

# OSPI Reference Sheet

## Language Access - Limited English Proficiency

Child Nutrition Program (CNP) sponsors receiving federal reimbursement for meals must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs for children from households comprised of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals. Limited English Proficiency is when a person does not speak English as their primary language and has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. Failing to provide language assistance to LEP persons may be discrimination.

### Requirements

- ✓ Provide information about Child Nutrition Programs to applicants, participants, potentially eligible persons, and grassroot organizations.
- ✓ Provide reasonable, timely, appropriate, and competent language services at no cost to individuals with LEP. Factors to consider:
  - The number or proportion of LEP persons from a particular language group encountered in the population.
  - The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
  - The nature or importance of the program to people's lives.
  - The resources available and costs.
    - Carefully explore the most cost-effective means of delivering competent and accurate language services.
    - Always see what can be done to accommodate the LEP individual and contact OSPI about potential concerns.
- ✓ Determine commonly spoken languages of households in the community your organization serves. Examples of how to identify common languages in your area:
  - Ask parents and guardians to identify primary household language during enrollment, prior to the distribution of applications.
  - Conduct a [Home Language Survey](#).
  - Share [USDA "I Speak" language identification cards](#).
  - Store language information in a database to ensure communications are sent in appropriate languages.
- ✓ Communicate meal program 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.



- ✓ Offer an interpreter to all LEP households, and whenever requested by a parent or staff. The interpreter should be able to accurately communicate in specialized terms or concepts related to the meal program. The interpreter must also understand and follow confidentiality and impartiality rules.
  - Do not use students or other children.
  - Parents may voluntarily decline an offer for an interpreter.
  - Qualities of an appropriate and competent interpreter:
    - Understands specialized terms,
    - Are trained on the role of an interpreter,
    - Are trained on the ethics of interpretation; AND,
    - Understands the need for confidentiality.

## Best Practices

- ✓ Use the [Department of Justice's Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool](#) to develop and review a Language Access Plan.
- ✓ Set a schedule to review your Language Access Plan- update the plan as needed.
- ✓ Work with an equity or language access contact to address the needs of the communities you serve.
- ✓ Tip: Provide an already translated tagline at the bottom of your documents for families that may need interpretation services. Your organization may already have something available. View the [LEP-Important Information to Translate Reference Sheet](#) for more details.

## Definitions

- ✓ *Limited English Proficiency*- A limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.
- ✓ *Language Access Plan*- A management document that outlines how the agency defines tasks, sets deadlines and priorities, assigns responsibility, and allocates the resources necessary to come into or maintain compliance with language access requirements.
- ✓ *Language Interpretation*- An oral language assistance service.
- ✓ *Language Translation*- A written language assistance service.

## Interpretation Service Options

- ✓ Sharing services with advocacy groups and other 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

## Reference

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

## Resources

- [USDA I Speak](#)
- [LEP.gov Mapping Tools](#)
- [LEP.gov Language Access Planning Webpage](#)
- [Translated Prototype Application Materials](#)
- [OSPI Translation and Interpretation Services Webpage](#)
- [OSPI Resources for Districts: Interpretation and Translation Services Webpage](#)
- [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#)

## Acronym Reference

- CFR- Code of Federal Regulations
- LEP- Limited English Proficiency
- OSPI- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- USDA- United States Department of Agriculture