



ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN (LEP)

INTRODUCTION

The Victoria Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has developed a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan to address its responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to individuals with limited English proficiency language skills. This plan has been prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.

The Victoria MPO understands that differing treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English is national origin discrimination. Each agency is expected to publish guidance on how to ensure that such discrimination does not take place. This applies to all state and local agencies which receive federal funds. It is the responsibility of the MPO to have a process in place to ensure that communication is not impaired as a result of an individual of limited English proficiency.

PLAN SUMMARY

The Victoria MPO has developed a Limited English Proficiency Plan to identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to understand English. This plan outlines how to identify an individual who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance is provided, required staff training, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available.

In development of this plan, the Victoria MPO used the four-factor LEP analysis, which considers the following factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served by the Victoria MPO.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Victoria MPO services.
3. The nature and importance of services provided by the Victoria MPO for the LEP population.
4. The interpretation services available to the Victoria MPO and overall cost to provide LEP assistance. A summary of the results of the four-factor analysis is in the following section.

FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to require Victoria Metropolitan Planning Organization services:

The 2010 Census estimates that as of 2019 the Victoria MPO boundary, which coincides with boundaries of Victoria County, is 47.8 percent Hispanic/Latino and 1.5 percent Asian and Pacific Islander. 25.1 percent of households speak a language other than English at home.

2019 ACS data estimates that 3 percent of households are limited English speaking households in Victoria County. 10.8 percent of Spanish speaking households and 27.8 percent Asian and Pacific Island language speaking households are limited English speaking.

2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with the Victoria MPO services:

The Victoria MPO staff reviewed the frequency with which the Policy Advisory Committee, and MPO staff have interacted with LEP persons. The Victoria MPO has encountered LEP persons at certain meetings and events and has had an individual to translate each time.

3. The nature and importance of services provided by the Victoria Metropolitan Planning Organization to the LEP population:

The Victoria MPO serves a higher percentage of Hispanic or Latino population (52.7 percent) than the country (18.5 percent), as well as a higher percent of households speaking a language other than English (27.2 percent) relative to the rest of the country (21.5%). These statistics convey that a highly effective LEP plan is necessary to the Victoria MPO to best serve our diverse community when interacting with LEP individuals.

4. The interpretation services available to the Victoria Metropolitan Planning Organization and overall cost to provide LEP assistance:

The Victoria Metropolitan Planning Organization reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance and put together a process for contacting local citizens that might be willing to provide voluntary Spanish or other language translation if needed within a reasonable time period. The Victoria MPO also has official translators available for a cost.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IDENTIFICATION AND MEASURES

A LEP person is entitled to language assistance with respect to services of the Victoria MPO. Language assistance can include interpretation, which means spoken language transfer of a message and translation, which means the written language transfer of a message.

How the Victoria MPO staff may identify an LEP person who needs language assistance:

1. Post notice of the LEP Plan and the availability of free translation services.
2. Victoria MPO staff would be provided with "I Speak" cards to assist in identifying the language interpretation needed if the occasion arises.
3. Victoria MPO staff will be asked periodically about their professional experience with LEP.
4. A Victoria MPO staff person may greet participants as they arrive to informally gauge

each attendee's ability to speak and understand English.

5. Outreach to organizations that may focus on or represent LEP populations when appropriate to provide services or benefits to the LEP population.

The Victoria MPO will also be able to accommodate LEP persons by having competent bilingual employees of the MPO or City of Victoria, language assistance volunteers from the public within a reasonable time period, and LEP individuals will be permitted to bring their own interpreters or translators.

STAFF TRAINING AND CONTRACTORS/SUBCONTRACTORS

The following training will be provided to all staff:

1. Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities.
2. Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
3. How to use "I Speak" cards.
4. Documentation of language assistance requests.
5. How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

All contractors or subcontractors performing work for the Victoria Metropolitan Planning Organization will be required to follow the Title VI LEP guidelines.

MONITORING

The Victoria Metropolitan Planning Organization may update the LEP Plan as needed. The plan will be reviewed and if needed, updated when data from the decennial U.S. Census is available and indicates that concentrations of LEP individuals are present in the Victoria MPO's service area to an extent that costs and benefits of changes would be warranted.

DISSEMINATION OF THE VICTORIA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION'S LEP PLAN

1. Post a copy of the LEP on the MPO Website.
2. Post notices at accessible locations regarding the LEP Plan and how to access language services.
3. State on agendas and public notices that if special assistance is needed, such as interpretation, this will be accommodated upon request by calling the MPO.

TITLE VI/LEP COORDINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

S. Jay Keen
MPO Coordinator
700 Main Center,
P.O. Box 1758
Victoria, TX 77902- 1758
(361) 485-3360