

3. What Is LEP Service?

This chapter includes:

- **Key definitions for LEP service**
- **Components of LEP service**
- **General policies for LEP service**
- **General procedures for LEP service**

Definitions for LEP service

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

A person with limited English proficiency (LEP) cannot speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that permits him or her to interact effectively with city staff.

(Individuals who communicate with American Sign Language are covered in this definition, although other Federal laws and regulations such as the Americans with Disabilities Act apply and should be consulted separately.)

Meaningful access

Federal standards require that organizations receiving federal funds provide meaningful access to the services for LEP individuals. A person has meaningful access when he or she:

- is given adequate information;
- can understand the services and benefits available;
- can receive the services for which he or she is eligible; and
- can communicate the relevant circumstances of his or her situation to the service provider.

Primary languages

Languages spoken by at least 1,000 Minneapolis residents.

Resident

Someone who lives within the city boundaries. This plan applies to anyone who lives, works in or visits the city of Minneapolis. In this document, the term “resident” is not related to immigration status.

Timely

Avoids the effective denial or delay of important benefits or services.

Components of LEP service

There are many ways in which LEP individuals must be served by the city. It is not enough just to have translated materials, or bilingual staff, or multilingual signs. This plan addresses how services will be provided in each of the areas below, through general policies and through specific procedures.

- Notice: providing notice to limited English speakers of their right to service;
- Identification: identifying LEP individuals and needed LEP services in city

- departments;
- Interpreting: offering free, timely spoken language interpretation for LEP individuals;
 - Translation: providing free written language translations of vital city documents on request;
 - Staffing: hiring to meet multilingual service needs; and
 - Training: delivering training on LEP service mandates to all city staff.

General policies for LEP service

(Specific policies for LEP service areas are spelled out in sections 4, 5 and 6)

Individuals with limited English proficiency are entitled to the same kinds and levels of service from Minneapolis city employees as all other individuals.

Updating and monitoring the LEP plan

Minneapolis' LEP plan is updated annually. Updating is the responsibility of the Multicultural Services Coordinator.

Calculating primary language groups

Minneapolis' primary language groups are identified using an established formula (See "How to calculate primary languages" in Section 8, Print Resources, Part c). This formula will be re-applied annually. Primary language groups may change, as new data appears. For implementing the plan in 2004, this formula shows that the primary language groups in Minneapolis are (in size order):

1. Spanish
2. Hmong
3. Somali
4. Laotian
5. Oromo
6. Vietnamese

General procedures for LEP service

How to incorporate department level assessments, plans and budgets into annual budget plans

See the department-specific worksheets, *Department Templates for LEP Service*, online at CityTalk. Click on "Work Tools" and then on "Language and Translation Services " for a downloadable version.

How to evaluate the LEP plan

Each year, the city of Minneapolis will conduct an evaluation of its LEP plan to determine its effectiveness. The Multicultural Services Coordinator will lead the evaluation with staff in each department.

The evaluation will include:

- assessment of the number of Minneapolis residents with LEP;
- assessment of the current level of services delivered to LEP individuals by each city charter department;
- assessment of training levels of city staff regarding LEP services; and
- feedback and comments from LEP communities, including LEP community organizations and advocacy groups, on the effectiveness of the city's LEP services.