



Limited English Proficiency Plan

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) administers a variety of programs designed to help all Floridians prosper. DEO's Division of Workforce Services receives federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) and, therefore, must ensure universal and meaningful access to its programs and services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). This plan outlines DEO's strategy for ensuring that LEP individuals obtain meaningful access to the services and programs funded by USDOL.

II. LEGAL AUTHORITY

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that no person shall "on the grounds 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 receiving federal financial assistance." Likewise, Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act provides that no individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity because of national origin.

The federal regulations implementing the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Section 188 specifically address national origin discrimination and language access. These regulations require that services or information be available in languages other than English to reduce the barriers that preclude LEP individuals from receiving any aid, benefit, service, or training made available through federal financial assistance.

III. LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT INDIVIDUALS

LEP individuals are those who do not speak English as their primary language and who may have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. Examples of populations likely to include LEP individuals who are served by DEO and its providers include, but are not limited to:

- Unemployed or dislocated individuals seeking reemployment assistance (RA) benefits, job search assistance, job training services, or job placement services;
- Youth seeking summer employment, career counseling, or job readiness assessment assistance; or
- Migrant and seasonal farm workers seeking placement or information regarding protections afforded to them.

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IV. DEO’s COMMITMENT TO LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT INDIVIDUALS

DEO is fully committed to making services and information available to all LEP individuals through the provision of free translation services upon request. Furthermore, where a significant number or proportion of the eligible service population requires services or information in a particular language that is not English, DEO is committed to providing all vital program information in that language.

V. ENSURING MEANINGFUL ACCESS

In accordance with USDOL guidelines, DEO has conducted a four-factor analysis to determine the reasonable steps it must take to ensure meaningful access to LEP individuals:

1. **FACTOR ONE:** DEO has determined the number or proportion of LEP individuals served or encountered in the eligible service population.

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2014 American Community Survey, DEO has identified Spanish and Haitian Creole¹ as the primary languages spoken by LEP individuals residing in Florida.

	Estimate	Margin of Error
Total:	18,284,956	+/-630
Speak only English	13,202,757	+/-17,264
Spanish or Spanish Creole:	3,743,708	+/-9,952
Speak English "very well"	2,103,379	+/-11,721
Speak English less than "very well"	1,640,329	+/-10,980
French Creole:	373,552	+/-8,770
Speak English "very well"	200,997	+/-5,701
Speak English less than "very well"	172,555	+/-5,001

¹ DEO has determined that Haitian Creole is the primary language it encounters which falls under the French Creole umbrella.

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Local areas are responsible for conducting individualized local assessments to identify and prioritize language groups that may seek services from, reside in, or be eligible for local programs in that area.

2. FACTOR TWO: DEO has determined the frequency with which LEP individuals encounter the program.

In addition to voluntary equal opportunity demographic information, DEO collects the primary language preference of each DEO customer if the customer agrees to provide the information. Additionally, DEO's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) conducts periodic reviews of Florida's 24 Local Workforce Development Board's (LWDB) individual demographic data to identify any local trends in the number of LEP individuals served.

Based on a review of the State-wide census results and the language preference data DEO collects, DEO has determined that Spanish and Haitian Creole are the two significant languages spoken by frequently encountered LEP individuals.

3. FACTOR THREE: DEO has determined the nature and importance of the aid, benefit, service, or training provided, so that LEP individuals are effectively informed about and able to participate in the program or activity.

DEO is committed to providing translated vital program information to LEP individuals. Vital information is information, whether written, oral, or electronic, that is necessary for an individual to understand how to obtain any aid, benefit, service, or training, or information that is required by law. Examples include applications, consent forms, complaint forms, notices of rights and responsibilities, notices advising LEP individuals of free language assistance, rulebooks, or notices that require a response from the beneficiary, applicant, participant, or employee.

DEO is committed to reviewing each of its programs to identify vital program information and take reasonable steps to ensure that information is available to LEP individuals.

4. FACTOR FOUR: DEO has taken reasonable steps to provide adequate translation services to LEP individuals in accordance with its budget.

1. DEO has entered into a contract for translation services. All DEO employees that may have oral interactions with LEP individuals have been trained to identify a customer's need for

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translation services and to provide the service in a timely manner and free of charge. No individual is required to provide their own interpreter.

2. DEO has taken reasonable steps to publicize the availability of free translation services, and has created a special assisted claims filing telephone service for individuals that cannot read or write effectively in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. DEO has posted notice of these services on its website and in Florida's One-Stop centers. Additionally, DEO has instructed Florida's 24 LWDBs to distribute the notice to local community organizations serving LEP populations.
3. DEO includes, on every vital document, a "Babel Notice," informing customers in 15 different languages that free translation services are available upon request.
4. DEO has made the entire Reemployment Assistance claims and benefits information system available in Spanish and Haitian Creole.
5. DEO has distributed "Language Communication Cards," or "I speak Cards," to the LWDBs. These resources will assist employees providing direct services to customers quickly identify the need for translation services.
6. DEO employs bilingual staff to assist LEP individuals.

VI. STAFF TRAINING

DEO has ensured that staff who serve customers or members of the public are knowledgeable of the contents of this plan. DEO provides mandatory training on LEP policies and procedures for all staff who have the potential to interact or communicate with LEP individuals, managers, and certain staff with web-based duties.

VII. MONITORING AND UPDATES

DEO's OCR will review and update this plan periodically. LEP training will be conducted periodically as a refresher for all staff. DEO managers have established a process for reviewing oral interactions with LEP individuals for compliance with this plan. OCR will solicit feedback from DEO manager's review of oral interactions for use in its periodic reviews of this plan.

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