

Limited English Proficiency Plan

I. Policy

It is the policy of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (LDAF MPIP), to provide meaningful access to individuals, who wish to access its programs and services regardless of their national origin or limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand English. To provide ongoing effectiveness of this plan it will be reviewed annually and updated, if needed.

II. Who Is Limited English Proficient (LEP)

Any persons who, as a result of national origin, does not speak English as their primary language and/or who has a limited ability to speak, read, write or otherwise understand English.

III. Purpose

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the federal law which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of their race, color, or national origin in programs that receive federal financial assistance. Language barriers can prevent LEP individuals from receiving meaningful access to the LDAF MPIP's services and information.

IV. Language Assistance

a. Language Identification

- i. Once a LEP individual is identified, the LDAF employees will utilize Language Identification Flashcards to identify their language needs.

b. Assistance Options

- i. Will utilize the interpreter/translator services provided by ASTA-USA on an as needed pay as you go basis. (<https://www.asta-usa.com/>)
- ii. Electronic translation programs (Google translate and/or other smart phone technologies or applications)

V. Definitions/Key Terms

Agency - The departmental program with delegated authority to deliver programs, activities, benefits, and services.

American English – The language/dialect primarily used in the United States.

Certified Interpreter – An individual who has taken and passed an examination administered by a knowledgeable authority.

Discrimination – The unfavorable treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person based on the group, class, or category to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit.

Federally Assisted Program – All programs and operations of entities that receive assistance from the Federal government.

Interpretation – Listening to communication in one language and orally converting it to another language while retaining the same meaning.

Language Access – Efforts to make programs and services accessible to individuals who are not proficient in English.

Language Assistance Services – Interpretation or translation services that assist Limited English Proficient individuals in understanding or communicating in another language.

Limited English Proficiency Person – An individual who does not speak English as his or her primary language and has a limited ability to reason, speak, write, or understand English.

Translation – The process of transferring ideas expressed in writing from one language to another.

Translator – A person who converts language into an alternative form of communication so it is understandable to persons who communicate differently.

Vital Document – Paper or electronic written material that contains information that is critical for accessing a program or activity, or is required by law, such as consent forms, applications, and notices of rights.

VI. Four Factor Analysis

To ensure that LEP customers are provided adequate services, LDAF Meat and Poultry Inspection Program has conducted a four-factor analysis. The four-factor analysis addresses the following:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be serviced or likely to be encountered by our state program: **A review of the most current census data indicates that approximately 2.8% of Louisiana residents speak English less than “very well”. Of these the majorities (54.7%) are Spanish followed by (15.3%) are French speakers.**

2. The frequency with which LEP persons using a particular language come in contact with the state program: **To date, the LDAF Meat and Poultry Inspection Program have not received a request for translation assistance from current recipients or prospective applicants.**
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by LDAF Meat and Poultry Inspection Program to LEP Persons: **Food safety is important to everyone, and our agency's policy as outlined above is to provide meaningful access to all, including LEP individuals. If documents are deemed vital to a service requested, these would then be translated to the language required by the individual.**
4. Determine the resources available to LEP persons and the costs to the state: **Should a request for language assistance be received through the LDAF Meat Inspection Office, the program will exercise one of the assistance options previously listed. Cost will vary depending on the service requested.**

VII. LEP Training

LDAF MPIP employees initially received LEP training during the third quarter of 2018. Additional training will be conducted annually and will include documented receipt and review of the Program's most current LEP Plan by all LDAF MPIP personnel.

VIII. Communication/Outreach

Communication and outreach will be achieved through posting the Program's LEP policy on the LDAF MPIP webpage and providing the link to a call-in relay service. When a need for assistance is identified, the LDAF MPIP will contact the contract interpreter for further communication with the LEP individual. All LEP services will be offered at no cost to the individuals requiring assistance and family members, including children, of LEP persons will not be utilized by LDAF/MPIP for translations or interpreting services.

IX. Implementation

Our implementation timeline follows the guidance listed in Appendix 1 of the January 2016 Guidelines for Federally Assisted Programs for LEP Implementation Strategy.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON/STAFF	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	TIMELINE
State Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure employees who interact with LEP individuals receive LEP training. 2. Develop an LEP plan. 3. Gather data for languages spoken in geographic areas being serviced. 4. Identify vital documents to be translated. 5. Compile and analyze data gathered to determine what LEP services are needed. 6. Secure contractor for translation and interpretation services. 7. Ensure that there is adequate funding, and that other resources are available to provide effective and efficient LEP services. 8. Notify beneficiaries of LEP services. 9. Track LEP interactions. 10. Report LEP interactions to the Agency’s Civil Rights Staff. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual basis</p>