

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PLAN

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons refers to persons for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. It includes people who reported to the U.S. Census that they speak English less than very well, not well, or not at all.

In order to comply with DOT's LEP policy guidance and Executive Order 13166, this section outlines the reasonable steps the Authority will take to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important portions of Airport programs and activities by individuals who may be considered LEP.

Pursuant to Department of Justice and Department of Transportation guidance, the Authority conducted a four-factor analysis to determine the specific language services appropriate to provide, and to whom, to inform language assistance planning and determine if Authority communication with LEP persons is effective. The following section summarizes the results of the four-factor analysis.

1. Number of LEP persons likely to be encountered by an Airport program, activity, or service.

The Authority finds that the principal LEP population of concern is ticketed passengers traveling on commercial airlines at the Grand Junction Regional Airport.

The Authority used the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey database to determine the number of LEP individuals in the following Colorado Counties that utilize the Airport on a regular basis: Mesa (location of the Airport), Garfield, and Delta. Of the 75,491 residents in this data set, 16.1% speak languages other than English at home, with the predominant non-English language being Spanish (13.9%). Of the population that speaks a language other than English, only 6.3% are identified as speaking English "less than very well."

Grand Junction Regional Airport is not an international airport. The Airport offers eight daily commercial flights to Denver and other major cities in the Southwest and West Coast. Data collected by consultants engaged by the Authority shows that 100% of the Airport's O&D passengers come from within a 100-mile radius of the Airport. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of passengers originate from countries where English is the primary language.

2. Frequency of contact with LEP persons.

Based on the data identified in Step 1, the Airport believes that the total number of LEP persons traveling through the Airport as ticketed passengers is quite low. The primary context in which LEP persons are encountered is passenger screening. LEP persons are also encountered on a less frequent basis during flight diversions and medical emergencies.

An informal survey of TSA's passenger security screening staff at the Airport indicates that 1-2 passengers per day going through the security screening checkpoint would be considered LEP. TSA staff report that those individuals are almost always Spanish speaking, which is consistent with the U.S. Census data set forth in Step 1. Currently, four of the TSOs staffed at the Airport are Spanish speaking and able to assist those passengers through the screening process.

With respect to encounters with LEP persons during flight diversions and/or medical emergencies, Airport staff report that instances are quiet low, in the order of less than five occurrences per year. In those cases, staff have successfully navigated communications by utilizing I-Speak cards and translation apps (such as Translate Now) on their Authority-issued mobile devices.

Considering the U.S. Census data summarized above, as well as information provided by local TSOs and Airport staff, the Authority finds that encounters with LEP persons at the Airport are relatively low, and that those persons predominantly speak Spanish as their primary language.

3. Nature and importance of the program, activity, or service.

The most critical Airport program, activity or service for which LEP may create a barrier or limitation is passenger security screening. The inability to process a passenger through security screening risks denying access to air travel. Moreover, passenger screening involves multiple steps and requires the ability to obey specific requests and commands from TSA's contracted security screening personnel (e.g., presenting identification, divesting personal items, etc.). For this reason, two primary language assistance measures set forth below are a written description of passenger screening in Spanish and other languages, and availability of Spanish-speaking TSOs.

While less frequent, another critical Airport service for which LEP may create a barrier or limitation is communication during emergencies and irregular operations. Information may be provided over the Airport's public address system or verbally by law enforcement officers, airlines, and other Airport employees.

Finally, the most common Airport program, activity or service for which LEP may create a barrier or limitation is directional assistance (e.g., directions to ticketing, baggage claim, ground transportation, rental cars, restrooms, etc.). While inadequate directional assistance does not typically create a risk to a passenger's ability to engage in air travel, it may degrade the passenger experience and disrupt travel. Here too, directional assistance may be provided by Airport employees.

4. Resources Available/Costs Imposed.

The Airport is categorized as a non-hub primary commercial service airport by the FAA. In 2023, the Airport served 482,773 total passengers. The Authority's approved budget for Airport operating expenses in Fiscal Year 2024 is approximately \$6.7 million, which includes payroll for 32 full time employees (for non-screening functions), 12 of which are management or administrative staff.

The Authority does not station paid staff or volunteers in the Airport Terminal for the purpose of providing customer service or assistance. The Airport staff office is located inside the Airport Terminal, and Airport staff regularly travels through the Terminal and interacts with ticketed passengers, "meeters and greeters" and others. In particular, maintenance and janitorial staff have a regular presence in the Terminal and often interact with passengers.

Conclusions:

The Authority finds that the assessment of factors two, three, and four reveals that encounters with LEP persons at the Airport are relatively low and that access to critical Airport services for LEP persons can be achieved in an economical and supportive manner by implementation of the Language Assistance Measures set forth below. Further, assessment of factor one demonstrates that emphasis on Spanish language services is justified.

Language Assistance Measures:

The following language assistance measures are reasonable and achievable for the Airport:

- Providing translation and interpretive services at public meetings (upon request or as determined by Airport staff to be necessary or supportive of expected LEP persons).
- Establishing an account with Language Line to ensure that as many languages as possible are covered.
- Training Airport staff, concessionaires, and tenants on the use of (i) I-speak cards to identify the language spoken by the LEP passenger, and (ii) Language Line to connect the passenger to the appropriate interpreter.
- Maintaining records of Airport staff, concessionaires, and tenants who are fluent or possess skills in any language besides English.
- Developing and providing a written description of screening procedures in Spanish.
- Work with TSA to maintain availability of Spanish-speaking TSOs.
- Providing information related to language assistances on the Airport website's FAQ page.
- Providing printed information related to language assistance at the Airport's general information desk and the security guard desk.