

**Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and Emergency Preparedness
State of Louisiana**

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



JAMES B. WASKOM
DIRECTOR

**Limited English Proficiency
Policy Number: HR-0032**

Issue Date: **October 1, 2019**

Revised Date:

Approval:


James B. Waskom, Director

I. POLICY

The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) will take reasonable steps to ensure that person(s) with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits.

The policy of GOHSEP is to ensure meaningful communication with LEP persons when coordinating the State's efforts to prepare for, prevent, respond from and mitigate against future emergencies and man-made and natural disasters. Persons include, but are not limited to, visitors and individuals who transact business with GOHSEP such as vendors, maintenance personnel, subrecipients, clients, contractors, and consultants.

All interpreters, translators and other aides shall be provided as needed to comply with this policy. They will be provided without cost to the person being served. Persons will be informed of the availability of such assistance free of charge.

Language assistance will be provided through use of competent bilingual staff, staff interpreters, contracts or formal arrangements with local organizations providing interpretation or translation services, or technology and telephonic interpretation services. All staff will be provided notice of this policy and procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with LEP persons will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter.

GOHSEP will conduct a regular review of the language access needs of our individual population, as well as update and monitor the implementation of this policy and these procedures, as necessary.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all GOHSEP employees regardless of position, status, or authority. This includes unclassified employees, full-time, part-time, seasonal, and temporary employees. The prohibitions of this policy are equally applicable to appointing authorities, executive management, administrators, directors, managers, supervisors, staff, students, and interns.

III. PROCEDURES

1) IDENTIFYING LEP PERSON AND THEIR LANGUAGE

GOHSEP will promptly identify the language and communication needs of the LEP person. If necessary, staff will use a language identification card (or “I speak cards”) or posters to determine the language. In addition, when records are kept of past interactions with persons or their family members, the language used to communicate with the LEP person will be included as part of the record.

2) OBTAINING A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER

- a) Maintaining an accurate and current list showing the name, language, phone number and hours of available of bilingual staff.
- b) Contacting the appropriate bilingual staff member to interpret, in the event that an interpreter is needed, if an employee who speaks the needed language is available and is qualified to interpret.
- c) Obtaining an outside interpreter if a bilingual staff or staff interpreter is not available or does not speak the needed language.

3) PROVIDING WRITTEN TRANSLATIONS

GOHSEP will evaluate public facing documents to determine whether or not translation is warranted.

4) MONITORING LANGUAGES NEEDS AND IMPLEMENTATION

On an ongoing basis, GOHSEP will assess changes in demographics, types of services or other needs that may require reevaluation of this policy and its procedures. In addition, GOHSEP will regularly assess the efficacy of these procedures, including but not limited to mechanisms for securing interpreter services, equipment used for the delivery of language assistance, complaints filed by LEP persons, and feedback from the public and community organizations.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY:

All employees are responsible for complying with all aspects of this policy.

V. QUESTIONS:

Questions, comments, or concerns regarding this policy should be addressed to GOHSEP's Employee Relations Designee.

VI. VIOLATIONS:

Employees found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.