

# Request for Board of Commissioners' Action

**From:** Vicki Parrish, County Clerk **Date:** November 28, 2018

**Subject:** CDBG – Language Access Plan **Item Number:** VIII-C

Michael Jacobs has presented the attached Language Access Plan and Resolution that is required to be adopted and signed by the Board for the CDBG grant process.

Please find attached the certification forms that had to be signed in order to get the grant. All applicants had to have a LAP plan even though your languages did not meet the threshold. Applicants that did not sign it, or even a few that missed a spot for signatures or did not print the public hearing notices, were denied funding. Hope this helps.

Michael V. Jacobs  
Senior Planner  
Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
1725 South Georgia Parkway, West  
Waycross, GA 31503  
(912) 285-6097  
(912) 285-6126 (fax)

Chair will need a motion to adopt the Language Access Plan and authorize her endorsement on the Resolution.

Motion made by \_\_\_\_\_

Second made by \_\_\_\_\_

Any discussion: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Votes \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

Motion carried/ failed

**Language Access Plan  
Cook County, Georgia  
Community Development Department  
December 2018**



**1200 S. Hutchinson Avenue  
Adel, GA 31620  
(229) 896-2266**

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# LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Prepared By: Michael V. Jacobs  
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List of Current Applicable Funded Grants/Programs (to be automatically amended as projects are funded):

1. Grantee: Cook County, GA  
CDBG-EIP #: 15p-y-037-1-5844  
Target Area: Bounded by Oak Trace Road and River Trace Road  
(Cook County: Census Table S1601 – 1.3% LEP)
2. Grantee: Cook County, GA  
CHIP Grant Number: 17p-x-037-1-5991  
Target Area: Bounded by Chaserville Boulevard, Chaser Drive, Indigo Lane and Jo Treadway Road  
(Cook County: Census Table S1601 – 1.3% LEP)

This *Language Access Plan* has been prepared to address Cook County's responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance from Georgia Department of Community Affairs programs & grants funded by HUD as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited English language skills.

The plan has been prepared to ensure compliance with HUD's guidance and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and its implementing regulations. Under HUD's guidance, Cook County must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Executive Order 13166, titled *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*, 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 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 state and local agencies which receive federal funds, including Cook County.

Cook County has developed this *Language Access Plan* to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) who wish to access services provided through programs funded by the Georgia Department of Community

Affairs/HUD. As defined by Executive Order 13166, 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, Cook County used HUD’s four-factor LEP analysis which considers the following factors:

- 1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the Community Improvement programs;
- 2) The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with Community Improvement programs;
- 3) The nature and importance of the Community Improvement programs and services provided by Cook County to the LEP population;
- 4) The resources available to Cook County and overall cost to provide LEP assistance.

**SAFE HARBORS**

In accordance with HUD Safe Harbors for LEP, Cook County will translate written Community Improvement documents for groups that are at least 5% of the population eligible (and more than 50 persons) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less. If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the 5% trigger above, Cook County will not translate the vital Community Improvement written materials, but will provide written notice in the primary language of the LEP group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost.

The size of the language group determines the recommended provision for written language assistance.

<b>Size of Language Group</b>	<b>Recommended Provision of Written Language Assistance</b>
1,000 or more in the eligible population	Translated vital documents
More than 5% of the eligible population or beneficiaries and more than 50 in number	Translated vital documents
More than 5% of the eligible population or beneficiaries and 50 or less in number	Translated written notice of right to receive free oral interpretation of documents.
5% or less of the eligible population or beneficiaries and less than 1,000 in number	No written translation is required.

**II. MEANINGFUL ACCESS: FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS**

**1. The number of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program.**

Cook County reviewed Census Table S1601 in the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates and determined that of the population of 15,235 persons over 5 years of age, 716 persons in Cook County (4.5% of the total population) speak a language other than English. Of those 716 persons, 346 (2.2% of the total population) have limited English proficiency; that is, they speak English less than “very well”. In Cook County, the majority of those persons with limited English proficiency speak Spanish, with others speaking Other Indo-European languages.

This does not meet the threshold described above for translating vital documents or translated written notice of right to receive free oral interpretation of documents. Oral Interpretation Services are available for clients upon request. However, in the past, all of our clients have provided their own translator with whom they are comfortable sharing personal information.

<b>Language Spoken*</b>	<b># of Residents Over 5 Years of Age*</b>		<b>Speaks English Less Than “Very Well”*</b>	
English	15,235	(95.5%)	N/A	
Spanish	642	(4.0%)	309	(48.1%)
Other Indo-European	60	(0.4%)	37	(61.7%)
Asian & Pacific	14	(0.1%)	0	(0.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,951</b>	<b>(100.0%)</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>(2.2%)</b>

**2. The frequency with which LEP persons may come in contact with Community Development programs.**

Cook County Community Development Department staff reviewed the frequency with which staff have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries or office visits, as well as public hearings and interactions during surveys. Over the past two years, Community Development has had no requests for interpreters and no requests for translated program documents.

Frequency of Interaction: Annually

For Project Applications:

- a. When notifying the public about potential grants and activities.
- b. When surveying income in specific target areas.
- c. When determining preliminary eligibility for housing activities.

For Homeowner Rehabilitation/Reconstruction/Down-Payment Assistance:

- a. When notifying the public about the grant award and activities.
- b. When seeking applicants to participate in the program.
- c. When seeking qualified contractors.
- d. When working with homeowners selected for assistance.

**3. The nature and importance of programs, activities or services provided by Community Development to the LEP population.**

Community Development plays a critical role in maintaining quality of life. The primary objective is the development of viable communities through improvement of living conditions, housing and the expansion of economic opportunities in cities and counties. Outreach throughout the community helps to ensure awareness of our programs. The majority of the County's population (95.5%) speak English. Other than English speaking individuals, Community Development staff are most likely to encounter Spanish speaking or Other Indo-European language speaking LEP individuals through office visits, phone conversations and during surveys. Upon client request, Cook County will provide oral interpreters using bi-lingual employees or qualified contract interpreters. To date, all LEP individuals have provided their own interpreter, whether a child or a friend.

Nature of the Program(s): Housing Activities, Public Facilities, and Economic Development.

Importance of the Program(s): Denial or delay of access to services or information would not have serious or life-threatening implications for the LEP individual.

**4. The resources available to Cook County, and overall cost to provide LEP assistance.**

Cook County reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance, including which of its documents would be most valuable to be translated if the need should arise. An "I Speak" card/poster will be made available to determine needed language translations. A notice (see below) will be posted in all ads for GA DCA/HUD programs regarding who to contact should language assistance be needed. Language translation, if needed, would be provided through the available bi-lingual staff and/or the Language Line (866-874-3972) for which Cook County would pay a fee.

**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 Community Development 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.

The Name of the individual at Cook County responsible for coordination of LEP Compliance is:  
County Clerk Vicki Parrish  
Cook County Commission  
1200 S. Hutchinson Avenue  
Adel, GA 31620  
(229) 896-2266

How the Community Development staff may identify an LEP person who needs language assistance:

- Post notice of LEP Plan and the availability of interpretation services free of charge in languages LEP persons would understand;

- Add statement (see below) to public meeting and event notices concerning GA DCA/HUD programs;
- All Community Development staff will be informally surveyed periodically on their experience concerning any contacts with LEP persons during the previous year; and
- When Community Development conducts a Public Hearing, an informational meeting or event, a staff person may greet participants as they arrive. By informally engaging participants in conversation it is possible to gauge each attendee's ability to speak and understand English. Although translation may not be able to be provided at the event (unless previously requested) it will help identify the need for future events; and
- Language Identification Cards/Posters will be used as necessary to determine a client's language needs.

**Language Assistance Measures:** Although there is a small percentage in Cook County of eligible LEP households, that is, persons who speak English “not well” or “not at all”, it will strive to offer the following measures:

1. The Community Development staff will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to LEP clients who have difficulty communicating English.
2. The following resources will be available to accommodate LEP persons:
  - Interpreters for Spanish or other Indo-European languages if available will be provided within a reasonable time period; or
  - Language interpretation will be accessed through Language Line Solutions.
3. Language Identification Cards/Posters will be used as necessary to determine a client's language needs.
4. The following statements will be added to public meeting and event notices concerning GA DCA/HUD programs:

“Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language should contact County Clerk Vicki Parrish at (229) 896-2266 before \_\_\_\_\_. This person can be located at the Cook County Commission Offices, 1200 S. Hutchinson Avenue, Adel, GA 31620, and is available between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, or you may call (229) 896-2266. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service, at (TDD) 1-800-255-0056 or (Voice) 1-800-255-0135.”

5. As Community Improvement documents are reprinted the following statement will be added in English and Spanish:

“If you require a free oral interpretation in a language other than English, please call 229-896-2266.”



"Si necesita una interpretación oral libre en un idioma que no sea Spagnolo, por favor llame al 229-896-2266."

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

The following training will be provided to all Community Development staff:

- Information on the Title VI Policy and LEP responsibilities;
- Description of language assistance services offered to the public;
- Documentation of language assistance requests; and
- How to handle a potential Title VI/LEP complaint.

All contractors, subcontractors and sub-recipients performing work for or receiving federal funds for Community Development projects will be required to follow the Title VI/LEP guidelines.

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

● Cook County weighed the cost and benefits of translating documents for potential LEP groups. Considering the expense of translating the documents, the likelihood of frequent changes in documents and other relevant factors, at this time no documents require translation.

● Due to the relatively small eligible local LEP population, Cook County does not have a formal outreach procedure in place at this time. Translation resources have been identified. When and if the need arises for LEP outreach, Cook County will consider the following option:

- When staff prepares a document, or schedules a meeting, for which the target audience is expected to include LEP individuals, then relevant documents, meeting notices, flyers, and agendas will be printed in an alternative language based on the known LEP population, if requested.

#### **VI. MONITORING AND UPDATING THE LAP PLAN**

Cook County will update the LAP Plan as required. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed and updated every five years using American Fact Finder for census information, or when it is clear that higher concentrations of LEP individuals are present in Cook County. 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;
- 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 Cook County's financial resources are sufficient to fund language assistance resources needed;
- Determine whether Cook County fully complies with the goals of this LAP Plan; and

- Determine whether complaints have been received concerning the agency’s failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals.

**VII. DISSEMINATION OF COOK COUNTY’S LAP PLAN**

The LAP Plan will be on Cook County’s website page and provided to anyone requesting the information.

**VIII. RECORDS**

Cook County will maintain records in the County Clerk’s office regarding its efforts to comply with Title VI LEP obligations. These records will be reviewed periodically and open to the public in an effort to improve service.

**IX. COMPLAINTS/FINDINGS**

Any person who believes they have been denied the benefits of this LAP or that Cook County has not complied with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000(d) and Executive Order 13166 regulations may file a complaint with the County’s LAP Coordinator. The County LAP Coordinator may be the first point of contact for any complaints or appeals, but the DCA LAP Coordinator must be informed of all complaints and appeals. The LAP Coordinator will provide oversight of the complaint/appeal resolution process. To file a complaint, submit the written complaint to:

LAP Coordinator  
 County Clerk Vicki Parrish  
 Cook County Commission  
 1200 S. Hutchinson Avenue  
 Adel, GA 31620

Or

DCA 504 Coordinator  
 60 Executive Park South, N.E.  
 Atlanta, GA 30329-2231  
[fairhousing@dca.ga.gov](mailto:fairhousing@dca.ga.gov)

**X. AVAILABLE FEDERAL LEP RESOURCES**

HUD’s LEP Website:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/lep.xml>

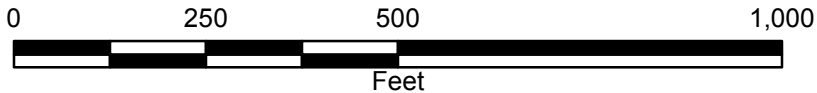
Federal LEP Website:

<http://www.lep.gov/>

LEP and Title VI Videos:

<http://www.lep.gov/video/video.html>

“I Speak” Card: <http://www.lep.gov/ISpeakCards2004.pdf>



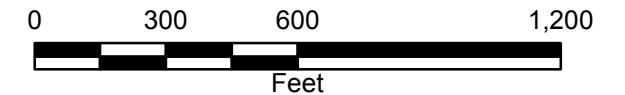
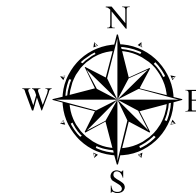
**Map Legend**

- Local Road
- Target Area
- Target Area Parcels
- Structure Type
  - Single Family Home
  - Single Family Mobile Home
  - Single Family Mobile Home Vacant
- 1 Housing Number

**Cook County  
CDBG 2018  
Target Area  
Housing Map**

Map created February 2018 for general planning purposes only. Refer all questions on data accuracy and availability to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.





**Map Legend**

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| — Local Road          | <b>Structure Type</b>              |
| □ Target Area Parcels | ● Single Family Mobile Home        |
| ■ Target Area         | ▲ Camper                           |
| □ County              | ● Single Family Mobile Home Vacant |
| 1 Housing Number      |                                    |

# Cook County CDBG 2016 Target Area Housing Map

Map created March 2016 for general planning purposes only. Refer all questions on data accuracy and availability to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.



RESOLUTION

COOK COUNTY, GEORGIA  
ADOPTION OF A LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN (LAP)  
FOR GA DCA & HUD FUNDED GRANTS & PROGRAMS

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Chairperson and County Commission and it is hereby resolved by authority of same.

WHEREAS, the Chairperson and the County Commission have found it necessary to adopt a Language Access Plan (LAP) for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) and other Georgia Department of Community Affairs (GA DCA) & U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded grants & programs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Chairperson and the County Commission that they have adopted the Cook County Language Access Plan (LAP) in accordance with the requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (GA DCA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other required federal and state regulations.

Adopted September 11, 2017

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Executive Officer  
Chairperson Debra Robinson

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vicki S. Parrish, County Clerk