

**Hernando County
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Limited English Proficiency Plan



www.hernandocounty.us/mpo

**Prepared by:
Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization
20 North Main Street, Room 262
Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: (352) 754-4057
Fax: (352) 754-4020**

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Introduction

The purpose of this limited English proficiency policy guidance is to clarify the responsibilities of recipients of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities to limited English proficient (LEP) persons, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations. It was prepared in accordance with **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.**, and its implementing regulations provide that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance, and;

Executive Order 13166

Executive Order 13166 "Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency," reprinted at 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000), directs each Federal agency that is subject to the requirements of Title VI to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying that obligation. Executive Order 13166 further directs that all such guidance documents be consistent with the compliance standards and framework detailed in the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Policy Guidance entitled "Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964-- National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency." (See 65 FR 50123, August 16, 2000 DOJ's General LEP Guidance). Different treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write, or understand English may be a type of national origin discrimination.

Executive Order 13166 applies to all federal agencies and all programs and operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government, including state agencies, local agencies and governments such as the MPO, private and non-profit entities, and subrecipients.

Plan Summary

The Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has developed this Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) to help identify reasonable steps to provide language assistance for LEP persons seeking meaningful access to MPO programs as required by Executive Order 13166. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

This plan details procedures on how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, training staff, how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available, and information for future plan updates.

In developing the plan while determining the MPO's extent of obligation to provide LEP services, the MPO undertook a U.S. Department of Transportation four factor LEP analysis which considers the following: 1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the County to be served or likely to encounter an MPO program, activity, or service; 2) the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with an MPO program; 3) the nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the MPO to the LEP population; and 4) the resources available to the MPO and overall costs to provide LEP assistance. A brief description of these considerations is provided in the following section.

Four Factor Analysis

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to encounter an MPO program, activity, or service.

The MPO examined the US Census Bureau's 2005 -2007 American Community Survey data and was able to determine that approximately 10.6 or 16,379 of the Hernando County population age 5 and older spoke a language other than English at home. Hispanics comprised the largest non-English speaking language group.

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with an MPO program, activity, or service.

The MPO assesses the frequency at which staff has or could possibly have contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries and surveying public meeting attendees. From January 1 to December 31, 2008, the MPO recorded zero requests for a Spanish-speaking interpreter and zero requests for translated MPO documents.

3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the MPO to LEP community.

Since there is a relatively small concentration of Hispanics in Spring Hill, the MPO has not conducted any formal outreach efforts to identify which MPO programs would be of importance to a Hispanic LEP person. One area that was addressed was the fixed-route transit system and to help accommodate the Hispanic population, the County's transit operator, The Hernando Express Bus, has translated its system route map and brochures. The MPO has the ability to translate any of its documents and brochures into Spanish as needed.

Many Hispanic Outreach Operation clients are economically disadvantaged and receive medical services through Medicaid. The MPO's coordinates its Transportation Disadvantaged Program (TD) thru Mid Florida Community Services, Inc., and it is the coordinating Medicaid non-emergency transportation agency and provides transportation for Medicaid compensable trips. The TD Program was also identified as a potential provider of important services for the Hispanic LEP.

4. The resources available to the MPO and overall costs

The MPO assessed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance. This included identifying what staff and volunteer language interpreters (see Appendix B) are readily available, how much a professional interpreter and translation service would cost, which documents should be translated, taking an inventory of available organizations that the MPO could partner with for outreach and translation efforts, examining which financial and in-kind sources could be used to provide assistance, and what level of staff training is needed.

After analyzing the four factors, the MPO developed the plan outlined in the following section for assisting persons of limited English proficiency.

How to Identify an LEP Person who Needs Language Assistance

Below are tools to help identify persons who may need language assistance:

- Examine records requests for language assistance from past meetings and events to anticipate the possible need for assistance at upcoming meetings;
- When MPO sponsored workshops or conferences are held, set up a sign-in sheet table, have a staff member greet and briefly speak to each attendee. To informally gage the attendee's ability to speak and understand English, ask a question that requires a full sentence reply;
- Have the Census Bureau's "I Speak Cards" at the workshop or conference sign-in table. While staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at this meeting, the cards can be an excellent tool to identify language needs for future meetings. Also, have the cards available at the MPO office reception area and Transportation Disadvantaged Program office's walk-in counter; and;
- Post a notice of available language assistance at MPO reception area.

Language Assistance Measures

When an interpreter is needed, in person or on the telephone, first determine what language is required. MPO staff can currently provide only informal verbal interpretation. If the required language is not available or if a formal interpretation is required, staff shall use the telephone interpreter service, Language Line, at 1-800-752-6096 and this service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Staff may be able to assist with written communications and small MPO document translation requests from LEP persons.

The following MPO documents are currently available in Spanish: Transportation Disadvantaged Program brochure and application, THE Bus (fixed-route transit) routes and information, as well as the Title VI discrimination complaint form.

MPO Staff Training

All MPO staff will be provided with the LEP Plan and will be educated on procedures and services available. This information will also be part of the MPO staff orientation process for new hires. Training topics are listed below:

- Understanding the Title VI LEP responsibilities;
- What language assistance services the MPO offers;

- Use of LEP “I Speak Cards;”
- How to access a staff interpreter;
- Documentation of language assistance requests;
- How to handle a complaint; and
- The importance of educating subrecipients on the MPO’s LEP program responsibilities and their obligation to provide language assistance.

Providing Notice of Available Language Service to LEP Persons

- Post signs that language assistance is available in public areas such as at the TD Program’s walk-in counter at the office of Trans-Hernando.

Outreach Techniques:

- If staff knows that they will be presenting a topic that could be of potential importance to an LEP person or if staff will be hosting a meeting or a workshop in a geographic location with a known concentration of LEP persons, have meeting notices, fliers, advertisements, and agendas printed in an alternative language, such as Spanish.
- When running a general public meeting notice, staff should insert the clause “**Un traductor del idioma español estará disponible.**” This means, “A Spanish translator will be available.” Or if not sure of the need, staff should insert this clause, “**Si usted necesita la ayuda de un traductor del idioma español, por favor comuníquese con la** (insert staff name) **al teléfono (###-####), cuando menos 48 horas antes de la junta,**” which asks persons who need Spanish language assistance to make arrangements with the MPO within two days of the publication notice.
- As a rule, Spanish speaking staff or a hired interpreter should be on hand at public meetings intended for gathering public input.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

This plan is designed to be flexible and is one that can be easily updated. At a minimum, the MPO will follow the Title VI Program update schedule for the LEP Plan. The next required Title VI Program update must be forwarded to the FTA by August 1, 2013.

Each update should examine all plan components such as:

- How many LEP persons were encountered?
- Were their needs met?
- What is the current LEP population in Hernando County?

- Has there been a change in the types of languages where translation services are needed?
- Is there still a need for continued language assistance for previously identified MPO programs? Are there other programs that should be included?
- Have the MPO's available resources, such as technology, staff, and financial costs changed?
- Has the MPO fulfilled the goals of the LEP Plan?
- Were any complaints received?

Dissemination of the MPO Limited English Proficiency Plan

The MPO will post the LEP Plan on its website at: www.hernandocounty.us/mpo.

Any person, including social service, non-profit, and law enforcement agencies and other community partners with internet access will be able to access the plan. For those without personal Internet service, all Hernando County libraries offer free Internet access. Copies of the LEP Plan will be provided to the Hernando County Office of Health and Human Resources, the Florida Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and any person or agency requesting a copy. Each MPO subrecipient will be provided a copy and will be educated on the importance of providing language assistance. LEP persons may obtain copies/translations of the plan upon request.

Any questions or comments regarding this plan should be directed to the MPO Title VI Specialist:

Steve R. Diez
Hernando County MPO
20 North Main Street, Room 262
Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: (352) 754-4057
Fax: (352) 754-4420
Email: stevend@hernandocounty.us

APPENDIX A

2007 HERNANDO COUNTY POPULATION			
General Characteristics	Estimate	Percent	U.S.
Total Hernando County Population	162,975		
Male	77,592	47.6	49.2%
Female	85,383	52.4	50.8%
Median age (years)	45.3	(X)	36.4%
Under 5 years	8,072	5.0	6.9 %
18 years and over	131,728	80.8	75.3 %
65 years and over	42,730	26.2	12.5 %
One single race	160,665	98.6	97.9 %
White	148,392	91.1	74.1 %
Black or African American	7,936	4.9	12.4 %
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	13,411	8.2	14.7 %
American Indian and Alaska Native	548	0.3	0.8 %
Asian	1,325	0.8	4.3%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	105	0.1	0.1%
Some other race	2,359	1.4	6.2%
Two or more races	2,310	1.4	2.1%
Disability status (population 5 years and over)	34,249	22.4	15.1%
Economic Characteristics	Estimate	Percent	U.S.
In labor force (population 16 years and over)	66,231	49.0	64.7%
Mean travel time to work in minutes (workers 16 years and over)	28.6	(X)	25.1%
Median household income (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)	41,991	(X)	50,007
Median family income (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)	49,403	(X)	60,374
Per capita income (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)	22,422	(X)	26,178
Families below poverty level	(X)	7.5	9.8 %
Individuals below poverty level	(X)	10.9	13.3%

Source: US Census Bureau 2007 American Community Survey.
 An (X) means that the estimate is not applicable or not available from the US Census Bureau.

2007 LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME		
Hernando County Population 5 years and over	162,975	
Speak English only	138,524	%
Language other than English spoken at home	16,379	10.6
Speak English less than "very well"*	X	X
Hispanic/Latino		
Hispanic/Latino's 5 years and over who speak Spanish at home	X	X
Speak English less than "very well"*	X	X
Asian and Pacific Islander languages		
Persons 5 years and over who speak Asian and Pacific Islander languages at home	X	X
Speak English less than "very well"*	X	X
Other Languages		
Persons 5 years and over who speak other languages at home	X	X
Speak English less than "very well"*	X	X

Source: US Census Bureau 2007 American Community Survey.

*Of total population

APPENDIX B

List of Available Resources

Informal Staff Translation and Interpretation:

Spanish

If the required language is not available or if a formal interpretation is required, staff shall use the telephone interpreter service.

Formal Interpreter and Translation Service:

The MPO will utilize the Language Line Interpreter Services at 1-800-752-6096.

APPENDIX C

Hernando County MPO Discrimination Complaint Procedure

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin for programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. As a recipient of federal financial assistance, the Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has in place a Title VI complaint procedure.

1. Any person who believes that he or she, or any specific class of persons, has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation, from the Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) administration of federally funded programs, as prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and related statutes, may file a written complaint. (Note: If the person filing a complaint believes they have been discriminated against by another branch of the Hernando County Government, they are directed to contact the Hernando County Office of Human Rights at 727.464.4880). All written complaints received by the MPO are referred immediately by the MPO's Title VI Specialist, Steve Diez, to the FDOT's District Seven Title VI Coordinator for processing in accordance with approved State procedures.

Written complaints may be sent to:

Steve Diez, MPO Title VI Specialist
Hernando County MPO
20 North Main Street, Room 262
Brooksville, FL 34601
Phone: (352) 754-4057
Email: stevend@hernandocounty.us

2. The MPO's Title VI Specialist shall resolve verbal and non-written complaints received by the MPO informally. If the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved through informal means, or if at any time the complainant requests to file a formal written complaint, the Complainant shall be referred to the FDOT's District Seven Title VI Coordinator for processing in accordance with approved State procedures.
3. The MPO's Title VI Specialist will advise the FDOT's District Seven Title VI Coordinator within five (5) calendar days of receipt of the allegations. The following information will be included in every notification to the FDOT's District Seven Title VI Coordinator:
 - (a) Name, address, and phone number of the Complainant;
 - (b) Name and address of the MPO;
 - (c) Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, familial status or retaliation);
 - (d) Date of alleged discriminatory act(s);
 - (e) Date complaint received by the MPO;
 - (f) A statement of the complaint;

- (g) Other agencies (state, local or Federal) where the complaint has been filed; and
 - (h) An explanation of the actions the MPO has taken or proposed to resolve the allegation(s) raised in the complaint.
- 4. Within ten (10) calendar days, the MPO's Title VI Specialist will acknowledge receipt of the allegation(s), inform the Complainant of action taken or proposed action to process the allegation(s), and advise the Complainant of other avenues of redress available, such as the FDOT's Equal Opportunity Office (EOO).
- 5. Within sixty (60) calendar days, the recipient's MPO Title VI Specialist will conduct and complete a review of the verbal or non-written allegation(s) and based on the information obtained, will render a recommendation for action in a report of findings to the MPO Executive Director.
- 6. Within ninety (90) calendar days of the verbal or non-written allegation(s) receipt, the MPO Executive Director will notify the Complainant in writing of the final decision reached, including the proposed disposition of the matter. The notification will advise the Complainant of his/her right to file a formal complaint with the FDOT's EEO if they are dissatisfied with the final decision rendered by the MPO. The MPO's Title VI Specialist will also provide the FDOT's District Seven Title VI Coordinator with a copy of this decision and summary of findings.
- 7. The MPO's Title VI Specialist will maintain a log of all verbal and non-written complaints received by the recipient. The log will include the following information:
 - (a) Name of Complainant;
 - (b) Name of Respondent;
 - (c) Basis of complaint (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, familial status or retaliation);
 - (d) Date verbal or non-written complaint was received by the recipient;
 - (e) Date recipient notified the FDOT's District Seven Title VI Coordinator of the verbal or non-written complaint; and
 - (f) Explanation of the actions the MPO has taken or proposed to resolve the issue raised in the complaint.

**TITLE VI PROGRAM AND RELATED STATUTES
DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT AGAINST THE HERNANDO COUNTY MPO**

Name:		Telephone (home):	Telephone (work):
Address:		City, State, Zip Code:	
Name of MPO Staff Person that You Believe Discriminated Against You:			
Address:		City, State, Zip Code:	
Date of Alleged Incident:			
You were discriminated because of:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Retaliation	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Familial Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Color	<input type="checkbox"/> National Origin (Language)	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability
			<input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Other
<p>Explain as briefly and clearly as possible what happened and how you were discriminated against. Indicate who was involved. Be sure to include how other persons were treated differently than you. Also attach any written material pertaining to your case.</p>			
Signature:		Date:	

**FORMULARIO DE QUEJA
CONDADO DE HERNANDO**

Nombre de la persona discriminada:	Número de Teléfono (residencia):	Número de Teléfono (trabajo):
Dirección de Residencia (Número y calle, número de departamento):	Ciudad, Estado y Código Postal de Residencia:	
Nombre de la persona que discriminó contra usted, y nombre de la dependencia (si lo sabes):		
Dirección de la persona o dependencia que discriminó contra usted:	Ciudad, Estado y Código Postal de la persona o dependencia que discriminó contra usted:	
Fecha del incidente discriminatorio:		
Causa de la discriminación:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Raza <input type="checkbox"/> Retaliación <input type="checkbox"/> Sexo <input type="checkbox"/> Estado Civil <input type="checkbox"/> Religión <input type="checkbox"/> Color de Piel <input type="checkbox"/> Nacionalidad <input type="checkbox"/> Edad <input type="checkbox"/> Impedimento Fisico <input type="checkbox"/> Otro o Mental		
<p>Explique claramente como sucedió la discriminación y quienes participaron en ella. Incluya en su explicación cualquier conocimiento que tenga de tratamiento diferente a otras personas. Adjunte cualquier otro escrito relacionado con su caso.</p>		
Firma:	Fecha:	

APPENDIX D

Notice to MPO Grant and Program Subrecipients

All programs and operations of entities that receive assistance from the federal government, including the MPO and its subrecipients, must comply to the fullest reasonable extent for improving access to services for LEP persons.

Subrecipients are encouraged to have in place written policies on the provision of interpreter and translation services.

I acknowledge that a copy of the MPO Limited English Proficiency Plan has been provided to our organization and I have read the contents and fully understand the LEP Plan obligations and responsibilities.

Signature

Date

Organization