

2024 State of Louisiana Office of Community Development Language Access Plan for Limited English Proficiency Persons

I. Introduction

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000(d) and Executive Order 13166 require that recipients of federal funds take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP persons). The Louisiana Office of Community Development (OCD) is a recipient of federal funds for a portion of its programs and, thus obligated to reduce language barriers that can preclude meaningful access by LEP persons to OCD Programs. OCD has prepared this Language Access Plan (LAP), which defines the actions to be taken to ensure meaningful access to agency services, programs, and activities on the part of persons who have limited English proficiency.

In preparing this LAP, OCD conducted a four-factor analysis, considering (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the OCD or its federally funded programs, (2) frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the Agency's programs, (3) nature and importance of the program, activity, or service to people's lives, and (4) resources available and costs. OCD will review and update, on an annual basis, this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs.

II. Description of Covered Programs

The Louisiana Office of Community Development within the Division of Administration is home to the following federal and state grant programs:

- A. Louisiana Community Development Block Grant Program (LCDBG) The LCDBG Program is a federally funded (HUD) program which provides grants to units of local government in non-entitlement areas for the development of viable communities by providing a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. Grants are made to these communities for primary needs such as potable water, water for fire protection, sewer, streets, clearance and demolition, and economic development activities.
- B. Louisiana Office of Community Development (LLDRU) LLDRU creates a safer and stronger Louisiana by leading the state's disaster recovery and long-term community resilience planning efforts through innovation, partnerships and best practices. HUD CDBG Disaster allocations dedicated to recovery from Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, and Issac. These funds have and continue to be allocated to housing, infrastructure, economic development and planning programs for recovery in the storm-impacted areas.

- C. Local Government Assistance Program (LGAP)
 LGAP funds are used to assist units of local government for needed infrastructure and long-term capital improvements in rural areas. The LGAP Program is designed to fill the gaps where there are no federal or other state funds available to assist a unit of local government with an identified high priority need. Priority is given to those projects which identify and resolve basic human health and safety needs.
- D. Community Water Enrichment Fund (CWEF)
 The purpose of the Community Water Enrichment Program (CWEF) is to assist units of local government with funding for needed infrastructure and long-term capital improvements for potable water projects in rural areas. The CWEF Program is designed to fill the gaps where there are no federal or other state funds available to assist a unit of local government with an identified high priority need for potable water improvements. Priority is given to those projects which identify and resolve basic human health and safety needs.

III. Four-factor Analysis

The following four-factor analysis will serve as the guide for determining which, if any, language assistance measures the OCD will undertake to provide access to the covered programs for LEP persons. Additionally, all future CDBG fund recipients will be required to use the same four-factor analysis prior to the release of funds.

- A. Number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the OCD or its federally funded programs. Per the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, Louisiana’s population is 4,350,704. Approximately 92.4% of Louisiana’s population speak only English, and 7.6% speak a language other than English. 3.7% of Louisiana’s population speak Spanish, and 2.3% speak other Indo-European languages and 1.2% speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages. No other ethnicity has a sizeable limited English proficiency.
- The table below shows the LEP percentages for each of the above mentioned languages.

Language 1 (name)	Population That Speaks a Language Other Than English	LEP Number	LEP % of Total Louisiana Population
Spanish	160,405	73,048	3.7%
Other Indo-European	101,621	18,526	2.3%
Asian and Pacific Island	50,036	22,496	1.2%

1. LCDBG – Eligible applicants to the LCDBG program are non-entitlement communities in Louisiana. Sub-recipients must consider the service area of their project/activity to conduct the four-factor analysis.
 2. LDRU – The LDRU translates actions plans into Vietnamese and Spanish based on census data for impacted areas.
 3. LGAP – All Louisiana municipalities and parishes are eligible to apply for funds excluding the HUD entitlement cities: Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Kenner, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans and Shreveport.
 4. CWEF –All Louisiana municipalities and parishes are eligible to apply for funds excluding the HUD entitlement cities: Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Kenner, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans and Shreveport.
- B. Frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the programs
1. LCDBG – Throughout the history of the LCDBG Program, OCD has not encountered a LEP person. Also, the OCD has not received notification from a sub recipient of an encounter with a LEP person. Since all LCDBG funds are granted to local governments, any direct beneficiaries who are LEP are more likely to communicate directly with the subrecipients. As a result the sub-recipients will be required to develop a LAP prior to the release of funds.
 2. LDRU – LDRU does not have any record of encounters with LEP persons.
 3. LGAP – There are no direct beneficiaries of the LGAP; all funds are granted to local governments.
 4. CWEF – There are no direct beneficiaries of the CWEF Program; all funds are granted to local governments.
- C. Nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program
1. LCDBG – While LCDBG programs deal mostly with public infrastructure, there is some direct benefit to the beneficiaries of sewer and water hook-ups on private property. Gathering of income data in order to determine income level can result in contacting a LEP person(s). Also, CDBG has a Citizen Participation requirement in order for OCD as well as local governments to identify the community development needs and priorities. It will be necessary to ensure proper communication in order to complete these tasks.
 2. LDRU – LDRU has various types of programs and participates in direct benefit activities. Also, CDBG has a Citizen Participation requirement in order for OCD as well as local governments to identify the community development needs and priorities. It will be necessary to ensure proper communication in order to complete these tasks.
 3. LGAP – There is no direct benefit in this program.

4. CWEF – There is no direct benefit in this program.
- D. Resources available and costs to the recipient
1. LCDBG– Will use electronic translation software for vital documents.
 2. LGAP – No resources are needed, as there are no documents produced which are necessary for public viewing.
 3. CWEF – No resources are needed, as there are no documents produced which are necessary for public viewing.

IV. Actions to be taken by OCD

After careful consideration of the four-factors identified above, the OCD will take the following actions:

- A. OCD has appointed the following Language Access Coordinator to serve for all programs:
 1. Denease McGee, OCD/LCDBG Program, 1201 North Third Street, Ste. 3-150, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225)342-7412
- B. The OCD LAP will be distributed to all OCD staff members and posted on the OCD website.
- C. All OCD Receptionists and the Language Access Coordinator will maintain and be trained to use an I Speak Language Identification Document for use during encounters with LEP persons. After the appropriate language has been identified, the OCD Receptionist will contact the Language Access Coordinator for further instructions. If the need for access services is identified either by phone or email, OCD staff shall immediately contact their Language Access Coordinator who will take appropriate action to ensure meaningful communication.
- D. LCDBG Consolidated Plans and Consolidated Annual Action Plans and Substantial Amendments will be published in Spanish on the OCD website. LDRU will continue to translate appropriate documents in Spanish and/or Vietnamese as previously established. All published OCD citizen participation advertisements will include a statement in Spanish indicating materials are available in Spanish upon request.
- E. All LCDBG and LDRU sub-recipients beginning in FY 2016 and beyond will be required to conduct a Four-factor Analysis and develop a LAP as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000(d) and Executive Order 13166, which states that recipients of federal funds take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access by persons with Limited English Proficiency.