



Language Access Policy

Section: Governance and Operations	Attachment(s):
Policy #:	
Effective Date: May 15, 2018	
Adoption Date: May 15, 2018	
Revision Dates:	
Issuing Department: Centre County Planning and Community Development Office	
Responsible Officer: Centre County Administrator or Designee	
Required Policy Review Period: As needed.	
Required Language Access Plan Review Period: Review, update (if needed) and adoption must occur within 5 years of plan adoption to meet the US Department of Housing and Urban Development requirements for the Centre County Community Development Block Grant Program.	

Section 1: Policy Statement:

Centre County, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, *“Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency”*, Act 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and/or other applicable statutes, is committed to providing meaningful access to the County’s programs and services for **Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals**.

Limited English Proficient Individuals are Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have limited ability to hear, read, speak, write, or understand English. These limited English proficient persons may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type or service, benefit, or encounter.

Primary Source: Limited English Proficiency (LEP) LEP.gov, a Federal Interagency Website

Section 2: Overview

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is the federal law that protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of their race, color, or national origin in programs that receive federal financial assistance. In certain situations, failure to ensure that LEP persons can effectively participate in, or benefit from federally assisted or other government programs may violate Title VI’s protection against national origin discrimination. All programs and operations of entities that receive financial assistance from the federal government including but not limited to state agencies, local agencies and for-profit and non-profit entities, must comply with the Title VI requirements.

In addition, Executive Order (EO) 13166 *“Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,”* signed into law on August 11, 2000, directs all federal agencies to work to ensure that programs receiving federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to LEP persons.

Section 3: Provisions

Upon adoption, the Centre County Language Access Policy:

- a. Designates the Centre County Administrator or designee as the language access administrator to oversee Centre County Government's provision of services for limited English proficient persons.
- b. Establishes that a prescribed analysis will be conducted on a recurring basis by the language access administrator in conjunction with other applicable County offices as a means to identify the limited English proficient populations residing in the County that meet the threshold for requiring translation services and/or services for the hearing impaired. U.S. Census data and locally substantiated data will be incorporated into the analysis to identify populations for whom outreach is needed and who would benefit from the programs and activities when language services are provided. This analysis will be incorporated into a **Language Access Plan (LAP)**.
- c. Insures the proper procurement of Language Access Services.

Section 4: Procedures

a. Language Access Plan

The **Language Access Plan (LAP)** identifying limited English proficient persons will establish guidelines and requirements for the provision of language access services. This LAP process will occur on a 5-year cycle in order to meet federal program funding guidelines.

b. Availability of Services

Centre County staff shall take reasonable and cost effective steps to provide limited English proficient (LEP) persons with meaningful access to all programs, services or activities conducted by the County and entities receiving funding from the County.

Centre County will inform the public of the availability of language access.

- i. Citizen participation materials, public notices and project-related resolutions will:
 - (1) be published/posted in LEP language(s) identified through the Language Access Plan and as needed by specific County departmental requirements; and
 - (2) include a statement in the identified LEP language(s) indicating that written materials will be made available, upon request.
- ii. Services for LEP individuals may include:
 - Translation of written materials, upon request
 - Verbal translation, upon request or as needed for on-site communication
 - American sign language, upon request
 - Public meeting translation upon at least 72 hours' notice
 - Website translation – The Centre County Government website currently includes a Google Translate option.

c. Filing a Complaint

Any person, who has limited ability to hear, read, speak, write, or understand English and who believes that the County has not provided adequate language assistance, or any representative of such a person, is afforded the opportunity to file a complaint with the County.

Verbal communication with the County department head responsible for the objectionable program, service or facility is the first step in this process. Should verbal communication not be successful, a complaint may be filed in writing to the County Administrator, using the Centre County Accessibility Complaint Form.

The Centre County Accessibility Complaint Policy provides for the timely, respectful and thorough review of a complaint upon receipt of a fully completed Centre County Accessibility Complaint Form. Directions for submittal of a written complaint are included on the Accessibility Complaint Form.

The form is available on the County website <http://www.centrecountypa.gov/> or from the Centre County Administrator or designee at the following address:

Centre County Government
420 Holmes Street
Bellefonte, PA 16823

Email: accessibility@centrecountypa.gov Phone: 814-355-6700

Section 5: Related Policies / Forms / Documents:

Public Accessibility Complaint Policy

Public Accessibility Complaint Form

Centre County Public Accessibility Policy (Section 504)

Repealer:

All prior policies and/or directives or parts of policies and/or directives that are contrary to the provisions of this Policy are hereby repealed to give this policy full force and effect.