

# Language Access Plan

**Bureau of the Fiscal Service  
U.S. Department of the Treasury**

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# LANGUAGE ACCESS ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING FOR FISCAL SERVICE

## I. OVERVIEW

The goal of all language access planning and implementation is to ensure that Fiscal Service communicates effectively with Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals.<sup>1</sup> As the Attorney General notes in the [Memorandum to all Federal Agencies Regarding the Federal Government's Renewed Commitment to Language Access Obligations Under Executive Order 13166](#), which requires ensuring effective communication at all points of contact between an LEP person and your agency.<sup>2</sup> This plan will walk through Fiscal Service's plan to overcome language barriers by developing capabilities, uniting engagement, measuring experience, and elevating delivery. Fiscal Service will break the plan down into quantifiable steps while sharing the results and updates as they are completed.

## II. SCOPE

The obligations of Executive Order 13166 apply to all federal conducted and assisted programs. In the [Memorandum for Heads of Federal Agencies regarding the Federal Government's Renewed Commitment to Language Access Obligations Under Executive Order 13166](#), the Attorney General directed federal agencies that provide federal financial assistance to draft LEP guidance for agencies that are recipients of federal financial assistance (recipients).

The term federal financial assistance includes, but is not limited to, grants and loans of federal funds; grants or donations of federal property; training; details of federal personnel; or any agreement, arrangement, or other contract which has as one of its purposes the provision of assistance. Fiscal Service will directly or indirectly obtain information and maintain records that ensure support the level of customer interactions (examples include individual, federal agencies, financial agencies, Federal Reserve Banks, and Financial Institutions).

## III. EXECUTION

Fiscal Service will execute the plan over a period of time by completing sequential steps, measuring the current level of interaction with LEP, assessing results to elevate delivery, and developing needed capabilities to unite engagement with LEP individuals. The goal in the execution of the Plain Language plan is to more effectively communicate with LEP as evidenced from the feedback received from surveys across all program areas interacting with individuals. The feedback received from surveys will be documented and prioritized based on the criticality of the issue in preventing successful communication for LEP individuals. The process measuring experience, developing capabilities to unite engagement will be ongoing.

<sup>1</sup> See Exec. Order No. 13166, 65 Fed Reg. 50,121 (Aug. 11, 2000), <http://www.lep.gov/13166/colep.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See Attorney General Holder Memorandum to All Federal Agencies Regarding the Federal Government's Renewed Commitment to Language Access Obligations Under Executive Order 13166 (February 17, 2011), [http://www.lep.gov/13166/AG\\_021711\\_EO\\_13166\\_Memo\\_to\\_Agencies\\_with\\_Supplement.pdf](http://www.lep.gov/13166/AG_021711_EO_13166_Memo_to_Agencies_with_Supplement.pdf).

## **A. Measure Experience - Conduct a self-assessment to determine interaction with the LEP population.**

Fiscal Service will complete an assessment to determine if it communicates effectively with LEP individuals and can inform language access program planning. Divided into five sections, the self- assessment approximates the elements that are part of effective language access policy directives and implementation plans: (1) understanding how LEP individuals interact with your agency; (2) providing language assistance services; (3) training staff on policies and procedures; (4) providing notice of language assistance services and (5) monitoring, evaluating, and updating the language access policy directives, plans, and procedures.<sup>3</sup>

### **1. Data for Fiscal Service Self-Assessments**

Provided below is additional information to describe the five elements of data being captured by program areas for individual customers. While the information may differ in the program areas, each area will consider and collect feedback from each of these elements to be included the in the Fiscal Service plan.

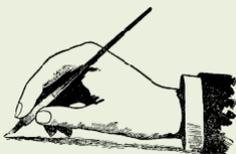
#### **a. Understanding How LEP Individuals Interact with Your Agency**

Each program area will document what vehicle is used and common questions ask when interacting with customers from the general public. Any interaction with the public has the potential to interact with LEP individuals. These could include, but are not limited to, program applicants and participants; information line calls; outreach programs; public access to agency websites; written materials; and agency brochures intended for public distribution.

#### **b. Providing Language Assistance Services**

Effective communication with LEP individuals requires your Fiscal Service to have language assistances services in place. There are two primary types of language assistance services: oral and written. Oral language assistance service may come in the form of "in-language" communication (a demonstrably qualified bilingual staff member communicating directly in an LEP person's language) or interpreting.

**TRANSLATION** is a **WRITTEN** language assistance service.



Translation is the replacement of written text from one language into another. A translator also must be qualified and trained. Federal agencies and recipients may need to identify and translate vital documents to ensure LEP individuals have meaningful access to important written information. Agencies should proactively translate vital written documents into the frequently encountered languages of LEP groups eligible to be served or likely to be affected by the benefit, program, or service.

#### **c. Training of Staff on Policies and Procedures**

It is strongly recommended that training should be mandatory for staff who have the

potential to interact or communicate with LEP individuals, staff whose job it is to arrange for language assistance services, and managers. Training will explain how staff can identify the language needs of an LEP individual, access and provide the necessary language assistance services, work with interpreters, request document translations, and track the use of language assistance services. Without periodic assessment and training, bilingual staff may not be able to provide the language assistance services necessary to ensure LEP individuals have meaningful access to your agency's programs.

**d. Providing Notice of Language Assistance Services**

Fiscal Service must inform LEP individuals of their eligibility for benefits, programs, and services in a language they understand. Fiscal Service will assess all points of contact, telephone, in-person, mail, and electronic communication its staff has with the public and LEP individuals when determining the best method of providing notice of language assistance services. We will not only translate its outreach materials, but also explain how LEP individuals may access available language assistance services. Methods used to inform LEP individuals about language assistance services may include translating outreach materials into other languages, updating non-English content in key languages on the main page of the program website, and providing public service messages in non-English media describing your programs.

**e. Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Language Access Policy Directives, Plans, and Procedures**

Fiscal Service will regularly monitor and evaluate information for changes and/ or updates to the needs of individuals to continue the Language Plan's effectiveness. These updates could include modifications to websites, options on phone lines, or written guidance, policies, or procedures. Monitoring the effectiveness of Fiscal Service programs could include:

- Surveying staff on how often they use language assistance services, if they believe there should be changes in the way services are provided or the providers that are used, and if they believe that the language assistance services in place are meeting the needs of the LEP communities in the service area.
- Conducting customer satisfaction surveys of LEP applicants and beneficiaries based on their actual experience of accessing the agency's benefits, programs, information, or services.
- Observing and evaluating agency interactions with LEP individuals.
- Considering new resources including funding, collaborations with other agencies, human resources, emerging technology, and other mechanisms for ensuring improved access for LEP individuals.
- Monitoring your agency's response rate to complaints or suggestions by LEP individuals, community members, and employees regarding language assistance services provided.
- Using available online translation tools on customer facing Fiscal Service web pages to ensure all necessary information is translatable.

Fiscal Service will create a record of language assistance services that can help inform individual programs in the enterprise whether there should be changes to the quantity or type of

language assistance services. The monitoring and review of current policies and the types of language assistance services provided will occur on a regular basis.

## **B. Elevate Delivery - Reviewing Assessment Results**

Fiscal Service will record and analyze all results from program areas to determine areas of improvement. This effort will be to continuously improve the customer experience to increase satisfaction and build confidence and trust with LEP individuals. Fiscal Service will look at best practices and leverage solutions from other federal agencies to create synergies. Fiscal Service will look to create solutions for individual program areas that can be rolled enterprise wide. The results of the self-assessment and proposed solutions will be shared with executives.

## **C. Develop Capabilities - Initiate Implementation Plan and Standard Procedures.**

- **Language Access Policy-** Policy sets forth standards, operating principles, and guidelines that govern the delivery of language for Fiscal Service enterprise services. Policy directives may come in different forms but are designed to align the agency and its staff to ensure clear communication through meaningful access. Policy will be made publicly available.
- **Language Access Implementation Plan-** The plan is a management document that outlines how Fiscal Service will define tasks, sets deadlines and priorities, assigns responsibility, and allocates the resources necessary to come into or maintain compliance with language access requirements. The plan is a roadmap that assists in navigating the process of identifying responsible personnel for policy and procedures development; assess and ensure quality control of language assistance services; provide notice of language assistance services; provide staff training; and conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
- **Language Access Procedures-** The Standard Operating Procedures are the "how to" for staff. They specify for staff the sequential steps to follow to provide language services, gather data, and deliver services to LEP individuals. Standard Operating Procedures can be set forth in electronic and hard copy form.
- **Execution of Implementation Plan -** When any Fiscal Service provides federal financial assistance it ensures that recipients acknowledge and agree that they will comply (and require any sub-grantees, contractors, successors, transferees, and assignees to comply) with applicable provisions of federal civil rights laws and policies prohibiting discrimination, including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits recipients from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin, including limited English proficiency.
- **Language Access Tools –** Provide the ability to utilize available free online translation tools for those who speak languages other than English. Tools must ensure that all necessary information on customer-facing Fiscal Service web pages is translatable.

## **D. Unite Engagement – Enterprise Participation for LEP Customers**

Program areas with customer audiences of individuals will be identified and unified to create best practices, enterprise wide. This group will research and collect common practices across federal agencies to build and strengthen the knowledge for communicating with LEP individuals. This will allow for a Fiscal Service strategic perspective that will be implemented consistently in all program areas interacting with the same customer base.