



Volunteers of America®

MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN

Public Participation and Language Assistance Plan

Effective June 20, 2017

Purpose

The purpose of this Language Assistance Plan (hereinafter "plan") is to meet Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) requirements to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. As a subrecipient of FTA funds, this transit system is pledged to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to its transit services for persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. The FTA refers to these persons as Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons.

The completion of this plan for persons with Limited English Proficiency conforms to the requirements of the FTA Circular 4702.1B; Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients.

The U.S. DOT's FTA Office of Civil Rights' publication "Implementing the Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Persons – A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers," dated April 13, 2007, was used in the preparation of this plan.

The plan for *ElderRide – Volunteers of America of MN* contains:

- A. Needs assessment based on the four-factor analysis
- B. Language assistance measures
- C. Staff training plan
- D. Methods for notifying LEP persons about available language assistance
- E. Methods for monitoring, evaluating and updating the plan

A. LEP Needs Assessment – the Four-Factor Analysis

Factor 1:

The number or proportion of LEP persons in our service area who may be served or are likely to encounter a transit program, activity, or service.

We assessed the following information (as checked) about LEP persons to determine the number or proportion of LEP persons who might use or want to use our transit services:

- 2010-2014 US Census data/American Community Survey data

- Survey results:
- Local school district data
- Locally Coordinated Human Services Plan
- Other Human Services data
- Area/Metropolitan Planning Organizations/Regional Development Commission data
- Information from local organizations (religious, legal, social service, etc.) about LEP persons in our service area
- Reports from drivers, dispatchers and others about contact with LEP persons
- Other information (Describe): According to data provided by Census.gov website, pulling data from the American Community Survey 2015 – Hennepin County, (<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>):

- 1) The total number of LEP persons in our service area is: 7200.
- 2) The total eligible population in our service area is: 15413
- 3) The proportion of LEP persons to the total eligible service population is: 46.7%.

Factor 2:

The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with our transit programs, activities, or services. *ElderRide drivers have contact with program participants / LEP persons on a daily basis. Tracking of LEP persons is through our drivers, we do not complete intakes on all our passengers to accurately measure number of people we served.*

The conclusion drawn from examining this information is that most LEP persons seeking transit services from ElderRide speak Hmong / minimal English.

Factor 3:

The nature and importance of programs, activities, or services provided to the LEP population.

ElderRide Transit considers transportation to be an important and essential service for many people living in our service area. The majority of the trips that we provide LEP passengers are for social services and medical appointments.

A passenger has limited English language proficiency (LEP) when he/she is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English Language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with Community Transit staff.

Factor 4:

The resources available to our transit system and the overall cost to provide language assistance.

Our current budget for marketing or communicating with LEP persons in their language about transit services that are available to them is \$350. This may include funding for staff training, translation services, brochures, flyers, posters, newspaper ads, radio ads, website, travel training, etc.

B. Language Assistance Measures

There are several language assistance measures that are available to *ElderRide*. These include: Check off any items below that are relevant and provide a short narrative to explain your future efforts.

- Translation of key documents in the following language(s): Hmong, Lao and Somali
- Arranging for availability of oral translators (program is staffed with culturally appropriate individuals that are able to translate)
- Communication with LEP persons' groups about transit services
- Posting notices in appropriate languages informing LEP persons of available services
- Other (Describe): *Provide group rides for shopping, education and other social services.*

C. Staff Training

To ensure effective implementation of this plan, the transit system will schedule training at orientations for new staff and for all relevant employees on an annual basis to review:

- the transit system's Language Assistance Plan
- demographic data about local LEP population
- printed LEP persons' materials
- how to handle verbal requests for transit service in a foreign language
- responsibility to notify transit manager about any LEP persons' unmet needs.

D. Notice to LEP Persons about Available Language Assistance

Our transit system plans to notify LEP persons in their own language about the language assistance available to them without cost by using the following methods:

- signs on buses or at bus stops
- brochures
- posters
- sending information to local organizations that work with LEP persons
- telephone messages

- local ads (newspaper, radio, TV)
- website & Facebook notices
- information tables at local events, grocery stores, pharmacies, and churches
- Other (Describe):

E. Annual Monitoring, Evaluating and Updating Plan

The transit system will review this plan during its annual review with its Mn/DOT transit project manager by:

- assessing its effectiveness (e.g., comparing numbers of LEP persons served by year, number of requests for language assistance received during the year),
- assessing the sufficiency of staff training and budget for language assistance,
- reviewing current sources for assistance to ensure continuing availability, and
- reviewing any complaints from LEP persons or about their needs that were received during the past year.

This plan will be reviewed by our transit system annually. Revisions of this plan will be approved by the Management of ElderRide and dated.

F. Dissemination of Plan

This Language Assistance Plan is available on our website at: <https://www.voamnwi.org/park-eldercenter>.

This plan is also available at no cost in English upon request by telephone, fax, and mail or in person.

If requested to be provided in another language and it is feasible to have it translated, information will be provided at no cost to the requester.

G. Contact Information

Questions or comments about this plan may be submitted to:

Name: Bee Vue, Service Director and ElderRide Manager at 1505 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55404. Phone: 612-278-4261, Fax: 1-888974-5909.