

Limited English Proficiency Plan
Stutsman County
Last Updated: December 2011

INTRODUCTION

This Limited English Proficiency Plan has been prepared to address Stutsman County's responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency language skills. The plan has been prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C 2000d, et seq, and its implementing regulations, which state that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.

Executive Order 13166, titled *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, indicates that differing treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English is a type of national origin discrimination. It directs each agency to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying their obligation to ensure that such discrimination does not take place. This order applies to all state and local agencies which receive federal funds, including all Stutsman County departments receiving federal grant funds.

Plan Summary

Stutsman County has developed this *Limited English Proficiency Plan* to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) who wish to access services provided. As defined Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. This plan outlines how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available.

In order to prepare this plan, Stutsman County 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 Stutsman County.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Stutsman County services.
3. The nature and importance of services provided by Stutsman County to the LEP population.
4. The interpretation services available to Stutsman County and overall cost to provide LEP assistance. A summary of the results of the four factor analysis is in the following section.

MEANINGFUL ACCESS: FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS

The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to require Stutsman County services:

Stutsman County reviewed the 2010 U.S. Census Report and determined that 1,147 people (5.9% of the population) in Stutsman County speak a language other than English. Of those 1,147 people, 401 people (2.07% of the population) have limited English proficiency. In other words, they speak English “not well” or “not at all”. In Stutsman County, of those persons with limited English proficiency, 127 speak Spanish or Spanish Creole, 9 speak French, 182 speak German, 30 speak Scandinavian languages, 9 speak Russian, 8 speak other Slavic languages, 20 speak other Indic languages, and 16 speak Tagalog.

The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Stutsman County services:

Stutsman County staff has reviewed the frequency with which County Commission members and County staff have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries or office visits. To date, Stutsman County has had no requests for interpreters and no requests for translated program documents. The Stutsman County staff have had very little contact with LEP persons.

The nature and importance of services provided by Stutsman County to the LEP population:

There is no large geographic concentration of any type of LEP individuals in the service area for Stutsman County. The overwhelming majority of the population, 94.1%, speak English. As a result, there are few social, service, professional and leadership organizations within the Stutsman County service area that focus on outreach to LEP individuals. The Stutsman County Commission and staff are most likely to encounter LEP individuals through office visits and phone conversations.

The resources available to Stutsman County, and overall costs to provide LEP assistance:

Stutsman County reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance and identified which of its documents would be most valuable to be translated if the need should arise. Local citizens will likely be available to provide Spanish translation if needed, and other languages will be interpreted through a telephone interpreter line for which the County would pay a fee.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE

A person who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English may be a Limited English Proficient person and may be entitled to language assistance with respect to Stutsman County services. Language assistance can include interpretation, which means oral or spoken transfer of a message from one language into another and/or translation, which means the written transfer of a message from one language into another language.

How the Stutsman County staff may identify an LEP person who needs language

assistance:

- All county staff will be provided with “I Speak” cards to assist in identifying the language interpretation needed if the occasion arises.
- All Stutsman County staff will be informally surveyed periodically on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.
- When Stutsman County sponsors an informational meeting or event, a staff person may greet participants as they arrive. By informally engaging participants in conversation it is possible to gauge each attendee’s ability to speak and understand English. Although translation may not be able to be provided at the event it will help identify the need for future events.

Language Assistance Measures:

Although there is a very low percentage of LEP individuals in Stutsman County, that is, persons who speak English “not well” or “not at all”, it will strive to offer the following measures:

1. The Stutsman County staff will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to LEP clients who have difficulty communicating English.
2. The following resources will be available to accommodate LEP persons:
 - Local interpreters for Spanish language will be provided within a reasonable time period.
 - Language interpretation will be accessed for all other languages through a telephone interpretation service.

STAFF TRAINING

The following training will be provided to all staff:

- Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities.
- Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
- Use of the “I Speak” cards.
- Documentation of language assistance requests.
- How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

All contractors or subcontractors performing work for Stutsman County will be required to follow the Title VI/LEP guidelines.

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS

Stutsman County weighed the cost and benefits of translating documents for potential LEP groups. Considering the expense of translating documents, the likelihood of frequent changes in documents and other relevant factors, at this time it is an unnecessary burden to have any documents translated.

Due to the very small local LEP population, Stutsman County does not have a formal outreach procedure in place, as of 2011. Translation resources have been identified and are limited in this region. However, when and if the need arises for LEP outreach, Stutsman County will consider the following options:

- When staff prepares a document, or schedules a meeting, for which the target audience is expected to include LEP individuals, the documents, meeting notices, flyers, and agendas will be printed in an alternative language based on the known LEP population.

MONITORING

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan:

Stutsman County will update the LEP Plan as required. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed and updated when data from the 2020 U.S. Census is available, or when it is clear that higher concentrations of LEP individuals are present in the Stutsman County service area. Updates will include the following:

- The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually.
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Determination as to whether the need for translation services has changed.
- Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.
- Determine whether Stutsman County's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
- Determine whether Stutsman County fully complies with the goals of this LEP Plan.
- Determine whether complaints have been received concerning the agency's failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals.

DISSEMINATION OF THE STUTSMAN COUNTY LEP PLAN

- Post signs at County Courthouse notifying LEP persons of the LEP Plan and how to access language services.
- State on agendas and public notices in the language that LEP persons would understand that documents are available in that language upon request at the County Courthouse.

