

West Virginia Department of Education
Office of Child Nutrition
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in Child Nutrition Programs Guidelines

Limited English Proficiency or LEP refers to an individual with a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. Sponsors of federally funded Child Nutrition Programs have a responsibility to ensure that language and communication are not a barrier for individuals identified as LEP. Failing to provide language assistance to LEP persons may be discrimination. LEP requirements include:

- Providing meaningful access – the act of providing reasonable, timely, appropriate, and competent language services at no cost to individuals with LEP. Factors to consider:
 - The number or proportion of LEP persons from a particular language group encountered in the population.
 - The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
 - The nature or importance of the program to people’s lives.
 - The resources available and costs.
- Determining commonly spoken languages of households with students enrolled service area.
- Communicating program eligibility information in an understandable and uniform format and to the maximum extent practicable, in a language that parents and guardians can understand.
 - Consider which materials are vital to program participation, especially those that require a response from the household (letters, instructions, notices, and verification material).
 - Ensure these materials are available in a language the individual can understand.
 - Provide LEP individuals access to the same information that is provided to non-LEP persons.
 - Provide interpretation services for individuals when written translations are not available in their primary language OR the individual has limited literacy.
- Offering an interpreter whenever requested by a parent or school staff.
 - Do not use student or other children.
 - Parents may voluntarily decline the district’s offer of an interpreter.
 - Qualities of an appropriate and competent interpreter:
 - Has an understanding of specialized terms,
 - Are trained on the role of an interpreter,
 - Are trained on the ethics of interpretation; AND,
 - Understands the need for confidentiality.
 - Options for interpretation services include:
 - Sharing services from advocacy groups and Federal grant agencies
 - Training bilingual school staff to act as interpreters/translators
 - Using telephonic and video conferencing interpretation services
 - Formally using qualified community volunteers as interpreters
 - Partner with migrant or refugee assistance organizations
 - The interpreter/translator should be able to accurately communicate in specialized terms or concepts related to the meal program. The interpreter/translator must also have the ability to understand and follow confidentiality and impartiality rules.

Helpful LEP Resources:

- [Meaningful Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency in the School Meal Programs: Guidance and Q&As | USDA-FNS](#)
- [Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs \(lep.gov\)](#)