

# **Tips and Tools for Reaching Limited English Proficient Communities in Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery**

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# Introduction

**Effective communication with limited English proficient individuals increases the safety of the entire community, saves lives, and is consistent with your mission and the law.**

Communicating information to the public is essential to emergency management. Limited English proficient (LEP) individuals will likely be present in any community faced with an emergency or disaster. LEP individuals are those who have difficulty speaking, understanding, reading, or writing English. If LEP individuals are not able to access disaster information in a language they can understand, the consequences can be deadly. When individuals do not evacuate, find shelter, or understand how to prevent getting a contagious disease, emergency response personnel and resources are further strained to conduct rescue operations or otherwise remedy avoidable situations. To avoid such outcomes, planning for communication with LEP individuals should occur at all stages of disaster management—including preparedness, response, and recovery.<sup>1</sup>

Ensuring language access is not only good practice: it is also the law. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance.<sup>2</sup> The prohibition on national origin discrimination requires recipients to take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to the same benefits, services, information, and any other vital aspect of the recipient’s programs or activities as everyone else.<sup>3</sup> Although this document focuses on disaster management, many agencies have a much broader mandate. Federally funded emergency, medical, social service, and other agencies that will be called upon to

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<sup>1</sup> We recognize that many emergency experts refer to additional or different “stages” of disaster preparedness than are presented in this document, such as mitigation and reconstruction. While the stages to which we refer simplify the complex nature of emergencies, we believe they offer sufficient clarity to illustrate relevant LEP-related concerns that are the focus of this document. Though this document does not explicitly refer to guidance found in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) or the National Response Framework (NRF), it closely parallels these resources and supplements their guiding principles. More information about the NRF can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/national-response-framework>; the NIMS web page is located at <https://www.fema.gov/national-incident-management-system>.

<sup>2</sup> 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Additionally, [Executive Order 13166](#), reprinted at 65 Fed. Reg. 50121 (August 16, 2000), requires that recipients of federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their programs and services. Other federal law and policy, such as the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act](#) (Stafford Act) requires the consideration of language access in emergency planning and response. 42 U.S.C. § 5151(a).

provide assistance during disasters should ensure they are providing meaningful access to their regular programs and services as well. Doing so before an emergency occurs, may not only be required by law, but will also make it much easier to provide meaningful access during times of crisis.

This document is geared toward state and local decision-makers, planners, and language access coordinators at agencies responsible for emergency preparation, response, and recovery. It provides a non-exhaustive compilation of tips and promising practices intended to serve as a starting point for incorporating language access considerations into disaster management plans. Our hope is that this document helps recipients incorporate language access considerations into emergency plans, encourages innovation and sharing of information, and promotes a broader assessment of how language access is addressed in everyday activities.

### **No Language Access Plan? Get Started Now!**

For further information on creating a language access policy or plan to address your agency's work, consider the following resources:

- [Common Language Access Questions, Technical Assistance, and Guidance for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs.](#)
- [Language Assistance Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance](#)
- [Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs](#)
- [Limited English Proficiency Resource Document: Tips and Tools from the Field](#)

For additional information, please review the Appendix, and visit: [www.LEP.gov](http://www.LEP.gov)

# Tips and Tools for Reaching Limited English Proficient Communities in Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

Planning for contingencies and potential obstacles is part of a successful response to an emergency. Such planning ultimately benefits the entire community. Taking appropriate steps to anticipate the needs of limited English proficient community members is an important part of the planning process.

This document offers tips and tools to assist you to create comprehensive strategies that incorporate language access considerations into the following stages of emergency management:

- **Establishing Policies and Procedures** – This section offers information to assist recipients in implementing appropriate policies and procedures to address language access matters in the emergency and disaster context.
- **Preparedness, including Mitigation** – This section offers suggestions and resources for ensuring that LEP individuals have access to information and services offered by emergency managers relating to the actions individual community members should take to be better prepared for emergencies and disasters.
- **Response** – This section offers tips and tools for ensuring that emergency responders have the capability to communicate and assist LEP individuals when emergencies and disasters are in progress, and in the immediate aftermath.
- **Recovery** – This section offers recommendations for including LEP individuals during long term recovery activities, including interactions at aid centers, coordination with federal agencies, and post-disaster planning and rebuilding efforts.

In addition, the Appendix provides resources from federal, state and local entities with emergency management responsibilities, as well as nonprofit organizations who serve LEP populations.

## Establish Policies and Procedures: Include Language Access to Your Emergency Plan

Title VI language access requirements are broad and include activities related to emergency management. To provide meaningful access to emergency services successfully, written policies and procedures should be in place and address, in as much detail as possible, how access will be provided to individuals who are LEP in all stages of an emergency, including preparedness, response, and recovery.

### Identifying the Language Groups in Your Service Area

- Recipients can use demographic data (e.g., census data, school district language data, and language data from local welfare or human services agencies), and institute procedures for keeping track of interactions with different LEP language groups **to help them assess the language needs of their communities.**
- Using American Community Survey data, the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section of the Civil Rights Division in the Department of Justice (FCS) has created maps indicating the concentrations of LEP individuals by state, county, and judicial district. These maps also provide data about the numbers of individuals in each language group represented in the geographic area at issue. These maps are available at: <http://www.lep.gov/maps>.

### Ensuring LEP Individuals Can Access Your Programs and Services Now

Evaluating your programs before a disaster strikes helps determine what tools are already in place to assist LEP individuals and what, if any, additional resources are needed. Many state and local agencies already address language access considerations in their daily operations. For example, many hospitals provide language services through certified interpreters and have written plans on how to provide these services in the event of a major emergency. Many 911 call centers have bilingual operators and access to multi-lingual language lines as well as procedures that address how to effectively communicate with an LEP caller. Police departments may already have qualified bilingual staff and/or procedures for providing language services. Tips for evaluating and expanding existing LEP tools include:

- Taking stock of the areas where you have already made progress and where there may be room for improvement. If you have a language access plan, reviewing it and considering how to build on its strengths will help you work to address any deficiencies. (For more information on creating a language access plan, see the text box on page ii.);

- Re-examining evacuation and disaster preparedness plans to ensure that these plans address the needs of LEP populations. When re-examining plans, pay particular attention to communication strategies and make sure that procedures for communicating in languages other than English are part of those strategies. (Refer to the **Response** section, below, for more on specific communication strategies.);
- Reviewing public-facing materials to determine what documents may be vital during a disaster or emergency and translating those materials into the commonly spoken languages in the area. (For more information on obtaining translations, see the text box on page 7.);
- Many jurisdictions incorporate the concept of “access and functional needs,” (sometimes referred to as “at-risk” or “vulnerable”) populations into their disaster preparedness plans to address individuals who require specific assistance or resources during emergencies. Populations with access and functional needs often include individuals with disabilities, those without access to transportation, children, and the elderly. Jurisdictions should also incorporate LEP individuals in the “access and functional needs” categories throughout their plans.

### **Conducting Outreach Efforts to Establish Partnerships and Identify the Practices that Best Serve Your Community Before Disaster Strikes**

Thoughtful outreach practices are important because traditional means of distribution may not be the most effective. Depending on the history of interactions between some localities and local populations (immigrants and otherwise), mistrust of the government could be a real issue when dealing with LEP community members. Additionally, localities should be conscious of varying literacy levels within specific LEP communities and use a range of methods to communicate with each language population, as they would use for English speakers. Partnering with community groups who work closely with LEP individuals and immigrant communities can not only assist in identifying the best outreach practices for your community, but can also provide a trusted voice to help carry the message of personal preparedness.

Effective outreach efforts can help you be prepared to respond to LEP members of your community, such as:

- Providing information about disaster-related language access services to, and seeking input from, LEP persons and the community organizations that serve them can encourage cooperation and partnerships and assist planners in identifying the most successful language access strategies for their community.
  - The [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#) program is a national program that FEMA's Community Preparedness Division administers to

train community members to assist with disaster response. In order to tailor the program to different populations and encourage broader participation, local CERTs across the country offer training courses in non-English languages. More information about CERT, including how to start a local team, is available here: <http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>

- Building ethnic media lists for each language population in your area and for common forms of media (non-English radio stations, newspapers, websites, etc.);
- Publicizing the availability of language services, locations of public gatherings, and other key information about your programs and activities in ethnic media;
- Working with other agencies and jurisdictions to brainstorm and identify scenarios where LEP individuals may need emergency assistance. Consider appropriate responses, resource sharing options, and how best to incorporate language access into emergency response plans; and
- Identifying individuals with verified language skills who are willing to volunteer during an emergency and are competent to do so.

### A Note about Less Common Languages

Strategies for communicating with persons who speak less common languages, as well as persons who speak the most common languages, are important in emergency plans. While it may not be necessary to hire qualified bilingual employees for every language present in your community or to translate every document in dozens of languages, smaller LEP language groups should be provided meaningful access to emergency services, in part by providing notice in those languages about where to get vital information. Strategies for providing meaningful access include:

1. Identifying these smaller language populations and where they are located;
2. Having a plan in place to communicate vital information to these groups, such as evacuation orders, through the use of ethnic media or community partnerships;
3. Procuring contracts with competent interpreter service providers, both in person and remote, for the language populations you have identified.
4. Utilizing pictures and symbols, where appropriate, at shelters and disaster relief centers;
5. Identifying volunteers with relevant, verified language skills before a disaster happens who can provide sight translations of relief information.

For more guidance about when translation of written material is necessary see the “Written Language Services” section of your federal funding agency’s LEP Guidance or the DOJ’s Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2002-06-18/pdf/02-15207.pdf>.

## Training Activities

Including LEP individuals and language access issues into disaster training exercises helps emergency responders respond effectively. Tips include:

- When testing your communication strategies, practicing how you will translate and distribute translated media alerts, issue multilingual evacuation announcements, work with interpreters, and other critical communications to reach LEP populations.
- Helping prepare responders and volunteers to communicate with LEP disaster victims in emergency exercises at hospitals, mobile health units, shelters, etc.
- Preparing “I Speak” cards and training responders, intake workers, and volunteers on how they can be used to assist to identify languages spoken by disaster survivors.

## Preparedness

Preparedness is the first line of defense to ensure the safety of individuals in an emergency or disaster. Having an informed community assists emergency managers and responders when an emergency does arise. Many local, state, and federal agencies responsible for various emergency-related tasks routinely provide free information to the public about how to prepare themselves for emergencies ranging from hurricanes to earthquakes, pandemic flu, and terrorist attacks.

To have an informed and prepared public, however, it can be vital that this information be translated and disseminated in the most common languages present in the community. Translating vital documents is a key part of providing meaningful access to your programs and activities for LEP persons. For more guidance on how to procure good quality translations, see the text box on page 7. For information on when written translations are necessary and identifying the languages in which to translate documents, see the text box about translating documents into less common languages on page 4.

### **A Note about Disseminating Information**

It is often problematic to rely exclusively on the Internet or any other single method to disseminate preparedness information because many people do not have regular access to the Internet. Community groups can provide invaluable advice and assistance in identifying how best to reach LEP populations and in distributing materials in your community.

Online emergency preparedness information should be prominently displayed and available in commonly encountered languages on relevant home pages and web sites, as well as on translated web pages and sites. Translated information appearing on websites is most useful when it is directly accessible to LEP individuals, and not hidden “behind” English-language text or links.

Federal agencies and national organizations, as well as state and local entities, already provide an abundance of free personal preparedness information in multiple languages. Much of this information is translated into many languages and can be used by state and local governments at no cost. See the Appendix at the end of this document for resources in multiple languages that may be useful in ensuring that LEP individuals in your community are adequately prepared.

## **Good Quality Translations are Essential: Plan Ahead!**

Accurate, culturally competent translations help ensure that LEP communities understand the information you want to convey. Below are some resources that can help you understand the translation process, identify a translation vendor, and obtain good quality translations:

- U.S. Department of Justice, Question 11, Commonly Asked Questions and Answers Regarding Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals, *What is the difference between a bilingual staff person and an interpreter or translator?* available in: [http://www.lep.gov/faqs/042511\\_Q&A\\_LEP\\_General.pdf](http://www.lep.gov/faqs/042511_Q&A_LEP_General.pdf).
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, *What Does it Mean To be a Certified Linguist – TIPS to discovering vendor and linguist qualifications* available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHG4>.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, *Before You Hire – Ask Yourself: “What are my Project’s Language Needs?” – TIPS to make language service hiring decisions* available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHG4>.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service, *Toolkit for Making Written Material Clear and Effective, Section 5: Detailed guidelines for translation*, which includes guidelines to produce culturally appropriate translations, available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cp6xY>.

## Response

Effective communications about sheltering, evacuation, transportation options, and health care during an emergency or disaster can mean the difference between life and death. To ensure the safety of all members of a disaster-impacted area, it is important that planning for disaster-related communications with disaster victims incorporates language access considerations.

### Notifications and Warnings

In any emergency, communication before, during, and after an incident is vital. Emergency response plans should include procedures for notifying the public about where to find shelter, whether to evacuate, or where to go for assistance. The following are tips for providing meaningful communication with LEP populations during an emergency:

- Coordinating with non-English media—in TV, print, and radio, as well as through online platforms and social media—to assist with sharing emergency information to LEP populations in your area, including:
  - Establishing these partnerships before a disaster occurs and ensuring that emergency plans identify the media outlets and their contact information.
  - If you are not familiar with the non-English media outlets that serve your area, LEP individuals and community organizations may be able to assist in identifying promising partnerships;
  - When creating ethnic media contact lists it is important to consider that some publications are not published daily. Make note of their publishing deadlines to ensure release of emergency information will be timely.
- Providing a clear message for evacuation pickup points and traffic routes in the languages present in the affected area.
- If canvassing a neighborhood to provide warning, considering the languages present in the area and identifying employees and/or volunteers with appropriate language skills to cover them, as well as providing telephonic interpretation services to personnel involved in canvassing activities.

- To assist in disseminating information, forming partnerships with non-profit, legal services, community, and faith-based organizations that serve LEP populations;
- Ensuring that 911 call centers have bilingual staff in the highest volume languages and access to telephonic interpretation services and properly training operators on how to handle an LEP caller;
  - For more information specific to 911 call centers, see Chapter 2 of DOJ's *Limited English Proficiency Resource Document: Tips and Tools from the Field*, available at: [http://www.lep.gov/resources/tips\\_and\\_tools-9-21-04.htm](http://www.lep.gov/resources/tips_and_tools-9-21-04.htm).
- If using a 311 or similar call center that operates as a clearinghouse for emergency information such as where to find shelter, evacuation routes, etc., providing options for the same information in the non-English languages most common in the affected area.
- Some local governments utilize reverse-911 systems that are programmed to call, text, or email emergency information to residents. These systems, which may operate using local telephone listings or via individual sign up, can incorporate means to include messages in the languages most common in the area.
- Identifying and publicizing the use of public television stations as a clearinghouse for emergency messages that are repeated in the most commonly spoken languages in the area (see text box above).

### **A Note about Telephonic Interpretation Services**

Telephonic interpretation services can be an excellent resource for providing language assistance, for emergency- and disaster- related call centers, and for emergency management personnel in the field. To be effective, however, vendors need to provide high quality services, and personnel need to be properly trained to use the service. Below are some resources that address these issues.

- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, *TIPS on hiring the Right Telephonic Interpretation Vendor*, available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHGG>.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, *TIPS for Working with Telephonic Interpreters*, available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHGP>.

## Survivor Care

During or immediately following an emergency, people may need shelter, medical care, or reunification with missing loved ones. In these situations, LEP individuals will need to be able to understand and effectively communicate with emergency responders:

- Planning ahead to identify bilingual employees and volunteers with verified language skills who are competent in assisting LEP individuals during a disaster. Community organizations that work with LEP individuals can be a good resource for identifying bilingual volunteers. Note, however, that community organizations and nonprofits have their own obligations and resource limitations; emergency management planners should not expect to receive language services from these organizations for free. Consider working collaboratively with government agencies in neighboring areas to pool language access resources and volunteers;
- Reaching out to area interpreters and translators who do not work in the emergency field, such as those who work in the local courts or school districts, to determine their interest in volunteering their services during times of emergency. The following national organizations also may be of assistance in locating volunteer interpreter and translators in your area:
  - [American Association of Language Specialists](#)
  - [American Translators Association](#)
  - [International Association of Conference Interpreters](#)
  - [National Center for State Courts](#)
  - For more information about using interpreters and translators see: [http://www.lep.gov/interp\\_translation/trans\\_interpret.html](http://www.lep.gov/interp_translation/trans_interpret.html);
- Encouraging the hiring of bilingual employees whose language skills have been assessed for proficiency to serve in positions that require interaction with the public during times of emergency;
- Providing telephonic interpretation services for employees and volunteers interacting with the public;
- To the extent that locations in the community, such as schools or churches, are identified as possible shelter or emergency health facilities, considering ahead of time which languages are present in the immediate area and planning for appropriate language resources to be available at those facilities;
- Having a plan in place for keeping track of language needs when processing wounded or sheltering individuals;

- Working with area hospitals to create lists of certified medical interpreters and creating a policy of volunteer interpreter sharing in the event an emergency affects a neighboring community;
- Considering and classifying the type of skills a volunteer with language skills may have. Those who are qualified or certified medical interpreters should work directly with health professionals and those who are not qualified or certified medical interpreters, and likely without a strong understanding of medical terminology, may be more suited to a limited role;
- Providing signs in the most common languages that provide notice of the availability of language services and that encourage self-identification. However, not all affected individuals are literate. If using signs to direct people to or around an emergency facility, consider using pictures instead of words;
- Distributing “I Speak” cards to assist responders, intake workers, and volunteers in identifying languages spoken by disaster victims. For example, consider the “I Speak” poster and booklet created by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, available here: <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/dhs-language-access-materials>.

### **A Note about Children**

In many families, children may be the only fluent English speakers. As the DOJ LEP Guidance makes clear, children must not be relied upon to serve as interpreters and translators. Only under extenuating circumstances, as a last resort while awaiting interpreter services, should children be used as language brokers. In order to avoid relying on child “interpreters,” it is crucial to identify volunteers with language skills, hire bilingual employees, and establish relationships with professional interpreters and translators before an emergency situation is present.

## Recovery

One of the lessons learned from recent recovery efforts is the importance of providing information about disaster relief and long term recovery efforts in the languages spoken in the impacted area. Relief workers and other emergency management personnel should be aware of this obligation. To carry out this obligation, the following may be helpful:

- Ensuring that language services—including bilingual staff, interpreters, and translated materials—are in place at aid centers so that LEP persons are able to communicate their needs, apply for assistance, and receive important information about the process. At relief centers, using multi-lingual signage and other means to publicize that language services are available;
- If the services you provide require recordkeeping, repeated interaction, or other follow-up with victims, making sure to record LEP persons' language needs in their file, and ensure that future communications with the LEP individual, such as notices, phone calls, and letters are made in the LEP person's language;
- In the event of a federal response to a disaster in your area, communicating to federal agencies, such as FEMA, the language needs in your area. This will assist federal agencies in providing federal disaster relief information in the languages present in your community, as well as identifying federal employees with relevant language skills to assist with recovery operations;
- Providing translations in a variety of languages for documents that address eligibility requirements for disaster relief benefits, and for documents disseminated for public comment concerning long term recovery plans or proposals, including those concerning rebuilding efforts, changes or repairs to infrastructure, and use of federal emergency or disaster relief funds. Providing translations in a variety of languages for any other notices or bulletins concerning recovery efforts;
- Utilizing ethnic media lists to publicize town halls and other public forums at which recovery efforts are discussed, or where community input concerning emergency and disaster recovery efforts is sought. Reaching out to contacts at non-profit, legal services, community, and faith-based organizations that serve LEP populations to assist in disseminating translated information;
- Providing interpretation for commonly spoken languages at town halls and other public forums at which recovery efforts are discussed, or where community input concerning emergency and disaster recovery efforts is sought. Making sure that

interpretation is provided not only of what is communicated by the speakers at the event, but also for questions and comments from the audience. Ensuring that any handouts, pamphlets, signs and other relevant written text are translated and made available at the venue.

# Appendix: Resources

## Federal Resources and Examples

### Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Offices within HHS have created a number of tools and resources in order to assist emergency planners and responders to adequately assist diverse communities, including those with limited English proficiency.

- **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC)** website includes a search bar at the top right allowing users to search the entire website in the language of their choice: <http://www.cdc.gov>. Spanish language translation of the CDC website is available here: <http://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>.
- **The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**, has published a [\*Toolkit for Making Written Material Clear and Effective, Section 5: Detailed guidelines for translation\*](#), which includes guidelines to produce culturally appropriate translations, available here: <http://go.usa.gov/cp6xY>.
- **The Health Resources and Services Administration** has developed an on-line training course entitled: [\*Culture, Language, and Health Literacy\*](#). The information included in this training site can assist healthcare professionals in improving patient communication skills; increasing awareness and knowledge of the three main factors that affect communication with patients, which include 1) health literacy, 2) cultural competency and limited English proficiency, and 3) implementing patient-centered communication practices that demonstrate cultural competency and appropriately address patients with limited health literacy and limited English proficiency: <http://www.hrsa.gov/culturalcompetence/index.html>.
- **The National Institute of Health’s HealthReach** offers documents, audio and video information files on a variety of health related topics. Its resources are searchable by language: <https://healthreach.nlm.nih.gov/AdvancedSearch.aspx>.
- **The Office of Minority Health** has funded the development of [\*A Patient-Centered Guide to Implementing Language Access Services in Healthcare Organizations\*](#). The information included in this Guide can assist healthcare organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating language access

services to better serve their LEP patient population and decrease disparities in access to healthcare: <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/Assets/pdf/Checked/HC-LSIG.pdf>.

## Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

[www.Listo.gov](http://www.Listo.gov) is the Spanish language version of [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov) and provides tips for families on creating emergency preparedness kits, formulating family emergency plans, and learning about government emergency response. The site is also available in 11 other languages.

- **The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** provides information in multiple languages on its website, including Spanish, here: <http://www.fema.gov/es>.
- ***Tips for Effectively Communicating with Protected Populations During Preparedness, Response, and Recovery*** (DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, FEMA Office of Equal Rights, FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination) provides information to state, local, and tribal governments on practices to help jurisdictions effectively communicate with individuals who are LEP and or who have other access and functional needs and is available here: <https://www.dhs.gov/antidiscrimination-group>.

## Department of Justice (DOJ)

The Civil Rights Division provides LEP training and technical assistance to interested stakeholders as its resources permit. For more information on the work of the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section (FCS) of the Civil Rights Division, visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/fcs/>. For technical assistance, please call FCS at (202) 307-2222, TTY: (202) 307-2678. The Department also manages [www.LEP.gov](http://www.LEP.gov), which provides information, tools, and technical assistance regarding limited English proficiency and language services for federal agencies, recipients of federal funds, users of federal programs and federally assisted programs, and other stakeholders. For example:

- Using American Community Survey data collected by the U.S. Census, FCS has released maps which provide data on the distribution of LEP individuals in the United States on a state, county, and judicial district level, and offer information about the top languages spoken in selected areas: <http://www.lep.gov/maps/>.
- The Department has created a *Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs*, which can assist state

and local emergency planners and responders to assess their needs and to plan for the provision of language services in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery:

[http://www.lep.gov/resources/2011\\_Language\\_Access\\_Assessment\\_and\\_Planning\\_Tool.pdf](http://www.lep.gov/resources/2011_Language_Access_Assessment_and_Planning_Tool.pdf).

- The Department has created a number of tools to assist organizations with hiring and procurement of language services. These include:
  - *Before You Hire – Ask Yourself: What are my Project’s Language Needs?” – TIPS to making language service hiring decisions*, available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHGk>.
  - *What does it Mean to be a Certified Linguist? TIPS on discovering vendor and linguist qualifications*, available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHG4>.
  - *TIPS on Hiring the Right Telephonic Interpretation Vendor*, available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHGG>.
  - *TIPS for Working with Telephone Interpreters*, available at: <http://go.usa.gov/cpHGP>.

## State and Local Resources and Examples<sup>4</sup>

- **Arlington County, Virginia** utilizes an automated alert system, which provides alerts through text, email, instant messaging, fax, or telephone in English or Spanish: <https://www.arlingtonalert.com/index.php?CCheck=1>  
<https://member.everbridge.net/index/1332612387832024#/faq>.
- The **California Department of Public Health** has a “Be Prepared” program, which provides fact sheets in 13 languages for public health emergencies, including disaster **preparedness** for the event of extreme heat, extreme cold, and wildfires:  
<http://www.bepreparedcalifornia.ca.gov/ResourcesAndLinks/Languages/Pages/FactSheetsinSelectedLanguages.aspx>.
- The **California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services** published the guide *Meeting the Needs of Vulnerable People in Times of Disaster: A Guide for Emergency Managers*, which **provides** advice on how to partner with community based organizations, available at:  
<http://www.caloes.ca.gov/AccessFunctionalNeedsSite/Documents/Vulnerable%20Populations.pdf>.
- **Florida Department of Health Emergency Preparedness & Response** has issued the Florida Emergency Preparedness Guide in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Creole](#). It also created fact sheets for serving vulnerable populations in emergencies: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/vulnerable-populations/vp-factsheets.html>. Specific examples are noted below:
  - Fact sheet for communicating with LEP individuals:  
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/vulnerable-populations/documents/vp-non-english.pdf>.

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<sup>4</sup> The examples described in this section are consistent with the goals of the DOJ’s *Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons* (“DOJ LEP Guidance”), [67 Fed. Reg. 41455](#) (June 18, 2002). However, DOJ has not conducted an extensive review of the entities noted in these examples, has not independently verified translated materials, nor reviewed how the policies and practices are implemented. DOJ does not endorse or suggest that any particular program is legally required. Language access coordinators and decision-makers should consult the LEP Guidance documents that DOJ and other federal agencies have published, in conjunction with these examples.

- Communications resource guide for response personnel to serve vulnerable populations, with sections on non-English speaking populations and migrant populations: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/vulnerable-populations/documents/fan-resource-guide.pdf>.
- **Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)** has created *Show Me: A Communication Tool for Emergency Shelters*, which uses symbols and visual elements to communicate emergency related services to LEP populations. EOHHS has also made this tool available as a mobile application. For more information, see <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/emergency-prep/additional-access-needs/show-me.html>.
- The **Minnesota Department of Health** offers information in 18 languages. Many of these translated materials are relevant to emergency and disaster preparedness.
  - Project ECHO (Emergency, Community, and Health Outreach), provides health, safety, and emergency preparation information in multiple languages by phone, email, on television, and on the web during emergency and non-emergency times to people who are LEP throughout the state of Minnesota. Project ECHO delivers emergency information in several formats, depending on the scope of the emergency, including:
    - ECHO Phone – a toll-free phone number provides regularly updated emergency-related information in 10 languages
    - ECHO Web – provides a virtual hub for public officials, outreach workers and community members seeking multi-language health, safety, emergency and civic engagement education. See [www.echominnesota.org](http://www.echominnesota.org).
    - ECHO Community Partnerships – translated information is relayed to LEP audiences locally
    - ECHO TV – broadcasts live on public television during statewide emergencies to provide instructions and information in English and in seven additional languages
- **Orange County, North Carolina’s Immigrant Emergency Communications Program** was created by the county’s Health Department (OCHD) in response to a December 2002 ice storm that led to several carbon monoxide poisoning deaths of Latinos in North Carolina. The program provided emergency preparedness and response information in Spanish, such as a

telephonic calling tree through which real time information is disseminated, emergency preparedness training, translated emergency information, and paid radio advertisements about emergency preparedness. The program also provided interpreter training, locates shelter volunteers with Spanish skills, and held meetings with organizations that serve Spanish-speaking populations to share information on how best to improve their services. For more information about OCHD's program, see: <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/practice/multi-format-communications-program-readies-spanish-speakers-emergencies-0>.

- **Philadelphia's Office of Emergency Management** provides translations of many of its disaster preparedness brochures in several languages: <https://alpha.phila.gov/departments/oem/ready-or-not/brochures/>.
- The **San Francisco Department of Emergency Management** provides PDFs of the information available on its preparedness website in Chinese, English, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese: <http://www.sf72.org/plan>.
  - For an example of a successful partnership between emergency responders, the public, and community organizations, take a look at the Chinatown Disaster Response Program in San Francisco. Information about this program is available here: <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/practice/disaster-planning-san-francisco%E2%80%99s-chinatown-trains-empowers-community-members-responders>.
- The **City of Seattle** published a site that contains both disaster preparedness and emergency response information translated into a number of non-English languages. Translated materials include both online information and one-page flyers that are easy to distribute: <http://kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/languages.aspx>.
  - For an example of a partnership between a county and community organizations to ensure emergency-related information reaches vulnerable communities, see the Seattle and King County Community and Communication Network: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/preparedness/VPAT/CCN.aspx>.
- The **Virginia Department of Emergency Management** offers Emergency Preparedness information in ten non-English languages on its site: <http://www.vaemergency.gov/readyvirginia/other-languages>.

## Additional Resources and Examples<sup>5</sup>

The **American Red Cross** (Red Cross) provides a translated version of its preparedness information in Spanish at <http://www.redcross.org/cruz-roja/preparate>, and PDF documents in a number of languages, available at <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library>. The Red Cross also maintains a Language Bank, which provides free in-person and over-the-phone interpretation as well as written translation for individuals and community based partner agencies, and quick tips and a resource guide for non-profit partners. Relevant links include:

- <http://www.redcross.org/local/wa/northwestregion/programs-services/translation-interpretation>.
- [http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA\\_CustomProductCatalog/m27940127\\_lb\\_quick\\_tips.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m27940127_lb_quick_tips.pdf).
- [http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA\\_CustomProductCatalog/m27940129\\_language\\_bank\\_resource\\_guide.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m27940129_language_bank_resource_guide.pdf).

The **Asian American Justice Center** provides information concerning language access requirements under the Stafford Act and an analysis of the Hurricane Katrina disaster response in Asian Communities. For example:

- *Fact Sheet: Language Rights and the Stafford Act*, available at: <http://www.advancingjustice-aaajc.org/sites/aaajc/files/FEMA-TheStaffordAct-LanguageRights-FACTSHEET.pdf>.

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- *Hurricane Katrina: Models for Effective Emergency Response in the Asian American Community*, available at: <http://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org/sites/aajc/files/KatrinawriteupFINAL.pdf>.

An innovation of the **Drexel University School of Public Health's Center for Health Equality** and funded by the **HHS Office of Minority Health**, the National Resource Center on Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities is an online clearinghouse and information exchange portal designed to facilitate communication, networking and collaboration to improve preparedness, build resilience and eliminate disparities for culturally diverse communities in public health emergencies. [Diversitypreparedness.org](http://www.diversitypreparedness.org) provides translated preparedness resources listed by language at:

<http://www.diversitypreparedness.org/browse-resources/language/>, and translated documents (including training materials), listed by type of document at: <http://www.diversitypreparedness.org/browse-resources/multiple-categories/>.

**National Consensus Panel on Emergency Preparedness and Cultural Diversity**, with support from HHS's Office of Minority Health, published a *Guidance for Integrating Culturally Diverse Communities into Planning for and Responding to Emergencies* which includes information on providing linguistically appropriate communications, and is available here: <http://www.aha.org/content/11/OMHODiversityPreparednesToolkit.pdf>.

The **National Council of La Raza** created a comprehensive guide to the provision of emergency services to Latino communities, including the provision of services to LEP communities, called *Emergency Managers Tool Kit: Meeting the Needs of Latino Communities* available at: <http://publications.nclr.org/handle/123456789/382>.

The **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction** has created glossaries of emergency and disaster related terms, [2009 UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction](https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/7817), and has obtained translations in twelve languages: <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/7817>. Glossaries can be very helpful when working with interpreters, many of whom may not have specialized knowledge in the area of emergency and disaster management.