

Raleigh Housing Authority Language Access Plan (LAP)

Introduction

The Raleigh Housing Authority (RHA) is committed to complying with the federal requirements of providing free, meaningful access of its services and programs to all persons. RHA acknowledges that additional and/or alternative steps may need to be taken in order to communicate effectively with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals. This Language Access Plan outlines the process and steps that RHA may take to ensure that all persons are able to access its programs and services regardless of their ability to speak, read, write or understand the English language. Periodic assessments of client needs for language assistance will be conducted based on requests for interpreters and/or translation, as well as the literacy and language skills of its clients.

Overview

Federal law prohibits discrimination based on national origin. National origin discrimination includes discrimination based on a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is interpreted to apply to citizens, documented non-citizens, and undocumented non-citizens. Recipients of federal funds must provide meaningful access to LEP persons in federal and federally assisted programs and activities.

Should federal laws or regulations change during the time frame covered by this Plan, those changes will be effective thirty days from the date of passage. If there is any conflict between this Plan and laws/regulations, the laws and regulations will prevail. RHA's Language Access Plan is intended as guidance and does not create individual rights or entitlements nor establish RHA duties or process beyond what is required under applicable law.

Speaking, reading, or writing language can be a barrier to LEP persons in accessing important benefits or services, understanding and exercising important rights, complying with applicable responsibilities, or understanding other information provided by RHA. The definition of LEP used in the Plan is: person(s) who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. LEP persons can be housing applicants, residents, voucher holders and parents or family members of these individuals.

Language Assistance and Translations

Language assistance includes the interpretation or transfer of a message from one language into another language. RHA has the discretion to determine whether language assistance is needed, and if so, the type of language assistance necessary to provide meaningful access. RHA staff will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to all of its clients. If a client asks for language assistance or if it is readily apparent that language assistance is needed, then RHA may reasonably determine that the client is an LEP person. RHA will make reasonable

efforts to provide free language assistance and in the LEP client's preferred language when reasonable. If desired and at their own expense, LEP persons may use an interpreter of their own choosing in place of or as a supplement to the free language services offered by RHA.

Oral Interpretation

Oral interpretation services will be provided to all LEP persons in some form as needed. RHA will handle requests for oral interpretation assistance in the following manners:

- Asking the individual whether they have a family member or friend who can assist with oral translations. It is ultimately the LEP person's decision whether or not to use family or friends as translators.
- Seeking out any bilingual/multilingual staff members who may act as translators.
- Utilizing telephonic, virtual and electronic translation services.
- Bringing in outside translation services when necessary. Advanced notice will be required for this service which will be paid for by the Housing Authority.

Written Translation

RHA will translate or provide translation services for written materials/correspondence if needed in certain circumstances. RHA will provide written translation of vital documents in the following circumstances:

- Written translations for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5 percent or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered; or
- If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the 5 percent trigger, RHA will provide written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost.

"Tag lines" or footnotes may be added to correspondence to help direct LEP persons to RHA staff for further assistance if they cannot read or understand the information provided in the correspondence.

Alternative Formats/Translations

RHA may provide materials and translations in alternative formats upon request and as needed. This includes large print documents, American Sign Language interpreters, or braille upon request.

Audiovisual Materials

RHA may use reasonable efforts to produce or obtain translations of any audiovisual materials it uses to inform or educate applicants, residents and other client groups.

Complaints

Complaints may be filed with RHA's Special Assistant, Laura McCann, if an individual believes they have not received the services set out in this Plan. Complaints should be filed within six (6) months of the alleged incident. To file a complaint with RHA, please submit complaints to:

Laura McCann

Raleigh Housing Authority

900 Haynes Street

Raleigh NC, 27604

lmccann@rhaonline.com

(919) 508-1304