



Introduction

The Town of West Hartford ("Town") is committed to ensuring that all residents, program participants, clients and visitors, regardless of their proficiency in English, have access to Town programs and services. As part of that commitment, the Town has developed this Language Access Policy and Plan to provide guidance to its employees that interface with the public and as a resource in order to better serve its community.

Purpose and Authority

The Town's Language Access 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.

The intent of this plan is to help identify reasonable steps for providing assistance to non-English speakers and persons with limited English proficiency who wish to access and participate in Town programs, services and activities. As defined by Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for persons with Limited English Proficiency," Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons are those whose primary language is not English and have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. An LEP individual may display competence in certain types of communication (ex. speaking or understanding) but still be LEP for other purposes (ex. reading or writing).¹

Policy

The Town of West Hartford recognizes that removing language barriers is vital to the work of achieving equitable access to Town services. Accordingly, the Town is committed to taking reasonable steps to ensure that individuals with Limited English Proficiency have access and opportunity to participate in programs, services and activities. It is the policy of the Town of West Hartford to provide meaningful communication and access to LEP individuals. This policy also includes the communication of information contained in documents such as, but not limited to, notices of public hearings, public information concerning proposed capital projects and public outreach programs. Interpreters, translators and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided at no cost to the individual being served.

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



Factors Assessed to Ensure Meaningful Access for LEP Persons

The plan was developed based on the guidance of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights, which asks that recipients of federal funding, such as the Town of West Hartford, to consider the following factors in putting together a language access policy and plan: (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or grantee; (2) the frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the program; (3) the nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the recipient to its beneficiaries; and (4) the resources available to the Town of West Hartford and the costs of interpretation/translation services.²

As of 2020, 17.3% of West Hartford, CT residents were born outside of the United States. However, based on census data, none of the households in West Hartford, CT reported speaking a non-English language at home as their primary language.³ This does not consider the potential multi-lingual nature of households, but only the primary self-reported language spoken by all members of the household.⁴ Given the lack of statistical census data available, the Town contacted its local police department, social services department and school board to determine the proportion of LEP persons served by those respective Town departments. Spanish was reported to be the most common non-English language spoken by those who participate in the Town's programs and services. Some departments also reported receiving requests for services in Portuguese, Russian and Mandarin.

Language Access Plan

All Town of West Hartford personnel are encouraged to review the following procedures when assisting individuals with limited English proficiency.

- (1) Identify the primary language. Town of West Hartford personnel shall attempt to identify the primary language of the individual seeking services. One way to accomplish this is to display the *Language Identification Guide "I-Speak" flashcard*, which features over 30 languages issued by DHS to the LEP individual. The flashcard will enable staff to effectively determine language needs, and provide language assistance to persons with LEP.

² <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-providers/laws-regulations-guidance/guidance-federal-financial-assistance-title-vi/index.html>

³ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/west-hartford-ct#:~:text=Foreign%2DBorn%20Population&text=10.6k%20people-,As%20of%202020%2C%2017.3%25%20of%20West%20Hartford%2C%20CT%20residents,the%20national%20average%20of%2013.5%25.>

⁴ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/west-hartford-ct>



- (2) Seek translation assistance. After identifying the primary language of the individual seeking services, Town of West Hartford personnel who are engaging with the LEP individual shall:
 - a. Attempt to seek assistance from other Town of West Hartford personnel who may speak the same language. The Town's Department of Human Resources maintains a list of Town employees who speak another language, and are willing to assist in translation services.
 - b. Seek assistance from family, friends, bystanders and community contacts.
 - c. In the event that Town personnel are not available and the use of family, friends, bystanders is not appropriate, then Town personnel may utilize phone interpretation (a three-way phone communication between a professional interpreter, the customer needing language assistance, and Town staff) or other professional interpretation/translators. Town staff have access to a contracted 24/7 service for immediate telephone access to a professional interpreter in 200+ languages.
- (3) Translation of documents. Town of West Hartford personnel may seek assistance from other Town of West Hartford personnel. In the event that the Town of West Hartford personnel or voluntary interpreters are not available, Town personnel may utilize one of the contracted translation services.

Language Resources

In order to ensure the accessibility of its programs and services, the Town of West Hartford has committed to the following:

- Maintain a list of bilingual employees who are willing to provide translation and/or interpretation services, depending on the language spoken by the individual and the availability of staff at a particular day and time.
- Distribute this list to Town departments that regularly interface with public.
- Ensure that the Town's website and its notifications are accessible to the public in over 100 languages.
- Maintain contracts with language translation services, including sign language services to ensure access to programs and services.
- Provide notifications in Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Mandarin of the availability of LEP assistance in submitting complaint forms.
- Issue training and instruction to staff regarding the provisions of this plan to provide assistance to persons with LEP.



- Proactively inform individuals with LEP that language assistance is available at no cost.
- Partner with local community groups to assist with dissemination of information to specific populations.
- Offer a variety of free beginning, intermediate and advanced English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.
- Maintain signage at public pools in multiple languages.
- Provide dual language books in the Town of West Hartford Libraries Welcome Centers.
- Maintain Google Translate on the West Hartford Libraries website.
- Social Services Department shall continue to maintain a recorded telephonic message in English and Spanish.
- Public Safety Personnel shall continue to utilize Language Line to respond to persons in their primary language.
- Post the Language Access Plan on the Town's website to notify the public that language assistance services are available, as needed, to meaningfully access the Town of West Hartford's services, program and activities.

Outreach and Assessment

All informational flyers generated by the Town's Social Services Department are also translated and provided in Spanish. The Town of West Hartford will, on a continuing basis, identify vital documents that are routinely provided to citizens that will be translated into Spanish, and other languages, upon request.

On an on-going basis, the Town will monitor the effectiveness of its LAP and evaluate areas for improvement of its policies, procedures, protocols and training, consistent with the Town's vision to be a welcoming, innovative, livable and prosperous community with a unique diversity across economic, religious, social, and cultural spectrums.

The Town will also consult with community-based organizations in assessing the needs of the community, particularly the needs of individuals with LEP, seek out suggestions for improvement, implement appropriate language access strategies to ensure individuals with LEP have meaningful access, and seek input from community stakeholders in updating the plan.

Persons requiring language services should contact:

Town of West Hartford Human Resources Specialist Claudia Tata at 860-561-7483 or Claudia.Tata@WestHartfordCT.gov.



Complaint Procedure for LEP Individuals

Any LEP individual has a right to file a complaint against the agency where he or she believes that the agency did not provide necessary LEP services as appropriate. These complaints include those available under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and as outlined in the Town of West Hartford's Nondiscrimination policy and complaint process [Equity Advancement - Town of West Hartford \(westhartfordct.gov\)](https://www.westhartfordct.gov/equity-advancement).

A Spanish version of the Discrimination Complaint Form is available for any Spanish LEP individual who wishes to lodge a complaint. For any LEP individual whose primary language is not English or Spanish, then the Town will, on an as needed basis, translate applicable complaint forms for the complainant and provide the complainant with written notice of the disposition of the complaint in the complainant's primary language.

- If information is needed in another language contact, 860-561-7483.
- Si necesita esta información en otro lenguaje, llame al 860-561-7483.
- Jeśli potrzebne są informacje w innym języku, prosimy o kontakt z nami pod numerem 860-561-7483.
- 如果需要以另一語言獲得相關資訊，請聯絡 860-561-7483.