Addressing Language Access in the City of Everett

Recommendations for Performing a Language Access Assessment

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April 2021

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Purpose

In 2020, the City of Everett identified the need to examine its provision of language access services to its residents. Through a partnership between the Northeastern University Public Evaluation Lab (NU-PEL), the City of Everett, and the Everett Safe and Welcoming Coalition (ESWC), the City aims to create a long-term language access plan. This report was generated for the purpose of providing an introduction to the importance of language access on the health and wellbeing of limited English proficient (LEP) individuals and an overview of the components of a language access plan and language access assessment. The focus of this report will be on language access assessments, which are often a subset of language access plans and the recommended first step for the City of Everett to take when creating a plan. This report will conclude with some recommendations for the City of Everett to consider when developing their language access assessment for future language access plans.

Background

Limited English proficiency (LEP) is a term used to describe individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.[1] According to data from the 2016 American Community Survey, roughly 10% of Massachusetts residents 18 years and older self-reported as not speaking English very well or not speaking English at all.[2] One of the cities with the highest portion of LEP individuals in MA is the City of Everett. 16% of Everett's diverse population is categorized as LEP.**Error! Bookmark not defined.** Spanish, French (incl. Haitian Creole and Cajun), Portuguese Creole, and Vietnamese are among the most frequently spoken languages by Everett residents.[3,4]

Discrimination based on a person's language is a subset of discrimination based on national origin, provided that one's language is often determined by national origin.[5] Language discrimination can be defined as unfair treatment based on characteristics of one's speech, including accent, and one's preferred language.[5,6] Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits the exclusion of a person based on their race, color, or nation of origin from participating in or receiving benefits from agencies and organizations that receive federal assistance.[7] On the state level, Chapter 151B of the MA General Laws also prohibits discrimination based on national origin.[8] These laws provide a legal obligation to address language barriers faced by LEP individuals because it requires recipients of federal and state funding to provide **meaningful language access** to the public services they provide.[9] Meaningful access is defined as services provided with "accurate, timely, and effective communication."[10]

In addition to the legal requirements, there are health-related incentives to providing language accessible services. Language and literacy skills are social determinants of health, which are environmental conditions that impact health outcomes and quality of life.[11] Adult immigrants

with a language barrier may have an increased risk for stress and poor health outcomes.[12] LEP adults in the US face barriers to health insurance coverage, as evidenced by their increased odds of being uninsured or receiving public insurance like Medicaid and Medicare when compared to adults who speak English only.[13] The uninsured are less likely to seek regular preventative care and receive screening services than those who are insured.[14] Additionally, LEP adults in the U.S. have increased odds of not having a usual source of care.[13] These factors can increase the risk for developing chronic disease in the LEP population.

In the healthcare setting, a lack of language services and cultural sensitivity can result in misdiagnosis or delayed treatment, as well as lead to mistrust or misunderstandings between the provider and the patient.[15,16] From a public health perspective, communicating health information in the appropriate language with cultural consideration is important for promoting healthy behaviors and reducing the prevalence of disease.[17] With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, communication is essential for managing and controlling the spread of the virus. Providing language accessible services and information can reduce misinformation, and aid in contact tracing.[18]

Barriers faced by immigrants when trying to access legal services include fear of deportation, stigma, legal status, and unfamiliarity with legal resources. Limited English proficiency can further complicate communication with the legal agencies that provide these services and can prevent immigrants from seeking legal assistance in courts.[19] There may be a lack of awareness and understanding - both in the linguistic and the procedural sense - of the process for filing complaints for discrimination.[20] Some LEP individuals may not be aware of their rights to interpreter services at no cost or fear that requesting these services will harm their case.[21] Having a system in place that not only addresses language barriers but also notifies the public of the availability of language accessible services will help increase awareness of resources and gradually improve immigrants' access to legal resources.

From a social perspective, communication barriers can lead to an inability to integrate into the community, and this can elicit feelings of isolation and vulnerability.[20] Routine activities such as buying groceries, navigating the healthcare system, and communicating with their children's teachers are a challenge for LEP individuals. Limited English proficiency of parents can impede on their ability to monitor and guide their children's education.[20,22] Employment is a primary need for most immigrants, yet finding employment that matches their training or professional goals can be hindered by a lack of English proficiency or not knowing about licensing procedures. Reports indicate that high-skilled LEP immigrants are more likely to be employed in unskilled jobs than immigrants who are proficient in English.[22,23]

Addressing language barriers not only involves making sure services are language accessible, but it should be paired with services that support English acquisition for LEP individuals. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes are opportunities to bridge language barriers and give structured English learning to LEP individuals. ESL classes can be especially helpful if they give guidance on finding employment and pursuing education, as well as keep students updated on available social services and opportunities for civic engagement.[23] However, some limitations of ESL classes include inconvenient timing of classes, inaccessibility by public transportation and for LEP individuals with children, there may be a need for childcare services. Funding or a lack of staff may also be a barrier for organizations running classes.

The medical, economic, and mental hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic have added another layer to the challenges LEP individuals faced pre-COVID-19 and limited English proficiency has likely made it more difficult for this population to cope. The transition of services to remote platforms and the limitation of in-person interaction has added another barrier for LEP persons navigating through these changes. The inability to see a person's mouth behind a mask can complicate in-person communication. In the virtual space, communication is limited to verbal communication and even when communicating through a video call, body language cues are difficult to discern. At a time when communication is vital, organizations and agencies that provide services to LEP populations must have a structured plan to address language gaps in service access.

Language Access Plan: Overview

A **language access plan (LAP)** is a document or management tool that outlines how an agency will provide services in a language accessible manner to address the needs of the LEP population in its **service area**. These plans are generally developed by the agency to tailor to their unique services and population. While these plans tend to differ between agencies, they often share some elements. The 2011 Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool developed by the US Department of Justice (DOJ) provides a comprehensive guide on how to develop language access plans.[24] This tool lists 8 elements of a LAP:

1) A description of the group of people who are responsible for overseeing and implementing the plan, such as a language access coordinator role or committee

2) An explanation of how the LEP community in the agency's service area is assessed; **this is also referred to as a language access assessment**

3) A timeline with objectives and goals

4) A description of how staff will be trained on language access policies and procedures

5) A description of how the agency will notify the LEP persons in their service area of 1) their eligibility for benefits, programs, and services and 2) the availability of language assistance services

6) A description of how service provision for the LEP population will be monitored and evaluated, as well as how regularly the LAP will be reviewed

7) A description of issues pertaining to funding and resources to support language access services and how these barriers will be addressed

8) A description of how the agency conducts outreach to and collaborates with community partners and stakeholders

As the purpose of the report is to provide recommendations for the preliminary steps of forming a language access plan, our focus will be on the implementation of a language access assessment.

Language Access Assessments

For organizations who do not have a language access plan, one of the foundational steps to take is to perform an assessment of the organization's current provision of **language services** and the characteristics of the LEP population in the agency's service area. In the context of developing language access plans, these assessments are referred to as **language access assessments**. The assessment should be used to inform the development of a language access plan. The method by which data is collected and the findings from the assessment should be discussed in the language access plan. Provided the importance of program evaluation, language access assessments should be performed whenever a language access plan is revised to identify changes in the characteristics of the LEP population and language services available.

Language Access Assessments Conducted by U.S. Cities and Agencies

The City of Cleveland, OH
The City of Cleveland began developing its language access plan in 2016.[25] A taskforce called the Language Access Working Group was formed to oversee the implementation of the language access plan. This group included members from Cleveland's Mayor's Office, City Council, and Office of Information Technology and Services. Information from the U.S. Census Bureau was used to find an estimate of the number of non-English speaking households. A limitation of using this data is that it only offers information on the number of Spanish-speaking households, and all other languages are grouped into monolithic categories: Indo-European, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Other. The Working Group also conducted a city-wide assessment of language access needs by sending a survey to the director/commissioner of each City Department. The goal of the assessment was to identify the vital documents that needed translation and to

determine where there was a need for interpreter services. Based on the needs identified from the assessment, an implementation plan was created, and it included target dates for completion. It is not mentioned whether the City of Cleveland involved community stakeholders in their assessment. Involving community-based organizations in the assessment can shed more light on the actual experiences of residents trying to access services. It is also not specified how departments were selected, or whether the City assessed for all the languages spoken in the service area through means other than the Census.

The City of San Leandro, CA

The City of San Leandro has a population of about 90,000 and about 50% of households speak a language other than English.[26] [27] As a recipient of federal assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the City of San Leandro is required to provide meaningful access to language services and create a language access plan.[28] The City must also conduct a four-factor analysis to identify the most prevalent non-English languages and shed light on the current provision of language services. The four areas of the analysis include: 1) the number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area; 2) how often LEP persons interact with the agency; 3) the types of services offered by the agency and their importance; and 4) the language services currently offered by the agency and the associated costs. For Factor 1, the City looked at Census data and used the description of speaking English "less than very well" as a proxy for limited English proficiency. The City acknowledged the limitation of using Census data in that it does not offer details about languages other than Spanish. To address this gap in information, the City relied on information collected from staff members who interacted with LEP individuals.

It is important to note that prior to the development of a formal language access plan in 2011, the City was already offering language assistance services and had employed 42 staff members to provide interpretation and translation services. The City was also offering indirect services by funding CBOs. Through input from the staff and CBOs, the City was able to determine other frequently used languages, including Mandarin. Based on the Census data, Spanish met the 5% of the population or the 1,000 persons threshold for the requirement of providing language access services. For Factor 2, since the City was already providing language assistance services, they were able to estimate the frequency from the number of times the services were used. They also relied on anecdotal information from staff members. For Factor 3, the City acknowledges that this information would be easier to collect once the LAP is implemented, since the LAP includes a monitoring and data collection section. Since there is not enough formally collected data to analyze, the City made a judgement as to what services they believed were most frequently used and which of these services should be prioritized. To address Factor 4, the City discusses the written translation and oral interpretation services currently offered by the City and the process of requesting services, as well as costs and financial barriers.

The City of Lowell, MA

The City of Lowell also has a diverse population, with a significant amount of persons who are LEP. As a federally funded entity, the City is required to provide meaningful access to services for people with LEP. In 2011, Lowell's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) began developing a language access plan, by first conducting an assessment based on the HUD's four-factor analysis.[29] The first factor was to determine the number/proportion of LEP persons in the service area. This was done by looking at data from the American Community Survey. The American Community Survey provided a detailed account of the population in each neighborhood in Lowell, as well as the specific languages spoken (Spanish, Khmer, and Portuguese). Due to the specificity, the DPD was able to identify the most prevalent languages in Lowell. The American Community Survey also provided data about age groups and their English proficiency, and their data indicated a higher prevalence of limited English proficiency in the elderly population (65+) compared to the adult and child populations, indicating a greater need to provide more information and outreach to this specific population and address the intersectionality between age and limited English proficiency. Lastly, the DPD looked at the prevalence of LEP persons based on income, since households with low-income levels would be more likely to use services from the DPD.

The City's analysis of the second factor was done in conjunction with analysis for the first factor. They determined the frequency of contact with LEP persons based on the number/proportion of LEP persons in the service area. For the third factor, the City determined that any programs that provide immediate and urgent need will be prioritized in terms of providing language assistance services like translation and interpretation. For the fourth factor, the DPD notes that there are resources available to assist the City with providing meaningful access to their programs. For oral interpretation, the City has bilingual staff who speak Spanish and Portuguese. The City allows the client to use a family member (including minors) and friends for interpretation; however, the City will notify the client of the potential issues of using a minor as an interpreter, as well as ensure that the client's decision is voluntary. The City will also notify clients of the availability of an interpreter at no charge. For written translation, the City will translate vital documents into Khmer, Spanish, and Portuguese. All other documents will be translated upon request, with a notice in the document directing clients to the appropriate contact to submit their request to.

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)[10] is a commission that investigates and prosecutes discrimination complaints in several sectors, including housing, education, and employment. The MCAD issued a language access plan in 2016. As with other

language access plans, the MCAD plan included a section on how they performed a needs assessment and collected data about the prevalence of LEP persons in their service area, as well as the frequency of service-use by the LEP population. Their assessment was based on recommendations from the ANF Administrative Bulletin #16.[30] This Bulletin provides language access policy guidelines aimed at improving access to services, programs, and activities to LEP individuals, reducing disparities and delays in service, and improving the agency's effectiveness. The guidelines proposed by the Bulletin are in line with the HUD's four-factor analysis. Similar to HUD's guidelines, the goal of these guidelines is to create a balance between the provision of meaningful access to services and the agency's resource and fiscal limitations. One note of caution when collecting information about the frequency of encounters with LEP persons is that this frequency may be an underrepresentation of the actual need of the LEP persons in the service area. The case may be that eligible LEP persons are not seeking services because they are unaware of their eligibility or they are concerned that their language need will not be met when seeking services. Therefore, the assessment should include a comparison between the number or proportion of LEP individuals who are eligible to receive services and the estimated frequency of encounters to identify potential gaps in service provision.

Part of the MCAD's assessment also involves consulting with state agencies and other stakeholders to better understand the needs of the LEP population. As part of their language access plan, the MCAD lists all their vital documents; hence, during the assessment, information about which vital documents exist and their status (translated or not) should be collected. As with the implementation of any program, it is important that assessment be an ongoing process. In order to be continuously assessing the frequency that LEP persons come into contact with the agency, the MCAD revised its intake and consultation forms to include questions about preferred language and whether the person would need language assistance services. The MCAD also created an LAP Questionnaire, which is a voluntary, anonymous form whose purpose is to collect information about preferred language, as well as other indicators like race and education level. The collected information will be used in future assessments of the LAP and needs of the population in the service area.

Recommendations for Conducting a Language Access Needs Assessment

A. Framework for the Assessment: The Four-Factor Analysis

The **four-factor analysis** was commonly used in the assessments of the aforementioned cities and agencies. The purpose of the four-factor analysis is to understand the characteristics of the LEP population that is eligible to receive services from the City of Everett, the frequency with which they come into contact with the City, the types of services they use, and the current language assistance offered by the City.

The four factors are outlined below:

Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area

Factor 2: The frequency of contact with LEP persons

Factor 3: The nature and importance of the services, programs, and/or benefits

Factor 4: The available resources for language assistance and the associated costs to the agency

When assessing the number or proportion of LEP persons and determining whether there is a significant need for language services, some cities and agencies use the "**safe harbor" threshold**. The agency will take steps to provide meaningful access to services, programs, and benefits for LEP populations in the service area who pass a 5% threshold or exceed 1000 people.[31]

The HUD provides the following translation guidelines for safe harbor factors:

Size of Language Group	Recommended Provision of Written Language Assistance
1,000 or more in the eligible population in the market area or among current beneficiaries	Translated vital documents
More than 5% of the eligible population or beneficiaries *and* more than 50 in number	Translated vital documents
More than 5% of the eligible population or beneficiaries *and* 50 or less in number	Translated written notice of right to receive free oral interpretation of documents
5% of less of the eligible population or beneficiaries and less than 1,000 in number	No written translation is required

Table 1. HUD's guideline for written language assistance [28]

Using this framework can help the City of Everett be efficient in identifying areas where language assistance services are most needed. For example, the City should prioritize the translation of **vital documents** to Spanish and Haitian Creole if it finds that the number or proportion of LEP speakers of these two languages exceeds the threshold of 5% or 1,000 persons in the service area. Prioritization will be evidence-based and dependent on the resources available to the City.

B. Application of the Four-Factor Analysis: The Seven Focus Areas of the Assessment

The four-factor analysis can be specified based on guidelines from the Department of Justice (DOJ). The DOJ offers a helpful guideline for creating a language access assessment. The focus areas outlined in the guidelines reflects the elements of the previously outlined language access plan. According to recommendations by the DOJ, a language access assessment should include questions that fall under the following six focus areas:

1) Characteristics of the LEP population

The purpose is to identify the prevalence of non-English languages in the population in the service area. This section can also include questions about the frequency of encounters with the LEP population. This focus area aligns with Factors 1 and 2, and sources of data include Census data, as well as locally collected data by the City of Everett. For example, if the City has documented information about preferred language on intake surveys, this information would be useful to include in the assessment. Employees at City Hall who provide services to the public may be able to provide an estimate of the frequency of encounters with LEP individuals.

2) Points of Contact

The purpose is to understand how the LEP population interacts with the agency and how the agency identifies LEP persons. This includes identifying the different manners by which the City interacts with the LEP population, whether it be in-person, telephonically, or through social media platforms. This focus area can provide additional information for Factor 3, as it can be useful to understand *how* LEP persons receive services, or the nature of the service.

3) Language Services

The purpose is to identify the current language access services provided by the City, such as bilingual staff, contracted interpreters, or translated documents. Part of assessing language services is identifying vital documents and noting which documents have been translated and in what languages. For interpretation services, the assessment should indicate which languages have available interpreters, as well as how these interpreters are accessed. This focus area falls under Factor 4.

4) Notices

The purpose is to identify how the LEP population is notified of the availability of language assistance services and how the department communicates with the general public. This may include questions about whether the City performs outreach through collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs). Input from representatives of the LEP community would be beneficial in terms of gaining their perspective on the level of outreach or awareness in the LEP community about the availability of language services.

5) Training

The purpose of this section is to understand whether staff receive training on accessing language assistance services. For agencies that do not have a formal training policy on providing services

to LEP individuals, the assessment should ask about the current procedures in place for when an employee encounters an LEP person.

6) Monitoring and Evaluation
The purpose of this section is to understand how the agency monitors and evaluates service provision for LEP individuals. For agencies without a language access plan in place, information that should be collected in the assessment include any complaints and feedback received from the public about language access.

An additional focus area not mentioned in the DOJ tool is:

7) Costs and Resource Allocation
This section focuses on the financial resources allocated to language access services. Part of the assessment involves understanding the financial capacity of the City to support language services. This focus area falls under Factor 4.

These focus areas fall in line with the four-factor analysis and will provide the data needed to identify areas of improvement for the different sections of the language access plan.

C. Key Stakeholders in the Assessment
An important aspect to consider in the assessment is the target audience. For the City of Everett, the assessment should target employees at City Hall who have frequent contact with the public, as well as community stakeholders such as representatives from community organizations who work with LEP individuals.

As was done in the City of Cleveland, the City of Everett should survey the directors/ commissioners of the Everett departments who are in frequent contact with the public. This will provide the perspective of the service providers. The assessment should also include representatives from community-based organizations (CBOs) who work with the LEP population in Everett. CBOs provide a voice for the LEP community and a different perspective that gives a better sense of how those using the services feel the City is meeting their language. CBOs can also provide insight into whether language assistance services are easily accessible to the LEP population, as well as the level of awareness of these services.

Involving all stakeholders in the assessment allows for the collected data to be reflective of the experiences of those providing services, as well as those receiving services. A cohesive assessment will lead to a more effective language access plan.

D. Format of the Assessment: Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews

There are several methods for collecting data for the language access assessment, each with strengths and limitations.

Surveys:

Surveys are the best method for collecting data from large groups of people. They offer a standardized approach for data collection and can be anonymous. Since survey data is quantitative, the results can be more easily analyzed that data collected from focus groups or interviews. However, surveys typically cannot capture details about an issue due to the lack of open-endedness. A sample survey for the City of Everett can be found in Appendix A.

Focus Groups:

Focus groups are helpful for providing more detailed insight into an issue due to its open-endedness. Holding focus groups with members of the LEP population can be especially informative as they can discuss their experiences of accessing municipal services in detail – something that cannot be done with a survey. A limitation of focus groups is that the gathered information may not be generalizable to the entire LEP population in the area, as people come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and face other intersecting social and political identities, such as gender or disability.

Interviews:

Holding interviews with community leaders or City department heads may be useful for gaining in-depth information about their perspectives on gaps in language accessibility. Similar to focus groups, interviews offer an opportunity to ask more open-ended questions. Since interviews are generally one-on-one, questions can be personalized to the respondent. A limitation of interviews (and focus groups) is that the lack of anonymity may discourage people from participating or participants may withhold some information.

E. Identifying a Language Access Coordinator (or Committee)

When conducting a language access assessment, identifying a language access coordinator or committee can be helpful for ensuring the sustainability and implementation of the language access plan once it has been developed. A language access coordinator (or committee) would be responsible for ensuring that the agency complies with the language access plan. Specific responsibilities include (but are not limited to) managing staff trainings, monitoring and evaluating the language access plan, and procuring funding and resources to support language services. The DOJ recommends that the coordinator be a high-ranking official in the agency, since high-level support is important for implementing the language access plan.

Conclusion

Language plays a crucial role in the health and wellbeing of persons with limited English proficiency, and language barriers can have an array of health, legal, and social impacts on the LEP population. Provided that the City of Everett is home to a large LEP population, ensuring that municipal services are language accessible must be a priority. As the City of Everett is working towards creating a language access plan, performing a language access assessment is an appropriate first step to understand what resources are most needed and which services and languages should be prioritized. The four-factor analysis can serve as a useful guide for creating the assessment, as it balances the need to provide meaningful access with the agency's available financial resources. In order to provide a holistic understanding of the current provision of language assistance services, the assessment must involve stakeholders from the City and the LEP community. Once the assessment has been performed, an appointed language access coordinator should oversee the development and implementation of the City's language access plan based on the findings from the assessment. For next steps, the City of Everett is encouraged to participate in a language access assessment and consider the recommendations presented in this report.

Helpful Resources

Iris Coloma-Gaines | MLRI
Email: icoloma-gaines@mlri.org
Iris Coloma-Gaines is an attorney with Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) who leads the MA language access coalition. She is also leading a legislative working group for a proposed statewide bill related to language accessibility in Massachusetts. Ms. Coloma-Gaines is a helpful resource for guidance on developing a language access plan.

Northeastern University Contacts:
Alisa Lincoln | Director of the Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research (IHESJR)
Email: al.lincoln@northeastern.edu

Tiana Yom | Director of the Northeastern University Public Evaluation Lab (NU-PEL)
Email: t.yom@northeastern.edu

U.S. Department of Justice: Language Access Planning Tool
https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/2011_Language_Access_Assessment_and_Planning_Tool.pdf
The DOJ Language Access Planning Tool provides a comprehensive guide for conducting a language access assessment and developing a language access plan. It serves as a useful resource for getting familiar with language access plans.

Appendix A: Language Access Assessment for the City of Everett's Employees

A. Points of Contact

This section focuses on how the limited English proficient (LEP) population interacts with your department.

1. Does your department currently interact or communicate with LEP individuals?

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

2. How does your department identify LEP individuals? (Select all that apply)

   ○ Assume the individual is LEP if ability to communicate in English seems difficult

   ○ Ask questions to determine language proficiency

   ○ Ask if the individual self-identifies as LEP or needs interpretation

   ○ Individual requests language assistance services

   ○ Use of "I Speak" language identification cards or posters

   ○ Based on written materials submitted to the department (e.g. complaints)

   ○ Other (Please specify): _____

3. Please describe the manner(s) by which your department interacts with LEP individuals. (Select all that apply).

   ○ In-person

   ○ Telephonically

   ○ Electronically (email, website, etc.)

   ○ Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

   ○ Other (Please specify): _____

4. How often do these interactions occur?

   ○ Daily

   ○ Weekly

   ○ Monthly

   ○ Annually

5. In what language do you communicate with LEP individuals?

○ English

○ A language other than English, preferred by the LEP individual

○ A language other than English, but not the preferred language of the LEP individual (ex: a third language that both parties are familiar with)

6. When encountering a person that you identify as LEP, what is your process to try to communicate with them?

_____

_____

B. Characteristics of the LEP Population
This section focuses on how your department identifies limited English proficient (LEP) individuals and the languages frequently encountered by your department.

1. Please list **the most commonly encountered** non-English languages **AND** the **estimated frequency** of these encounters. *Ex: Spanish, several times a day*

_____

_____

2. Does your department have a system in place to **record the following information**?

	Yes	No
The **number** of LEP individuals you **currently serve**		
The **languages** of the LEP individuals you **currently serve**		
The **contact information** of the LEP individuals you **currently serve**		
The **number** of LEP individuals in your **service area** (i.e. all LEP individuals who are eligible to receive your services)		
The **most prevalent languages spoken** in your **service area**		

3. Please describe how your department records and stores the information indicated in the previous question.

_____

_____

C. Language Services

This section seeks to identify current services in place for addressing the needs of the limited English proficient (LEP) population (ex: interpreters, bilingual staff, translated vital documents, etc.)

1. What types of language assistance services does your department provide? (Select all that apply)
Note: **Interpretation** refers to <u>spoken</u> language assistance, and **translation** refers to <u>written</u> language assistance (ex: translating documents).

○ Bilingual staff
○ In-house interpreters
○ In-house translators
○ Contracted interpreters
○ Contracted translators
○ Volunteer interpreters or translators
○ Telephone interpretation services
○ Referral to community organizations for information in a language the person understand
○ Use of community organizations as interpreters or translators
○ Other (Please specify): _____
○ None

2. In what languages does your department offer **interpretation** services?

○ Spanish
○ Haitian Creole
○ Portuguese
○ Arabic
○ Nepalese
○ Other _____

3. Does your department use **written documents** when providing services to the general public?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

4. Which of the following **written documents** does your department use / offer? (Select all that apply)

- ○ Bills
- ○ Complaint forms
- ○ Intake forms
- ○ Notices of rights
- ○ Applications to participate in programs/activities or to receive benefits/services
- ○ Notice of denial, loss or decrease in benefits or services
- ○ Permits
- ○ Public notices
- ○ Service requests
- ○ Tax forms
- ○ Voting forms
- ○ Other (please specify): _____

5. In what **languages** other than English do you offer **written documents**? Select all that apply. If no documents have been translated, select "None."

- ○ Spanish
- ○ Haitian Creole
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Arabic
- ○ Nepalese
- ○ Other _____
- ○ None

6. Does your department perform any of the following?

	Yes	No	N/A
Ask or allow LEP individuals to provide **their own interpreters** or have **family or friends** interpret			
Provide staff with information and training on how to access **qualified interpreters**			
Provide **interpretation services** at **public meetings**			
Provide staff with information and training on how to request the **translation** of written documents into other languages			
Translate physical signs or posters announcing the availability of language assistance services			
Translate website and social media information			

D. Notification of Services

This section asks about how the limited English proficient (LEP) population is notified of the availability of language assistance services and how the department communicates with the general public.

1. How do you inform members of the public about the availability of language assistance services? (Select all that apply)

- ○ Frontline multilingual staff
- ○ Posters in public areas
- ○ "I Speak" language identification cards worn or displayed by staff
- ○ Website
- ○ Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)
- ○ E-mail to individuals or a list serv
- ○ Other (Please specify): _____
- ○ Does not apply
- ○

2. Please answer the following:

	Yes	No	N/A
Does your department inform **community groups** about the availability of language assistance services for LEP individuals?			
Does your department send communications on **local non-English media** (television, radio, newspaper, and websites)?			
Does your department **website or web page** include non-English information?			

E. Monitoring and Evaluation

This section focuses on how your department monitors and evaluates service provision for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals.

1. Does your department have an established policy that addresses and/or includes language access?
 Note: language access refers to how an agency or department will provide services in a language accessible manner for LEP persons

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

2. Is a description of this policy available to the public?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

3. How often is your department's language access policy reviewed and updated?

- ○ Annually
- ○ Biennially
- ○ Unsure
- ○ Other: _____

4. Please answer the following:

	Yes	No	N/A
Do you obtain feedback from the LEP community on the **effectiveness** of the language assistance services you provide?			
Does your department have a formal language access **complaint process**?			
Has your department received any complaints about a lack of language assistance services?			

F. Costs and Resource Allocation

This section focuses on the financial resources allocated to language access services.

1. Do you have any knowledge or information about the fiscal resources and costs associated for language access services?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

2. Are there funds dedicated to providing language access services in your department?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Glossary

Four-factor analysis: a guideline for conducting a language access assessment that balances between the provision of meaningful access to services for the LEP population and the agency's resource and fiscal limitations

Language access assessment: an assessment of the organization's current provision of language services and the demographics of the LEP population that are eligible for their services

Language access plan (LAP): A document or management tool that outlines how an agency or department will provide services in a language accessible manner to address the needs of the LEP population in its service area.

Language services: 1) *Interpretation:* refers to <u>spoken</u> language assistance (ex: interpreter services). **2)** *Translation:* refers to <u>written</u> language assistance (ex: translating documents).

Limited English proficiency (LEP): A term used to describe individuals whose primary language is not English and who have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

Meaningful access: refers to the provision of services in the preferred language of the client in an accurate, timely, and effective manner

Safe harbor threshold: when an LEP population of a certain language exceeds a threshold of 5% of the service area population or 1,000 persons, the agency should take steps to provide meaningful access to services, programs, and benefits in that language

Service area: a term that extends beyond the individuals currently using services to refer to all persons eligible to participate in programs and receive services and benefits from an agency.

Vital document: a document that is critical for ensuring meaningful access to important services, programs, and benefits

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