

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Language Access Plan

I. Introduction

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA or the Department) has prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP or Plan), which defines the actions to be taken by the Department to ensure meaningful access to agency services, programs, and activities for persons who have limited English proficiency. TDHCA will review and update this Plan on a biennial basis or as needed in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with Executive Order 13166 (which may be found at <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/cor/Pubs/eolep.php>).

II. Purpose

The purpose of this LAP is to ensure TDHCA's clients with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to services, programs, and activities.

TDHCA is committed to this Plan as the appropriate response to meeting its clients' needs. The LAP is consistent with the guidance promulgated by all relevant Federal agencies.

A Limited English Proficient (LEP) person is someone who is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with Department staff. A client maintains the right to self-identify as an LEP person.

III. Department Description

TDHCA's mission is to administer its assigned programs efficiently, transparently, and lawfully and to invest its resources strategically and develop high quality affordable housing, which allows Texas communities to thrive.

TDHCA accomplishes this mission by acting as a conduit for federal and state grant funds for affordable housing and community services. In addition, because several major housing programs require the participation of private investors and private lenders, TDHCA also operates as a housing finance agency.

Ensuring program compliance with the many state and federal laws that govern housing programs is another important part of the Department's mission. This ensures the health and safety of residents of TDHCA's housing portfolio and guarantees state and federal resources are expended in an efficient and effective manner.

TDHCA also serves as a financial and administrative resource that helps provide essential services and affordable housing opportunities to Texans who qualify for this assistance based on their income level. Additionally, TDHCA is a resource for educational materials and technical assistance for housing, housing-related, and community services matters.

For more information about TDHCA's efforts, please see the current State of Texas Low Income Housing Plan and Annual Report, which may be found at:
<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/housing-center/pubs-plans.htm>

IV. Language Access Plan

Approach: This LAP shall be fully implemented subject to the availability of fiscal resources. This Plan has been developed in consultation with all relevant guidance from federal agencies and with reference to Executive Order 13166 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This LAP represents an administrative blueprint for TDHCA to provide meaningful access to its services, programs, and activities on the part of LEP individuals. This LAP outlines the tasks TDHCA will undertake to meet this objective.

(1) Agency Language Access Coordinator

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(2) TDHCA Language Access Needs Assessment

a. Meaningful Access

At appropriate points in all of TDHCA’s efforts (Poverty and Homelessness Prevention, Rental Assistance and Multifamily Development, Homebuyer Assistance and Single-Family Development, Rehabilitation and Weatherization, Foreclosure Relief, and Disaster Relief), TDHCA shall make meaningful access available to each regularly encountered LEP group and specifically to the prevalent LEP population in Texas: native Spanish-speaking individuals. Meaningful access, as used in this document, means language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the LEP individual. For LEP individuals, meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English proficient individuals.

b. Language Makeup of Client Population

TDHCA staff utilized the 2021 One-Year Public Use Microsample Data (PUMS) from the U.S. Census Bureau to determine what languages were spoken by LEP individuals at or below 30% of the Area Median Family Income (AMFI) in the major Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in Texas and statewide. The table below shows the results of this analysis. Staff estimates that there are just over 620,000 LEP Texans living at or below 30% AMFI. The following table shows languages with more than 1,000 speakers at or below 30% AMFI.

Language	Speakers	Percent
Spanish	549,268	88.4%
Vietnamese	16,972	2.7%
Arabic	10,642	1.7%
Chinese	6,804	1.1%
Korean	3,486	0.6%
Amharic	2,386	0.4%
Urdu	2,205	0.4%
Hindi	2,187	0.4%
French	1,803	0.3%
Mandarin	1,386	0.2%
Gujarati	1,336	0.2%
Russian	1,264	0.2%
Khmer	1,190	0.2%
Farsi	1,168	0.2%

c. Current Points of Contact between Department and Client Population

Web Contact

Translated web content and vital documents are available on TDHCA's website for web-based access to Department programs, services and activities.

Written Contact

Written communications, *e.g.*, email, letters, etc., and responses, are routed to external translation service provider(s) for translation, as needed.

Phone Contact

Phone calls from persons of LEP will require the use of the Language Line

(3) Language Resources Assessment

- a. TDHCA employs a phone-based Language Line that all staff are able to access to provide translation services for technical discussion of programs and services.
- b. Every staff member has the ability to access the language line for any of the fourteen languages in the above table shown on page 3, along with languages not included in this table.

(4) Language Service Protocols

- a. TDHCA contracts with vendors for telephone, document and web content translation services for languages outside of Departmental staff's ability on an as-needed basis.
- b. As appropriate, TDHCA will engage a qualified vendor to provide in-person translations for events where Department staff anticipates persons of LEP will be present.

(5) Vital Document Translation

- a. To identify vital documents for translation, TDHCA responds to requests from its subrecipient network for each program regarding which documents are most necessary for LEP persons. Translation will be prioritized for those documents that are most needed to alleviate an immediate problem for an individual, to be determined at the Executive Director's or his designee's discretion.

- b. Website Content—using the same prioritization as noted above, translated web content and vital documents will also be added for web-based availability. For documents that are generated from the Federal level, appropriate links to Federal websites will be provided.

(6) Stakeholder Consultations

- a. Stakeholders will be consulted on an ongoing basis, through the annual development of program plans, to determine if further languages and document translations are needed.

(7) Staff Training

- a. Staff will be trained to recognize and work with persons of limited English proficiency and the use of appropriate language translation services.
- b. Staff training documents will also be changed in order to reflect a focus on training subrecipients and other administrators to recognize and work with persons of limited English proficiency.

(8) Notice to Public

TDHCA will make clear on its website which languages are available for clients, and will prominently display the LAP Coordinator's contact information.

(9) Agency Monitoring

A member of TDHCA's Executive Team will periodically review TDHCA's actions toward increasing access for LEP persons in order to ensure continued steps toward wider language access. An Executive will also receive any LAP-related complaints in order to ensure the LAP is being properly implemented by the LAP Coordinator.



Bobby Wilkinson
Executive Director

3/31/2023

Date