

**Manatee County
Title VI/Nondiscrimination Policy and Plan
for Sub-Recipients in the Local Agency Program (LAP)**

Board of County Commission adopted July 7, 2016

Policy Statement:

The County values diversity and welcomes input from all interested parties, regardless of cultural identity, background or income level. Moreover, the County believes that the best programs and services result from careful consideration of the needs of all of its communities and when those communities are involved in the transportation decision making process. Thus, County does not tolerate discrimination in any of its programs, services or activities. Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal and state authorities, the County will not exclude from participation in, deny the benefits of, or subject to discrimination anyone on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, income or family status.

Complaint Procedures:

The County has established a discrimination complaint procedure and will take prompt and reasonable action to investigate and eliminate discrimination when found. Any person who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, family or income status in any of County programs, services or activities may file a complaint with the County Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator:

Carmine DeMilio (ADA Coordinator)
Attn: Property Management Department
Manatee County
1112 Manatee Ave W
Bradenton, FL 34208
Email: carmine.demilio@mymanatee.org
Phone: (941) 792-8784
Hearing Impaired: 800-955-8771 (TDD)

If possible, the complaint should be submitted in writing and contain the identity of the complainant; the basis for the allegations (i.e., race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or family status); and a description of the alleged discrimination with the date of occurrence. If the complaint cannot be submitted in writing, the complainant should contact the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator for assistance.

The Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator will respond within thirty (30) calendar days and will take reasonable steps to resolve a complaint, the County will forward the complaint, along

with a record of its disposition to the appropriate District of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The County's Title VI Coordinator has direct access to the County Administrator and is not required to obtain management or other approval to discuss discrimination issues with the County Administrator. However, should the complainant be unable or unwilling to complain to the County, the written complaint may be submitted directly to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). FDOT will serve as a clearing house, forwarding the complaint to the appropriate state or federal agency:

Florida Department of Transportation
Equal Opportunity Office
Attn: Title VI Complaint Processing
605 Suwannee Street MS 65
Tallahassee, FL 32399

ADA/504 Statement:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and related federal and state laws and regulations forbid discrimination against those who have disabilities. Furthermore, these laws require federal aid recipients and other government entities to take affirmative steps to reasonably accommodate the disabled and ensure that their needs are equitably represented in transportation programs, services and activities.

The County will make every effort to ensure that its facilities, programs, services, and activities are accessible to those with disabilities. The County will make every effort to ensure that its advisory committees, public involvement activities and all programs, services and activities include representation by the disabled community and disability service groups.

The County encourages the public to report to any facility, program, service or activity that appears inaccessible to those who are disabled. Furthermore, the County will provide reasonable accommodation to disabled individuals who wish to participate in public involvement events or who require special assistance to access facilities, programs, services or activities. Because providing reasonable accommodation may require outside assistance, organization or resources, the County asks that requests be made at least (5) calendar days prior to the need for the accommodation.

Questions, concerns, comments or requests for accommodations should be made to the County's ADA Coordinator:

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Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166, and various directives from the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and the US Department of Transportation (DOT) require federal aid recipients to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to programs, services and activities by those who do not speak English proficiently. To determine the extent to which LEP services are required and in which languages, the law requires the analysis of four factors:

- The number of proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the County's programs, services or activities.
- The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.
- The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people's lives and;
- The resources available to the County and the likely costs of the LEP services.

1. Using 2016 census data, the County has determined that LEP individuals speaking English less than well represent approximately 7% of the community. Spanish is the prevalent LEP language. According to the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS), Manatee County has a total population of 318,079 aged 5 years and over. The ACS estimates that 265,271 (83 percent) of that population speak English at home while 37,511, or 7 percent, speak Spanish at home. Of those, the ACS estimates that approximately 16,947, or 45 percent of Spanish speakers, speak English "less than very well.". Approximately seven percent of the total population of Manatee County speak English "less than very well.". Manatee County has targeted Spanish speakers as the predominant LEP population for assistance. Manatee County will work to target areas with a high proportion of Spanish speaking populations to ensure all needs for assistance are met.

2. The County performed a survey in 2016 with an LEP question. That question asked respondents what language other than English was spoken at home. The respondents indicated 22 percent speak a language other than English at home. In addition, a follow up question on the survey queried respondents as to what language, or languages other than English were spoken at home. The result indicated that Spanish is the most common language other than English spoken at home among respondents to the survey.

3. The County believes that transportation is of critical importance to its public, as access to health care, emergency services, employment, and other essentials would be difficult or impossible without reliable transportation systems. Additionally, the County will advise the public of how to access its nondiscrimination and public involvement policies. In addition, Manatee County forwards all persons calling the customer service line who speak only Spanish

to a County Spanish speaking agent. The result of these efforts has assisted Manatee County in better serving LEP populations. In addition, Manatee County employs a very diverse workforce. Many operators and road supervisors are bilingual and fluent in both Spanish and English. This furthers Manatee County's efforts to ensure users have access to Manatee County program information in both languages.

4. Based on the current resources available, Manatee County is currently providing the most cost-effective means of delivering competent and accurate language services within its service area. Manatee County will continue to monitor the need for additional language assistance, including the need for greater dissemination of information in the existing languages provided and/or translation to new languages. If additional services are needed, Manatee County will determine which additional language assistance measures are cost effective and feasible for implementation based on current and projected financial resources.

After completing the Four Factor Analysis, the Language Assistance Plan, or LEP Plan, addresses the results and further direction.

Individuals who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English are considered LEP persons. Manatee County recognizes that this information indicates special effort is necessary to communicate important information to some of our citizens. In order to meet this need, Manatee County takes the following steps:

- Seek out opportunities to conduct outreach to the community and faith based organizations serving minority populations.
- Provide language assistance on its customer service line.
- Participate in updates to the County's evacuation and disaster preparedness plans to ensure the plans include the needs of all community members, and especially LEP, low income, and minority populations.
- Continue to review programs, activities, and services provided to ensure that LEP persons can participate and utilize our services.

To determine how best to continue reaching LEP persons in Manatee County and improve current ongoing efforts, Manatee County will continue to conduct targeted needs assessments and gather data to gain an understanding of the need.

Manatee County provides notice to LEP persons and provides language assistance in many ways, including the following:

Safety and Security. Several road supervisors speak Spanish and assist the public with translations. Further, our call center has Spanish speaking representatives that assist those that are more comfortable with the Spanish language.

Website. currently, Manatee County's website provides visual aids and maps to provide information regarding services.

Training. Employee training for new employees and refresher training provided

annually to employees reminds them of the importance of conveying information to citizens as part of their customer service training.

Customer Service. Telephone lines are equipped to the extent possible with persons who speak Spanish and English. Personnel who are bilingual are identified for providing additional assistance.

Community Outreach. Manatee County makes available persons who can serve as translators at community outreach meetings whenever possible.

Manatee County provides an ongoing needs assessment to determine how best to continue reaching LEP persons and improve ongoing efforts. To ensure that the intent of the LEP plan remains current, Manatee County staff will continue to monitor and update the plan and report progress every three years. These efforts include the following actions:

Monitor current LEP populations in the service area and in emerging populations affected or encountered.

Document and monitor frequency of encounters with LEP language groups.

Assess the availability of resources, including technological advances (e.g., ITS projects), and the cost imposed. Further, to determine the success in meeting the needs of the LEP community.

Communicate the goals and objectives of the LEP plan and evaluate the opportunity for community involvement and planning.

Strive to identify sources of assistance and opportunities to implement LEP goals.

Indicate the availability of language services on outreach documents, brochures, booklets, and in recruitment materials.

Conduct outreach presentations and notices to schools, community, and faith based organizations. Manatee County will provide announcements and collect information on how best to serve LEP persons through community and faith based organizations.

When possible, include Spanish and other languages on its website. Front line personnel will routinely provide information on LEP persons in order to best address identified needs.

Strive to provide excellent customer service, in person and over the phone, in other languages.

Participate to the greatest extent possible in local events.

Manatee County will provide ample training opportunities for employees to assist LEP populations with timely and reasonable language assistance. Manatee County will conduct the following activities:

Provide information on LEP policies and procedures as part of new employee orientation and staff retraining.

Require staff to complete customer service training and be provided guidance on working effectively with in person and telephone interpreters.

Inform recipient staff how LEP services can be obtained.

Train staff on how to respond to LEP persons including callers, through written communications, and through in person contact.

Strive to ensure the competency of interpreters and translation services per federal DOT (Department of Transportation) LEP Guidance Section VII (2).

Public Involvement:

In order to plan for efficient, effective, safe, equitable and reliable transportation systems, the County must have the input of its public. The County spends extensive staff and financial resources in furtherance of this goal and strongly encourages the participation of the entire community. The County holds a number of transportation meetings, workshops and other events designed to gather public input on project planning and construction. Further, the County attends and participates in other community events to promote its services to the public. Finally, the County is constantly seeking ways of measuring the effectiveness of its public involvement.

Persons wishing to request special presentations by the County; volunteer in any of its activities or offer suggestions for improvement of County public involvement may contact:

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Data Collection:

Federal Highway Administration regulations require federal-aid recipients to collect racial, ethnic and other similar demographic data on beneficiaries of or those affected by transportation programs, services and activities. The County accomplishes this through the use of census data,

American Community Survey reports, Environmental Screening Tools (EST), driver and ridership surveys, its community development department and other methods. From time to time, the County may find it necessary to request voluntary identification of certain racial, ethnic or other data from those who participate in its public involvement events. This information assists the County with improving its targeted outreach and measures of effectiveness. Self-identification of personal data to the County will always be voluntary and anonymous. Moreover, the County will not release or otherwise use this data in any manner inconsistent with the federal regulations.

Assurances:

Every three years, or commensurate with a change in County executive leadership year, the County must certify to FHWA and FDOT that its programs, services and activities are being conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner. These certifications are termed “assurances” and serve two important purposes. First, they document the County’s commitment to nondiscrimination and equitable service to its community. Second, they serve as a legally enforceable agreement by which the County may be held liable for breach. The public may view the annual assurance on the County’s website or by visiting the County’s offices.