



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response



Resources for Serving Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English are considered limited English proficient, or “LEP.” Entities that receive Federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to provide persons with limited English proficiency meaningful access to the programs, services, and information that they provide.

Legal authority is found in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on national origin. In addition, Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to LEP persons, and develop and implement a system to provide those services so persons with limited English proficiency can have meaningful access to them. Many Federal and other resources are available for emergency managers for translation and interpretation services:

- The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) provides a list of contractors that provide interpretation and translation services. There are also services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and persons who are blind or have low vision. The list can be accessed at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21158>.
- The National Language Service Corps (NLSC) is a Congressionally-authorized civilian corps of volunteers with certified expertise in languages important to the well-being of the United States. It is currently a pilot project with over 1,000 charter members. Information can be found at <http://www.nlscorps.org>.
- LEP.gov, the website of the Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency, has a list of interpretation and translation services, including regional and state-based organizations. Information can be found at http://www.lep.gov/interp_translation/trans_interpret.html.
- CDC’s SNAPS database lists the top five languages spoken in any given locality. This information can be useful as a starting point for determining language assistance that may be needed, and can be accessed at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/snaps/>.
- The Office of Minority Health’s *Think Cultural Health* initiative provides resources that would be pertinent to emergency managers and the provision of language access services. *The Health Care Language Services Implementation Guide*, as well as the *Cultural Competency Curriculum for Disaster Preparedness and Crisis Response*, provides valuable tools for the implementation of language access services as well as skill-building for working with interpreters and translation organizations. Both of these resources can be accessed at <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/> and through <http://www.diversitypreparedness.org/>.
- The Refugee Health Information Network (RHIN), sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and its National Library of Medicine, is a national collaborative partnership that has created a database of quality multilingual, public health resources for those providing care to resettled refugees and asylees. Resources include health education materials in various languages and formats (brochures, fact sheets, videos), provider tools (including information on refugee populations and cultures), and links to related Web sites. This resource can be accessed at <http://rhin.org/Default.aspx>.
- The National Health Law Program’s “Language Services Resource Guide” provides information on language services, including a list of national and state interpreter and translator services. It can be accessed at <http://www.healthlaw.org/images/stories/issues/ResourceGuideFinal.pdf>.
- The Migration Policy Institute’s Language Portal provides access to hundreds of state and local agency documents used to provide services to Limited English Proficient clients. It can be searched by state, language, and service delivery type and is found at http://www.migrationinformation.org/integration/language_portal/search.cfm.
- Local groups, such as community-based cultural organizations, may offer translation services. Local colleges and universities with foreign language programs may also be a resource. In addition, Medical Reserve Corps units may have interpreters as part of their community-based teams.