**We Are Columbia**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
CITY OF COLUMBIA

# LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN
# CITY OF COLUMBIA

## JUNE 2020

# POLICY CHANGES OR UPDATES TABLE

| Action | Affected Section | Date |
|---|---|---|
| **Version 1 - Approval** | Entire document | 5/22/2020 |
| **Version 1.1 – Incorporated CD edits** | Entire document | |
| | | |
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# CITY OF COLUMBIA
# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
## LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

## 1. Purpose

The City of Columbia's Language Access Plan (LAP) is part of the City's Citizen Participation Plan. The purpose of the LAP is to ensure that the City of Columbia's Community Development (CD) Department provides meaningful access for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to its activities, programs, and services funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or "LEP," and may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter. Typical LEP populations include, but are not limited to:

- Persons who are seeking housing assistance from a public housing agency or assisted housing provider or are current tenants in such housing.
- Persons seeking assistance from a state or local government for home rehabilitation.
- Persons who are attempting to file housing discrimination complaints with a local Fair Housing Assistance Program grantee.
- Persons who are seeking supportive services to become first-time homebuyers
- Persons seeking housing-related social services, training, or any other assistance from HUD recipients.
- Parents and family members of the above categories.

The City of Columbia has adopted a LAP that sets forth the City's policies and procedures for language access during the development and implementation of HUD-funded activities and programs listed below.

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- CDBG – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)
- CDBG – Mitigation (CDBG-MIT)
- CDBG COVID-19 (CDBG-CV)
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA)
- HOPWA Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)
- HOPWA COVID-19 (HOPWA CV)

The City of Columbia's LAP explains the actions the city and its subrecipients/partners[1] are taking to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, and HUD's 72 Federal Register 2732 which require recipients of federal financial assistance to provide meaningful access to LEP persons. The City of Columbia and its subrecipients/partners are committed to complying with HUD's 72 FR 2732 and the City will update this plan as new Census data becomes available.

## 2. Goals
The goals of this LAP are to:

1. Provide language access services to LEP individuals needing access to HUD-funded activities and programs.
2. Manage and train CD and subrecipient staff on procedures for implementing the LAP.
3. Inform LEP individuals that language access services are available.
4. Continuously monitor and evaluate the implementation of this plan.

## 3. Four-Factor Analysis
HUD grantees and their subrecipients/partners are required to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons. As described in HUD's 72 FR 2732, the LEP requirement is flexible and fact-dependent, and the starting point is a community-level assessment that balances the following four factors:

1. Number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by CD.
2. Frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the programs.
3. Nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives.
4. Resources available to CD and the costs.

The four-factor analysis helps HUD grantees and their subrecipients/partners determine the appropriate level of language access for each of their programs and ensure meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services without imposing undue burdens on small business, small local governments, or small nonprofit entities. Some activities may be more important than others and/or have greater impact on or contact with LEP persons, and thus may require more language assistance.

CD completed a four-factor analysis below to determine ensure meaningful language access to LEP residents in the City of Columbia.

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[1] A list of the City's subrecipient and partner agencies is provided in Appendix A.

## FACTOR 1: NUMBER OR PROPORTION OF LEP PERSONS IN THE ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREA

CD's eligible service area for its CDBG, CDBG-DR, CDBG-MIT, CDBG-CV, HOME, HOPWA, and HOPWA-CV programs includes the entire City of Columbia. In the past, CD has only received requests for Spanish language assistance, which the City has addressed with its bilingual staff members. However, the City recognizes that demographics can shift over time and has completed a four-factor analysis to ensure that the City continues to provide meaningful language access to its LEP residents.

For the four-factor analysis, CD estimated the proportion of LEP persons in the service area using 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) data (*Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over*). LEP persons are defined as those that "speak English less than very well" in the ACS data.

Approximately 3% of Columbia residents are LEP; in comparison, 92% of Columbia residents speak only English. HUD's safe harbor guidelines outlined in 72 FR 2732 recommend providing written translation of vital documents[2] for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5 percent or 1,000, whichever is less, of the eligible service population. Spanish or Spanish Creole is the only LEP language group to exceed 1,000 individuals within the City of Columbia. As such, CD will provide written translations of all vital documents into Spanish as strong evidence of compliance with CD's written translation obligations. CD may offer oral translation of vital documents for other languages upon request.

The five largest LEP populations in Columbia are listed by native language below for reference.

| Native Language | Number Who Speak English Less Than Very Well | Percentage Who Speak English Less Than Very Well |
|---|---|---|
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 2,190 | 1.75% |
| Chinese | 420 | .34% |
| Arabic | 191 | .15% |
| Korean | 151 | .12% |
| African Languages | 132 | .11% |

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[2] A "vital document" is defined as a document that includes information regarding program eligibility requirements, applications and instructions, program eligibility determinations, and appeals procedures.

## FACTOR 2: FREQUENCY WITH WHICH LEP INDIVIDUALS COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE PROGRAMS

CD and its subrecipients/partners manage a range of HUD-funded activities and programs that have varying degrees of interaction with LEP individuals. For example, programs that serve homeowners, renters, and small business owners are likely to have more contact with LEP individuals and require more robust language access services than infrastructure programs. Language assistance is typically not provided to public entities such as municipalities and non-profits that receive HUD funding because those entities are less likely to be LEP; however, these entities may serve LEP populations and should comply with Columbia's LAP, as specified in their subrecipient agreements with CD. In addition to translating vital documents to Spanish for all HUD-funded programs, CD and its subrecipients/partners provide appropriate language access services and training to public-facing staff.

The table below lists HUD-funded projects and programs managed by CD and its subrecipients/partners and the relative level of interaction with LEP populations.

| HUD Program | Local Program/Project | Agency | Potential LEP Interactions |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CDBG** | Acquisition, Economic Development, Housing, Public Improvements, Public Services | CD, Partner Agencies | High/Medium |
| **CDBG-DR** | Homeowner Assistance, Small Rental Repair, Elevation Reimbursement, Minor Repair, Small Business Assistance, Multifamily Housing | CD | High/Medium |
| **CDBG-DR** | Canal Head Gates, 25% FEMA Local Cost Share | CD | Low – recipients are government entities or private developers |
| **CDBG-MIT** | Canal Head Gates and Lock Repair, Olympia Fire Station Replacement, Critical Facility Generators | CD | Low – recipients are government entities |
| **CDBG-CV** | Housing Services – Rental Assistance | Partner Agencies | High/Medium |
| **HOME** | Acquisition, Homebuyer Assistance, Homeowner Rehabilitation, New Construction for Ownership, Tenant-based Rental Assistance | CD | High/Medium |

| HOME | Multifamily Rental New Construction, Multifamily Rental Rehabilitation | CD | Low – recipients are private developers, but clients may be LEP |
|---|---|---|---|
| HOPWA | Permanent Housing in Facilities; Permanent Housing Placement; Short-term or Transitional Housing; Short-term Rent Mortgage, and Utility Assistance; Supportive Services; Tenant-based Rental Assistance | Partner Agencies | High/Medium |
| HOPWA Housing Choice Voucher | Housing Choice Voucher | Columbia Housing Authority | High/Medium |
| HOPWA-CV | Permanent Housing in Facilities; Permanent Housing Placement; Short-term or Transitional Housing; Short-term Rent Mortgage, and Utility Assistance; Supportive Services; Tenant-based Rental Assistance | Partner Agencies | High/Medium |

## FACTOR 3: NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROGRAM, ACTIVITY, OR SERVICE

Language access services are prioritized for programs, activities, and services with the greatest impact on LEP individuals. CD and its subrecipients/partners will focus LEP outreach on the programs that provide critical services to homeowners, landlords, renters, and small business owners (e.g. homeowner assistance program, small rental repair).

## FACTOR 4: RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE CITY OF COLUMBIA AND COSTS

The City of Columbia is taking all reasonable steps to provide meaningful access for LEP persons to HUD-funded programs, activities, and services. For example, the City is translating vital documents to Spanish and reaching out to Spanish-speaking community organizations (see more details in Section 4). The City collects data from its agencies, developers, and subrecipients on requests for LEP services and uses this data to ensure that CD continues to balance the city's LEP needs with the available funding resources.

# 4. Language Assistance Measures

The City of Columbia and its subrecipients/partners offer language assistance measures to ensure meaningful access by LEP individuals to HUD-funded programs, activities, and services. In all cases, CD and its subrecipients/partners seek to provide high-quality, accurate, and professional language services to LEP individuals. The following sections describe CD's language assistance measures.

## LAP COORDINATOR

The City of Columbia has designated a LAP Coordinator as the primary point of contact who oversees LAP implementation and compliance across all HUD-funded programs in the City of Columbia. CD's LAP Coordinator, Andelyn Rodriguez, ensures that CD and subrecipient/partner staff understand their LAP responsibilities and she provides ongoing training and monitoring to ensure the provision of meaningful language assistance services. CD strongly recommends that each of its subrecipients/partners designate their own LAP Coordinator to oversee LAP implementation and submit data on LEP requests to the CD LAP Coordinator.

**If CD staff, subrecipient/partner staff, or the public have questions about the City's language access services, they should contact the LAP Coordinator directly.**

CD and subrecipient/partner staff should notify the LAP Coordinator at least quarterly the level of language access requested by phone, email, mail correspondence, or in person, so that CD can track demand for these services and continue to offer meaningful access to LEP populations.

> ***City of Columbia LAP Coordinator***
> Andelyn Rodriguez
> Andelyn.Rodriguez@columbiasc.gov
> 803-545-3958

## TRANSLATION OF VITAL DOCUMENTS

A "vital document" is defined as a document that includes information regarding program eligibility requirements, applications and instructions, program eligibility determinations, and appeals procedures. CD will professionally translate all vital documents to Spanish and post them on the City of Columbia's website. Subrecipients/partners will also translate vital documents to Spanish and post them on their respective websites. If subrecipients/partners have a question about whether a document is considered vital, they can reach out to the City of Columbia's LAP Coordinator for guidance. Should CD or its subrecipients/partners receive a request to translate a document into a language other than Spanish, they will weigh the program costs and benefits on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate measures.

Upon approval of this LAP, CD will ensure all program policies and procedures and trainings include the requirement of translating vital documents to Spanish.

## LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES

The City of Columbia plans to offer live interpretation services upon request for Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Korean, and other languages, to ensure that LEP individuals understand CD's HUD-funded programs and services and can fully participate. The agency is currently researching language line providers and will update this LAP once services have been procured.

## CITY OF COLUMBIA WEB PAGES

CD's web pages include resources and links to help LEP individuals access key information about CD programs and activities, including:

- Spanish translations of vital documents.
- A "Google Translate" section to support real-time translations.
- A phone number and email address for LEP residents to contact for additional language assistance.

The relevant City of Columbia web pages are provided below. CD's website policy includes more details about website contents and procedures. Once the website policy is posted online, this LAP will be updated to include a link.

| Program | Web page |
| --- | --- |
| CDBG | https://columbiasc.gov/community-development/federal-entitlement/CDBG |
| CDBG-DR | https://dr.columbiasc.gov/ |
| CDBG-MIT | https://mit.columbiasc.gov/ |
| HOME | https://columbiasc.gov/community-development/federal-entitlement/HOME |
| HOPWA | https://columbiasc.gov/community-development/federal-entitlement/HOPWA |

## LANGUAGE BANK

CD and its subrecipients/partners maintain a "language bank" of staff who are fluent in a language other than English, along with their contact information (see Appendix C). The LAP Coordinator for each agency distributes the language bank to all HUD-funded programs that directly interact with the public and updates the list at least annually. All staff identified in the language bank must complete the LAP training which covers roles and responsibilities, ethics, specialized terminology, and relevant program-specific information.

The language bank enhances the City of Columbia's ability to provide interpretation services on demand by leveraging its multilingual staff. For situations where City staff are unable to provide adequate interpretation services, CD may rely on its language line (*to be procured*) or partner with local universities and community groups to expand on-demand interpretation capacity.

### "I SPEAK" CARDS

CD and its subrecipients/partners distribute I Speak cards to all public-facing offices and train staff to use the cards. These cards allow visitors to identify their native language so that the city can connect them to appropriate language access services. The U.S. Census Bureau provides I Speak cards for free download on its website (see Appendix D).

### LEP OUTREACH

CD conducts multiple forms of community outreach so that LEP populations know how to access HUD-funded activities, programs, and services. This outreach includes, but is not limited to, the following types of actions:

- Building a list of grassroots, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations that serve LEP individuals and engaging with these organizations regularly to share program information
- Building a non-English media list (radio stations, newspapers, TV stations) for the City of Columbia
- Publicizing the availability of language services, locations of public hearings and other vital program information through non-English media
- Communicating vital program information in Spanish using the City's social media accounts

See the City of Columbia's Citizen Participation Plan for more information on language access procedures related to public hearings and citizen participation periods.

## 5. Training City of Columbia Staff On the LAP

The City of Columbia will create a mandatory training for all CD and subrecipient/partner staff that interact with the public through HUD-funded programs. The training ensures that these staff members understand how to provide meaningful language assistance services to LEP individuals and covers the following:

- Definition of LEP persons
- State and federal regulations governing language access
- Cultural sensitivity
- Staff roles and responsibilities
- How to identify the language needs of an LEP individual
- CD language access procedures
- The LAP complaints/appeals process

CD will also incorporate LEP modules in new hire onboarding for all CD employees who interact with the public through HUD-funded programs. The LAP Coordinator oversees the coordination of all LAP trainings and provides staff with the exact date, time, and location of the training in advance. Trainings are conducted at locations throughout the service area to ensure full participation. Upon completion of the training, the trainer provides a list of the staff in attendance to the LAP Coordinator.

## 6. Subrecipient Monitoring

Subrecipients/partners agree to comply with this LAP as part of their subrecipient agreements. Private developers are required to address LEP concerns in their Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) Marketing Plans. CD strongly recommends that each of its subrecipients/partners designate their own LAP Coordinator to oversee LAP implementation. Subrecipients/partners must report the number and type of LEP requests they have received each quarter to CD.

CD monitors each of its subrecipients/partners at least annually to verify that subrecipients/partners are complying with this LAP to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals. If subrecipients/partners are not in compliance, CD's LAP Coordinator will work with them to train their staff and implement adequate measures.

## 7. Complaints and Appeals

It is the policy of the City of Columbia to review all complaints received. Citizens have an opportunity to register comments or complaints by email, phone, post mail, or in-person. Any written complaints concerning CD's compliance with this LAP will be referred to the City of Columbia LAP Coordinator. A written response will be made within 15 working days upon receipt of complaint. A copy of the written complaint and response will be maintained by the Community Development Department, 1401 Main Street, 4th Floor, P.O. Box 147, Columbia, South Carolina, 29217, (803) 545-3373.

Complaints concerning the general provision of language assistance may be submitted via email (CoCCommDevCompliance@columbiasc.gov) or

> ***City of Columbia***
> Community Development Department
> c/o Andelyn Rodriguez
> 1401 Main Street, 4th Floor
> Columbia, SC 29201

Alternatively, complaints can be filed directly with the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Region IV office at the following address:

> ***Atlanta Regional Office of FHEO***
> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
> Five Points Plaza
> 40 Marietta Street, 16th Floor

Atlanta, Georgia 30303

## 8. Updating and Evaluating the LAP

The City of Columbia LAP Coordinator will update this LAP annually as needed to reflect any change in the plan based on the prior year's demographic changes and to ensure relevancy and quality control of language access services. CD will review procedures for providing language access services, existing trainings, outreach activities, and the language access data to periodically update the language access program. This LAP can be updated as the needs of the LEP population and the demands on CD to service this population evolve.

To inform future LAP updates, the LAP Coordinator will:

- Maintain data on the number of LEP individuals that request language access services for all CD programs
- Review updated Census data and engage at least annually with school districts, faith communities, and other local resources to keep current on LEP community demographics
- Consider new resources, including funding, collaborations with other agencies, human resources, emerging technologies, and other mechanisms for improving LEP language access

# Appendix A: Subrecipient and Partner Agencies

| Program | Subrecipients/Partner Agencies |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| **CDBG** | COC Community Development<br>COC Parks and Recreation Department<br>United Way of the Midlands<br>Homeless No More<br>Mental Illness Recovery Center, Inc.<br>Fast Forward<br>Hush No More |
| **CDBG-DR** | COC Community Development |
| **CDBG-MIT** | COC Community Development<br>COC Fire Department<br>COC Water Division<br>COC Engineering, Construction Management Division |
| **CDBG-CV** | COC Community Development<br>Partner Agencies (TBD) |
| **HOME** | COC Community Development<br>Homes of Hope, LLC. |
| **HOPWA** | Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services - PALSS<br>The Cooperative Ministries – TCM<br>Midlands Housing Alliance –Transitions – MHA/T<br>University of South Carolina-Department of Medicine –USC-DOM<br>Upper Savannah Care Services - USCS |
| **HOPWA HCV** | Columbia Housing Authority - CHA |
| **HOPWA-CV** | Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services - PALSS<br>The Cooperative Ministries – TCM<br>Midlands Housing Alliance –Transitions – MHA/T<br>University of South Carolina-Department of Medicine –USC-DOM<br>Upper Savannah |

# Appendix B: LAP Program Contacts

| Department/Agency | Contact for LAP Services | Telephone | Email Address |
|---|---|---|---|
| Community Development | Andelyn Nesbitt-Rodriguez | 803.545.3958 | Andelyn.Rodriguez@ColumbiaSC.gov |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

# Appendix C: Language Bank

| Name | Languages Spoken other than English | Phone | Email |
|---|---|---|---|
| Andelyn Nesbitt-Rodriguez | Spanish | 803.545.3958 | Andelyn.Rodriguez@ColumbiaSC.gov |
| Fernando Vidal | Spanish | 803.587.1107 | Fernando.Vidal@ColumbiaSC.gov |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# Appendix D: I Speak Cards

**2004 Census Test**

**United States Census 2010**

LANGUAGE IDENTIFICATION FLASHCARD

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ ضع علامة في هذا المربع إذا كنت تقرأ أو تتحدث العربية. | 1. Arabic |
| ☐ Նշդրում էնք նշում կատարեք այս քառակուսում, եթե խոսում կամ կարդում եք հայերեն: | 2. Armenian |
| ☐ যদি আপনি বাংলা পড়েন বা বলেন তা হলে এই বাক্সে দাগ দিন। | 3. Bengali |
| ☐ ឈ្មបបញ្ញាក់ក្នុងប្រអប់នេះ បើអ្នកអាន ឬនិយាយភាសា ខ្មែរ ។ | 4. Cambodian |
| ☐ Motka i kahhon ya yangin ûntûngnu' manaitai pat ûntûngnu' kumentos Chamorro. | 5. Chamorro |
| ☐ 如果你能读中文或讲中文，请选择此框。 | 6. Simplified Chinese |
| ☐ 如果你能讀中文或講中文，請選擇此框。 | 7. Traditional Chinese |
| ☐ Označite ovaj kvadratić ako čitate ili govorite hrvatski jezik. | 8. Croatian |
| ☐ Zaškrtněte tuto kolonku, pokud čtete a hovoříte česky. | 9. Czech |
| ☐ Kruis dit vakje aan als u Nederlands kunt lezen of spreken. | 10. Dutch |
| ☐ Mark this box if you read or speak English. | 11. English |
| ☐ اگر خواندن و نوشتن فارسي بلد هستيد، اين مربع را علامت بزنيد. | 12. Farsi |

DB-3309

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

# Appendix E: Data Sources

This LAP uses the 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) data (*B16001: Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over*) to determine the number of LEP persons in the City of Columbia. LEP persons are defined as those that "speak English less than very well" in the ACS data. This data set is generally used for LAPs and is the most recent data as of 5/22/2020. The LAP will be updated as new data becomes available.

| Native Language | # of LEP Individuals | % of Total Population |
|---|---|---|
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 2,190 | 1.75% |
| Chinese | 420 | 0.34% |
| Arabic | 191 | 0.15% |
| Korean | 151 | 0.12% |
| African Languages | 132 | 0.11% |
| Tagalog | 131 | 0.10% |
| Other Indic Languages | 129 | 0.10% |
| German | 85 | 0.07% |
| Russian | 78 | 0.06% |
| Other Asian Languages | 76 | 0.06% |
| French (incl. Patois, Cajun) | 61 | 0.05% |
| Thai | 60 | 0.05% |
| Persian | 54 | 0.04% |
| Vietnamese | 54 | 0.04% |
| Other and Unspecified Languages | 23 | 0.02% |
| Polish | 21 | 0.02% |
| Hindi | 21 | 0.02% |
| Greek | 19 | 0.02% |
| Japanese | 19 | 0.02% |
| Portuguese or Portuguese Creole | 9 | 0.01% |
| Other Indo-European Languages | 7 | 0.01% |
| Other Pacific Island Languages | 6 | 0.00% |
| Gujarati | 4 | 0.00% |
| Hebrew | 3 | 0.00% |
| **TOTAL** | **3,944** | **3.16%** |

The City of Columbia cross referenced the ACS data with HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Data and Mapping Tool (AFFH-T); similar to ACS data, AFFH-T shows that Spanish is the only language to exceed HUD's safe harbor threshold and confirms CD's decision to translate vital documents to Spanish. CD staff have the tools (e.g. I Speak Cards) to identify language needs other than Spanish (e.g. Chinese) and can provide adequate language assistance to these LEP populations, through language line services (*to be procured*) or otherwise.

| Native Language | Number of Individuals | Percent of Total Population |
|---|---|---|
| Spanish | 1,763 | 1.43% |
| Chinese | 495 | 0.40% |
| Korean | 218 | 0.18% |
| French | 100 | 0.08% |
| Other Indic Language | 89 | 0.07% |
| Tagalog | 89 | 0.07% |
| African | 73 | 0.06% |
| Other Asian Language | 71 | 0.06% |
| German | 65 | 0.05% |
| Thai | 58 | 0.05% |