

City of Boise – Legal Department LEP Assessment and Plan 2015

As part of the City of Boise's LEP, the Legal Department has developed the following plan to provide meaningful access to its services for LEP populations. The plan will be updated biennially.

Four Factor Analysis

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service population. The number or proportion of LEP persons encountered is the same as that in the general population of the City of Boise
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program. In the past year, attorney and legal staff have had regular contact with LEP individuals, either at the courthouse or at the front desk. Of 31 attorneys/staff interviewed, 18 have had contact with at least one LEP individual and 7 have had 10 or more contacts with LEP individuals. All of the LEP contacts were with either defendants or victims/witnesses in criminal cases. The languages spoken included Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, French, Vietnamese, Russian, Farsi, and Swahili. Legal prosecutes approximately 15,000 cases per year.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by the recipient to people's lives. A criminal case is one of the most important incidents in a person's life, whether that person is the defendant or a victim of a crime. Ensuring that both defendants and victims understand their rights and the criminal justice process is of the utmost importance to the Legal department.
4. The resources available to the recipient and the costs. The Department has "I Speak" language cards available at the front desk. In addition, translation services for defendants are available through the courthouse. Legal has a contract with FACES to provide translation services to victims of domestic violence. In addition, Legal has access to the Police Department's Contract Interpreter list and can contact interpreters in 30 different languages if necessary to communicate with LEP victims. Defendants receive full interpreter and translation services through the court. One attorney is fluent in sign language. No one else is bilingual in the department.

Department Plan

1. Identifying LEP individuals who need language assistance. Legal annually surveys its staff and attorneys for instances of direct or indirect contact with LEP individuals. Legal also has "I Speak" cards available at the front desk. Defendants who need translation services usually have "interpreter" stamped in the front of their court file.
2. Language assistance measures. Legal will continue to locate "I Speak" cards at the front desk. It will also have Google Translate installed on its website and have access to Google Translate on the front office computer where LEP individuals may be encountered. Legal has a contract with FACES for translation services for victims of domestic violence and will continue to expand its use of the Police Department's Contract Interpreter list. Legal will also look into the feasibility and cost of translating its victim letter into Spanish.

3. Training Staff. In addition to the training provided by the City, Legal will ensure that its staff understands its Title VI LEP responsibilities. Staff will also receive specific training on what language assistance services the City of Boise offers and specific procedures to be followed when encountering LEP persons. Attorneys and staff will also receive specific training on the FACES translation contract and how to access/use Police's Contract Interpreter's list.
4. Providing notice to LEP persons. Legal will continue to direct LEP defendants to the courthouse's services. While at court, attorneys will continue to access the Language Line and the county's formal court interpreters for language assistance. Legal will post a notice at the front desk that language assistance is available and will train its front desk staff to use I-Speak cards and Google Translate.
5. Monitoring and updating the LEP plan. Legal will monitor and update this plan on a regular basis, but not less than annually. At minimum, Legal will examine how many LEP persons were encountered and determine if their needs were met. Legal will also continue to review its documents to determine if any of them should be translated into other languages and to determine if more program-specific outreach should be undertaken. It will also look at any complaints received and learn how to better serve the LEP population through those complaints.