



LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY
AND
LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

King County Housing Authority (KCHA)

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LANGUAGE ACCESS POLICY

KCHA’s language access policy is to provide persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) meaningful access to its programs and activities. This policy is essential to the success of KCHA’s mission of being a national leader in providing innovative and effective housing solutions so that people and communities can prosper.

[In 2020, approximately 440,908 people in King County \(excluding Seattle\) speak a language other than English and approximately 172,502 of those people speak English “less than very well.” The largest LEP populations in King County \(excluding Seattle\) speak Spanish \(109,191 people\), other Indo-European languages \(180,840 people\), and other languages \(39,397 people\).](#)

LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

The Language Access Plan establishes guidelines for KCHA personnel to follow when working with LEP persons. These guidelines are consistent with [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) and [Executive Order 13166](#).

LEP persons may be applicants, participants, or residents in the Housing Choice Voucher or public housing programs and their family members.

GOALS OF THE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN

The goals of KCHA’s Language Access Plan include:

1. Ensuring meaningful access to KCHA’s public housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV/Section 8) programs by all eligible individuals regardless of their primary language.
2. Ensuring that all LEP persons know that KCHA will provide free oral interpretation services to help with their participation in KCHA programs.
3. Providing written translation of vital documents to LEP individuals in accordance with [HUD’s “safe harbor” guidelines](#). Vital documents are [“any document that is critical for ensuring meaningful access to the recipients’ major activities and programs by beneficiaries generally and LEP persons specifically.”](#)
4. Ensuring that KCHA staff know about available language assistance services.

ASSESSMENT/FOUR FACTOR ANALYSIS

KCHA’s Language Access Committee will periodically assess the language needs of its clients to ensure LEP persons continue to have meaningful access to KCHA programs and activities using interpretation services and translation.

KCHA’s assessment will balance the following four factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered. The below table outlines HUD’s recommendations per their “safe harbor” guidelines.

Size of Language Group	Recommended Provision of Language Services	Applicable Language Groups
1,000 or more in the eligible population in the market area among current beneficiaries	Translated vital documents	English, Somali
More than 5% of the eligible population or beneficiaries and more than 50 in number	Translated vital documents	Amharic, Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tigrinya, Ukrainian, Vietnamese
More than 5% of the eligible population or beneficiaries and 50 or less in number	Translated written notices of right to receive free oral interpretation of documents	None
5% or less of the eligible population or beneficiaries and less than 1,000 in number	No written translation is required	All other languages

2. How often LEP persons come in contact with KCHA:

- in-person
- over the phone
- electronically
- through the mail

KCHA also asks applicants, participants, and residents to specify a language preference at the application and recertification stages.

3. The nature of the program, activity, or service and its importance to people's lives.
4. The resources available to the grantee/recipient or agency, and costs to the recipient.

KCHA continuously assesses the availability of language assistance resources, like bilingual staff and professional interpretation and translation services. KCHA tracks its use of these resources.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES

KCHA informs members of the public about the availability of language assistance services by:

- Using “I Speak” language identification cards which are available to all frontline staff;
- Placing signs in offices that state free language assistance is available; and
- Making this document available to the public.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is a language assistance service where an interpreter communicates a message from one language into another language. KCHA contracts with language assistance service providers to provide interpretation services.

KCHA provides free interpretation services to LEP persons if requested or if necessary to ensure meaningful access to its programs and activities.

For some activities, LEP persons may, at their own expense, use their own interpreters instead of or in addition to the free interpreter KCHA offers. The interpreter may also be a family member or friend.

TRANSLATION

Translation is a written language assistance service that replaces written text from one language into another language. KCHA contracts with language assistance service providers to provide translation services.

KCHA will provide the following translation services:

Size of LEP language group	Service provided
At least 5% of the eligible population or 1,000 persons (whichever is less)	Written translation of vital documents for each LEP language group. Oral interpretation of other documents as needed.
At least 5% of the eligible population, but less than 50 people	Written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of their right to receive oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost

KCHA keeps an inventory of translated documents and periodically reviews them to ensure they are up-to-date.

Staff are trained on how to request translations and may request assistance from the Resident Services department.

OUTREACH

KCHA will conduct outreach in a manner that is inclusive of LEP persons as resources permit. KCHA will:

- Work with community-based organizations and other stakeholders to inform LEP persons of KCHA's services, including the availability of language assistance services;
- Coordinate with other agencies and partners to ensure consistent identification of LEP status, primary language, and similar information;
- Develop community resources, partnerships, and other relationships to help with the provision of LEP services; and
- Provide our applicants and tenants information about the available language assistance services and how to use them.

STAFF AND TRAINING

KCHA will hold mandatory trainings about language access for employees. Training will occur on a recurring basis. Topics the training may cover include:

- Language access policies and procedures
- How to provide language assistance services to LEP persons
- How to obtain and work with interpreters
- How to request the translation of written documents into other languages
- How to access existing language access resources

REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

On an annual basis, KCHA's Language Access Committee will:

- Review its Language Access Policy, assessment, and Language Access Plan;
- Review agency LEP data;
- Determine whether more vendors providing translation and interpretation services are needed;
- Determine any additional language access needs for each KCHA department; and
- Obtain updated LEP data for KCHA's service area from the United States Census Bureau if it is available.

After completing the above steps, KCHA will determine if any action is necessary and work with relevant staff to make changes.