



**Hillsborough
County Florida**

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

Prepared For
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
CDBG and HOME Programs
June 1, 2021

Affordable Housing Services Department
601 E. Kennedy Blvd, 24th Floor
Tampa, FL 33602



SUBJECT: AHS Plan FOR COMMUNICATION WITH PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/4/21

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN: To document program plan guidelines and procedures used by the Affordable Housing Services (AHS) staff to ensure full citizen participation in the plan development and recommendations on local, state and federal funding awards, as well as community events sponsored by AHS, and programs funded through local, state and federal awards.

A. PLAN:

1. *Objectives*: The AHS Plan for Providing Communication with Persons with Limited English Proficiency will assure that Affordable Housing Services (AHS) will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful and equal access to participate in every opportunity for public comment, including but not limited to: identifying neighborhood and county needs and funding priorities, commenting on draft Annual Action Plans (AAP), Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), Five-Year Consolidated Plans, Local Housing Assistance Plans and Incentive Strategies, Five-Year Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plans, HOPE Affordable Housing Biennial Plans, and community events sponsored by AHS. A Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individual is an individual who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

2. *Financial Commitment*: All interpreters, translators and other aids needed to comply with this plan shall be provided without cost to the person being served. Availability of communication assistance will be included in public notices.

3. *Staff Commitment*: Language assistance will be provided through use of competent bilingual staff, staff interpreters, contracts or formal arrangements with local organizations providing interpretation or translation services, or technology and telephonic interpretation services.

B. PROCEDURES:

1. *Ascertaining LEP needs in Hillsborough County*: AHS will assess changes in demographics and create an annual profile of language trends in Unincorporated Hillsborough County, Temple Terrace and Plant City, including the number and proportion of LEP persons in the jurisdictions.

2. *Accommodating LEP Persons*: AHS will consult with Hillsborough County's Communications and Digital Media Department on fulfilling objectives of LEP Plan.

3. *Identifying Appropriate Bilingual Staff*: All staff will be provided notice of this plan and procedure. AHS will identify and train staff bilingual in frequently encountered languages spoken in the County.

Staff that may have direct contact with LEP individuals will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter.

If bilingual staff or staff interpreter is not available or does not speak the needed language, AHS will obtain an outside interpreter.

4. *Provision of written materials:* AHS will provide all written plans and announcements in identified languages as required or requested.

AHS will prepare notices in identified languages for print in local newspapers as required or requested. Currently, notices are also placed in two newspapers that target minority audiences: La Gaceta and the Florida Sentinel.

5. *Provision of phone voice recordings:* AHS will provide announcements in identified languages.

6. *Monitoring of Performance:* AHS will regularly assess the efficacy of these procedures by strategies, including but not limited to: mechanisms for securing interpreter services, feedback from LEP persons, and modifying plan and procedures accordingly.

7. *Other Federal Requirements:* The County will comply with all applicable "Other Federal Requirements" to include but not be limited to Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.