

Charter Portage Township
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN

(July 26, 2016)

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Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

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Introduction

The purpose of this limited English Proficiency Plan policy guidance is to clarify the responsibilities of Charter Portage Township (Twp.) to its recipients who might receive some form or benefit of any federal financial assistance originating from the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD). This policy will assist the Twp. with its responsibility to limited English proficient (LEP) persons, pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations. It was prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq., and its implementing regulations provide that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity that receives any sort of federal financial assistance.

Executive Order 13166

Executive Order 13166 “Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency,” reprinted at 65 FR 50121 (August 16, 2000), directs each Federal agency that is subject to the requirements of Title VI to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying this obligation. Executive Order 13166 further directs that all such guidance documents be consistent with the compliance standards and framework detailed in the Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) Policy Guidance entitled “Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 National Origin Discrimination Against Persons With Limited English Proficiency.” (See 65 FR 50123, August 16, 2000 DOJ’s General LEP Guidance). Different treatment based upon a person’s inability to speak, read, write, or understand English may be a type of national origin discrimination. Executive Order 13166 applies to all federal agencies and all programs and operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government, including state agencies, local agencies, governments, private and non-profit entities, and sub recipients.

Plan Summary

The Twp. has developed the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) to help identify reasonable steps to provide language assistance for LEP persons seeking meaningful access to Twp. services, some of which are funded through the USDA – RD, as required by Executive Order 13166. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. This plan details procedures on how to identify a person who may need language assistance, the ways in which assistance may be provided, training staff, how to notify LEP persons that assistance is available, and information for future plan updates. In developing the plan while determining the Twp's extent of obligation to provide LEP services. The Twp. undertook a U.S. Department of Agriculture's four-factor LEP analysis which considers the following: 1) The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the Twp's service area, which includes the communities of Dodgeville/Hurontown, Superior, Tapiola, Elo and Pelkie. Immediately adjacent to the Twp. is the City of Houghton where Michigan Tech is located. 2) The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the Twp. staff/employees. 3) The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by Twp. to the LEP population. 4) The resources available to the Twp. and overall cost to provide LEP assistance. A brief description of these four considerations is provided in the following section.

Four Factor Analyses

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible in the Twp. area who may be served or likely to encounter a Portage Township program, activity or service:

The Twp. examined the 2010 US Census report and determined that approximately 36 people speak English less than very well or less than 1.1% of the 3,221 recorded total Twp. population.

The Twp. was unable to document what percentage of those 36 persons have limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with Portage Township:

The Twp. assessed the frequency at which elected officials, our receptionist/water clerk, the Twp. Assessor, the DPW employees and Forest Hills Cemetery Staff have had or could possibly have contact with LEP persons. This includes documenting phone inquiries and verbally surveying our staff, contracted individuals and the elected officials. The Twp. has had no requests for interpreters and no requests for the translation of any Twp. minutes/agendas, billings, voting procedures or any other associated documents. The contracted individuals, elected officials, cemetery and DPW staff and election officials have all indicated that they have had no known contact with LEP individuals.

3. The nature and importance of the program, activity or service provided by Portage Twp. to the LEP community.

There is no geographic concentration of any one type of LEP individuals within the boundaries of the Charter Township of Portage. The overwhelming majority of the Twp's population of 3,077 which are over the age of 5 speak only English. As a result, there is no social, service, professional or leadership organizations within the Twp. that focuses on either the outreach or membership of LEP individuals.

4. LEP Resources available to the Twp. and overall costs:

The Twp. reviewed available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance. This included identifying which documents would be most valuable to be translated if and when the population supports, taking inventory of available organizations that Twp. might partner with

another Township or partner for outreach and translation efforts, and what level, if any joint staff training is needed. After analyzing the four factors, the Twp. developed the plan outlined in the following section for assisting persons of limited English proficiency.

Limited English Proficiency Plan Outline

How to identify and LEP person who Needs Language Assistance:

Below are tools with which to help identify persons who may need language assistance:

The Census Bureau “I Speak Cards” are available at the Twp. office. While the staff may not be able to provide immediate translation assistance, the cards are an excellent tool with which to identify language needs for future contacts with LEP speaking customers. The Twp. staff will log any contact with LEP individuals and inform the Supervisor about the encounter for future evaluations of services that may be needed by LEP individuals.

Language Assistance Measures

Twp. staff will first attempt to determine what language service is required. Staff will then utilize Language Line Services at <http://www.language.com>, selecting the “Need an Interpreter Now” link.

Public Participation Plan

As an agency receiving federal financial assistance, we have promoted public participation in planning and decision making processes. At most of the Twp. public meetings/hearings there is usually two “public comment” periods provided; one at the beginning and one at the end of each meeting. On an ongoing basis the Twp. has invited the public to participate and to tender comments concerning the following projects/opportunities:

Green Acres Road Sewer Project and Dodgeville Infiltration Joint Project: There have been numerous public meetings, public surveys and web-site information disseminated to the public inviting any written or verbal public concerns/comments about this USDA – RD funded proposed project.

Dakota Heights Sewer Project: There were numerous public meetings as well as public informational portions on the agenda at the Board of Trustees monthly meetings concerning this project.

The newly updated Zoning Manual and Accompanying Map: There were numerous public meetings/hearings, public announcements in the media, web-site updates and Board Meeting agenda items concerning the updating of our Zoning Manual and accompanying map.

Board of Trustees Monthly Meetings: The governing body for the Twp. is the elected seven member Board of Trustees. The Board holds monthly meetings as well as Special Meetings which are all open to the public. LEP persons and all citizens may request to be placed on the Board Agenda or may utilize public comment periods at either the beginning or the ending of each Board meeting to address any concerns or make general comments pertaining to Twp. government/projects or administrative decisions. Agenda requests should be submitted to the Twp. Clerk and or the Supervisor, 47240 Green Acres Road, Houghton, Michigan 49931 or call our office at: (906) 482-4310.

Township Employee/Staff Training

DPW and Cemetery staff, the elected officials and the Assessor will be provided with the LEP Plan and will be exposed to the following:

- * Understanding the Title VI policy and LEP responsibilities.
- * Use of “I Speak Cards”

- * How to access Language Line Services.
- * How to document any language assistance requests.
- * How to handle Title VI and or LEP complaints.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

This plan is designed to be flexible and is one that can easily be updated. The Twp. will follow the Title VI Program update schedule for the LEP plan with any updates with the release of new census data indicating significant changes in LEP counts or if the Twp. begins to note contact with specific LEP individuals needing service. Factors to consider while updating the plan include:

- * How many LEP persons were encountered?
- * Were their needs met?
- * What is the current LEP population of Portage Twp.?
- * Have changes occurred in the types of languages where LEP services were needed?
- * Is their continuing need of language assistance identified?
- * Have the Twp. resources changed?
- * Were any complaints received?

Dissemination of the Township's Limited English Proficiency Plan

The Twp's LEP plan with its Title VI Policy and Complaint Procedures will be posted on our web-site and be available at the Township Office during normal business hours, Monday through Thursday. Copies of the LEP Plan will be provided upon request to any person(s) requesting the document. Any questions or comments regarding this plan should be directed to:

Portage Township Supervisor
47240 Green Acres Road
Houghton, MI 49931

Phone: 906-482-4311
Email: supervisor@charterportagetwp.org