

ADOPTED: 09/27/2019

REVISED:

PURPOSE: Jefferson Fire District is committed to compliance with federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination based on a disability. The Fire District recognizes its legal obligation to ensure effective communication with persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and makes every effort to pro-actively assess communication needs as well as providing the best service.

RESPONSIBILITY:

The Fire Chief is the coordinator for the Fire District's procedures for implementing of this Operational Guideline. It is the responsibility of each member to know the Operational Guideline and to follow it.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. Effective Communication. Communication sufficient to provide the individual who may have limited English proficiency with substantially the same level of services received by individuals who are not limited in English proficiency.
- B. Interpretation. The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language) while retaining the same meaning.
- C. LEP is the acronym for both "limited English proficiency" and "limited English proficient." The U.S. Census Bureau's operational definition for LEP is a person's self-assessed ability to speak English less than "very well." Individuals who do not speak English as the primary (or preferred) language and who have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Individuals who are LEP may be competent in English for certain types of communication (like speaking) but still be LEP for other purposes (like reading or writing).
- D. Language Assistance Services. Oral and written language services needed to assist individuals who are LEP to communicate effectively with Fire District personnel and to provide individuals who are LEP meaningful access and equal opportunity to participate fully in the services, activities, or other programs.
- E. Meaningful Access. Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the individual who is LEP. Meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed or inferior as compared to programs or services provided to persons who are proficient in the English language.
- F. Primary Language. An individual's primary language is the language in which the individual most effectively communicates.

- G. Qualified Interpreter or Translator. A qualified interpreter (or translator) is an interpreter who has had their specialized vocabulary (medical or legal terminology) proficiency assessed.
- H. Translation. The replacement of written text from one language (source language) to an equivalent written text in another language (target language).
- I. Vital Documents. A document will be considered vital if it contains information that is critical for obtaining federal services and/or benefits or is required by law.

PROCEDURE:

1. Jefferson Fire District will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with LEP have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in services, activities and programs offered. The Fire District shall provide effective communications to individuals who may have LEP with substantially the same level of services received by individuals who are not limited in English proficiency.
2. Jefferson Fire District members will promptly identify the language and communication needs of persons with LEP as needed to ensure effective communication. If necessary, members may use a language identification cards, online services or posters to determine the preferred language.
3. Jefferson Fire District has access to interpreters through Language Line Services. Contact information is in each Fire District vehicle and facility.
4. When 9-1-1 calls are received at the PSAP from a person with LEP the call taker will attempt to identify the primary language and use Language Line Services to communicate with the caller. Dispatch will relay the information to the responders. In the event of a time critical situation responders may use any means available to communicate with a person with LEP including bilingual family members, bilingual bystanders, written communications, gestures and or digital communications. If a responder encounters a person with LEP on a response call, it must be noted on the Patient Care Form and in the narrative of the alarm report in Elite. Documentation must include what actions were taken to assist the person with LEP. All HIPPA and confidentiality regulations still apply when dealing with a person(s) with LEP.
5. In a non-emergency situation LEP persons may prefer or request to use a family member or friend as an interpreter. However, family members or friends of the LEP person will not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by that individual and **after** the LEP person has understood that an offer of an interpreter, at no charge to the person, has been made by Jefferson Fire District. If the LEP person chooses to use a family member or friend as an interpreter, issues of competency of interpretation, confidentiality, privacy, and conflict of interest will

- be considered. If the family member or friend is not competent or appropriate for any of these reasons, competent interpreter services will be provided to the LEP person. In order to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication children should not be used to interpret
6. Any person who believes they have been subject to discrimination based on their primary or preferred language may file a grievance using the procedures outlines in Policy 8.8, Section 4, Complaint Procedures.
 7. It is possible to encounter a language where translation is extremely difficult to obtain or achieve in a short period of time. In these situations the Fire District personnel must do what is in the best interest of the person(s) needing help.
 8. On an ongoing basis, Jefferson Fire District will assess changes in demographics, types of services or other needs that may require reevaluation of this Operational Guideline and its procedures. In addition, the Fire District will regularly assess the efficacy of these procedures, including but not limited to mechanisms for securing interpreter services, equipment used for the delivery of language assistance, complaints and community feedback. Website LEP.gov is a good source for LEP information. It also has a LEP Mapping Tool showing the highest percent of LEP individuals by language spoken. The data can be broken down by State.
 - a. Data from 2015 shows the total number of LEP over the age of 5 in Marion County was 31,827.
 - i. 85% Spanish
 - ii. 6% Russian
 - iii. 5% All Other
 - iv. 2% Chinese
 - v. 1% Japanese
 - vi. 1% Vietnamese
 - b. Data from 2015 does not break down the percentages for Linn County but shows a range of LEP over the age of 5 to be greater than 1000 and less than 10,000.