

10/1/2024



## Language Access Implementation Plan

The Language Access Implementation Plan explains how the agency will provide services to people who have limited English proficiency (or LEP).

Agency name:

Language Access Coordinator name: Jon Lanier, Assistant Chief

Language Access Coordinator title: Assistant Chief of Operations & Training

Divisions

Published date: *10/1/2024*

## Section 1. Agency mission and services

The Fire Department (WCFD) provides services including:

- Responding to fires
- Providing Public safety strategies
- Responding to medical emergencies
- Responding to disasters
- Responding to terrorist acts

The WCFD protects the lives and property of Sevier County residents and visitors. The WCFD advances fire safety through its prevention and education programs. It responds to more than 700 fires, non-fire related emergencies, and medical emergencies each year. The WCFD maintains 1 firehouse.

### **THE SERVICES THAT ARE PROVIDED BY THE WCFD TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC INCLUDE:**

- Fire Suppression
- Emergency Medical Service
- Fire Prevention Inspections
- Fire Safety Education
- Fire Investigation

### **WCFD INTERACTS WITH THE PUBLIC:**

- during emergency situations;
- via field and/or by home visit;
- over the phone and via electronic mail;
- via public events (such as forums, town halls, and during fire prevention week).

## Section 2. Agency language access policy

The WCFD's language access policy is to provide or assist in accessing interpretation and translation services to all Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customers. When applicable, forms and pamphlets are translated into multiple languages as needed. When WCFD employees speak the native language of the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customers, the employees will assist with interpreting basic information to provide the best possible customer service. When an employee is not available, Central Dispatch is used for OIP Phone Translation Service. If an employee is in an area without cell service and can not access the Translation Service through Central Dispatch Translation Software installed on the Battalion Cell Phone or Battalion or Engine Tablet can also be used. All these devices have a downloaded Spanish translation program that will translate off-line.

Through interpretation and translation, WCFD continues to make sure important safety messages reach all residents and visitors in a way that they can understand.

### Section 3. Language access needs assessment

**FACTOR 1: THE NUMBER OR PROPORTION OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PERSONS IN THE ELIGIBLE SERVICE POPULATION** The WCFD's service area is primarily the 32 square mile Waldens Creek area of Sevier County, Tennessee. However, through Auto and Mutual Aid Agreements this expands our service area. We have approximately 96,000 residents and 14,000,000 visitors to our area a year. 92.04% of Sevier County, Tennessee residents speak only English, while 7.96% speak other languages. The non-English language spoken by the largest group is Spanish, which is spoken by 5.63% of the population.

**FACTOR 2: THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) INDIVIDUALS COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE AGENCY**

The data provided from field encounters and reported demographic data shows that Spanish translation through our Honduran residents is our primary need for translation and interpretation services.

WCFD encounters individuals with LEP either through emergency contact or community events.

Community events take place at locations such as:

- Community centers/Churches
- Pre-school, elementary and high schools;
- Firehouses;
- Other places of assembly.

Fire safety presentations are done in schools and assembly areas throughout the county and specifically target neighborhoods that have experienced fatal fires or are at increased threat for Wildland Fire due to the Wildland Urban Interface.

Based on community make-up or by request, the WCFD brings language-appropriate materials. Fire safety educators bring English and Spanish language materials to events, especially at the larger public events. The WCFD inquires about the language needs prior to events.

At fire safety events following fatal or serious fires, community needs are assessed with the community organization coordinators.

When an applicant/client calls, visits, or encounters WCFD's office(s)/station, or when WCFD employee enters residents' premises (whether its work or home) language must not be a barrier to the receipt of appropriate services.

This Language Access Implementation Plan reflects the WCFD's commitment to providing language access services and meeting the following over-arching goals to:

- Ensure that language is not a barrier to WCFD services.
- Ensure that all applicants and clients have equal access to the services for which they are eligible, regardless of the level of their English proficiency;
- Inform all WCFD applicants and clients that free interpretation services are always available; and
- Train front-line staff on the importance of ensuring access to free interpretation services for all LEP clients.

**FACTOR 3: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BENEFIT, SERVICE, INFORMATION, OR ENCOUNTER TO THE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) PERSON**

WCFD offers LEP assistance, on as needed basis, to the people while providing services as we realize that access can be limited due to language barriers. WCFD's mission is to protect life, property and overall safety, and to continue that goal, language access is very important.

**FACTOR 4: THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE AGENCY**

The WCFD uses "I SPEAK" cards, bilingual staff, and the Translation line through our central dispatch to speak with our clients in their preferred language. As a back up the Battalion Phone, Battalion Tablet, and Engine Tablet all have translation software that will work off-line.

WCFD employees assist members of the public at our station (2828 Goose Gap Road, Sevierville, Tennessee, 37862) or in the field.

Translated materials are proofread for accuracy before becoming a final document.

The WCFD On-Duty Officer/Shift Battalion Chief has a department issued smartphone. Battalion Chief/Shift Officers use this smart phone for the OIP Translation service through Central Dispatch or installed translation software, as needed.

#### Section 4. Notice of the right to language access services

WCFD makes sure that the public knows that information is available via translation and interpretation. WCFD post translated materials on its website and Facebook, (when applicable)

WCFD employees distribute materials in different languages during public events (when needed/as required).

Additionally, the WCFD station has stationary signs in the follow language:

- Spanish

The agency is currently working on developing and obtaining more signage.

## Section 5. Provision of language access services

The WCFD provides language access services via multiple channels:

### A. Interpretation & translation services

- WCFD employees who greet the public at the have access to the interpretation services.
- WCFD employees can obtain an interpreter by phone to assist LEP customers in their native language. OIP currently offers interpreters for over 100 languages.
- WCFD has implemented the use of a translation app on our department devices app for more expedited services.
- The WCFD maintains “I SPEAK” cards for language identification on all our department vehicles and devices. These cards are located in the visor above the driver of every WCFD vehicle



### B. Emergency communications

*While Sevier County Emergency Management and other agencies may take a lead role in large-scale emergency response, many agencies provide specific resources to aid individuals and families in crisis. Agencies must anticipate and set conditions such that emergency communications can be delivered quickly and efficiently to meet the language needs in an equitable manner.*

## Section 7. Training

All front-line staff who provide services to customers are trained. The WCFD provides all new employees (initial) and current employees (re-occurring) Title VI and LEP training policies and procedures.

Supervisors train their front-line staff on how to properly assist LEP customers. In addition, employees are trained on how to use the translation services via mobile phones in the field.

## Section 8. Continuous improvement planning

### A. Data collection and monitoring

The WCFD now tracks the use of all our language access contacts, including the use of telephonic interpretation, on-site interpretation and written translation by program and location. This will allow us to adjust our policy and procedures so that we can be flexible and adapt to our residents' and visitor needs.

### B. Language access complaints

All language access complaints can be sent to Assistant Chief Jon Lanier at [janier@waldenscreekfire.org](mailto:janier@waldenscreekfire.org), Deputy Chief Donald Shular at [dshular@waldenscreekfire.org](mailto:dshular@waldenscreekfire.org) or by calling 865-454-1996. Further, if any WCFD Language Access issues are reported an e-mail is sent to Chief Tim Baker and Board President Rodger Ogle for further review and action.

Any issues received are evaluated on case-by-case basis

TIM BAKER, CHIEF

WALDENS CREEK FIRE & RESCUE

