



U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division


Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20035

DEC 19 2001

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Directors

FROM: Ralph F. Boyd, Jr.  
Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division 

SUBJECT: Invitation to your agency to participate in an  
Interagency Working Group to address limited  
English proficiency issues

I invite your agency to participate in an important new interagency working group. On October 26, 2001, I issued a memorandum reaffirming this Administration's commitment to ensuring that people who are limited English proficient (LEP) have meaningful access to federally funded and federally conducted programs and activities.<sup>1</sup> Since that time, we have received numerous requests for additional guidance and coordination from the affected agencies. In order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of implementation of Executive Order 13166 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as it relates to LEP issues, we are creating an Interagency LEP Working Group.

The Interagency LEP Working Group ("the Group") will build awareness of the need and methods to ensure that important government and government-assisted programs and activities are not excluding LEP persons because of language barriers.

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<sup>1</sup>A copy of that memorandum and background information can be found at: [www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/);  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/cor/lep/Oct26BackgroundQ&A.htm>.

Taking its lead from the Executive Order, the August 2000 Department of Justice Guidance, and the October 26, 2001 clarifying memorandum, the Group will help to ensure that Executive Order 13166 implementation remains a priority and is coordinated in a consistent manner across agencies.

As you are aware, each federal agency is responsible for creating and implementing a plan for ensuring that its federally conducted activities are meaningfully accessible for people who are LEP. In addition, those 31 agencies that provide federal financial assistance to recipients must create and publish guidance on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to assist recipients in complying with the Title VI meaningful access requirements. The Coordination and Review Section of the Civil Rights Division has been coordinating implementation of this Executive Order across the federal government. As with last year's meeting on November 14, 2000, when the Division held an agency-wide stakeholders meeting to which all federal agencies were invited to hear panel discussions by advocates for LEP communities, this working group will be open to all agencies.

I expect that the Group will share and create tools, technical assistance, and ideas for ensuring that the federal provision of language services is high quality, cost efficient, consistent, and effective. In addition, the Group will coordinate implementation of Title VI and technical assistance to recipients of federal funds in this area, including providing recipients and community groups with relevant best practices and tools used by the federal government. Many of your agencies have already started collecting and creating best practices, effective plans, and tools, and providing training and/or technical assistance. The Group will offer an opportunity to share those activities and thus provide greater and more effective assistance.

I invite each federal agency to designate participants interested in working on these important issues. I especially encourage the 31 agencies that provide federal financial assistance to appoint members of the Group, along with other agencies that have frequent contact with the general public in their own programs and activities. I invite agencies to send program people who work on issues involving public contact, as well as civil rights staff.

The first meeting of the LEP Working Group will take place on January 31, 2002, from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. in the Office of Justice Programs Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, 810 7th Street, NW. Please bring your government identification and one other form of identification and arrive early to allow time to pass through security. The meeting will be facilitated by the Coordination and Review Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. Please e-mail Anika Gamble ([Anika.Gamble@usdoj.gov](mailto:Anika.Gamble@usdoj.gov)) of the Coordination and Review Section, by noon on January 28, 2002, with the names of the staff who wish to attend the Interagency LEP Working Group meeting and participate in its work. Although we hope to make this group as inclusive as possible, depending upon the response, Ms. Gamble may have to limit the number of representatives from each agency. If you have questions or accommodation needs, you may call Ms. Gamble at (202) 307-2222.

Thank you for your interest in this important area. I look forward to establishing the LEP Working Group and working together with you to ensure meaningful access for LEP persons.