

## ADAMS HOUSING AUTHORITY LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Adams Housing Authority (“LHA”) is committed to ensuring equal access to its programs and services by all residents, regardless of primary language spoken.

Pursuant to 760 CMR 4.02(1)(e), Massachusetts Local Housing Authorities must adopt and enforce a Language Access Plan (“LAP”) regardless of whether they receive federal funds. DHCD has provided “DHCD LAP Guidance to Program Administering Entities” as an appendix to its Language Access Plan, most recently in 2017.<sup>1</sup>

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI”) also requires recipients of federal financial assistance to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and services by individuals with Limited English Proficiency (“LEP”). Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, or understand English may be considered LEP individuals. Such reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access include language access planning.

On January 22, 2007, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) issued Final Guidance to recipients of HUD funding concerning compliance with the Title VI prohibition against national origin discrimination affecting LEP individuals, including detailed guidance for language access planning.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, HUD’s Final Guidance defines a four-factor self-assessment method which assists agencies receiving HUD funds in determining the extent of their obligations to provide LEP services. DHCD, in its “DHCD LAP Guidance to Program Administering Entities,” has encouraged LHAs to utilize this four-factor self-assessment method regardless of whether they receive HUD funds. Based on the DHCD and HUD guidance, the LHA has completed an LEP four-factor self-assessment (“Attachment A”).

Using the LEP self-assessment as a guide, the LHA has prepared this LAP, which defines the actions to be taken by the LHA to ensure LHA compliance with Title VI and/or DHCD requirements with respect to LEP individuals. The LHA will periodically review and update this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with 760 CMR 4.02(1)(e), as well as Title VI and related HUD guidance as applicable.

### II. GOALS OF THE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/25/lapdhcd2017.docx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2007/01/22/07-217/final-guidance-to-federal-financial-assistance-recipients-regarding-title-vi-prohibition-against>; see also <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2007/03/16/E7-4794/final-guidance-to-federal-financial-assistance-recipients-regarding-title-vi-prohibition-against> (Update of Web Site Reference)

## V. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED

To promote equal access to LHA programs and services by LEP individuals, the LHA will implement the following array of Language Access services:

*Notices of Oral interpretation Services:* Subject to budget constraints and in consideration of the four-factor self-assessment described on Attachment A, the LHA will provide free access to language assistance for staff contact with LEP individuals. The LHA will prominently post multi-language notices in common areas and on its website which indicate that free language assistance is available upon request (see "Attachment B"). The LHA will also gather data on requests for language assistance by language to inform its four-factor self-assessment.

### B. Language Access Measures

*Oral Interpretation - Staff:* When feasible, bilingual LHA staff will be utilized to communicate with LEP individuals in their native languages and to assist them in reviewing LHA materials, answering questions about LHA programs, and responding to LHA forms and information requests. Currently, LHA does not employ staff members who speak another language besides English].

*Oral Interpretation - Telephone Support:* Subject to budget constraints and in consideration of the four-factor self-assessment described on Attachment A, if qualified bilingual LHA staff are unavailable to communicate with an LEP individual who is requesting assistance, the LHA will use the services of a professional telephone interpretation service, including when an LEP individual uses an "I Speak... Language Identification Flashcard" to signify that they speak a non-English language. When these contacts involve review of LHA forms and procedures, the LHA will schedule the call so that the telephonic interpreter has the opportunity to first review the relevant form or procedure. The LHA will only utilize interpretation services which demonstrate a high degree of training and professionalization among the interpreter staff. The LHA **currently utilizes the Language Line Access Service**. A service which provides trained and certified interpreters and coverage for a multitude of languages. LHA staff will be trained in how to access this service, which will be available as needed for LEP applicants and residents.

*Oral Interpretation - In Person Assistance:* Subject to budget constraints and in consideration of the four-factor self-assessment described on Attachment A, in limited instances where telephone interpretation services or the use of bilingual LHA staff are determined insufficient to ensure meaningful access, the LHA may provide qualified in-person interpretation services at no cost to the LEP individual through the use of community resources and/or outside organizations or vendors

document which states in the most frequently encountered languages identified under the administering entity's LAP, "This is an important document. Please contact [Adams Housing Authority at 413-743-5924] for free language assistance" (see "Attachment C").

- *Legal documents:* In the case of legally binding documents such as a lease, although a translated copy of the document should be provided, the English version of the document is the one that is legally binding and considered the official document. The translated document is to be used as a reference tool only. A brief statement will be included on these documents in the language which the document has been translated into which states "This document is for informational purposes only. The English version of this document is considered the legally binding document" (see "Attachment D").
- *Translation of written documents:* For LHA program documents, including those that are highly individualized (such as ineligibility, termination or appeal notices), the LHA will, to the extent feasible within administrative and fiscal limits, translate these documents based on an assessment utilizing the four-factors discussed above.
- *Note on timing-related rights:* A person with LEP will not be penalized or denied meaningful and effective access because of an administering entity's inability to provide timely translation or interpretation services. This would include allowing additional time for translation and/or interpretation without impacting an applicant's position on the LHA waitlist.
- *Review and updating:* The LHA will periodically review and update the list of vital documents to reflect those documents which are considered vital to applicants and/or residents, and will also track existing translated documents that need to be updated for consistency with updated English-language documents.

### C. Staff Training and Coordination

The LHA will provide training on LEP awareness and required assistance actions under the Language Access Plan for employees. This will include:

*Training:* The LHA will make reasonable efforts to avail its staff and employees of any available trainings on Language Access. LHA employees and staff who regularly interact with LHA clients will be encouraged to complete periodic refresher trainings on Language Access.

*LEP Coordinator:* The LHA has designated the **Executive Director** as the LEP Coordinator, responsible for ongoing updating of LEP analysis, addressing staff and public questions and issue related to LEP matters, and providing ongoing LEP training.

**[INSERT LANGUAGES WITH CORRESPONDING NUMBER OF LEP PERSONS FOR THAT LANGUAGE AND % OF THE 5+ POPULATION FOR THE COUNTY]: Berkshire**

<b>Spanish</b>	<b>0.01</b>
Italian	0.35
Polish	0.06%
Arabic	0.21%
Hebrew	0.28%

(b). Municipal Data [*For use only where the % of LEP population speaking the language in the City/Town is greater than the percentage for the County*]:

See data graph (attached) compiled by **City and Town Data** of citizens of **Adams and Berkshire County** aged 5 years and over for which English is spoken "less than very well."

**[INSERT LANGUAGES WITH CORRESPONDING NUMBER OF LEP PERSONS FOR THAT LANGUAGE AND % OF THE 5+ POPULATION FOR THE CITY/TOWN]:**

**Spanish 5%**

(c). Applicant data (e.g., data on CHAMP application languages for estimating applicant LEP population served):

Spanish 5%

(d). Tenant data (e.g., data on primary languages and communication preferences by language for estimating tenant LEP population served):

LHA Unit Demographic breakdown  
Spanish 0.2% Both Tenants Speak English as well.

(e). Other (e.g., data on telephonic or in-person interpretation usage by language, data from surveying other organizations serving LEP persons in the LHA's region)

Using the County and City/Town Census Data

Based on the above data sources, the following languages are priority languages for translation, in descending order of priority for translation [*Spanish must be included*]:

*Select appropriate method for providing interpretation* on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature and importance of the communication, including whether in-person interpretation is necessary for providing meaningful access to programs and services. The following are interpreter resources for consideration:

a. *LHA staff*

At this time the LHA does not speak any other language besides English.

b. *Community/other resources* (e.g., non-profit assistance or inter-agency partnerships)

*Local High School Spanish Teacher, Local Churches, I Speak Flash Cards Online Services*

*[In-Person Assistance:* In limited instances where in-person assistance is necessary to ensure meaningful access and use of bilingual LHA staff is determined to be insufficient or inappropriate (e.g., due to a conflict of interest), the LHA may provide qualified in-person interpretation services at no cost to the LEP individual either through local community organizations ] as listed above.

**[DESCRIBE THE PROCESS FOR UTILIZING IN-PERSON ASSISTANCE AND IDENTIFY LANGUAGES FOR WHICH COMPETENT AND EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION]**

Same as above.

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Additional Protocols for Administrative Staff

- 1) Utilize staff resources or the service to:
  - a. Determine the LEP caller's question or issue.
  - b. Obtain the LEP caller's name, contact information, and best times when he or she can be reached.
  - c. Inform the LEP caller that the appropriate staff person will contact the caller.
  
- 2) After the call ends, let the appropriate staff person that would handle the caller's type of question/issue know that the caller requires follow-up with language interpretation and specify for the staff person the information corresponding to paragraph (1) (a)-(c) above as well as whether the issue appears to be time sensitive.

- 2) *To the extent important documents have yet to be translated, free language assistance terminology translated in other languages must be inserted with the document (see "Attachment C").*
- 3) *For legally binding documents, such as a lease, the translation must be accompanied by a statement in the language of the translated document indicating that the translated document is for informational purposes only and that the English version is considered the legally binding document (see "Attachment D").*

**Attachment C: Important Document Notice**

**This is an important document. Please contact Adams Housing Authority at 413-743-5924 for free language assistance.**

Este documento es muy importante. Favor de comunicarse con el \_\_\_\_\_ en \_\_\_\_\_ para ayuda gratis con el idioma. (Spanish)

Este é um documento importante. Entre em contato com o \_\_\_\_\_ no número \_\_\_\_\_ para obter assistência gratuita com o idioma. (Portuguese)

Dokiman sila a enpòtan. Tanpri kontakte \_\_\_\_\_ la nan \_\_\_\_\_ pou asistans gratis nan lang. (Haitian Creole)

此文件為重要文件。如果您需要免費的語言翻譯幫助，請聯絡 \_\_\_\_\_ 聯絡方式： \_\_\_\_\_。(Chinese, Traditional)

此文件為重要文件。如果您需要免費的語言翻譯幫助，請聯絡 \_\_\_\_\_ 聯絡方式： \_\_\_\_\_。(Chinese, Simplified)

Это весьма важный документ. Свяжитесь с сотрудником \_\_\_\_\_ на предмет оказания бесплатной помощи по переводу на иностранный язык ( \_\_\_\_\_ ). (Russian)  
(Phone #)

នេះគឺជាឯកសារសំខាន់។ សូមទំនាក់ទំនង \_\_\_\_\_ តាមរយៈ \_\_\_\_\_ ដើម្បីទទួលបានជំនួយ ផ្នែកភាសាដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ។ [Mon-Khmer, Cambodian]

Đây là một tài liệu quan trọng. Vui lòng liên hệ \_\_\_\_\_ tại \_\_\_\_\_ để được hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí. (Vietnamese)

Kani waa dukumentiyi muhiim ah. Fadlan \_\_\_\_\_ kala soo xiriir \_\_\_\_\_ si aad u hesho gargaar xagga luqadda oo bilaash ah. (Somali)

هذه وثيقة مهمة. يرجى الاتصال بـ \_\_\_\_\_ للمساعدة اللغوية المجانية. (Arabic)  
[Phone #] [Agency Name]

Ce document est très important. Veuillez contacter le \_\_\_\_\_ au \_\_\_\_\_ afin d'obtenir une assistance linguistique gratuite. (French)

این سند مهمی است. لطفا جهت دریافت خدمات رایگان زبان با \_\_\_\_\_ از طریق

تماس حاصل

فرمایید.

[Phone #]  
(Farsi)

[Agency Name]

**This document is for informational purposes only. The English version of this document is considered the legally binding document.**

Το παρόν έγγραφο είναι μόνο πληροφοριακό. Η Αγγλική εκδοχή του θεωρείται νομικά δεσμευτικό έγγραφο. (Greek)

Niniejszy dokument służy wyłącznie celom informacyjnym. Angielska wersja tego dokumentu jest prawnie obowiązująca. (Polish)

이 문서는 정보 제공용입니다. 이 문서의 영문판은 법적 구속을 받는 문서로 간주됩니다. (Korean)

この文書は情報提供のみを目的としたものです。本文書の英語版は法的効力を持つ文書となります。  
(Japanese)

Այս փաստաթուղթը տեղեկատվական նպատակներին համար է վիսայն: Այս փաստաթուղթին անգլերեն տարբերակն է համարվում իրավաբաններին պարտավորեցնող փաստաթուղթ: (Armenian)

ນີ້ແມ່ນເອກະສານໃຊ້ເພື່ອໃບຈຸດປະສົງຂອງການໃຫ້ຂໍ້າໃຈຂໍ້ມູນເທົ່ານັ້ນ. ເອກະສານນີ້ທີ່ໃຊ້ບັນສະບັບຖືກຕ້ອງຕາມກົດໝາຍລະແມ່ນສະບັບພາສາອັງກິດເທົ່ານັ້ນ. (Lao)

Ovaj dokument služi samo u informativne svrhe. Verzija ovog dokumenta na engleskom jeziku se smatra zakonski obavezujućim dokumentom. (Serbo-Croatian)

یہ دستاویز صرف معلوماتی مقاصد کیلئے ہے۔ اس دستاویز کا انگریزی ورژن قانونی طور پر پابند کرنے والا دستاویز ہے۔

(Urdu)

આ દસ્તાવેજ માત્ર માહિતીના હેતુઓ માટે જ છે. આ દસ્તાવેજનું અંગ્રેજી સંસ્કરણ કાયદી રીતે બાધ્ય દસ્તાવેજ ગણવામાં આવશે. (Gujarati)

เอกสารนี้สำหรับใช้เป็นข้อมูลเท่านั้น

ฉบับภาษาอังกฤษของเอกสารนี้ถือเป็นเอกสารที่มีภาระผูกพันตามกฎหมาย

(Thai)

این سند صرفاً جهت اطلاع می باشد. تنها نسخه انگلیسی آن از لحاظ قانونی یک سند تعهدآور است.

(Farsi)