Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
In the United States, there is an ever-growing population of individuals whose primary language is not English. The Federal Government and entities receiving Federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that persons who are LEP have meaningful access to the programs, services, and information those entities provide. This will require Federal agencies and private-sector organizations alike to think “outside the box” for creative solutions to address the needs of those individuals.

Who is a Limited English Proficient Person?
Persons who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English are considered LEP. These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or activity provided by the Federal Government or private-sector recipients of Federal financial assistance.

Who Must Comply and Who Can Be Found in Violation?
All programs and operations of entities that receive financial assistance from the Federal Government (i.e., recipients), including: state agencies, local agencies, and private and nonprofit entities.

Federally assisted programs must comply.

Executive Order 13166: (Improving Access to Persons with Limited English Proficiency)
This order was issued on August 11, 2000, directing Federal agencies to:

- Publish guidance on how their recipients can provide access to LEP persons.
- Break down language barriers by implementing consistent standards of language assistance across Federal agencies and amongst all recipients of Federal financial assistance.
- Improve the language accessibility of federally conducted programs and activities.

Recipient Obligations

Four-Factor Analysis
Recipients of Federal financial assistance have an obligation to reduce language barriers that can preclude meaningful access by LEP persons to important Government services. (The same obligations apply to Federal Government agencies based on Executive Order 13166.) The starting point for determining whether there has been a denial of meaningful access is an individualized assessment that balances the following four factors:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or grantees/recipient;
2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people’s lives; and
4. The resources available to the grantees/recipient and costs.

Elements of an Effective LEP Policy
- Identify LEP persons who need language assistance.
- Identify ways in which language assistance will be provided.
- Train staff.
- Provide notice to LEP persons.
- Monitor and update LEP policy.

Language Assistance Services
- Oral interpretation services
- Bilingual staff
- Telephone interpreter lines
- Written language services
- Community volunteers

Filing a Complaint Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as Amended
Any LEP person who believes he/she has been denied meaningful access to a NASA recipient’s program or activity as a result of the recipient’s failure to provide language assistance may file a complaint of discrimination pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A complaint must be filed within 90 days of the date of discovery unless the time for filing is extended by NASA’s Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (OD & EO) for good cause.

What To Include In Your Complaint
Any person wishing to file a complaint should submit in writing the following information:

- Your name and address (a telephone number where you can be reached during business hours is helpful, but not required);
- A general description of the person(s) or class of persons injured by the alleged failure to provide language services (names of the injured persons are not required);
- The name and location of the recipient of NASA financial assistance that failed to provide language assistance; and
- A description of the alleged failure to provide language assistance in sufficient detail to enable the OD & EO to understand what occurred.

Retaliation is Illegal
It should be noted that NASA recipients may not retaliate against any person who has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

Where To Send Your Complaint
Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
300 E Street SW
Room 4W39
Washington, DC 20546

Complaints Hotline: 866-654-1440
Telephone: 202-358-2167
TDD: 202-358-3748
Fax: 202-358-3336
E-mail: AssistedProgramComplaint@NASA.gov or LEP@NASA.gov

Seeking Meaningful Access to NASA-Conducted Programs and/or Activities
Any person with LEP wishing to participate in a NASA-conducted program and/or activity who needs other-than-English language assistance may request such language services in writing, by telephone, personally, or through a personal interpreter. It is recommended that the request be made prior to the beginning of the NASA-conducted program and/or activity in order to ensure that the language services requested can be provided in an efficient and timely manner. In order to ensure that NASA will be able to comply with your request, please give the Agency as much notice as possible. Language assistance services are free of charge.

How To Request Language Assistance

Where To Send Your Request for Language Assistance
Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
NASA
Ames Research Center
Stop 19-5
Moffett Field, CA 94035-1000
650-604-6510