

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE MEAT INSPECTION DIVISION

LIMITED ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY POLICY STATEMENT

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) Meat Inspection Division (MID) has a responsibility to ensure that equal access to services, programs, and activities is provided to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). These policies are designed to be implemented for both existing and potential customers of the MDAC/MID. Persons identified with LEP are individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand the English language. MDAC/MID will provide LEP services free of charge to customers.

The MDAC/MID will implement reasonable steps to ensure that individuals meeting the criteria of LEP have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in its services, activities, programs, and other benefits as needed. The MDAC/MID utilizes a four-factor analysis in determining the steps that are needed to communicate clearly and effectively with all individuals meeting the criteria of LEP. These four factors are as follows:

1. The number or proportion of LEP individuals eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or 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.
4. The resources available to the program/recipient and costs.

The responsibility to reduce language barriers encompasses the MDAC/MID's responsibility to both translate vital documents and provide oral interpretation of critical information. The MDAC/MID will provide written translation services for vital documents used in order to carry out its meat and poultry inspection programs. Vital documents are defined as written material that contains information that is critical for accessing a program or activity or that is required by law, such as consent forms, applications, and notices of rights. MDAC/MID will also provide oral interpretation services to convey information necessary to carry out its meat and poultry inspection programs.

MDAC/MID will utilize various resources to translate and interpret critical information. These resources include the following (and may not be limited to):

- The utilization of the abilities of employees who are fluent in a particular language
- The provisions offered as assistance to the MDAC/MID from federal agencies
- The contractual providers of language services.

The MDAC/MID will provide these services at no cost to the customer in an accurate and timely manner.