

HUMAN RELATIONS BOARD

WEDNESDAY, September 20, 2023

4:00 P.M.

Hybrid Meeting

Battle Creek City Hall

10 N. Division Street

"To increase constructive communication among all people regardless of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, marital status, physical or mental disability, family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socioeconomic status. To also increase constructive communication between residents, public officials, and community organizations, thereby promoting harmonious and productive relationships within the community, and equitable access to community resources for all."

A. INTRODUCTIONS

B. ROLL CALL

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. August 16, 2023

D. COMMUNICATIONS

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. Community Review Oversight Board

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. Language Access Discussion
2. Communications Promotion of Boards and Committees
3. Time/Duration of Meeting for Human Relations Board
4. Charge of Human Relations Board

H. COMMUNITY POINTS OF INTEREST – OPEN DISCUSSION

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

J. BOARD COMMENTS

K. NEXT MEETING – tbd

L. ADJOURNMENT

**Human Relations Board
Battle Creek City Hall
10 N. Division St.
Room 302A
&
Virtual-ZOOM
Wednesday August 16, 2023
4:00 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Kathy Szenda Wilson, Chuck Asher, Derrick Freeman, Keona Ackley, Joe Hooper, and Deana Spencer (4:06pm) - all attending in person. Donald Woodward (aka Pao Shan) remotely from the City of Kalamazoo.

Staff: Deputy City Clerk, Alicia Greene; DEI Officer, Kimberly Holley; Police Chief Bagley

Guests: There were none.

Board Members Absent: Jeffrey Cotton, Boonikka Herring, Lyanne Wesley, Whitney Wardell and Jennifer Metzger

Ex-Officio members Absent: Rebecca Fleury and Comm. Roger Ballard

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Derrick Freeman, supported by Chuck Asher, to approve the Human Relations Board minutes of June 21, 2023. All yes, none opposed. Motion approved.

Communications: There were none.

Committee Reports: There were none.

Old Business: Kimberly Holley provided an updated status on the DEI Action Plan which was submitted to the City Commission. Ms. Holley will begin conducting round table discussions with City Departments/Employees and gather additional surveys to develop the plan further. The next phase will involve community round tables.

Ms. Szenda Wilson discussed the expectation of the HRB in developing the Citizens Review & Oversight Board (CROB). Ms. Szenda Wilson expressed a desire to develop a task force to include members of the HRB to take the CROB from conception to implementation.

Ms. Holley stated the CROB members will have a tremendous responsibility and will require a vast amount of knowledge and a firm commitment.

Ms. Szenda Wilson clarified the CROB will be a separate entity not tied the HRB. Further stating the work of the HRB happens once a month for an hour, noting much more intentionality will need to be applied for the CRB to work effectively move forward. Ms. Szenda Wilson suggested requesting the CROB be a compensated board, due to the level of training, commitment and work being requested.

Language Access discussion will be tabled for a later meeting, requesting a City representative join the meeting.

Public Comments: There were none.

New Business: There was none.

Community Points of Interest: Ms. Spencer shared concerns with Police interactions in the community related to a gathering at The Parma House.

Ms. Ackley requesting information on the steps taken if someone files a false police report.

Chief Bagley provided an overview of the process and resources available.

Public Comments: There were none.

Board Comments: Ms. Szenda Wilson would like to revisit extending the time allowed for the HRB meetings.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the Human Relations Board September 20, 2023 @ 4:00 pm in Room 302A and available by Zoom.

Adjournment: Ms. Kathy Szenda Wilson adjourned the meeting at 5:03 pm.



Resolution NO. 86

A Resolution approving updates to the Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan and the Limited English Proficiency Plan.

BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN - 4/11/2017

Resolved by the Commission of the City of Battle Creek:

That the updates to the Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan and the Limited English Proficiency Plan be approved.

I, Victoria Houser, City Clerk of the City of Battle Creek, hereby certify the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Battle Creek City Commission at a Regular meeting held on April 11, 2017.

Victoria L. Houser
Victoria Houser

Battle Creek City Commission
4/11/2017

Action Summary

Staff Member: Jacob Schacht

Department: City Manager

SUMMARY

A Resolution approving updates to the Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan and the Limited English Proficiency Plan.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

There are no costs associated with these changes. Future costs may occur as the city addresses additional languages under the plan.

HISTORY, BACKGROUND and DISCUSSION

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the City of Battle Creek operates all of its federal aid highway programs without regard to race, color, or national origin.

As the sub-recipient of federal transportation funds, the City of Battle Creek must comply with federal and state laws, and related statutes, to ensure equal access and opportunity to all persons, with respect to transportation services, facilities, activities, and programs, without regard to race, color or national origin. Every effort will be made to prevent discrimination in any program or activity, whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not, as guaranteed by the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987.

The City of Battle Creek changed its Title VI Coordinator on September 20, 2016. Upon submitting Form 1079 to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), it was discovered that the Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan and the Limited English Proficiency Plan needed to reflect the recent designation of coordinator. MDOT reviewed in full both plans and provided recommendations. Following revisions to both plans, MDOT requests commission approval of the updated versions.

Attached are revised copies of the Non-Discrimination Plan and Limited English Proficiency Plan along with redlined copies identifying the changes from the original versions. Additionally, there is the letter from MDOT with the requested action. Most changes were administrative in nature with the exception of the following. In the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, the three languages identified for translation services were removed, and the language became less specific.

Following commission approval of the plans, they will be added to the City's website on the home page.

DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE

POSITIONS

ATTACHMENTS:

File Name	Description
☐ City of Battle Creek Title VI Plan updated 3-13-17.pdf	Updated Non-Discrimination Plan
☐ City of Battle Creek LEP Plan updated 3-7-17.pdf	Updated Limited English Proficiency Plan
☐ Redlined City of Battle Creek Title VI Plan.pdf	Redlined Non-Discrimination Plan
☐ Redlined City of Battle Creek LEP Plan.pdf	Redlined Limited English Proficiency Plan
☐ Requested Action from MDOT.pdf	MDOT Email Requesting Action

CITY OF BATTLE CREEK

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN

**10 North Division Street
Suite 206
Battle Creek, MI 49015
Phone: (269) 966-3378
Fax: (269) 966-6654
Website: www.battlecreekmi.gov**

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A RESOLUTION OF THE
CITY OF BATTLE CREEK
ADOPTING THE
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP) PLAN

In accordance with Title VI non-discrimination laws in regard to providing appropriate access to services and activities provided by federal agencies and recipients of federal assistance, the Limited English Proficiency Plan was drafted to define how City of Battle Creek will accommodate persons with Limited English Proficiency.

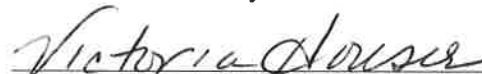
Individuals who do not speak English well and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

The City of Battle Creek City Commission hereby approves the establishment and adoption of the Limited English Proficiency Plan for the City of Battle Creek.

Adopted the day of



Dave Walters
Mayor



Victoria Houser
City Clerk

Per certified Resolution included.



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Victoria L. Houser

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Battle Creek City Commission
4/11/2017

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Department: City Manager

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Attached are revised copies of the Non-Discrimination Plan and Limited English Proficiency Plan along with redlined copies identifying the changes from the original versions. Additionally, there is the letter from MDOT with the requested action. Most changes were administrative in nature with the exception of the following. In the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan, the three languages identified for translation services were removed, and the language became less specific.

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Introduction

On August 11, 2000, President William J. Clinton signed an executive order, Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Service for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, to clarify Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It had as its purpose, to ensure accessibility to programs and services to otherwise eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language.

This executive order stated that individuals who do not speak English well and who have a limited ability to read, write and speak, or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.ⁱⁱ These individuals are referred to as being limited in their ability to speak, read, write, or understand English, hence the designation, “LEP,” or Limited English Proficient. The Executive Order states that:

“Each federal agency shall prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons. Each plan shall be consistent with the standards set forth in the LEP Guidance, and shall include the steps the agency will take to ensure that eligible LEP persons can meaningfully access the agency’s programs and activities.”

Not only do all federal agencies have to develop LEP plans as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance, recipients have to comply with Title VI and LEP guidelines of the federal agency from which funds are provided as well.

Federal financial assistance includes grants, training, use of equipment, donations of surplus property, and other assistance. Recipients of federal funds range from state and local agencies, to nonprofits and organizations. Title VI covers a recipient’s entire program or activity. This means all parts of a recipient’s operations are covered, even if only one part of a recipient’s organization receives the federal assistance. Simply put, any organization that receives federal financial assistance is required to follow this Executive Order.

The City of Battle Creek receives funds from the US Department of Transportation via the Federal Highway Administration.

The US Department of Transportation published *Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients’ responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Person* in the December 14th, 2005 Federal Register.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Guidance implies that the City of Battle Creek is an organization that must follow this guidance:

This guidance applies to all DOT funding recipients, which include state departments of transportation, state motor vehicle administrations, airport operators, metropolitan planning organizations, and regional, state, and local transit operators, among many others. Coverage extends to a recipient’s entire program or activity, i.e.. to all parts of a recipient’s operations.

This is true even if only one part of the recipient receives the Federal assistance. For example, if DOT provides assistance to a state department of transportation to rehabilitate a particular highway on the National Highway System, all of the operations of the entire state department of transportation—not just the particular highway program or project—are covered by the DOT guidance.

Elements of an Effective LEP Policy

The US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division has developed a set of elements that may be helpful in designing an LEP policy or plan. These elements include:

1. Identifying LEP persons who need language assistance
2. Identifying ways in which language assistance will be provided
3. Training Staff
4. Providing notice to LEP persons
5. The recommended method of evaluating accessibility to available transportation services is the Four-Factor Analysis identified by the USDOT.

These recommended plan elements have been incorporated into this plan.

Methodology for Assessing Needs and Reasonable Steps for an Effective LEP Policy

The DOT guidance outlines four factors recipients should apply to the various kinds of contacts they have with the public to assess language needs and decide what reasonable steps they should take to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to the LEP Community.
4. The resources available to the City of Battle Creek and overall cost.

The greater the number or proportion of eligible LEP persons, the greater the frequency with which they have contact with a program, activity, or service and the greater the importance of that program, activity, or service, the more likely enhanced language services will be needed. The intent of DOT's guidance is to suggest a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on small organizations and local governments.

Smaller recipients with more limited budgets are typically not expected to provide the same level of language service as larger recipients with larger budgets.

The DOT guidance is modeled after the Department of Justice’s guidance and requires recipients and sub-recipients to take steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities to LEP persons. More information for recipients and sub-recipients can be found at <http://www.lep.gov>.

The Four-Factor Analysis

This plan uses the recommended four-factor analysis of an individualized assessment considering the four factors outlined above. Each of the following factors is examined to determine the level and extent of language assistance measures required to sufficiently ensure meaningful access to City of Battle Creek services and activities that may affect their quality of life. Recommendations are then based on the results of the analysis.

Factor 1: The Proportion, Numbers and Distribution of LEP Persons

The Census Bureau has a range for four classifications of how well people speak English. The classifications are: ‘very well,’ ‘well,’ ‘not well,’ and ‘not at all.’ For our planning purposes, we are considering people that speak English less than ‘very well’ as Limited English Proficient persons.

As seen in Table #1, the Census 2015 Data for the City of Battle Creek shows that 3,964 (8.2%) of individuals in the City speak a language other than English; of those individuals, 1,278 (2.7%) have identified themselves as speaking English less than ‘very well’. Of those individuals, there are 609 (1.3%) individuals in the Spanish language group, 21 (0.0%) people in the Other Indo-European languages group, 640 (1.3%) residents in the Asian and Pacific Islander languages group, and 8 (0.0%) people whose native language is not English (“Other” language group).

TABLE #1

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	# of Individuals	Percentage
Population 5 years and over	48,089	
English only	44,125	91.8%
Language other than English	3,964	8.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	1,278	2.7%
Spanish	2,350	4.9%
Speak English less than "very well"	609	1.3%
Other Indo-European languages	359	0.7%
Speak English less than "very well"	21	0.0%
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	1,182	2.5%
Speak English less than "very well"	640	1.3%
Other languages	73	0.2%
Speak English less than "very well"	8	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder website
 DP02: SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE UNITED STATES

Factor 2: Frequency of Contact with LEP Individuals

The City has conducted an informal survey of our employees with regard to whether they have had encounters with LEP individuals in the performance of their job functions and found that they have had encounters with LEP individuals. We have offices accessible to the public and therefore accessible to LEP individuals. We also have staff that work in the field that could encounter LEP individuals. Additionally, regular Commission meetings are held twice every month, which would potentially bring LEP individuals to these meetings. Given the number of LEP individuals, as displayed in Table #1 (above), the probability of our employees to encounter an LEP individual is moderate.

Factor 3: The Nature and Importance of the Program, Activity, or Service to LEP

The City of Battle Creek serves individuals throughout the City in a variety of ways including managing roads, water, sewer, police, fire, elections, and other services to residents and other individuals, such as visitors and those traversing the state. The nature of the services that the City provides is very important to an individual's day-to-day life. Therefore the denial of services to an LEP individual could have a significant detrimental effect. Given the number of LEP individuals in the City, we will ensure accessibility to all of our programs, services, and activities.

Factor 4: The Resources Available to the City of Battle Creek and Overall Cost

US Department of Transportation Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons published in the Federal Register: December 14, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 239) states:

"A recipient's level of resources and the costs imposed may have an impact on the nature of the steps it should take in providing meaningful access for LEP persons. Smaller recipients with more limited budgets are not expected to provide the same level of language services as larger recipients with larger budgets. In addition, "reasonable steps" may cease to be reasonable where the costs imposed substantially exceed the benefits. Recipients should carefully explore the most cost-effective means of delivering competent and accurate language services before limiting services due to resource concerns."

Based on this guidance, we have reviewed our resources and deemed that given the high concentration of LEP individuals in our City, upon request, we will translate our vital documents into the language requested to ensure accessibility.

Although there will not be a fixed amount allocated from our yearly budget for the translation of documents, the cost associated with the necessary translation of document in order to comply with LEP requirements will be allocated on an as-needed basis.

Safe Harbor Stipulation

Federal law provides a “Safe Harbor” situation so that recipients can ensure with greater certainty that they comply with their obligation to provide written translations in languages other than English. A “Safe Harbor” means that if a recipient provides written translation in certain circumstances, such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient’s written-translation obligations under Title VI.

The failure to provide written translations under the circumstances does not mean there is non-compliance, but rather provides a guide for recipients that would like greater certainty of compliance than can be provided by a fact-intensive, four factor analysis. For example, even if a Safe Harbor is not used, if written translation of a certain document(s) would be so burdensome as to defeat the legitimate objectives of its program, it is not necessary. Other ways of providing meaningful access, such as effective oral interpretation of certain vital documents, might be acceptable under such circumstances.

Strong evidence of compliance with the recipient’s written translation obligations under “Safe Harbor” includes providing written translations of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes 5% or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally.

This “Safe Harbor” provision applies to the translation of written documents only. It does not affect the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and are reasonable.

Given that the number of LEP individuals in the City is above the Safe Harbor threshold, written translations of vital documents will be made upon request, or oral interpretation can be provided. The City of Battle Creek will translate all vital documents, which may include but not be limited to: the complaint form, complaint procedures, and all public meeting notices.

Providing Notice to LEP Persons

USDOT LEP guidance says:

Once an agency has decided, based on the four factors, that it will provide language service, it is important that the recipient notify LEP persons of services available free of charge. Recipients should provide this notice in languages LEP persons would understand.

The guidance provides several examples of notification including:

1. Signage, in languages that an LEP individual would understand that free language assistance is available with advance notice.
2. Stating in outreach documents that free language services are available from the agency.
3. Working with community-based organizations and other stakeholders to inform LEP individuals of the recipient's services, including the availability of language assistance services.

Statements in languages that an LEP individual would understand will be placed in public information and public notices informing LEP individuals that those requiring language assistance and/or special accommodations will be provided the requested service free of charge, with reasonable advance notice to the City of Battle Creek.

Options and Proposed Actions

Options:

Federal fund recipients have two (2) main ways to provide language services: oral interpretation either in person or via telephone interpretation service and written translation. The correct mix should be based on what is both necessary and reasonable in light of the four-factor analysis.^{iv}

The City of Battle Creek is defining an interpreter as a person who translates spoken language orally, as opposed to a translator, who translates written language or who transfers the meaning of written text from one language into another. The person who translates orally is not a translator, but an interpreter.^v

Due to limited financial resources, it is necessary to limit language aid to the most basic and cost-effective services. However, when requested, appropriate assistance will be provided.

What the City of Battle Creek will do. What actions will the City of Battle Creek take?

- Notify the public that interpreter services are available upon request, with seven-day advance notice.
- With advance notice of seven calendar days, the City will provide interpreter services at public meetings, including language translation and signage for the hearing impaired.

- The City will utilize the *Translators Resource List* as provided by MDOT for translation services and verbal interpretation.
- The Census Bureau “I-speak” Language Identification Card will be distributed to all employees that may potentially encounter LEP individuals.
- Once the LEP individual’s language has been identified, an agency from the *Translators Resource List* will be contacted to provide interpretation services.
- Publications of the City’s complaint form will be made available online and upon request.
- In the event that a City employee encounters a LEP individual, they will follow the procedure listed below:

OFFICE ENCOUNTER

1. Provide an I-speak language identification card to determine the language spoken by the LEP individual.
2. Once the foreign language is determined, provide information to Title VI Coordinator who will contact an interpreter from MDOT’s *Translators Resource List*.
3. If the need is for a document to be translated, the Title VI Coordinator will have the document translated and provided to the requestor as soon as possible.

ROAD ENCOUNTER

1. Road crew employee will immediately contact the Title VI Coordinator for assistance, and provide an I-speak language identification card to the LEP individual to determine the language spoken by the individual.
2. Once the foreign language is determined, provide information to Title VI Coordinator who will contact an interpreter from MDOT’s *Translators Resource List* to provide telephonic interpretation.
3. If the need is for a document to be translated, the Title VI Coordinator will have the document translated and provided to the requestor as soon as possible.

IN WRITING

1. Once a letter has been received it will be immediately forwarded to the Title VI Coordinator.
2. The Title VI Coordinator will contact a translator from the MDOT’s *Translators Resource List* to determine the specifics of the letter request information.

3. The Title VI Coordinator will work with the selected agency to provide the requested service to the individual in a timely manner.

OVER THE PHONE

1. If someone calls into our office speaking another language, every attempt will be made to keep that individual on the line until an interpreter can be conferenced into the line, and if possible, determine the language spoken by the caller.
2. Once the language spoken by the caller has been identified, we will proceed with providing the requested assistance to the LEP individual.

The City of Battle Creek's Staff Training

The City of Battle Creek's staff will be provided training on the requirements for providing meaningful access to services for LEP persons.

LEP Plan Access

A copy of the LEP plan document can be requested at the City of Battle Creek's main office during normal business hours and the City of Battle Creek will make the plan available on the website at www.battlecreekmi.gov. Any person or agency may also request a copy by contacting:

Ted Dearing
Assistant City Manager
10 North Division Street
Suite 206
Battle Creek, MI 49015
Phone: (269) 966-3378
Fax: (269) 966-6654
Email: tedearing@battlecreekmi.gov

i The executive order verbatim can be found online at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/Pubs/colep.htm>.

ii Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons. Federal Register: December 14, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 239)

iii The DOT has also posted an abbreviated version of this guidance on their website at: <http://www.civilrights.dot.gov/civil-rights-awareness-enforcement/language-assistance>

iv <http://www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/asp/lcp/asp>

v Department of Justice Final LEP Guidelines. Federal Register June 18, 2002-Vol. 67-Number 117.