



HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

Language Access Plan

August 31, 2011

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Language Access Summary

Federal and HUD Guidelines

On August 11, 2000, President William Clinton signed Executive Order 13166 – Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency which took effect August 16, 2000 for the Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency. The order stated “each Federal agency shall work to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries.” Under the order, each federal agency was required to draft guidance specific to its recipients detailing general standards that would be applied.

In 2003, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued guidelines that were finalized on January 22, 2007. These guidelines apply to any recipient of HUD assistance including but not limited to public housing agencies and assisted housing providers.

Under the 2007 HUD Guidelines, recipients are required to make all of their programs accessible to Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons. The LEP persons included in the guidelines include persons seeking housing assistance, seeking supportive services to become first-time homebuyers, seeking housing-related social services, training, or any other assistance from HUD recipients, current tenants, or parents or family members of these persons. The types of services and LEP communities targeted are based on a 4 Factor Analysis which includes:

1. The number of proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program.
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the program.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people’s lives.
4. The resources available to the grantee/recipient and costs.

Compliance

Compliance with the 2007 HUD Guidelines is voluntary. However, recipients are required to comply with civil rights-related programs and provide meaningful access to LEP persons. Complaints of discrimination based on national origin due to failure to provide meaningful access filed with HUD will be investigated. Continued failure to provide meaningful access will result in the withdrawal of HUD funding.

Language Access Plan

Plan Statement

The Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) is committed to its mission of empowering all individuals and families in need to achieve an enriched quality of life by providing housing opportunities and resources throughout San Bernardino County. In keeping with this mission, in 2005 HACSB adopted its first Language Access Plan (LAP) to ensure its programs and services are accessible to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Identification of LEP Communities

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English¹. When reviewing demographic data to analyze language assistance needs, it is important to focus on the languages spoken by those who are not proficient in English, and not simply individuals who speak multiple languages.

A 2011 review of the language proficiency of the residents of San Bernardino County revealed 317,112 individuals in the HACSB jurisdiction who do not “speak English very well.”² Of the languages spoken by the residents of San Bernardino County, there are 9 languages that are spoken by the threshold population size of 5% or 1,000 persons. Those 9 languages are:

<u>Language</u>	<u>Number of Individuals in Population</u>
Spanish or Spanish Creole	274,220
Chinese	7,759
Japanese	1,052
Korean	5,081
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	1,230
Thai	1,286
Vietnamese	5,323
Tagalog	5,487
Arabic	2,573

¹ January 22, 2007 HUD Guidance – Who is a Limited English Proficient Individual?

² U.S. Census Bureau – 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates – Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over

Language Assistance Measures

HACSB serves the LEP community with oral interpretation and written translation services for the Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing programs.

Oral Interpretation Services

HACSB will serve LEP persons with oral interpretation services that include but are not limited to the following services:

- Bilingual Staff – Spanish and Vietnamese.
- ESL courses offered free of charge and held onsite at Public Housing properties.
- Free interpretation services offered through contract vendor.
- Special HCV and PH Briefings offered in Spanish to LEP clients.
- LEP persons are allowed to use interpreters of their own choosing. Effective 1/1/2012, minors will not be allowed to be used as interpreters. This will increase the potential for accuracy during interpretation and minimize the withholding of confidential information that may affect participant rights.
- Briefings recorded in multiple languages and made available for LEP persons.

Written Translation Services

HACSB will provide written translations of the documents determined to be “vital” to assist with access to HACSB’s housing programs by LEP persons. The written translations will be provided in the languages that meet the threshold requirements within San Bernardino County, or found most commonly among HACSB program participants and public contacts. The Vital Documents list is included as Attachment A and was developed with consideration of the applicable State of California and Fair Housing laws.

Oral interpretation services will be used for all other documents not listed as Vital Documents and languages that do not meet the threshold requirements.

Expand Accessibility Services to the Authority Owned and Housing Partners I, Inc., Portfolios

HACSB will expand the Language Assistance services to the Authority Owned and Housing Partners I, Inc. portfolios with the use of Spanish bilingual employees at property offices, telephonic interpretation services, and noticing through multilingual posters in property offices and “I Speak” cards for clients to self-identify as an LEP person and the language in which they are comfortable communicating.

Accessibility to Non-Vital Programs

All housing related programs are considered vital to participants and the public. Other programs not directly related to housing or that may affect someone’s right to housing are considered non-vital. While the accessibility to non-vital programs is important, it is not subject to the same standards as housing programs. HACSB programs that are considered non-vital include:

- Section 3
- Community Development Initiatives
- Procurement
- Community Outreach

LEP assistance in accessing these programs will be offered through the use of bilingual employees and cost effective written translation programs available through the internet. Notice of these services will be provided on program documents issued to participants and the public.

Notice of Language Assistance Services

HACSB will provide notice of the availability of its LEP Services free of charge. The notices include:

- Interpretation Service Posters in all offices in multiple languages.
- Bilingual options available on the automated phone system.
- “I Speak” cards available for clients to self-identify at all offices, in applications mailed to people pulled from the waiting list, and carried by the onsite maintenance team.
- Interpretation Service notice added to the HACSB website, brochures, community notices, public notices, and other identified communications.
- Notices in local ethnic media.
- Language Access Plan available on the HACSB website and at all offices.

Implementation and Training

Persons Charged with Plan Implementation

While all HACSB employees are responsible for ensuring LEP persons are provided adequate access to our information, programs and resources, there are key individuals who specifically have the responsibility of implementing and monitoring this Language Access Plan.

The Language Access Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the agency adheres to the plan and procedures to provide meaningful access. This person is responsible for the oversight, performance, and implementation of the plan. The Coordinator is also responsible for performing the annual plan evaluation and analyzing the survey responses and complaints of LEP persons as part of the evaluation process. Effective with the approval of this 2011 Language Access Plan, the Language Access Coordinator is the Executive Assistant of HACSB.

The Chief Operating Officer and Regional Property Manager are responsible for implementing the Language Access Plan for the Public Housing Program and Authority Owned portfolio. The Chief Administrative Officer and the Director Housing Administration are responsible for implementing the Language Access Plan for the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Implementation Timeframes

Implementation of the services, policies, and procedures for the HACSB Language Access Plan is based on current program activities and available funding. The implementation deadlines are detailed below.

<u>Oral Interpretation Services</u>	<u>Implementation Date</u>
Bilingual Staff – Spanish and Vietnamese.*	In Place.
ESL courses offered free of charge and held onsite at Public Housing properties.	In Place.
Free interpretation services offered through contract vendor.	In Place.
Special HCV and PH Briefings offered in Spanish to LEP clients.	In Place.
LEP persons are allowed to use interpreters of their own choosing.	In Place.
Eliminate use of minors as interpreters.	1/1/2012
Offer briefings recorded in multiple languages.	3/1/2012

* Bilingual HACSB staff has been tested for accuracy using an independent third-party. New employees are subject to independent testing before they can be listed as bilingual

HACSB employees. The details of the HACSB Bilingual Program are included as Attachment B.

Written Translation

HACSB previously translated all vital program documents into Spanish. With the implementation of the activities under the agency's MTW status, the documents have been revised to reflect the new policies and procedures. The final revisions are expected to be completed in December 2011. The revised documents will be translated into Spanish after the revisions are complete, approximately January 2012.

Based on the review of the languages meeting the threshold requirements in San Bernardino County, HACSB will translate the applications for all programs into the additional 8 languages identified as meeting the population threshold. Due to the anticipated cost of approximately \$2,500 per language for translation of a full set of documents, the translation of the complete HCV or PH package will be complete as they are needed to accommodate applicants or clients.

Written Translation Services

Implementation Date

Pre-Applications translated into all 9 languages.	10/27/2011
Vital program documents translated into Spanish.	1/27/2012
Vital program documents translated into other languages.	As needed by participants

Expanded Program Accessibility

Expand services to Authority Owned portfolio	4/26/2012
Non-Vital Program Accessibility	4/26/2012

Notice of Language Access Services

Implementation Date

Interpretation Service Posters in all offices in multiple languages.	10/27/2011
Bilingual options available on the automated phone system.	In Place.
"I Speak" cards at all offices	10/27/2011
"I Speak" cards in applications for people pulled from the waiting list	10/27/2011
"I Speak" cards carried by the onsite maintenance team.	10/27/2011
Notices added to the HACSB website, brochures, community notices, public notices, and other identified communications.	12/2/2011
Notices in local ethnic media.	12/2/2011
Language Access Plan available on the HACSB website and at all offices.	In Place.

Plan Monitoring and Updating

Implementation Date

Record Keeping System	10/7/2011
Annual Customer Service Survey	5/31/2012
Complaint Process	5/31/2012

Training

All HACSB employees may at one time or another come into contact with either a participant or member of the public who may be an LEP person. All HACSB employees will be trained on the following items:

- LAP policies and procedures.
- Types of services available to assist LEP persons.
- How to respond to LEP callers.
- How to respond to LEP visitors.

Staff who are in a position where contact with LEP persons is likely to occur more frequently will also be trained on the following items:

- How to respond to written communication from LEP persons.
- How to access oral interpretation and written translation services.
- How to work effectively with interpreters.

Monitoring and Updating the Plan, Policies, and Procedures

HACSB's Language Access Plan will be monitored annually by the Language Access Coordinator. The Coordinator will review:

- Languages in San Bernardino County that meet the threshold requirements.
- Languages most frequently used by program participants and public contacts.
- Implementation status.
- Effectiveness of services.
- The availability and cost of providing additional services.

Upon completion of the annual review, updates and revisions of the Language Access Plan will be submitted for approval by the President / CEO and the Board of Commissioners.

Languages in San Bernardino County

To evaluate the languages in San Bernardino County that meet the threshold requirements, information will be obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, community based associations, and any other resources available.

Languages Most Frequently Used by Program Participants and Public Contacts

To determine the languages most frequently used by program participants and public contacts, HACSB will implement a record keeping system that will track the following information:

- Primary language used by person who contacted HACSB.
- Method of contact, i.e. telephone, in-person, correspondence, web-based, etc.
- Type of assistance provided during encounter.
- LEP persons choice to use own interpreter and age of interpreter.
- Number of LEP persons served.

This information will not only identify the languages HACSB comes into contact with most frequently, but also assists with evaluating the effectiveness of the services provided.

Implementation Status

The status of implementing the services will be evaluated and adjusted as necessary annually.

Effectiveness of Service

HACSB's efforts will be monitored annually for effectiveness in providing meaningful access to housing programs. The effectiveness will be evaluated based on annual customer service surveys and any responses received through the Feedback Process available to the public for individuals denied services for lack of English proficiency.

Effectiveness of Service (continued)

The Feedback Process will allow any member of the public, participant, or past participant to submit comments regarding the Language Access Services provided by HACSB. The comment form will be available on the HACSB website and at all HACSB offices. The comments will be submitted to the Language Access Coordinator for review and follow up with the appropriate personnel, or adjustments to the plan.


Availability and Cost of Providing Additional Services

Each year, the Language Access Coordinator will research and solicit ideas for new ways to serve LEP persons. An evaluation of the availability, cost, and potential effectiveness of the additional services will be performed and adjustments to the plan will be recommended accordingly.

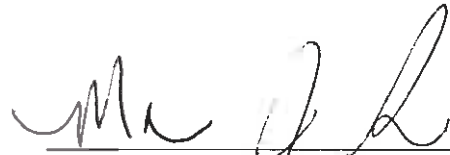
Language Access Plan Approval

The Language Access Plan is approved annually by the President / CEO and the Board of Commissioners.

ADOPTED: 9-14-11



Susan L. Benner, President / CEO



Mario Saucedo, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

Attachment A

Vital Documents

HACSB has developed a list of the documents that are vital to the access of LEP persons to HACSB's housing programs. This list was developed with consideration of the applicable laws of the State of California and Fair Housing laws.

HCV

Privacy Act
Release of Information
Disclosure Questionnaire &
Supplemental
MTW Voucher
MTW Contract
Crime Free Addendum
Zero Income Letter
Request for Reasonable
Accommodation
Program Termination Letter
Informal Hearing Letter
Briefing packet
MTW Briefing Packet
Your Rental Assistance Booklet
Repayment Agreement
Conditional Termination Letter
Acknowledgement of Program
Violations
Zero Tolerance Fraud

HOPE

HOPE NE Letter
Documentation Submission Letter
HOPE Recertification Appt
Voluntary Term Letter
Requirements & Obligations

Public Housing

Pre-Application
Application
Applicant Correspondence
Public Housing Information
Application Needs Letter
Initial Briefing Letter
Rescheduled Briefing Letter
Application Removal Letter
Criminal History Background Info
Criminal HBI – Additional Persons
Public Housing Information Booklet
Section 214 Verification Consent
Listing of Non-Contending Members
Request for Informal/Formal
Grievance Hearing
Smoke Detector Policy
LR Briefing Packet
Acknowledgement of Program
Violations
Zero Tolerance

Public Housing and HCV

Disclosure Questionnaire and
Supplement
Crime Free Addendum
Request for Reasonable
Accommodation
Repayment Agreement
Section 214 Verification Consent
List of Non-Contending Members
Release of Information

Attachment B

Bilingual Program

Eligibility: Full or Part-time employees in designated positions who successfully pass the Bilingual Skill Assessment, are eligible to participate in the Bilingual Pay Program.

Designated Positions: Positions which require direct contact with current or potential clients are “Designated” Positions. Additional positions may be designated in the Administrative Office, as required, to provide sufficient bi-lingual support services.

Bilingual Skill Assessment: Effective January 1, 2011, all eligible personnel will be assessed (or reassessed) for:

- Proficiency in speaking and understanding the spoken Spanish and/or Vietnamese Languages.
- Effective communication with sign language.

Newly-hired employees in designated positions will be assessed at the time of hire.

Bilingual Pay Incentive: Eligible employees who successfully pass the Bilingual Skill Assessment will receive the following incentive pay:

Defined	Full Time	Part Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Speak and understand the spoken language; and/or• Communicate effectively with sign language	\$40.00 Per pay period	\$20.00 Per pay period