



Language Assistance Plan (LAP) Policies and Procedures

I. Definitions

A Language Assistance Plan (LAP) is the official policies and procedures used by an agency to better serve and meet the needs of clients whose primary language is other than English. An LAP identifies the languages, other than English, that are statistically most commonly spoken in its service area. The LAP then outlines how best to serve and do outreach to those language communities.

II. Methodology

Metro Housing|Boston uses the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidelines developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop the policies, procedures and demographic determination to prepare its LAP. Metro Housing|Boston used the Four Point Analysis methodology as outlined in the Guidelines. The four points are:

1. Number or proportion of the population in the service area
2. The frequency of contact with the agency
3. Determination of the importance of the service/benefit
4. Available resources

III. Identified Primary Languages in Metro Housing|Boston Service Area (11/15/17)

1. Spanish
2. Haitian Creole
3. Portuguese
4. Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese)
5. Cape Verdean Creole
6. Vietnamese

IV. Policy

A person, whose language is other than English, can request that oral interpretation or translation of vital documents be provided to create equal access and opportunity to all Metro Housing |Boston programs and projects. Vital documents are defined by HUD as "... any document that is critical for ensuring meaningful access to the recipients' major activities and programs by beneficiaries generally and LEP persons specifically." Metro Housing|Boston will provide this access in the following ways:

1. Prioritize the hiring of multi-lingual staff who are fluent in the primary languages identified by Metro Housing|Boston.

2. Metro Housing|Boston will develop informal and formal agreements with other organizations to provide oral interpretation on a volunteer basis to address the needs of its clients.
3. In crisis situations, with supervisory approval, Metro Housing|Boston staff may use a telephonic oral interpretation service.
4. "I Speak" cards will be available at the Front Desk in the lobby to provide a systematic procedure for clients and visitors to identify which language they speak.
5. Vital documents will be translated into the primary languages other than English identified by Metro Housing|Boston demographic statistical analysis.
6. Metro Housing|Boston will review its outreach efforts to ensure that they are reaching the language communities that are identified in the LAP.
7. All Metro Housing|Boston staff will be trained on the LAP implementation.

V. Procedure

1. Metro Housing|Boston multilingual staff will be available for oral interpretation on an as needed basis for clients requesting this assistance
2. Each Metro Housing|Boston Program will make available their vital documents translated into the identified primary languages for their staff. These documents will be made available electronically and in hard copy versions.
3. All applicants, clients and visitors will be presented with an "I Speak" card upon their arrival.
4. Once a Metro Housing|Boston client has identified a preference for LAP assistance, staff will make the necessary arrangements for oral interpretation and provision of the translated vital documents.

VI. Implementation

1. A copy of this policy, translated into the identified primary languages, will be posted in all public and common use areas.
2. Copies of this policy, translated into the identified primary languages, will be provided to all applicants/participants at every stage of interaction with Metro Houston|Boston.
3. An LAP policy statement and agency procedures will be provided in all agency materials
4. LAP policy statement and procedures will be included in all workshop folders.
5. Technical assistance on providing language assistance can be requested of the Senior Advisor on Civil Rights & Fair Housing.