

**Alabama State Department of Education**  
**Child Nutrition Programs**  
**Limited English Proficiency and Language Access Policy**

The state agency, sponsoring organizations, and local sites and providers must take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). People with LEP are individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English because of their national origin. Failure to provide services to potentially eligible persons, applicants, or participants with LEP, or to deny them meaningful access to federally assisted Child Nutrition Programs, may be discrimination on the basis of national origin under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Language should never be a barrier to program access.

Meaningful access requires providing reasonable, timely, appropriate and competence language services at no cost the individuals with LEP. Identifying reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access is contingent on a number of factors, including:

1. The number or proportion of individuals with LEP who are eligible to be served;
2. The frequency with which individuals with LEP come in contact with the program;
3. The nature and importance of the program; and
4. The resources available to the recipient and costs.

The ALSDE CNP section posts taglines in the 10 most common languages on its website for users to request free language assistance service. The tagline includes the main number to the ALSDE Section (334-694-4656). The administrative support personnel who answer the telephone line contact the selected vendor for over-the-telephone interpretation services. The ALSDE CNP section uses an existing vendor with a State contract to provide qualified interpretation services and translation services.

Other appropriate resources that may be utilized include contracted translation and interpretation services, qualified bilingual staff, and qualified community organizations and volunteers. It is not appropriate to allow children to serve as interpreters. Applicants and participant cannot be asked to provide their own interpreters.

Translated versions of the School Meals Application or how to request them must be readily available on SFA/LEA online services, such as Titan or PayPams. Translated applications are available from the USDA FNS website at [Translated Applications | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.fns.usda.gov/food-and-nutrition-service).

All SFAs/LEAs must record and track offers of free language assistance and identify the type of language assistance rendered when communicating with students, parents, and guardians accessing the School Meal Programs. The information must be recorded on

the Services for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency and/or Disabilities Households form.

Machine translations of documents are not sufficient to meet the federal requirements because the quality is questionable. A qualified translator must review any documents produced by a machine.

The ALSDE CNP section conducts an annual analysis using the USDA-approved Self-Assessment and Four-Factor Analysis tool to determine the language profile for the state and its regions. Different programs and regions are analyzed each year. Results of the assessment are used to ensure vital documents and online information are translated into appropriate languages. School food authorities, sponsoring organizations, and independent centers are also required to conduct an analysis, using the same tool, when requested to do so by the state.

The following websites are useful for finding population data:

- U.S. Department of Justice LEP.gov  
[Data and Language Maps \(LEP.gov\)](https://www.dhs.gov/lep)
- U.S. Census Data  
[Data \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov)
- American Community Survey  
[American Community Survey \(ACS\) \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov/acs)
- Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy  
[Migration Policy Institute \(migrationpolicy.org\)](https://www.migrationpolicy.org)

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