in the following section.

Meaningful Access: Four (4)-Factor Analysis

The number or proportion of persons with limited English language proficiency in the service area who may be served or are likely to require APO services.

The U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 ACS Five (5) Year Estimates have determined 10,491 individuals within the Saint Cloud APO planning area over the age of five (5) speak a language other than English at home. That is equivalent to 8.5 percent of the population over the age of five (5). Of this, the ACS data has estimated 3,922 of those individuals – or 3.2 percent of the population over five (5) years of age – speak English less than very well.

The frequency with which persons with limited English language proficiency come into contact with APO services or programs.

The APO staff reviewed the frequency with which its Board, committee members, staff, and contractors have or could have, contact with persons with limited English language proficiency. This includes documenting phone inquiries or office visits. To date, the APO has had no requests for interpreters and no requests for translated documents. The APO Board, committee members, staff, and contractors, or sub-recipients have had very little contact with persons with limited English language proficiency.

The nature and importance of services and programs provided by the APO to the LEP population.

The APO is responsible for metropolitan multimodal transportation planning and programming in the region. It uses a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process that identifies the region's needs and sets priorities for the future. The APO encourages all members of the public, including individuals with limited English language proficiency, to become involved. The APO Board, staff, and contractors are most likely to contact persons with limited English language proficiency through public meetings and other general public involvement opportunities. Involvement in APO planning activities by citizens is voluntary and not considered a vital, immediate, or emergency direct service. Inclusive public participation is a priority for APO transportation planning studies and programs.

The resources available to the APO and overall costs to provide LEP assistance

Given the small size of the LEP population within the APO planning area and the financial constraints, full multi-language translations of large planning documents or agenda packets are not warranted. The APO will consider any such requests on a case-by-case basis as they arise. In addition, should the need arise, the

APO has reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance and that information is on file at the APO office.

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 identified as a person with limited English language proficiency and may be entitled to language assistance with respect to the APO's programs and services. Language assistance can include interpretation, which means oral or spoken transfer of a message for one language into another language, and/or translation, which means the written transfer of a message from one language into another language.

APO staff may identify a person with limited English language proficiency who needs language assistance by:

- Posting notice of the LEP plan and the availability of interpretation or translation services free of charge in languages persons with limited English language proficiency would understand.
- Providing "I Speak" cards to assist in identifying the language interpretation needed if the occasion arises. Examples of "I Speak" cards can be found in Appendix J of this document.
- APO staff will be surveyed annually as part of the annual monitoring process.
- Publishing advanced public notice of the event including information on procuring a translator or interpreter.

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 provided at the event, it will help identify the need for future events.

Language Assistance Measures

Although there is a low percentage in the Saint Cloud planning area of individuals with limited English proficiency, that is, persons who speak English "less than very well," the APO will strive to:

1. Take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to clients who have difficulty communicating in English.
2. Provide the following resources to clients who have difficulty communicating in English:
 - Interpretive services for public meetings, if advance notice is provided to the APO and such services are readily available.
 - Translated versions (or provide for interpretation of relevant sections) of all documents/publications upon request, within a reasonable time frame and if resources permit.

Translation of Documents

The APO weighed the cost and benefits of translating documents for potential groups of persons with limited English language proficiency. Considering the expense of translating the documents, the likelihood of frequent changes in documents, and other relevant factors, the APO will consider the translation of documents (or portions thereof) on a case-by-case basis, as requested.

Translation resources have been identified and are kept on file at the APO. [Google's Translate program](http://translate.google.com) (<http://translate.google.com>), can also provide users with HTML content in other languages. This resource is an imperfect system, but has a potential to provide enough information for an individual or group of persons with limited English language proficiency to gain an initial understanding of APO documents in response to initial contact. However, when and if the need arises for LEP outreach related to APO programs and services, the APO will coordinate with counties, cities, townships, and other planning partners in the APO planning area to determine an appropriate course of action in regards to existing interpretive and outreach resources available.

Staff Training

The following training will be provided to all staff on an annual basis:

- Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities.
- Description of language assistance services offered to the public.

- Use of the "I Speak" cards.
- Documentation of language assistance requests.
- How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

All contractors or subcontractors performing work for the Saint Cloud APO will be required to follow the LEP guidelines. Such assurance will be made at time of establishing the contract.

Monitoring

The APO will review the LEP Plan annually with its self-certification procedure per 23 CFR 450.334. The Plan will be updated as needed. An annual review and update will include the following:

- The number of documented persons with limited English language proficiency contacts encountered annually.
- How the needs of persons with limited English language proficiency have been addressed.
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Determination 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 APO's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
- Determine whether the APO 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 individuals with limited English language proficiency.
- Maintain a Title VI complaint log, including LEP to determine issues and basis of complaints.

Dissemination of the Saint Cloud APO LEP Plan

- Post signs at conspicuous and accessible locations notifying persons with limited English language proficiency of the LEP Plan and how to access language services; such as public meetings of the APO.
- Include as part of public notices and related materials that persons needing interpretative service need to contact the APO.
- Include as part of the APO website.
- Post in the front desk area of the APO offices, employee bulletin board, and bulletin boards in the common area and conference room.
- Display notices at Board, TAC, and BPAC meetings.