

Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada

Language Assistance Plan

*Excerpt from Title VI MPO and Transit Reports
September 2022*

2.5 Language Assistance Plan

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requires that DOT recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency," reprinted at 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000), directs each Federal agency to examine the services it provides and to develop and implement a system by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those services. The Executive Order states that recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq., and its implementing regulations provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance. The Supreme Court, in *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974), interpreted Title VI regulations promulgated by the former Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to hold that Title VI prohibits conduct that has a disproportionate effect on LEP persons because such conduct constitutes national origin discrimination. Federal agencies also have published guidance for their respective recipients in order to assist them with their obligations to LEP persons under Title VI. This order applies to all state and local agencies that receive federal dollars.

The Language Assistance Plan is a key tool for RTC transit and transportation planning, as described below:

- **RTC Transit:**
Public transit is a key means of achieving mobility for many LEP persons. Providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency is an effective way to ensure community outreach that helps identify the mobility needs of this population and any concerns or hardships they may be experiencing due to service or fare changes. An effective Language Assistance Plan demonstrates that the RTC values its customers who use the RTC's fixed route bus services and ADA (American Disabilities Act) Paratransit Demand Response Services and is committed to seeking community input in order to retain and improve the service the RTC offers to the community.
- **MPO:**
The planning and programming decisions made by the MPO will affect the future economic health of the region and the transportation options available to residents. An effective LEP program is a tool to determine the extent to which the transportation needs of the LEP population mirror those of the community at large, and the extent to which LEP persons have different needs that should be addressed through the planning and project development process.

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The Language Assistance Plan is based on the federal guidance provided by U.S. DOT. The plan evaluates language needs using the “four factor analysis”, identifies available language services, and establishes an implementation plan.

2.5.1. Determining Language Needs

In order to prepare the Language Assistance Plan (LAP), a needs assessment was conducted utilizing the Four Factor Analysis, as recommended by USDOT. The four factors are:

1. The number or proportion of limited English proficiency (LEP) persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by RTC services and programs.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with RTC services and programs.
3. The nature and importance of the RTC’s services and programs in people’s lives.
4. The resources available to the RTC for LEP outreach, as well as, the costs associated with the outreach.

In the following analyses, each factor was considered in relation to RTC Transit and RTC acting as the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Factor 1: Number and Proportion of LEP Population

Individuals with limited English Limited English Proficiency are those who reported speaking English “less than very well” in the American Community Survey (ACS). RTC used data from the 2014-2019 ACS to determine the number of LEP persons over age 5 in Clark County. Key findings from ACS data are summarized below:

- 34.1% of the total population speak a language other than English at home. When comparing 2017 and 2019 ACS five-year estimates, Clark County experienced a 2.4% overall increase in the number of people that speak a language other than English at home, compared to a 4% increase in the overall population ([Table 2.2](#)).
- 13.1% of the total population have limited English proficiency and for Spanish and Asian/Pacific Island language groups, 40% of people have limited English proficiency ([Table 2.3](#)). The largest LEP language groups are Spanish and Tagalog ([Table 2.4](#)).
- 31.1% of the total population are Hispanic or Latino, 11.2% are Black of African American, and 9.7% are Asian ([Table 2.5](#)). Filipino residents make up more than half of the total Asian population at 52.9% ([Table 2.6](#)).

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Safe Harbor Threshold

The Safe Harbor provision for written materials is triggered when an LEP population reaches 5% of 1,000 persons, whichever is less. According to [Table 2.4](#), nine language groups meet this threshold. As shown in [Section 2.5.2](#), the RTC provides written materials in Spanish, which is the largest LEP language group. The RTC offers translation into any other language upon request.

Table 2.2: Language Spoken at Home

| Language Spoken at Home | 5-Year Percent Change in Number of People | 2013-2017 | | 2015 -2019 | |
|---|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Estimated Number of People | Percent of Total Pop. | Estimated Number of People | Percent of Total Pop. |
| Total Population 5 years and over in Clark County, Nevada | 3.4% | 1,976,398 | - | 2,043,921 | - |
| Speak only English | 4.0% | 1,295,036 | 65.5% | 1,346,419 | 65.9% |
| Speak a language other than English | 2.4% | 681,362 | 34.5% | 697,502 | 34.1% |
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 2.4% | 466,049 | 23.6% | 477,089 | 23.3% |
| Other Indo-European languages | 2.4% | 52,753 | 2.7% | 54,007 | 2.6% |
| Asian and Pacific Island languages | 1.7% | 139,880 | 7.1% | 142,318 | 7.0% |
| Other languages | 6.2% | 22,680 | 1.1% | 24,088 | 1.2% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – ACS 2013-2017 and 2015-2019 5 Year Estimates, Table S1601 – “Language Spoken At Home”

Table 2.3: Limited English Proficiency

| Total Population 5 Years and Over: 2,043,921 | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Language Spoken at Home | Total Number of Language Group that Speaks English “Less Than Very Well” | Percent of Language Group that Speaks English “Less Than Very Well” | Percentage of Total Population (ages 5+) |
| Spanish or Spanish Creole | 191,040 | 27.4% | 9.3% |
| Indo-European languages | 14,884 | 27.6% | 0.7% |
| Asian and Pacific Island languages | 54,587 | 38.4% | 2.7% |
| Other languages | 8,239 | 34.2% | 0.4% |
| % of Total Population (age 5+) with Limited English Proficiency | | | 13.1% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates, Table C16001 – “Language Spoken at Home for Population 5 Years and Over”

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Table 2.4: Limited English Proficiency (detailed language list)

| Language | Estimate | % Language Group with Limited English Proficiency |
|--|-----------------|--|
| Total Population Age 5+ in Clark County, Nevada: | 2,043,921 | |
| Speak only English | 1,346,419 | |
| Spanish: | 477,089 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 191,040 | 40.0% |
| French, Haitian, or Cajun: | 7,395 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 1,379 | 18.6% |
| German or other West Germanic languages: | 6,430 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 832 | 12.9% |
| Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages: | 12,573 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 4,529 | 36.0% |
| Other Indo-European languages: | 27,609 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 8,144 | 29.5% |
| Korean: | 9,779 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 4,743 | 48.5% |
| Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese): | 28,207 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 16,615 | 58.9% |
| Vietnamese: | 8,513 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 4,265 | 50.1% |
| Tagalog (incl. Filipino): | 72,077 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 19,667 | 27.3% |
| Other Asian and Pacific Island languages: | 23,742 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 9,297 | 39.2% |
| Arabic: | 3,934 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 1,214 | 30.9% |
| Other and unspecified languages: | 20,154 | |
| Speak English less than "very well" | 7,025 | 34.9% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates, Table C16001 "Language Spoken at Home for Population 5 Years and Over"

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Table 2.5: Race and Ethnicity

| Race | Estimate | Percent of Total Population |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|
| One race | 2,065,232 | 94.6% |
| White | 1,312,652 | 60.2% |
| Black or African American | 255,174 | 11.7% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | 18,693 | 0.9% |
| Asian | 212,385 | 9.7% |
| Asian Indian | 11,168 | 0.5% |
| Chinese | 33,295 | 1.5% |
| Filipino | 112,407 | 5.2% |
| Japanese | 9,794 | 0.4% |
| Korean | 12,667 | 0.6% |
| Vietnamese | 10,877 | 0.5% |
| Other Asian | 22,177 | 1.0% |
| Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 16,407 | 0.8% |
| Some other race | 249,921 | 11.5% |
| Two or more races | 116,772 | 5.4% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Hispanic or Latino (of any race) | 679,381 | 31.1% |
| Not Hispanic or Latino | 1,502,653 | 68.9% |
| Total population in Clark County, Nevada | 2,182,004 | -- |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates,
Table DP05 - "Demographic and Housing Estimates"

Table 2.6: Distribution within Asian population in Clark County

| Ethnicity | Estimate | Percent of Asian Population |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Filipino | 112,407 | 52.9% |
| Chinese, except Taiwanese | 33,295 | 15.6% |
| Korean | 12,667 | 6.0% |
| Vietnamese | 10,877 | 5.1% |
| Asian Indian | 11,168 | 5.3% |
| Japanese | 9,794 | 4.6% |
| Thai | 5,691 | 2.6% |
| Two or more Asian | 7,279 | 3.4% |
| Other Asian | 9,604 | 4.5% |
| Total Asian Population | 212,385 | 100% |
| Total Population in Clark County, Nevada | 2,182,004 | |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates,
Table B02015 - "Asian Alone by Selected Groups"

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Factor 2: Frequency of Contact

Transit

Typically, the front line staff such as bus drivers, dispatchers, and call center staff are primarily in direct contact with customers and answer inquiries related to transit and paratransit services or activities. Currently, the most common request for translation is Spanish and translation services for other languages or services (i.e. sign language) are infrequent.

During October 2019, the RTC conducted “Wave 13” of the RTC Customer Satisfaction Survey a statistically valid survey of 906 customers on board RTC fixed route buses. There were 572 residents and 334 tourists surveyed.

- The income of most customers is below the average median household income for Clark County (which was \$61,048 in 2019). Of the surveyed customers, 34% of customers reported incomes below \$25,000 and 37% reported incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 while 19% reported incomes above \$50,000.
- Race and ethnicity for survey participants included, Black/African American (37%), White/Caucasian (34%), Hispanic/Latino (19%), Asian/Pacific Islander (4%) and American Indian/Native American (3%).

In April 2019, the RTC conducted “Wave 12” of the RTC Customer Satisfaction Survey; a statistically valid survey of 850 customers on board RTC fixed route buses.

In that iteration, there were 535 resident surveys and 315 tourist surveys completed. Race and ethnicity for customers surveyed in Wave 12 were as follows. Black/African American (38%), White/Caucasian (26%), Hispanic/Latino (25%), Asian/Pacific Islander (4%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (2%).

Both surveys confirm that RTC transit has frequent contact with Hispanic/Latino Customers, which represents the largest LEP language group.

MPO

The MPO has contact with LEP individuals through community engagement related to transportation studies and plans including public workshops, special events, open houses, and online (i.e. social media, website). Each planning study includes the development of a community engagement strategy, where methods to reach LEP populations and translation/language assistance needs are identified based on the project-specific frequency of contact.

Additionally, the RTC conducts analyses to assess the potential impacts of regionally significant projects on minority, low income, and LEP populations, as described in Section 3.3.

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Factor 3: Nature and Importance of Programs, Services and Activities

Transit

The RTC provides public transportation services to the general population through its fixed route bus service as well as some specialized transportation services that are based on demand response, such as the paratransit services for the seniors and people with disabilities. The RTC is always striving to provide the exceptional customer service to its riders. Therefore, it is important to the agency that language is not a barrier for the LEP customers while accessing any such transit or transportation services.

The RTC Transit Planning Department also conducts special analyses to assess those routes that operate in minority, low income, underserved, and LEP populations. The majority of RTC transit routes operate in areas where there is a significant LEP population. In addition, all transit routes operate at least partially in LEP populations due to the length of the route and the expanse of the service area, as shown by Map 3.1.

MPO

The primary function of the MPO is to set out long-term regional transportation investment needs through the development and update of the 20-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This plan provides a framework for discussion of the importance of transportation to the regional economy, accessibility, mobility and safety. The RTP serves as a base for selecting projects for implementation in the near-term using funding under federal transportation programs. These projects are identified in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The RTC also conducts planning studies that are funded under the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which includes multi-modal transportation studies, data collection and modeling, and intelligent transportation system planning. These studies often provide the basis for including projects in the RTP and TIP. Additionally, due to increasing numbers of pedestrian fatalities, car free households, and people with chronic diseases linked to a lack of physical activity, the RTC has expanded efforts related to active transportation planning. The RTC frequently conducts outreach and provides information to the community related to planning studies.

Factor 4: Resources Available

Each year, the RTC commits a considerable amount of funds and resources to provide for and improve access to its services and programs for traditionally underserved populations including LEP persons. The costs associated with customer services to the LEP population are part of RTC's annual budget.

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2.5.2. Providing Language Assistance

The RTC provides language assistance through the following methods:

Bilingual Print and Digital Communications

Currently, Spanish is the second most common language in Clark County and within the RTC transit service area; therefore, a number of materials are created and translated in a format that is easily understood by this Spanish speaking population.

Collateral are created and translated for outreach and marketing purposes, including:

- Direct mailings in English and Spanish
- Signs/decals posted at transit stops and on ticket vending machines
- E-mail blast disseminated to appropriate rtcsnv.com subscribers
- Audio in English and Spanish for notices and key updates on RTC phone queue systems
- Information highlighted in all agency Pocket Guides distributed free to customers
- Information highlighted in all agency Transit Guides sold to customers
- News releases disseminated to local television, radio and print media
- Newsletters and e-blasts by Club Ride
- Spanish outreach materials (public notices, service explanations)
- English/Spanish on-board signage (how to use services, fares)
- English/Spanish brochures (i.e. fare box use, know your rights)
- Spanish route and time guides
- Spanish versions of key documents, such as Executive Summaries of planning documents

Multilingual Staff

The RTC Call Center also has two or more certified Spanish speakers available per work shift. Additionally, RTC Human Resources maintains a list of RTC staff who speak languages other than English at a conversational level or above. Staff with these skills provide language assistance to customers when needed, and are able to do so on short notice. As of December 2021, 107 RTC staff speak 25 different languages. These languages include (number of speakers): Spanish (69), Tagalog (13), Chinese (4), German (4), French (2), Mandarin (3), Arabic (1), Asante (1), Ga (1), Italian (2), Russian (1), Bulgarian (1), Danish (1), Greek (1), Hawaiian (1), Hindi (2), Ilocano (1), Japanese (1), Korean (1), Punjabi (1), Swahili (1), Thai (1), Urdu (1), and Visayan (1).

Bilingual Public Meetings

Staffing at public meetings typically includes at least one staff person with conversational Spanish skills, and more bilingual resources are committed to meetings in areas known to have a high proportion of Spanish speakers. The RTC MPO also holds virtual and hybrid stakeholder and focus group meetings which provide language translation services upon request and/or are delivered in Spanish. Facebook Live used during public meetings also provides Spanish captions.

Bilingual Bus Announcements

RTC bus audio systems provide transit information/announcements in both English and Spanish.

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Sign Language and Braille

When additional language services are requested, outside contractors, such as American Sign Language Communication and Preston Bass, provide these services with training from RTC staff. Braille is also available from contractor Master Engravers upon request.

Website Translation

The RTC website is regularly updated to display the latest activities and the website allows for instant translation of the information posted in the following eight languages: Chinese, Dutch, French, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish.

Additional Assistance

The RTC also offers additional language translation services for public meetings at no cost to the public, if the request is made 48 hours prior to the time of the scheduled meetings. MPO planning documents may also be translated into other languages upon request.

2.5.3. Plan Implementation

One of the main tasks for the RTC is to monitor the prioritization of transportation projects in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the changes to RTC Transit routes, fares and services. In particular, the RTC must analyze any major decision made to the overall transportation system, particularly if it negatively affects areas of high concentration of LEP population. Ongoing LAP implementation strategies include:

- Monitoring Language Needs
- Language Assistance Measures
- Staff Training
- Public Involvement
- Monitoring and Updating the LAP
- Point of Contact

Monitoring Language Needs

The RTC will continue to monitor the language needs of the LEP individuals within its services area and will continue to do the following:

- Continue to monitor the languages and the customers' needs encountered by the front-line staff.
- Continue to monitor the language preferences of the paratransit applicants.
- Continue to monitor the American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate published each year by the US Census Bureau for changes in the LEP population.
- Closely monitor the Census data and ensure that the Language Assistance Plan (LAP) is updated in a timely manner when the threshold population is reached in the Filipino community that is the fastest growing population in Southern Nevada besides the Hispanic population.

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Language Assistance Measures

The RTC will continue to implement the current measures to assist the LEP population and will continue to enhance its services to strengthen the LAP to include:

- Continue to provide for interpreters as needed, in Spanish and any other language requested.
- Maintain regular communication with the drivers, dispatchers and other front line staff regarding their experience with the LEP clients in order to assess the assistance provided.
- Continue to translate important notices regarding fares, service changes, and major transportation planning studies or changes in policies that may directly or indirectly impact the LEP population.
- Continue to work with local social services agencies to disseminate information to the LEP population and to collect information regarding the unmet needs.
- Provide information related to available language translation in future MPO documents.

Staff Training

The RTC MPO is in the midst of coordinating with the RTC Government Affairs, Media and Marketing department and the RTC legal department for roundtable training for all MPO staff in Title VI policies and complaint procedures. Providing this training will help staff with providing a high level of customer service to the general population as well as the LEP population.

- This training will ensure that all staff are familiar with the processes for handling potential Title VI and LEP complaints.
- Staff with bilingual capabilities would be encouraged to work for the agency and will be given special training related to language assistance and how to handle potential Title VI and LEP complaints.
- RTC will continue to periodically survey staff for their language skills in order to provide conversation language assistance to RTC customers, as needed.

Public Involvement

The RTC will continue to implement its very extensive and inclusive public outreach process as has been detailed previously.

- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the current process via feedback received from the public as well as certain targeted surveys.
- Update the Public Participation Plan as needed.
- Explore new and innovative techniques and strategies to engage the public in transportation planning.

Monitoring and Updating the LAP

The RTC will continue to update the LAP as required by the USDOT and as the characteristics of the population changes. Updates will be made as necessary and may include, but not limited to:

- Changes in LEP population by number or area as new information are made available;
- Updated analysis of the current LEP service area;
- Requirements for addition language translation services; and/or
- Updates to policies and procedures, if such guidance is directed by the RTC Board.

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Language Assistance Contact

Language assistance may be requested by contacting:

Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada

Government Affairs, Media & Marketing

600 S. Grand Central Parkway, Suite 350

Las Vegas, NV 89106

(702) 676-1500 (phone)