

Language Assistance Plan for VINE Faith in Action

Effective:
7/15/15

Purpose

The purpose of this Language Assistance Plan (hereinafter "plan") is to meet Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) requirements to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. As a subrecipient of FTA funds, this transit system is pledged to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to its transit services for persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. The FTA refers to these persons as Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons.

The completion of this plan for persons with Limited English Proficiency conforms to the requirements of the FTA Circular 4702.1B Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients.

The U.S. DOT's FTA Office of Civil Rights' publication "Implementing the Department of Transportation's Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Persons – A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers," dated April 13, 2007, was used in the preparation of this plan.

The plan for VINE Faith in Action contains:

- A. A needs assessment based on the four-factor analysis
- B. Language assistance measures
- C. A staff training plan
- D. Methods for notifying LEP persons about available language assistance
- E. Methods for monitoring, evaluating and updating the plan

A. LEP Needs Assessment – the Four-Factor Analysis

Factor 1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in our service area who may be served or are likely to encounter a transit program, activity, or service.

We assessed the following information (as checked) about LEP persons to determine the number or proportion of LEP persons who might use or want to use our transit services:

- X 2010 US Census data/American Community Survey data
- Survey results: Describe: _____
- Local school district data
- Locally Coordinated Human Services Plan
- Other Human Services data
- Area/Metropolitan Planning Organizations/Regional Development Commission data
- Information from local organizations (religious, legal, social service, etc.) about LEP persons in our service area

- Reports from drivers, dispatchers and others about contact with LEP persons
- Other information: Describe: _____

According to data provided by Mn/DOT from the 2010 American Community Survey 2007-2011 Five-Year estimate:

- 1) The total number of LEP persons in our service area is 1869.
- 2) The total eligible population in our service area is 90097.
- 3) The proportion of LEP persons to the total eligible service population is 2%.

Factor 2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with our transit programs, activities, or services.

VINE Faith in Action's People to Jobs program partners with both the Blue Earth County Employment Services and the Adult Basic Education program. With these partnerships, we provide transportation to LEP persons for education purposes daily during the school year and for employment and daycare needs. VINE also has contracts with local county human services to provide transportation for MA eligible LEP passengers. Thanks to a Title IIIB federal grant award, VINE is now implementing "special access services" for LEP elders. Grant funds will allow us hire a FT project coordinator and interpreters who will help elders from diverse cultures access transportation and other needed services.

VINE is establishing an Advisory Committee to implement our "special access service project". Representatives from the local Islamic Center, the Diversity Council, and the MN Council of Churches (MCC) Refugee Project will assist us in making connections with LEP people in Blue Earth, Nicollet, and Le Sueur Counties. They have already identified the need for transportation from public housing (not on the public bus routes) to enable refugees to connect with others from their cultures. Consistently we hear about the isolation and loneliness that elders experience as their younger family members get jobs, pursue their education, and the American dream.

Other destinations frequently identified include the Blue Earth County Government Center (also not on a Mankato bus route), Adult Basic Education classes, and local medical clinics. The Greater Mankato United Way is also closely involved with this project and will be a valuable resource.

Mankato is well known as a popular resettlement site for secondary refugee families, e.g. those who choose to relocate because of family ties and jobs. MCC staff estimates that 3-5 secondary refugee families are arriving weekly. The conclusions drawn from examining this information about LEP persons seeking transit services are that transportation assistance is needed to help our newest neighbors navigate life in their homeland.

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

Our transit system considers transit to be an important and essential service for many people living in our service area. Many LEP persons use our transit service to travel to work, medical appointments, and educational opportunities. During the 2013-2014 FY,

VINE provided 2112 rides to 37 LEP adults for employment, educational, or medical purposes. Besides providing rides to Adult Basic Education and English Language Learner Classes, we drive LEP persons to South Central College for advanced training. We provide adults with rides to their places of employment and their children to daycare.

Factor 4. The resources available to our transit system and the overall cost to provide language assistance.

Our current budget for marketing to or communicating with LEP persons in their language about transit services that are available to them is \$3,250. Using DHS grant dollars, we have recently contracted with a videographer to produce 60-second commercials in Spanish, Arabic, and Nuer languages to promote transportation and other services. Commercials will be posted on our website and shared electronically with LEP groups and individuals. VINE's service brochure is available in Spanish. Interpreters who will be hired through the AAA grant will help explain VINE's transit service to LEP persons. Currently, one of our staff members is fluent in Russian and several volunteer drivers speak Spanish. Our partnerships with Blue Earth County Employment Services and Adult Basic Education assist us in communicating with people whose first language is not English. These partnerships also help with marketing the People to Jobs program.

B. Language Assistance Measures

There are several language assistance measures that are available to VINE Faith in Action. These include: Check off any items below that are relevant and provide a short narrative to explain your future efforts.

- X Translation of key documents in the following language(s): Spanish, Arabic, Nuer, Russian
- X Arranging for availability of oral translators
- X Communication with LEP persons' groups about transit services
- X Posting notices in appropriate languages informing LEP persons of available services
- Other: Describe:

C. Staff Training

To ensure effective implementation of this plan, the transit system will schedule training at orientations for new staff and for all relevant employees on a quarterly basis in 2016 and yearly thereafter.

- the transit system's Language Assistance Plan
- demographic data about local LEP population
- printed LEP persons' materials
- how to handle verbal requests for transit service in a foreign language
- responsibility to notify transit manager about any LEP persons' unmet needs.

The responsibility for coordinating staff and volunteer diversity training is included in the job description of the Special Access Coordinator.

Notice to LEP Persons about Available Language Assistance

Our transit system plans to notify LEP persons in their own language about the language assistance available to them without cost by using the following methods:

- X signs on buses or at bus stops
- brochures
- posters
- X sending information to local organizations that work with LEP persons
- telephone messages
- local ads (newspaper , radio, TV)
- X website notices
- information tables at local events, grocery stores, pharmacies, and churches
- X Other: Describe: Our communication with LEP passengers will continue to be conducted through our partnerships with Blue Earth County Employment Services and Adult Basic Education.

D. Annual Monitoring, Evaluating and Updating Plan

The transit system will review this plan during its annual review with its Mn/DOT transit project manager by:

- assessing its effectiveness (e.g., comparing numbers of LEP persons served by year, number of requests for language assistance received during the year),
- assessing the sufficiency of staff training and budget for language assistance,
- reviewing current sources for assistance to ensure continuing availability, and
- reviewing any complaints from LEP persons or about their needs that were received during the past year.

This plan will be reviewed by our transit system annually. Revisions of this plan will be approved and dated by VINE's Executive Director and Transit Manager.

E. Dissemination of Plan

This Language Assistance Plan is available on our website
<https://www.vinevolunteers.com/vine/transportation>

This plan is also available at no cost in English upon request by telephone, fax, and mail or in person.

If requested to be provided in another language and it is feasible to have it translated, information will be provided at no cost to the requester.

F. Contact Information

Questions or comments about this plan may be submitted to:

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