

# Limited English Proficiency Plan

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Gem County

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This *Limited English Proficiency Plan* has been prepared to address Gem County's responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English 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 Gem County departments receiving federal grant funds.

- **PLAN SUMMARY**

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

## II. MEANINGFUL ACCESS: FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS

1. **The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to require Gem County services.**

Gem County staff reviewed the 2010 U.S. Census Report and determined that 92 % of the Gem County population 5 years and over speak English as their primary language. 8.4% of Gem County’s population speaks a language other than English as their primary language. Of those, 3.6% speak English less than very well. In Gem County, of those persons with limited English proficiency, the primary language is Spanish or Spanish Creole, Other Indo-European and Other Languages.

**2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Gem County services.**

Gem County staff has reviewed the frequency with which the commissioners, office staff and court staff have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. In the past year, the county has had requests for Spanish and Punjabi interpreters in the court system. Other departments have served customers who speak Spanish, Hindi, German, Chinese and Portuguese. Most of these customers brought someone with them to help them communicate with county staff. The Commissioners and office staff have had very little contact with LEP persons.

**3. The nature and importance of services provided by Gem County to the LEP population.**

There is no large geographic concentration of any type of LEP individuals in the service area for Gem County. The overwhelming majority of the population, 92%, speak English. As a result, there are few social, service, professional and leadership organizations within the Gem County service area that focus on outreach to LEP individuals. The Gem County Commissioners and staff are most likely to encounter LEP individuals through office visits, phone conversations and court appearances.

**4. The resources available to Gem County, and overall costs to provide LEP assistance.**

Gem County reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance and have identified employees and local citizens that would be willing to provide voluntary Spanish translation if needed within a reasonable time period. Other language translation if needed would be provided through a telephone interpreter line for which the county would pay a fee.

**III. 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 Gem County services. Language assistance can include interpretation, which means oral or spoken transfer of a message from one language into another language and/or translation, which means the written transfer of a message from one language into another language.

How Gem County staff may identify and LEP person who needs language assistance:

- Post notice of LEP Plan and the availability of interpretation or translation services free of charge in languages LEP persons would understand.
- All county staff will be provided with a “Language Identification Flashcard” to assist in identifying the language interpretation needed if the occasion arises.
- All county staff will be informally surveyed periodically on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.

**A. Language Assistance Measures**-Although there is a very low percentage in Gem County of LEP individuals, that is, persons who speak English “not Well’ or “not at all”, it will strive to offer the following measures:

1. Gem 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:
  - i. Volunteer interpreters for the Spanish language are available and will be provided within a reasonable time period. A list of volunteers and the languages they speak will be available to county employees.
  - ii. The Court system, Marriage License Applicants, Motor Vehicle and Driver’s Services have resources available to assist LEP persons through assistance from the State of Idaho Transportation Department, Vital Statics and the Supreme Court.
  - iii. Language interpretation will be accessed for all other languages through a telephone interpretation service.

#### **IV. 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 “Language Identification Flashcard”.
- Documentation of language assistance requests.
- How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

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

#### **V. TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS**

- Gem County weighed the cost and benefits of translating documents for potential LEP groups. Considering the expense of translating the documents, the likelihood of frequent changes in documents and other relevant factors, at this time it is an unnecessary burden to have any additional documents translated.
- Due to the very small local LEP population, Gem County does not have a formal outreach procedure in place, as of 2013. Translation resources have been identified and are limited in this region. However, when and if the need arises for LEP outreach, Gem County will consider the following options:
  - a. When staff prepares a document, or schedules a meeting, for which the target audience is expected to include LEP individuals, then documents, meeting notices,

flyers, and agendas will be printed in an alternative language based on the know LEP population.

## **VI. MONITORING**

**Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan-** Gem 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 Gem 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 Gem County's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed.
- Determine whether Gem 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.

## **VII. DISSEMINATION OF THE GEM COUNTY LEP PLAN**

- Post signs at the Courthouse notifying LEP persons of the LEP Plan and how to access language services.