



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Limited English Proficiency Plan

Adopted: (November 8, 2021)

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This Limited English Proficiency Plan has been prepared to address the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English language skills. The 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 FWC is committed to providing meaningful access and will provide written translation for any of its documents, when reasonable, effective and within the available resources. In other cases, the FWC will strive to provide alternative but meaningful accessibility. Moreover, the FWC continually evaluates its programs, services and activities to ensure that persons who may be LEP are always provided with meaningful access.

Federal guidance for recipients on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act indicates that differing treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English is a type of national origin discrimination (e.g., *Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons* (February 18, 2011, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2011-04-18/pdf/2011-9336.pdf>) Title VI applies to all state and local agencies which receive federal funds.

### Key Terms

a) **Limited English Proficient Persons:** Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

b) **Bilingual Persons:** Persons who are bilingual are fluent in two languages and are able to conduct the business of the workplace in either of those languages. This is to be distinguished from proficiency in more than one language. An individual who is proficient in a language may, for example, be able to greet an LEP individual in his or her language, but not conduct agency business in that language. Interpretation and translation require the interpreter to be fluently bilingual, and also require additional specific skills as described below in (c).

c) **Interpretation and translation:** Interpretation involves *oral* communication. Translation involves *written* communication. Interpretation involves the immediate communication of meaning from one language into another. An interpreter conveys meaning orally, as a result, interpretation requires skills different from those needed for translation. Interpreting is a complex task that combines several abilities beyond language competence in order to enable delivery of an effective professional interpretation in a given setting. From the standpoint of the user, a successful interpretation is one that faithfully and accurately conveys the meaning of the source language orally, reflecting the style, register, and cultural context of the source message, without omissions, additions, or embellishments on the part of the interpreter. Interpreters may be physically present, or, in appropriate circumstances, may appear via videoconferencing or telephonically. When videoconferencing or telephonic interpretation are used, options include connecting directly to a specific professional interpreter with known qualifications or using a company that provides telephonic interpretation services and has in place quality control and privacy safeguards.

If bilingual staff is asked to interpret or translate, staff should be qualified to do so.

## Plan Summary

The FWC has developed this *Limited English Proficiency Plan* to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) who wish to access services provided. LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. This plan outlines how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, staff training that may be required, and how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available. In order to prepare this plan, the FWC used the four-factor LEP analysis which considers the following factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served by the FWC.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with FWC services.
3. The nature and importance of services provided by the FWC to the LEP population.
4. The interpretation services available to the FWC and overall cost to provide LEP assistance. A summary of the results of the four-factor analysis is in the following section.

## II. FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS

### **1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to require FWC services.**

The FWC staff reviewed the U.S. Census Report and determined that 7.9 million persons in Florida, 30.5% of the population speak a language other than English. Of those 7.9 million persons, 563,224 have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English "not well" or "not at all", this is only a 7.1 % of the overall population in Florida. In Florida, of those persons with limited English proficiency, 25.8% speak Spanish, 16.2% speak Indo-European languages and 22.1% speak Asian and Pacific Island languages and 11.8% speak other languages.

### **2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with the FWC services.**

The FWC staff reviewed the frequency with which office staff had contact with LEP persons. This information was collected and provided by Linguistica International, Inc. and FWC staff. According to Linguistica, in 2020, the FWC had 117 requests for interpreters for our Division of Law Enforcement Regional Dispatch Centers (107 Spanish, 4 Vietnamese, 2 Mandrin, 1 Korean, 1 Bengali, 1 Russian and 1 Haitian Creole). FWC staff estimated receiving approximately 1000 requests for phone call interpreter assistance and approximately 25 requests for FWC program assistance from LEP individuals. The largest concentration of LEP requests were Spanish.

### **3. The nature and importance of services provided by the FWC to the LEP population.**

In terms of importance, the FWC provides services and programs to all residents and non-residents, including LEP individuals seeking information on fish and wildlife activities in the State of Florida. These services may include habitat and species conservation, hunting, fishing, licensing, permitting, boating, wildlife and law enforcement. All of FWC's programs are important; however, those related to law enforcement, environment, hunting, fishing and

wildlife resources, are among the most important.

#### **4. The resources available to the FWC to provide LEP assistance.**

The FWC understands that it is a large entity serving a potentially large number of Spanish speaking individuals. The FWC makes every effort to make its programs, services and activities accessible to LEP individuals. In addition to documents that are routinely published in the most frequently encountered languages, the FWC will use available resources, both internal and external (e.g. Linguistica International, and agency staff), to accommodate reasonable requests for translation. Further, through the use of the 7-1-1- Relay Service, free oral interpretation services are available.

### **III. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE**

A person who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English may be a Limited English Proficient person and may be entitled to language assistance with respect to FWC services. Language assistance can include interpretation, which means oral or spoken transfer of a message from one language into another language and/or translation, which means the written transfer of a message from one language into another language.

Although the higher percentage of LEP individuals reside in the southern regions within the state, FWC currently offers the following language assistance measures:

1. The FWC staff will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to LEP individuals who have difficulty in communicating English.
2. The following resources will be available to accommodate LEP persons:
  - FWC will continue to provide written materials translated in Spanish on popular topics like boating, boating safety, birdwatching, living with Gopher Tortoises and translation of landowner consent notices and letters, at an approximate cost of \$14,000 annually.
  - Language interpretation may be also accessed through a telephone interpretation service provided by the State of Florida, called Florida Relay 7-1-1 ([www.ftri.org/relay](http://www.ftri.org/relay)).
  - A contact list of FWC bilingual staff will be made available on the FWC website.

The Division of Law Enforcement Regional Communication Dispatch Centers will continue to allocate \$1200 annually for Linguistica International, Inc services., which provides interpretation and translation services.

#### **Identifying an LEP person who needs language assistance:**

Step 1. Determine if the individual is limited English proficient (LEP)

- LEP person self-identifies as LEP; and/or
- LEP person requests an interpreter; and/ or

- During the interaction, FWC staff believes that the individual does not speak and understand English well enough to effectively participate in the conversation/interview or fully understand questions and answer them without difficulty.

Step 2. Determine the language spoken by the LEP person.

- LEP person self identifies language preference;
- LEP person's companion or an available document indicates language preference; and/or
- [LEP person identifies language preference through language identification tool.](#)

Step 3. Determine most efficient method to assist LEP person.

- Utilize internal bilingual staff to assist; and/or
- Utilize services through Florida 7-1-1 Relay; and/or
- Utilize contracted services through Linguistica International.

**Notifying LEP persons that language assistance is available:**

Post notice of LEP Plan and the availability of interpretation or translation services free of charge in languages LEP persons would understand on the FWC website. The website notice of available LEP assistance will include information on Language Assistance available through Florida 7-1-1 Relay services. Florida Relay is a service provided to residents in the State of Florida who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Disabled that connects them to standard (voice) telephone users. Calls can be made 24/7, 365 days a year allowing our Florida residents who are in need of Relay services to connect and communicate with anyone at any time.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Service Description</b>
<b>TTY</b>	800-955-8771	If you are using TTY equipment.
<b>Voice</b>	800-955-8770	If you are a standard (voice) user and are trying to connect with a Relay user.
<b>ASCII</b>	800-955-1339	If you are utilizing a computer.
<b>Voice Carry Over (VCO)</b>	877-955-8260	If you prefer to speak directly to the hearing person. When the hearing person speaks to you, the Relay Operator serves as your "ears" and types everything said to your TTY or VCO phone.
<b>Speech to Speech (STS)</b>	877-955-5334	If you have a speech disability and would prefer to have our specially trained Relay Operators serve as your voice and repeat your responses to the called party.
<b>Video Assisted STS</b>	877-955-5334	Video-Assisted STS supports a one-way video call between the CA and STS user. The video connection assists the CA in understanding the STS user's speech. Callers can enter contact information in the STS Profile to reduce set-up time.
<b>Spanish to Spanish</b>	877-955-8773	If you prefer to conduct your conversations in Spanish.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Service Description</b>
<b>Spanish to English Translation</b>	844-463-9710	If your primary language is Spanish, however your caller is an English speaker. Our Relay Operators are able to translate your conversation into English.
<b>French to French</b>	877-955-8707	If you prefer to conduct your conversation using the French language

#### **IV. STAFF TRAINING**

The following training will be provided to FWC staff:

- Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities; annually and upon hire.
- Description of language assistance services offered to the public; in person and telephone

#### **V. TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENTS**

- Requests for translation services from LEP individuals have received assistance from FWC staffing. The FWC will continue to monitor the requests to determine if translations of additional materials, and translations in languages other than Spanish may be necessary in the future.

#### **VI. MONITORING**

**Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan-** the FWC will review and update the LEP Plan periodically. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed and updated when new data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey is available; or when it is identified a higher concentration of LEP individuals are present in the FWC service area. Updates will include:

- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Track encounters with LEP individuals to identify current and future needs for language services.
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
- Determination as to whether the need for translation services has changed.
- Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the need.
- Determine whether the FWC's financial resources are sufficient to fund additional language assistance resources needed.
- Determine whether the FWC fully complies with the goals of this LEP Plan.

- FWC staff will be informally surveyed periodically on their experience and frequency concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year.

## **VII. DISSEMINATION OF FWC LEP PLAN**

Post information on the agency website notifying LEP persons of the LEP Plan and how to access language services.

## **VIII. CONTACT INFORMATION**

To file a complaint with FWC, a member of the public may download the FWC discrimination complaint [form](#) and return to: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission EEO/AA/ADA Coordinator, Paul Clemons, Office of Human Resources 620 South Meridian Street Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600.

Your complaint will be carefully reviewed, and a determination made regarding the need for an investigation. The agency will make every effort to resolve the complaint within 45 days of receipt. You will be periodically notified of the status of your complaint. You may also contact the Office of Inspector General (at 850-488-6068) or the Commission's EEO/AA/ADA Coordinator (at 850-488-6411) at any time for information regarding the status of the complaint.