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| YourLEP FitnessChecklist |

https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcR-AyaFStw7-zM4E500nQRUkYmLDvf14LISaXJuexmmpTu9_mYl**How well are you addressing limited English proficiency?**1. Does your organization seek or receive federal funding?
* NO. The federal LEP guidance does not apply.
* YES, proceed.
1. Do you have a current **Language Assistance Program** in place?
* NO. You are out of compliance.
* YES, proceed.
1. Does your **Language Assistance Program** include:
* A four-part **Language Needs Assessment**
* A **Language Access Plan**
* Annual **LEP Training** for staff
1. Possible “Trouble spots”–

Your organization:* Does not inform clients of their language rights
* Does not have language identification flash cards
* Does not offer no-cost interpretation
* Insists clients bring an interpreter
* Does not offer translated documents
* Uses children, family or friends to interpret
* Does not document LEP activities
* Has received a complaint from a non-English speaker

***Ask us for expert guidance on your language assistance needs!***C:\Users\Owner\Documents\Gary E Hanes and Assoc LLC\Logos\Gary E Hanes and Assoc\logo5500495_lg.jpg**208-515-2185**gary@gehanes.comwww.gehanes.com **Welcome in any language** By: Gary HanesMaggie, the manager of a down payment program, peered across her document-strewn desk at the father chastising his 10 year old son. Drawing on her long career in lending didn’t seem to help. The man was angry that the distraught youth could not explain in Spanish what Maggie had just said in English. The Father had worked two low-paying jobs, sacrificed and saved for years. This funding was his family’s ticket out of a crowded apartment and into a home. The dream was slipping away in a confusion of words he didn’t understand. His son was to blame!This was not going well, but hadn’t the man insisted that his kid interpret? Maggie has another appointment waiting in the lobby and an inspiration: “Gestures! I’ll use gestures to explain and speak more slowly and maybe a little louder! If that doesn’t work, we can try again after my vacation. Besides, the next client may use up the remaining funds.”This can be one outcome. But, there can be a better one where Maggie has appropriate information and tools to help people in their language while avoiding a civil rights or fair housing complaint. That’s why I do this work.Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in accessing federally-assisted programs. This includes discrimination based on national origin. National origin includes a person that doesn’t read, write, speak, or understand English…someone that is limited English proficient…LEP. This designation bestows certain rights on this person under Title VI. Federal agencies issue guidance on what is required. There can be penalties when reasonable steps are not taken to avoid delayed or denied services because a person is LEP. As recipients of federal assistance, affordable housing providers and others have an obligation to provide timely, competent and no-cost language assistance to persons in any language. This takes the form of interpretation and translation. Interpretation is the oral conversion of English into another language, and vice versa. Translation is its written counterpart. The federal guidance requires a provider to have a **Language Assistance Program**. I help clients through these steps to create a program: a Language Needs Assessment, a Language Access Plan, staff training, and periodic monitoring, evaluation and updates to the Plan.A good **Language Assistance Program** can help you expand your market, offer better service, meet federal requirements and manage risk. Erik Kingston of the Idaho Housing Finance Association probably says it best: “*Good customer service is welcome in any language*.”*(Reprinted from “Opening Hearts”**Intermountain Fair Housing Council’s newsletter)*  |

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