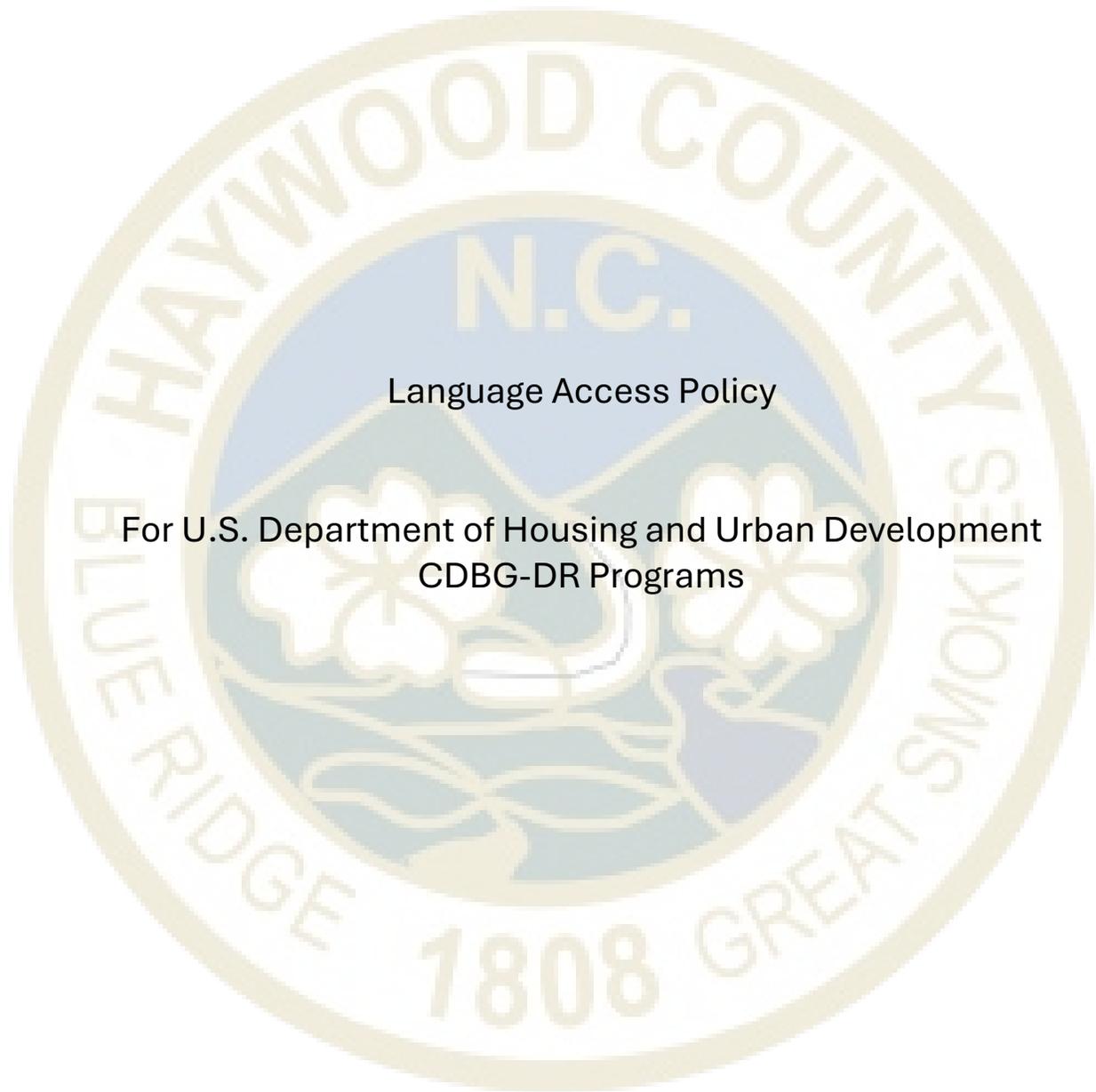


Haywood County, North Carolina



Last update: June 2025

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Revision History

Version Number	Date Updated	Summary of Changes
1.0	June 1, 2025	First version

Introduction and Purpose

Haywood County is committed to complying with all civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which requires us to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to federally funded CDBG-DR programs and services. LEP does not refer to people who are bilingual but rather to individuals that are protected from national origin discrimination and are not excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, as per 42 U.S.C. §2000d.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that Haywood County as required, takes reasonable steps to provide LEP individuals with meaningful access to CDBG-DR's programs and services.

Language Assistance Measures

The type of language assistance necessary to provide meaningful access will vary depending on the type of communication Haywood County staff is having with LEP individuals (e.g., phone, in person, or written communication). Regardless of how the language assistance is provided, Haywood County recognizes the importance of offering applicants' resources that can provide an effective translation of Program features and requirements in a timely manner. Haywood County understands that the extent of their obligation to provide both oral and written translation. Haywood County has chosen to follow the Safe Harbor Rule, contained in HUD's final guidance, to assist in determining when to provide translation of vital documents.

The Safe Harbor Rule for written translation of vital documents is based on the number and percentages of the eligible population or beneficiaries and applicants that are LEP individuals. HUD recommends translation of vital documents to be provided when the eligible LEP population in the market area or current beneficiaries exceeds 1,000 persons or if it exceeds 5% of the eligible population or beneficiaries and more than 50 people are affected. In cases where more than 5% of the eligible population speaks a specific language, but fewer than 50 persons are affected, there should be a translated written notice of the person's right to an oral interpretation.

Haywood County's residents are above the 5% "eligible beneficiary" threshold for Spanish language, vital documents will be translated into Spanish and Haywood County will provide a translated written notice of the person's right to oral interpretation services for Spanish speakers. These plans are subject to change as Haywood County continues to monitor demographic information and trends with respect to LEP populations to be served.

Oral Interpretation Services

HUD's safe harbor rule does not apply to oral communication. An obligation to provide oral language assistance exists regardless of the number or percentage of persons who comprise a specific language group. Haywood County will collaborate with its agents and contractors to provide competent interpretation services whenever such are necessary for assisting LEP residents.

Interpreters providing services to Haywood County must:

- Be proficient in and able to communicate information accurately in both English and the other applicable language;

- Understand relevant community development terminology;
- Understand and ensure confidentiality;
- Maintain impartiality and act solely in the role as an interpreter; and
- Be aware of the differences in usage of the language and be able to provide the most appropriate interpretation in a consistent manner.

Regardless of who is used as an interpreter, Haywood County staff will adhere to the following guidelines when using an interpreter:

- Explain to the interpreter the purpose of the communication and provide a description of the information to be conveyed;
- Provide brief explanations of technical terms that may come up during the communication, such as eligibility, income limits, duplication of benefits, etc.;
- Avoid using acronyms, such as HUD, DOB, ECR, etc.;
- Speak in short sentences;
- Express one idea at a time and allow the information to be interpreted prior to continuing;
- Check-in with the interpreter to make sure he/she is understanding what staff is attempting to communicate;
- Enunciate words;
- Avoid contractions; and
- Address the LEP resident and not the interpreter during the conversation.

LEP persons may choose to bring an informal interpreter with them to assist in communication, including but not limited to the LEP person's family members, friends, legal guardians, or social services case manager representatives or personal advocates. In such instances, Haywood County staff will:

- Inform LEP persons who bring an informal interpreter with them that free language interpretation is available through NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR);
- Choose a formal interpreter instead of an informal interpreter, if the circumstances and subject matter of the interaction indicate that formal interpretation is needed to protect the resident's rights and interests; and
- Avoid relying on minors as informal interpreters unless there is an extreme need, and no competent interpreters are available.

Written Translation Services

In keeping with HUD's Safe Harbor Rule, Haywood County will provide a translated written notice of LEP individuals' rights to an oral interpretation of vital documents. Vital documents are defined below. Haywood County will not translate internal, non-public documentation such as standard operating procedures or job guides. This written notice will be provided in Spanish, which is the currently- identified language spoken by a significant number of LEP individuals.

Vital Documents

Haywood County regularly reviews documents used in the delivery and administration of its federal funds to identify documents considered vital. As part of such review, Haywood County considers the population percentage, the importance to the public, and the frequency and contact of the information while assessing the potential for translating such documents. Documents most likely to encounter the need to translate and be considered vital documents are those related to public

involvement, general public information, and local assistance. Documents related to the internal administration or delivery of programs or activities that are not generally for public involvement, such as billing guides and payment requests, are not considered vital documents.

Examples of vital documents may include the following:

- Public comment notices;
- Public hearing notices;
- Notices of Intent to Request the Release of Funds;
- Findings of No Significant Impact;
- Drafts and finalized versions of action plans and amendments as well as annual reports;
- Applications, instructions, or documents intended for individual beneficiaries directly related to how to participate in a program or activity to receive benefits, services, or grant funding.

Haywood County will continue to review, identify, and translate vital documents as time and resources allow, to ensure it is taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals. Haywood County may make a determination that while a document or elements of a document may be considered vital, there is no need to translate. For example, an application for assistance that is intended for a municipality or contractor that conducts business in English rather than a second language may not need to be translated.

Translation Services

Haywood County will provide accurate translation services whenever such are necessary for assisting LEP persons.

Haywood County will make every attempt to use competent and accurate translators. Many of the considerations described above regarding interpreters apply to translators. Where appropriate, Haywood County will utilize HUD translated documents. Haywood County recognizes that the translated document is not a legal document and that HUD intends to put a disclaimer on it stating that it is “providing the translation to you merely as a convenience to assist in your understanding of your rights and obligations. The English language version of this document is the official, legal, controlling document. This translated document is not an official document.”

Haywood County will use a similar disclaimer on its legal documents that are translated. Haywood County will also be ready to provide oral interpretation of written documents for LEP persons who may not be able to read their native language.

Staff Training Regarding LEP Policies and Procedures

Where applicable, Haywood County staff will be trained on their obligation to provide meaningful access to information and services for LEP residents. Training will seek to make staff aware of the following:

Haywood County’s obligation to provide meaningful access to LEP persons;

- LEP policies and procedures; and
- Protocol in responding to LEP persons contacting Haywood County via telephone, written communications, and in-person contact.

Haywood County staff will include LEP and other language access training as a component of regular, ongoing training and development to keep informed of Haywood County's current and evolving obligations as a grant subrecipient. Information and materials received during such training will be distributed to other Haywood County staff as appropriate.

Providing Notice of Free Language Services to LEP Persons

Haywood County recognizes that it is important to put LEP persons on notice that free language assistance will be provided when needed. Haywood County staff will notify LEP persons of these services through translated statements (e.g., "Free language assistance is available for accessing all programs.") to be published in Spanish and any other languages identified in the future as being spoken by a significant number of LEP persons.

At a minimum, notices and signs will be posted and provided in intake areas and other points of entry, including but not limited to the main lobbies, waiting rooms, etc.

- Haywood County Historic Courthouse Building - Front Lobby Area
- Haywood County Department of Health and Human Services – Front Lobby Area

Notification will also be provided through one or more of the following: outreach documents, telephone voice mail menus, local newspapers, radio and television stations, and/or community-based organizations.

Outreach documents - Brochures

Overview and Applicability Continuous Oversight of the LAP – Monitoring and Updates

Haywood County will monitor and update this LAP on an ongoing basis. If new demographic data is released by the federal or state government, Haywood County will review the data and update the LAP accordingly. In addition, special attention will be made to incorporate new resources, including potential funding, collaborations with other agencies, human resources, emerging technologies, and other mechanisms to improve language access in the plan.

Appendix A: Regulations and Resources

Applicable Regulations

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency
- 72 FR 22732, Federal Register Volume 72, Issue 13 (January 22, 2007), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HUD's LEP Resources

HUD's Resources

- HUD's website: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/17lep.

