# Language Access Plan

**May 2023**

## Acknowledgment

University of Georgia Extension would like to extend gratitude to University of Wisconsin-Madison for sharing their Language Access Plan as an example.

## Foreword

Persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) are protected from national origin-based discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As recipients of federal financial support, the University of Georgia Extension Service's (hereafter "UGA Extension") programs, services, and activities are accountable to the federal laws and policies that protect the rights of LEP persons. The following language access plan (LAP) is our organization's guiding document for serving LEP audiences in our activities. It builds on the previous findings by working groups, guidance documents, reports, and other sources of information that focused on identifying and addressing UGA Extension's language access needs.

Strong communication is essential to build the strong relationships that support our work and mission. This LAP is an expression of our ongoing commitment to serve the linguistically and culturally diverse communities in Georgia. Its purpose is twofold. First, it articulates UGA Extension's responsibilities for meeting federal language access obligations in our programs and activities. Second, it guides our practices and efforts in ways that systematically address language barriers within the organization. In essence, the LAP converges our commitment to expanding access and our commitment to ensuring equity in programming.

The LAP clarifies our organizational responsibilities to provide appropriate language accommodations through our federally funded programs, activities, and services. It was written in accordance with the legal framework outlined by federal law, policy directives, LEP guidance documents from the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and other sources and authorities of federal funding and oversight.

When examined through the lens of our work in educational programming, language access assumes additional meaning. Our organizational response to shifts in demographics and the emerging needs within our state's communities is important, which is why serving LEP audiences in ways that are both culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate is a critical priority. Translation, interpretation, and other language support services are some of the ways UGA Extension staff helps create linguistically inclusive learning environments. These services expand the reach of educational programming and enhance the public impact of our work by reducing barriers that interfere with the flow of information and communication. Language access is an equity-minded approach to educational programming that adds value to the impact of our work.

Ensuring language access is an organizational effort. Understanding federal policy and minimum legal standards to serve the needs of LEP populations help us set a baseline for goals and priorities. This plan charts our strategic vision for how we promote language-based inclusion by outlining the procedures, processes, and practices that help us enhance our capacity to serve. Thank you to the LAP advisory committee whose feedback, insight, and experience helped shape the contents of this document. The LAP will be subject to periodic review every four (4) years and ongoing updates to help our organization improve the way we serve LEP audiences.

# Contents

# Part A. For Administrators

## 1 UGA Extension's mission, values, and language access policy

### 1.1 Mission statement

UGA Extension delivers lifelong learning across the state through science-based programs and education in agriculture and the environment, family well-being, and 4-H youth.

### 1.2 Organizational values

Communication: Practice active listening skills. Effective use of written, oral and electronic communication. Respond promptly and diplomatically to inquiry. Use of a variety of methods to positively promote UGA Extension. Communicate effectively with diverse audiences, other professionals and co-workers.

Flexibility: Demonstrate openness to new ideas. Adapt well to changing priorities, situations and demands. Demonstrate ability to compromise. Adapt to time and role requirements.

Initiative: Demonstrate motivation, commitment and dedication. Follow through with projects in a timely manner. Work to maintain an area(s) of expertise. Take calculated and educated risks to strengthen programming. Use sound judgment. Use innovative programming to address changing needs of clientele.

Organization: Demonstrate effective management of time, resources and people. Be prompt, timely and dependable. Successfully manage multiple projects.

Professional orientation: Exhibit honest and ethical behavior. Present appropriate and professional appearance. Possess and display a positive self-image. Accept and follow UGA Extension policies and procedures. Exhibit professional courtesy.

Program planning, implementation, and evaluation: Develop and actively implement a substantial and innovative Annual Timeline. Present programming in a professional manner. Encourage participant involvement. Build rapport with program participants. Deliver information in an effective manner. Work effectively with program advisory committees. Conduct program evaluation. Submit required reports in a timely manner.

Service orientation: Identify and develop programs to meet critical needs. Demonstrate effective development and delivery of educational programming for diverse audiences.

Teamwork/leadership: Use proactive approach to problem solving. Encourage creative thinking in decision making. Take responsible risks and make timely decisions. Utilize volunteer leadership. Effectively structure committees to develop and implement programs. Work cooperatively with and be supportive of co-workers. Work toward group achievement. Build and maintain positive relationships and work effectively with clientele and other professionals.

Technology: Demonstrate competency and effective use of computers and electronic communications technology, including social media. Use technology effectively and appropriately.

### 1.3 Why language access matters to our work in UGA Extension

Strong communication is essential to build strong relationships with our Georgia communities. In some cases, however, language differences between our organization's staff and members of our

state's communities present challenges to the communication process. In many cases, these challenges can be avoided with the appropriate types of support. We do not want to limit our organization's capacity to build strong relationships across the state. We value opportunities to build relationships around the state and do not want to limit our organization's capacity to fulfill its mission. Our organization is committed to inclusive practices in programs and activities that help build stronger relationships with linguistically and culturally diverse audiences. In order to realize this commitment, we need to ensure that persons who may be limited in their ability to communicate effectively in English, and staff who may be limited in their ability to speak languages other than English have the appropriate support to communicate with one another as needed.

## 1.4 Language access policy

In accordance with our organizational values and the federal accountability framework for language access, it is UGA Extension's policy to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to our programs, services, and activities. Our objective with this policy is to ensure that no person is subject to prohibited discrimination based on their language, or any other identity marker associated with one's national origin.

## 2 UGA Extension's language access plan

### 2.1 Definition of language access

UGA Extension defines language access as the strategic and systematic management of multilingual communication within different contexts and across various scales of delivery. With regard to UGA Extension activities, language access has two main implications. First, language access involves the provision of appropriate accommodations (e.g., translation and interpretation) to mitigate communication barriers caused by language differences. Second, language access refers to UGA Extension's collective effort to create programming, services, and activities that are culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). The purpose of creating language access is to ensure equal footing and equitable participation in programs and activities for LEP persons and audiences.

### 2.2 What is limited English proficiency (LEP)?

Limited English proficiency refers to persons who do not speak English as their primary language and/or who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand the English language.

### 2.3 Key terms

Effective communication involves the removal of language barriers to provide LEP persons with the same substantive level of access to information and services that are available to persons who are not LEP.

Federally assisted refers to programs, activities, and services in UGA Extension that receive financial and other types of support from federal sources.

Interpretation is the act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language) while retaining the same meaning. The different modes of interpretation follow:

Simultaneous interpretation is a mode of interpretation commonly used in large-scale meetings, conferences, trainings, and presentations. The simultaneous interpreter listens to the speaker and

simultaneously interprets the message from the source language to the target language. One-way microphone systems are often used for settings that need simultaneous interpretation.

Consecutive interpretation is a mode of interpretation that is commonly used in small-scale meetings. The consecutive interpreter waits for the speaker to finish a sentence or an idea, and then renders the speaker's words into the target language.

Remote/distance interpretation is a mode of interpretation that uses technology, usually phone or tablet, to remove communication barriers. The use of technology does not require the interpreter to be in the same location as the two speakers needing language support.

Sight translation is the oral rendering of written text into spoken language by an interpreter without change in meaning based on a visual review of the original text or document.

Language support services are oral and written language accommodations that help LEP individuals and non-LEP individuals communicate effectively. Interpretation and translation are commonly referred to as language support services in this document.

Limited English proficient (LEP) persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and/ or who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. LEP persons may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing).

Meaningful access (for LEP audiences) denotes access to UGA Extension programs, activities, and services that are not significantly restricted, delayed or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English proficient individuals.

Reasonable steps refers to the affirmative and appropriate measures and resources used by UGA Extension to mitigate access barriers to information and participation in educational programs. The federal government uses a four-factor analysis as a baseline to determine compliance with providing LEP persons meaningful access to an organization's activities. The four-factor analysis is explained in the language access accountability section (3.3.2).

Translation is the process and product of rendering written text from one language (source language) into another language (target language).

## 2.4 Purpose of the language access plan

To uphold the organization-wide commitment expressed through its language access policy, UGA Extension has created this language access plan. The purpose of the following language access plan is to provide a comprehensive and shared understanding of how UGA Extension, as a part of the U.S. land grant system, operationalizes its organizational responsibilities and commitment to serving the linguistically diverse individuals and communities of Georgia. This plan outlines the policies and procedures that guide the reasonable steps the institution and its employees must take in order to create "meaningful access" for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP), a federally protected audience under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (§ 601).

## 2.5 Document scope

This language access plan applies to all programs, activities, and services carried out by, or in coordination with, UGA Extension.

# 3 Language access accountability

## 3.1 Language access is a matter of civil rights

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in federally supported activities (§ 601). According to the law, a person's language is considered to be an extension of one's national origin. Under Title VI, individuals and communities are protected from being the targets of discrimination, which includes organizational practices in federally supported activities that have a disparate impact on groups that speak different languages, see Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

Since UGA Extension programs, services, and activities receive financial and other types of support from federal sources, language access compliance responsibilities established by Title VI and the corresponding legal framework apply to the entire organization and staff acting on its behalf.

## 3.2 Guiding legal framework for language access accountability

The following core set of laws, policies, and regulations formulate the legal standards for UGA Extension's language access accountability and nondiscrimination compliance:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Executive Order 13166 (2000)

- Memoranda to Federal Department Heads from Attorney General (2010, 2011)

- Food and Drug Act (2008)

- The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Final Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Persons with Limited English Proficiency (2014)

- The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Implementing Strategy for Federally Assisted Programs (2016)

## 3.3 The federal standard for serving LEP audiences

### 3.3.1 Reasonable steps

The legal framework for language access accountability establishes that recipients of federal support must provide "reasonable steps" to ensure that LEP populations have meaningful access to programs, activities, and services. Federal authorities use a four-factor analysis to evaluate organizational standards for ensuring language access obligations.

### 3.3.2 Four-factor analysis

The following four factors provide a flexible, fact-dependent standard for determining how institutions should consider responding to their language access needs. The four-factor analysis includes the:

- Number or portion of LEP persons in target or eligible population;

- Frequency of contact the organization's programs have with LEP audiences;

- Nature and importance of the program or activity;

- Organizational resources available to implement language access services.

## 3.4 UGA Extension's legal obligations to ensure nondiscrimination for LEP persons

### 3.4.1 Denying a request for language support services

Our organization has a legal obligation to provide accommodations for individuals with limited English proficiency. Therefore, to the extent covered by law, we are to fulfill requests for language support services to a person who is a participant, or wants to participate in UGA Extension programs, services, and activities.

### 3.4.2 Requests made by members of the public

UGA Extension is legally obligated to provide translation or interpretation services any time a member of the public request's services in connection to their—or someone else's—restricted ability to access or understand English-only information that is related to our educational programming activities.

### 3.4.3 Programming that requires critical or vital communication

Critical or vital communication means information in any format that clientele/participants need to access programming. Any English-only document used by UGA Extension in an official capacity is subject to translation. This is particularly true for applicant participation, release or consent forms, documents related to a participant's medical history, emergency information, and other documents that ask for information that is sensitive in nature.

UGA Extension abides by the "Safe Harbor" provision for translation of vital written materials. The provision outlines the circumstances that can provide a "Safe Harbor" for compliance with LEP requirements (meaning no translation is required) which is considered strong evidence of compliance with written translation obligations.

### 3.4.4 General educational programming

UGA Extension may be legally obligated per Title VI to provide language support services in educational programming based on, among other things, 1) the nature and scope of the project, 2) the target audience, and 3) community demographics within the designated service area. If you have questions or are unsure about any potential language access obligations of your project or programming, please contact the appropriate District Director or College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES) Human Resources.

## 4 Language access and UGA Extension

## 4.1 Standards for serving LEP audiences through UGA Extension activities

To comply with Title VI nondiscrimination law and the corresponding legal framework for language access accountability, UGA Extension commits itself to the following set of organizational standards. Ongoing guidance provided in this LAP and other resources will help UGA Extension and its employees and volunteers maintain the following organizational standards:

### 4.1.1 Free language support services for LEP audiences

UGA Extension will provide language support services such as translation and interpretation at no cost to the intended beneficiary of such services.

### 4.1.2 Public notification of language support services

UGA Extension will provide public notification about the free and rightful access LEP audiences have to translation and interpretation services as a part of our organizational activities. Public notification includes:

- Providing information in multiple languages as applicable.

- Stating in outreach documents that language services are available for the recipient.

- Announcements in brochures, booklets, and outreach and recruitment information.

- Including notices in local newspapers in languages other than English, as well as established community papers published in languages other than English.

- Providing notices on non-English language radio and television stations about the available language assistance services and how to obtain them.

- Providing presentations and/or notices at schools and religious organizations.

- Working with community-based organizations and other stakeholders to inform LEP individuals of the recipients' services, including the availability of language assistance services.

### 4.1.3   Maintain records of efforts to identify and serve LEP audiences

Our organization will keep records on the way we identify LEP audiences and provides services to them through UGA Extension activities. Record keeping related to language access needs across the organization may include, but is not limited to:

- Communications from the District Director, UGA Extension Associate Deans office, CAES Human Resources or UGA Office of Equal Opportunity pertaining to language access resources and tools.

- Programming and projects provided in a multilingual format.

- Tracking language support services used (language support requests, archives of translated materials, events that used interpreters, service delivery evaluations, etc.).

- County-based language needs assessment tool

- Data that supports a collective understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity in given service area or sector (e.g., U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Agriculture or other reliable sources).

- Empirical data on LEP persons within a given service area (American Community Survey/U.S. Census Bureau).

- Evidence of partnerships with community agencies that serve LEP persons and/or communities.

### 4.1.4   Training

UGA Extension's District Directors, in conjunction with the CAES Human Resource office, will provide leadership for training and resources that help the organization meet its language access needs and goals.

### 4.1.5   Monitor and evaluate language support services

As the primary guidance document for the organization, this LAP provides tools and guidance for ongoing assessment of efforts to serve LEP populations. The LAP will be reviewed and updated every four (4) years or otherwise as determined appropriate by organizational stakeholders. The UGA Extension Associate Dean, Director of County Operations, District Directors and CAES Human Resources will provide ongoing administrative oversight for monitoring and evaluating the reach and impact of language access efforts.

### 4.1.6 Expand programming access to underserved populations

UGA Extension categorizes LEP persons as an underserved population. In addition to federal nondiscrimination laws, expanding program access to serve LEP audiences is an integral part of UGA Extension's mission and one of its core organizational priorities. Anticipating and responding to language access needs for programming and projects helps promote linguistically inclusive learning environments. While interpretation and translation services are often used in the process, expanding access to LEP audiences also involves exploring new approaches to developing and delivering educational programming in a multilingual learning and living environment.

## 4.2 How to budget funds for language access needs

### 4.2.1 Interpretation services

Interpreter charges vary depending on individual qualifications, the language pair, and the nature of the event. Please note that many interpreters and agencies may also charge for travel time, mileage, and the use of interpretation equipment. In addition, agencies also may charge higher rates for evening or weekend hours and for interpreting in less frequently spoken languages.  It is not unusual for some agencies to have policies that require a minimum of two interpreters for assignments that exceed a certain amount of time.

It is important to discuss the rates and policies of interpreters and agencies prior to booking them for an event. The District Director, Director of County Operations, or CAES Human Resources is available to help identify measures of quality when contracting with interpreters for events.

### 4.2.2 Translating documents

Not all translators and agencies charge the same nor do they produce the same quality product. Therefore, the fastest turnaround time and cheapest rate for translating documents is not a reliable way to ensure that you are working with a quality translator.

It is important to discuss how a translator charges for services and the means they use to ensure quality prior to hiring them. The District Director, Director of County Operations, or CAES Human Resources is available to help identify measures of quality when hiring translators for projects.

## 4.3 How to address language-based discrimination complaints (per Title VI)

As mentioned above, UGA Extension is committed to nondiscrimination and takes complaints related to civil rights, Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, and sexual harassment very seriously. A complaint or charge of discrimination or harassment can be registered by any person (employee, program or activity participant, job applicant, visitor, volunteer, etc.) who has reason to believe that they have been subjected to or witnessed unlawful discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in an Extension education program or activity, or in the employment setting.

### 4.3.1 Discrimination complaint form

The UGA Office of Equal Opportunity form for filing a discrimination complaint is available at:

https://eoo.uga.edu/Report/

### 4.3.2 Who can file a discrimination complaint?

Any person has the right to file a complaint.

### 4.3.3 Filing a complaint

The UGA Office of Equal Opportunity process following filing a complaint is available at:

https://eoo.uga.edu/Report/

### 4.3.4 Organization contacts for complaints

For specific questions related to discrimination complaints, please contact:

| District Offices | State Office | University of Georgia |
|---|---|---|
| Denise Everson, District Director Northeast District (706) 542-3179 deverson@uga.edu<br><br>Clinton McRae, District Director Northwest District (770) 228-7274 clinton.mcrae@uga.edu<br><br>Andrea Scarrow, District Director Southwest District (229) 386-7139 ascarrow@uga.edu<br><br>Arch Smith, District Director Southeast District (912) 478-8983 asmith@uga.edu | CAES Human Resources Lee Motsinger, Director 209 Conner Hall Athens, GA 30602 (706) 542-8575 lmotsing@uga.edu<br><br>Director of County Operations Michael Martin (706)542-1060 Michael.martin@uga.edu | UGA Office of Equal Opportunity 278 Brooks Hall Athens, GA 30602 (706) 542-7912 eeo@uga.edu |

## 4.4   UGA Extension contacts for language access

Please direct any questions related to UGA Extension standards for compliance, language support services, or other language access issues to:

| District Offices | State Office |
| --- | --- |
| Denise Everson, District Director<br>Northeast District<br>(706) 542-3179<br>deverson@uga.edu<br><br>Clinton McRae, District Director<br>Northwest District<br>(770) 228-7274<br>clinton.mcrae@uga.edu<br><br>Andrea Scarrow, District<br>Director<br>Southwest District<br>(229) 386-7139<br>ascarrow@uga.edu<br><br>Arch Smith, District Director<br>Southeast District<br>(912) 478-8983<br>asmith@uga.edu | CAES Human Resources<br>Lee Motsinger, Director<br>209 Conner Hall<br>Athens, GA 30602<br>(706) 542-8575<br>lmotsing@uga.edu<br><br>Director of County Operations<br>Michael Martin<br>(706)542-1060<br>Michael.martin@uga.edu |

# 5  Additional resources

Detailed LEP guidance can be found on the NIFA website:
https://www.nifa.usda.gov/limited-english-proficiency

Federal Inter-agency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency: https://www.lep.gov/

Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs:
https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/2011_Language_Access_Assessment_and_Planning_Tool.pdf

Complaint Forms:
https://civilrights.justice.gov/#five

Executive Order 13166:
https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/eolep.pdf

Know Your LEP Population with the Language Map App:
https://www.lep.gov/video/know-your-lep-population-language-map-app

# 6 Monitoring and updating

We will review the LAP to ensure it remains current to the LEP populations in our service area as needed, including any time new census data reveals a significant increase in LEP persons in our service area OR if a significant increase in contacts or inquires with LEP persons is evidenced. At a minimum, the language access plan will be reviewed every four (4) years to ensure out LEP policies and procedures remain current and result in effective language services and meaningful access.

Information in the tables below is from the 2015 LEP.Gov Language Maps (latest available) and was sorted to summarize the Georgia Counties that have an LEP population of > 5% and also Spanish speaking population of >5%. These counties should pay special attention to ensuring that their programs are accessible to those with other than English as their primary language. Source: https://www.lep.gov/maps

| | Total Population | LEP Population (Number) | LEP Population (Percent) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Georgia | 9,133,039 | 522,952 | 5.72 |
| Echols County | 3887 | 706 | 18.16 |
| Whitfield County | 94705 | 14689 | 15.51 |
| Gwinnett County | 763848 | 116224 | 15.22 |
| Hall County | 168962 | 22442 | 13.28 |
| Stewart County | 5762 | 679 | 11.78 |
| Clayton County | 240742 | 24850 | 10.32 |
| Atkinson County | 7627 | 752 | 9.86 |
| Colquitt County | 42000 | 3918 | 9.33 |
| DeKalb County | 648779 | 60332 | 9.3 |
| Telfair County | 15502 | 1412 | 9.11 |
| Gordon County | 51469 | 4368 | 8.49 |
| Polk County | 38217 | 2957 | 7.74 |
| Cobb County, | 651092 | 49865 | 7.66 |
| Forsyth County | 169671 | 11986 | 7.06 |
| Murray County | 36867 | 2590 | 7.03 |
| Habersham County | 40558 | 2724 | 6.72 |
| Clarke County | 111819 | 7275 | 6.51 |
| Fulton County | 885052 | 55314 | 6.25 |
| Gilmer County | 26713 | 1584 | 5.93 |
| Rockdale County | 80035 | 4553 | 5.69 |
| Evans County | 10077 | 557 | 5.53 |
| Grady County | 23572 | 1280 | 5.43 |
| Toombs County | 25036 | 1358 | 5.42 |
| Barrow County | 64676 | 3291 | 5.09 |
| Calhoun County | 6272 | 317 | 5.05 |
| Cherokee County | 203011 | 10159 | 5 |

|  | Spanish Speaking LEP Population (%) |
| --- | --- |
| Whitfield County | 15 |
| Echols County | 13.8 |
| Hall County | 12.4 |
| Stewart County | 11.5 |
| Atkinson County | 9.8 |
| Colquitt County | 9.1 |
| Telfair County | 9.1 |
| Gwinnett County | 8.8 |
| Gordon County | 7.9 |
| Polk County | 7.2 |
| Murray County | 6.5 |
| Clayton County | 6.3 |
| Habersham County | 5.6 |
| Gilmer County | 5.6 |
| Evans County | 5.4 |
| Grady County | 5.4 |
| DeKalb County | 5.1 |
| Cobb County | 5.1 |
| Clarke County | 5.1 |
| Toombs County | 5.1 |