

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency



Draft Language Access Plan

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
LEP Policy Statement.....	2
Responsible Personnel/Offices and Oversight.....	3
FEMA Interactions with the Public	5
LEP Communities Served or Encountered	7
Tracking.....	7
Language Access Procedures/Protocols.....	8
Employee Duties and Development.....	8
Training	8
Resources	9
Notice to LEP Persons	9
Procedures for Quality Control.....	10
Outreach to LEP Communities	11
Monitoring and Performance Measures.....	12
FEMA Language Assistance Accomplishments.....	12
Acronyms	21

Introduction

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards. To successfully accomplish this mission, FEMA must interact with the public and be committed to providing equal access and ensuring diverse audiences receive critical, accessible and understandable disaster assistance communications, regardless of language proficiency or accessible communications needs. This summary highlights FEMA's access initiatives and activities to build trust and working relationships with diverse populations to promote community engagement throughout all phases of emergency management.

This plan applies to all organizations and program offices in FEMA, the following organizations listed are highlighted in this plan:

- Office of Equal Rights (OER)
- Office of External Affairs Disaster Operations Division (OEA)
- Office of Response and Recovery (ORR)
- Individual Assistance (IA)
- Public Assistance (PA)
- National Processing Services Centers (NPSC)
- United States Fire Academy Prevention and Information (USFA/P&I)
 - (FIMA)'s-Risk Insurance Division and
- National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)
- Grant Programs Directorate (GPD)

LEP Policy Statement

FEMA adheres to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy on language access in the DHS Language Access Plan¹. In addition, FEMA has ensured effective communication with limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals by developing and implementing a comprehensive written language assistance program that includes policies and procedures for identifying and assessing the language needs of its LEP customers/applicants. FEMA provides a range of oral and written language assistance options, including notice to LEP persons in a language they can understand. FEMA monitors implementation of its language assistance plan to ensure that the rights of LEP individuals are protected. This policy applies to all FEMA office and divisions, contractors, and subcontractors likely to have contact with LEP persons.

¹ It is the policy of DHS to provide meaningful access for individuals with limited English proficiency to operations, services, activities, and programs that support each Homeland Security mission area by providing quality language assistance services in a timely manner. DHS Components, therefore, should incorporate language access considerations into their routine strategic and business planning, identify and translate crucial documents into the most frequently encountered languages, provide interpretive services where appropriate, and educate personnel about language access responsibilities and how to utilize available language access resources. U.S. Department of Homeland Security Language Access Plan, February 28, 2012, <http://www.dhs.gov/department-homeland-security-language-access-plan>.

The Agency's LEP Policy Statement is available to Agency personnel and the public on the internet and intranet; through brochures that address language access needs; and through other public documents published by the Agency and disseminated to the public (Appendix A), as well as Agency policy documents used by Agency personnel.

FEMA makes language access a critical element of its communication strategy. During disasters, an Equal Rights Advisors (ERAD) and OEA analyze demographic information and other elements to determine the need for additional language resources. All disaster information is published in the languages identified through demographic analysis of the impacted area. Alternative formats are made available generally and specifically for persons with vision impairments, and for persons that are deaf or hard of hearing. TTY lines are available for contact to the Agency generally and at disaster sites. Sign language interpreters are used to communicate the Agency's public statements and meeting information.

All entities that receive Federal financial assistance from FEMA, either directly or indirectly, through a grant or other form of financial assistance are covered by the policy guidance, *DHS Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons (DHS Recipient Guidance)*, 76 Fed. Reg. 21755-21768, (April 18, 2011) and FEMA conducted activities. FEMA's policy extends LEP responsibility to activities conducted by the Agency. Some examples of covered entities include:

- The U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA) federally conducted activities include publications for the general public; application forms for the National Fire Academy; and field-delivered courses;
- FIMA's Federally conducted activities include materials and correspondence on the National Flood Insurance Program; publications for the general public (e.g., Safe Room Booklet);
- The FEMA's Office of Response and Recovery federally conducted activities include employment and contracting of bilingual field staff (e.g., housing inspectors, Community Relations Representatives Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams); fliers and brochures on disaster assistance distributed in the community; posted material at Disaster Recovery Centers; correspondence to applicants regarding disaster assistance programs; Provision of interpreter service at Disaster Recovery Centers; provision of interpreter service during registration for assistance.

Responsible Personnel/Offices and Oversight

Headquarters

- FEMA OER has enforcement authority for compliance with policy regarding interactions with populations with limited English proficiency, which is derived from Section 601 of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d et. seq. that states: "No person in the United States shall on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to

discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The Office of Equal Rights also administers and has oversight responsibility for FEMA’s Title VI Civil Rights Program. The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), is the operating authority for Federal disaster operations, and Section 308(a) (Nondiscrimination in Disaster Assistance) of the Stafford Act was amended by the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act to include English proficiency and disability as additional protected bases.

- The FEMA Office of External Affairs is responsible for identifying communications needs, establishing outreach plans for populations with limited English proficiency/accessible communication needs (LEP/ACN), and multilingual media in order to ensure that diverse audiences receive critical, accessible, understandable, and simultaneous disaster assistance communications.
 - The FEMA Office of External Affairs has a Limited English Proficiency/Accessible Communications Needs Coordinator, whose primary responsibility is to ensure populations with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to information and services provided by FEMA in the language they understand.
 - FEMA also has a blanket purchase agreement with three national contractors that provide written translations and interpretation support in more than 300 languages. These contractors also provide services for populations with accessible communications needs including: American Sign Language. Communication Access Realtime Translations, closed captioning, 508 compliance, and written transcriptions.
 - The FEMA Office of External Affairs hired a full-time Spanish-speaking media relations specialist to conduct outreach with Spanish-speaking media and intergovernmental audiences. This position was created in Fiscal Year 2013.

Within FEMA’s Office of External Affairs Disaster Operations Division, there is a full time LEP/ACN Coordinator, who is responsible for ensuring that the Agency meets both routine and unusual interpretation and translation needs. The LEP/ACN Coordinator manages the following:

- FEMA Spanish Website: translation of English content on fema.gov into Spanish on the Spanish FEMA website. Translations of other documents are based on demographic needs identified for declared disasters.
- Initial Language Assessments: conducts an initial language assessment using various sources, including the data from the U.S. Census Bureau and nongovernmental, community, and voluntary organizations.
- Disaster Translations: serves as a liaison between contractors, Contracting Officers, and Reservists to ensure documents such as public service announcements, media advisories, flyers, guides, and letters related to disaster assistance are provided in accessible formats and other languages for disaster survivors.
- Media Outreach: utilizes ethnic/foreign language media outlets to disseminate critical disaster related information to LEP/ACN populations in targeted languages.

Regional

- Beginning in 2011, FEMA created a job position title and qualification system for reservists who have experience in working with LEP populations. As of June 2011, each FEMA employee in an incident management position as of June 2011, was evaluated by a panel of subject matter and program experts from the existing FEMA workforce. These experts developed baseline qualifications for each program position, including LEP Specialists and evaluated each eligible reservist against those standards for training, experience, and performance. The LEP Specialist title was developed as a result of this new qualification system. The process for determining current qualifications was in compliance with the National Incident Management System and was strictly controlled and monitored to ensure integrity and fairness.

FEMA Interactions with the Public

Office of Response and Recovery work directly with local, State, and Tribal governments in shared responsibility for protecting citizens from disasters, and for helping them to recover when a disaster strikes.

The Individual Assistance programs aid survivors following a disaster, most of which are administered directly by FEMA. Information is provided in languages as indicated by the analysis of the demographics by Equal Rights Advisors and the Office of External Affairs.

The Prevention and Information (P&I) Branch located in the United States Fire Academy (USFA), has the most direct and frequent interactions with the public. This unit interacts with the public primarily via the USFA website, www.usfa.fema.gov. The P&I publications center is available via a toll-free number and from the website. A P&I staff member helps to improve program effectiveness in providing LEP services through sharing information and practices learned by participation in the cross Federal agency Plain Language Working Group meetings, webinars, etc.

The Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration's Risk Insurance Division produces and distributes publications in Spanish for providing flood awareness, flood preparedness, and flood claims processing information to Spanish speaking communities with limited English proficiency throughout the United States. In addition, the NFIP contract training cadre delivers technical flood training on writing flood insurance policies, insuring at-risk properties and adjusting flood claims to Spanish speaking insurance agents, mortgage lenders, and claims adjusters with limited English proficiency through classroom workshops. FIMA also produces several publications in Spanish.

- The following FIMA publications are produced in Spanish:
 - Why You Need Flood Insurance
 - Your Homeowners Insurance Doesn't Cover Flood (s)
 - Top 10 Facts Every Consumer Needs to Know
 - Preparing for Flood
 - Myths & Facts about the National Flood Insurance Program
 - How the NFIP Works
 - NFIP Summary of Coverage

- Preferred Risk Policy for Homeowners and Renters
- Preferred Risk Policy- Business
- Flood Insurance Fulfillment Brochure
- Flood Insurance Claims Handbook
- Managing Your Flood Insurance Claim

Traditionally, FEMA has deployed individuals as Community Relations Specialists to declared disasters to provide information to disaster survivors and other groups on FEMA disaster programs and state assistance. This group has transformed to Disaster Survivor Assistance serving as the primary front-line assistance to disaster survivors.

Disaster Survivor Assistance

- On April 8, 2013, FEMA leadership transferred the Community Relations (CR) program from the Office of External Affairs to the Recovery Directorate. To reflect a renewed commitment to disaster survivors and the expanded role of the cadre, FEMA changed the name from CR to Disaster Survivor Assistance.
- Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Teams function in a 100 percent mobile environment to provide services directly to survivors on-site and in-person, and use a web-based geographic information system application to collect information that is replicated in real-time and available to view by response officials.
- The DSA Mission is to build and sustain an expeditionary cadre that can address disaster survivor's immediate needs by:
 - Establishing a timely presence;
 - Providing in-person, tailored information and services;
 - Providing referrals to Whole Community partners as needed;
 - Collecting targeted information to support decision-making; and
 - Identifying public information needs so critical messaging can be developed and disseminated
- DSA's Five Essential Functions are:
 - Assess, Inform, Report Mission;
 - Register survivors for FEMA disaster assistance;
 - Address inquiries about survivor case status;
 - Perform pre- or post-registration needs assessments; and
 - Connect survivors to additional resources available through Whole Community partners.

External Affairs provides information to different media outlets that informs various LEP populations about disaster preparedness and disaster assistance. The FEMA Office of External Affairs is responsible for identifying communications needs, establishing outreach plans for LEP/ACN populations and multilingual media (the target groups) in order to ensure that diverse audiences receive critical, accessible, understandable, and simultaneous disaster assistance communications.

The Grants Program Directorate (GPD) interacts with the public through the issuance of grants and cooperative agreements to eligible entities. Grants and cooperative agreements are not

issued to individuals but rather to eligible state, local, tribal, nonprofit, and for profit organizations. As such, through the terms and conditions of the grant/agreement, the requirements of Title VI to provide meaningful access to FEMA's assisted programs and services are passed to the recipients of the grant or agreement in compliance with Title VI.

The USFA P&I Division provides material via their website and publications center. Also, select fire safety materials for the public are available in Spanish. A Spanish section is available on the USFA's website. Fire safety information for parents of young children is available in Spanish, Chinese, French, Vietnamese, Korean and Russian.

LEP Communities Served or Encountered

In accordance with Section 616 of Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA), based on the LEP/ACN populations most commonly encountered in disasters, FEMA has identified priority languages in coordination with State and local governments. The languages most frequently encountered are Spanish, Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, Haitian-Creole, French, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese, Greek, Polish, Thai and Portuguese and American Sign Language.

Tracking

FEMA collects and tracks LEP interactions in:

- **After Action Reports:** Documents that review all aspects of the Agency's preparations for, immediate response to, and initial recovery from a disaster. These documents identify both strengths and areas for improvements, and provide recommendations for future response and recovery efforts. After Action Reports are completed upon conclusion of every disaster.
- **Initial Language Assessments:** Spreadsheets with data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, that provide information about the languages spoken at home for populations 5 years and over in counties where a disaster has been declared. Initial language assessments are conducted for all disasters and upon request.
- **National Processing Servicing Centers:** Maintains historical data from previous disasters regarding language line usage and the number of applicants requesting to speak with an agent in Spanish and other languages.
- **Community Questionnaires:** Provides direct feedback from the community, indicates how effectively FEMA is reaching LEP/ACN communities, and highlights areas for possible improvement.

USFA Prevention and Information monitors feedback and program delivery to assist in the assessment of additional need for various languages and translations, as well as, the need for alternative formats.

The Office of Response and Recovery utilizes information developed by the Office of Equal Rights and External Affairs to determine need for language translations, interpreter services and alternative format communication strategy.

The Office of External Affairs maintains information regarding LEP languages and populations on an internal website, Share Point, and on a shared computer drive with access for FEMA employees.

Language Access Procedures/Protocols

Personnel likely to have contact with the public have procedures to follow to identify LEP persons and obtain available language services. FEMA will survey the Agency and assess where procedures need to be updated or finalized. During Hurricane Sandy the protocol for Disaster Survivor employees who had contact with LEP populations required those employees to have on hand the *I SPEAK* language assistance cards and phone numbers for language assistance lines in order to have immediate translation and interpretation tools available while in the field. Additionally this information is integrated into the Training Section of this plan. As a reminder, the DHS Language Access Plan states:

“each Component, if it has not already done so should develop and disseminate Language Access Procedures that explain to staff who encounter or are likely to encounter LEP individuals how to identify LEP individuals and access available language services...such procedures or protocols are also one of the required elements of the Component Language Access Plan.” <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/asests/crcl/crcl-dhs-language-access-plan.pdf>

Please also note the language below in the Memorandum to Federal Agencies from Attorney General Eric Holder Reaffirming the Mandates of Executive Order 13166, February 17, 2011.

“*Action Item:* Agencies should ensure that staff can competently identify LEP contact situations and take the necessary steps to provide meaningful access. *Specifics:* Agency staff should be able to, among other tasks, identify LEP contact situations, determine primary language of LEP individuals, and effectively utilize available options to assist in interpersonal electronic, print, and other methods of communication between the agency and LEP individuals.”
http://www.lep.gov/13166/AG_021711_EO_13166_Memo_to_Agencies_with_Supplement.pdf

Employee Duties and Development

This information is integrated into the *Training* and other sections of this plan.

Training

To ensure that FEMA’s LEP language assistance policy is followed, FEMA disseminates that policy to all employees likely to have contact with LEP persons, and periodically trains these employees. These employees include Individual Assistance, National Processing Service Centers, and Disaster Survivor Assistance employees. Effective training ensures that employees are knowledgeable and aware of LEP policies and procedures, are trained to work effectively

with in-person and telephone interpreters, and understand the dynamics of interpretation among applicants, FEMA personnel, and interpreters. All employees in applicant contact positions will be properly trained. Effective training is one means of ensuring that there is not a gap between FEMA's written policies and procedures and the actual practices of employees who are in the front lines interacting with LEP persons

In May 2012, FEMA held a LEP Focus Group to develop a course that would prepare FEMA Reservists to better serve disaster survivors with LEP. All of the participants in the focus group were reservists with extensive experience working with LEP populations. The focus group covered some of the following topics: how to identify LEP disaster survivors, development of language assessments, coordination of language translation requests, distribution of LEP surveys and methods of tracking LEP information. The Civil Rights Title VI Training Course that is mandatory for all employees every two years contains a separate module that details specific LEP guidance and requirements. Please see Appendix B for an outline of the Title VI Civil Rights and FEMA Disaster Assistance On-line Training Course.

Resources

Disaster Response and Disaster Recovery activities: When the President declares a major disaster, disaster relief funds are utilized for disaster translation/interpretation support. This support includes sign language interpreters, translation of disaster materials in languages of all impacted populations, and provision for alternative formats. Much of the material translated can be utilized in future disaster situations which reduces recurring translation costs.

The Office of External Affairs allocates a percentage of its annual budget for translation/interpretation support. Full-time bilingual personnel and contractors are used to proof-read and assist with translation support. Quality assurance metrics will be implemented to ensure accuracy and effectiveness.

Grant Programs Directorate provides information in demonstrated demographic languages from their program budget. Some common documents are funded through the Office of External Affairs budget.

The Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration's Risk Insurance Division funds the development and publication of their documents and information in Spanish.

U.S. Fire Administration Prevention and Information Division provides funding and/or training in support of LEP services through encouraging the fire educator staff to take advantage of partner training available for low literacy and/or plain language.

Notice to LEP Persons

FEMA makes LEP individuals aware of their right to interpretation services without charge. Posted at active disaster sites, which include Joint Field Offices and Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC), are notices in languages other than English of the availability of staff interpreters or

contractor services with trained and competent interpreters. Notice of language services is also provided in the following ways:

- Use of language identification cards which allow LEP beneficiaries to identify their language needs to staff and for staff to identify the language needs of applicants; placing and maintaining signs in regularly encountered languages other than English in waiting rooms, reception areas and other initial points of entry. These signs inform applicants and beneficiaries of their right to free language assistance services and invite them to identify themselves as persons needing such services;
- Inclusion of statements about the services available and the right to free language assistance services, in non-English languages, in brochures, booklets, outreach and recruitment information and other materials that are routinely disseminated to the public.

*If you have difficulty understanding English you may request interpreter services. These services are free of charge. For more information about interpreters or other language services feel free to call the **Language Assistance Line at toll free 800-333-1796.***

U.S. Fire Administration Prevention and Information Division provides notice to LEP persons of resources available through:

- Publications available on the website via a search of the site.
- A link to Spanish content is provided on every page of the USFA's website.
- Spanish materials are available for order/download through the USFA's online publications catalog.

Procedures for Quality Control

With the assistance of Disaster Survivor Assistance, FEMA obtains direct feedback from LEP Disaster survivors via questionnaires. The use of questionnaires enables FEMA to improve translations and better meet the needs of disaster survivors.

Language interpreters and translators will be evaluated periodically to ensure accuracy and effectiveness.

The Office of Equal Rights ERADs are deployed to disaster sites. Among other elements the ERADs review the Agency's performance at the disaster site for compliance with the LEP program and with the requirements of the Language Access Plan. The ERADs provide reports and feedback to Headquarters on Civil Rights (including LEP) and EEO issues every 30 days during a disaster. This information and feedback assists FEMA in updating its language guidance plans and policies and in its compliance with non-discrimination laws and regulations that govern LEP. Quality assurance metrics are being developed and will be implemented to ensure accuracy and effectiveness of language interpreters and translators.

Outreach to LEP Communities

The Office of Equal Rights improves Agency inclusion of LEP populations in its programs and activities as well as to ensure that LEP communities have equal access to the Agency services, programs and benefits. This function is engaged during disaster deployment through the ERADs deployed to disaster operations. ERADs are embedded in the Neighborhood Task Force Initiative and identify and address LEP issues for the Agency and the communities they service.

The Office of External Affairs maintains lists of contacts in various community organizations including LEP communities. These lists and contacts are utilized to assist the Agency to effectively reach LEP populations to provide disaster information and assistance, and to provide access to Agency programs, services and benefits. These contacts and organizations help to identify media that can be used to ensure that information is provided to impacted LEP populations.

- The Office of External Affairs will continue to maintain an online resource library for storing commonly used disaster assistance informational materials in the most commonly encountered languages, as well as in various other formats such as large type, Braille and accessible technology to comply with Section 508.
- During disasters, the Office of External Affairs continues to develop web pages in different languages that contain disaster-specific information, information on FEMA programs (e.g. NFIP FAQs, IA information, etc.), related links, widgets, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and other pertinent information designed specifically for each LEP community.
- FEMA LEP Specialists in every Joint Field Office review LEP media contacts early and often in order to ensure LEP media lists are current. This will help to ensure communications are effectively reaching targeted LEP populations via the media.
- Ready.gov, which is the website for FEMA's national public service advertising campaign designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters, is available in 12 languages including: Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Urdu and Vietnamese.

The Grant Programs Directorate conducts outreach in minority and LEP communities through minority serving institutions.

U.S. Fire Administration Prevention and Information Division conducts outreach in support of LEP through:

- Work with partners groups, i.e., Safe Kids Worldwide, to provide information on available publications.
- The partner groups reach out to several coalitions and chapters who have an interest in LEP resources.
- USFA P&I also send notice of publications to several distributions lists that reach educators around the country.

Please see the section below, *FEMA Language Assistance Accomplishments*, for other additional methods and activities for engaging with LEP populations.

Monitoring and Performance Measures

The key to providing effective access to FEMA's benefits and services for LEP personnel is to ensure that the language assistance provided results in accurate and effective communication between the Agency recipient and the LEP applicant/client about the types of services and/or benefits available.

Examples of sources of information to evaluate FEMA's services collects and tracks LEP interactions include:

- After Action Reports.
- Initial Language Assessments.
- NPSCs maintain historical data from previous disasters regarding language line usage and the number of applicants requesting to speak with an agent in Spanish and other languages.
- Community Questionnaires, which provide direct feedback from the community, indicate how effectively FEMA is reaching LEP/ACN communities, and highlight areas for possible improvement.
- Neighborhood Task Force initiatives have direct contact with neighborhood groups to address LEP concerns.

The Office of Equal Rights reviews the Agency's performance for compliance of the LEP program and with the requirements of the Language Access Plan. FEMA periodically updates its language guidance plans and policies, monitors the assistance and grants programs to ensure compliance with non-discrimination laws and regulations.

FEMA Language Assistance Accomplishments

Throughout the 2011-12 active tornado and hurricane seasons FEMA component offices responsible for the implementation and monitoring of LEP activities maintained structured and ongoing outreach programs to ensure that all services administered by FEMA disaster programs adhered to the Language Assistance Plan by making available products and services in more than Spanish-only languages. During Hurricanes *Sandy*, *Irene*, and *Isaac*, FEMA provided flyers and brochures in the 20 languages, as recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau, as being the most commonly spoken languages for those disaster affected areas (Appendix B). This Agency's commitment to continue to have a language assistance program that continually supports the public we serve can be measured by the progressive and extensive training of our employees and by providing information to the non-English speaking individuals in the following ways:

- Neighborhood Task Force initiatives provide direct contact with neighborhoods to provide immediate LEP access.
- Translation of application forms and instructional, information and other written materials into appropriate non-English languages by competent translators. For LEP

persons whose language does not exist in written form, assistance from an interpreter to explain the contents of the document;

- Uniform procedures for timely and effective telephone communication between staff and LEP persons.
- During the first days of Hurricane Sandy, more than 380 persons were trained for Community Relations including a LEP specific requirement for individuals deployed to the field. During Hurricane Sandy the protocol for Disaster Survivor employees who had contact with LEP populations were required to have on hand the *I SPEAK* language assistance cards and phone numbers for language assistance lines in order to have immediate translation and interpretation tools available while in the field.
- Appendix C shows the number of FEMA disaster registrations completed through the use of FEMA's telephonic interpreter services during Hurricane Sandy by number and specific languages.
- Further developed the "Other Languages" page by storing more translated disaster-related content.
- Developed a database with all previously translated materials including flyers, press releases, and guides for re-use. This project has already been incorporated via Share Point website and requires periodic updates by the LEP Coordinator.

Disaster Communications

- FEMA established a language line that provides callers direct access to disaster assistance information in more than 50 languages. This line has been promoted through community outreach, engagement with state and local government officials, flyer distribution, news releases and media interviews. While initiated during Hurricane Sandy, this line is still active and will be a resource for LEP callers for future disasters.
- FEMA's *Help After a Disaster*" guide, which provides critical information about the Individual and Households Program and how to apply for disaster assistance, is translated in all of the most frequently encountered PKEMRA languages including: Arabic, Chinese, French, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, Vietnamese and Somali. The guide is also easily accessible to the public via the internet at: www.fema.gov/help-after-disaster.
- Alternative formats of FEMA's "*Help After a Disaster*" guide, including large print and Braille also are available for individuals with accessible communications needs.
- During Hurricane Sandy response and recovery, FEMA conducted unprecedented outreach to communities with LEP:
 - In New York and New Jersey, FEMA translated hundreds of news releases, flyers and other written disaster information in multiple languages, including: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Cambodian, simplified Chinese, Estonian, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Nepali, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, and Yiddish.
 - In New York and New Jersey, more than 1.7 million flyers, were distributed in multiple languages to disaster survivors through neighborhood canvassing outreach. Disaster photos and registration messages also were displayed on the Times Square Jumbotron in nine languages.

- Multilingual Public Information Officers in New York and New Jersey conducted more than 680 media interviews in languages identified for communities affected by Hurricane Sandy.
- FEMA supported more than 145 Speaker's Bureau events and meetings in New York and New Jersey. Interpreters were provided for multiple languages, including: Albanian, American Sign Language, Cantonese, Haitian-Creole, Mandarin, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Yiddish, and Urdu as well as others. These interpreters also assisted with on-site language assistance at DRCs.
- The LEP teams in New York and New Jersey customized language-specific Hurricane Sandy web content in more than 20 languages. Languages included: Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Haitian, Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Yiddish.

Stakeholder Engagement

- In January 2013, FEMA Intergovernmental Affairs conducted a webinar on best practices in Asian American and Pacific Islander preparedness to include outreach to populations with limited English proficiency. The slides from this webinar have been posted to the FEMA website and translated into Chinese and Vietnamese. Intergovernmental Affairs is planning another webinar about the FEMA Individual Assistance process. The purpose of this webinar is to explain how to obtain disaster assistance and emphasize resources that are available for populations with limited English proficiency and individuals who are undocumented.
- In September 2013, FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs and Individual and Community Preparedness Divisions conducted a half-day roundtable discussion with nongovernmental stakeholder organizations (approximately 20) that serve traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations and currently have Memorandums of Agreement or long-standing relationships with FEMA. Through this roundtable, FEMA engaged diverse individual stakeholders and discussed overarching priorities of preparedness, disaster coordination, and continuity of operations at the community level.
- As part of its core mission to engage the whole community in all aspects of emergency management, the DHS Center for Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships (DHS Center) worked with emergency managers in key cities across the country to encourage and promote partnerships with leaders of diverse groups, including leaders of communities heavily populated by immigrants, low income people, elders and people with access and functional needs. In these partnerships, the issue of language access was emphasized as a way to ensure that people with limited English proficiency have a way to find out about preparing for, responding to and recovering from disaster. In this work, the DHS Center promoted the development of materials in various languages and appropriate literacy levels, use of translators, and partnerships with key leaders in communities, who are trusted messengers among the people.
 - As part of its work with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD), the DHS Center promoted the inclusion of diverse groups into the NVOAD membership and/or affiliation with the group to ensure that volunteers on

- the ground during disasters reflect the diverse characteristics of communities served. Notable examples include Islamic Relief, USA; National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; ICNA Relief, Inc.; Oxfam America; and Immigrants Responding to Crisis.
- In support of the 2013 Sandy Recovery Act amendment to the Stafford Act to provide federally-recognized tribal governments the option to make a request for a Presidential emergency or major disaster declaration, the DHS Center, in partnership with FEMA and regional tribal liaisons, is conducting outreach and developing relationships with tribal representatives to learn how to best provide legally, culturally and linguistically appropriate support in times of disaster.
 - The DHS Center worked with Miami-Dade Emergency Management and key groups within the Communities Organized to Respond to Emergencies (C.O.R.E.) to reach monolingual Spanish and Haitian communities and people with low literacy in Miami-Dade County.
 - The DHS Center supported the work of the Los Angeles Emergency Management Department to reach out and engage diverse populations, many with limited English proficiency, including:
 - Outreach to Bangladeshi community leaders to engage their monolingual community in disaster preparedness;
 - Presentations and engagement with the Korean community through houses of worship;
 - Work with Tzu Chi Buddhist Relief Foundation in outreach and translation of materials to monolingual Chinese populations;
 - Work with World Vision on outreach to Latino Protestant and Evangelical houses of worship on disaster training (They have requested, and we are pursuing resources for, translation of the Houses of worship guide into Spanish);
 - Work with Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Religious Advisor in outreach to African Americans in low-income areas;
 - Partnering with the Council on Pakistani American Affairs to develop a model of Teen Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) outreach and preparedness work with monolingual Pakistani Americans and Pakistani youth;
 - Work with the University of Southern California Center for Religion and Civic Culture on review of their Muslim Mass Care guide.
 - The DHS Center engaged and trained volunteers (Immigrants Responding to Crisis) in the Jamaican immigrant community of Flatbush, Brooklyn, New York, for a year prior to Hurricane Sandy to enhance emergency preparedness activities in their community. This group was critical in serving vulnerable populations in Brooklyn and Far Rockaway in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.
 - In partnership with FEMA's Individual and Community Preparedness Division (ICPD), the DHS Center conducted a national webinar with emergency managers and nongovernmental organizations from across the country on best practices in engagement with diverse communities. In addition, ICPD and the DHS Center

drafted a best practices guide for working with diverse faith-based and community groups—one for community leaders and one for emergency managers. The DHS Center also included these concepts in a best practices engagement guide published by DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

Community Preparedness

- FEMA ICPD continues to overcome challenges in communication and cultural differences by supporting outreach to populations with limited English proficiency:
 - FEMA’s Individual and Community Preparedness Division will continue to engage the whole community in all aspects of emergency management. The national network of State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Citizen Corps Whole Community Councils use multiple methods to reach and engage populations from diverse cultures and languages in reviewing emergency plans, preparing the public, and training volunteers to provide support to emergency preparedness and response.
 - Community Emergency Response Teams across the country have made CERT training available in many languages, including Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Urdu, Tagalog, Korean, English, Somali, and Spanish. Training is also available in Braille as an alternative format.
 - As manager of the FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Awards, ICPD recognized honorees with programs that serve communities with a primary language other than English, to include:
 - American Red Cross Bay Area Chapter (CA) – the Ready Neighborhood program, which has built a cadre of more than 200 bilingual volunteers and strengthened preparedness activities in linguistically diverse communities by creating culturally relevant materials and providing instruction in several Asian languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese (spoken only), Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Tongan.
 - Texas Citizen Corps (TX) – provides CERT training to Spanish speaking communities.
 - New York City Citizen Corps Council (NY) – successfully brought together nearly 130 leaders from a variety of organizations to focus on ways to reach the immigrant population with preparedness and protective action messaging.
 - Chinatown Community Development Center (CA) – trains and certifies youth in emergency response and disaster preparedness, leads fire prevention and earthquake preparedness outreach efforts, and provides training to senior Single Room Occupancy residents.
 - Mohamed Ali (WA) – in response to severe winter weather, local leaders crafted a voicemail message in Somali and English that included information on preventing carbon monoxide poisoning and winter travel warnings. The message was robo-dialed to thousands of Somalis and East Africans in King County.
- FEMA’s Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) and the Regional Disability Integration Specialists continue to improve access for populations with disabilities:

- ODIC and RDIS provide technical assistance in identifying and meeting physical, program, and effective communication accessibility, including meeting the communication access requirements of non-English speakers, who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or who have other communication barriers due to disability or limited English proficiency.
- Working in partnership with all components in preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation, ODIC and RDIS identify and provide guidance for addressing community needs inclusive of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.
- ODIC and RDIS provide guidance on how to create documents in accessible, alternative formats to disaster survivors. Examples of alternative formats include large print, CD/audio and Braille. Guidance is provided to components in FEMA as well as other governmental agencies that provide disaster assistance to survivors.

Internal Training

- In August 2013, the FEMA Office of External Affairs executed a Pilot Strategic Communications Course, which instructed FEMA employees on how to effectively identify and communicate with diverse audiences, including populations with limited English proficiency and accessible communications needs.

Interagency Coordination

- In May of 2013, FEMA collaborated with other government agencies, including the Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Social Security Administration, and the Department of Justice, to develop educational video vignettes designed to increase awareness about how federal employees should interact with LEP populations. Once the vignettes are finalized, they will be used to train all FEMA personnel who interact with LEP populations as a function of their jobs.
- FEMA regularly participated in meetings of the Interagency Working Group for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and became a member of the sub-committee for language access. Additionally, five FEMA Regions became members of the Regional Interagency Working Group for the Initiative, which is designed to promote interagency coordination at the regional level for outreach to Asian American and Pacific Islander populations.

Monitoring and Measurements

- In collaboration with FEMA's NPSC, the Office of External Affairs is in the process of adopting new performance measures to assess the effectiveness of FEMA's outreach to LEP populations. The new performance measures will include the development of two new electronic surveys that will be used to facilitate the process through which feedback is received from FEMA employees who interact with LEP populations and disaster survivors. The anticipated completion date of these surveys is the fall of 2014.

Goals for Fiscal Year 2014

FEMA will continue to build on its accomplishments while conducting new activities and initiatives to increase the Agency's outreach to populations with limited English proficiency during all phases of emergency management. FEMA will build new and enhance existing formal and informal working relationships with organizations that serve such populations. Examples are included below.

Interactions with Diverse Communities and Populations with Limited English Proficiency

- FEMA will maintain the language line that provides disaster survivors with direct access to disaster assistance information in more than 50 languages.
- FEMA's OEA/Intergovernmental Affairs Division is planning additional webinars and conference calls to assist individuals with limited English proficiency, including a webinar about the FEMA Individual Assistance process. The purpose of this webinar will be to explain how to obtain disaster assistance and emphasize resources that are available for populations with limited English proficiency and individuals who are undocumented.
- Intergovernmental Affairs also is planning another roundtable discussion for community-based organizations that provide services to traditionally underserved populations, including those with limited English proficiency. The purpose of this roundtable discussion is to encourage community networking and stronger relationships with FEMA to support great collaboration and coordination during disasters and more efficient outreach and assistance to underserved populations. As appropriate, FEMA will work to create more formal partnerships with such organizations that assist underserved communities and populations with limited English proficiency.
- The DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships will continue its efforts to build, sustain and leverage partnerships between faith-based and community organizations and DHS, focusing on groups marginally affiliated with the department's components and programs, which include groups with limited English proficiency.
- FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination and the Regional Disability Integration Specialists will continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to identify limited English proficiency needs and to develop tools to support culturally competent practices that impact survivors with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, including limited English proficiency.

Internal Training

- The Strategic Communications Pilot Course designed to educate FEMA employees on how to effectively identify and communicate with diverse audiences, including populations with Limited English proficiency and accessible communications needs, should be completed by 2015.

Interagency Coordination

- The educational vignettes designed to increase awareness about how federal employees should interact with LEP populations is projected to be completed in 2014.

Monitoring and Measurements

- The performance measures being developed between the Office of External Affairs and NPSC to measure feedback from FEMA employees who encounter LEP populations will include the development of two new electronic surveys that are projected to be completed during the fall of 2014.

Electronic and Online Resources

- The Office of External Affairs will continue to maintain an online resource library for storing commonly used disaster assistance informational materials in the most commonly encountered languages, as well as in various other formats such as large type, Braille and accessible technology to comply with Section 508.
- During disasters, the Office of External Affairs continues to develop web pages in different languages that contain disaster-specific information, information on FEMA programs (e.g. NFIP FAQs, IA information, etc.), related links, widgets, PSAs, and other pertinent information designed specifically for each LEP community.
- FEMA LEP Specialists in every Joint Field Office review LEP media contacts early and often in order to ensure LEP media lists are current. This will help to ensure communications are effectively reaching targeted LEP populations via the media.

Prioritization

In addition to updating its LEP plan in FY 2014, FEMA is committed to undertaking a number of activities to increase access for LEP persons to FEMA's programs and services. These activities include:

- General improvements for language access
 - Train staff on language access responsibilities. Projected training implementation Date: Spring 2014.
 - Continue to distribute and use "I Speak" materials, which assist customers in expressing their language needs, to employees in high public contact positions, in Joint Field Offices, etc. 2012 continuing.
 - Continue to ensure quality assurance for language services by obtaining feedback from disaster survivors and trained FEMA staff. Develop and implement metric to determine language accuracy and effectiveness in the LEP program.
- Outreach
 - Consult with stakeholders to plan future language services.

- Further tailor media distribution lists. This project has already been incorporated via PR Newswire and requires periodic updates by the LEP Coordinator and/or Public Affairs Staff within the Office of External Affairs.
- USFA P&I) is engaging the following activities in support of the LAN to improve LEP access.
 - As significant publications are updated for the public, i.e. Fire Safety for Older Adults, USFA P&I published a Spanish version as well.
 - USFA plans to incorporate a process for determining when and which fire safety educational materials need to be developed for LEP audiences.
 - The www.usfa.fema.gov website and the USFA Publications Center available via the website and by toll-free number.

Acronyms

CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
CR	Community Relations
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DRC	Disaster Recovery Centers
DSA	Disaster Survivor Assistance
ERAD	Equal Rights Advisors
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIMA	Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration
GPD	Grant Programs Directorate
IA	Individual Assistance
ICPD	Individual and Community Preparedness Division
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LEP/ACN	Limited English Proficiency/Accessible Communications Needs
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NVOAD	National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters
NPSC	National Processing Services Centers
ODIC	Office of Disability Integration and Coordination
OEA	Office of External Affairs Disaster Operations Division
OER	Office of Equal Rights
ORR	Office of Response and Recovery
PA	Public Assistance
P&I	Prevention and Information
PKEMRA	Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act
USFA	United States Fire Academy
USFA/P&I	United States Fire Academy Prevention and Information