



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Language Access Handbook

Revised June 2020

Marion County
Board of County Commissioners
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, Marion County becomes home to thousands of new citizens. As our population continues to grow, so do the demands for county government services and the need for enhanced and specialized communications that acknowledge the diverse fabric of our community.

Recognizing this, the Marion County Board of County Commissioners remains committed to implementing a series of actions aimed at improving internal and external communications.

This handbook addresses Marion's Spanish-speaking market, the county's largest language minority, and provides a framework of steps aimed at facilitating communication with this growing sector and other non-English speaking groups.

This document represents one among all of the steps the Marion County Board of County Commissioners takes to ensure fulfillment of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166 requirements for agencies that are recipients of Federal financial assistance.

LANGUAGE ACCESS OVERVIEW

Need for language access services

As a recipient of Federal financial assistance, Marion County government is required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166 by taking reasonable steps to increase accessibility of its programs and services for citizens with low English proficiency. An LEP person is someone who does not read, speak, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him or her to interact effectively with Marion County government staff and services.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that:

“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.”

To better enforce this federal obligation, former President Bill Clinton on August 20, 2000, issued Executive Order 13166, which states that:

“...each Federal agency shall examine the services it provides and develop and implement a system by which LEP persons can meaningfully access those services consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the fundamental mission of the agency. **Each Federal agency shall also work to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance (recipients) provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries.** To assist the agencies with this endeavor, the Department of Justice has today issued a general guidance document (LEP Guidance), which sets forth the compliance standards that recipients must follow to ensure that the programs and activities they normally provide in English are accessible to LEP persons and thus do not discriminate on the basis of national origin in violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and its implementing regulations. **As described in the LEP Guidance, recipients must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons.**”

In Marion County, nearly 12 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2014*). The majority of speakers of other languages are of Hispanic descent and make up 11.6 percent of the county's population.

LANGUAGE ACCESS COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Marion County's language access resources

Marion County Public Relations has identified 21 employees with reading, writing, translating and/or interpreting skills in at least nine languages. These potential resources responded to countywide emails requesting information from bilingual/multilingual staff. Though language skill levels and availability of these employees are not certain, their names are listed here as reference. If employees need assistance with a non-English speaker, they can also contact the Office of Public Information at 352-438-2300.

Language	Department	Name
American Sign Language (no Cert.)	Building Safety	Chad Wicker
Chinese	Extension Services	Yilin Zhuang
French	Office of the County Engineer	Jocelyn Nageon de Lestang
Japanese	Clerk of the Court	Sachiko Leon
Portuguese and Spanish	Office of the County Engineer	Sindy Garcia-Blasquez Sato
Spanish	911 Management	Lorianne Velez
Spanish	Information Technology	Jovanny Arenas
Spanish	Animal Services	Jim Sweet
Spanish	Facilities	Nanette Diaz
Spanish	Fire Rescue	Daniel García
Spanish	Fleet Management	Fred Costa
Spanish	Human Resources	Nikita Cruz
Spanish	Information Technology	Alex Torres
Spanish	Extension Service	Giovanna Benitez
Spanish	Procurement	Lidia Kennison
Spanish	Solid Waste	Glendeliris Johnson
Spanish	Solid Waste	Juan Quintero
Spanish	Utilities	Luis Martens
Spanish	Utilities	Claribel Martinez
Spanish	TPO	Liz Mitchell
Spanish	Utilities	Alejandro Rad
Spanish	Utilities	Javier Colon Torres
Spanish	Transportation	Jennyre Castillo Falcon

Spanish Language Marketing Communication Strategy

The following recommendations are presented to assist Marion County government in reaching Spanish-speaking citizens, Marion County's largest non-English speaking minority. Designed to

meet current budget and staffing constraints, these strategies will accomplish short- and long-term goals using available resources.

1. Maintain a list of bilingual and multilingual resources.

Project Completion Date: August 2015

Project Implementation Date: Ongoing

Marion County first created a list of bilingual and multilingual staff in July 2009. This list received a major update in 2020, and will be revised as needed moving forward.

2. Create a Spanish-language version of the *Guide to Marion County Governmental Services*.

Project Completion Date: February 1, 2021

Project Implementation Date: Ongoing

This is a hard copy book containing contact information to all county departments/services, including Clerk of Court, Florida Department of Health, Property Appraiser, Sherriff's Office, Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Marion County Legislative Delegations and other agencies including municipalities and special interest organizations. These guides can be picked-up in county lobbies or upon request from Administration.

3. Create a Spanish-language digital version of the Guide to Marion County Government Services which will be published on the Marion County website for easy access and readability.

Project Completion Date: March 1, 2021

Project Implementation Date: Ongoing

This will be a digital version of the hard copy version of this guide which contains contact information to all county departments/services, including Clerk of Court, Florida Department of Health, Property Appraiser, Sherriff's Office, Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Marion County Legislative Delegations and other agencies including municipalities and special interest organizations. This digital guide will be published on the Marion County website.

4. Revise cultural diversity training course to include section on language access services to low English proficiency clients.

Project Completion Date: March 2016

Project Implementation Date: March 2016

All Marion County employees participate in cultural diversity training, but not all are aware of the federal guidelines that direct Marion County government's efforts to provide language access services. We will work in collaboration with the Human Resources Department to evaluate the cultural diversity courses to include a section summarizing these guidelines and the steps they can take to facilitate communications with LEP clients.

5. Create a Spanish-language introductory video.

Project Completion Date: December 15, 2020

Project Implementation Date: Ongoing

This effort will support Marion County’s broadcasting efforts. Content will include information about Marion County government services and where to find contact information for offices and departments.