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Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, U.S. Senate

November 2005

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Better Dissemination and Oversight of DOT's Guidance Could Lead to Improved Access for Limited English-Proficient Populations

G A O

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GAO-06-52

November 2005

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-06-52, a report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

More than 10 million people in the United States are of limited English proficiency (LEP), in that they do not speak English at all or do not speak English well. These persons tend to rely on public transit more than English speakers. Executive Order 13166 directs federal agencies to develop guidance for their grantees on making their services accessible to LEP persons. The Department of Transportation (DOT) issued its guidance in 2001, with revised guidance pending issuance. This report reviews (1) the language access services transit agencies and metropolitan planning organizations have provided, and the effects and costs of these services; (2) how DOT assists its grantees in providing language access services; and (3) how DOT monitors its grantees' provision of these services.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of DOT (1) ensure that DOT's revised LEP guidance is directly distributed to all DOT grantees; (2) consider providing additional assistance to grantees in providing language access; and (3) more fully incorporate the revised guidance in current review processes, and establish consistent norms for what constitutes a language access deficiency.

DOT generally concurred with the findings and recommendations in this report.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-52.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Kate Siggerud at (202) 512-2834 or siggerudk@gao.gov.

Translated report summaries are available in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean at www.gao.gov/special.pubs/translations.

What GAO Found

Transit agencies and metropolitan planning organizations provide a variety of language access services, predominantly in Spanish, but the effects and costs of these services are largely unknown. Types of services provided included, among other things, translated brochures and signs; multilingual telephone lines; bilingual drivers; and interpreters at public meetings. However, few agencies we visited had conducted an assessment of the language needs in their service areas, or had conducted an evaluation of their language access efforts. As a result, it is unclear whether agencies' efforts are comprehensive enough to meet the needs of LEP persons, and community groups in the areas we visited saw important gaps in agencies' services. In addition, although those costs are largely unknown, several agencies saw providing language access as a cost of doing business, not as an additional cost. However, if efforts were to be expanded to include additional services or languages, agency officials told us that costs could become prohibitive.

DOT assists grantees in providing language access through its guidance and other activities, but DOT has made limited efforts to ensure that grantees are aware of the available assistance, which was not often accessed by the agencies we visited. This assistance includes DOT's guidance—which provides a five-step framework for how to provide meaningful language access—as well as workshops and peer-exchange programs that include language access practices, and training courses that touch on language issues. DOT also participates in a federal LEP clearinghouse, www.lep.gov. However, few agencies we visited had accessed these resources. Several local officials stated that easily accessible training and assistance specific to language access and examples of how to implement DOT's guidance could help them more effectively provide access to LEP populations.

Transit agencies' and metropolitan planning organizations' provision of language access services are monitored through in-depth civil rights compliance reviews and two broader reviews—triennial reviews of transit agencies and planning certification reviews. However, these reviews do not have consistent criteria for determining whether an agency is deficient in providing such services. Furthermore, these reviews do not fully reflect Executive Order 13166 or DOT's guidance. Without thorough and consistent monitoring that takes into account the guidance, local agencies' language access activities will likely remain varied and inconsistent.

Examples of Translated Signs in Orange County, California

Source: Orange County Transportation Authority.

Contents

Letter

1

Results in Brief 6
Background 9
Several Types of Language Access Services Are Provided, but Little Is Known about the Effects and Costs of Services 12
DOT Assists Grantees on Language Access Services through Its Guidance and Other Activities, but These Resources Are Not Often Accessed by Local Agencies 38
Three Review Processes Provide Limited Monitoring of Language Access Activities, and Criteria for Finding a Deficiency Are Inconsistent 47
Conclusions 54
Recommendations for Executive Action 56
Agency Comments 57

Appendixes

Appendix I: Scope and Methodology 59

Appendix II: Resources Available on Providing Language Access for Transportation Services 67
Provision of Language Access Services 67
Community Involvement in Transportation Planning 69

Appendix III: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments 70

Tables

Table 1: FTA and FHWA Reviews 47
Table 2: Language Access Deficiencies Found through Title VI Compliance Reviews 49
Table 3: Results of the Pilot LEP Review of the Brownsville Urban System in Texas 51
Table 4: Census Data on Language Ability and Transit Use for Seven Site Visit Locations 59
Table 5: Transit Agencies, MPOs, and Community and Advocacy Groups Interviewed 62

Figures

Figure 1: LEP Population in 2000, by County 2
Figure 2: Percentage Growth of LEP Populations between 1990 and 2000, by County 3

Figure 3: Percentage of Transit Agencies and MPOs We Visited That Make These Types of Language Access Services Available in at Least Spanish 14
Figure 4: English and Spanish Versions of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Rider's Guide 17
Figure 5: Seven-Language Bus Stop Sign in Oakland, California 20
Figure 6: Meeting Notice Posted on a Bus in San Francisco, California, in English and Chinese 22
Figure 7: Posters in Orange County, California, in English and Spanish 23
Figure 8: Golden Gate Transit's Spanish Phrase Guide for Drivers 25
Figure 9: Spanish Version of the Ozark Regional Transit's Web Site Home Page 29

Abbreviations

DOJ	Department of Justice
DOT	Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
LEP	limited English proficiency
MPO	metropolitan planning organization
NHI	National Highway Institute
NTI	National Transit Institute

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Accountability * Integrity * Reliability

United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

November 2, 2005

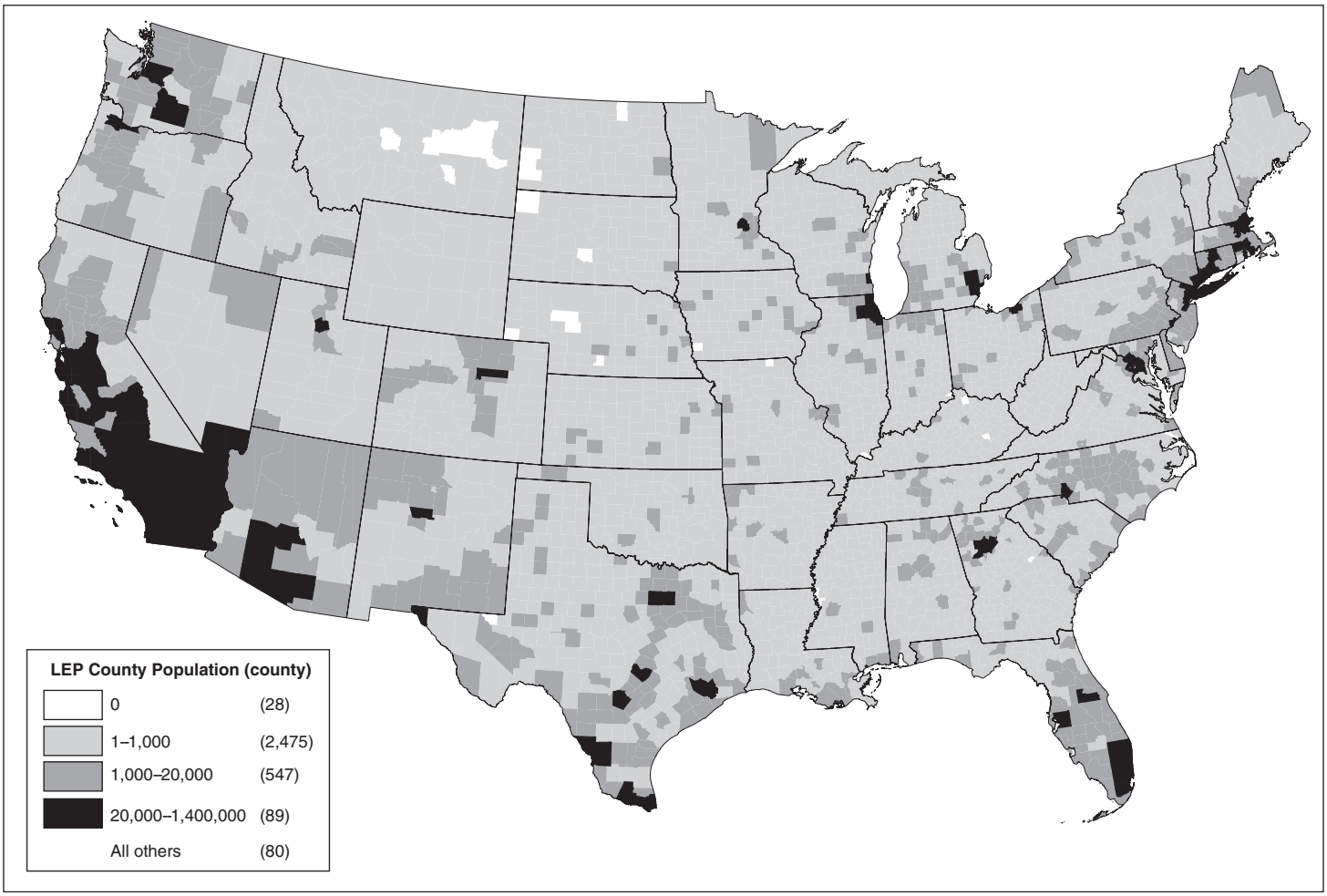
The Honorable Paul S. Sarbanes
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
United States Senate

Dear Senator Sarbanes:

The United States has a highly diverse population representing cultures from all over the world. English is not the primary language of many people living in the United States, and significant numbers have little or no English skills. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, more than 10 million people reported that they do not speak English at all, or do not speak English well. These persons of limited English proficiency (LEP), like English speakers, may depend on government for a wide range of services, including public transportation. For many LEP persons, public transit is a key means of achieving mobility. According to the 2000 Census, more than 11 percent of LEP persons aged 16 years and over reported using public transit as their primary means of transportation to work, compared with about 4 percent of English speakers.

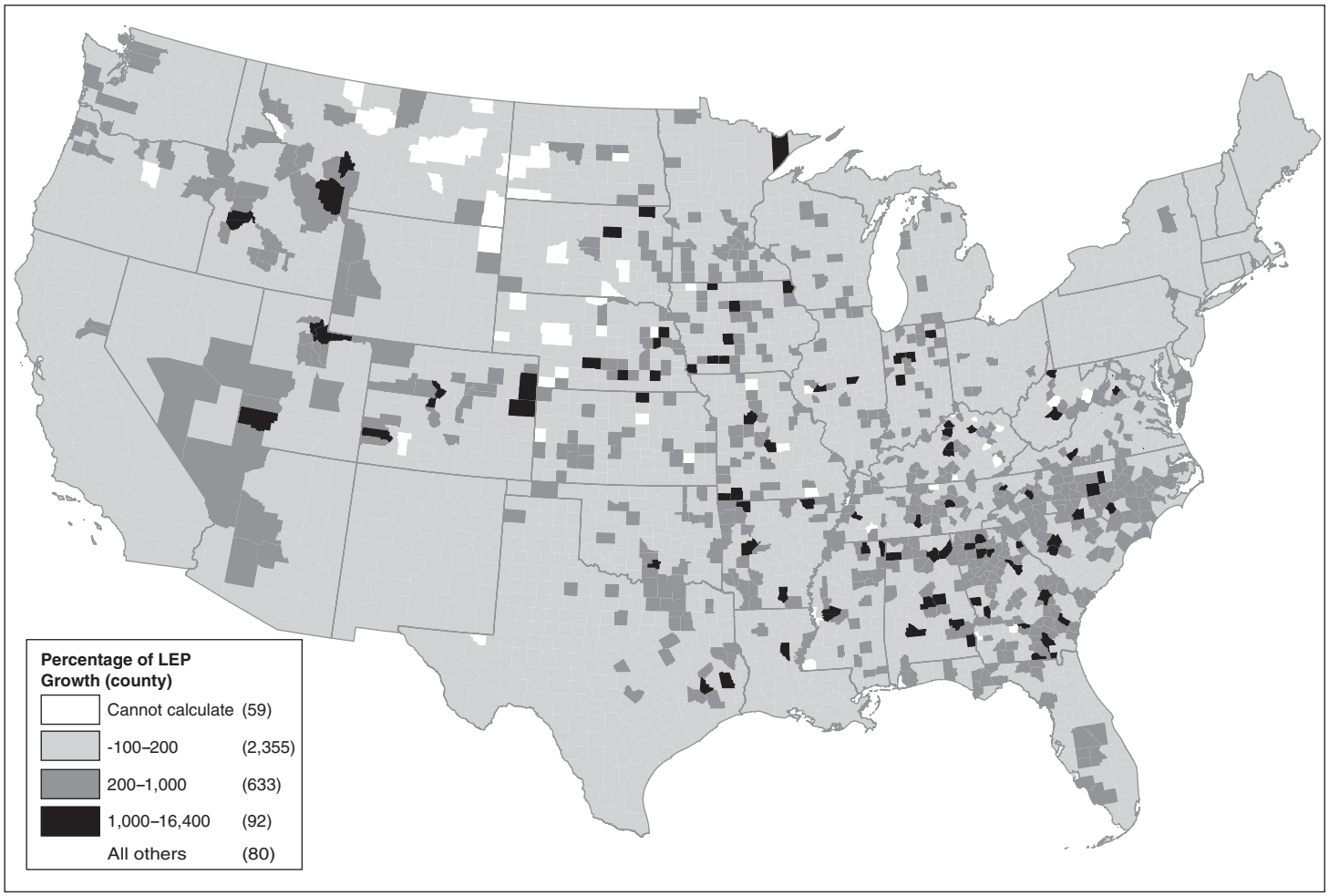
The number of persons reporting that they do not speak English at all or do not speak English well grew by 65 percent from 1990 to 2000. As figures 1 and 2 demonstrate, while LEP populations tend to be largest in counties in border and coastal states, the largest growth in these populations is occurring in the Midwest and the South. Among limited English speakers, Spanish is the language most frequently spoken, followed by Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), Vietnamese, and Korean.

Figure 1: LEP Population in 2000, by County



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

Figure 2: Percentage Growth of LEP Populations between 1990 and 2000, by County



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964[1] prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Executive Order 13166, which was signed by President

[1]42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.

Clinton in 2000,[2] sought to clarify the responsibilities of federal agencies and their grant recipients under Title VI to make their programs and activities accessible to LEP populations, and it required federal agencies to issue guidance to their funding recipients to avoid discriminating on the basis of national origin. The Department of Transportation (DOT) issued guidance in 2001, which discusses strategies for providing services to LEP persons, based on guidelines put forth by the Department of Justice (DOJ). This guidance, while in effect for grantees since 2001, was subsequently revised by DOT after public comments were received on it. The revised guidance was approved by DOJ on August 25, 2005, and DOT is preparing to publish and release this revised guidance.

Advocacy organizations and others have raised concerns over the extent to which DOT's guidance to its funding recipients is being implemented. A lack of English skills has the potential to hinder many LEP persons from fully utilizing public transit services and meaningfully participating in the transportation planning process. The inability to effectively access public transit services can result in an array of harmful consequences for LEP persons, including a reduction in employment opportunities, increased difficulty in accessing other needed services, the perpetuation of social isolation, and the diminishment of overall quality of life. In light of these issues, this report discusses (1) the types of language access services that transit agencies and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) have provided to the LEP populations in their service areas, and the effects and costs of these services; (2) how DOT and its modal administrations assist grantees in providing language access services for LEP populations; and (3) how DOT and the responsible modal administrations monitor grantees' provision of language access services for LEP populations.

To determine the types of language access services that transit agencies and MPOs provided to LEP populations, we visited seven metropolitan statistical areas[3] in Arkansas, California, Illinois, North Carolina, and

[2]Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." 65 Fed. Reg. 50121 (Aug. 16, 2000).

[3]A metropolitan statistical area is a core area containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities, having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. Metropolitan statistical areas comprise one or more entire counties. The Office of Management and Budget defines metropolitan statistical areas for the purposes of collecting, tabulating, and publishing federal data. Metropolitan statistical area definitions result from applying published standards to U.S. Census Bureau data.

Texas.[4] We used census data to select these site visit locations on the basis of the size, proportion, and growth of the LEP population, the number of languages spoken, and the extent of public transit use.[5] We conducted semistructured interviews with officials from 20 transit agencies, 7 MPOs, and 16 community and advocacy groups and reviewed various documents and other information. We complemented these case studies and interviews with findings from a 2004 study, conducted for the New Jersey Department of Transportation, which included a survey of 32 transit agencies around the country, and surveys and focus groups with LEP persons in New Jersey.[6] To understand how DOT assists transit agencies and MPOs in providing language access services, we interviewed DOT officials with knowledge of the resources available on language access. We reviewed and analyzed the assistance provided by DOT as well as other federal resources related to language access. To document how DOT's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) monitor transit agencies' and MPOs' provision of language access services, we interviewed FTA officials responsible for Title VI compliance reviews and triennial reviews, FTA and FHWA officials responsible for planning certification reviews, and regional officials in the areas we visited. We reviewed the documentation and results of these three review processes and analyzed the extent to which language access is considered by the reviews and norms have been developed for reviewers to use in identifying deficiencies related to language access. Furthermore, we reviewed the status and outcomes of LEP complaints that were made to FTA against transit agencies and MPOs. We conducted our work from February 2005 through October 2005 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Appendix I contains more information about our scope and methodology.

[4]The metropolitan statistical areas we visited were as follows: (1) Los Angeles/Riverside/Orange County, California; (2) San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose, California; (3) Chicago/Gary/Kenosha, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin; (4) Austin/San Marcos, Texas; (5) Fayetteville/Springdale/Rogers, Arkansas; (6) Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and (7) Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point, North Carolina.

[5]We did not include in our site visits, areas that recently had in-depth reviews by FTA as well as agencies that had been highlighted in a recent report prepared for the New Jersey Department of Transportation, in order to broaden the limited amount of research and data available in this area.

[6]Dr. Rongfang (Rachel) Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Travelers in New Jersey* (December 2004). Dr. Liu prepared this study for the New Jersey Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all transit agencies or to all LEP persons.

Results in Brief

Transit agencies and MPOs provided a variety of types and levels of language access services, predominantly in Spanish, with the effects and costs of these services largely unknown, although the cost burden of these services currently does not seem significant. The types of language access that these agencies provided included a wide variety of communication strategies, such as translated information brochures and signs, multilingual telephone services, translated Web sites, bilingual drivers and customer service staff, translated recorded announcements, and interpreters at public and community meetings. Almost all of the 27 transit agencies and MPOs we visited provided some materials and services in at least one language other than English, typically Spanish, although few agencies we visited regularly provided much material or service in other languages. For example, although most of the transit agencies we visited had at least Spanish-speaking operators available through their telephone information lines, only 7 transit agencies utilized multilingual telephone lines to provide service in languages other than English and Spanish. The effects of the language access services provided by transit agencies and MPOs on meeting the needs of LEP communities are not well known or understood. Few agencies we visited had conducted an explicit assessment of the needs of the LEP communities in their service areas, or an evaluation of the effectiveness of their language access efforts, even though DOT's LEP guidance recommends such activities. As a result, it is unclear whether those agencies' language access activities are comprehensive enough to meet the needs of LEP persons, and community and advocacy groups in the areas we visited perceived important gaps in agencies' language access activities. For example, 1 group told us that information on service changes is not consistently provided in languages other than English, which can result in LEP individuals waiting for buses that were rerouted. Furthermore, our case studies suggested that a lack of proactive agency outreach and publicizing of agency services to LEP communities may limit the impact and utilization of the materials and services provided, whereas more proactive agency outreach and publicizing to these communities might result in increased utilization of the services and benefits, such as enhanced public support for the agency and increased ridership. For example, although several transit agencies provided multilingual telephone services, community groups we spoke with often were not aware of the existence of such services. While costs related to providing language access services are largely unknown, we found that several agencies perceive providing language access as a cost of doing business, not as an additional cost, at the current level of activity. However, if the agencies were to significantly expand their efforts to include additional languages

beyond English and Spanish, additional materials, or additional services, agency officials told us that costs could become prohibitive.

DOT and its modal administrations assist grantees in providing language access through DOT's guidance and other activities, but they have made limited efforts to ensure that grantees are aware of this available assistance, which was not often accessed by the transit agencies and MPOs we visited. The most extensive assistance DOT provides is the LEP guidance itself, which provides grantees with a five-step framework for how to provide meaningful access to LEP populations, along with some information on how to implement such a framework. DOT's LEP guidance was published in the *Federal Register*, but was not publicized through any other direct methods, and the majority of transit agencies and MPOs we visited were not aware of it. In part, this lack of awareness may be due to staff turnover within agencies since the initial release of the guidance, although a DOT official told us that they have done little to promote the guidance since its release. Of the 9 transit agencies and 3 MPOs we visited that were aware of the guidance, only 3 had changed their language access activities in response to it, and only 1 transit agency appeared to have fully implemented the five-step framework. In part, this is because most transit agencies and MPOs told us that they already had been providing language access services for many years prior to the executive order and DOT's LEP guidance. In addition, FTA and FHWA have given workshops at a few annual conferences that specifically addressed the framework in the guidance and provided information on how to implement portions of it, but few agencies we visited had reported attending these workshops. DOT also participates in the Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency, which provides information and technical assistance to federal grantees through an on-line clearinghouse at http://www.lep.gov, although most of the Web site's information is not specific to transportation. Other DOT resources, such as peer-exchange programs hosted by FTA and FHWA, have a few postings that discuss language access activities. Training curricula offered through FTA's National Transit Institute and FHWA's National Highway Institute touch on language access services through a broader context, such as the transportation planning process, and not all of these curricula specifically mention the guidance. Several transit agencies and MPOs we visited stated that better training and technical assistance that is easily accessible and specific to language access and on how to implement DOT's LEP guidance could provide them with ways to more effectively provide access to LEP populations.

Transit agencies' and MPOs' provision of language access services for LEP populations is monitored through FTA's in-depth Title VI compliance reviews and two broader reviews—FTA's triennial reviews of transit agencies and planning certification reviews conducted jointly by FTA and FHWA. However, these reviews do not assess grantees' activities according to the framework in DOT's guidance and do not have consistent criteria for determining whether an agency is deficient in providing such services. While the framework and suggestions contained in DOT's LEP guidance are not requirements, they serve as a useful guide for ensuring that grantees' provision of language access services to LEP persons is in compliance with federal requirements under Title VI. However, the Title VI compliance reviews and the planning certification reviews do not incorporate the LEP guidance, and the triennial reviews have only a few specific questions referencing the LEP guidance. Deficiencies regarding language access, to the extent they exist, are rarely identified during these review processes. Furthermore, the criteria that are used in these review processes to identify a deficiency in providing language access services are inconsistent and unclear. For example, under triennial reviews, a deficiency is only determined if a complaint has been made against the local agency, although under the other reviews, a complaint need not be made for a deficiency to be found. As a result, what constitutes a deficiency under one review may not constitute a deficiency under another, although agencies under review may be providing the same level of service. In addition to the three review processes, FTA investigates Title VI complaints filed by the public alleging national origin discrimination against LEP persons. FTA's investigations focus on whether a recipient has taken reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to LEP persons. To date, FTA has received only one complaint related to language access. In that case, FTA found that the agency under question should have provided language access to its planning process. Without more thorough and consistent monitoring that takes into account DOT's guidance, agencies' language access activities are likely to remain varied and inconsistent and may leave agencies open to further complaints.

We are making recommendations in this report that the Secretary of Transportation take actions to ensure that DOT grantees are made fully aware of the agency's LEP guidance and their related responsibilities, that transit agencies and MPOs are provided with useful assistance in developing and improving their language access services, and that mechanisms are in place for clear and consistent oversight and monitoring of transit agencies' and MPOs' language access activities. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOT generally concurred with the findings and

recommendations and offered a number of technical comments, which were incorporated as appropriate.

Background

The statutory and regulatory framework for improving access to services for LEP persons stems from Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964,[7] an executive order, DOJ regulations and guidance, and DOT regulations and guidance. Section 601 of Title VI provides that no person shall "on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."[8] Section 602 of Title VI directs federal agencies to implement section 601 of the act by issuing rules, regulations, or orders.[9] In its efforts to implement section 601, DOJ has issued regulations that bar unjustified disparate impact on the basis of national origin.[10]

On August 11, 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13166 to improve access to federally conducted and federally assisted programs and activities for persons who, as a result of national origin, are limited in their English proficiency.[11] The order encouraged all federal agencies to take steps to ensure that any recipients of federal financial assistance under their purview provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries. The order further requires that each federal agency providing federal financial assistance to prepare guidance specifically tailored to its recipients. The agencies' guidance must then be reviewed and approved by DOJ before being issued.

[7]42 U.S.C. § 2000d et. seq.

[8]42 U.S.C. § 2000d.

[9]42 U.S.C. § 2000d-1.

[10]Disparate impact claims involve practices that are facially neutral in their treatment of different groups but that, in fact, fall more harshly on one group than another and cannot be justified by business necessity. *Raytheon Co. v. Hernandez*, 540 U.S. 44 (2003). Under the disparate impact theory of discrimination, a facially neutral practice may be deemed illegally discriminatory without evidence of subjective intent to discriminate, which is required in disparate-treatment cases.

[11]65 Fed. Reg. 50121.

DOJ released guidance[12] in 2000 that set forth general principles for federal agencies to apply to ensure that their programs and activities provide reasonable access to LEP persons and, thus, do not discriminate on the basis of national origin. The DOJ guidance explains that, with respect to federally assisted programs and activities, Executive Order 13166 "does not create new obligations, but rather, clarifies existing Title VI responsibilities." Although Title VI and its implementing regulations require that recipients take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons, federal agencies' LEP guidance recognize that each situation is fact-specific, and that it would not make sense for the guidance to mandate specific approaches to comply with Title VI. Rather, the purpose of federal agencies' guidance is to provide recipients with a framework for assessing their obligations under Title VI, while maintaining flexibility for the recipients to determine how best to comply with those obligations. Thus, the guidance outlines steps federal-funds recipients can take to avoid administering programs in a way that results in discrimination on the basis of national origin, which would be in violation of Title VI regulations.[13] In general, the test for assessing the existence of national origin discrimination on the basis of language under Title VI is to determine whether the failure to provide a service in a language that a recipient understands will prevent the recipient from receiving essentially the same level of service benefit as an English speaker.

[12]65 Fed. Reg. 50123. Additionally, DOJ developed its own guidance document for its funding recipients, which was initially issued on January 16, 2001. 66 Fed. Reg. 3834. Revised guidance was issued on June 18, 2002, after revising the guidance to reflect public comments. 67 Fed. Reg. 41455.

[13]In *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974), the Supreme Court interpreted regulations similar to the DOJ regulations, and held that Title VI prohibits conduct that has a disproportionate effect on LEP persons because such conduct constitutes national-origin discrimination. The Court held that a San Francisco school district that had a significant number of non-English-speaking students of Chinese origin was required to take reasonable steps to provide them with a meaningful opportunity to participate in federally funded educational programs. In *Alexander v. Sandoval*, 532 U.S. 275 (2001), a non-English-speaking applicant for a driver's license brought a lawsuit challenging Alabama's requirement that driver's license examinations be conducted only in the English language. The plaintiff claimed that this violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by discriminating against non-English speakers on the basis of their national origin. Without addressing the merits of the claim, the Supreme Court held that a private individual was not entitled to file a lawsuit to enforce DOJ regulations on disparate impact under Title VI. DOJ has emphasized that the Court did not invalidate its regulations under Title VI or Executive Order 13166, and that those remain in force. See the October 26, 2001, Memorandum for Heads of Departments and Agencies General Counsels and Civil Rights Directors from Ralph F. Boyd, Jr., Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division.

DOJ's guidance established a four-factor analysis to help determine the extent of a funding recipient's obligation to provide LEP services. These four factors are (1) the number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or grantee; (2) the frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with the program; (3) the nature and importance to people's lives of the program, activity, or service provided by the grantee; and (4) the resources available to the grantee and costs. According to DOJ, the intent of the analysis is to suggest a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services, while not imposing undue burdens on small businesses, local governments, or nonprofits.

DOT issued its guidance in 2001. This guidance was generally consistent with DOJ's guidance but included three additional factors, as well as the four factors previously outlined, suggesting that funding recipients should also consider (1) the level of services provided to fully English-proficient people; (2) whether LEP persons are being excluded from services, or are being provided a lower level of services; and (3) whether the agency has adequate justification for restrictions, if any, on special language services. The guidance states that such restrictions would be accepted only in rare circumstances. On the basis of public comments, DOT subsequently revised its guidance, and the revised guidance was approved by DOJ on August 25, 2005. DOT is currently preparing to publish and release its revised guidance.

In addition to describing factors that funding recipients should consider in assessing their obligations to provide LEP services, DOT's guidance outlines several key components to an effective language access program, stating that grantees should (1) conduct an assessment of the language groups within their service areas and the language needs of these groups; (2) develop and implement written plans outlining their strategies for ensuring access to services for LEP populations; (3) make staffs aware of the LEP access plan, and train the staffs and provide them with the tools necessary to carry out the plan; (4) ensure that language access services are actually provided in a consistent manner, and that LEP populations are aware of the services; and (5) develop monitoring programs that allow grantees to assess the success of their LEP access programs and to identify needed modifications. These five steps are designed to help DOT grantees ensure that they are not administering their programs in a way that results in discrimination in violation of Title VI.

Several offices within DOT, particularly the Office of Civil Rights within FTA, have responsibility for ensuring that transit operators and transportation planning entities receiving DOT funds are in compliance with Title VI and responsibility for monitoring and overseeing their language access activities.

Several Types of Language Access Services Are Provided, but Little Is Known about the Effects and Costs of Services

The types of language access services provided by the transit agencies and MPOs we visited included translated service brochures, multilingual telephone lines, translated Web sites, bilingual customer service staffs, and a host of other services. However, the effects and costs of these services are largely unknown. The extent of language access provided varied across the areas we visited during our case studies, and services provided often varied across agencies within the same metropolitan area. Almost all of the transit agencies and MPOs we visited provided at least some language access services in Spanish, the largest LEP language group, and some agencies provided services in other languages. Little is known about the effects of these services on improving access to public transportation and the transportation planning and decision-making process for LEP populations, but community and advocacy groups in the areas we visited identified several gaps in the language access services provided by agencies, such as a lack of awareness in the community about the services available. Given such problems, community groups told us that more proactive agency outreach to LEP communities to determine specific needs and advertise existing services might improve the effectiveness of language access services, whereas a lack of outreach and poor publicizing of available services could likely reduce the impact and utilization of the materials and services provided. One agency cited the positive benefits it received by improving its outreach to non-English-speaking populations, including increased ridership and enhanced public support for the agency. Little is also known about the costs of providing such services, and most agencies saw the language access they provide as a cost of doing business as opposed to an additional cost; however, agencies told us that costs could become prohibitive if services were substantially expanded or provided in several additional languages.

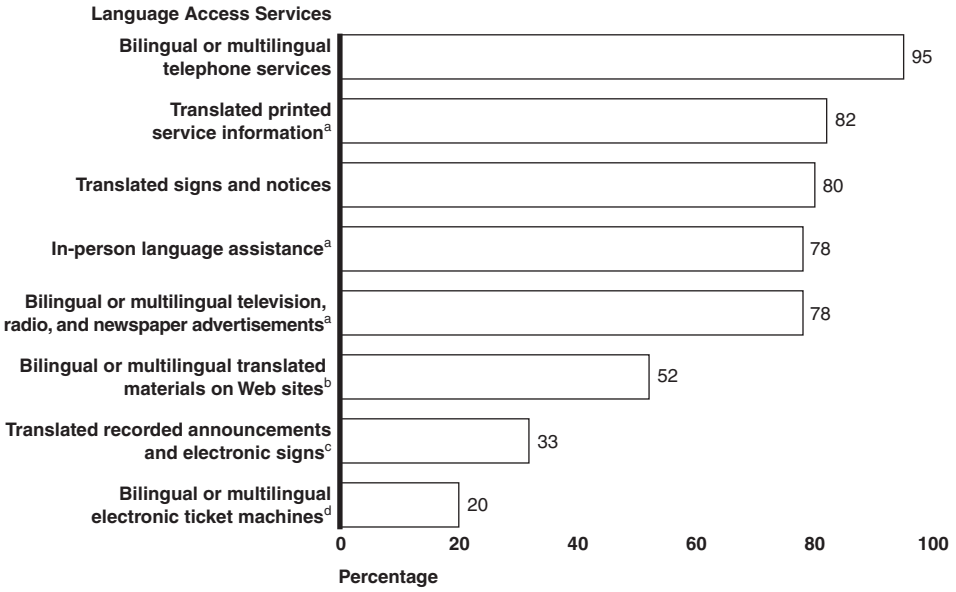
Types and Level of Language Access Services Varied, Although Core Services Are Offered in Spanish by Most Agencies We Visited

During our case studies, we found that providing language access to LEP populations can be incorporated into all of the different ways in which transit agencies and MPOs communicate with the public, not only regarding the transportation services they provide but regarding how agencies provide LEP communities with access to the transportation planning and decision-making process. Transit riders and potential transit riders may need a variety of different types of information to plan their trips, use the transit system, and participate in the transportation planning and decision-making process. For example, potential riders may need to know about the existence of available services, destinations, and travel options, and about time schedules, route options, and transfer policies. When in the transit system, riders may need to know where stops are located, whether service changes have occurred, about available fare and payment options, and about emergency and safety information. Riders may also need confirmation that they are on the right route or are exiting at the correct stop. To participate in the transportation planning and decision-making process, individuals need to know how the process works, what is the purpose and effect of their participation, and when and where public meetings are being held, in addition to needing to be able to understand the proceedings of public meetings and to make statements and participate in those discussions.

To provide such access to LEP populations, transit agencies and MPOs employed a host of different communication strategies, including the following: providing bilingual or multilingual telephone services; translating written materials; translating signs or notices posted at stations, at stops, or on vehicles; providing in-person language assistance through drivers, interpreters, or multilingual customer service staffs; advertising in other languages on television, on radio, or in newspapers; translating materials on their Web sites; translating recorded announcements or electronic signs; or making ticket machines accessible in other languages. In providing language access, the agencies in each of the areas we visited faced different challenges. In North Carolina and northwest Arkansas, agencies are facing a substantial recent growth in the size of the Spanish-speaking population. (See app. I for more information on the size and growth of LEP populations in these two areas.) In parts of California—the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles and Orange County areas—and in Chicago, Illinois, the predominance of a number of Asian and other language groups, in addition to a large percentage of Spanish-speakers, presents further challenges. Agencies in Austin, Texas, have also experienced growth in Asian languages spoken in the area. Figure 3 shows the percentages of the transit agencies and MPOs we visited that provided

services in at least Spanish for each of these communication strategies. However, in some cases, agencies may not utilize these communication strategies, even in English, and these agencies are not included in the percentage calculation.

Figure 3: Percentage of Transit Agencies and MPOs We Visited That Make These Types of Language Access Services Available in at Least Spanish



Source: GAO analysis of site visit data.

Note: Some agencies provide information and services in other languages, in addition to English and Spanish. We visited 20 transit agencies during our site visits.

[a]Included in this percentage are 20 transit agencies and 7 MPOs.

[b]Included in this percentage are 20 transit agencies and 7 MPOs. Four transit agencies and 1 MPO posted translated information to their Web sites without indication that the translated material was available.

[c]Included in this percentage are just the 12 transit agencies that have recorded announcements or electronic signs.

[d]Included in this percentage are just the 5 transit agencies that utilize electronic ticket machines.

The following sections discuss transit agency and MPO activities within each of the broad categories shown in figure 3, and highlight examples from the seven metropolitan statistical areas we visited. Following the discussion of these activities, we further discuss agencies' community

outreach activities related to LEP populations and to the community and advocacy groups that represent them.

Bilingual or Multilingual Telephone Services

All but 1 of the 20 transit agencies we visited had at least some telephone operators who were bilingual in English and Spanish, but the availability of telephone information in other languages varied. In contrast, a survey of 32 transit agencies conducted for the New Jersey Department of Transportation found that only one-half of responding agencies used multilingual telephone lines or bilingual or multilingual persons in call centers.[14] A few transit agencies we visited in highly diverse areas, such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, had operators fluent in other languages. For example:

- The Metropolitan Transportation Authority in Los Angeles and San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency have operators that speak Tagalog and Chinese.

- The Bay Area Rapid Transit has Chinese-speakers available in its call center.

In other cases, telephone services were not language accessible. For example, the San Francisco Bay Area's 511 traveler information line, which provides information on all of the transportation options available in the area, is currently only accessible in English.

Transit agencies in Chicago; Los Angeles; Orange County; and Greensboro, North Carolina, had access to a three-way call translation service in numerous languages. While this service is available through these agencies' general transit information lines, which are advertised on most agency materials, the fact that translation services are available through the three-way call service is not well publicized. Therefore, LEP persons may not be aware of these translation services. For example, representatives of a Chinese community center in Chicago were not aware that Chinese translators were available through the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority's language line, although those representatives said they often assist new Chinese immigrants in learning how to use the transit system. In addition, the New Jersey study found, through its surveys and focus groups with LEP persons, that awareness of the existence of the translation services available in New Jersey was very low, although the study found

[14]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 32.

such services to be valued by LEP persons.[15] Some community groups also pointed to the availability of bilingual or multilingual operators as one of the most critical and useful services that agencies can provide to LEP persons. Without such services, LEP persons must rely on family, friends, or other transit riders who speak their language to provide assistance.

Transit agencies told us that complaints in other languages could also be taken through their bilingual or multilingual telephone services; many agencies had received complaints in languages other than English, primarily in Spanish. However, specific complaints about language access were rare, with only 1 agency reporting such a complaint in relation to a rider's having trouble communicating with a driver.

In some areas we visited, other nontransportation agencies receiving federal financial assistance also had contracts for multilingual telephone translation services. Because those agencies also are subject to the executive order and federal agency LEP guidance, the existence of such contracts presents an opportunity for local agencies to coordinate in order to more efficiently provide such services. Few of the transit agencies or MPOs we visited had coordinated with any other nontransportation agencies in their service areas in this regard. However, in North Carolina, transit agencies in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, and Greensboro all have relationships with other city departments that can assist with language access needs, such as sharing bilingual operators.

Translated Printed Service Information

All but 2 of the 20 transit agencies we visited printed at least some schedules and maps, how-to-ride guides, applications for specialized transportation, or other service information materials in Spanish, and many transit agencies provided extensive amounts of printed materials in Spanish. (See fig. 4 for a sample of a translated service information brochure.) In addition, the New Jersey survey of 32 transit agencies found that two-thirds of responding agencies provided translated timetables and route maps.[16] However, officials at 3 transit agencies indicated that they often do not translate the language on maps and schedules because most of the information consists of numbers, which are universal.

[15]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 29.

[16]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 32.

Figure 4: English and Spanish Versions of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Rider's Guide

Source: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Seven transit agencies we visited also provided selected guides and maps in languages other than Spanish that are prevalent in their service areas, and 4 agencies are able to provide translated materials upon request. Some examples include the following:

- The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District in the San Francisco Bay Area regularly prints service information in Spanish and Chinese.

- Also in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Bay Area Rapid Transit's rider's guide is printed in Spanish and Chinese.

- On request, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority can provide information in several other languages, although the agency acknowledged that such requests were very rare. The agency also produced informational brochures in Chinese to advertise the opening of its Gold Line light-rail service, which passes through Chinatown in downtown Los Angeles.

Some community groups we spoke with indicated that, if service information materials are not translated, many LEP transit riders will likely learn to use the system from family, friends, or others in their community. However, a lack of translated printed materials may discourage use of the system or participation in the transportation planning and decision-making process by affected language groups. Officials at 1 agency told us that providing information in the language the community is most comfortable with sends a message that they are welcome on the system and in the planning process, while not doing so may send the message that they are unwelcome. Community groups also told us that more translated service information could encourage greater ridership and make the system more welcoming to LEP persons. In addition, the New Jersey study found that, next to having a staff person speaking their native language, LEP groups most preferred to have timetable, schedule, and other information in their native language.[17]

While MPOs can serve a variety of functions and may provide a wide variety of services related to transportation, we specifically focused on informational materials related to transportation planning and public involvement provided by MPOs we visited. Three of the 7 MPOs we visited had translated a summary of their transportation plan into Spanish, with 1 MPO, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the San Francisco Bay Area, also translating the document into Chinese. Two MPOs had translated a citizen's guide to participation in the transportation planning process into Spanish. Another MPO had translated a transportation needs survey into Spanish.

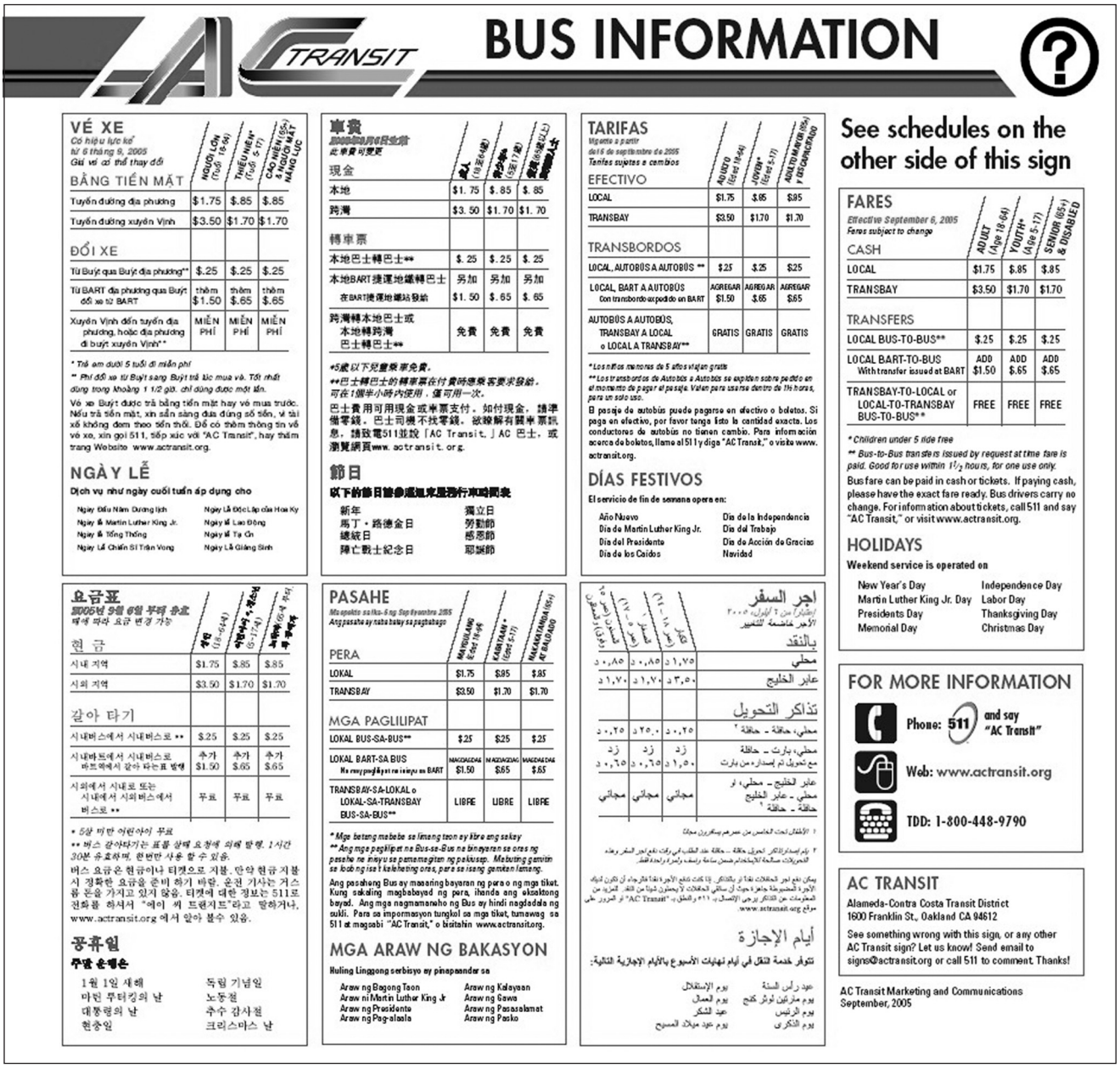
[17]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 28.

Bilingual or Multilingual Signs and Service Change Notices

Transit agencies we visited provided several different types of translated signs in vehicles or at stations and stops. Of the 4 agencies out of 20 that did not have such signs, 2 were primarily paratransit operators whose vehicles are operated by contractors. The types of translated signs provided included basic service information on bus stop signs, postings of service changes, fare box signs, emergency exit and priority-seating signs, public meeting notices, and posters for informational campaigns. Without translated postings of service changes, bus stop closures, or fare policies, LEP persons are at a disadvantage in accessing the transit system. One community group cited an instance of LEP persons waiting at a bus stop that had been closed due to a city event. This situation occurred because the transit agency had not posted translated notices at the bus stop announcing the closures.

Of the transit agencies we visited, 8 had some basic service information signs at rail stations or bus stops available in languages other than English, and 1 agency we visited had such information available in languages other than Spanish at selected bus stops. For example, Transportation Authorities in Orange County and Los Angeles provide some information at some bus stops in Spanish (such as the direction of travel and information on their telephone lines). One agency, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District in Oakland, estimates that approximately 750 of its 1,200 signs are translated in Chinese and Spanish, with signs in bus shelters in the city of Oakland, California, now being replaced with seven-language signs, an example of which is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5: Seven-Language Bus Stop Sign in Oakland, California



AC TRANSIT BUS INFORMATION

VÉ XE

Có hiệu lực kể từ 6 tháng 9, 2005
Giá vé có thể thay đổi

BẰNG TIỀN MẶT	NGƯỜI LỚN (Tuổi 18-64)	THIẾU NIÊN* (Tuổi 5-17)	CAO NIÊN (65+) & NGƯỜI MẤT NĂNG LỰC
Tuyến đường địa phương	$1.75	$.85	$.85
Tuyến đường xuyên Vịnh	$3.50	$1.70	$1.70
ĐỔI XE			
Từ Buýt qua Buýt địa phương**	$.25	$.25	$.25
Từ BART địa phương qua Buýt đổi xe từ BART	thêm $1.50	thêm $.65	thêm $.65
Xuyên Vịnh đến tuyến địa phương, hoặc địa phương đi buýt xuyên Vịnh**	MIỄN PHÍ	MIỄN PHÍ	MIỄN PHÍ

* Trẻ em dưới 5 tuổi đi miễn phí

** Phí đổi xe từ Buýt sang Buýt trả lúc mua vé. Tối thiểu dùng trong khoảng 1 1/2 giờ, chỉ dùng được một lần.

Vé xe Buýt được trả bằng tiền mặt hay vé mua trước. Nếu trả tiền mặt, xin sẵn sàng đưa đúng số tiền, vì tài xế không đem theo tiền thối. Để có thêm thông tin về vé xe, xin gọi 511, tiếp xúc với "AC Transit", hay thăm trang Website www.actransit.org.

NGÀY LỄ

Dịch vụ như ngày cuối tuần áp dụng cho

Ngày Đầu Năm Dương lịch	Ngày Lễ Độc Lập của Hoa Kỳ
Ngày Martin Luther King Jr.	Ngày lễ Lao Động
Ngày lễ Tổng Thống	Ngày lễ Tạ Ơn
Ngày Lễ Chiến Sĩ Trận Vong	Ngày Lễ Giáng Sinh

車費

2005年9月6日起生效
此車費可更更

現金	成人 (18歲至64歲)	學生票 (5歲至17歲)	老年人/殘障人士 (65歲以上)
本地	$1. 75	$. 85	$. 85
跨灣	$3. 50	$1. 70	$1. 70
轉車票			
本地巴士轉巴士**	$. 25	$. 25	$. 25
本地BART捷運地鐵轉巴士	另加	另加	另加
在BART捷運地鐵站發給	$1. 50	$. 65	$. 65
跨灣轉本地巴士或本地轉跨灣巴士轉巴士**	免費	免費	免費

**5歲以下兒童乘車免費。*

***巴士轉巴士的轉車票在付費時應乘客要求發給。可在1個半小時內使用，僅可用一次。*

巴士費用可用現金或車票支付。如付現金，請準備零錢。巴士司機不找零錢。欲線解有關車票訊息，請致電511並說「AC Transit,」AC 巴士，或瀏覽網頁www. actransit. org.

節日

以下的節日請參照週末服務行車時間表

新年	獨立日
馬丁・路德金日	勞動節
總統日	感恩節
陣亡戰士紀念日	耶誕節

TARIFAS

Vigente a partir del 6 de septiembre de 2005
Tarifas sujetas a cambios

EFECTIVO	ADULTO (Edad 18-64)	JÓVEN* (Edad 5-17)	ADULTO MAYOR (65+) Y DISCAPACITADO
LOCAL	$1.75	$.85	$.85
TRANSBAY	$3.50	$1.70	$1.70
TRANSBORDOS			
LOCAL, AUTOBÚS A AUTOBÚS **	$.25	$.25	$.25
LOCAL, BART A AUTOBÚS Con transbordo expedido en BART	AGREGAR $1.50	AGREGAR $.65	AGREGAR $.65
AUTOBÚS A AUTOBÚS, TRANSBAY A LOCAL o LOCAL A TRANSBAY**	GRATIS	GRATIS	GRATIS

**Los niños menores de 5 años viajan gratis*

***Los transbordos de Autobús a Autobús se expiden sobre pedido en el momento de pagar el pasaje. Válen para usarse dentro de 1½ horas, para un solo uso.*

El pasaje de autobús puede pagarse en efectivo o boletos. Si pago en efectivo, por favor tenga listo la cantidad exacta. Los conductores de autobús no tienen cambio. Para información acerca de boletos, llame al 511 y diga "AC Transit," o visite www.actransit.org.

DÍAS FESTIVOS

El servicio de fin de semana opera en:

Año Nuevo	Día de la Independencia
Día de Martin Luther King Jr.	Día del Trabajo
Día del Presidente	Día de Acción de Gracias
Día de los Caídos	Navidad

See schedules on the other side of this sign

FARES

Effective September 6, 2005
Fares subject to change

CASH	ADULT (Age 18-64)	YOUTH* (Age 5-17)	SENIOR (65+) & DISABLED
LOCAL	$1.75	$.85	$.85
TRANSBAY	$3.50	$1.70	$1.70
TRANSFERS			
LOCAL BUS-TO-BUS**	$.25	$.25	$.25
LOCAL BART-TO-BUS With transfer issued at BART	ADD $1.50	ADD $.65	ADD $.65
TRANSBAY-TO-LOCAL or LOCAL-TO-TRANSBAY BUS-TO-BUS**	FREE	FREE	FREE

** Children under 5 ride free*

*** Bus-to-Bus transfers issued by request at time fare is paid. Good for use within 1½ hours, for one use only.*

Bus fare can be paid in cash or tickets. If paying cash, please have the exact fare ready. Bus drivers carry no change. For information about tickets, call 511 and say "AC Transit," or visit www.actransit.org.

HOLIDAYS

Weekend service is operated on

New Year's Day	Independence Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Labor Day
Presidents Day	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Christmas Day

요금표

2005년 9월 6일 부터 유효
때에 따라 요금 변경 가능

현 금	성인 (18-64세)	어린이(5-17세)	노인(65세 이상) 및 장애자
시내 지역	$1.75	$.85	$.85
시외 지역	$3.50	$1.70	$1.70
갈아 타기			
시내버스에서 시내버스로 **	$.25	$.25	$.25
시내바트에서 시내버스로 바트역에서 갈아 타는표 발행	추가 $1.50	추가 $.65	추가 $.65
시외에서 시내로 또는 시내에서 시외버스에서 버스로 **	무료	무료	무료

* 5살 미만 어린아이 무료

** 버스 갈아타기는 표를 살때 요청에 의해 발행. 1시간 30분 유효하며, 한번만 사용 할 수 있음.

버스 요금은 현금이나 티켓으로 지불. 만약 현금 지불 시 정확한 요금을 준비 하기 바람. 운전 기사는 거스름 돈을 가지고 있지 않음. 티켓에 대한 정보는 511로 전화를 하셔서 "에이 씨 트랜지트"라고 말하거나, www.actransit.org 에서 알아 볼수 있음.

공휴일

무료 운행은

1월 1일 새해	독립 기념일
마틴 루터킹의 날	노동절
대통령의 날	추수 감사절
현충일	크리스마스 날

PASAHE

Mga epektio sa Ika-6 ng Setyembre 2005
Ang pasahe ay saka-balay sa pagbabago

PERA	MATANDA (Edad 18-64)	KABATAAN* (Edad 5-17)	MAKAKATANDA (65+) AT BALOLADO
LOKAL	$1.75	$.85	$.85
TRANSBAY	$3.50	$1.70	$1.70
MGA PAGLILIPAT			
LOKAL BUS-SA-BUS**	$.25	$.25	$.25
LOKAL BART-SA BUS Na nauy pagkiyat na isinyu sa BART	MAGDAGDAG $1.50	MAGDAGDAG $.65	MAGDAGDAG $.65
TRANSBAY-SA-LOKAL o LOKAL-SA-TRANSBAY BUS-SA-BUS**	LIBRE	LIBRE	LIBRE

** Mga beteng mebebe sa limang taon ay libre ang sakay*

*** Ang mga pagliliput na Bus-sa-Bus na binayaran sa oras ng pasahe na inisyu sa pamamagitan ng pakusap. Mabuting gamitin sa loob ng isa't kalahating oras, para sa isang gamitan lamang.*

Ang pasahong Bus ay maaaring bayaran ng para o ng mga tikat. Kung sakaling magbabayad ng para, ihanda ang eksaktong bayad. Ang mga nagmamaneho ng Bus ay hindi nagdadala ng sukli. Para sa impormasyon tungkol sa mga tikat, tumawag sa 511 at magsabi "AC Transit," o bisitahin www.actransit.org.

MGA ARAW NG BAKASYON

Huling Linggong serbisyo ay pinapanatili sa

Araw ng Bagong Taon	Araw ng Kalayaan
Araw ni Martin Luther King Jr	Araw ng Gawa
Araw ng Presidente	Araw ng Pasasalamat
Araw ng Pag-alaala	Araw ng Pasko

اجر السفر

إعتباراً من ٦ أيلول، ٢٠٠٥
الأجر خاضعة للتغيير

بالنقد	بالغ (عمر ١٨-٦٤)	شاب (عمر ٥-١٧)	مسن (٦٥+) ومعوق
محلي	د ١,٧٥	د ٠,٨٥	د ٠,٨٥
عابر الخليج	د ٣,٥٠	د ١,٧٠	د ١,٧٠
تذاكر التحويل			
محلي، حافلة ـ حافلة [1]	د ٠,٢٥	د ٠,٢٥	د ٠,٢٥
محلي، بارت ـ حافلة مع تحويل تم إصداره من بارت	د ١,٥٠	زد د ٠,٦٥	زد د ٠,٦٥
عابر الخليج ـ محلي، أو محلي ـ عابر الخليج حافلة ـ حافلة [1]	مجاني	مجاني	مجاني

١ الأطفال تحت الخامس من عمرهم يسافرون مجاناً

٢ يتم إصدار التذاكر التحويل حافلة ـ حافلة عند الطلب في وقت دفع أجر السفر وهذه التحويلات صالحة للإستخدام ضمن ساعة ونصف ولمرة واحدة فقط.

يمكن دفع أجر الحافلات نقداً أو بالتذاكر. إذا كانت تدفع الأجرة نقداً فأرجاء أن تكون لديك الأجر المضبوطة جاهزة حيث أن سائقي الحافلات لا يحملون شيئاً من النقد. المزيد من المعلومات عن التذاكر يرجى الإتصال بـ ٥١١ والقول بـ "AC Transit" أو الدخول على موقع www.actransit.org

أيام الإجازة

تتوفر خدمة التنقل في أيام نهايات الأسبوع بالأيام الإجازية التالية:

عيد رأس السنة	يوم الإستقلال
يوم مارتين لوثر كنج	يوم العمال
يوم الرئيس	عيد الشكر
يوم الذكرى	يوم عيد ميلاد المسيح

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Phone: 511 and say "AC Transit"

Web: www.actransit.org

TDD: 1-800-448-9790

AC TRANSIT

Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District
1600 Franklin St., Oakland CA 94612

See something wrong with this sign, or any other AC Transit sign? Let us know! Send email to signs@actransit.org or call 511 to comment. Thanks!

AC Transit Marketing and Communications
September, 2005

Source: Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District.

Officials at 3 transit agencies stated that they had not translated street signs, or did not translate the entire sign, because much of the information is numeric and because including several languages on such signs would become unwieldy for transit riders to effectively use. Agency officials also indicated that cost could become an issue in replacing all of the signs throughout their systems, and some agencies were looking into utilizing more pictograms in order to avoid the use of multiple languages while providing more universal access. However, some community group representatives told us that, although the use of pictograms can be a useful way to communicate with non-English speakers, some translated language may need to accompany the pictograms in order for the information to be communicated effectively.

Several of the transit agencies we visited posted or provided, in languages other than English, information on service changes or closures at rail stations, at bus stops, and in vehicles. Some examples include the following:

- The Orange County Transportation Authority puts service change flyers in English and Spanish in vehicles on affected bus routes.

- The Golden Gate Transit in San Francisco posts Spanish and English service change notices at its central transit hub.

- The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District provides service change brochures in Chinese and Spanish.

Ten transit agencies had on-board signs that included information on fares or emergency exits and priority-seating signs for elderly and disabled persons, and 10 agencies posted public meeting notices on their vehicles, translated into at least Spanish. A few agencies also provided fare information or posted public meeting notices on buses or in stations in other languages. For example:

- The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District both provide fare information in Chinese and Spanish.

- The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency posts some meeting notices on its vehicles in Chinese and English, as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6: Meeting Notice Posted on a Bus in San Francisco, California, in English and Chinese

Source: The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency.

In addition, some transit agencies we visited had translated other types of signs, such as posters in English and Spanish, generally designed under the auspices of new initiatives or information campaigns. For example, METRA Commuter Rail in Chicago and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority both placed posters in English and Spanish that highlight safety issues on those systems. Orange County Transportation Authority officials credit the wide acceptance of the agency's new "no pennies" fare policy to the bilingual "Hasta Luego Pennies" campaign, as shown in figure 7.

Figure 7: Posters in Orange County, California, in English and Spanish

Source: Orange County Transportation Authority.

In-Person Language Assistance

While all but 3 of the transit agencies we visited had bilingual drivers on staff, some agency officials noted that those drivers are generally not required or instructed to make announcements in other languages and are generally not assigned to routes where their language skills may be useful. Some agency officials indicated that union rules allow drivers to select preferred routes on the basis of seniority. Therefore, there is no indication of the number of bilingual drivers that are utilizing their languages skills, although agency officials knew of individual occurrences. Three agencies we visited—Golden Gate Transit in California; Capital Metro in Austin, Texas; and Chapel Hill Transit in North Carolina—had provided their drivers with useful phrase or word guides in Spanish, an example of which

is shown in figure 8. A few other agencies, including the Capital Area Rural Transportation System and the Capital Metro in Austin, Texas, and the Ozark Regional Transit in northwest Arkansas, have bilingual employees available to translate over the radio on the bus.

Figure 8: Golden Gate Transit's Spanish Phrase Guide for Drivers

GOLDEN GATE TRANSIT

Your Guide to Communicating with Spanish Speaking Customers

Guía Para la Communicación con Clientes que Hablan Español

*Thanks to Bus Operator **Tony Galloway** for brochure concept and Bus Operator **Oscar Jacobs** and Public Information Clerk **Connie Prado** for assistance in making it as accurate as possible. Thanks also to **Davie Comaduran**, Art Director, for her assistance and to her husband, **Francisco Comaduran**, for his assistance in translating.*

Revised December 1997

General Travel

I'm sorry, you will have to get off the bus.
Lo siento, tiene que bajarse del autobus.

Where have you come from?
¿De dónde viene?

What town have you come from?
¿De qué pueblo viene?

What is the name of the place?
¿Quál es el nombre del lugar?

Where did you get on the bus?
¿En dónde se subió usted en el autobus?

What town are you going to?
¿A qué pueblo va a ir?

I will take you there.
Yo lo llevaré ahí.

Where do you live?
¿Dónde vive?

Can you write that down for me?
¿Podría usted escribir eso para mí?

I'm sorry, there is no room for your luggage.
Lo siento, no hay espacio para su equipaje.

You can't bring that on here.
Usted no puede traer eso aquí.

Can you put your bags by the rear door?
¿Podría poner su equipaje cerca la puerta de atrás?

Can you ring the bell next time, please?
Por favor, toque el timbre la proxima vez.

You must ring the bell if you want me to stop.
Usted tiene que tocar el timbre si quere que yo pare.

Where are you going to, please?
¿A dónde va? por favor.

I don't go there, but the number _____ does.
Yo no voy ahí, pero el número _____ lo llevará.

Are you a Senior?
¿Es usted mayor de edad?

Do you want the next stop?
¿Quiere usted la siquiente parada?

Shall I tell you when we get there?
¿Tendré que decirle, cuando lleguemos allá?

This is your stop.
Esta es su parada.

Fares

Have you any money?
¿Tiene dinero?

If you have no money, you cannot travel.
Si no tiene dinero, no puede ir en el autobús.

How much did you pay on the other bus?
¿Cuanto pagó usted en el otro autobús?

This transfer is not valid. You will have to pay again.
Este transfer no es válido, Tiene que pagar otra vez.

This transfer is past the time limit.
Este transfer ya se paso de la hora limitada.

This transfer is punched for a different day.
Este transfer es para otro dia.

How many people are you paying for?
¿Por cuantas personas está usted pagando?

You have to put the money in there.
Usted tiene que poner el dinero ahí.

I don't give change.
No le puedo dar cambio.

Put the dollar bills in there.
Ponga los billetes dentro de ahí.

Don't fold the bills.
No doble los billetes.

Put the coins in there.
Ponga las monedas ahí.

Ask if someone can change the money for you.
Pregunte si alguien le puede cambiar su dinero.

You will have to pay more, please.
Usted tiene que pagar más, por favor.

I'm not allowed to handle the money.
No me permiten recibir ningún dinero.

Do you want a transfer?
¿Quiere un transfer?

Do you need this transfer again?
¿Necesitará este transfer otra vez?

You will need this transfer for the other bus.
¿Va a necesitar el transfer para el otro autobús?

I have to see your transfer please.
Tengo que ver su transfer, por favor.

General Statements

How are you?
¿Como está usted?

I am very well.
Estoy muy bien.

...and how are you?
¿...y como está usted?

I am well also.
Yo también estoy bien.

I'll see you next week.
Lo veré la próxima semana.

I'll see you tomorrow.
Lo veré mañana.

See you later.
Hasta luego.

Have a good weekend.
Que tenga un buen fin de semana.

Are you going to work?
¿Va para el trabajo?

Are you going home?
¿Va para la casa?

Good morning.
Buenos dias.

Good afternoon/evening.
Buenas tardes.

You're welcome.
De nada.

Have a good day.
Que pase buen día.

Please stand behind the white line
Por favor, estacionarse detras la linea blanca

Good night.
Buenas noches.

What is your name?
¿Cómo se llama?

Come here, please.
Venga aquí, por favor.

Stop there, please.
Pare ahí, por favor.

Come with me, please.
Venga conmigo, por favor.

Hurry up, please.
Dese prisa, por favor.

That's enough.
Es suficiente.

One moment, please.
Un momento, por favor.

Watch your step.
Tenga cuidado.

Are you ill?
¿Está enfermo?

Do you need a doctor?
¿Necesita un doctor?

Please do not move.
Por favor, no se mueva.

Do you understand?
¿Entiende?

I'm sorry.
Lo siento.

Please move to the rear of the bus.
Por favor, muevesi atras del áutobus.

The Fare is:
El Pasaje es:

1 **Uno**
2 **Dos**
3 **Tres**
4 **Cuatro**
5 **Cinco**
6 **Seis**
7 **Siete**
8 **Ocho**
9 **Nueve**
10 **Diez**
11 **Once**
12 **Doce**
13 **Trece**
14 **Catorce**
15 **Quince**
16 **Dieciseis**
17 **Diecisiete**
18 **Dieciocho**
19 **Diecinueve**
20 **Veinte**

25 **Veinticinco**
30 **Treinta**
35 **Treinta-y-cinco**
40 **Cuarenta**
45 **Cuarenta-y-cinco**
50 **Cincuenta**
55 **Cincuenta-y-cinco**
60 **Sesenta**
65 **Sesenta-y-cinco**
70 **Setenta**
75 **Setenta-y-cinco**
80 **Ochenta**
85 **Ochenta-y-cinco**
90 **Noventa**
95 **Noventa-y-cinco**

Source: Golden Gate Transit.

Many of the transit agencies reported that they had some bilingual staffs in customer information booths or ticket offices, although agencies tended not to look for bilingual customer service staffs in particular. Agency officials in several areas stated that customer service personnel have language skills because their employees reflect the ethnic and language diversity of their region. For public meetings related to the transportation planning and decision-making process, 12 transit agencies and 4 MPOs had Spanish interpreters or bilingual employees or board members available if needed at most public meetings, while 6 transit agencies and 3 MPOs had Spanish interpreters available by request. In areas where there is a preponderance of other languages spoken, interpreters in languages other than Spanish were generally provided on a "by-request" basis, although 1 agency reported that it regularly provided Chinese translators.

While 16 transit agencies we visited had cultural sensitivity included in their staff training, only 9 provided training or technical assistance to their employees that directly related to LEP issues. The New Jersey survey of transit agencies found that only one-quarter of the responding agencies had training for customer service employees that was specific to LEP service.[18] Five agencies we visited offered free Spanish classes to employees. For instance, Chapel Hill Transit hired a contractor to teach conversational Spanish to supervisors, dispatchers, and those employees who answer telephones during work hours. The agency has not been able to offer the course to drivers because of budgeting issues, since attending the course would be considered part of the drivers' work week and they would have to be paid overtime. However, the town of Chapel Hill does offer tuition reimbursement to drivers who want to take Spanish classes on their own time.

Community groups regularly pointed out the importance of having as many bilingual bus drivers and customer service staff as possible. At a community meeting in Aurora, Illinois, held by the Chicago Area Transportation Study, the need for more bilingual bus drivers was highlighted as a community transportation need. The New Jersey focus groups with LEP travelers also found that the inability to communicate with bus drivers was one of the chief complaints of the LEP travelers in New Jersey.[19] In terms of the availability of interpreters at public meetings,

[18]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 32.

[19]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, pp. 27-28.

community groups we met with criticized the fact that interpreters are frequently only provided on a "by-request" basis. Agencies generally require that requests be made 3 days in advance of the meeting, but community groups told us that if an agency is advertising the meeting in different languages, as many of the agencies we visited did, they should be prepared to provide access to the proceedings of the meeting in those languages, rather than relying on the public to request translation.

Bilingual or Multilingual Television, Radio, and Newspaper Advertisements

Fourteen transit agencies and 6 MPOs we visited posted notices of public meetings in newspapers printed in languages other than English—with 10 posting notices in more than one language. A few agencies posted such notices in as many as five different language newspapers. For example, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority publishes its "Metro Briefs," which includes notices of public meetings and other information, in Thai, Korean, Chinese, Armenian, and Spanish language newspapers. Spanish radio and television advertisements were also placed by several agencies, sometimes in relation to ongoing information campaigns, such as rail safety campaigns. For example, METRA Commuter Rail in Chicago advertised its rail safety campaign on television and radio in Spanish.

Bilingual or Multilingual Translated Materials on Web sites

Eleven of the 20 transit agencies we visited had some information on their Web sites that was available in other languages; however, 4 of the 11 made no indication on their home pages that translated materials were available. Of the 7 MPOs we visited, 3 had such translated information posted on their Web sites, and 2 had links on their home pages indicating that translated materials were available. Some examples of translated Web sites include the following:

- The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District's Web site provides basic rider information in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese—the three largest LEP populations in its service area—that is directly accessible through links in those languages on the home page.

- The Regional Transportation Authority in Chicago, and the Bay Area Rapid Transit and the Golden Gate Transit in San Francisco, have basic transit information available in seven and eight other languages, respectively, indicated by country flag icons on the agencies' home pages. The languages chosen are not fully reflective of the major LEP groups in these areas, however, because these Web sites also serve tourism purposes. For example, in Chicago, the Regional Transportation Authority's Web site is translated into French, German, and Japanese,

although these are not major LEP groups in the city. However, the site is not accessible in Chinese, although Chinese is the third largest LEP population in Chicago.

Four transit agencies and 1 MPO had posted translated materials to their Web sites but did not indicate on the home pages that those materials were available. For example, materials translated into Spanish are posted on the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Web site, but a user must navigate through links that are in English to get to them. Also, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency has part of its Title VI plan translated into Spanish and Chinese, but the user must navigate through at least two links in English to find the translations. Only 1 agency we visited, the Ozark Regional Transit, a small urban operator in northwest Arkansas managed by First Transit, had made its entire Web site accessible in another language, Spanish, as seen in figure 9. A link in Spanish on the home page leads to a fully translated version of the Web site. Furthermore, while many agencies have Web-based trip planners, none of the agencies we visited had made that function fully available in other languages.[20]

[20]Two examples of agencies with language-accessible trip planners are the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority, which makes that function available in several languages, and the Tri-Met in Portland, which makes that function available in Spanish. We did not visit these agencies.

Figure 9: Spanish Version of the Ozark Regional Transit's Web Site Home Page

Source: Ozark Regional Transit, a public transit system managed by First Transit.

Translated Web sites were not frequently identified by community groups as being particularly useful for LEP persons because LEP persons often do not have access to the Internet, according to the community group representatives we met with. In addition, the New Jersey study found that LEP focus groups did not often rate translated Web sites as a major resource in addressing mobility needs.[21] However, providing translated information on an agency Web site without indication in that language that it is available is likely to reduce the usefulness of that information to those LEP persons who do have Internet access.

[21]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 29.

Translated Recorded Announcements and Electronic Signs

Only 3 of the transit agencies we visited had recorded announcements in other languages on their vehicles or at their facilities, although many agencies do not utilize recorded announcements at all. Also, although a few transit agencies employ electronic media, such as televisions or ticker-tape style displays, only 1 provided translated information on its ticker-tape display. Examples of translated recorded announcements include the following:

- The Capital Metro in Austin provides recorded announcements on its buses in English and Spanish, which are also broadcast outside the bus at bus stops.
- The Bay Area Rapid Transit has Spanish and Chinese announcements recorded and available for use in the event of an emergency in its train stations or on its trains.
- The Gold Line light-rail line in Los Angeles has recorded announcements of stops and rider instructions in English and Spanish.

Bilingual or Multilingual Electronic Ticket Machines

Of the transit agencies that utilize electronic ticket machines for rail services—the Chicago Transit Authority, the METRA Commuter Rail in Chicago, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Bay Area Rapid Transit, and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency—only the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority had some machines accessible in English and Spanish. This agency has installed ticket machines that are accessible in Spanish on a newer light-rail line that passes through a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood, and officials told us they were considering replacing all ticket machines with machines that will be accessible in six to eight languages. One group we met with pointed out that, without translated information on fare discounts and without ticket machines that are language accessible, LEP persons may not be aware of the fare options available to them in the same manner that English speakers would be, potentially leading to LEP persons' paying more than needed for their trips.

Communicating Directly with LEP Communities or Community and Advocacy Groups Representing LEP Persons

Almost all of the transit agencies and MPOs we visited had made at least some effort to communicate more directly with communities and to conduct outreach with LEP communities and the community and advocacy groups that serve LEP persons. For example, in Greensboro, the city recently started a new program with Lutheran Family Services, a community group that works with many LEP persons, to provide an orientation for recent immigrants and refugees to the area. Under the

program, city departments identified as having the most public interaction with LEP persons, make an interactive presentation of services provided. These presentations are given in English and simultaneously translated into several languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Russian, depending on the availability of translators. The city is also producing a video on its services, including public transit, which will be translated into Spanish and into other languages upon request. In Orange County, the Orange County Transportation Authority conducts a program that includes visiting Spanish-speaking senior centers to inform seniors about the agency and its services. As part of the program, the agency will bring a bus to the centers and walk the seniors through every step of riding the bus, including getting on, paying the fare, and exiting. In addition, 2 agencies reported holding information sessions at bus terminals when service changes or fare adjustments are about to occur. For example, the Durham Area Transit Authority publicizes such information sessions in the Spanish community, and then has translators on hand at bus terminals to explain service changes and answer any questions.

In terms of transportation planning and decision making, federal law and regulations require transit agencies and MPOs to involve the public in transportation planning and decision-making processes,[22] and Title VI, as well as DOT's guidance, suggests that agencies should also make this process accessible to non-English speakers. Providing language access to planning and decision making can include all of the communication strategies used by transit agencies and MPOs in this process. Some communication strategies for public participation will fall into the strategies previously outlined, such as providing interpreters at public meetings and posting translated notices of community or public meetings on Web sites, at stations, in vehicles, in newspapers, or on television or radio. Some agencies also employed more direct tactics to include LEP groups in the planning process. For example, several transit agencies and MPOs we visited mailed out notices of community and public meetings to community and advocacy groups representing LEP persons, although in some cases, these notices were not sent out in languages other than English. In addition, several agencies we visited distributed translated public meeting notices in various establishments throughout the community. For example, the Golden Gate Transit in the Bay Area distributes meeting notices in Spanish at convenience stores, restaurants, and laundromats in predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods. Some transit

[22]For example, see 23 U.S.C. § 134 (i)(5) and 23 C.F.R. § 450.316(b).

agencies and MPOs also kept in regular contact with community and advocacy groups representing LEP persons or created specific advisory boards that occasionally influenced language access activities. For example, the Orange County Transportation Authority created a citizen's advisory committee that pushed for the agency to provide translated notices of service changes. In addition, some agencies reached out directly to LEP communities with regard to the planning and decision-making process. For example, Capital Metro in Austin started an outreach campaign that involved sending teams of staff and volunteers, many of whom were bilingual, into the community to provide information on new transportation projects face-to-face. Capital Metro found that this outreach resulted in greater public support for the agency and in increased ridership.

Despite some of these efforts, community group representatives we spoke with were often critical that agencies' outreach efforts related to planning and decision making were generally not proactive and inclusive of LEP persons. For example, one representative we spoke with told us that attendance at a public meeting on transportation projects in a predominantly Chinese-speaking neighborhood was not well attended by members of that community, and that no Chinese translator was on hand at the meeting. This representative believed that better outreach to that community to encourage community involvement would have led to higher attendance. A representative of another group explained that community meetings are often very difficult to access for Spanish-speaking members of the community, and that the local MPO tends to work with elected officials rather than working more directly with members of the community.

In the New Jersey surveys and focus groups of LEP travelers, some LEP groups in New Jersey indicated that a lack of adequate transportation services was the biggest impediment to their mobility.[23] Without access to and involvement with local transit agencies and planning entities, the needs of this community are not likely to be heard by these agencies. Furthermore, failing to provide language access to decision making can lead to complaints of discrimination. FTA has received one complaint that LEP persons were not given adequate access to the planning and decision-making process.

[23]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 28.

Effects of Language Access Services on Meeting Needs Are Not Well Known

The efficacy of the LEP access services provided is largely unknown due to a lack of data. Most transit agencies and MPOs we visited could provide only limited information about the utilization or effectiveness of their language access services. Furthermore, few of the agencies we visited had conducted a formalized assessment of the needs of the LEP populations in their service areas, or had assessed the success of their language access activities in meeting these needs, although DOT's LEP guidance recommends that they do so. Data limitations were present in analyzing the effects of all types of LEP access services. For example, although some transit agencies print thousands of translated brochures, they do not keep track of how many brochures are placed on buses or in stations. In addition, because many brochures are printed with English and another language in the same booklet, it is impossible to know whether the language accessible section is being utilized. Data on the utilization of bilingual or multilingual telephone operators were also generally not available for the majority of the transit agencies because they do not formally track calls received in languages other than English. In those instances where calls were tracked, they were predominantly in Spanish, and calls in other languages were generally not common. For 1 transit agency, of the 378 calls in languages other than English that were received in 2004, 90 percent of them were in Spanish. For another, just 3 percent of calls were in languages other than English and Spanish. One agency in Los Angeles did receive a relatively large percentage of calls in Russian, Farsi, and Armenian to its language line. For Web sites, data on the utilization of multilingual pages were only available in some instances. Even when tracked, these Web site data were often inconclusive regarding how often the translations were accessed relative to English portions of the sites. Finally, information on the effectiveness of translated signs was not determined by any of the transit agencies or MPOs we visited.

Although little effort had been made by the transit agencies and MPOs we visited to closely examine the impact of their LEP activities, a few agencies were considering language issues as part of their more comprehensive assessments of ongoing communication and outreach efforts. For example, the Regional Transportation Authority in Chicago has started a long-term study of the overall communication strategies of all the transit agencies in Chicago, including language access issues. Part of the study's methodology was for a researcher to ride along with a LEP rider to identify areas where communication was lacking and the rider encountered problems. The study found that language barriers made it difficult to understand changes to schedules or service, or changes in how to navigate through the system.

The study is looking at an increased use of pictograms as one potential solution to making access easier for LEP populations.

Despite the lack of supporting data, most agencies felt that they were adequately responding to the demand for language access services in their areas. Agency officials believed that because no complaints had been recorded concerning the level of language access provided, and because they generally did not receive many requests for translated materials or interpreters, they were doing a reasonable job of providing such access. Several agency officials did state that there was still room for improvement, and some were considering providing more information in languages other than Spanish. Agency officials also recognized the need for greater outreach efforts in general, especially for ethnic communities that may have language barriers, since turnout at public meetings by these groups is typically low. However, some agency officials told us that agencies may lack the needed staff to regularly conduct proactive community outreach activities.

By contrast, community and advocacy groups we met with generally saw several shortcomings in the provision of language access services, sometimes within the larger context of how transit agencies and MPOs communicate with the public in general. In their opinion, a lack of complaints regarding LEP issues did not necessarily mean that transit agencies were doing a satisfactory job, but rather might reflect the fact that many LEP persons were not likely to complain about the provision of language access services, due to cultural differences and wariness about interacting with government agencies. Many community group representatives we spoke with complained of a lack of knowledge in the community about the materials and services that were available, and a lack of materials in languages other than Spanish. Even in areas where transit agencies do provide translated materials, representatives of community groups stated that these materials were often not readily available or easy to locate. In addition, many community groups were unaware of the existence of multilingual telephone lines, or they complained that Spanish-speaking operators were often not available when they called.

In addition to questioning the level of service information available to LEP populations, community groups cited concerns about the lack of actual transit services available to certain communities where large LEP populations reside, as well as concerns about a lack of effective involvement of these communities in the planning and decision-making process, as previously discussed in this report. Many representatives we

spoke with were unaware of public meetings held by transit agencies and MPOs, and they complained about the lack of ongoing communication with them and the communities they represent. Furthermore, representatives of community groups told us that these agencies rarely used them as a resource or consulted with them on LEP transportation issues.

These representatives made several suggestions regarding how language access services could be improved, and which types of activities would likely be most effective in meeting community needs. Several suggestions involved facilitating the inclusion of ethnic communities, including LEP persons, in the planning process. For example, representatives from one group stated that public meetings should have agendas that are clear, specific, and of value to the community, and that these communities should be sought out and included early in the process. Other representatives stated that established community and advocacy groups should be used more effectively as a conduit to the community. Regarding language access services, community group representatives recommended having ticket machines and discount fare information available in other languages so that LEP communities could take advantage of fare discounts. They also said that having spoken announcements in other languages or having bus drivers or other personnel available to communicate in other languages would be highly effective in improving access for LEP persons.

The New Jersey survey and focus groups of LEP travelers provided some data on the needs of LEP transit users. Like the community group representatives, some LEP groups in this study reported that inadequate service in their neighborhoods was their chief concern. In terms of travel assistance needed, LEP groups most often cited having a driver or staff person available to assist them in their own language. Reaction was split among LEP travelers on whether multilingual telephone lines were helpful. Some travelers felt they were helpful, and others felt that if the information is prerecorded, it is not effective. While New Jersey Transit does have a multilingual telephone line (not prerecorded), most of the respondents in this study were not aware of the service, which was likely due to a lack of advertising. Finally, LEP groups stated that Web sites were also not particularly helpful because many of the respondents did not have access to the Internet.[24]

[24]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, pp. 28-29.

Costs May Not Be Burdensome at the Current Level of Activity, but They Could Escalate with Additional Languages and Services

On the basis of our site visit data, we determined that agencies generally did not believe that the costs for existing language access activities were burdensome.[25] Many transit agencies believed that providing services to LEP populations makes sound business sense. Such agencies recognize that LEP populations represent a significant portion of both their current and their potential ridership. Thus, making services more accessible to LEP persons could increase ridership. For instance, officials at Austin's Capital Metro told us that their outreach efforts to LEP communities has resulted in increased ridership and greater public support for the agency.

While several of the transit agencies we interviewed did not view LEP language access costs as burdensome, the majority of agencies were unable to provide much data on many of the costs associated with their LEP access services. Sometimes these costs were simply not tracked because they were spread out over several departments, or because LEP access activities were not separated from broader costs. The New Jersey survey of transit agencies also found little available data on costs, with only one-third of respondents sharing cost information.[26] Of the respondents to that survey providing cost information, about one-half of them reported annual costs of between $10,000 and $30,000; one-quarter reported costs of under $5,000; and one-quarter reported costs greater than $100,000.

Transit agencies and MPOs were able to avoid incurring substantial additional costs by utilizing existing staff. For instance, many agencies stated that rather than contracting out for interpreters at public meetings, they bring in bilingual staff members, use bilingual board members, or rely on community groups or individuals to bring their own interpreters as needed. A similar situation occurs in providing interpreters for customer service telephone lines. While 7 transit agencies have access to some form of a language line with formalized services, many agencies have operators who are bilingual or who will utilize various bilingual staff members

[25]Several different cost components can be associated with efforts to provide access to public transit for LEP persons. These costs must be differentiated from costs that would ordinarily be experienced by an agency whether a service is provided in English or in another language. Extra costs borne by an agency that are directly attributable to LEP access activities include the following: outside translation and interpreter costs, cost differentials for developing and printing materials in other languages versus providing these services in English, the creation of translated pages on Web sites, premiums paid to bilingual employees, and software costs to provide multiple languages options at ticket machines.

[26]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 32.

throughout their operations to field LEP calls when needed. In terms of printed documents and materials, many of the transit agencies and MPOs we visited have their translations done in-house using bilingual staff members. Often, translation is not part of these staff members' official responsibilities, but it is done on a voluntary basis at no cost to the agency beyond the use of staff time.

Although several transit agencies and MPOs did not report unduly burdensome costs, the cost of providing LEP access has the potential to increase significantly if agencies seek to undertake more comprehensive programs.[27] As we previously discussed, many agencies rely on existing staff to do their translations of materials and to act as interpreters. Utilizing existing staff becomes more difficult when an agency attempts to provide access beyond just one or two languages. In that case, agencies would likely have to contract out for translation and translator services, or have to expend additional time and effort during the hiring process to find qualified candidates fluent in the languages desired. Contracting out for both translation and translator services can be costly. For example, the Capital Metro in Austin estimates that it spends between $10,000 and $15,000 a year for outside translations of materials. The Chicago Transit Authority stated that it spent over $1,100 for interpreters at four public hearings in 2004.

Costs will also rise for agencies if they seek to make more comprehensive translated information about their services and programs available through multiple sources. For example, only 1 agency we visited had developed a comprehensively Web site. In addition to any translation costs incurred, developing fully translated Web sites is likely to require modifications to an agency's Web site architecture, which has the potential to be costly. For instance, the Chicago Transit Authority estimated that the initial costs of translating its Web site into Spanish, Chinese, and Polish could potentially be between $74,000 and $99,000. In addition, the ongoing costs for maintaining the translated sites could also be substantial. Agency officials told us that the capability to update just the Spanish section of a translated Web site on a regular basis would require a new full-time employee and the purchase of additional software, costing an estimated $47,000 to $60,000

[27]Cost considerations are one of the factors that federal agency guidance suggests agencies consider when determining what constitutes reasonable access. DOJ's guidance to federal agencies states that the resources available to an agency may have an impact on the nature of the steps that recipients must take. Smaller recipients with more limited budgets would not be expected to provide the same level of services as larger recipients with larger budgets. 67 Fed. Reg. 41455, 41460 (June 18, 2002).

annually. In addition, providing language line service that covers multiple languages could raise costs significantly for transit agencies, depending on the usage of the line. Costs for language line services vary, depending on the provider as well as the language being translated, but generally costs per minute range from $1.00 to $1.50, which can add up to significant amounts. For example, the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority's language line cost about $16,000 in 2004, and Access Services in Los Angeles spent $3,500 in the first 3 months of 2005. In addition, to the extent that agencies seek to provide printed materials in languages other than Spanish, there would be increased typesetting and formatting issues that would give rise to higher costs as well. This is especially true with languages using non-Roman alphabets. For example, officials at the Orange County Transportation Authority estimated that the cost of producing materials in Chinese would be significantly more than for Spanish materials. Finally, in terms of public outreach, a shift to more proactive strategies may lead to higher costs. Transit agencies and MPOs that take the initiative to actively reach out to various community groups and LEP populations would likely need to dedicate a greater amount of staff time and resources.

DOT Assists Grantees on Language Access Services through Its Guidance and Other Activities, but These Resources Are Not Often Accessed by Local Agencies

DOT's LEP guidance provides grantees with a five-step framework for how to provide meaningful access to LEP populations, along with some information on how to implement such a framework; however, officials at the majority of the 20 transit agencies and 7 MPOs we visited were not aware of the LEP guidance. Of the agencies that were aware of the guidance, only 3 had changed their language access activities in response to it, and only 1 transit agency appeared to have fully implemented the five-step framework. DOT and DOJ have also provided other types of assistance on language access services—such as workshops, a DOJ-sponsored interagency Web site, and other resources—but most of the transit agencies and MPOs we visited had not accessed these resources. Officials at transit agencies and MPOs we visited stated that training and technical assistance that is widely available, and specific to language access and how to implement DOT's LEP guidance, could help them more effectively provide access to LEP populations.

DOT's LEP Guidance Provides Steps to Meaningful Access, but DOT Took Limited Steps to Make Grantees Aware of Guidance

DOT's 2001 LEP guidance outlines five steps funding recipients should take to provide meaningful access for LEP persons, including (1) conducting an assessment of the language groups within their service areas and the language needs of these groups; (2) developing and implementing written plans outlining their strategies for ensuring access to services for LEP populations; (3) making staff aware of the LEP access plan, training them, and providing them with the tools necessary to carry out the plan; (4) ensuring that language access services are actually provided in a consistent manner and that LEP populations are aware of these services; and (5) developing monitoring programs that allow agencies to assess the success of their LEP access programs and to identify needed modifications. The guidance gives some information on how to implement the framework and examples of promising practices. For example, the guidance lists components that a written plan should generally include, although it does not provide examples of such a plan.

DOT made its guidance available to its funding recipients through the *Federal Register*, its Web site,[28] and the DOJ interagency Web site; however, DOT headquarters officials did not distribute the guidance through any other direct method to ensure that grantees were aware of it, such as through a policy memorandum or other outreach to grantees. According to a DOT official, DOT relies on its operating agencies to make grantees aware of the guidance, and, in turn, these operating agencies may rely on regional representatives to make grantees aware of the guidance. In the areas we visited, however, FTA regional representatives had not disseminated the guidance or made grantees in their areas aware of the guidance. Staff turnover in DOT's agencies, as well as in local transit agencies and MPOs, likely complicate agency awareness of the guidance, since newer employees may not be aware of documents issued years earlier. Although, according to a DOT official, DOT has not done much to reinforce awareness of the guidance, or grantees' responsibilities under it, since its original publication in the *Federal Register* in 2001.

As a result, the majority of officials we visited during our site visits who are primarily responsible for implementing aspects of DOT's guidance were not aware of the guidance. Some of the officials we visited who were aware of the guidance had not made significant changes in response to it. Rather

[28]DOT's guidance is available electronically on FTA's Web site under "Transit Data & Info" and then "Title VI policy, Guidance & Procedures," and through FHWA's Civil Rights Office Web site under "Non-Discrimination."

than citing DOT's guidance, officials at the transit agencies and MPOs we visited indicated that they provide language access activities in response to their customer base and demographics, as a result of the Environmental Justice initiative,[29] or as a result of requests from community groups or board members. Officials at many transit agencies and MPOs we visited said they had been providing language access services for many years prior to the executive order and DOT's guidance. Other officials indicated that they were not sure what their responsibilities were under the guidance.

Of the 9 transit agencies and 3 MPOs we visited that were aware of DOT's guidance, only 2 transit agencies and 1 MPO made changes to their languages access activities as a result. Examples of agency responses to the guidance include the following:

- The Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District developed an inventory of its language access activities, with several proposals for improving language access services that are now being implemented.

- The Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the San Francisco Bay Area indicated that, while it had not significantly changed its practices as a result of the guidance, it had increased its efforts.

- The Chicago Transit Authority formed a committee to examine LEP issues after the release of the guidance in 2001. This committee determined the languages spoken in its service area from Census data and has discussed the idea of implementing a survey to determine what language needs exist. No current plan or timeline for developing or implementing the proposed survey exists.

[29]Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," issued on February 11, 1994, directed every federal agency to make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing the effects of all programs, policies, and activities on "minority populations and low-income populations." DOT's environmental justice initiatives accomplish this goal by involving the potentially affected public in developing transportation projects that fit harmoniously within their communities without sacrificing safety or mobility. There are three fundamental environmental justice principles, which are to (1) avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations; (2) ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process; and (3) prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

Officials from the California, North Carolina, and Texas state departments of transportation reported that they had begun to monitor their small urban and rural grantees' LEP activities as a result of the executive order and DOT's guidance. As a result, some materials have been provided to grantees about their responsibilities under the guidance.[30]

Some of the transit agencies and MPOs we visited told us that technical assistance and information would be helpful in implementing DOT's guidance, and 1 transit agency cited a lack of funds and time to conduct an assessment of language access needs and to provide and evaluate language access activities. For example, an MPO in North Carolina said it would benefit from the ability to easily access practical resources on language access services for LEP persons. In addition, agency officials at a transit agency in California told us that an example of a needs assessment—with estimates of the cost to conduct one and effective ways to outreach to LEP persons—would be very helpful. A DOT official told us that, in anticipation of issuing DOT's revised guidance, additional training and assistance was being considered within DOT.

[30]The California Department of Transportation has developed a written department policy for LEP persons. The intent of the policy is to ensure departmental employees are aware that LEP persons shall be provided meaningful access to the department's programs, activities, and services that are normally provided in English. In addition to the draft policy for LEP, the department is in the process of finalizing "standard" LEP office procedures for the various program areas and districts to use. Finally, the department developed an LEP training module, which includes requirements under state law (Dymally-Alatorre Bi-lingual Services Act of 1973); federal law (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); and Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." This training module will be used to inform departmental staff of LEP requirements and assist them to ensure that the regulatory requirements are met. Process reviews of program areas will be conducted in conjunction with Title VI reviews to determine the level of compliance; corrective action, if necessary; and best practices.

Other Federal Resources Address Language Access Issues to Varying Degrees, but They Are Not Frequently Used by Grantees

DOT's Workshops at Conferences and Federal Web Sites Provide Some Assistance on DOT's LEP Guidance

FTA and FHWA have hosted a few workshops at annual conferences[31] that have provided assistance on how to implement portions of the framework described in the guidance.[32] Presentations held by FTA and FHWA reviewed the LEP executive order, and DOT's LEP guidance, and provided workshop participants with real-world LEP information, including how to identify LEP populations in their service areas. For example, workshops included the following:

- Strategies for Complying with FHWA LEP Requirements, was held at the Southern Transportation Civil Rights Conference in Orlando in August 2005.[33] This training identified strategies to ensure that LEP persons have access to programs, services, and information through the application of DOT's guidance. In addition to this presentation, a "train the trainer" curriculum was developed regarding LEP awareness.[34] Training attendees were provided with a manual with resources on providing language access, which included DOT's guidance, language

[31]Since 2003, FTA and FHWA have held workshops that specifically address language issues in the context of the guidance at conferences held by the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and the Community Transportation Association of America.

[32]The North Carolina State Department of Transportation became aware of DOT's LEP guidance through a 2-day workshop on Civil Rights and Environmental Justice, which was given by FHWA at the department's request.

[33]According to the FHWA official, the presentation should soon be available on FHWA's Civil Rights Web site. Additionally, this official told us the presentation will be shared with others via FHWA's internal Community of Practice Web site.

[34]This curriculum was developed for Maryland state employees to assist them in implementing a proposed law on language access. The Maryland State Senate Bill requires state departments, agencies, or programs to take reasonable steps to provide equal access to public services for LEP individuals, which includes the translation of forms and documents ordinarily provided to the public into any language spoken by any LEP population that constitutes 3 percent of the overall population within the geographic area served by a local office of a state department, agency, or program.

identification flash cards, language statistical data, language assistance self-assessment tools, and commonly asked questions and answers.

- Fair Transportation: Incorporating Equity Concerns into Transit Planning and Operations, presented to the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials by FTA's Office of Civil Rights, occurred in July 2005. This presentation discussed the changing demographics and growing multicultural nature of the American population and the increase in the number of LEP persons nationwide. FTA staff summarized the requirements of DOT's LEP guidance, and recommended that transit agencies incorporate attention to the needs of LEP persons into elements of their routine planning and operations, such as their complaint procedures, marketing, customer surveys, and community outreach.

- LEP: A Lesson in Redefining Public Involvement was given at the 2003 Conference of Minority Transportation Officials National Meeting and Training Conference. This presentation provided information about the LEP executive order and DOT's guidance, and used real-world examples to illustrate the complications an agency may face as a result of not providing information to LEP populations during the planning process. The presentation also defined compliance with the LEP executive order by listing important components in DOT's guidance (i.e., a needs assessment, a written language assistance plan, language assistance, and monitoring).

- How to Identify LEP Populations in Your Locality was given by FHWA at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' 2004 Civil Rights Conference. This presentation also provided information on the LEP executive order; DOT's guidance; and specific information about what resources can be used to identify LEP populations, which is the first step of conducting a needs assessment. For example, the presentation highlighted using Census and state departments of education data to identify the size and location of LEP populations. This presentation is available on FHWA's Civil Rights Web site.

Besides offering workshops, DOT also participates in the Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited-English Proficiency, which provides resources to federal grantees mainly through its Web site, http://www.lep.gov. The resources available on the Web site are generally not specific to transportation, with the exception of DOT's LEP guidance

and a multilingual video on using public transit, "Making Public Transit Work for You," which was produced by the Contra Costa Commute Alternative Network. The Web site, which is maintained by DOJ, serves as a clearinghouse by providing and linking information; tools; and technical assistance about LEP and language services for federal agencies, recipients of federal funds, users of federal programs and federally assisted programs, and other stakeholders. While most of the information on the Web site is not specifically about transportation, some of it could be applicable to transit agencies. For example, the Web site contains a variety of tools—including a self-assessment—to help local agencies assess their current language services and plan for the provision of additional language assistance to LEP individuals. The Web site also provides an overview of how to develop a language assistance plan, and it contains performance measures, such as a measure of the extent of ongoing feedback from the community, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of LEP activities. In addition, there is a video on the Web site regarding LEP access issues that could be used in training for customer service personnel at transit agencies. FTA's Title VI Web page provides a link to this Web site.

Other DOT Resources Have Few Language Access Activities or Touch on Language Issues in a Broader Context

FTA and FHWA have two peer-exchange programs through which local agencies can share innovative or effective practices on various topics that have sometimes included language access. FTA's peer-exchange program, called Innovative Practices for Increased Ridership, and FTA and FHWA's collaborative peer-exchange program, called the Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, allow agencies to easily share information over the Internet. FTA's Innovative Practices Web site serves as a central information resource for innovative strategies on various topics. Innovative practices are submitted by transit organizations and reviewed by FTA, and these practices are then made available for other transit organizations to search records, review innovations, and potentially implement similar programs. A search of FTA's Innovative Practices Web site revealed some assistance on language access issues. In one example, a transit agency in Maine created a multilingual brochure that provided basic information about riding its bus service in eight languages, including Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Russian, Khmer, Somali, Vietnamese, French, and English, and plans to translate the brochure into six more languages, including Farsi, Arabic, Acholi, Swahili, Chinese, and Bulgarian. The transit agency credits this effort with increasing its ridership.

The Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program[35] provides resources to local agencies through its Web site, where users can search various topics to find out if any other agency has posted helpful information on those topics. LEP resources are not directly available through an explicit link on this Web site. However, a search of the program's Web site under Title VI and Environmental Justice issues revealed some assistance on language access. For example, the materials from a workshop called Identifying and Engaging Low Literacy and Limited English Proficiency populations in the Transportation Decision-making Process, which was held in Atlanta in May 2004, was made available to users on the Web site. The workshop refers to the LEP executive order and describes innovative and effective practices that some agencies have employed to improve awareness among communities and transportation planning agencies of the existence of low-literacy and LEP populations in their areas.

FTA and FHWA also provide federal grantees with training and technical assistance—through the National Transit Institute (NTI) and the National Highway Institute (NHI), respectively—that address language access issues to some extent in training on other subjects, such as public participation in the transportation planning process. Funded by grants from FTA, NTI provides training, education, and clearinghouse services in support of public transportation. Representatives from NTI identified five training courses in which language issues were discussed in the broader context of other issues. [36] In addition, NTI is developing a course for transit employees that will specifically address cross-cultural communications, including tips for overcoming language barriers, such as speaking slowly, being patient, and not using slang words. NHI also provides training, resource materials, and technical assistance to the transportation community, although, like NTI training, language issues are addressed as they relate to the course content. An official from NHI identified two training courses in which language issues were discussed. An example is NHI's course called Fundamentals of Title VI/Environmental Justice, in which LEP issues are woven into the course materials. The training gives examples of outreach

[35]The Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program is designed to help decision makers, transportation officials, and staffs resolve the increasingly complex issues they face when addressing transportation needs in their communities.

[36]In addition to the five courses identified, 1 transit agency in North Carolina cited an NTI training course, entitled Customers, Conflicts, and You: A Transit Operators Guide to Problem Solving, in which language was discussed.

done by various agencies, which includes providing meeting materials and flyers in Spanish. Another course, entitled Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision Making, describes the importance of including LEP populations in the planning process; provides suggestions on effective ways to reach out to LEP populations, such as through community groups and informal meetings; and outlines ways to continue communication with LEP groups once a connection has been established. For example, the training states that providing translated materials and interpreters at meetings is essential in reaching non-English speakers. NHI and NTI representatives told us that they are working to combine their relevant training courses on public involvement in the transportation planning process into one course.

Other Available Federal Resources Are Rarely Used by Grantees

The majority of transit agencies and MPOs we visited did not access the federal resources previously discussed because many officials were unaware that these resources exist. Only a few agencies we visited had reported attending workshops held at annual conferences on language access issues,[37] and no agency we met with had reported accessing information available through http://www.lep.gov. Furthermore, statistics on the number of Internet users that accessed LEP resources on the Web-based peer-exchange programs indicate that these resources are not accessed often in comparison to other resources on those Web sites. A few transit agencies we visited were aware of or had accessed the NTI training entitled Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making, which includes a section on ensuring that nontraditional participants—that is, minority, low-income, and LEP populations—are included in the public involvement process associated with transportation planning.

[37]We did not review overall attendance at these workshops to determine the extent to which this information was accessed by transit agencies nationwide, but rather we focused on whether the agencies we visited were aware of the resources that DOT provides.

Three Review Processes Provide Limited Monitoring of Language Access Activities, and Criteria for Finding a Deficiency Are Inconsistent

Language access activities of transit agencies and MPOs are monitored through three review processes—FTA's Title VI compliance reviews, FTA's triennial reviews, and planning certification reviews conducted jointly by FTA and FHWA (described in table 1). However, these reviews do not fully take into account Executive Order 13166 or DOT's LEP guidance, and the criteria for finding a deficiency with regard to providing language access are inconsistent.

Table 1: FTA and FHWA Reviews

Type of review	Description and scope
Title VI compliance review	A Title VI compliance review is conducted to determine if the grantee's required efforts under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are represented to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This review lasts 2 to 3 days and assesses implementation of Title VI programs in areas such as general reporting requirements, service standards and policies, and language access. This review covers each agency's policies, procedures, and record keeping related to Civil Rights and Title VI.
Triennial review	The triennial review is a periodic process review that is conducted at least once every 3 years for each formula grant recipient. The results of the triennial review are integrated into FTA's grant management functions and ultimately serve as the basic review of FTA's comprehensive oversight program. Although it is broad in scope, the triennial review is the only FTA review that is statutorily mandated.
Planning certification review	The planning certification review occurs at least once every 4 years in all Transportation Management Areas, which are metropolitan areas that have a population that exceeds 200,000 people. Unlike the aforementioned reviews, the planning certification review is conducted jointly by FTA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The objective of this review is to enhance the effectiveness of federal oversight of the transportation planning process. The planning certification review process includes a desk review, on-site interviews with all participants in the planning process, and input from the public. The review concludes with a final report of findings and recommendations, which is intended to provide an overview of the planning process and identify areas where FTA and FHWA need to provide guidance or direction to the process.

Source: GAO.

The Title VI compliance review[38]—an in-depth review of a limited number of transit agencies, MPOs, and state DOTs—does not assess language access activities using the LEP guidance, but rather assesses them using guidelines in an FTA circular, which asks agencies to describe the language access they provide.[39] However, the circular does not provide agencies with a framework, and does not have much specificity regarding what agencies should provide in terms of language access. FTA officials told us that the circular is used for the compliance review because it is a requirement for agencies, while agencies are not required to implement all aspects of DOT's LEP guidance. The officials further stated that they have considered including more aspects of DOT's guidance in the compliance review.

We reviewed Title VI compliance reviews completed between 2002 and 2004 and found that the scope of these reviews of language access activities varied, and may not assess local agencies' language activities across the entire breadth of communication strategies previously outlined in this report. For example, in one review, an agency was found deficient because it did not have safety and emergency information translated, yet in other reviews it was unclear whether safety and emergency information was included in the scope of the review. Furthermore, the scope of the multilingual communications portions of the Title VI compliance reviews has varied on the basis of the primary objective of the endeavor. Some of these reviews considered only the extent to which language assistance was provided to persons wanting to involve themselves in the transit system's planning and decision-making processes because the scope of the reviews focused solely on these processes. Other reviews evaluated only the extent to which language assistance was provided to persons wanting to use the

[38]Since 2002, FTA has conducted roughly six compliance reviews per year of transit providers, state DOTs, or MPOs, final reports from these reviews are available on FTA's Title VI Web page. See http://www.fta.dot.gov/16241_ENG_HTML.htm. FTA identifies recipients for review on the basis of complaints against the recipient, media reports, recommendations of regional civil rights officials, outstanding findings on past triennial reviews, and FTA's desire to review both smaller and larger grantees in areas around the country.

[39]Recipients of FTA funding assistance are subject to the Title VI compliance conditions associated with the use of these funds pursuant to FTA Circular 4704.1, "Title VI Program Guidelines for Grant Recipients," dated July 26, 1988; Part II, Section 117(a) of the FTA Agreement; and FTA Circular 4702.1, "Title VI Program Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients," dated May 26, 1988. The program guidelines of FTA Circular 4702.1 define the components that must be addressed and incorporated in the recipients' Title VI Program and are the basis for the selection of compliance elements that are reviewed in FTA discretionary reviews.

transit system. Table 2 provides examples of deficiency findings related to language access from these Title VI reviews.

Table 2: Language Access Deficiencies Found through Title VI Compliance Reviews

Agency	Type of review	Finding	Recommendation	Agency response
Chicago Transit Authority	Limited scope review – Review of Service/Fare Change	The agency did not adequately communicate information at public meetings in other languages.	The agency should improve its community outreach efforts to ensure that minority residents are heard.	The agency pledged to establish a public participation process that increases the number of public meetings and outreach to community organizations.
Metro St. Louis	Limited scope review – Review of Service/Fare Change	Review found that language access considerations may not have adequately been taken into account.	Review recommended that the agency evaluate whether there is a need for considering limited English-proficient (LEP) persons when disseminating information.	The agency indicated that it would prepare a written assessment of the need to address LEP needs. The assessment will include targeted surveys of operators and customers on routes known to serve immigrant populations, as well as interviews with advocacy groups, community groups, and human service agencies that serve immigrant populations.
New York City Transit	Full Title VI compliance review	Sampling of vehicles and facilities failed to confirm the consistent use of Spanish in safety and emergency evacuation procedures.	Within 90 days, the agency must submit to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) documentation that a Policy for Translating Customer Information Materials has been finalized and implemented.	The agency submitted its draft policy, which indicated it would translate safety notices into Spanish, and FTA accepted it. The agency also provided several examples in its quarterly progress reports of safety messages translated into Spanish.

Source: GAO review of Title VI compliance reviews, 2002-2004.

In March of 2003, FTA's Office of Civil Rights conducted a pilot Title VI compliance review of the Brownsville Urban System in Texas, specifically looking at the extent to which the agency had implemented DOT's LEP guidance. This pilot was initiated as part of a refocusing of Title VI compliance reviews on more specific issues within Title VI, including multilingual communications, fare increases, service changes, and equitable allocation of resources. Brownsville was selected by FTA's Office of Civil Rights for the pilot assessment for multilingual communication because of its large Spanish-speaking community.[40] The assessment guidance used in the pilot incorporated sections of DOT's guidance in

[40]FTA's Office of Civil Rights informed us that they have plans to conduct a similar assessment of another entity in fiscal year 2006.

addition to the multilingual facilities section of the FTA circular used in other Title VI compliance reviews. The assessment focused on whether the Brownsville system had ensured meaningful access to LEP persons by assessing 11 different aspects of providing greater access to LEP persons. For example, the review focused on whether the agency had a needs assessment and a written language assistance plan; the agency's provision of language services (e.g., oral interpretation; written translations; and alternative, nonverbal methods); and its provision of language access to its grievance or complaint procedures. Brownsville was found deficient in 5 of the 11 areas, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Results of the Pilot LEP Review of the Brownsville Urban System in Texas

Area examined	Result of review	Recommendation
Needs assessment	Deficiency - overall assessment not conducted	Identify other language needs in the community
Assessment of linguistically isolated populations	Deficiency - assessment not conducted	Identify linguistically isolated populations during overall needs assessment
Identification of barriers	Deficiency - not conducted	Identify communication barriers during overall needs assessment
Written language assistance plan	Deficiency - language assistance plan not in writing	Draft written language assistance plan
Availability of multilingual communications	Deficiency - reasonable efforts to provide multilingual communications; however, several items found only in English	Translate the hours of operation and remaining information on the route schedules and system maps into Spanish
Staff training	No deficiency - staff aware of and understand language assistance plan	None
Special language assistance	No deficiency - adequate and effective methods for notification of language assistance	None
Monitoring	No deficiency - regular oversight provided	Use passenger survey for additional feedback
Types of language services	No deficiency - adequate mix of oral interpretation and written translations	Consider the use of alternative, nonverbal methods of communication
Grievance or complaint procedures	No deficiency - adequate complaint procedure in place	Put complaint procedure in writing
Limited English-proficient community outreach and education	No deficiency - adequate community outreach	None

Source: GAO review of the Brownsville Pilot Title VI Assessment on Language Access.

FTA's Office of Civil Rights has also recently developed an initiative that focuses on fare and service changes, but FTA's advice to agencies related to this initiative has not always been consistent. While this initiative is based on the Executive Order on Environmental Justice, it does include an LEP component. In 2004, FTA developed and disseminated a self-assessment (also posted on the FTA's Title VI Web site) to about 20 transit agencies considering fare and service changes. This assessment included questions about the public involvement process and asked the transit agency whether it believed outreach to the LEP population was warranted, and, if so, what steps the transit agency had taken or was planning to take to inform its LEP population about the service or fare changes and to offer this population the chance to comment on the changes. The majority of the agencies that returned this self-assessment reported that they had taken steps to reach out to their LEP populations using methods similar to those previously noted in this report, such as posting information about the upcoming fare

increases in multiple languages in vehicles and stations, advertising the changes in other-language newspapers, and including interpreters at public meetings established to discuss the changes. Several of the transit agencies responding to this initiative stated that they had not engaged in LEP outreach because the number and proportion of LEP persons in their service areas were very small (i.e., less than 1 percent). For 1 agency, FTA encouraged the agency to conduct a further assessment of the LEP population, even though the agency reported that only 119 residents in its service area (less than ½ of 1 percent) did not speak English well. Yet, in another location, where the agency reported that only ½ of 1 percent of the service area population was LEP, FTA encouraged the transit agency to monitor demographic trends to determine whether limited English proficiency may become more relevant in the future, rather than conduct a further assessment.

Another of the review processes, the triennial review, looks at whether transit agencies that receive Urbanized Area Formula Grants have complied with statutory and administrative requirements in 23 areas, one of which is Title VI.[41] Because this review covers a wide variety of activities and federal requirements, it is not as in-depth with regard to Title VI as Title VI compliance reviews. However, the triennial review serves as the basic review of FTA's oversight program. Under the Title VI section of the triennial review, specific questions make reference to DOT's LEP guidance: "Has the grantee assessed and addressed the ability of persons with limited English proficiency to use transit services? Are schedules and other public information provided in languages other than English? If yes, what other languages are provided?" In the triennial review, the grantee is found deficient only if a complaint has been made and the grantee has not conducted an assessment of the population and the need for LEP materials. However, several community and advocacy groups we met with indicated that there may be language barriers to making a complaint, and, as we previously discussed, there may be different cultural or social norms that preclude LEP persons from making complaints (i.e., some persons may feel

[41]The triennial review focuses on compliance with statutory and administrative requirements, and, should the review reveal a deficiency on the part of the grantee to comply with Title VI—or any other of the 23 oversight topics—further and more detailed reviews will follow to ensure continued adherence to federal standards. In addition, grantees found not to be in compliance may have their funding reduced or eliminated. FTA conducts this review with some of its own personnel, but it also uses several contractors to complete the review.

that it is not their place to question the government, or may feel uncomfortable doing so).

Because a deficiency is found only if a complaint has been made and the agency has not conducted an assessment, findings of deficiencies are rare; although our case studies and the New Jersey survey of transit agencies suggest that most agencies have not conducted a language needs assessment.[42] We reviewed 34 triennial reviews conducted in fiscal year 2005 that identified one or more deficiencies in the area of Title VI and found only one deficiency related to LEP. In 2005, the Fayetteville Area System of Transit was found deficient for not conducting an assessment of the extent to which there are LEP persons in its service area. Within 90 days, the agency was to provide FTA with documentation that it had conducted an LEP assessment and with information on the steps it would take to address any needs identified.

The third of the three review processes that monitor language access activities is the planning certification review, which looks at how well state and regional planning processes comply with DOT planning regulations.[43] This review is conducted jointly by FTA and FHWA and is also not as in-depth with regard to Title VI as Title VI compliance reviews. One section of the review guidelines is directed at LEP issues with regard to public participation in the planning process, but the review does not incorporate the LEP guidance. The section states that agencies should "if necessary, make available communications for the hearing impaired and provide sign and foreign language interpreters." It is not clear what constitutes a deficiency in these reviews, and during the past 2 years, there have been no deficiency findings regarding language.

In addition to the review processes, FTA investigates Title VI complaints filed by the public alleging national origin discrimination against LEP persons. These investigations focus on whether a recipient has taken reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to LEP persons. However,

[42]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*, p. 32.

[43]DOT prepares review guidelines for reviewers at the regional level. These reviewers may modify their review questions on the basis of regional differences. Every state and regional planning process is reviewed every 3 years. Of the approximately 400 MPOs across the country, only the largest one-third of them (in areas with populations over 200,000) is subject to formal certification. The remaining agencies are required to self-certify. Over a 3-year period, about 130 to 140 regional planning processes are reviewed.

FTA has received only one complaint related to language access to date. The complaint—which was made by West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.,[44] against New York City Transit in November 2000—stated that no opportunity had been given for community groups to comment on New York City Transit's capital plan to construct additional bus parking facilities next to an existing bus depot. The complaint further stated that the capital plan was not published in Spanish and no monolingual Spanish-speaking resident of northern Manhattan was afforded the opportunity to comment on the capital plan. New York City Transit noted that since Executive Order 13166 and the LEP guidance were issued after the development of its 2000-2004 capital program, there was no requirement to issue the plan in any language other than English at that time. FTA responded that although the executive order and the LEP guidance were issued subsequent to the issuance of the plan, New York City Transit should have provided language access under its 1988 Circular on Multilingual Facilities. In resolving the complaint, FTA requested (1) copies of Spanish translations of public hearing notices and summaries of the capital program and (2) a report on what steps New York City Transit had taken to involve the public, including minority, low-income, and LEP populations, in its 2005-2009 capital planning process. FTA closed its investigation of this complaint in letters of finding transmitted in January 2005.

Conclusions

Transit agencies and MPOs across the country are providing a wide variety of language access services. Determining and providing reasonable and effective language access to transportation services, however, is not a clear-cut matter. To do so, an agency must have a strong understanding of the size and location of the LEP community in its area as well as the information needs of this community, although such assessments are rarely done. The agency must then deal with a whole host of issues, such as determining which language access services to provide and in what quantity, how translations are to be accomplished, where such materials or services are best distributed, and how such materials and services are best publicized to the LEP communities. For agencies in very diverse areas, the challenges grow exponentially. Specifically, some of the questions they may need to address are as follows: How many languages should materials and services be translated into? Is there a threshold with regard to the size or

[44]West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc., is a nonprofit, community-based, environmental justice organization dedicated to building community power to fight environmental racism and improve environmental health, protection, and policy in communities of color.

proportion of different language groups before translations should be provided? Will translated signs be too complex for transit users to effectively use? Will the costs of translations, telephone, and Web services be burdensome, given the relatively light use some of these services may receive? Furthermore, providing language access is just one part of a larger communication strategy for these agencies, which can include determining how to provide useful information in English, how to communicate with the hearing or sight impaired, or how to deal with communication to persons with cognitive disabilities. One clear need in all of these instances is for agencies to outreach to these various communities and work in partnership to determine and meet a variety of information needs.

DOT's LEP guidance, and many of the available federal resources, can provide some assistance to transit agencies and MPOs when facing these challenges and making decisions about the level of language access to provide; however, the absence of local agency awareness of the existence of these resources limits their usefulness. In addition, for some transit agencies and MPOs, the available assistance was not effective in helping them answer some of the difficult questions previously outlined, because the assistance does not provide much information on what a good language and needs assessment contains, or how one is done. It also does not provide templates or examples of effective language access plans, nor does it provide much help in determining how to monitor and judge the effectiveness of agencies' language access activities. Given the lack of data available on the effectiveness of services, the availability of such assistance takes on greater importance. More direct dissemination of the LEP guidance and available assistance, and the development of additional assistance related to conducting assessments, developing plans, and monitoring the effectiveness of language access activities could help connect local agencies with information and resources that may help them improve access to their services for LEP persons.

While complaints concerning language access are rare, transit agencies' and MPOs' language access efforts are often perceived by community groups to be lacking in certain areas, particularly with regard to the inclusion of such communities in decision-making processes, thus opening up the potential for further complaints against these agencies for not providing reasonable language access. At present, however, monitoring and oversight activities conducted by FTA and, to a lesser extent, FHWA, are not likely to remedy perceived gaps in the provision of language access, due to the inconsistencies in scope and criteria for what constitutes a deficiency. For example, one of the chief complaints of community groups

is the lack of involvement of LEP communities or the community groups that represent them, in decision-making processes; however, planning certification reviews do not look at involvement per se, but rather they focus on whether interpreters were provided at public meetings "if necessary." Furthermore, FTA's pilot review of language access, which used DOT's LEP guidance, revealed several deficiencies that would not have been found under current review processes, and these deficiencies can commonly be found across countless numbers of agencies. It is important, though, to consider that findings of deficiency, such as those found under the pilot review, do not necessarily indicate that an agency has been discriminatory. Nonetheless, further incorporation of key aspects of DOT's LEP guidance in existing review processes and consistent criteria for what constitutes a deficiency could help transit agencies and MPOs understand their responsibilities under the executive order and DOT's LEP guidance and lead to improved services for LEP persons.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To improve awareness and understanding of DOT funding recipients' responsibilities to provide language access services, we recommend that, upon final issuance of DOT's LEP guidance, the Secretary of the Department of Transportation ensure that the guidance is distributed to all DOT funding recipients through a policy memorandum or other direct methods and direct regional personnel to make grantees in their areas fully aware of the existence of the guidance, and of grantee responsibilities under the guidance.

To enhance and improve transit agencies' and MPOs' language access activities, we recommend that the Secretary, when issuing DOT's revised LEP guidance, take the following two actions:

- Provide additional technical assistance, such as templates or examples, to aid these agencies in developing assessments of the size, location, and needs of the LEP population; plans for implementing language access services; and evaluations of the effectiveness of agencies' language access services.

- Publicize the availability of existing federal resources on LEP issues, including workshops, http://www.lep.gov, peer-exchange programs, and available training to transit agencies and MPOs, and make these resources easily accessible through an explicit link to LEP Assistance on the Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program's Web site.

To ensure that transit agencies and MPOs understand their responsibilities to provide language access, and to ensure that they are providing adequate language access to their services and their transportation planning and decision-making processes, we recommend that the Secretary more fully incorporate the revised LEP guidance into current review processes by taking the following three actions:

- Include questions on whether agencies have conducted assessments, have language access plans, and have evaluation and monitoring mechanisms in place in Title VI compliance reviews and triennial reviews.
- Include more specific questions regarding language access to the planning process and involvement of LEP communities in planning certification reviews.
- Establish consistent norms for what constitutes a deficiency in the provision of language access across and within these review processes, ensuring that what constitutes a deficiency could directly lead to lesser service for LEP persons or complaints against the agency.

Agency Comments

We obtained comments on a draft of this report from DOT officials who generally agreed with the findings and recommendations in the report. These officials also provided technical clarifications, which we incorporated in the report as appropriate. In particular, the officials said that DOT is already planning to take actions to address some of our recommendations, including ensuring that its revised LEP guidance is fully and appropriately distributed, and enhancing its training and technical assistance to grantees.

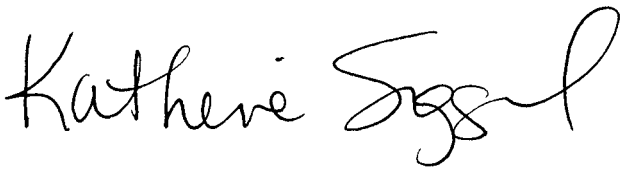
We also provided DOJ with an opportunity to comment on segments of the report that pertain to DOJ processes and policies. DOJ provided technical clarifications, which we incorporated in the report as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees and to the Secretary and other appropriate officials of the Department of Transportation. We will also make copies available to others upon request. The report will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at http://www.gao.gov. In addition, translated summaries of this report in

Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean will be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at http://www.gao.gov/special.pubs/translations.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-2834 or at siggerudk@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made major contributions to this report are listed in appendix III.

Sincerely yours,



Katherine Siggerud
Director, Physical Infrastructure

Scope and Methodology

To determine the types of language access services that transit agencies and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) provide to limited English-proficiency (LEP) populations, we visited seven metropolitan statistical areas in Arkansas, California, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas. We used U.S. Census Bureau data to select site visit locations, on the basis of the size and proportion of the LEP population, the number of languages spoken, the growth of the LEP population, and the extent of public transit use, to capture a variety of different circumstances agencies may face in providing language access services. We eliminated from our site visits areas that had recently had in-depth reviews by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), as well as agencies that had been highlighted in a recent report for best practices in providing LEP access, to broaden the limited amount of research and data available in this area. Notable areas eliminated from our potential site visits for these reasons included New York, New York; Washington, D.C.; Portland, Oregon; and Seattle, Washington.[1] The relevant statistics for the seven areas we visited are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Census Data on Language Ability and Transit Use for Seven Site Visit Locations

Metropolitan statistical area	Total population aged 5 years and over in 2000 that spoke English less than well	Percentage of population in 2000 that spoke English less than well	Percentage change in persons that spoke English less than well 1990-2000	Major languages spoken by the LEP population	Estimated percentage of LEP persons aged 16 years and over using public transportation[a]
Los Angeles/ Riverside/Orange County, California	2,024,765	12.4	30.0	Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean	14.5
San Francisco/ Oakland/San Jose, California	551,266	7.8	59.0	Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean	16.3
Chicago/Gary/ Kenosha, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin	522,238	5.7	75.0	Spanish, Polish, Chinese, and Korean	11.9
Austin/San Marcos, Texas	67,115	5.4	209.0	Spanish and Vietnamese	10.5

[1]For more information on the specific language access activities of the main transit agencies in these four areas, see Dr. Rongfang (Rachel) Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Travelers in New Jersey* (December 2004). Dr. Liu prepared this study for the New Jersey Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration.

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Metropolitan statistical area	Total population aged 5 years and over in 2000 that spoke English less than well	Percentage of population in 2000 that spoke English less than well	Percentage change in persons that spoke English less than well 1990-2000	Major languages spoken by the LEP population	Estimated percentage of LEP persons aged 16 years and over using public transportation[a]
Raleigh/Durham/ Chapel Hill, North Carolina	38,365	3.2	607.0	Spanish and Chinese	3.8
Greensboro/ Winston-Salem/ High Point, North Carolina	33,633	2.7	544.0	Spanish and Vietnamese	1.1
Fayetteville/ Springdale/ Rogers, Arkansas	9,621	3.1	1,892.0	Spanish and Vietnamese	0.0[b]

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

[a]All estimated percentages have margins of error not exceeding plus or minus 2.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

[b]At the time of the 2000 Census, transit service in this area was predominantly demand-response. Since then, Ozark Regional Transit has begun some limited fixed-route service.

We conducted semistructured interviews with officials from 20 transit agencies and 7 MPOs in these locations who were responsible for some facet of providing language access services. We interviewed officials from various departments, including operations, marketing, public affairs, community relations, training, civil rights, and planning. At smaller agencies, we interviewed the general managers as well as other agency officials. We chose agencies in each location according to their size and characteristics. For example, we interviewed the largest transit agency in each location, and where there were several transit agencies operating, we then interviewed the next largest agencies. In certain locations, such as the Southern California area and the San Francisco Bay Area, we were unable to interview all of the agencies in the area due to the large number of transit agencies. In these areas, we chose additional agencies on the basis of different operating characteristics. For example, in Los Angeles, California, we chose to interview the major provider of specialized transit services for persons with disabilities, whereas, in the San Francisco Bay Area, we chose a suburban bus system to complement the urban systems we were obtaining information on. We also interviewed officials from the major MPOs in areas we visited. In some cases, an MPO also may provide some level of transportation service. For example, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the San Francisco Bay Area operates the region's 511 transportation information lines. In these instances, we did not

count such agencies as transit agencies, but we included the services they provide in the appropriate section of this report.

We structured the agency interviews on the basis of the elements of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) LEP guidance and the findings of previous research and surveys conducted of the language access activities of transit agencies. During our interviews, we discussed the types of language access activities provided in terms of day-to-day transportation services and in the planning and decision-making process; we also discussed the costs and effects of these services. We also reviewed documents and other information in support of the language access services provided by transit agencies and MPOs.

We also interviewed representatives from 16 community and advocacy groups in the areas we visited as well as representatives from national advocacy groups, such as the National Council of La Raza, the Center for Community Change, and the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium. We chose groups in the locations we visited on the basis of recommendations from these national groups, FTA regional officials, transit agency officials, and our own research into the transportation issues in these areas. We structured these interviews in order to understand the perspectives of these community and advocacy groups with regard to how transit agencies and MPOs in the areas are providing access to their services to the communities these groups serve, and the effects of these services on meeting the needs of LEP communities. The agencies and groups we included in our interviews are listed in table 5.

Table 5: Transit Agencies, MPOs, and Community and Advocacy Groups Interviewed

Metropolitan statistical area	Agency or group name	Description
Los Angeles/ Riverside/Orange County, California	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority	The primary provider of bus, subway, and light-rail transit services within the county of Los Angeles.
	Access Services	A paratransit service provider in the Southern California region.
	Orange County Transportation Authority	The second largest transit provider in Southern California, serving Orange County.
	Southern California Association of Governments	Metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) for the Southern California region.
	Los Angeles Busrider's Union	An organization in Los Angeles that seeks to promote environmentally sustainable public transportation for the entire population of Los Angeles.
	Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition	A grass roots organization that represents 35 other community-based organizations in Los Angeles, whose goal is to secure jobs and careers that offer communities living wages and ethical benefits.
	Center for Community Change	A social justice organization. Part of the center is the Transportation Equity Project that seeks to advance equity in transportation planning and policy.
	Asian Pacific American Legal Center	Provides Asian and Pacific Islander and other communities with multilingual, culturally sensitive services and legal education.
	Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	The frontline law firm for low-income people in Los Angeles.
	Africans in America Community Resource Center	A community group in South Los Angeles that represents Africans living in Southern California.
	South Asian Network	A grassroots, community-based organization dedicated to advancing the health, empowerment, and solidarity of persons of South Asian origin in Southern California.

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Metropolitan statistical area	Agency or group name	Description
San Francisco/ Oakland/San Jose, California	Municipal Transportation Agency	The primary provider of bus and rail transit services in the city of San Francisco.
	San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District	A regional rail transit provider serving the nine-county Bay Area.
	Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District	The primary bus transit provider in the city of Oakland and the counties of Alameda and Contra Costa.
	Golden Gate Transit	The primary bus transit provider in Marin County.
	Metropolitan Transportation Commission	MPO for the nine-county Bay Area.
	Chinatown Community Development Center	The center provides services in six work areas—programs, advocacy and organizing, planning, housing development, property management, and tenant services—and has done some work in the provision of public transportation in its community.
	Rescue MUNI	A transit advocacy organization for the city of San Francisco.
	Urban Habitat	An advocacy and organizing group that seeks to connect environmentalists, social justice advocates, government leaders, and the business community.
Chicago/Gary/ Kenosha, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin	Chicago Transit Authority	Chicago Transit Authority serves Chicago and 40 suburbs with its extensive train lines and bus routes.
	PACE Suburban Bus	The provider of bus service to Chicago's six-county suburbs.
	METRA Commuter Rail	The provider of commuter rail service between the downtown Chicago business district and the counties of Cook, DuPage, Lake, Will, McHenry, and Kane.
	Regional Transportation Authority	The financial oversight and regional planning body for the three public transit operators in northeastern Illinois: the Chicago Transit Authority, METRA commuter rail, and PACE suburban bus.
	Chicago Area Transportation Study	MPO for the northeastern Illinois region.
	Center for Neighborhood Technology	An advocacy group based in Chicago with a mission to invent and implement new tools and methods that create livable urban communities for everyone.
	Chicago Chinese Community Center	The primary community provider of services to Chicago Chinatown residents.

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Metropolitan statistical area	Agency or group name	Description
Austin/San Marcos, Texas	Capital Metro	The primary provider of bus transit services in the city of Austin.
	Capital Area Rural Transportation System	The provider of bus transit service in the counties of Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Travis, and Williamson.
	Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization	MPO for Williamson, Travis, and Hays counties.
	Just Transportation Alliances	An organization that seeks to organize people with disabilities, seniors, low-income individuals, and others for equitable transportation through state and local alliances.
	Poder (Bus Rider's Union)	A grass-roots organization that advocates for the Hispanic communities in Austin.
Fayetteville/ Springdale/ Rogers, Arkansas	Razorback Transit	The primary provider of bus transit services in the city of Fayetteville, with the vast majority of its ridership consisting of students and faculty at the University of Arkansas.
	Ozark Regional Transit, a public transit system managed by First Transit	The primary provider of bus transit and demand-response transit services, serving both the urban and rural areas of Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington counties.
	Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission	The designated MPO for transportation in northwest Arkansas.
	Rogers Community Support Center	A community center in Rogers, Arkansas, that provides information and assistance to members of the community.
Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Greensboro/ Winston-Salem/ High Point, North Carolina	Capital Area Transit	The provider of bus transit services in the city of Raleigh.
	Durham Area Transit Authority	The provider of bus and paratransit services, serving all parts of Durham, including Research Triangle Park.
	Chapel Hill Transit	The provider of bus transit services throughout the Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and University of North Carolina community.
	Triangle Transit Authority	The provider of regional bus transit services in Research Triangle Park, connecting to the cities of Raleigh and Chapel Hill.
	Greensboro Transit Authority	The primary provider of bus transit services in the city of Greensboro.
	Capital Area MPO	MPO for the Raleigh/Durham metropolitan area.
	Durham-Chapel Hill MPO	MPO for the western part of the Research Triangle Area.
	El Centro Hispano	A nonprofit, community-based organization based in Durham dedicated to Latino empowerment through education and leadership development.

Source: GAO.

We also conducted interviews with officials within the Texas, California, and North Carolina departments of transportation and conducted additional Internet research of state departments of transportation, to determine how these agencies were involved in providing or monitoring language access. Furthermore, we requested that the Community

Transportation Association of America, which operates a list-serve of Job Access and Reverse Commute grantees, send a query requesting that any grantees involved in providing language access services under those grants provide information on the types of services they offer. We received two responses from this query.

We complemented these case studies and interviews with findings from a survey of transit agencies across the country and surveys and focus groups with LEP persons in New Jersey conducted for the New Jersey Department of Transportation.[2] We reviewed the methodology of this study and found it to be sufficiently reliable for the purposes of our report. However, the results of the surveys and focus groups reported in this study cannot be generalized to the full universe of transit agencies or LEP persons. Rather, we used the findings in this study to provide additional information on the types of strategies that agencies use as well as the types of challenges that LEP populations face.

We synthesized the information we collected from the site visits, structured interviews, and the New Jersey study. We analyzed this information to identify major themes, commonalities, and differences in the level of language access provided by transit agencies and MPOs. We observed that almost all transit agencies and MPOs we visited provided some level of language access services, although levels varied across agencies and locations. Because these findings are based on a nonprobability sample of case studies and a survey of 32 transit agencies, they cannot be generalized to the full universe of transit agencies or MPOs across the country.[3] These case studies are meant to highlight the variety of different strategies agencies may use to improve communication with LEP persons, as well as key themes that emerge under various circumstances.

To understand how DOT assists local agencies in providing language access services, we interviewed officials at the Offices of Civil Rights in FTA and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), representatives from the National Transit Institute and the National Highway Institute, and DOT regional officials. During our interviews, we identified and discussed various resources available that may include information on language

[2]Liu, *Mobility Information Needs of LEP Travelers*.

[3]Results from nonprobability samples cannot be used to make inferences about a population because in a nonprobability sample, some elements of the population being studied have no chance or an unknown chance of being selected as part of the sample.

access activities, including training curricula and workshops. We interviewed officials from FHWA offices in California, Maryland, and New Jersey regarding some of their LEP activities, such as hosting workshops at annual conferences and other assistance they have provided grantees. We reviewed Executive Order 13166, the Department of Justice's (DOJ) and DOT's draft LEP guidance, other federal laws and regulations, and research related to providing access to services to LEP populations. We requested copies of identified trainings and reviewed them. We also identified and reviewed other various DOT resources and other federal resources to determine whether language access issues were addressed, including http://www.lep.gov and peer-exchange programs maintained by FTA and FHWA.

To understand the extent to which local agencies are accessing DOT's resources, we discussed with local agency officials their awareness and implementation of DOT's LEP guidance. We also discussed with these officials whether the agency has accessed DOT's resources and, if so, had the resources been helpful in the provision of language access activities. In addition, we reviewed Web statistics for materials available on the Internet for additional information on how often those materials were accessed.

To document how FTA and FHWA monitor transit agencies' and MPOs' provision of language access services for LEP populations, we interviewed officials from the FTA Office of Civil Rights; the FTA Office of Program Management; and FHWA's Office of Planning, Environment and Realty. We also interviewed FTA regional representatives from Arkansas, California, Illinois, North Carolina, and Texas. We reviewed oversight documents pertaining to Title VI compliance reviews, triennial reviews, and planning certification reviews to determine how language access is considered by these reviews (i.e., specific questions regarding language access activities) and to what degree these reviews incorporate DOT's LEP guidance. In addition, we collected available data on any findings from these reviews to analyze the extent to which norms have been developed for reviewers to determine whether deficiencies are found and reported. Furthermore, we reviewed the status and outcomes of LEP complaints.

We conducted our work from February 2005 through October 2005 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Resources Available on Providing Language Access for Transportation Services

Provision of Language Access Services

- *Executive Order 13166 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*: Executive Order 13166 was signed by President Clinton in 2000. It clarifies federal agencies and their grant recipients' responsibilities under Title VI, to make their services accessible to LEP populations.
http://usdoj.gov/crt/cor/Pubs/eolep.htm

- *DOT Guidance to Recipients on Special Language Services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Beneficiaries*: DOT's guidance was issued in 2001. It discusses strategies for providing services to LEP persons and outlines a five-step framework to an effective language access program as well as innovative practices.
http://usdoj.gov/crt/cor/lep/dotlep.htm

- *Federal Interagency Working Group on Limited-English Proficiency*: The http://www.lep.gov Web site, maintained by DOJ, serves as a clearinghouse, providing and linking information, tools, and technical assistance regarding LEP and language services for federal agencies, recipients of federal funds, and users of federal programs and federally assisted programs. The Web site includes a self-assessment tool and an overview of how to develop a language assistance plan with performance measures. There is also a video available from the Web site on LEP access issues that could be used in training for customer service personnel at transit agencies.
http://www.lep.gov

- *FTA Title VI Web site*: FTA's Title VI Web site provides information and resources on Title VI, including links to Executive Order 13166, DOT's LEP guidance, and http://www.lep.gov.
http://fta.dot.gov/16241_ENG_HTML.htm

- *FHWA Office of Civil Rights Web site*: FHWA's Office of Civil Rights Web site provides links to Title VI, Executive Order 13166, and DOT's LEP guidance.
http://fhwa.dot.gov/civilrights/nondis.htm

- *Workshop entitled* How to Identify Limited English Proficient (LEP) Populations in Your Locality: This workshop was given by FHWA at the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official's 2004 Civil Rights Conference. The workshop provides information on the LEP executive order, DOT's LEP guidance, and specific information

about what resources can be used to identify LEP populations.
http://fhwa.dot.gov/civilrights/confworkshops04.htm

- *FTA's Innovative Practices to Increase Ridership*: The Web site serves as a central information resource on innovative strategies on various topics. Innovative practices are submitted by transit organizations, reviewed by FTA, and are then made available for other transit organizations to search records, review innovations, and potentially implement similar programs. Innovative practices regarding language access services are available.
http://ftawebprod.fta.dot.gov/bpir/

- *FTA and FHWA's Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program*: Users can search various topics to find out if like sized or any type of agency has posted any helpful information on those topics. Information regarding language access services is available.
http://planning.dot.gov/

- *National Transit Institute course entitled* Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making: This course includes is a section on ensuring that nontraditional participants, that is, minority, low-income, and LEP populations are included in the public involvement process that is associated with transportation planning.
http://ntionline.com/

- *National Highway Institute course entitled* Fundamentals of Title VI/Environmental Justice and Public Involvement in the Transportation Decision-Making Process: These courses include a discussion on language access issues in the planning process.
http://nhi.fhwa.dot.gov/

- *Caltrans Title VI Web site*: Caltrans' Title VI Web site includes information and resources on Title VI and links to FHWA's Office of Civil Rights training resources, the Web site for the Civil Rights Division of DOJ, and lep.gov. In addition, there are three training videos available for free, one specifically on the language assistance for LEP persons.
http://dot.ca.gov/hq/bep/title_vi/t6_index.htm

- *Mobility Information Needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Travelers in New Jersey*: A report written by Dr. Rongfang (Rachel) Liu, prepared for the New Jersey Department of Transportation/Federal

Highway Administration. December 2004.
http://transportation.njit.edu/nctip/final_report/LEP.htm

Community Involvement in Transportation Planning

- *The Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process: Key Issues: A Briefing Notebook for Transportation Decisionmakers, Officials, and Staff*: Published by the Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program, this document has information on public participation, including sections on Title VI and Environmental Justice.
http://planning.dot.gov/documents/BriefingBook/BBook.htm

- *Public Involvement Techniques for Transportation Decision-Making*: Published by FHWA, this document discusses public involvement techniques for transportation decision making for ethnic, minority, and low-income groups, such as including community groups that may provide access to individuals and can serve as forums for participation.
http://fhwa.dot.gov/reports/pittd/contents.htm

- *Final report September 2002: Title VI Challenge Grant from the Federal Transit Administration to the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board*: This report outlines recommendations for how to include communities not typically involved in the transportation planning process. Included in the report is a discussion concerning LEP issues.
http://planning.dot.gov/Documents/EnvJustice/EJFinalReport.htm

- *Innovations in Public Involvement for Transportation Planning*: This document discusses techniques for getting the public involved in transportation planning, such as using surveys with questions in languages other than English and accessible to persons with disabilities.
http://ntl.bts.gov/DOCS/trans.html

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