

**Seminole County
Community Development Division
Limited English Proficiency Plan**

Community Development Division
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Seminole County Community Development Limited English Proficiency Plan

PURPOSE

This document serves as to show the Community Development Division's commitment to provide access to all individuals accessing services and assistance. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals are to be informed of the availability of free interpretation and translation services when it appears that the individual is not able to communicate effectively in English. Such services will be provided during all normal business hours and when an emergency has been determined to exist during non-business hours.

At no time will any Division employee or contractor indicate – either verbally or in writing – that any LEP applicant or client accessing County services will be charged for interpretation or translation services.

Dissemination of the Limited English Proficiency Plan is to occur via many routes. Any individual will be able to access the plan via the Internet on the Community Development web site. All Division employees will have access to it via the Internet and through paper copy dissemination. Paper copies will also be available in English and in Spanish for applicants and clients in the waiting area(s). LEP individuals can obtain copies and/or translations upon request.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE RESOURCES OFFERED

Limited English Proficiency Populations to Be Served

Currently, only Spanish and American Sign Language interpretation and translation is available. Select Division staff members are available during normal working hours to offer such services. These staff members will be utilized to facilitate transactions within the staff person's division and for all County departments whenever possible.

PROCEDURE TO ACCESS LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

Means of Providing Interpretive Services

While bilingual staff may not be available to interpret for any language encountered, many other departments and divisions have other bilingual staff available to meet the needs of many LEP individuals.

Use of bilingual staff: Each County department will be contacted to provide a list of all staff persons within their department that are bilingual. Due to the constantly changing workforce composition, this list may change frequently. With this list, and depending upon immediate availability of bilingual staff members, interpretation can be provided via telephone, instant messaging, or in person.

If the client has been offered free interpretive services and chooses to utilize his/her own interpreter – i.e., friend, family member or community member – that will be allowed.

When confronted with a situation in which the client is illiterate – cannot read or write in his or her own language – the staff person, with assistance from an interpreter, will assist the LEP individual in the completion of necessary forms and documents.

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When individuals require access to services within short time frames, the staff member – in consultation with a Supervisor or Manager – will take whatever steps deemed necessary to ensure that all clients, including LEP clients, have access to services within the appropriate time frame. The goal is to make its services accessible within the required time frame, whether that means using an interpreter or another appropriate type of language assistance.

Document Translation

The need for assistance in the application process for many County programs poses some unique challenges. While the Community Development Division employs staff with the ability to assist in these functions, they are not able to cover all language needs in all locations. While many application forms and critical documents are available in translated format, low literacy rates in some LEP populations, a lack of translated materials in all languages, and a lack of translated information on such topics as program eligibility, income and asset limits present additional challenges to County staff.

Through a process of prioritization, the Division Manager and division staff will identify critical and vital documents to be translated into Spanish. Translation into other languages will depend upon demand.

Privacy Issues

Most staff members use walled offices to conduct client and/or patient interviews in a private and confidential manner. Privacy will be a chief consideration, within reason and practicality.

Complaints

Complaints of a Limited English Proficiency nature will be forwarded to the Division Manager, with the expectation that an inquiry will be conducted in a timely manner. If any of the issues involve Federal/State protected classes, and a possible violation of any Seminole County non-discrimination policy, management will consult with the Human Resources Division Manager for guidance.

The Division Manager will review the complaint, conduct interviews with all parties, and recommend a course of corrective action to the Human Resources Manager.

