

Limited English Proficiency

Local education agencies (LEAs), and other entities that receive Federal funds, including reimbursement for meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to school meals for eligible students from households comprised of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals. LEP is when a person does not speak English as their primary language and has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Requirements:

- ✓ Determine commonly spoken languages of households with students enrolled in the LEA.
- ✓ Communicate school meals eligibility information in an understandable and uniform format and to the maximum extent practicable, in a language that parents and guardians can understand.
 - Consider which materials are vital to program participation, especially those that require a response from the household (letters, instructions, notices, and verification material).
 - Ensure these materials are available in a language the individual can understand.
 - Provide LEP individuals access to the same information that is provided to non-LEP persons.
 - Provide interpretation services for individuals when written translations are not available in their primary language OR the individual has limited literacy.

Options for interpretation services include:

- Sharing services from advocacy groups and Federal grant agencies
- Training bilingual school staff to act as interpreters/translators
- Using telephonic and video conferencing interpretation services
- Formally using qualified community volunteers as interpreters
- Partner with migrant or refugee assistance organizations

The interpreter/translator should be able to accurately communicate in specialized terms or concepts related to the meal program. The interpreter/translator must also have the ability to understand and follow confidentiality and impartiality rules.

Reference:

- [SP 37-2016 Questions and Answers](#)
- [7CFR 245.6 \(a\)\(2\)](#)
- [FNS Instruction 113-1 Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement](#)
- [Guidance Regarding the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin](#)
- [Department of Education LEP Guidance](#)

Resources:

- [USDA I Speak](#)
- [Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool](#)
- [Translated Prototype Application Materials](#)
- [OSPI Translation/Interpretation Services](#)
- [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#)
- [Hyperlink](#)

Acronym Reference:

- **CFR** Code of Federal Regulations
- **CNS** Child Nutrition Services
- **NSLP** National School Lunch Program
- **OSPI** Office of Superintendent Public Instruction
- **SBP** School Breakfast Program
- **USDA** United States Department of Agriculture
- **LEP** Limited English Proficiency