

# **Language Assistance Plan for Cedar Valley Services – SMART Transit**

**Effective:  
06/23/2014**

## **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 Cedar Valley Services – SMART Transit 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:

- 2010 US Census data/American Community Survey data
- Locally Coordinated Human Services Plan

- Reports from drivers, dispatchers and others about contact with LEP persons
- Local school district data

According to data provided by Mn/DOT from the 2010 American Community Survey 2007-2011 Five-Year estimate for Freeborn, Mower, and Steele counties:

- 1) The total number of LEP persons in our service area is 3832.
- 2) The total eligible population in our service area is 99394.
- 3) The proportion of LEP persons to the total eligible service population is 3.86%.

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

- Our drivers have reported that they have infrequent contact with LEP persons for transit services or information; perhaps 2 to 3 times per month.
- Our dispatchers and managers have reported that they have infrequent contact with LEP persons for transit services or information; perhaps 3 to 4 times per month.
- Common destinations include ESL (English as a Second Language) classes through local community education agencies and local factories such as Quality Pork Products in Austin.
- In all 3 communities, the ESL class staff works closely with our dispatchers to schedule rides for their students.

The conclusions drawn from examining this information about LEP persons seeking transit services are:

- The number of persons with LEP in our region is minimal.
- The primary languages spoken outside of English are Spanish and Somali.
- The passengers we assist who are LEP are receiving assistance from community resources and bi-lingual family members to obtain necessary services.
- If our LEP ridership increases, we will look at additional efforts for assistance.

**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 ESL classes in all 3 communities as well employment opportunities and daycare facilities.

We work closely with the ESL education providers to transport their students and deliver approximately 10 students per county per day during the school year.

**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 \$200. This includes funding for staff training, translation services, brochures, flyers, posters, newspaper ads, radio ads, website, etc.

In addition we frequently rely on the following resources:

- Even Start/Head Start staff
- Community Ed staff
- County Human Services staff
- Our own Bilingual staff

## **B. Language Assistance Measures**

There are several language assistance measures that are available to SMART Transit. These include:

- Translation of key documents in the following language(s): Spanish and Somali
- Arranging for availability of oral translators
- Communication with LEP persons' groups about transit services (i.e. presentations at ESL classes)
- Posting notices in appropriate languages informing LEP persons of available services
- Riders Guide

## **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 an annual basis to review:

- 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

## **D. 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:

- signs on buses or at bus stops
- brochures
- posters
- sending information to local organizations that work with LEP persons
- website notices
- information tables at local events, grocery stores, pharmacies, and churches
- working with local school system to disseminate information

## **E. 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 by the Transit Manager and dated.

#### **F. Dissemination of Plan**

This Language Assistance Plan is available on our website at [www.SMARTBusMN.org](http://www.SMARTBusMN.org).

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.

#### **G. Contact Information**

Questions or comments about this plan may be submitted to:

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