



northern tier
regional planning &
development
commission

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN



February 2025

Final

Northern Tier Rural Planning Organization
312 Main Street
Towanda, PA 18848



NOTICE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission Alliance will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the ADA.

Effective Communication: The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, should contact Bonnie Warner, ADA Coordinator, at 570-265-1513 or warner@northerntier.org as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Bonnie Warner, ADA Coordinator, at 570-265-1513 or warner@northerntier.org.

The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

**NORTHERN TIER RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION (NORTHERN TIER RPO)
NOTIFICATION OF PROTECTIONS TO THE PUBLIC OF RIGHTS UNDER TITLE VI AND OTHER NON-
DISCRIMINATION REGULATIONS WITH INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT**

It is the policy of the Northern Tier RPO to utilize its best efforts to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, disability, low income, national origin, or Limited English Proficiency, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under its programs and planning activities, as provided by civil rights statutes, executive orders, regulations, and policies applicable to the programs and activities it administers. This includes Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Any person who believes they – or with a specific class of persons – have been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice may file a complaint. All complaints received are documented and investigated by the appropriate agency.

For more information about the Northern Tier RPO's civil rights program and the procedures to file a complaint, or to get information in another language, please contact:

Title VI Compliance Officer/ADA Coordinator

Attn: Bonnie Warner

Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission

312 Main Street

Towanda, PA 18848

570-265-1513

warner@northerntier.org

Once a complaint is submitted, an acknowledgement of receipt will be provided to the individual submitting the complaint in writing within 15 calendar days. The complaint will then be forwarded to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the appropriate federal agency for further review and investigation. Complaints and/or allegations received in alternative formats, such as by phone, will be transcribed and provided to the complainant for review and signature.

Alternatively, complaints may be filed with PennDOT, the Federal Highway Administration's Pennsylvania Division Office, the Federal Highway Administration's Headquarters Office of Civil Rights, the Federal Transit Administration, the United States Department of Transportation, the US Department of Justice, or the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (staff agency for the Northern Tier RPO).

ATTENTION If you speak another language other than English, language assistance services can be made available to you. Call (570) 265-9103.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla otro idioma que no sea inglés, habrá servicios de asistencia en otros idiomas disponibles. Llame al (570) 265-9103.

Language Taglines

English

ATTENTION: If you speak another language other than English, language assistance services can be made available to you. Call (570) 265-9103.

Spanish

ATENCIÓN: Si habla otro idioma que no sea inglés, habrá servicios de asistencia en otros idiomas disponibles. Llame al (570) 265-9103.

Polish

UWAGA: Jeśli posługujesz się językiem innym niż angielski, możesz skorzystać z usługi pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer (570) 265-9103.

Vietnamese

LƯU Ý: Nếu quý vị nói một ngôn ngữ khác không phải tiếng Anh, các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ có thể được cung cấp cho quý vị. Gọi (570) 265-9103.

Korean

주의: 영어 이외의 다른 언어를 사용하는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 이용할 수 있습니다. (570) 265-9103으로 전화하십시오.

French

« ATTENTION : Si vous parlez une autre langue que l'anglais, des services d'assistance linguistique peuvent être mis à votre disposition. Appelez le (570) 265-9103. »

Somali

FIIRO GAAR AH: Haddii aad ku hadasho luqad kale aanan ahayn Ingiriisiga, adeegyada gargaarka luqadda ayaa lagu diyaarin karaa. Wac (570) 265-9103.

Russian

ВНИМАНИЕ: если вы говорите на другом языке, вам может быть оказана языковая помощь. Обратитесь в информационно-справочную службу по номеру: (570) 265-9103.

Ukrainian

УВАГА: якщо ви розмовляєте іншою мовою, вам може бути надана мовна допомога. Зверніться до інформаційно-довідкової служби за номером: (570) 265-9103.

Simplified Chinese

请注意：如果您说英语以外的另一种语言，我们可以为您提供语言帮助服务。请致电 (570) 265-9103.

Traditional Chinese

請注意：如果您說英語以外的另一種語言，我們可以為您提供語言幫助服務。請致電 (570) 265-9103

Arabic

تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث لغة أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية، يمكننا توفير خدمات المساعدة اللغوية لك. اتصل بالرقم 570 265 9103

Burmese

သတိပြုရန်- သင်သည် အင်္ဂလိပ် ဘာသာစကား မဟုတ်သော အခြား ဘာသာစကားကို ပြောလျှင် သင့်အတွက် ဘာသာစကား အကူအညီ ဝန်ဆောင်မှုကို ရရှိနိုင်ပါသည်။ 1
(570) 265-9103 သို့ ခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

Japanese

注意：英語以外の言語を話す場合は、言語支援サービスを利用できるようにすることができます。電話 (570) 265-9103

Italian

ATTENZIONE: Se parli una lingua che non sia l'inglese, i servizi di assistenza linguistica possono essere messi a tua disposizione. Chiama (570) 265-9103.

Nepali

ध्यान दिनुहोस्: यदि तपाईं अंग्रेजीबाहेक अन्य भाषा बोल्नुहुन्छ भने तपाईंलाई भाषा सहायता सेवा उपलब्ध गराउन सकिन्छ। (570) 265-9103 मा फोन गर्नुहोस्।

Urdu

توجہ دیں: اگر آپ انگریزی کے علاوہ کوئی اور زبان بولتے ہیں تو آپ کی زبان میں مدد کے لیے آپ کو خدمات فراہم کرائی جاسکتی ہے۔ براہ کرم (570) 2659103 پر کال کریں۔

Greek

ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Εάν μιλάτε άλλη γλώσσα διαφορετική από τα αγγλικά, οι υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής βοήθειας μπορούν να σας διατεθούν. Καλέστε (570) 265-9103.

Table of Contents

- Introduction6**
 - About Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission 6
 - What is Limited English Proficiency? 6
 - What is the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan?..... 6
- Limited English Proficiency Four-Factor Analysis 7**
 - Factor 1: Number of LEP Persons Encountered in the Northern Tier Region 7
 - Factor 2: Frequency of Contact with LEP Persons 15
 - Factor 3: Nature and Importance of Northern Tier RPO Programs, Activities, and Services 16
 - Factor 4: Available Resources and Costs of Language Assistance Services 16
- Language Assistance Measures and Tools 17**
 - Identification of LEP Populations 17
 - Language Interpretation 17
 - Translations 17
 - Engagement with Community-Based LEP Organizations 19
 - Notice and Advertisement of Language Assistance Services 19
 - Written Communications (Both Paper and Electronic) 19
 - Staff Training 20
 - Language Access Measures for Localized Studies, Plans, or Projects 20
- Strategies for Increased Transparency and Meaningful Access 21**
- Implementation of the LEP Plan 21**
 - Evaluation of Language Assistance Measures 21
 - Limited English Proficiency Plan Update Cycle 21
- Appendices 22**
 - Appendix A: Notice of Language Services (English and Spanish) 23
 - Appendix B: Language Taglines 25
 - Appendix C: Language Identification Card (U.S. Census) 27
 - Appendix D: Potential Translation/Interpretation Service Providers 28

Introduction

About Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission

The Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission (NTRPDC) is one of seven sub-state regional agencies designated as a Local Development District (LDD) by the state and federal governments to enhance economic and community development activities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. NTRPDC's service area encompasses the counties of Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, and Wyoming. The Commission offers a wide range of programs and services, including: business financing, export counseling, government contract assistance, internet and technology assistance, grant writing services, transportation planning, and workforce development.

Under its transportation planning services, NTRPDC serves as the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) for the region's five counties and guides the transportation planning and decision-making process. It works with partners at all levels of government for the ongoing development, maintenance, and operation of the region's multimodal transportation system. Through memoranda of understanding with PennDOT, the NTRPDC and other RPOs in Pennsylvania are held to the same federal transportation planning requirements as the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

What is Limited English Proficiency?

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a term used to describe individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand English. Under federal regulations and executive orders, individuals considered to be limited English proficient ("LEP individuals") may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.¹

What is the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan?

In 2000, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 13166 titled "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" to clarify Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VI") and ensure accessibility of programs and services to otherwise eligible individuals not proficient in the English language. Under this executive order, LEP individuals are entitled to language assistance under Title VI and all agencies receiving federal financial assistance are required to develop plans to improve LEP access to their programs and activities by LEP persons.

As a subrecipient of federal transportation funding through the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Northern Tier RPO must meet the requirements of this executive order to be in compliance with Title VI. As such, the RPO must develop a regional LEP plan and take "measurable steps" to ensure ample opportunity for LEP populations to participate in regional transportation planning and decision-making.

The RPO's LEP Plan is just one component of its overall public participation strategy, which is further documented in its Public Participation Plan and Title VI/Non-Discrimination Plan. The purpose of the RPO's LEP plan is to understand how to identify a person who may need language assistance, outline the ways in which language assistance may be provided, and how to notify LEP persons that language assistance services are available to them.

¹ https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/media/document/2020-03/042511_QA_LEP_General_0.pdf

Limited English Proficiency Four-Factor Analysis

One of the compliance processes outlined in the US Department of Justice’s Limited English Proficiency Guidance documentation is an LEP four-factor analysis, a technique for organizations to examine the presence of LEP populations in their service area. The analysis is designed to help federal funding recipients and sub-recipients, like the Northern Tier RPO, develop a plan with cost-effective and meaningful strategies for communications and engagement with LEP populations.

The four factors include:

1. The number and proportion of LEP persons served or encountered in the eligible service population.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the program, activity, or service provided.
3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to LEP persons.
4. The resources available to the recipient and costs associated with providing meaningful access to LEP persons.

Factor 1: Number of LEP Persons Encountered in the Northern Tier Region

A comprehensive understanding of language demographics is necessary in order to identify where LEP populations are located within the region and to determine the most efficient outreach and implementation strategies. Factor 1 of an LEP four-factor analysis evaluates the number of LEP persons served as well as the concentration of LEP persons in a given service area population. In the case of the Northern Tier RPO, the total population within the region’s five member counties – Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, and Wyoming – is considered the service population.

LEP Populations in the Northern Tier Region

Regional language demographics were interpreted using the most recent five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). The data included in the analysis covers the five-year period of 2018-2022. The dataset for “Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over” (Table S1601) was compiled and mapped at the block group level. For the purposes of this analysis, an individual who speaks English “less than very well” or “not at all” is considered an LEP person.

Table 1 summarizes LEP populations for all language groups in the Northern Tier region compared to Pennsylvania, statewide. Of the region’s total population 5 years and older, 1,220 persons or less than one percent are estimated to be LEP persons. This percentage is significantly lower than that of Pennsylvania, statewide. While the Northern Tier’s overall population is primarily English-speaking and its share of LEP individuals is small, the RPO will continue to ensure it is taking steps to improve and ensure that regional transportation planning and decision-making is accessible to LEP individuals.

Table 1: Total LEP Population (All Language Groups), Northern Tier RPO and Pennsylvania

	Northern Tier RPO		Pennsylvania	
	Estimate	% of Total Population	Estimate	% of Total Population
Total Population (5 Years and Older)	163,325		12,300,637	
Total LEP Population <i>All Language Groups</i> Speak English "less than very well"	1,220	0.7%	558,725	4.5%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), Table S1601

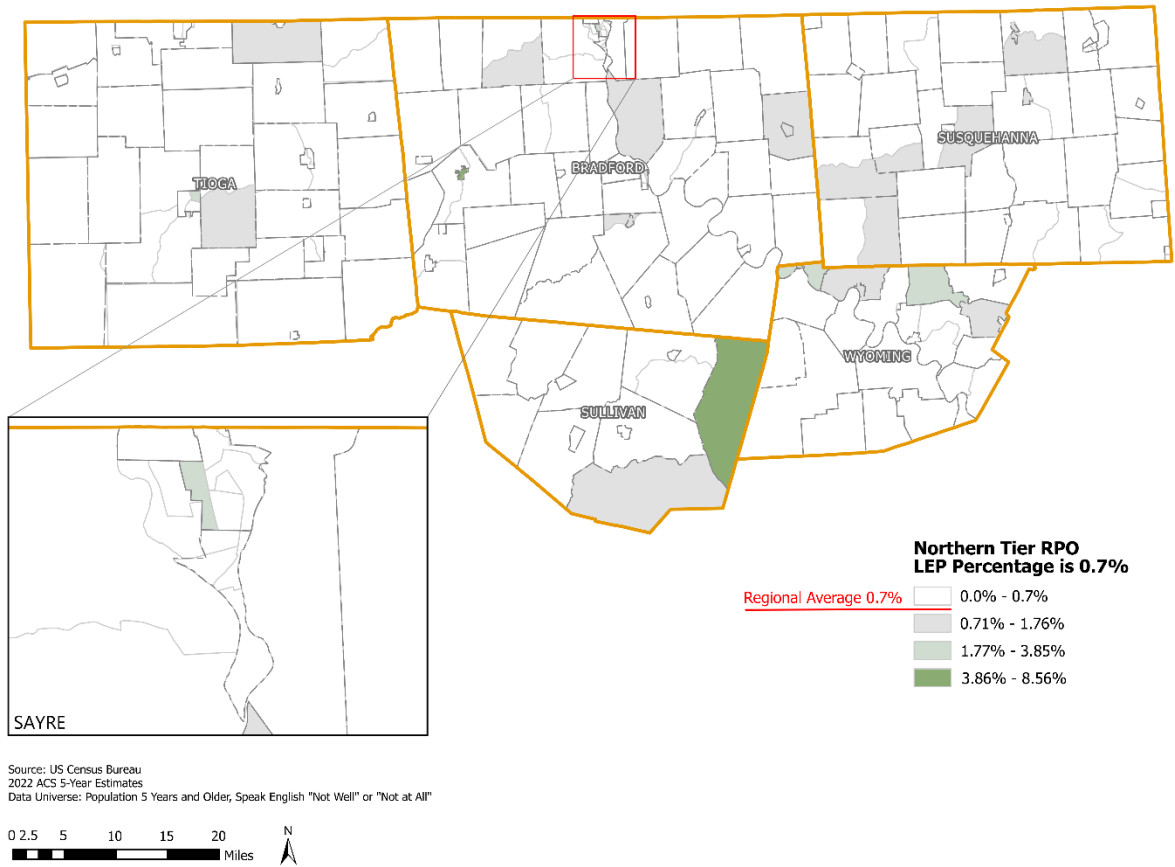
When compared by county, Sullivan County has the highest proportion of LEP persons in the region at 1.5 percent, followed by Bradford County at 1.0%. The region's other three counties – Susquehanna, Tioga, and Wyoming – have a total LEP population share of less than 1 percent, as shown in **Table 2**. **Figure 1** depicts the region's LEP concentrations by block group.

Table 2: Total LEP Populations (All Language Groups) by County

County	Total Population (5 Years and Older)	All Language Groups – Limited English Proficiency	
		Speak English "Less than Very Well"	% of Total Population
Bradford	56,751	563	1.0%
Sullivan	5,711	86	1.5%
Susquehanna	36,737	251	0.7%
Tioga	39,119	188	0.5%
Wyoming	25,007	132	0.5%
Total	163,325	1,220	0.7%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), Table S1601

Figure 1: Limited English Proficiency Concentrations, Northern Tier Region



Concentrations of LEP persons at or above the region's average of 0.7% are found in the following municipalities:

Bradford	Sullivan	Susquehanna	Tioga	Wyoming
Le Raysville Borough	Colley Township	Auburn Township	Charleston Township	Braintrim Township
Monroe Township	Davidson Township	Bridgewater Township	Lawrence Township	Clinton Township
Monroe Borough		Great Bend Borough	Wellsboro Borough	Factoryville Borough
Pike Township		Great Bend Township		Laceyville Borough
Ridgebury Township		Hallstead Borough		Lemon Township
Sayre Borough		Jessup Township		Meshoppen Borough
Towanda Borough		New Milford Borough		Meshoppen Township
Troy Borough		Rush Township		

Most Prominent LEP Languages in the Northern Tier Region

Table 3 summarizes information related to the most populous LEP language groups in the region.

Table 3: Northern Tier LEP Populations by Language Group

Language Group	Population Estimate (5 Years and Older)	% of Regional Population	% of Language Group Population
Total Population	163,325		
LEP Language Groups – Speak English “Less Than Very Well”			
Spanish	610	0.37%	47%
Other Indo-European Languages	388	0.24%	24.8%
Asian & Pacific Island Languages	210	0.13%	32%
Other Languages	12	0.01%	12.5%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates (2022), Table S1601

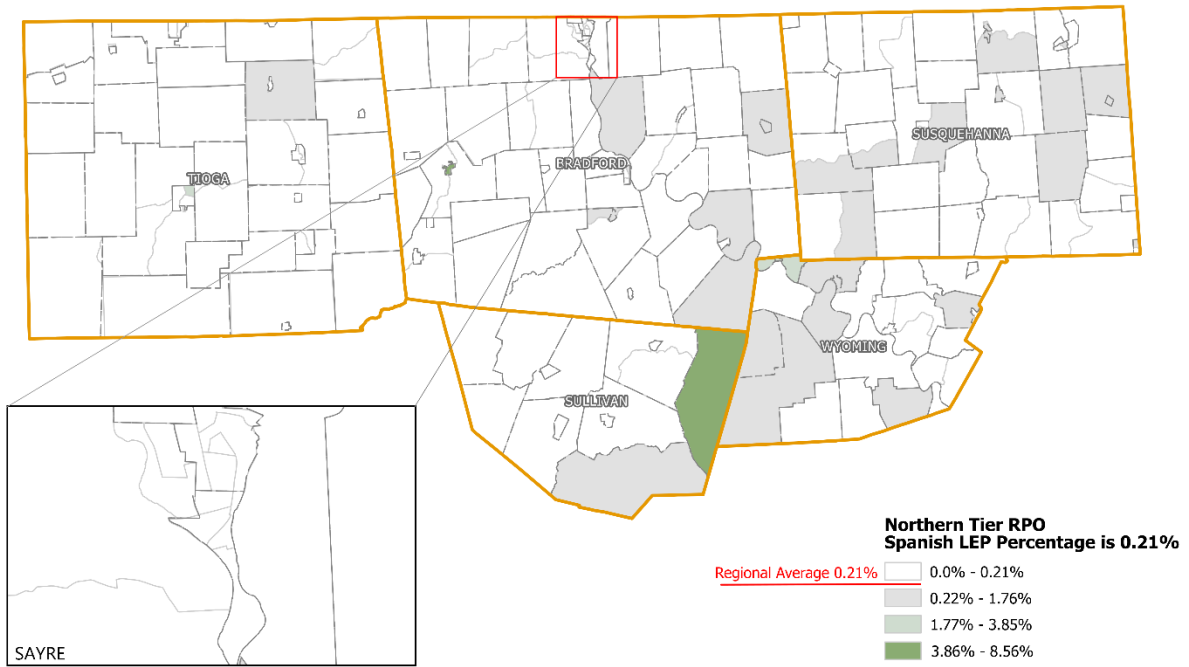
While the LEP share of the Northern Tier’s overall population is small, the share of individuals speaking English “less than very well” within each language group population show that nearly half of the region’s Spanish-speaking population is comprised of LEP individuals, followed by the Asian and Pacific Island language group at 32 percent. One quarter of individuals speaking Indo-European languages in the region are considered to be limited English proficient.

By conducting a spatial analysis of this data, the RPO can identify where concentrations of these language groups are located throughout the region. This allows for a better understanding of language groups that may qualify under the federal Safe Harbor provision. LEP concentrations of each language group at the block group level are shown in **Figures 2-5**.

Safe Harbor Provision

The Safe Harbor provision is considered the most prevalent guideline in determining what language-specific services are needed and what those services should entail. This provision was created as part of the U.S. Department of Justice’s LEP guidance and states that “vital documents” must be accessible to LEP populations with more than 1,000 persons or make up at least 5 percent of the total regional population (whichever is less). In the case of the Northern Tier region, the Safe Harbor provision is not triggered by any language group as all are below the 1,000-person and 5 percent threshold. Although this does not require the RPO to translate “vital documents” per federal regulation, the RPO will do its due diligence and ensure it continues to maintain a clear, accessible process for individuals to request translations of its transportation planning documents that convey critical information to the public.

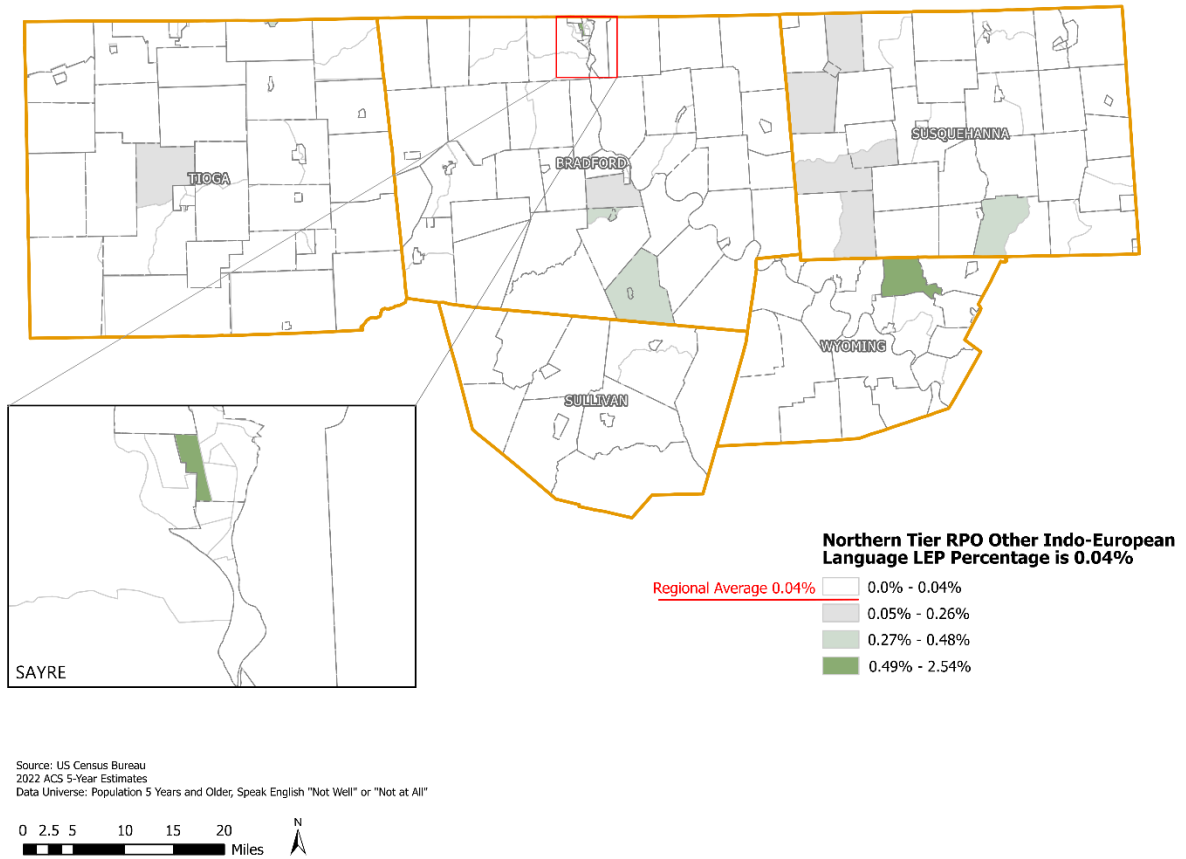
Figure 2: Spanish LEP Concentrations



Concentrations of Spanish speaking LEP populations that are at or above the regional average of 0.21 percent are found in the following municipalities:

Bradford	Sullivan	Susquehanna	Tioga	Wyoming
Le Raysville Borough	Colley Township	Auburn Township	Tioga Township	Braintrim Township
Monroe Borough	Davidson Township	Bridgewater Township	Wellsboro Borough	Clinton Township
Monroe Township		Gibson Township		Factoryville Borough
Pike Township		Great Bend Borough		Forkston Township
Sheshequin Township		Hallstead Borough		Laceyville Borough
Towanda Borough		Jackson Township		Mehoopany Township
Troy Borough		Jessup Township		Meshoppen Borough
Wilmot Township		New Milford Borough		Meshoppen Township
Wyalusing Township		Rush Township		North Branch Township
		Susquehanna Depot Borough		Northmoreland Township
		Thompson Borough		
		Thompson Township		

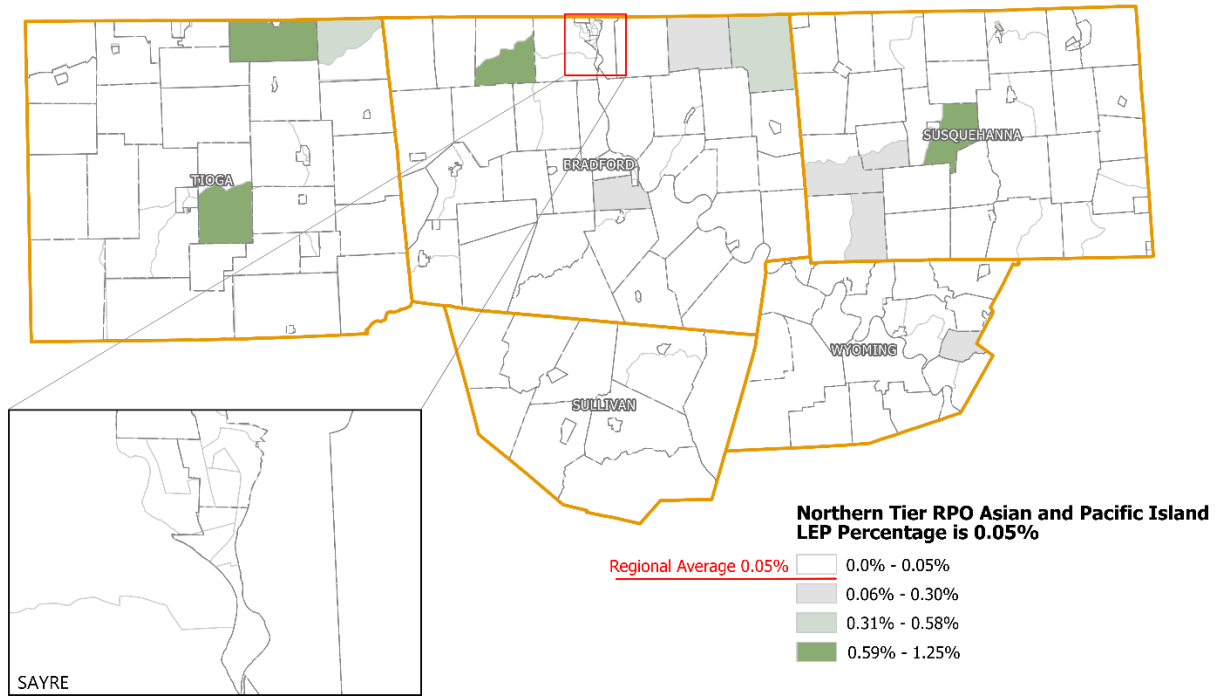
Figure 3: Other Indo-European Languages - LEP Concentrations



The U.S. Census Bureau’s documentation on language groups states that the “Other Indo-European” language group includes individuals speaking French, Haitian, Italian, Portuguese, German, West Germanic languages, Greek, Russian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Slavic languages, Armenian, Hindi, and Indic languages among others. In the Northern Tier region, only 0.04 percent of LEP individuals fall within this language group, with concentrations in the following municipalities:

Bradford	Susquehanna	Tioga	Wyoming
Albany Township	Auburn Township	Delmar Township	Lemon Township
Monroe Borough	Choconut Township	Lawrenceville Borough	
New Albany Borough	Friendsville Borough		
Sayre Borough	Jessup Township		
Towanda Township	Lenox Township		
	Middletown Township		
	Rush Township		

Figure 4: Asian and Pacific Island Languages - LEP Concentrations



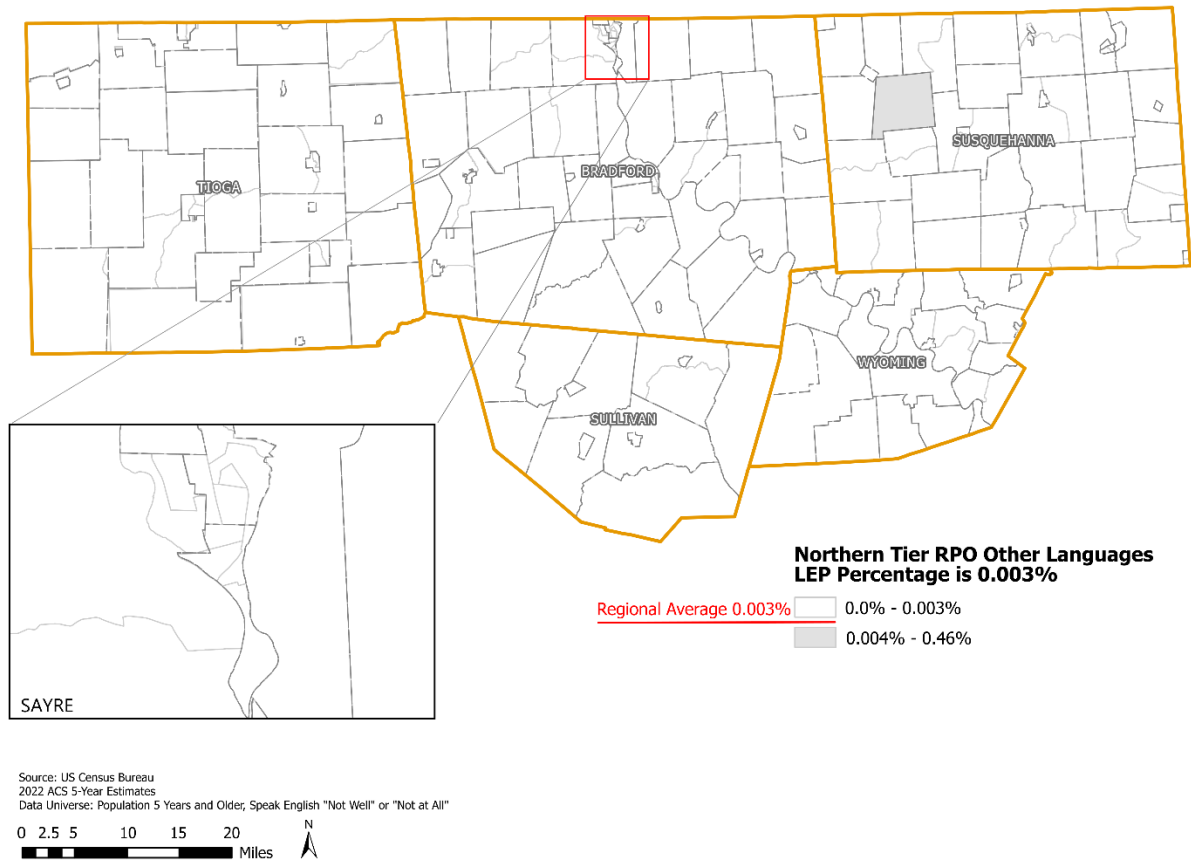
Source: US Census Bureau
 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates
 Data Universe: Population 5 Years and Older, Speak English "Not Well" or "Not at All"

0 2.5 5 10 15 20 Miles

The U.S. Census Bureau defines the “Asian and Pacific Island Languages” group as individuals speaking Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese), Japanese, Korean, Hmong, Vietnamese, Khmer, Thai, Tagalong/Filipino, other Tai-Kadai, and Austroneisan languages. In the Northern Tier region, LEP individuals in this language group makes up a very small percentage of the region’s population at 0.05 percent and block groups where these populations are present have concentrations of less than 1 percent. Municipalities that have block groups with concentrations that exceed this regional average include:

Bradford	Susquehanna	Tioga	Wyoming
Ridgebury Township	Auburn Township	Charleston Township	Overfield Township
Towanda Township	Bridgewater Township	Jackson Township	
Warren Township	Great Bend Borough	Lawrence Township	
Windham Township	Jessup Township		
	Rush Township		

Figure 5: LEP Persons Speaking "Other Languages"



The Census Bureau's "Other Languages" group includes individuals who speak Navajo and other Native North American languages, Arabic, Hebrew, Afro-Asiatic languages (e.g., Amharic, Somali, etc.), African languages, and other, unspecified languages. In the case of Northern Tier, only five individuals in the region are considered LEP within this language group with the only concentration located in Forest Lake Township, Susquehanna County.

Factor 2: Frequency of Contact with LEP Persons

By understanding how LEP individuals interact with the Northern Tier RPO's planning and public participation processes, the RPO can identify where language assistance resources need to be implemented/improved or where outreach efforts can be expanded. Areas where large concentrations of LEP populations are present will require additional support and resources in order to be adequately engaged.

To date, the Northern Tier RPO has not received any direct requests for translation or in-person interpretation services for any language, and the overall frequency that LEP persons come in contact with the RPO's plans, programs, and activities is largely unknown. Since the development of the RPO's previous LEP plan in 2016, the following interactions have occurred between Northern Tier RPO and LEP populations:

- **Formal Complaints:** The RPO has not received any formal complaints related to discrimination on the basis of Limited English Proficiency or national origin.
- **Translation/Interpretation Service Requests:** The RPO has not received any requests for translation or in-person interpretation services for any public engagement opportunities.
- **Public Input Received in Languages Other Than English:** Northern Tier RPO staff have not received any public input in languages other than English as part of any aspect of its planning program.

Although the spatial analysis shows that an LEP encounter is unlikely within the region, the Northern Tier RPO has a desire to be prepared to assist these individuals if and when they come into contact with regional transportation planning processes and programs.

RECOMMENDATION: Review analytics from the translation tool on the Northern Tier website to see how frequently non-English speakers are interacting with webpages related to the RPO and its transportation planning activities.

Factor 3: Nature and Importance of Northern Tier RPO Programs, Activities, and Services

While the Northern Tier RPO, nor the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, provide a direct transportation service within its five-county region, it is responsible for developing plans and facilitating programs that guide investments in the region's transportation infrastructure. Plans and programs developed and maintained by the RPO include, but are not limited to:

- Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Unified Planning Work Program
- Public Participation, Title VI, and LEP Plans
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Plan
- Special Studies

These planning activities, among others, have an impact on those living, working, and visiting the region regardless of race, poverty status, or language barriers. They provide a framework that guides the allocation of transportation funding, infrastructure improvements, and other initiatives to address the needs of the regional transportation system. As such, the RPO has an obligation to take the steps necessary to include LEP populations in relevant planning decisions.

The RPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is updated every two years and serves as the region's four-year investment plan while the LRTP establishes transportation policies and an investment portfolio beyond the Twelve-Year Program (TYP). In addition to these two core planning documents, the RPO's program includes other functional plans and studies that address other modes like bicycling, walking, and transit which may be of interest to LEP individuals or individuals that may not have access to a vehicle.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish partnerships with local agencies and LEP support organizations that to better understand the transportation needs of LEP populations and use their feedback to identify the most effective means of providing language assistance.

Factor 4: Available Resources and Costs of Language Assistance Services

The RPO's 2024-25 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) accounts for tasks that adhere to adopted public participation procedures and overall compliance with Title VI and other related non-discrimination statutes and regulations. Under its current work program, the RPO has funds allocated for the fiscal year to establish partnerships with LEP support organizations and the procurement of LEP translation/interpretation services to provide LEP individuals with improved, more transparent access to transportation planning efforts in the Northern Tier region. The UPWP further describes the RPO's ongoing commitment to expanding its outreach efforts to environmental justice and LEP populations.

With this in mind, it is recognized that the RPO has limited capital resources available to dedicate to procuring translation and interpretation services. At this time, the RPO and NTRPDC do not have dedicated staff on site to facilitate interactions with LEP individuals. A listing of translation and

interpretation service providers that could possibly be used by the Northern Tier RPO to assist with LEP requests is included in **Appendix D**.

Language Assistance Measures and Tools

Identification of LEP Populations

In addition to the results of the LEP four-factor analysis conducted as part of this plan, the Northern Tier RPO will document and evaluate all requests for translation and interpretation services, regardless of format to further identify language needs and determine whether language assistance may be needed as part of future transportation planning activities. As part of the implementation of this LEP plan, the RPO will also review any updated data from the U.S. Census to monitor any changes in LEP concentrations throughout the region.

Language Interpretation

Language Identification Card

The U.S. Census provides resources and tools to assist LEP individuals in requests for an interpreter or translator. The Language Identification Card (also known as an “iSpeak” card) is a one-page tool that states the following in multiple languages: “Mark this box if you read or speak [*language*].” The LEP individual will then check/point to their respective language on the card, which includes the name of each language in English along the right side of the page. This allows an English-speaking person to request interpretation services quickly and accurately. The RPO will include this one-page identification card at entry points to public meetings and reception staff at the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission office will have a copy readily available to address in-person requests. A sample of the language identification card is included in **Appendix C**.

On Demand/Telephone Interpretation Services

Currently, the Northern Tier RPO seeks out professional interpretation services only when a request is received in advance of a public meeting or other public engagement opportunities. As part of the implementation of the RPO’s Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and this LEP plan, the RPO will explore options for an on-call, oral language interpretation service to address telephone and in-person requests (through contract or on a case-by-case basis) to assist with in-person requests and interactions. While the RPO recognizes that the region’s population is predominantly English-speaking and its share of LEP individuals is small, procuring these services will ensure the RPO is prepared to address the needs of the region’s LEP individuals while also meeting the intent of Title VI policies and regulations.

Upon the selection of a professional service, the Northern Tier RPO will ensure that all transportation staff receive training to ensure proper knowledge on how the service is used and of the process steps needed to adequately assist individuals who may need the interpretation service.

Translations

Human Translation Services

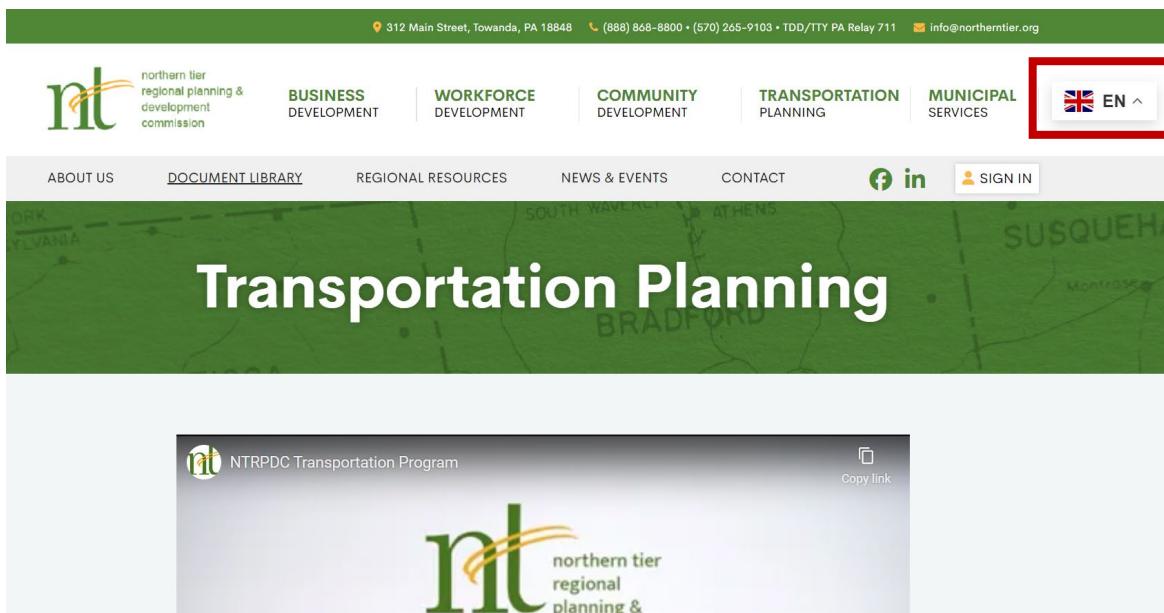
Human translation services (i.e., non-automated translation provided by multilingual, human translators) are available through local providers in the Northern Tier region as well as internet-based businesses who provide services nationwide. A list of select human-based translation providers can be found in **Appendix D**. Although the RPO has not received any requests for document translation

since the adoption of its previous LEP plan in 2016, it will continue to provide language translation services upon request. A request for language translation can be made by mail, email, phone, or in-person at the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission office.

Automated Translation Applications and Services

On-demand translations in multiple languages can be provided by online automated translation services and/or an application programming interface (API) that may be integrated into existing webpages (e.g., Google Translate). In 2024, the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission completed an update of the agency’s website. As part of the website update, a new translation widget was installed to provide for quick translation of the website content into several languages including Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. As a user scrolls through a webpage, the widget’s drop-down menu will remain pinned to the right of the screen for easy access and visibility.

Figure 6: Translation Widget on NTRPDC Website



RECOMMENDATION: Consider developing a web-based language assistance request form for the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission website as a means of receiving and directing language assistance requests. If possible, ensure the form is able to be translated using the website’s translator widget to provide accessibility to LEP individuals and their representatives.

Language Taglines

Language taglines are a tool that guides to a reader through the process of requesting translation services. Like the U.S. Census’s Language Identification Card for in-person interactions, these statements are provided in a wide variety of languages and the RPO can include them at the front of any plan or program document. As planning documents are updated, the RPO will include these language taglines (**Appendix B**) at the front of the document to help LEP individuals request the

document or its executive summary in another language. In situations where space is limited, the RPO will at a minimum include a Spanish tagline, as it is the most prominent LEP language in the region.

Engagement with Community-Based LEP Organizations

Establishing partnerships with local community organizations that center around LEP populations can provide an additional outlet for LEP individuals to participate in planning processes, decision-making, and other community functions. They may assist LEP persons at public meetings or provide insight on the most effective ways to engage LEP populations.

Notice and Advertisement of Language Assistance Services

Public Meetings

The Northern Tier RPO advertises all meetings open to the public through various methods and techniques, such as legal advertisements and press releases in local newspapers, social media posts, and email blasts to its stakeholders and interested parties. These advertisements include information such as a notice of protections under Title VI and contact information to request translation/interpretation services.

As part of the LEP plan update, the RPO developed a new Notice of Language Services (**Appendix A**) and abbreviated language assistance statement. The purpose of the Notice of Language Services is to provide guidance to LEP individuals on the process of requesting language assistance. In implementing this plan, the Northern Tier RPO will include this notice or an abbreviated language assistance statement in all public communications and advertisements as well as on the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission's Transportation Planning webpage. The use of the full notice or the abbreviated statement will depend on available space.

Other In-Person Interactions

While in-person interactions with LEP individuals may be infrequent, these requests may have a higher sense of urgency or have a specific purpose (e.g., filing a discrimination complaint). The RPO may need to address in-person interactions with LEP individuals who may visit the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission office. The RPO's Notice of Language Services will be posted in the office lobby and a copy of the U.S. Census Language Identification Card will also be kept in an easily accessible location for NTRPDC staff to best direct the interpretation request. Staff will then work to connect the individual with an interpretation service via phone using an on-demand service procured as part of the implementation of this plan or one of the providers listed in **Appendix D**.

Written Communications (Both Paper and Electronic)

The Northern Tier RPO may receive written correspondence from LEP individuals through physical or electronic means. This could include, but are not limited to, requests for information about the RPO's regional transportation planning program, a desire to provide input into a planning initiative or decision-making process, information regarding a transportation concern within the region, or a request for language assistance services ahead of a public meeting.

If written communication is received by mail or other physical means (e.g., facsimile, hand delivery, etc.), the Northern Tier RPO will a translation service to identify the language in which letter is written and will translate it into English. It is possible that the RPO may receive emails or other electronic-based communications in other languages. In addition to a professional translation service, the RPO

could leverage online, automated translation tools such as Google Translate to quickly detect the language used and translate the correspondence. While automated tools are helpful in providing quick translations, it is important to note that they may not be entirely accurate in their translations.

If the written communication received requires a response from the RPO, staff will work with a translation service provider to develop a response in the individual's preferred language. Human-based translation services are preferred in developing written responses to inquiries and concerns to ensure that the response is translated accurately and communicated effectively. Automated translation tools could be used if a more immediate response is required.

Staff Training

The RPO staff and any other Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission staff who may assist the RPO should be trained on key elements of the LEP plan, such as the language assistance measures and processes in place to address LEP requests the RPO may receive. Training materials should be developed by the RPO staff with focus on the following elements:

- Overview of the LEP Plan and language assistance measures
- Staff roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the LEP Plan
- Essential protocols used in addressing and directing LEP requests
- Guidance on how to provide notice of language services to LEP individuals
- Tips for communicating with LEP individuals over the phone or in-person

In-house training materials can also be supplemented with additional resources, such as the federal LEP website, which offers videos and other resources on federal regulations related to LEP. Copies of these materials should be provided to each RPO staff member and discretely located at reception points in the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission offices to ensure they can be accessed quickly if an LEP individual makes a language assistance request by phone or in-person.

Language Access Measures for Localized Studies, Plans, or Projects

As part of the RPO's work program, special studies, plans, or projects may be initiated in a more localized planning area, such as a specific roadway corridor or a local municipality. When a localized transportation planning effort begins, the RPO will review the latest American Community Survey data to determine if LEP populations are present within the study/planning area. If LEP individuals are present, an outreach plan will be developed to ensure that public-facing outreach materials and other related documents are translated accordingly, and a diverse range of techniques are used to ensure meaningful access and participation by LEP persons in planning efforts impacting their community.

Strategies for Increased Transparency and Meaningful Access

In addition to the language assistance measures documented in this plan, the Northern Tier RPO may use the following outreach strategies to provide further transparency and access to its plans and programs by LEP individuals:

- Include translated notices as part of legal ads/press releases (language taglines in Spanish)
- Post the RPO's notice of language services to the Northern Tier RPO webpage in text only format for easy translation using the embedded translation widget.
- Coordinate with member counties to identify community representatives/organizations that cater to LEP populations to identify the most efficient means of providing translation/interpretation services.
- Increase overall use of visual aids such as maps and graphics.
- Consider whether LEP populations are literate in English, their native language, or neither.

Implementation of the LEP Plan

Evaluation of Language Assistance Measures

The Northern Tier RPO will evaluate its language assistance measures on an annual basis to track the implementation and effectiveness of this LEP plan. By documenting the findings of this annual review, the RPO can identify strengths and areas of improvement related to accessibility of its transportation planning programs to the region's LEP population. Plan implementation could be tracked and evaluated against a set of progress measures, such as:

- Acquisition of on-demand interpretation services (by contract or on a case-by-case basis)
- Number of language assistance requests received.
- Language assistance methods, tools, and resources used as part of public outreach efforts.
- Number of new targeted outreach methods used to engage with or disseminate information to LEP populations.
- Identification of and engagement with agencies/organizations that serve LEP populations in the Northern Tier region.

Limited English Proficiency Plan Update Cycle

The Northern Tier RPO will update the LEP plan every five years or in line with an update to the Public Participation Plan to ensure that reasonable efforts are made to identify and address the needs of any additional or changing LEP populations in the region. Future updates will include a revised four factor analysis with a review of updated LEP demographic data from the ACS and updated documentation of the number of LEP persons encountered.

Appendices

Appendix A: Notice of Language Services (English and Spanish)

NORTHERN TIER RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RPO) NOTICE OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

The Northern Tier RPO provides language interpretation and document translation services upon request. If your preferred language is not English, please allow us to discover your preferred language so we can converse and correspond with you in that language. The following describes what you can expect when you interact with our staff:

In-Person

If you are attending a meeting in-person, please approach the welcome/sign-in location and state your preferred language. If the person assisting you cannot understand your request, he or she will show you a language card. Please point to your preferred language on the card. The person assisting you will ask you to wait a moment while an interpreter is contacted to assist in the conversation. Interpretation is available for many different languages and is provided free of charge. Please be patient as we connect you with an interpreter.

By Phone

If you wish to call the Northern Tier RPO, please call (570) 265-9103, and request your preferred language. If the person answering your call cannot understand your request, he or she will ask you to hold for a moment while an interpretation service is contacted to assist in the conversation. Interpretation is available for many languages and is provided free of charge. Please be patient while we discover your language and connect you with an interpreter.

By Written Correspondence

When writing correspondence (e.g., mail, fax, e-mail) to the Northern Tier RPO, please write it in your preferred language. Paper correspondence should be addressed to Northern Tier RPO, 312 Main Street, Towanda, PA 18848. We will work to translate your correspondence and provide you with a response (if feasible and appropriate) in your preferred language as well as in English. Please allow up to 45 days for the written, translated response to your correspondence.

Document Translations Available

The Northern Tier RPO is committed to translating documents that explain how to access the RPO's services (including language assistance services), complaint forms, and notification of rights in Spanish. These translated documents are available in paper copy through the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission office or electronically. Translation of other RPO planning documents or translations of these documents in other languages are available upon request.

NORTHERN TIER RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RPO) NOTIFICACIÓN DE SERVICIOS LINGÜÍSTICOS

La RPO de Northern Tier ofrece servicios de interpretación de idiomas y traducción de documentos a pedido. Si su idioma preferido no es el inglés, permítanos descubrir su idioma preferido para que podamos conversar y comunicarnos con usted en ese idioma. A continuación, se describe lo que puede esperar cuando interactúa con nuestro personal:

En Persona

Si va a asistir a una reunión en persona, acérquese al lugar de bienvenida/registro e indique el idioma de su preferencia. Si la persona que lo asiste no entiende su solicitud, le mostrará una tarjeta con el idioma de su preferencia. Indique el idioma de su preferencia en la tarjeta. La persona que lo asiste le pedirá que espere un momento mientras se conecta con un intérprete para ayudarlo con la conversación. Hay interpretación disponible para muchos idiomas diferentes y se proporciona de forma gratuita. Tenga paciencia mientras lo conectamos con un intérprete.

Por Teléfono

Si desea llamar a la RPO de Northern Tier, por favor llame al (570) 265-9103 y solicite el idioma que prefiera. Si la persona que responde a su llamada no entiende su solicitud, le pedirá que espere un momento mientras se comunican con un servicio de interpretación para ayudar en la conversación. Hay servicios de interpretación disponibles para muchos idiomas y se brindan de forma gratuita. Tenga paciencia mientras descubrimos su idioma y lo conectamos con un intérprete.

Por Correspondencia Escrita

Al escribir correspondencia (por ejemplo, correo postal, fax, correo electrónico) a la RPO de Northern Tier, escríbala en su idioma preferido. La correspondencia en papel debe dirigirse a la Northern Tier RPO, 312 Main Street, Towanda, PA 18848. Trabajaremos para traducir su correspondencia y le proporcionaremos una respuesta (si es posible y apropiado) en su idioma preferido, así como en inglés. Espere hasta 45 días para recibir la respuesta escrita y traducida a su correspondencia.

Traducciones de Documentos Disponibles

La RPO de Northern Tier se compromete a traducir al español los documentos que explican cómo acceder a los servicios de la RPO (incluidos los servicios de asistencia lingüística), los formularios de quejas y el Aviso de derechos. Estos documentos traducidos están disponibles en formato impreso a través de la oficina de la Comisión de Planificación y Desarrollo Regional de Northern Tier o en formato electrónico. La traducción de otros documentos de planificación de la RPO o las traducciones de estos documentos a otros idiomas están disponibles a pedido.

Appendix B: Language Taglines

English

ATTENTION: If you speak another language other than English, language assistance services can be made available to you. Call (570) 265-9103.

Spanish

ATENCIÓN: Si habla otro idioma que no sea inglés, habrá servicios de asistencia en otros idiomas disponibles. Llame al (570) 265-9103.

Polish

UWAGA: Jeśli posługujesz się językiem innym niż angielski, możesz skorzystać z usługi pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer (570) 265-9103.

Vietnamese

LƯU Ý: Nếu quý vị nói một ngôn ngữ khác không phải tiếng Anh, các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ có thể được cung cấp cho quý vị. Gọi (570) 265-9103.

Korean

주의: 영어 이외의 다른 언어를 사용하는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 이용할 수 있습니다. (570) 265-9103으로 전화하십시오.

French

« ATTENTION : Si vous parlez une autre langue que l'anglais, des services d'assistance linguistique peuvent être mis à votre disposition. Appelez le (570) 265-9103. »

Somali

FIIRO GAAR AH: Haddii aad ku hadasho luqad kale aanan ahayn Ingiriisiga, adeegyada gargaarka luqadda ayaa lagu diyaarin karaa. Wac (570) 265-9103.

Russian

ВНИМАНИЕ: если вы говорите на другом языке, вам может быть оказана языковая помощь. Обратитесь в информационно-справочную службу по номеру: (570) 265-9103.

Ukrainian

УВАГА: якщо ви розмовляєте іншою мовою, вам може бути надана мовна допомога. Зверніться до інформаційно-довідкової служби за номером: (570) 265-9103.

Simplified Chinese

请注意：如果您说英语以外的另一种语言，我们可以为您提供语言帮助服务。请致电 (570) 265-9103.

Traditional Chinese

請注意：如果您說英語以外的另一種語言，我們可以為您提供語言幫助服務。請致電 (570) 265-9103

Arabic

تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث لغة أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية، يمكننا توفير خدمات المساعدة اللغوية لك. اتصل بالرقم 570 265 9103

Burmese

သတိပြုရန်- သင်သည် အင်္ဂလိပ် ဘာသာစကား မဟုတ်သော အခြား ဘာသာစကားကို ပြောလျှင် သင့်အတွက် ဘာသာစကား အကူအညီ ဝန်ဆောင်မှုကို ရရှိနိုင်ပါသည်။ 1 (570) 265-9103 သို့ ခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

Japanese

注意：英語以外の言語を話す場合は、言語支援サービスを利用できるようにすることができます。電話 (570) 265-9103

Italian

ATTENZIONE: Se parli una lingua che non sia l'inglese, i servizi di assistenza linguistica possono essere messi a tua disposizione. Chiama (570) 265-9103.

Nepali

ध्यान दिनुहोस्: यदि तपाईं अंग्रेजीबाहेक अन्य भाषा बोल्नुहुन्छ भने तपाईंलाई भाषा सहायता सेवा उपलब्ध गराउन सकिन्छ। (570) 265-9103 मा फोन गर्नुहोस्।

Urdu

توجہ دیں: اگر آپ انگریزی کے علاوہ کوئی اور زبان بولتے ہیں تو آپ کی زبان میں مدد کے لیے آپ کو خدمات فراہم کرائی جاسکتی ہیں۔ براہ کرم (570) 2659103 پر کال کریں۔

Greek

ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Εάν μιλάτε άλλη γλώσσα διαφορετική από τα αγγλικά, οι υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής βοήθειας μπορούν να σας διατεθούν. Καλέστε (570) 265-9103.

Appendix C: Language Identification Card (U.S. Census)

Appendix D: Potential Translation/Interpretation Service Providers

Regional/Pennsylvania-Based Providers:

- Erin Riddle Language and Writing Services (*Spanish Translation Only)
P.O. Box 143
Owego, NY 13827
(607) 323-1615
<https://erinriddle.com/>
- Binghamton University Multicultural Resource Center – Translation & Interpretation Program
(607) 777-4781
tip@binghamton.edu
<https://www.binghamton.edu/centers/mrc/programs/tip.html>
- FCI Language Experts
1614 Washington Street
Easton, PA 18042
(610) 438-8900
<https://www.fcitle.com/>
- Quantum, Inc.
240 South 9th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
<https://www.quantumtranslations.com/>
- Cetra
7804 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 10
Elkins Park, PA 19027
<https://www.cetra.com/>
- ParaPlus
2 Coleman Avenue #1
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034
<http://www.para-plus.com/>
- Language Services Consultants
P.O. Box 412
Ardmore, PA 19003
<http://www.lsctranslations.com/welcome>

Web-Based National & International Providers:

- Propio Language Services
<https://propio.com/>

- inWhatLanguage
<https://inwhatlanguage.com/>
- Straker Translations
<https://www.strakertranslations.com/>
- Interpreters Unlimited Group
<https://www.interpreters.com/>