

**COLUMBIA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN

I. BACKGROUND

The limited English Proficiency Plan addresses Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color or national origin. In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that the failure to ensure a meaningful opportunity for national origin minorities, with limited-English proficiency, to participate in a federally funded program violates Title VI (Federal Aid Recipient Programs & Activities) regulations. Additionally, requirements are outlined in Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for persons with Limited English Proficiency signed on August 11, 2000. Its purpose is to ensure accessibility to programs and services to eligible persons who have limited proficiency in the English language.

Who is a Limited English Proficient Person?

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or “LEP”. The U.S. Census Bureau does not define limited English proficiency or non-limited English proficient populations. The Census’ American Community Survey (ACCS) data is reported based on categories of English-speaking ability: very well, and less than very well.

Determining the Need of Limited English Proficiency

As a recipient of federal funds, Columbia County must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information and services it provides. As noted in the **Federal Register, Volume 70; Number 239 on Wednesday, December 14, 2005**, there are four factors to consider when determining “reasonable steps.” This is known as “**the four-factor analysis**” and is outlined below:

- **Factor 1: The number of proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by Columbia County’s programs, services or activities.**
- **Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.**
- **Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people’s lives.**
- **Factor 4: The resources available and the overall cost to the County.**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) policy guidance gives recipients of federal funds substantial flexibility in determining what language assistance is appropriate based on a local assessment of the four factors listed above. Below is a self-assessment of need in Columbia County in relation to the four-factors.

II. LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SELF ASSESSMENT FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY

Columbia County has assessed its programs and services using the following four (4) factor analysis.

Factor 1: the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by Columbia County’s programs, services or activities.

Columbia County conducts regular Board meetings and advisory committee meetings throughout the year. Additionally there will be public hearings and community outreach conducted. Although the County Board meetings and advisory committee meetings are open to the public, the primary source of contact with citizens is through the webpage and community outreach. Therefore, it stands to reason that the most likely encounter avenue with LEP individuals would be through community outreach, and on the Columbia County webpage.

Data from Census Table B16001: Language Spoke at Home by ability to Speak English for the Populations 5 Years and Over, from the U.S. Census Bureau 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, was gathered. It should be noted that for our planning purposes, people that speak English “less than very well” are included in the analysis. Further, only the top four language groups are examined.

The table below is derived from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2015-2019 American Community Survey. It shows the number and percent of LEP persons 5 years and over, in total and by language in Columbia County. (LEP person: Person that speaks English “less than very well”.)

Population 5 years and older	Number of LEP Persons	Percentage of LEP Persons	LEP Persons who speak Spanish		LEP Persons who speak other Indo-European Languages		LEP Persons who Speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages		LEP Persons who speak other Languages	
			Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
65,754	3,259	4.96%	925	.28%	74	.02%	194	.06%	26	.008%

Table 1 shows that of the LEP persons within the Columbia County area, only .28% speak Spanish at home, making this the most significant language group as a percentage of population. The next most common language of the area’s LEP population is Asian and Pacific Island language, which makes up just .06%, followed by Other Indo-European Languages at just .02% and other languages at .008%.

Results from Factor 1 Analysis: Although the percentage of LEP persons in Columbia County is not significant enough to trigger a responsibility to provide services in languages other than English, Columbia County is committed to the principles of Title VI.

Factor 2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with these programs, services or activities.

The four-factor analysis identified Spanish as the most significant language spoken by the LEP population in the area covered by Columbia County. The size of the LEP population in this region is relatively small. However, to date, no requests for language assistance services have been made by LEP individuals or groups with the exception of Fire Services and 911 Communication (emergency dispatch) Services as in Factor 3 below. We will continue to monitor the requests for language assistance.

Results from Factor 2 Analysis: Based on this information, it is likely very infrequently that Columbia County staff will come into contact with LEP populations.

Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, service, or activity to people's lives.

The largest concentration of LEP individuals in Columbia County is Spanish. In terms of importance, Columbia County provides Fire services and 911 Communication Services (emergency dispatch) are deemed the most important. Adequate procedures are in place to ensure service to LEP individuals.

Factor 4: The resources available and the overall cost to Columbia County.

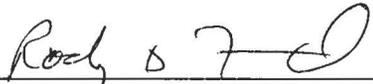
Although there is a very low percentage of LEP individuals in Columbia County, that is , persons who speak English "less than very well" the County will strive to offer the following measures:

1. The Columbia County staff will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to LEP clients who have difficulty communicating English.
2. The following resources will be available to accommodate LEP persons:
Language interpretation may be accessed for all languages through a telephone interpretation service such as the *Language Line and Florida Relay 711*.

Results from Factor 4 Analysis: Although the percentage of LEP persons in Columbia County is not significant enough to trigger a responsibility to provide services in languages other than English, Columbia County is committed to the principles of Title VI and will provide, with reasonable notice, translation services when needed upon request.

Duly adopted by the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners on March 4, 2021.

Columbia County, Florida
Board of County Commissioners

By:  _____
Rocky Ford, Chairman

Effective date: 3/4/2021

Revision Date(s): 7/19/2018, 3/4/2021