

Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KVRTA) Limited English Proficiency Plan

This Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan has been prepared to address the Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority's (KVRTA) responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance as they relate to the needs of individuals with limited language skills. The plan has been prepared in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Federal Transit Administration Circular 4702.1B, dated October 1, 2012, which states that the level and quality of transportation service is provided without regard to race, color, or national origin.

Executive order 13166, titled Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency indicates that differing treatment based upon a person's inability to speak, read, write or understand English is a type of national origin discrimination. It directs each federal agency to publish guidance for its respective recipients clarifying their obligation to ensure that such discriminations does not take place. This order applies to all state and local agencies which receive federal funds.

KVRTA is the provider of public transportation in Kanawha County, West Virginia. KVRTA has developed this LEP Plan to help identify reasonable steps for providing language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency who wish to access services provided by KVRTA. As defined in Executive Order 13166, LEP persons are those who do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English. This plan outlines how to identify a person who may need language assistance, and the ways in which assistance may be provided. In order to prepare this plan,

KVRTA undertook the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S.DOT) **four-factor LEP analysis** which considers the following factors:

- 1. The number and proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered in the service area;**

Data was obtained using Census variable S1601 Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the population 5 years and over by Kanawha County. The data in this plan is from ACS 2017-2021 5-year estimates.

The most recent five-year estimates report the municipalities of the service area include residents grouped as speaking Spanish, Other Indo-European Languages, Asian and Pacific Island languages, and other languages. The most prevalent non-English language groups are Asian and Pacific Island followed by Spanish.

The Safe Harbor Threshold is calculated by dividing the population estimate for the service area (Kanawha County) for a language group that "speaks English less than very well" by the total population of persons five years and older for the service area. The LEP Safe Harbor Threshold

provision stipulates that for each LEP group that meets the LEP language threshold (5% or 1,000 individuals, whichever is less), KVRTA must provide translation of vital documents in written format for non-English speaking persons.

Most people in the KVRTA area are proficient in the English language. Based on the United States Census Bureau – 2017-2021 ACS Demographic, Housing and Language Spoken at Home Estimates data, 97.3% of the population speak only English or speak another language but speak English “well.” 282 speak Spanish, 285 speak an Asian language mainly Vietnamese, 268 speak an Indo/European language and 286 speak another language. No languages meet the safe harbor threshold.

Total PO Over 5yrs	Speak English Only or Speak English Well ¹	Speaks English less than "Very Well"			
		Spanish	Indo/Eur	Asian	Other
167,522	166,517	282	268	285	286
<i>Percent</i>	99.40%	0.17%	0.16%	0.17%	0.17%
		0.63%			

¹Source: American Community Surveys 2017-2021

2. Frequency of Contact by LEP Persons with KVRTA Services

KVRTA staff reviewed the frequency with which office staff, dispatchers and drivers have, or could have, contact with LEP persons. **To date, KVRTA has had no requests over the past three years for an interpreter or translation of information.** KVRTA averages over 150 phone calls per day requesting schedule or other information.

KVRTA tracks the number of encounters and considers adjustments as needed to its outreach efforts to ensure meaningful access to all persons and specifically to LEP and minority populations of KVRTA’s programs and services.

If ever a language barrier were to exist, KVRTA would work to provide a reasonable accommodation. The “I Speak” Language Identification Card is a document that can be used to by KVTA staff to assist LEP individuals. The “I Speak” Language Identification Card includes languages spoken in the KVTA service area as identified by the U.S. Census data. Languages can be added or removed to match the demographics of the KVTA service area.

3. The nature and importance of programs, activities or services provided by KVRTA to the LEP

Understanding that an LEP person with a language barrier can face difficulties accessing essential services, KVRTA has committed to ensuring that all segments of the population, including LEP persons, can participate in our services.

With Improving outreach activities, KVTA is working to increase contact with LEP individuals at public meetings and other general public involvement activities. KVRTA is conducting a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA), that will help identify barriers to our service including those in the LEP community. Once the COA is concluded KVTA will add the findings in the LEP plan.

The most recent ACS data shows that a handful of census tracts in the cities of Charleston and South Charleston has a high number of LEP individuals (2.8% -7.0%) compared to the service area (0.63%). Those areas speak Spanish. Therefore, KVRTA will translate vital documents into Spanish.

4. The resources available to KVRTA and overall cost to provide LEP assistance

KVRTA reviewed its available resources that could be used for providing LEP assistance and determined that if required KVRTA can/and will pay for all translation services. Given the small size of LEP populations in the KVTA service area, full multi-language translations of our program and services are not warranted at this time. However, this information can be made upon request.

KVRTA has contracted with Certified Languages International for language interpreter services. Anyone in need of language interpretation may call the KVRTA staff office at 304-343-3840.

KVRTA Limited English Proficiency Plan Outline

If a person does not speak English as their primary language and is LEP, that person may be entitled to language assistance with respect to KVRTA programs and services. Language assistance can include interpretation and/or translation from one language into another language.

KVRTA will take reasonable steps to provide the opportunity for meaningful access to LEP individuals who have difficulty communicating in English.

How KVRTA staff may identify a person who needs language assistance:

1. Examine records to see if requests for language assistance have been received in the past, either at meetings or over the phone to determine whether language assistance might be needed at future events or meetings.

2. Have staff person greet participants as they arrive to KVRTA sponsored events. By informally engaging participants in conversation it is possible to gauge each attendee's ability to speak and understand English.

3. Have Census Bureau Language Identification Flashcards available to KVRTA front line managers and vehicle dispatchers. This will assist KVRTA in identifying language assistance needs for future events, meetings and to assist vehicle operators in identifying specific language assistance needs of passengers.

Language Assistance Measures

There are various ways in which KVRTA staff responds to LEP persons, whether in person, by telephone or in writing.

- Post the KVRTA Title VI Policy and LEP Plan on the agency website, www.rideonkrt.com
- To the extent feasible, assign bilingual staff for community events, public hearings and Board of Directors meetings and on the customer service phone lines.
- Survey bus operators, front-office staff, dispatchers, annually and Operations Supervisors related to their experience and contact with LEP persons during the previous year.
- Make translated versions (or provide for the interpretation of relevant sections) of all documents/publications available upon request, within a reasonable timeframe.
- Work with translation services as necessary to assist with the development of bilingual outreach materials.
- The use of online resources as a last resort such as Google Translate to assist with the translation of documents. The main downside of this approach is accuracy.

Staff Training

The following training will be provided to KVRTA staff:

1. Information on KVRTA Title VI Procedures and LEP responsibilities.
2. Description of language assistance services offered to the public.
3. Use of Language Identification Flashcards
4. Documentation of language assistance requests
5. How to Handle potential Title VI/Nondiscrimination and LEP complaints

Providing Notice to LEP Persons/Outreach Techniques

KVRTA will use the following steps to inform LEP persons of the availability of language assistance.

- Post a statement on the KVRTA website stating “If you need special accommodation or translation into another language to view KVRTA plans or programs, please contact Curt Zickafoose, 304-343-3840. Si necesita adaptaciones especiales o traducción a otro idioma para ver los planes o programas de KVRTA, comuníquese con Curt Zickafoose, 304-343-3840.
- Post the Title VI/LEP Notice of Nondiscrimination on its website. The notice includes a sentence written in Spanish providing instructions on how to contact KVRTA to request information in another language.
- When encountering LEP persons directly, as needed KVRTA staff will use the “I Speak Language Identification Card” to identify the language and communication need of LEP persons. KVRTA may not be able to immediately accommodate or assist individuals self-identifying as a person not proficient in English but will seek means to follow up with the individual to address their needs in the language requested as soon as possible.
- Review outreach activities and information gathered from the Log of LEP encounters on the frequency of contact with LEP individuals to determine whether additional language assistance services are needed.
- Develop and maintains cooperative relationships with key agencies/community organizations that serve LEP populations in the area or the region. These entities can assist in providing or verifying translations and/or identifying gaps in assistance to persons with LEP needs
- Utilize translation services, seeking out language assistance from community organizations.

Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan

KVRTA will update the LEP plan as required by U.S.DOT. At minimum, the plan will be reviewed and updated when higher concentrations of LEP individuals are present in the KVRTA service area. Updates will include the following:

- Determine the current LEP population in the service area.
- How the needs of LEP persons have been addressed.
- Determine as to whether the need for translation services has changed.
- Determine whether local language assistance programs have been effective and sufficient to meet the needs.
- Determine whether KVRTA's financial resources are enough to fund language assistance resources as needed.
- Determine whether KVRTA has fully complied with the goals of this LEP Plan.
- Determine whether complaints have been received concerning KVRTA's failure to meet the needs of LEP individuals.
- Sufficiency of Staff training.

KVRTA Limited English: People per square mile who are 5 years or older, who speak English less than "very well" b

