

TEXARKANA  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION



LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

---

APPROVED BY THE POLICY BOARD:  
JULY 25, 2012

## **Introduction**

This Limited English Proficiency Plan has been prepared to address the Texarkana MPOs 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. 200d, 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.

Executive Order 13166, titled *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, directs each Federal agency that is subject to the requirements of Title VI to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying that obligation and indicates that differing treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English is a type of national origin discrimination. It directs each federal agency to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying their obligation to ensure that such discrimination does not take place. This order applies to all federal agencies and all programs and operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government, including state agencies, local agencies and government, private and non-profit entities, and sub-recipients (such as the Texarkana MPO).

The Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization is the federally recognized Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization that serves as a forum for continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation decision making by state and local governments.

Staff and elected officials from State and local governments and area transportation agencies serve on the Texarkana MPO's Technical Committee and Policy Board and provide technical review, comments, recommendations, and policy decisions on the MPO's work products and plans.

## **Plan Summary**

The Texarkana MPO has developed this Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan to help identify reasonable steps to provide language assistance for LEP persons seeking meaningful access to MPO services as required by Executive Order 13166. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

In developing the plan, while determining the MPOs extent of obligation to provide LEP services, the MPO undertook a U.S. Department of Transportation four factor LEP analysis which considers the following:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely encountered by the Texarkana MPO program, activity or service;
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the Texarkana MPO program, activity or service;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the Texarkana MPO and;

4. The resources available to the Texarkana MPO and overall costs.

A brief description of the above considerations is provided in the following section.

**FACTOR 1:** The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely encountered by the Texarkana MPO program, activity or service.

The Texarkana MPO has had very limited contact with the LEP population. Over the past ten years, there has been no contact at public meetings, through Board or Committee members, through phone contact, or by personal visit.

The number and type of such encounters will be periodically analyzed to determine the breadth and scope of the language service required.

It has been determined that 4.9% of the population speaks a language other than English. Of those 1,091 persons, 306 have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English “not well” or “not at all”, this is 1.2% of the overall population in the MPO study area boundary.

The Texarkana MPO adheres to the philosophy of affording all citizens an equal opportunity to participate in each transportation program or activity.

**FACTOR 2:** The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with and MPO Program:

The MPO staff reviewed the frequency with which the MPO could have contact with LEP persons. While the Texarkana MPO has received some requests from vision-impaired and handicapped individuals in the last ten years, the MPO has not experienced any requests for interpreters and no requests for translated MPO documents. The MPO does keep a list of available Spanish translators that can offer assistance should the need arise.

The identified areas where a LEP person is most likely to interact with the Texarkana MPO’s operations are:

Public meetings

Information Requests

Office Staff

**FACTOR 3:** The nature and importance of the Program, Activity, or Service provided by the Texarkana MPO to the LEP Community.

There is no large geographic concentration of any type of LEP individuals in the Texarkana MPO study area boundary. The overwhelming majority of the population, 95.6% speak only English.

As a result, there is a lack of social service professional and leadership organizations within the study area boundary that focuses on outreach to LEP individuals.

It is the MPO's intent to provide meaningful access to all participants and eligible persons, however, the availability of resources may limit the provision of language services in some instances.

The majority of information that we provide is not confidential. Documents and maps represent the bulk of our communication with the public.

Services that are most likely to encounter LEP individuals are the fixed route bus system and the paratransit services provided by Texarkana Urban Transit District. A copy of their LEP Plan may be viewed at [www.t-linebus.org](http://www.t-linebus.org)

**FACTOR 4:** The resources available to the MPO and the overall costs:

The Texarkana MPO reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance. Currently, the budgetary impact to the MPO is minimal based on past and recent experiences such as the lack of contact or requests by LEP individuals.

### **Plan for Assisting Persons of Limited English Proficiency**

- Examine record requests for language assistance from past meetings and events to anticipate the possible need for assistance at upcoming meetings;
- When Texarkana MPO sponsored workshops or conferences are held, set up a sign-in sheet table, have a staff member greet and briefly speak to each attendee. To informally gauge the attendee's ability to speak and understand English, ask a question that requires a full sentence reply;
- Have the Census Bureau's "I Speak Cards" at the workshop or conference sign-in sheet table. While staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at this meeting, an inventory of those needs will help staff plan for language needs at a future meeting;
- Post a notice of available language assistance in the Texarkana MPO reception area.

### **Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan**

The Texarkana MPO will update the LEP as required by U.S. DOT. Updates will include the following:

- The number of documented LEP person contacts encountered annually.
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
- Determination of the current LEP population in the service area.
- Review of demographic data to determine whether the need for translation services has changed.

- Determine whether Texarkana MPOs available resources, such as technology, staff, and financial costs have changed;
- Has the Texarkana MPO fulfilled the goals of the LEP Plan?; and
- Were any complaints received?

## **Outreach Techniques**

As of July, 2012, the Texarkana MPO does not have a formal practice of outreach techniques due to the lack of LEP population and resources available in the service area. However, the following are a few options that the Texarkana MPO will incorporate when and/or if the need arises for LEP outreach:

If staff knows that they will be presenting a topic that could be of potential importance to a LEP person or if staff will be hosting a meeting or a workshop in a geographic location with a known concentration of LEP persons, meeting notices and agendas will be printed in an alternative language, based on known LEP population in the area.

The MPO will continue to keep a list of Spanish translators should the need arise for them to be utilized.

## **MPO Staff Training**

All MPO staff will be provided with the LEP Plan and will be educated on procedures to follow. This information will also be part of the MPO staff orientation process for new hires. Training topics are listed below:

Understanding the Title VI policy and LEP responsibilities;

What language assistance services the MPO offers;

Use of LEP “I Speak Cards”;

How to access AltaVista Babel Fish translator via: [http://balefish.yahoo.com/translate\\_txt](http://balefish.yahoo.com/translate_txt);

Documentation of language assistance requests;

How to handle a Title VI and/or LEP complaint.