



Minneapolis in Any Language



Policies and Procedures
to Ensure Equal Access to City Services
for People with Limited English Proficiency



November 2004

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Equal Access to City Services
for People with Limited English Proficiency*

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1. Summary

What does this plan address?

This plan describes how the city of Minneapolis will improve access to city services for people who speak limited English.

One in five Minneapolis residents speak a language other than English in their homes. This means that increasingly, city of Minneapolis employees are providing services to people who may not speak fluent English. This plan offers a systematic approach for adapting city services to meet the needs of these individuals.

What are the city's primary language groups?

For implementing the plan in 2004 and 2005, the primary language groups identified in Minneapolis are below (in size order). These are the 6 languages that the city will be focusing on in the LEP plan. Section 3 provides information on how these primary languages were identified.

- Spanish
- Hmong
- Somali
- Laotian
- Oromo
- Vietnamese

How was the plan created?

In November 2003, the City Council passed a resolution approving the creation of a citywide Limited English Proficiency Plan, to give specific direction to staff about how to make city services accessible to those who speak limited English. An eight-month planning process beginning January 2004 involved representatives of all city charter departments. Members of the LEP Plan Work Team reviewed relevant legal mandates, consulted LEP plans created by other cities and counties, and met with several groups representing the interests of limited English speakers, before drafting this plan and accompanying worksheets for departments.

What does LEP mean?

LEP stands for Limited English Proficiency. A person who has limited proficiency in English cannot speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that permits him or her to interact effectively with English speakers.

Why does the city need a plan for making services accessible to LEP individuals?

The city of Minneapolis is strongly committed to making city services and information about those services available to everyone, regardless of language barriers. This commitment stems from overall city goals of responsive government, community engagement, and customer service. As residents, workers or visitors who contribute to city life, people with limited English proficiency are entitled to fair and equal access to service.

The city of Minneapolis and its departments are required by federal law to plan for and provide meaningful access to services for those with limited English proficiency. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related federal regulations, state law and municipal ordinances apply to all city departments and contracted vendors.

What is “meaningful access”?

Meaningful access means that a person:

- 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.

What does the plan cover?

The plan describes city policies and procedures for:

- providing notice to limited English speakers of their right to service;
- identifying LEP individuals and needed LEP services in city departments;
- providing free spoken language interpreting;
- offering free written translations of vital city documents on request;

- hiring to meet multilingual service needs; and
- offering training on LEP service mandates to all city staff.

How does this plan apply to city departments?

This document provides policies and procedures that will apply to all departments. All charter departments of the city will be required to produce their own, department-specific plans and to budget for LEP services, starting in 2005.

Who is responsible for the plan?

The Department of Health and Family Support and the City Coordinator's Office oversaw the development of the citywide LEP plan. Kristin Keller, the city's Multicultural Services Coordinator, will assist all city departments in creating and implementing plans at the department level.

Acknowledgements

This plan was produced by members of an interdepartmental team (listed below), with Patricia Ohmans, MPH and Garth Osborn, MPH of Health Advocates, Community Health Consultants, www.healthadvocates.info.

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2. Introduction

This chapter includes:

- **How to use this plan**
- **The LEP population in Minneapolis**
- **Legal mandates for LEP services**
- **Current (2004) levels of city LEP services**

How to use this plan

This plan is intended for department managers and supervisors, and for staff who interact directly or indirectly with LEP individuals in Minneapolis. LEP legal requirements may also apply to subcontractors and vendors who do business with the city. LEP community members and advocates can refer to this plan to learn about the city's commitment to equal access.

The plan does several things:

- explains the legal mandate behind LEP planning (2: *Introduction*);
- defines key concepts in LEP service (3: *What Is LEP Service?*);
- lays out general guidelines that are minimum expectations for all city services and departments (4-7: *Notice and Identification, Interpreting and Translation, Staffing and Training*);
- sets a timetable and assigns responsibility for implementation; and describes how the plan will be monitored and updated (7: *Carrying Out the Plan*); and
- lists key resources (8: *Resources and References*).

A separate workbook (*Department Templates for LEP Services*, online at CityTalk) provides self-assessment tools and templates for city departments to create their own, department-specific plans, timetables and budgets.

The LEP population in Minneapolis

Minnesota and its largest city, Minneapolis, have become increasingly diverse over the past several decades. Immigrants have contributed greatly to the city's economic, cultural and linguistic diversity. In 2002 alone, 13,522 legal immigrants arrived in the state from 160 countries. This constituted the largest number of new arrivals since 1992 and an increase of 2,000 from the previous year. For most of these new arrivals, English is not their primary language.

One key way to track the proliferation of languages spoken in the state is to ask school children what language they speak at home. The Minnesota State Department of Education reports that over 75 languages are now represented in Minnesota's public schools. The number of children speaking languages other than English increased from 8,173 in 1996 to 13,959 in 2002 – or a 71% jump in just six years. In 2003, 31% of public school children reported speaking a language other than English in their homes, according to the Minnesota Department of Education.

Immigration status is not a completely reliable marker for English as a second language, since many immigrants speak fluent English. Further, immigration figures based on the US Census are often outdated or incomplete. But immigration figures do provide a partial picture of the growing linguistic diversity of our city. In 1990, 6% of Minneapolis residents were foreign born. This increased to 14.5% by 2000 – an increase of 142%.

The majority came from Latin America, with Minneapolis's Hispanic population increasing by 269% during the decade and surpassing St. Paul as the Minnesota city with the largest Hispanic population. Minneapolis continues to have the second largest population of Asian-born immigrants in the state, with 31% of its new arrivals from there. Nearly one fourth of new arrivals came from Africa; the majority of them were from Somalia. Somalis constituted the single largest ethnic group arriving in Minnesota, with 1,588 individuals reported in 2002.

Languages spoken by Minneapolis school children at home, 2003-2004	
English	30,191
Spanish	4,928
Hmong	4,071
Somali	1,693
Laotian	361
Oromo	251
Vietnamese	128
Cambodian	103
Other	588
Total	42,357

Minneapolis residents' countries of origin	
Mexico	13,393
East Africa (mostly Somalia)	7,484
Laos (both Lao and Hmong)	5,770
Vietnam	2,348
Ethiopia	1,968
Ecuador	1,922
Thailand (mostly non-citizens born in refugee camps)	1,909
Korea	1,414
India	1,300
China	1,103

At left are the main countries of origin of Minneapolis residents in 2000 (based on census figures, in which immigrants are often significantly underrepresented).

The vast majority of new arrivals have settled in Minnesota's metropolitan areas, where they can more readily reunite with family members and reconnect with others from their homeland; find jobs and pursue economic opportunities; and receive assistance from both public and private support systems. Contrary to often-

expressed public opinion, immigrants do not disproportionately use state and city resources. The *StarTribune* (April 18, 2004) reported that the average immigrant contributes \$1,800 more in taxes each year than s/he receives in government services and benefits. For economic reasons alone, new Minnesotans with limited English proficiency are entitled to equal benefits and services.

Legal mandates for LEP services

There is also a compelling legal argument for LEP services. The city of Minneapolis and its departments are required by federal and state law to plan for and provide meaningful access to services for city residents with limited English.

According to an opinion from the Minneapolis City Attorney's office, "Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the implementing federal regulations require city departments receiving federal financial assistance to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities for LEP persons. Failure to provide meaningful access could result in a loss of federal funding. Private individuals could bring a civil action alleging intentional discrimination in the denial of services based upon their protected class status... Nearly every city department receives some sort of federal financial assistance." (See the full text of Assistant City Attorney Susan Trammel's interpretation of legal mandates from the US Department of Justice in Section 8, Print resources, b.)

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related federal regulations, state law and municipal ordinances apply to all city departments and contracted vendors.

Current (2004) levels of city LEP services

In order to get a baseline picture of what the city is already doing to provide LEP service, representatives from each of the city's charter departments were interviewed in March and April 2004 by consultants.

The purpose of these interviews was to determine:

- Which key business lines are used by LEP individuals.
- Which departments are collecting data on LEP resident usage of their services.
- What resources and tools are being used to communicate with LEP individuals.
- If any departmental-level policies are in place related to serving LEP individuals.
- Department recommendations on how services could be made more user-friendly

for LEP individuals.

The information collected and summarized in this report was used to focus the efforts of the LEP Work Team during the planning process and to inform the development of the citywide and departmental LEP plans.

The report provided a snapshot of some, but not all city departments' approaches to LEP service in early 2004. It was not an evaluation of the quality or comprehensiveness of city services, nor is it a comprehensive list of all city services or all strategies that the city is currently using to address the communication needs of its LEP residents. The full report "Services Offered In Minneapolis City Departments For People With Limited English Proficiency" is reprinted in Section 8, Print Resources, Part a.

Among the key findings of the report, completed April, 2004:

- Each of the city departments surveyed is involved some way in serving LEP individuals, either directly or through the services they provide to intermediaries.
- Very little is being done to track or monitor the utilization of city services based on the language of clients.
- Several city departments have already made laudable efforts to ensure quality services to the city's LEP community, particularly through their use of interpreters and translated documents. However, much more needs to be done to ensure meaningful access to services.
- Except for the Minneapolis Police and Fire Departments, there appear to be no significant written or formal departmental policies specific to serving LEP individuals.

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.

4. Notice and Identification

This chapter includes:

- **Key definitions for notice**
- **Policies for notice**
- **Procedures for notice**
- **Key definitions for identification**
- **Policies for identification**
- **Procedures for identification**

Definitions for notice

Notice

Notice means proactively informing LEP residents of Minneapolis that they are entitled to LEP services.

Policies for notice

The city must proactively notify LEP individuals of their right to service.

City departments and staff must ensure that people with limited English proficiency know they have the right to free, timely language services.

Notice should be provided in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- posting signs in appropriate areas such as waiting rooms, reception areas and other points of entry
- including standard translated content in outreach documents such as posters or brochures stating that services are available .
- working with LEP organizations and other stakeholders to inform Minneapolis residents of their right to LEP service
- using a telephone voice mail menu in the most common languages encountered
- including notices in local newspapers in languages other than English
- airing notices on non-English language radio and television stations
- giving presentations at community meetings, schools and other organizations

Notice includes (at minimum):

- information about available LEP services;
- instructions on accessing services, including directions to city offices; and
- assurance of free and timely service.

Notice should be provided in the primary languages.

For this edition (2004-2005) of the LEP plan, notice will be provided in Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Laotian, Oromo and Vietnamese. When possible, notice or other translated material should include internationally recognized symbols, (like those used to identify restrooms.)

Notice should be provided based on a calculation of the information or service's relative importance to the LEP individual.

Decisions on which signs, documents or other means of providing notice should be made based on criteria such as:

- importance or urgency of service;
- volume of contact; or
- traffic flow.

Procedures for notice

How to make a sign notifying individuals of their right to service

Departments should post signs in the primary languages informing LEP individuals of their right to free, timely interpreting and translation services. For a sample of one such poster, see *Free Interpreting Services poster* online at CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

How to determine relative need for signs

Catalog current signs that are posted in public areas. Decide which signs (directional, instructional, etc) are most important for accessing services. Translate the most important signs first. Translate every important sign into the primary languages. Minneapolis Multicultural Services can be consulted regarding signage wording; call 612-673-3737.

How to request a permanent sign for an office in City Hall

Permanent signs posted in City Hall must conform to historical and aesthetic standards. Contact the Minneapolis Building Commission, 612-673-2150, before posting notice signs.

How to request a permanent sign for another City building or office

Contact and consult with Barb Johns of Property Services at 612-673-3051.

How to include a statement in non-English languages about free LEP service in print, audio or video materials

Vital documents used for city services should include a version of the following message, translated into the primary languages: “Attention. If you want help translating this information, call- 612-673-3737.” For a set of translations of this statement, see *Language Block* online at CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

Definitions for identification

Identification

Identification means collecting relevant information in order to provide better service to LEP individuals about

- the number or proportion of LEP individuals eligible to be served by city services or departments;
- the number or proportion of LEP individuals served; or
- the frequency of services or encounters.

Policies for identification

The city will collect sufficient data about LEP individuals to provide legally mandated services.

The city should establish, at minimum, how many Minneapolis residents primarily speak a language other than English, and which languages they speak. This number should be recalculated, at minimum, once per year.

Information collected about LEP individuals must never be used to discriminate against groups or individuals.

Immigration status is not relevant in determining whether a resident of Minneapolis is eligible for the LEP services outlined in this plan. City employees should not ask an LEP individual about their immigration status, even in casual conversation. All LEP individuals are eligible for city services.

The city must track services provided to LEP individuals.

Results of tracking can be used to measure increases in LEP services, to evaluate changes and to make appropriate budgeting decisions.

Procedures for identification

How to identify LEP individuals

LEP individuals can be identified in a variety of ways:

- by analyzing existing data sets, such as census figures or information from public agencies; or
- by asking LEP individuals to indicate their preferred language, using “I Speak” cards or other mechanisms.

How to use census and other data to estimate LEP population sizes

General population statistics based on the 2000 US Census are accessible on the US Census Bureau website, at www.census.gov. Statistics on primary languages spoken in Minneapolis schools are available through the Department of Education, at cfl.state.mn.us/datactr

How to measure extent of LEP services.

Ways to collect information about LEP individuals served include:

- adapting current databases used by the city to track languages spoken by clients;
- incorporating ‘language spoken’ fields in client intake forms and tracking responses.
- tracking telephone interpreting service usage;
- counting website ‘hits’ directed to translated content;
- conducting resident or customer satisfaction surveys;
- tallying the number of translated materials requested/distributed; and,
- tracking the number of department requests for Minneapolis Multicultural Services (MMS) assistance.

5. Interpreting and Translation

This chapter includes:

- **Key definitions for interpreting**
- **Policies for interpreting**
- **Procedures for interpreting**
- **Key definitions for translation**
- **Policies for translation**
- **Procedures for translation**

Definitions for interpreting

Interpreting/interpretation

Interpretation is the translation of a spoken message from one language to another, preserving the intent and meaning of the original message.

Policies for interpreting

Interpreters must be offered for free, if needed.

The city of Minneapolis must provide an interpreter, free of charge, to people who speak little or no English if needed to access city services.

Public meetings will have interpreters available, if needed.

Public meeting notices should include a line advising LEP individuals that interpreters will be provided upon request if there is at least 5 business days notice.

The city will use competent, trained and culturally sensitive interpreters.

Interpretation is more than simply being able to speak two languages. Interpreters are trained professionals who abide by a code of ethics and professional practice standards.

City interpreters or city employees who provide interpreting services must demonstrate competence.

A competent interpreter should demonstrate (at minimum):

- evidence of training that includes skills and ethics of interpreting;
- proficiency in English and the other language, as documented in an objective language proficiency test;
- ability to convey information in both languages, accurately and completely, as demonstrated by a simulated interpreting encounter;
- fundamental knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts related to the organization's program or activity; and
- sensitivity to the LEP person's culture.

Competency standards apply to all interpreters used to deliver city services.

Interpreting services for the city will be carried out by trained, professional interpreters, whether city staff, contractors or telephone interpreters. City staff who work as interpreters must demonstrate competence as defined above. With contract interpreters and telephone interpreters, competency is assumed, but contracting agencies should demonstrate how competency is assessed.

Volunteers should not interpret unless shown to be competent, according to city standards.

Volunteers, friends or family members whose competence has not been assessed should not be relied upon. The use of untrained volunteers exposes the city to liability, based on its legal obligation to provide competent interpreter services.

Children may not interpret.

For reasons of accuracy, confidentiality and family dynamics, minor children (under 18) may not interpret for family members or other LEP individuals. (This policy does not apply in serious emergency cases, when a minor child is the only available potential interpreter.

Volunteers may interpret for LEP voters.

According to election law, “a voter in need of assistance may obtain the assistance of any individual the voter chooses, except for the voter’s employer, union agent, or a candidate for election. ...” For a full explanation of assistance to LEP voters, see *MN Statute 204C.15—assistance to voters*.

Individuals may use their own adult volunteer interpreters under some limited circumstances.

Staff should never urge or require those who speak little or no English to provide their own interpreter. However, individuals may use their own interpreter if they waive their right to one provided by the city, and if the potential interpreter has demonstrated competence. If the effectiveness of service is compromised or the LEP person’s privacy may be violated, an interpreter should be used.

Individuals using volunteer interpreters should sign a waiver form.

Individuals waiving the right to an interpreter provided by the city may be asked to sign a waiver form in their own language. For a sample waiver form, see *Waiver of interpreter services* online at CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

Interpreting must be timely.

Access to interpreting services in all city departments must be timely. No one can be denied access to services based on the lack of interpreter availability.

Procedures for interpreting

How to provide interpreting

Interpreting can be provided in a variety of ways (in descending order of

preference);

- by bilingual staff trained in interpreting;
- by MMS or other city staff interpreters;
- by contract or free-lance professional interpreters;
- by professional telephone interpreters;
- by bilingual department staff; and
- by competent volunteer interpreters.

How to access a city interpreter through Minneapolis Multicultural Services

1. Identify which language the person speaks.

Simply ask the person what language s/he speaks, or (if the individual is onsite and not on the phone) ask him or her to point to the preferred language on a Language Identification Card . For a sample of a language identification card, see “I Speak” cards online at CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

2. Call Minneapolis Multicultural Services

Multicultural Services (MMS) is a division of the city’s Health and Family Support Department. MMS has Spanish and Somali speaking staff who can provide interpreter services free.

- For Spanish, please call 612-673-2700.
- For Somali, please call 612-673-3500. You may also share these phone numbers with your customers.
- For languages other than Spanish and Somali, please contact the division’s coordinator at 612-673-3737 or kristin.keller@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.
- MMS cannot guarantee that an interpreter will be available immediately. Please leave a message. Your call will be returned within 24 hours. If you need an interpreter immediately, follow the procedure below.

How to access a telephone interpreter

Follow the steps above to identify the language needed and to request a city interpreter. If staff are not available and you need an interpreter immediately, contact the city’s contracted telephone interpreting vendor. For online instructions on *How to access telephone interpreting services*, go to CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

How to access an interpreter through a contracted vendor

The city of Minneapolis has contracts with several vendors to provide interpreter services, as well as written translation of documents. Your department will be charged for using these services. For online instructions on *How to access contracted interpreting services*, go to CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

If you have frequent contact with individuals who speak limited or no English, please contact Multicultural Services Coordinator Kristin Keller at 612-673-3737 or kristin.keller@ci.minneapolis.mn.us to discuss how best to handle your interpretation needs.

How to work effectively with an interpreter

See online *Guidelines for working with interpreters*. Go to CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

How to work effectively with a telephone interpreter

See *Helpful Hints for Using Telephone Interpreters*. Go to CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

How to administer a waiver of the right to an interpreter

After working through an interpreter and ensuring that the individual waiving services can read in his or her preferred language, use the *Waiver of Interpreter Services* form online at CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

Definitions for translation

Translation/translating

Translation is the conversion of written communication from one language to another. An accurate translation is one that conveys the essential meaning of the original text.

Vital documents

Information or documents that are critical for accessing federally funded services or benefits, or are documents required by law. Documents that require a signature are considered vital. Vital documents include, but are not limited to:

- consent and complaint forms.
- intake forms with the potential for important consequences.
- written notices of eligibility criteria, rights, denial, loss, or decreases in benefits or services, actions affecting parental custody or child support, and other hearings.
- notices advising LEP persons of free language assistance.
- written tests that do not assess English language competency, but test competency for a particular license, job, or skill for which knowing English is not required.
- applications to participate in a recipient's program or activity or to receive recipient benefits or services.
- business cards or short descriptions of department or service.

Nonvital written materials could include:

- third party documents, forms, or pamphlets distributed by a recipient as a public service.
- for a non-governmental recipient, government documents and forms.
- large documents such as enrollment handbooks (although vital information contained in large documents may need to be translated).
- general information about the program intended for informational purposes only.

Policies for translation

Translation of vital documents must be offered, for free.

The city of Minneapolis must provide a translation of vital documents, free of charge, to people who speak little or no English if needed to access city services. City departments may want to work with Multicultural Services, the City Attorney's Office and LEP communities for suggestions regarding which documents would be

vital or helpful to have translated.

Vital documents must be in primary languages.

“Vital” documents must be available in the city’s primary languages or readily translated by an interpreter, upon request. Not all documents can be translated and available in every language. City departments must simply have the capacity to translate documents on request, in a timely fashion. (For further discussion and guidance on which documents should be translated, and when, see the *Department of Justice guidance* (67 FR 41466) in Section 8, Print resources, Part E, or refer to www.lep.gov.)

The city will use competent, trained and culturally sensitive translators.

Translation is more than simply being able to read and write in two languages. Translators are trained professionals who abide by a code of ethics and professional practice standards.

Vital documents are translated by competent staff, contract translators or interpreters, including telephone interpreters.

Materials translated by an outside source must be evaluated for accuracy of translation.

City translators must demonstrate competence.

A competent translator should demonstrate (at minimum):

- Evidence of training that includes skills and ethics of translation;
- Proficiency in English and the other language, as documented in an objective language proficiency test;
- Ability to convey information in both languages, accurately and completely, as demonstrated by a simulated translation job; and
- Fundamental knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts;
- With approved contract translators, competency is assumed, but a demonstration of competency should be requested.

Volunteers should not translate materials unless shown to be competent, according to city standards.

Volunteers, friends or family members whose competence has not been assessed should not be relied upon. The use of untrained volunteers exposes the city to liability, based on its legal obligation to provide competent translation services.

Children may not provide translations.

For reasons of accuracy, confidentiality and family dynamics, minor children (under 18) should not translate vital documents for family members or other LEP

individuals. (This policy does not apply in *serious* emergency cases, when a minor child is the only available potential translator.)

Individuals may use their own adult volunteer translators under some limited circumstances.

Staff should never urge or require those who speak little or no English to provide their own translator. However, individuals may use their own translator if they waive their right to one provided by the city. If the effectiveness of service is compromised or the LEP person's privacy may be violated, a city translator should be used.

Individuals using volunteer translators should sign a waiver form.

Individuals waiving the right to translation may be asked to sign a waiver form in their own language. After working through an interpreter and ensuring that the individual waiving services can read in his or her preferred language, use the *Waiver of interpreter services* form online at CityTalk. Click on "Work Tools" and then on "Language and Translation."

Translation must be timely.

Access to translated materials in all city departments must be timely. No one can be denied access to services based on the lack of translated material or documents.

Procedures for translation

How to provide translations

Translation can be provided in a variety of ways;

- by bilingual staff trained in translation;
- by MMS or other city staff translators;
- by contract or free-lance professional translators or by contract interpreters providing oral, on-site translation;
- by telephone interpreters providing oral translation of written documents; or
- by competent volunteer translators.

How to access translation services provided by a telephone interpreter

If staff are not available and you need an interpreter immediately to provide on-site translation of a document, contact the city's contracted telephone interpreting vendor.

For online instructions on *How to access telephone interpreting services*, go to CityTalk. Click on "Work Tools" and then on "Language and Translation Services."

How to access translation services through a contracted vendor

The city of Minneapolis has contracts with several vendors to provide written translation of documents. Your department will be charged for using these services. For online instructions on *How to access contracted interpreting services*, go to CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

If you have frequent contact with individuals who speak limited or no English, please contact Kristin Keller at 612-or kristin.keller@ci.minneapolis.mn.us to discuss how best to handle your translation needs.

How to access translation services through Minneapolis Multicultural Services

1. *Identify which language the translation should be in.*
2. *Call Minneapolis Multicultural Services*

Multicultural Services (MMS) is a division of the city’s Health and Family Support Department. MMS has Spanish and Somali speaking staff who can provide translation services free, in some cases.

- For Spanish, please call 612-673-2700.
- For Somali, please call 612-673-3500. You may also share these phone numbers with your customers.
- For languages other than Spanish and Somali, please contact the division’s coordinator at 612-673-3737 or kristin.keller@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

MMS cannot guarantee that a translation job will be completed immediately upon request. Please leave a message. Your call will be returned within 24 hours.

How to plan a translation project

See *The 39 Steps: Translation Specification Checklist* on CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on Language and Translation Services. Or read the checklist on the internet, www.itl.org.uk. Click on “Publications.”

How to check the accuracy of a translation

See *The 39 Steps: Translation Specification Checklist* on CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on Language and Translation Services. Or read the checklist on the internet, www.itl.org.uk. Click on “Publications.”

6. Staffing and Training

This chapter includes:

- **Key definitions for staffing**
- **Policies for staffing**
- **Procedures for staffing**
- **Key definitions for training**
- **Policies for training**
- **Procedures for training**

Definitions for staffing

Staffing

The process of filling a vacant position with the most highly qualified candidate.

Highly desirable qualification

A skill or competency that is not required to perform the essential functions of a position, but would complement the qualified candidate's overall abilities and add value to the organization.

Position classification

The process applied in determining the appropriate job classification of an individual position or group of positions.

Job announcement

The document “announcing” the need to fill a vacant position. This document includes the general job duties of that classification, job duties that are specific and unique to the position being filled, and position requirements, including desirable qualifications and administrative information.

Policies for staffing

Staffing decisions should be based on the city's customer service needs, including LEP service needs.

When individuals are hired for positions in which they interact with LEP residents, language skills may be a relevant job qualification.

Hiring to meet LEP needs can be done in three ways:

1. by creating new positions for and hiring full-time or part-time interpreters or translators within departments within standard hiring processes;
2. by reclassifying an existing position. If the need for interpretation and translation services is high and is expected to be long-term, departments may request Human Resources study a vacant position to determine if a reclassification is necessary. This request must be made before filling a vacant position.
3. by making bilingual or multilingual capability a “highly desirable” qualification in job announcements.

If bilingual or multilingual skills are included on the job announcement, LEP service capabilities should be assessed as part of the selection process. Assessment

may include:

- informal testing of language proficiency or interpreting/ translation ability *(permissible when the skill is a highly desirable qualification.)*
- formal testing of language proficiency or interpreting/translation ability *(recommended, if the skill is a requirement of the job)*
- certification, transcripts, diplomas or other evidence of language proficiency in English or other language *(strongly encouraged as evidence of skill level for either option)*
- certification, transcripts, diplomas or other evidence of training in interpreting and/or translation *(strongly encouraged as evidence of skill level for either option)*

Compensation for an employee who provides interpretation and translation services will depend on whether the service is an essential function of the job.

If interpreting/translation is an essential job function of the position, the position should be classified appropriately, ensuring the compensation is consistent with legal guidelines.

If interpreting and translating skills are desirable qualifications, but not an essential function of the job, department management may, under many circumstances, require a qualified employee to perform this function within the category of “other duties as assigned.” These duties should not exceed 40% of the employee’s work time.

The pay scale for non-exempt employees is defined by labor contract and departmental policies relating to overtime. Compensating exempt employees falls within the administrative leave language found in labor contracts and Civil Service rules. Both non-exempt and exempt employees may be required to provide these services if there is a business need. Any “additional” benefit (overtime or administrative leave) would be given in accordance with those provisions.

Procedures for staffing

How to amend a job announcement to include bilingual skills

When bilingual skills are required for a position, work with your department’s Human Resources Generalist (HRG) to request a job study of a vacant position. Once a determination is made on the job classification, it may be necessary to amend the job announcement. Work with your department’s HRG team to make revisions.

When it is determined that these skills are a highly desirable qualification, work with your Department's HRG team to make revisions.

How to describe the work of a full-time or part-time interpreter/translator for a job posting

See *Sample job announcements* online at CityTalk. Click on "Work Tools" and then on "Language and Translation Services."

How to informally test for language proficiency (*permissible when language skill is a highly desirable qualification*)

Include a native speaker of the desired language in the interview process, as one of the interviewers. Conduct part of the department interview in the desired language. If the job includes significant writing duties, ask for a writing sample in both languages.

Note that there are important distinctions in the syntax and vocabulary of any language, depending where a speaker is from, their education level, and their social class. Choose the native speaker interviewer with this in mind.

How to formally assess language proficiency (*recommended if interpreting and translation skills are a required qualification and are part of the position duties.*)

All individuals hired to perform interpreting services should, at minimum, be able to demonstrate oral proficiency in each language (English and other language) through a test, such as the one developed by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). For more information on the ACTFL test, visit the Council's website, www.actfl.org. Note that there is no ACTFL proficiency test for the Somali language.

It is important to also assess a candidate's English proficiency as well as the other desired language. Currently, English proficiency can be demonstrated through the written exam (always in English and at a level similar to what would be used on the job); the oral exam process (communication skills typically measured); and the department interview process.

How to assess an applicant's ability to serve as an interpreter and/or translator

All individuals hired to deliver interpreting or translation services should, at minimum, demonstrate oral proficiency in each language (as spelled out above) and demonstrate familiarity with and comprehension of ethical standards for interpreters. See *Standards Recommended by the Minnesota Interpreter Standards Advisory Committee* online at CityTalk. Click on "Work Tools" and then on

“Language and Translation Services.”

All individuals hired to perform interpreting or translation services full time should complete basic courses in interpreter training, such as those offered through the University of Minnesota and community colleges. See online resources for Staffing, Section 8, part L for a list of interpreter training opportunities.

Definitions for training

Training

Ensuring that city staff is familiar with mandates requiring equal level of service for LEP residents. All staff should know their department's procedures for LEP service.

Policies for training

Training will be coordinated through Human Resources and the Multicultural Services Coordinator.

Each department should provide Human Resources with a list of staff who will help develop the department's LEP Plan.

Information on LEP service will be provided to all newly hired city staff.

Information will be delivered to new hires as part of employee orientation.

Training on department-level procedures will be planned and carried out by departments.

Training relative to individual department LEP Plans should be provided annually. These activities will be coordinated within each department, with support from Human Resources and the Multicultural Services Coordinator.

Procedures for training

How to design and deliver department-level training on LEP services and procedures

Human Resources Training and Development and the Multicultural Services Coordinator will design in-house training guidelines to assist departments and ensure consistency of curriculum content.

7. Carrying Out the Plan

This chapter includes:

- **Implementation timeline**
- **Monitoring and updating the plan**
- **Role of the Multicultural Services Coordinator**
- **Resolving complaints about LEP services**

Implementation timeline

The LEP plan was approved by the Minneapolis City Council in September 2004. In late 2004 and throughout 2005, city charter departments will complete their own department-level assessments, plans and budgets. These will be addressed in two phases, with high priority, high visibility departments first (in 2005), and other departments by 2006. These plans will be included in the departments' business plans. Departments will work with their finance staff to incorporate LEP funding needs into existing budgets.

City of Minneapolis contracted vendors will be directed to read the city's LEP plan. Language to ensure compliance with language access and the city's LEP plan should appear in city contracts. Vendors will be responsible for notifying and training their staff about LEP mandates.

Task	Completion Date
Semi-final draft of city-wide plan	July 3
Community organization review	July 20-27
City council review and adoption of city-wide plan	September 2004
Departments assign responsibility for department-level plans to one or more staff	September 2004
Departments begin internal assessments and draft plans	October 2004
Training begins for all departments	October 2004
Phase I departments begin assessments	November 2004
Public release of LEP plan, print version	November 2004
Multicultural Services Coordinator and Performance Evaluation and Business Planning Coordinator work with departments to complete department-level plans and to incorporate funding needs into future budget requests	Phase 1 June 2005 Phase 2 June 2006

Monitoring and updating the plan

Minneapolis' LEP is updated annually. Updating is the responsibility of the Multicultural Services Coordinator. The evaluation will include:

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

Role of the Multicultural Services Coordinator

The Multicultural Services Coordinator oversees the development and implementation of the citywide Limited English Proficiency plan and manages the day-to-day operations of the city's Minneapolis Multicultural Services. Minneapolis Multicultural Services is charged with working collaboratively across city departments and with community organizations in order to improve the accessibility of city services to residents who are non- or limited English speakers.

Primary Responsibilities:

- oversee operations in Minneapolis Multicultural Services;
- supervise Bilingual Program Aides, support staff, and interns;
- ensure access point to city Services for non-English and limited English speaking city residents is provided;
- ensure that prompt, in-person and telephone interpretation and assistance is provided;
- develop and maintain relationships with community based organizations and governmental units in order to facilitate communication about and coordination of services and needs;
- inform city staff, management, and elected officials about the issues facing limited and non- English speaking persons and their ability to integrate into the economic and social community of Minneapolis;
- track volume of requests for services and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives in meeting the goal of assisting limited and non-English speaking individuals;
- develop and manage contracts and budgets.

- lead citywide Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Planning process and work with the City Coordinator's Office to implement, adapt, monitor and update the LEP Plan.
- work closely with the Limited English Proficiency task force to identify and implement short and long term solutions to LEP clientele of city services.
- provide assistance to city departments re LEP challenges and facilitate relationships with LEP persons and organizations, e.g., in communicating snow emergencies and other city activities to Hmong, Spanish, and Somali speaking communities, coordinating translation of signage and public documents for the city, and acting as information clearing house and contact for departments about immigration activities in the city.

Resolving complaints about LEP services

Complaint pathways will address customer concerns regarding poor customer service or the timeliness or quality of interpreter services. The complaints may be made in a number of ways: face to face, by telephone or in writing via the U.S. mail or email. In addition, with the development and implementation of the 311 system there may be opportunities for multilingual voicemail systems to function as comment lines.

Departments will follow their established complaint procedures for LEP persons to make complaints about services received. Departments will document actions taken to resolve each complaint in a timely manner. To ensure continuous improvement in service to LEP persons, the city will seek input from non-English or limited English proficient communities, as well as community-based and advocacy organizations that work and interact with limited English proficient communities.

8. Resources and References

This chapter includes:

Print resources

(attached)

- A Report on Mpls LEP services as of April, 2004
- B Legal opinion from Assistant City Attorney Susan Trammell
- C How to calculate primary languages
- D Summary of Mpls LEP community member comments
- E “Safe harbors provision” of Department of Justice guidance on vital documents and primary languages

Online resources

(available on the Internet or through CityTalk, Minneapolis City intranet, as indicated)

- F General resources
- G Resources for LEP service
- H Resources for notice
- I Resources for identification
- J Resources for interpreting
- K Resources for translation
- L Resources for staffing
- M Resources for training

Appendix A: Minneapolis LEP Services, April 2004

Services Offered In Minneapolis City Departments For People With Limited English Proficiency

RESULTS OF AN INFORMAL INTERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Prepared for the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

By Garth Osborn and Patricia Ohmans
Health Advocates Consultants

April 27, 2004

I. OVERVIEW

The City of Minneapolis has committed to developing a plan for improving access to city services for limited English proficient (LEP) residents and in February 2004 hired the consulting firm, Health Advocates, to assist in developing LEP plans. An intradepartmental LEP Work Team, including at least one representative from each of the thirteen chartered city departments, was formed and had its initial meeting in February. The team will be meeting at least monthly over the eight month planning process. Health Advocates implemented a set of interviews with representatives from each of the city departments in March and April 2004. The purpose of these interviews was to determine:

- ⇒ Which key business lines are being utilized by LEP residents.
- ⇒ Which departments are collecting data on LEP resident usage of their services.
- ⇒ What resources and tools are being used to communicate with LEP residents.
- ⇒ If any departmental-level policies are in place related to serving LEP residents.
- ⇒ Department recommendations on how services could be made more user-friendly for LEP residents.

The information collected and summarized in this report will be used to focus the efforts of the LEP Work Team during the planning process and to inform the development of the citywide and departmental LEP plans. It should be noted, however, that this report provides a snapshot of some, but not all city departments' approaches to LEP service. It is not an evaluation of the quality or comprehensiveness of city services, nor is it a comprehensive list of all city services or all strategies that the city is currently using to address the communication needs of its LEP residents.

Key findings include the following:

- ⇒ Each of the city departments surveyed is involved some way in serving LEP residents, either directly or through the services they provide to intermediaries.
- ⇒ Very little is being done to track or monitor the utilization of city services based on the language of clients.
- ⇒ Several city departments have already made laudable efforts to ensure quality services to the city's LEP community, particularly through their use of interpreters and translated documents. However, much more needs to be done to ensure meaningful access to services.
- ⇒ Except for the Minneapolis Police and Fire Departments, there appear to be no significant written or formal departmental policies specific to serving LEP

residents.

⇒ The response to this survey by the members of the LEP Work Team was generally very positive, with several providing thoughtful recommendations that reflect a commitment to improving the quality of city services to members of the LEP community.

II. METHODOLOGY

Health Advocates developed a five-item questionnaire in consultation with Patty Bowler and Ellie Zuehlke of the Department of Health and Family Support. Consultants requested interviews with each of the Work Teams' participants, who represent the chartered city departments. A majority of the interviews were done over the phone, however, due to time constraints some responded in writing. To ensure as free and open a discussion in the interviews as possible, each respondent was told that this was not an evaluation and that their comments would not be directly attributed to them in any published form. Extensive notes were taken of the interviews, reviewed, and then discussed by the consultants to develop the findings, which are presented in the next section.

III. FINDINGS

Question 1. Please briefly describe key business lines your department provides for city residents. Which of these services most commonly involve individuals from the LEP community?

Each of the departments interviewed have some level of contact with LEP residents or provide services, either to other city departments or intermediaries, which impact LEP residents.

Department	LEP-related Services
Assessor	Property inspections Property tax programs Property valuation reviews and appeals
Business Information Services	Supervision of phone operators for the city's general phone lines Manage City website
City Attorney/Civil Division	Provide legal opinions and draft contracts
City Attorney/Criminal Division	Criminal prosecution and victim and witness contact
City Clerk	Run elections Investigate complaints of discrimination in Minneapolis Certify/register small/underutilized businesses Review complaints against the Minneapolis Police Department
Communications	Provide communications counsel and technical support to other city departments Produce the "Access Minneapolis" cable TV show targeting Somali and Spanish speaking residents Implement "Community Engagement"
Community Planning and Economic Development	Employment training, job placement and displaced worker programs Manage Advantage Centers and City-run high rise apartments Programs for new arrivals Workshops on home ownership Small business loans Low interest housing loans and rehab Orchestrates strategic planning meetings with communities and community-based organizations
Finance	Billing for water/sanitation and manage call-in and walk-in centers
Fire	EMS, fire suppression, rescue, fire prevention, EMS/fire education
Health	School health clinics and Family Resource Center Emergency preparedness Advocacy on housing and seniors
Regulatory Services/Inspections	Safety inspections and educational visits to local businesses
Regulatory Services/Minneapolis Convention Center	Manage conference center events
Human Resources	Manage employee hiring process, including ensuring outreach to diverse communities

Police	Crime prevention Emergency Call Center (911) Investigations Traffic Control Precinct-level services
Public Works	Manage city Solid Waste and recycling services, Clean City programs Manage Water and Sewer services Manage city-owned parking facilities (on-street and off-street/ramps), traffic systems, skyways, vehicle impound lot, permits for block events Manage snow and ice control, street sweeping, sidewalks Manage Gopher State One-call for Minneapolis Manage city-owned buildings including Police and Fire stations, Public Service Center Manage public construction and maintenance projects, including public notice, community involvement Manage Special Assessment processes.
Civil Rights	Investigate complaints of discrimination in Minneapolis Certify/register small/underutilized businesses Review complaints against the Minneapolis Police Department

There are several ways to bundle these services, which may be helpful later when the LEP departmental templates are being designed. Similar types of services could conceivably be addressed the same way in different departments and therefore use the same template. Possible ways to differentiate and bundle these services:

- ⇒ Services that are provided internally to other city departments versus those that involve direct contact with LEP residents (i.e., City intranet website management by Business Information Systems versus managing the drop-in center where people pay their water bills in the Department of Finance).
- ⇒ Services that require broad community notification/education versus those that do not (i.e., Fire EMS/prevention education versus property inspections by the Assessor's Office).
- ⇒ Compulsory versus elective services (i.e., traffic control by the Police versus small business loans by CPED).

Question 2. How does your department track utilization of its services? Either from data or by estimate, what proportion of this usage is by LEP individuals?

Very little is being done currently within the city to monitor utilization of its services based upon the language spoken by clients. Several departments noted that doing so would be costly and/or time consuming. However, some departments are currently developing databases for client tracking (for instance Civil Rights). Language could be incorporated later into these databases without having to go back and reprogram an entire system.

There is also the potential for using surrogate measures from within the city to monitor use of city services by LEP residents and to identify any newly emerging languages spoken by city residents:

- ⇒ Adapting current databases used by the city to track languages spoken by clients.
- ⇒ Telephone interpreting usage.
- ⇒ Website ‘hits’ directed to translated content.
- ⇒ Resident satisfaction surveys.
- ⇒ Number of translated materials requested/distributed.
- ⇒ Number of city government requests for Minneapolis Multicultural Services (MMS) assistance.
- ⇒ Incorporating ‘language spoken’ fields in client intake forms and tracking responses.

Question 3. What resources/tools/services are currently being used in your department to communicate with LEP individuals?

Of the current strategies used by the city to address LEP resident language needs, the most common are the use of bilingual and MMS staff to provide interpreter services and the use of translated materials. This is further detailed in the attached table.

Departments, Divisions and Offices	A Signage	B Translated Materials	C Where to go for language services translation	D Translated website content	E Contracted language interpreter lines	F MM S	G Bilingual staff in the department	H Contracted interpreter staff	I "I speak cards"	J Phone messages in multiple languages	K City intranet site	L Notes
Health	X	X			X	X	X	X				
Regulatory/ Inspections	X	X ¹				X ²	X			X ³		
Regulatory/ Convention	X ²						X		X			X ³
HR	X ⁶	X ⁷			X	X						X ⁸
Police			X		X	X	X ⁹		X			X ¹⁰
Public Works		X					X					
Assessor		X					X		X			
BIS				X	X	X	X					
City Atty/Civil					X		X					
City Atty/Criminal		X	X		X	X	X					X ¹¹
City Clerk							X					X ¹²
Civil Rights/CI	X	X				X	X		X	X		
Civil Rights/ SUBP												

¹ Have food safety pamphlets translated into 7 languages.

² Sometimes bring MMS staff along during visits to businesses.

³ Some, but not all, staff can answer in Somali or Spanish

⁴ Use of pictographs at restrooms.

⁵ Has posted sheets with information about English classes available for staff.

⁶ Front door sign has been translated.

⁷ This is done ad-hoc for a particular recruitment drive.

⁸ Language skill is sometimes a plus in hiring up a level. Resource printed materials of LEP in contract info. Also interpreter translation, cultural info, etc. No interpreters in the HR Department. MMS staff are contacted.

⁹ Latino Project grant Spanish Speaking Citizens Academy oriented to police services. Provided by a Spanish-speaking Sergeant.

¹⁰ Spanish Language classes have been offered. Community service officers can be LEP.

¹¹ Utilize District Court interpreters when available; utilize friends/family members and bilingual domestic abuse advocates.

¹² Staff received training internally on how to communicate with a person who is LEP or has an accent, however, the effectiveness of the training was questioned by one of the respondents.

Departments, Divisions and Offices	A Signage	B Translated Materials	C Where to go for language services translation	D Translated website content	E Contracted language interpreter lines	F MM S	G Bilingual staff in the department	H Contracted interpreter staff	I "I speak cards"	J Phone messages in multiple languages	K City intranet site	L Notes
Civil Rights/ CRA		X ¹³				X						
Civil Rights/CC						X	X					
Communications		X				X			X			
CPED		X		X		X	X			X		
Finance	X		X		X	X	X		X			
Fire		X	X		X		X					X ¹⁴
TOTALS	6	11	4	2	8	12	15	1	6	3	0	N/A

¹³ Informational brochure explaining their services that was translated into 9 languages.

¹⁴ Currently implementing a trial study of PDA hand held Spanish Language interpreters.

Question 4. Can you share copies of any written policies that your department is currently using related to services for LEP individuals? Are there unwritten policies or procedures that your department follows?

None of the departments reported formal written policies specific to serving LEP residents, except for the mediation agreement involving the Police Department and a March memo distributed within the Fire Department detailing how to respond to emergency situations involving LEP residents. Some departments have, however, provided training to their staff who have direct contact with the community and specific direction on what to do when they come in contact with a client who cannot speak English.

Question 5. What steps could be taken within your department that would most effectively and efficiently improve communication with LEP individuals?

Each of the respondents had suggestions for ways to improve both their own department's services for LEP residents and those of the city overall. The most commonly noted recommendations include:

- ⇒ Quicker access to interpreter assistance: It was suggested that the level of stress inherent in the interaction, as well as situations where timeliness is a factor should be taken into account when prioritizing use of interpreter resources.
- ⇒ Staff training: The most commonly requested topics include use of the telephone interpreting lines, cultural sensitization, recognizing/identifying different languages, and language immersion courses.
- ⇒ Translated directions on how to use city services posted on the city web site: Several departments noted that they are trying to have residents conduct more of their business online through the city's website. One concern voiced was how to incorporate multiple languages on the website without making the site overly complicated or too expensive. Computer literacy, which is probably significantly lower in the LEP community, will also need to be taken into account when determining the efficacy and reach of this approach.
- ⇒ Pay differentials for applicants and employees with multiple language skills: Several of the departments report using their own staff to interpret. Some view higher pay as an incentive for helping to ensure that they will be able to retain this capacity with staff turnover.
- ⇒ Tracking who is using city services: There was recognition that the city needs to have a better understanding of which languages are spoken in the community.
- ⇒ Proactive outreach to the LEP community: Effective ways to communicate with the LEP community about city services need to be identified and pursued. One

department raised the question of how best to use interpreters at community meetings where more than two languages are involved.

⇒ Training of the communities: Some departments expressed an interest in providing training to members of the LEP community on various topics such as food safety classes for individuals interested in starting or working in a restaurant or classes to potential homeowners.

ATTACHMENTS:

- **List of Respondents**
- **Questionnaire**

INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Assessor's Office • Patrick Todd

City Attorney's Office • Susan Trammell

Business Information Systems • Roger Downey

City Clerk • Mary Keefe

Civil Rights Department • Sara Dietrich

Community Planning & Economic Development • Kent Robbins

Finance Department • Tony DiPietrantonio

Fire Department • Charlotte Holt

Health Department • Erin Schroeder

Human Resources • Brenda Shepherd

Police Department • Medaria Arrondando, Glen Burt

Public Works • Trudy Moloney

Regulatory Services/Inspections • Curt Fernandez, Tim Jenkins

Regulatory Services/Convention Center • Sheila Sabas

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please briefly describe key business lines your department provides for city residents. Which of these services most commonly involve individuals from the LEP community?
2. How does your department track utilization of its services? Either from data or by estimate, what proportion of this usage is by LEP individuals?

3. What resources/tools/services are currently being used in your department to communicate with LEP individuals?

- ___ Signage
- ___ Written translated materials
- ___ Written materials with translated directions on where to go for further information
- ___ Translated website content
- ___ Contracted telephone interpreter lines
- ___ Minneapolis Multicultural Services staff
- ___ Bilingual staff from within your own department providing interpretation
- ___ Contracted interpreter services provided from outside City Government
- ___ “I speak” cards
- ___ Telephone answering machine messages provided in different languages
- ___ Minneapolis Multicultural Services intranet website
- ___ Others, Please list: _____

4. Can you share copies of any written policies that your department is currently using related to services for LEP individuals? Are there unwritten policies or procedures that your department follows?

5. What steps could be taken within your department that would most effectively and efficiently improve communication with LEP individuals?

Appendix B:

Legal Opinion from the City Attorney

July 25, 2003

Ellie Ulrich Zuehlke
Interim Director
Minneapolis Multi-Cultural Services
Department of Health and Family Support

RE: Limited English Proficiency Programmatic Requirements

Dear Ms. Zuehlke:

You have requested that the Office of the City Attorney issue an opinion on the following questions.

- 1) What legal responsibility does the City have regarding its provision of services to limited English proficient persons?
- 2) Are departments in compliance with their legal responsibilities by using volunteer interpreters from the City workforce?
- 3) What are the potential legal liabilities should the City fail to provide interpretive or translation services to limited English proficient persons?

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the implementing federal regulations require City Departments receiving federal financial assistance to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities for limited English proficient (“LEP”) persons. Departments that rely upon volunteers from other departments to provide access to their programs and activities may not be in compliance with federal regulations implementing Title VI. The requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP persons is enforced by the federal agency providing the funding. Failure to provide meaningful access could result in a loss of federal funding. Private individuals could bring a civil action alleging intentional discrimination in the denial of services based upon their protected class status.

FACTS

Nearly every City department receives some sort of federal financial assistance. Recipients of federal financial assistance have the responsibility to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by persons with limited English

proficiency (LEP). See, for example, 28 CFR 42.104(b)(2) and 29 CFR part 31. Federal financial assistance includes grants, training, use of equipment, donations of surplus property, and other assistance. Subrecipients likewise are covered when federal funds are passed through from one recipient to a subrecipient.

Pursuant to the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (CRRRA), coverage extends to a recipient's entire program or activity, i.e., to all parts of a recipient's operations. This is true even if only one part of the recipient receives the federal assistance or the recipients operate in localities in which English has been declared the official language.

Each federal agency extending assistance subject to the requirements of Title VI is required to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying that obligation. See 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000). The guidance documents must be consistent with the Department of Justice (DOJ) LEP guidance, which was drafted and organized to also function as a model for similar guidance documents by other Federal grant agencies. See 67 FR 41455 (June 18, 2002).¹⁵ The DOJ LEP Guidance provides a description of the factors recipients should consider in fulfilling their responsibilities to LEP persons.¹⁶

ANALYSIS

I. The City Is Required To Provide Meaningful Access Of Its Services And Programs To Limited English Proficient Persons.

A. Defining Limited English Proficient Persons.

The DOJ LEP guidance (hereinafter "the Guidance") describes limited English proficient persons as "individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English". 67 FR 41459.

B. The Extent of a Recipient's Obligation to Provide LEP Access.

The Guidance requires recipients to take "reasonable steps to ensure meaningful

15. This memorandum will discuss the DOJ Guidance. LEP guidances issued by other federal agencies make note of differences from the DOJ Guidance. Any department receiving federal funding should confirm with the issuing agency which guidance the department should consider when fulfilling its responsibilities to LEP persons.

16. This memorandum is only a summary of the DOJ Guidance and should not be considered a substitute for the DOJ Guidance. Each City Department receiving federal assistance should thoroughly review the guidance applicable to the department's operations.

access to their programs and activities by LEP persons”. Id. The Guidance goes on to state that each recipient must conduct an individualized assessment that balances four factors:

- 1) The number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service population.
- 2) The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
- 3) The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient; and
- 4) The resources available to the recipient and costs.

Id. From the individualized assessment, the recipient must decide what reasonable steps should be taken to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons. Id.

Recipients have two main ways to provide language services – oral interpretation and written translation. The four-factor analysis necessarily implicates the “mix” of LEP services required. 67 FR 41460. The correct mix should be based on what is both necessary and reasonable in light of the four-factor analysis. Id.

C. Considerations in Selection of Language Assistance Services.

The Guidance considers quality and accuracy of the language service, both oral and written language services, as critical in order to avoid serious consequences to the LEP person and to the recipient. 67 FR 41461.

1. Oral Language Services

Oral language Services (hereinafter “interpretation”) can range from telephonic interpretation services to in person services. Recipients should generally offer competent interpreter services free of cost to the LEP person when the interpretation is necessary to provide meaningful access to the program or activity. 67 FR 41462. No matter which service is used, the DOJ guidance emphasizes that “recipients should ensure competency of the language service providers”. 67 FR 41461. Competency to interpret does not necessarily mean formal certification as an interpreter, but it does require more than self-identification as bilingual.¹⁷ Id. In fact

17. “Where individual rights depend on precise, complete, and accurate interpretation or translations, particularly in the contexts of courtrooms and custodial or other police interrogations, the use of certified interpreters is strongly encouraged.” 67 FR 41461. The Guidance notes that “[f]or those languages in which no formal accreditation or certification currently exists, courts and law enforcement agencies should consider a formal process for establishing the credentials of the interpreter.” 67 FR 41461, fn. 10.

the Guidance recognizes that interpretation can be provided through the hiring of bilingual staff, hiring staff interpreters, contracting for interpreters, using telephone interpreter lines, using community volunteers, use of family members, friends, or other community members. 67 FR 41461-62.

When using interpreters, recipients should ensure that interpreters:

- Demonstrate proficiency and ability to communicate information accurately in both English and in the other language and be able to identify and employ the appropriate mode of interpreting (e.g., consecutive, simultaneous, summarization, or sight translation).
- Have knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts peculiar to the recipient's program or activity and of any particularized vocabulary and phraseology used by the LEP person.
- Understand and follow confidentiality and impartiality rules to the same extent the recipient employee for whom they are interpreting and/or to the extent their position requires.
- Understand and adhere to their role as interpreters without deviating into a role as counselor, legal advisor, or other roles (particularly in court, administrative hearings, or law enforcement contexts).

67 FR 41461.

Provision of interpretive services must be timely. The guidance instructs that the “one clear guide [for determination of timeliness] is that the language assistance should be provided at a time and place that avoids the effective denial or the imposition of an undue burden on or delay in important rights, benefits, or services to the LEP person. Id.

2. Written Language Services

Translation is the replacement of a written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text in another language (target language). The general rule of the Guidance is that documents should be translated if “after applying the four-factor analysis”, the recipient determines that an effective LEP program includes “translation of vital written materials into the language of each frequently–encountered LEP group eligible to be served and/or likely to be affected by the recipient's program.” 67 FR 41463.

Whether or not a document (or the information it provides and/or solicits) is “vital” may depend upon the importance of the program, information, encounter, or service

involved, and the consequence to the LEP person if the information in question is not provided accurately or in a timely manner. * * * [R]ecipients are encouraged to create a plan for consistently determining, over time and across its various activities, what documents are “vital” to the meaningful access of the LEP populations they serve.

Id. Regular assessment of programs and the populations served will assist in the determination of “vital” documents. Additional factors to consider when determining whether a document should be translated include lifespan of the document and cost of translation over the lifespan of the document. Id.

Vital documents should be translated into the languages spoken by the LEP individuals with whom the recipient has frequent contact. The Guidance recognized that it is unrealistic to translate all encountered languages but also notes that a recipient has an obligation to translate vital “documents into at least several of the more frequently-encountered languages and to set benchmarks for continued translations into the remaining languages over time.” Id.

The competency standards for interpreters also apply to translators. Because of the resulting target language document, having a having a second, independent translator check the work of the primary translator will help ensure competency. Translation of the target language back into English by a second, independent translator is also a competency check. Id. The Guidance notes that utilizing community organizations for target document review can ensure that a document is written at an appropriate level for the audience.

The Guidance provides a “safe harbor” that applies to when a recipient either provides:

- a) * * * written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP group that constitutes five percent or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered * * *” or
- b) [i]f there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the five percent trigger in (a), the recipient does not translate vital written materials but provides written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost.

67 FR 41464. Proof of a recipient’s compliance with either (a) or (b) means that the recipient’s actions will be “considered strong evidence of compliance with the

recipient’s written translation obligations.”¹⁸ Id. It is important to note, however, that the safe harbor does not relieve a recipient of the need to provide meaningful access to LEP persons through competent oral interpreters. Id.

D. Establishment of an Effective Language Assistance Plan.

The Guidance recommends that a recipient develop an implementation plan after completing the four-factor analysis and deciding what language assistance services are appropriate. Id. A written implementation plan will both document compliance and provide a framework for the provision of timely and reasonable language assistance. Id.

The Guidance identifies five elements that are typically part of an effective implementation plan:

- 1) Identifying LEP individuals who need language assistance.
- 2) Information about the ways in which language assistance will be provided.
- 3) Training staff of their obligations to provide meaningful access to information and services for LEP persons.
- 4) Providing Notice to LEP Persons that LEP services are available and offered free of charge.
- 5) A process for monitoring and updating the LEP plan.

67 FR 41464-65.

Each City department receiving federal funding subject to Title VI should establish a Language Assistance Plan that documents the four-factor analysis conducted by the department and contains the five elements suggested by the Guidance.

II. The Guidance contains no prohibition regarding the use of City employees as interpreters.

A department may utilize a wide range of persons when providing oral interpretation services: bilingual staff, staff interpreters, contract interpreters, telephone interpreter lines, community volunteers, family members, friends, or other community members. 67 FR 41461-62. Because the department must ensure the competency of the interpreters, staff should only be used as interpreters after their competency has been determined. Caution should be exercised when using

18. Not all LEP Guidances issued by federal agencies contain this “safe harbor” provision. For example, the Department of Labor LEP Guidance does not adopt the “safe harbor” provision.

family, friends, and other informal interpreters. In addition to competency issues, use of family, friends and other informal interpreters raise issues of confidentiality, privacy, or conflict of interest. 67 FR. 41462.

Similarly, if a LEP person voluntarily chooses to provide his or her own interpreter, a department should consider whether a record of that choice and of the recipient's offer of assistance should be kept. While the LEP person's decision should be respected, the department "should take care to ensure that the LEP person's choice is voluntary, that the LEP person is aware of the possible problems if the preferred interpreter is a minor child, and that the LEP person knows that a competent interpreter could be provided by the recipient at no cost." 67 FR 41463. There may be situations where the department will want to provide its own, independent interpreter, even if a LEP person wants to use his or her own interpreter as well. *Id.*

Competent interpreters are also required in certain situations by Minnesota law. Police officers are required, following apprehension or arrest, to provide qualified interpreters to persons who are "handicapped in communication." Minn. Stat. § 611.32, subd.2. Persons are "handicapped in communication" if, due to a communication disorder, or because of difficulty in speaking or comprehending the English language, they cannot fully understand the proceedings or charges against them. Minn. Stat. § 611.31. By requiring the provision of interpreters, the legislature intended to avoid injustice and to insure the complete protection of the constitutional rights of persons considered "handicapped in communication." See Minn. Stat. § 611.30 (outlining the policy and legislative intent surrounding statutory requirement of providing qualified interpreters).

III. The City Faces Potential Financial and Legal Liabilities Should the Requisite City Departments Fail to Provide Interpretive or Translation Services to Limited English Proficient Persons.

A. Enforcement by Federal Agencies.

The federal agencies providing federal financial assistance are charged with enforcing the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP persons is enforced and implemented through the procedures identified in Title VI regulations¹⁹. These

19. Regulations promulgated by federal agencies to implement statutorily enacted programs may also contain procedures relative to the enforcement of the meaningful access to LEP persons requirement. See for example, 29 CFR parts 31 and 37; 45 CFR part 80.

procedures include complaint investigations, compliance reviews, efforts to secure voluntary compliance, and technical assistance.

The regulations state that the applicable agency will investigate any complaint, report or other information that alleges or indicates possible noncompliance by a City department receiving federal funds.²⁰ See 67 FR 41466; 68 FR 14114189; 68 FR 32300. If the investigation results in a finding of compliance, the agency will inform the City department in writing of this determination, including the basis for the determination. If the investigation results in a finding of noncompliance, the agency will inform the City department of the noncompliance in a Letter of Findings that sets out the areas of noncompliance and the steps that must be taken to correct the noncompliance. *Id.* The applicable agency will first seek voluntary compliance through informal means.²¹ If the matter cannot be resolved informally, compliance may be effectuated through the termination of federal assistance after the City department has been given an opportunity for an administrative hearing and/or referral to a DOJ litigation section for injunctive relief or other enforcement proceedings. Should a matter proceed through the process to a point where the federal assistance is being terminated, only the funds directed to the particular program or activity that is out of compliance would be terminated. 42 U.S.C. 2000d-1.

B. Civil Action by Individuals.

1. Federal Actions.

Section 601 of Title VI provides that no person shall, "on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity" covered by Title VI. 42 U.S.C. §2000d. Section 602 of Title VI provides that each Federal department and

20. A complaint is not necessary for an investigation. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights (DHHS/OCR) began an investigation after a newspaper article suggested that the Wyandotte County Department of Health was not providing adequate services to LEP persons.

21. Recently the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights (DHHS/OCR) issued findings against the South Carolina Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Environment, and the Department of Health for routinely requiring LEP clients to bring a family member or friend to interpret for them; routinely requiring LEP clients to pay for interpreters; failure to develop language assistance policies/procedures; and failure to train staff regarding the obligation to provide language assistance. The South Carolina Departments are working with the DHHS/OCR to remedy the deficiencies.

agency extending financial assistance to any program or activity must “effectuate the provisions of [section 601] * * * by issuing rules, regulations, or orders of general applicability.” 42 U.S.C. 2000d-1.

Private individuals may sue to enforce the Title VI prohibition against intentional discrimination in covered programs and activities and obtain both injunctive relief and compensatory damages. *See*, *Cannon v. University of Chicago*, 441 U.S. 677, 699 (1979) (Congress intended Title IX, like Title VI, to provide a private cause of action) and *Alexander v. Sandoval*, 532 U.S. 275 (2001) (“It is beyond dispute that private individuals may sue to enforce § 601.”) Private individuals, however, do not have right of action to enforce regulations promulgated under Title VI. *Alexander v. Sandoval*, 532 U.S. at 293.

In *Sandoval*, the plaintiff sued to enjoin Alabama’s English-only policy, arguing that it violated the DOJ regulation forbidding funding recipients to “utilize criteria or methods of administration which have the effect of subjecting individuals to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin * * *” because it had the effect of subjecting non-English speakers to discrimination based on their national origin. The U.S. Supreme Court held that there is no private cause of action to enforce the regulation promulgated under § 602 unless it is also actionable under § 601.

Although no federal courts have examined issues of language in the merits of a Title VI discrimination case, two recent federal cases examined language issues in race and national origin employment discrimination cases. The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals considered and rejected an employer’s failure to interpret during meetings as a factual foundation for a prima facie claim of national origin discrimination. The court noted:

The failure to translate from Japanese into English at meetings at which [the plaintiff] was present is subject to too many alternative explanations to discrimination (such as the unavailability of a translator, or the inadvertence--which we cannot believe could be thought, without more, significant evidence of national-origin discrimination--that often results in a bilingual speaker's lapsing into his native language despite the presence of monolingual foreigners) to be considered any better than makeweight evidence of discrimination.

Wallace, v. SMC Pneumatics, Inc., 103 F.3d 1394, 1398-99 (1997).

Similarly, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, rejected a claim of race or national

origin discrimination that was based, in part, on the use of the word translate. In *Hannoon v. Fawn Engr. Corp.*, Hannoon’s supervisor forwarded one of Hannoon’s e-mails to one of Hannoon’s subordinates requesting the subordinate translate the message. The e-mail contained various technical terms and Hannoon’s poor communication skills had been an issue since Hannoon’s hiring. The Eighth Circuit rejected Hannoon’s allegation stating:

Even if we were to believe that a trier of fact could interpret use of the word "translate" as a reference to race or national origin, we agree with the district court and do "not find that criticizing a foreign employee's facility with the English language constitutes discrimination against a particular race or national origin."

324 F.3d 1041, 1048 (8th Cir. 2003) (citing *Hannoon v. Fawn Engr. Corp.*, No. 4-01-CV-90170 at 7 (S.D. Iowa April 2, 2002)).

Title VI plaintiffs would likely encounter the same difficulties experienced by the *Hannoon* and *Wallace* plaintiffs when attempting to link language skills, or lack thereof, to race and national origin discrimination.

2. State and local actions.

Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance (“MCRO”) prohibits discrimination in access to, admission to, full use of or benefit from any public service based upon race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, affectional preference, disability, marital status, or status with regard to public assistance. M.C.O. § 139.40(j). The MCRO defines “public services” as “all activities, services or facilities offered to the public within the City of Minneapolis by any governmental agency or unit of government owned, operated or managed by any local, state or federal government, including, but not limited to, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency and Special School District No. 1. M.C.O. , §139.20. “Discriminate or discrimination” is defined as that which “[i]ncludes any act, attempted act, policy or practice, which results in the unequal treatment, separation or segregation of or which otherwise adversely affects any person who is a member of a class protected by this title, and for purposes of discrimination based upon sex it includes sexual harassment.” *Id.*

The corresponding state statute regarding discrimination in the provision of public services is Minn. Stat. § 363.03, subd. 4, which reads as follows:

It is an unfair discriminatory practice: (1) To discriminate against any person in the access to, admission to, full utilization of or benefit from any public

service because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or status with regard to public assistance or to fail to ensure physical and program access for disabled persons unless the public service can demonstrate that providing the access would impose an undue hardship on its operation.

Minnesota Statute 363.01 Subd. 14 defines discriminate as that which “includes segregate or separate and, for purposes of discrimination based on sex, it includes sexual harassment.”

Like the federal provision permitting private lawsuits to enforce Title VI, a private individual may sue to enforce intentional discrimination in public services under either the Minneapolis Civil Rights Ordinance or the State Human Rights Act. The action would have to be based upon one of the listed protected classifications. Minnesota Courts have not examined, in any reported cases, a discrimination claim involving lack of English skills under either the Ordinance or the State Human Rights Act

While the Minnesota Human Rights statute and the Minneapolis Civil Rights ordinance do not reference inability to speak English in its classifications under which suit may be brought for discrimination in provision of public services, they do include language prohibiting discrimination from “full utilization or benefit from” public services. Under a disparate impact theory, a complainant would need to prove that the City’s program or service, while facially neutral, actually operates to exclude a disproportionate number of the members of the protected class from full utilization or benefit from the program or service but would not need to prove discriminatory intent. Therefore, it is conceivable that a non-English speaking individual might bring a claim of disparate impact under the ordinance or the statute because he/she did not receive full utilization or benefit from a City service or program.

CONCLUSION

The opinion of the City Attorney’s Office, based upon the facts and analysis stated, is that City Departments receiving federal financial assistance are required to provide meaningful access to their programs and activities for LEP persons and the failure to do so could result in a loss of federal funding. Departments that rely upon volunteers from other departments to provide access to their programs and activities may not be in compliance with the applicable Federal Regulations. Private individuals could bring a civil action alleging discrimination in the denial of services based upon their protected

class status.

Very truly yours,

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City Attorney

By

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Approved

SLT: 02A-00224/ 7.7.03 Draft

Appendix C:

How to calculate primary languages

Every year, the primary languages in Minneapolis are calculated using a formula that extrapolates data from the Minneapolis Public Schools and the most recent census. The formula is used to identify which languages are spoken by at least 1,000 Minneapolis residents as their primary language.

The formula, $X/Y \times Z$, is used where Y = the number of Minneapolis public school students (42,925 in October 2003), X = the total population of Minneapolis (382,618 in 2000), and Z the number of Minneapolis school students who report speaking a specific language other than English at home.

Once the number of LEP residents is computed by language, the language groups can be listed in order of size and the 1,000 resident cutoff can be applied. For instance, 251 students reported speaking Oromo at home, so $382,618/42,925 \times 251$, or an estimated 2,237 Minneapolis residents speak Oromo as their primary language. Since this is over 1,000 residents, Oromo would be included. Conversely, 103 students said they speak Cambodian at home. So, an estimated $382,618/42,925 \times 103 = 918$ Cambodian-speaking residents live in Minneapolis and therefore, Cambodian would not be included.

This formula is used because it can be updated annually (the two main variables are recounted at the beginning of each school year) and it is more directly tied to language rather than the other population-based data sources that are based on ethnicity or country of origin. It is not, however, an exact measure of the LEP community, because of the recognized undercounting of minority populations in the US Census. Further, some immigrant groups (such as Russians, who are on average, older at immigration) might have fewer children in the Minneapolis school system than other groups.

Appendix D:

Summary: LEP community member comments

Community Input about LEP Service in the City of Minneapolis

A) How do you or members of the communities where you live or work find out about city services?

- from friends and family-“word of mouth” (20)
- at my place of worship (10)
- TV and radio announcements (10)
- at school (9)
- at my job (9)
- bulletin boards at agencies and libraries (6)
- newspapers (4)
- internet (4)

Other:

- Community based organizations/groups (3)
- Community events (2)
- Resettlement organizations (2)
- New Families Center (1)
- Email (1)
- Brochures (1)
- Medical clinics (1)

Notes:

- Several respondents circled or starred radio on their forms.

B) We have all heard stories about barriers that Limited English speakers have when they need services from City departments. When you think about this what are the most common barriers that you or the people you work with experience when accessing City services?

- language barriers (22)

- lack of understanding in how to navigate “the system” (19)
- difficult to find the department that can help you (18)
- lack of cultural sensitivity (17)
- confusing phone and voicemail message systems (17)
- lack of information or postings in my own language about the services that are available (11)
- unwelcoming space and staff (11)
- nobody that works there looks and speaks like me (8)
- can’t find information on the website (6)

Other:

- lack of follow-up (1)
- confusing notices/ forms received in the mail from City departments (1)
- no internet access (1)

C) Developing a plan is just the start, each department within the City of Minneapolis will have to develop strategies for customer service. This will take time and money. In order to help bring this plan into practice, we need your help in prioritizing decisions. If the City of Minneapolis could do 5 of the following things right now to improve services to people with Limited English Proficiency, what would they be? Please rank items-the most important = one; the least important = five.

1. hire more multilingual staff (22)
2. better interpretation services (20)
3. train staff to be more customer-focused (19)
4. centralized multilingual phone-line- “one call does it all” (16)
5. more City department information translated into multiple languages (13)
6. clearer signage (10)
7. more City staff or offices that are located in my neighborhood (9)
8. create waiting rooms and service counter areas that are more welcoming (8)
9. more advertising about services in newspapers and on TV and radio (6)
10. create a multilingual webpage (4)

Other:

- have information at community based organizations (3)
- transportation vouchers to access services from all areas of the city (1)

Notes from the community meeting held on July 27, 2004:

- Group members liked the idea of the centralized multilingual phone line, but

only if it is a real person, not an automated phone line/phone tree.

- Signage is vital; very basic. Signs should help you to get to the right location without having to ask anyone. Some group members felt that City buildings were confusing and intimidating. Some group participants felt that signage was useless if services were not available when the customer made it to the appropriate location. Some felt that a kiosk with translated brochures with maps may be helpful; others disagreed and thought that would work only for some communities/ individuals. Everyone in the group agreed that computer kiosks were not a good strategy.
- A key issue is that different strategies are needed for different communities.
- A lot of people do not access the web so don't spend too much energy on translating web content
- Having staff that speak the language is not enough; staff need to be culturally competent and provide good customer service.
- Several group members thought that educating staff in community based organizations about City services and providing translated materials and/or co-locating staff in community based organizations would help to get the word out about services and minimize barriers to access. However, some group members cautioned that the City should not expect community based organizations to take on the work of the city.

D) Can you think of any aspect of City services that the plan missed?

- Clarification is needed that City services are available to all people who live in Minneapolis. The use of the word "citizen" should be avoided.
- "Resident" also carries some connotations related to immigration status.
- Staff need cultural sensitivity training
- Talk more to people in the community
- "Highly desirable" is a good way to increase bilingual or multilingual staff, but will not fulfill the needs of LEP persons
- Competent interpreters and translators are needed. Not everyone who speaks a language has the needed language and/or personal (cultural understanding) to interpret.
- More services need money. The City has a deficit. Reducing the budget for services and eliminating some services. It would not do any good if I mention now what other services are needed.
- Supporting neighborhood and community organizations to provide better facilities that could enable the LEP populations to be served better.
- I would like to add "respect other cultures"
- You did not put much focus on the police department.
- Educating the hundreds of community agencies of the resources.

- Due to language barriers and cultural differences, the city services for immigrants need to be customized so the resources need to be allocated adequately. For example, the resources to serve MFIP participants are not based on the needs of immigrants but resources have been allocated equally. As a result, providers don't have enough resources to meet the special needs of refugees and immigrants.
- Educate communities on rules, regulations and services. Community outreach is a key factor to help the communities accessing important benefits or services.
- Cooperation with existing community groups or non profits (2)
- Outreach (2)
- Translated information for health insurance for children.
- Cultural sensitivity.
- Place people in community based offices so City is more approachable. Also, brochures translated into each of the six most common languages given to community based organizations to be distributed.
- More attention to elderly people.
- What is missing is that each department is given the option; there is no mandate. This leaves the LEP population vulnerable in many instances due to the institutional racism that exists at the service level.
- One on one assistance in filling out forms

E) How can we stay in touch with you?

Several respondents indicated that email was the best way to stay in touch. The City needs to come more to the community to hear peoples' input and their needs.

Appendix E:

“Safe harbors” provision of Department of Justice guidance

Department of Justice Guidance Memorandum

*section on safe harbors Federal Register Doc 0320179 HHS
revised guidance for LEP (August 8, 2003)*

“Classifying a document as vital or non-vital is sometimes difficult, especially in the case of outreach materials like brochures or other information on rights and services. Awareness of rights or services is an important part of “meaningful access.” Lack of awareness that a particular program, right, or service exists may effectively deny LEP individuals meaningful access. Thus, where a recipient is engaged in community outreach activities in furtherance of its activities, it should regularly assess the needs of the populations frequently encountered or affected by the program or activity to determine whether certain critical outreach materials should be translated. In determining what outreach materials may be most useful to translate, such recipients may want to consider consulting with appropriate community organizations. Sometimes a document includes both vital and non-vital information. This may be the case when the document is very large. It may also be the case when the title and a phone number for obtaining more information on the contents of the document in frequently-encountered languages other than English is critical, but the document is sent out to the general public and cannot reasonably be translated into many languages. Thus, vital information may include, for instance, the provision [[Page 47319]] of information in appropriate languages other than English regarding where a LEP person might obtain an interpretation or translation of the document.

Given the foregoing considerations, vital written materials could include, for example:

- Consent and complaint forms.
- Intake forms with the potential for important consequences.
- Written notices of eligibility criteria, rights, denial, loss, or decreases in benefits or services, actions affecting parental custody or child support, and other hearings.
- Notices advising LEP persons of free language assistance.

- Written tests that do not assess English language competency, but test competency for a particular license, job, or skill for which knowing English is not required.
- Applications to participate in a recipient's program or activity or to receive recipient benefits or services.

Nonvital written materials could include:

- Hospital menus.
- Third party documents, forms, or pamphlets distributed by a recipient as a public service.
- For a non-governmental recipient, government documents and forms.
- Large documents such as enrollment handbooks (although vital information contained in large documents may need to be translated).
- General information about the program intended for informational purposes only.

Into What Languages Should Documents be Translated?

The languages spoken by the LEP individuals with whom the recipient has contact determine the languages into which vital documents should be translated. A distinction should be made, however, between languages that are frequently encountered by a recipient and less commonly-encountered languages. Some recipients may serve communities in large cities or across the country. They regularly serve LEP persons who speak dozens and sometimes over 100 different languages. To translate all written materials into all of those languages is unrealistic. Although recent technological advances have made it easier for recipients to store and share translated documents, such an undertaking would incur substantial costs and require substantial resources. Nevertheless, well-substantiated claims of lack of resources to translate all vital documents into dozens of languages do not necessarily relieve the recipient of the obligation to translate those documents into at least several of the more frequently-encountered languages and to set benchmarks for continued translations into the remaining languages over time. As a result, the extent of the recipient's obligation to provide written translations of documents should be determined by the recipient on a case-by-case basis, looking at the totality of the circumstances in light of the four-factor analysis. Because translation is usually a one-time expense, consideration should be given to whether the up-front cost of translating a document (as opposed to oral interpretation) should be amortized over the likely lifespan of the document when applying this four-factor analysis.”

Appendix G:

Online resources for LEP service

- **LEP.gov: Meaningful access for people who are limited English proficient,** *www.lep.gov*. An electronic clearinghouse run by the federal government, providing and linking to information, tools, and technical assistance regarding Limited English Proficiency and language services for federal agencies, recipients of federal funds, users of federal programs and federally assisted programs, and other stakeholders.
- **Policy Guidance on the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin as It Affects Persons with Limited English Proficiency,** *Federal Register* Vol.65 No 169 August 30, 2000. Available through *www.lep.gov*
- **National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service in Health Care** Available through *www.lep.gov*
- **Cultural Competence Guides for Managed Care Plans, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** Information on developing a language services plan to meet the needs of customers/patients, including assessing cultural competency. Available through *www.lep.gov*

Appendix H:

Online resources for notice

“Free interpreter services are available” poster

Downloadable PDF templates of poster in various languages giving notice of right to service

See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services”

“Attention: If you want free help translating this information” block

Downloadable PDF of “language block” template

See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services”

Appendix I:

Online resources for identification

“I Speak” cards

Downloadable PDF templates of flashcards to help identify an LEP individual’s preferred language

See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services”

Appendix J:

Online resources for interpreting

“Waiver of rights to free interpreting services” form

Downloadable PDF of form to allow LEP individual to decline offer of free interpreting services

See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services”

“What Does An Interpreter Do?”

An overview of key concepts in interpreting, provided by a national interpreting and translation agency.

“Helpful hints for using telephone interpreters”

Tips excerpted from the Minnesota Department of Human Service Limited English Proficiency Plan

See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services”

Appendix K:

Online resources for translation

“The 39 Steps: Questions you need to ask yourself when undertaking a translation”

A checklist from the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, England

“Model contract for translators”

A sample contract that suggests translation duties, from American Translators Association

Appendix L:

Online resources for staffing

Sample job descriptions for City hires

- Job description when language skills are “highly desirable”
- Job description when an interpreter is being hired

See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services”

Assessment benchmarks for potential interpreters

Standards from the Minnesota Advisory Committee on Interpreter Standards, 2000

See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services”

Assessment test for language proficiency

From the website for the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages,
www.actfl.org

Training opportunities for interpreters and translators

A list of courses and classes. See CityTalk. Click on “Work Tools” and then on “Language and Translation Services.”

Appendix M:

Resources for training (proposed)

Curriculum content (to be developed; fall, 2004) Suggestions for training content include

- Communicating with accented English speakers
- Addressing typical objections to LEP services, such as “English is the ‘official’ language of the United States” and “Providing LEP services creates dependency and slows English language acquisition among immigrants.”

