

Your Rights as a Person Who Doesn't Speak English

Sus derechos • vos droits •
Deres retter • Suas direitas



The Cleveland Federal Executive Board's Limited English Proficiency Partnership Group is a network of 10 Federal agencies. Our mission is to serve as the catalyst in improving communication, education, cooperation, and partnerships between diverse ethnic communities and Federal agencies.

The Cleveland Federal Executive Board's
Limited English Proficiency Partnership Group



Know Your Rights

Have you ever tried to get benefits or services from the government or other organization but were unable to because you cannot speak, read, write, or understand English well?

Did you know that this could be a form of national origin discrimination?

A Federal law, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, protects your civil rights, including your right to be free from national origin discrimination.

The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that one type of national origin discrimination is discrimination based on your inability to speak, read, write, or understand English.

This means that state or local governments, or any organization that receives money or other types of assistance from the Federal Government, cannot discriminate against you because of your national origin.

Examples of National Origin Discrimination

- A hospital only has forms or documents in English and does not know how to help you if you don't speak, read, write, or understand English well.
- You call the police to report an emergency, but they cannot help you because they only speak English and they cannot understand your language.

- Your child's school communicates important information to you only in English, but you do not read or understand English well enough to understand the information.
- You seek help at a government office, but there is no employee or interpreter who can speak your language. You are told to return with someone who can interpret for you.
- A government office sends important documents to you such as applications or letters about reduction, denial, or termination of money; or any letter that requires your reply in English only.
- A company or group receives funds from the Federal Government to conduct a research study that impacts your community. As part of the study, they must talk with community members, but they only speak with individuals who are fluent in English.

Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency

On August 11, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 13166 to improve access to Federal services and federally assisted programs and activities. The complete text of this order can be found in your local public library or the Internet at www.lep.gov.

For more information about local groups that can help you, call the Cleveland Federal Executive Board at 216-433-9460.

