



Language Assistance Plan

Approved by Board of Directors May 2024

Submitted in Fulfillment of
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act October of 1964 and
FTA Circular 4702.1B (October 1, 2012)

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Introduction

Legal Basis and Purpose

This plan serves as a model to demonstrate Ride Connection's commitment to provide meaningful access to all individuals accessing Ride Connection's services. Ride Connection is committed to this plan as the appropriate response to meeting our customers' needs. Ride Connection takes adequate steps to ensure that persons with limited English proficiency receive the language assistance necessary to allow them meaningful access to services, free of charge. Ride Connection contracts with over 30 network partners and will ensure their compliance. For partners who choose not to adopt Ride Connection's Title VI and LAP plans, Ride Connection will provide its network partners guidance, plan template, and geographical data and annual site visits to ensure compliance with this plan is met.

The policies, practices, and analysis provided in this document illustrate how Ride Connection ensures compliance with Title VI Requirements. This plan is based on guidelines of FTA Circular 4702.1B (October 1, 2012), "Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients" Consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, DOT's implementing regulations, and Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" (65 FR 50121, Aug. 11, 2000), recipients shall take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are limited-English proficient (LEP). It is provided as documentation of compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as part of the FTA grant approval process.

Questions regarding any of the information contained in this report should be directed to Mike Mullins, Chief Quality Assurance & Compliance Officer, Ride Connection at (503) 528-1743 or mmullins@rideconnection.org.

Content and statistical information throughout this plan has been graciously provided by the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet).

Background

Ride Connection provides customer-focused, safe, reliable transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties. Ride Connection's mission is to link accessible, responsive transportation alternatives with individual and community needs. Our vision is to create independence and community connections through the gift of mobility. Ride Connection meets the transportation needs of everyone served by offering a variety of transportation options. From public transit training to grocery shopping shuttles, our priority is to ensure every person we serve has access to reliable transportation. As a non-profit organization, Ride Connection works to link other non-profits, human services agencies, and individuals into the complete transportation system in order to best meet their needs.

The History

The story of Ride Connection is one of evolution and collaboration; of identifying transportation needs and filling them; of recognizing opportunities and building upon those opportunities. In the mid-1980s a citizen committee recommended to TriMet that coordinating existing volunteer programs into one network could better meet the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities. The first rides were provided in 1986 by Volunteer Transportation, Inc. (VTI). Volunteer Transportation, Inc. was incorporated as a private nonprofit in May 1988 with a vision to serve this population with a more adaptable, accessible service than traditional public

transit. The name was changed to Ride Connection in 1999 to better describe the changing role of the organization. Ride Connection and its service provider network have evolved from a limited provider of volunteer transportation services to a major partner in the provision of transportation services to older adults and people with disabilities in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties in Oregon. The relationship between TriMet and Ride Connection represents a unique blending of public and private resources and serves as a model for effective regional cooperation and collaboration.

The Ride Connection network has grown from providing just over 11,700 rides in its first year (1986) to providing almost 550,000 rides in fiscal year 2019. Ridership decreased significantly in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although ridership has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels, there has been a steady increase since 2021 with 194,381 rides in FY21, 250,294 rides in FY22, and 310,873 rides in FY23. Today, Ride Connection has more than one-third of the hours driven by volunteer drivers. Volunteers are integral to Ride Connection's ability to provide services. Last fiscal year, volunteers contributed over 46,000 hours of service, lending a hand to Ride Connection as drivers, group transit trip leaders, board members, advocates, and more.

In October 2018, Ride Connection formed a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Committee tasked with evolving agency work in the area of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility to the point of operationalizing goals and outcomes. This work was endorsed by the Board of Directors as a strategic initiative driven by staff and supported by outside experts. The outside consulting firm Capacity Building Partnerships was hired in 2021. To date their work has included staff and board assessment as well as workshops. A Director of DEIA was also hired in June 2023.

A Coordinated Delivery System

As a network/coordinating organization, Ride Connection is unique in the region. We partner with over 100 organizations in the area to coordinate community-based transportation service options. Some of our partner organizations are large, experienced providers of human services, while others are small organizations or programs that are just getting started. Partner organizations include Impact Northwest, Metropolitan Family Service, Exceed Enterprises, and Urban League, to name a few. Ride Connection offers assistance at any stage, from visioning to implementation, ongoing monitoring, improvement, and expansion. Ride Connection recognizes, supports, and embraces the uniqueness of individual service partners and community organizations. As the coordinating organization in our region, we ensure the support of a reliable community transportation network. We work diligently to not only provide collaborative opportunities for planning and funding, but also provide training, customer service, community relations, contract management, reporting tasks, technology support, fiscal monitoring, planning, and volunteer management support. The base of our network support services allows projects to start with the foundation elements of service provision, reporting, safety, and compliance already in place. This allows our partners to focus on their customers, volunteers, staff, and the relationships needed to sustain high quality service delivery in day-to-day operations.

LEP Needs Assessment – The Four Factor Analysis

Factor 1. The number or proportion of LEP persons in our service area who may be served or are likely to encounter a transit program, activity, or service.

Assessing Needs of Limited English Proficient Individuals

Ride Connection acquired statistical data from the American Community Survey that determined the language assistance necessary to ensure limited English proficient individuals obtain meaningful access to its services and programs. The data was based on a four factor analysis: (1) number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or recipient; (2) frequency with which LEP persons come into contact with the program; (3) nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people's lives; and (4) resources available to the recipient for LEP outreach, as well as the cost associated with that outreach.

Limited English Proficient Populations Defined

Ride Connection's analysis focused on Limited English Proficient persons (LEP), as reported by the U.S. Census*, for whom English is not their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. It includes people who reported to the U.S. Census* that they speak English less than very well, not well, or not at all.

Number or Proportion of LEP Individuals

In order to prioritize language assistance service needs, Ride Connection staff examined the estimated total population aged five years and older within Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties. Ride Connection's staff determined that the data shows LEP populations represent 6.91% with the largest proportion consisting of Spanish speaking LEP individuals (3.06%). See Attachment A.

Ride Connection's staff identified the top five languages for LEP individuals (Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, and Korean) using US Census American Community Survey Tables: 2021 (5-Year Estimate). These top five languages comprise 75.14% of the total LEP population. See Attachment A.

*Ride Connection recognizes that certain populations face challenges with accurate representation. Factors such as poverty, limited mobility, language isolation, and inadequate educational opportunities persistently contribute to underrepresentation.

Factor 2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with transit programs, activities, or services.

Demography

The total population of persons with Limited English Proficiency in the tri-county area (Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties) according to the ACS 5-year estimate for 2021 in the TriMet District is 119,652 people. The top five languages spoken by LEP persons aged 5 and older in the tri-county area are Spanish (3.06%), Vietnamese (0.80%), Chinese (0.62%), Russian (0.56%), and Korean (0.16%).

Within the tri-county area, the population of LEP persons aged 5 and older represents an estimated 6.91% of the total tri-county population. Of the total LEP population, the highest concentration (44.4%) speaks Spanish.

Frequency of Contact

Below are the number of hits on the Ride Connection’s webpage that chose a language other than English, from the periods of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021 (FY21), July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022 (FY22), and July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023 (FY23):

Language	FY21	FY22	FY23
Chinese	163	683	1,139
Korean	0	0	6
Russian	6	0	8
Spanish	9	59	78
Vietnamese	0	0	6
Japanese	0	0	35
Total	178	742	1,272

At the Service Center, Ride Connection staff utilize in-house Russian and Spanish interpretation daily.

Below are the amounts of call center customers who chose Russian or Spanish for the periods between July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021 (FY21), between July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022 (FY22), and between July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023 (FY23):

Language	FY21	FY22	FY23
Russian	86	176	187
Spanish	244	790	1,389

Factor 3. The nature and importance of programs, activities, or services provided to the LEP population.

Customer Eligibility

Ride Connection serves individuals with barriers to mobility residing in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties. Our services are designed primarily for older adults* and people with disabilities. Because we believe every individual should have access to reliable transportation, some services are designed for the general public. A customer is eligible to use this service based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Location of residence;
- 60 and older*;
- Under 60 with disability;
- Unable to use public transport; or
- Unable to access public transport.

*Some programs offered by Ride Connection define an older adult as a person over the age of 65 years old. Contact us for further details by calling 503-226-0700.

Policies are enforced for eligible children, which include seat-belt securement and child safety-seat guidelines. An adult should accompany children under the age of 12.

Customer Service Statement

Ride Connection is dedicated to coordinating and providing transportation services to people with limited options in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties. Our organization has been linking transportation to people in our communities for over 30 years.

We believe transportation is a basic human right. Access to transportation means mobility. Being mobile allows a person to connect with their community and other essential life destinations.

Customer Service Quality Assurance

Quality customer service is our highest goal. The following have been developed to address customer service at each level of service.

- Customer service survey
- Incident Information Report
- Title VI Complaint processes
- Complaints, commendations and comments
- Quality Improvement Committee
- Quarterly Contractors Meeting
- Program & Providers Services Committee

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Ride Connection and our service partners conduct surveys of customer satisfaction. The goals of the surveys are to poll customers to determine transportation challenges they face, assure the service we provide meets those needs and challenges and that they are receiving quality customer service (see Appendix C).

Incident Information Report

Ride Connection has an incident information report to resolve Title VI Civil Rights-related disputes and complaints as well as compliments (see Appendix D).

Factor 4. The resources available to our transit system and the overall cost to provide language assistance.

Language Access Services

Ride Connection language access program is a mix of verbal and translated resources. Ride Connection will provide interpretation and/or translation upon request.

Customers may contact the Ride Connection Service Center between the hours of 7:30am and 5:00pm and request translation services. Currently, one Travel Navigator who is fluent in Russian and Ukrainian, and Travel Navigators and a Scheduler fluent in Spanish are available through the automated attendant message through the 503.226.0700 main phone number. If an on-site interpreter is not immediately available who speaks another language, then the call goes to the English queue and an external interpreter is patched in. An after-hours answering service with access to translation services is also available.

Interpretation Services

Ride Connection is committed to providing meaningful access for LEP clients by assuring the availability of qualified interpreters. At important stages that require one-on-one contact, written translation, verbal interpretation and American Sign Language, International Sign, and Tactile signing are also provided.

Ride Connection maintains access to telephonic interpretive services through Certified Languages International. This arrangement provides instant access to more than 200 languages.

To provide effective services for LEP clients, Ride Connection will use competent interpreters. "Competency" requires that interpreters will have demonstrated proficiency in both English and the intended language; training that includes the skills and ethics of interpreting; fundamental knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts; and respect for the customer's culture. Ride Connection uses the following vendors for interpretation services:

Linguava
IRCO
Certified Languages International
Access Services NW (ASL)

Document Translation

Ride Connection obtains translation services only from vendors who have extensive expertise in translation of documents. Ride Connection uses the following vendor for translation services:

IRCO/International Language Bank

When an eligible LEP group constitutes five percent of an eligible client group, or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, Ride Connection will prioritize translation of documents for potential LEP clients based upon the following criteria:

- Demographic analysis of population(s) affected, including apparent literacy rates;
- Weighing of risks and benefits of document translations;
- Barriers to meaningful translation or interpretation of technical information;
- The likelihood of frequent changes in the document(s);
- The type of plan, program, or service under consideration; and
- Available resources.

Training staff

Supervisors, managers, and department heads share the responsibility of providing initial and ongoing training for staff. Front line staff that answer phones are generally trained with a combination of “classroom” and “on the job” training. On the floor training involves shadowing others, doing the job with a mentor and then doing the job independently.

Notice of Right to Language Assistance

To ensure that Ride Connection is providing meaningful access for LEP customers, Ride Connection:

1. Determines LEP populations within service area
2. Makes all documents pertaining to use of the service available in multiple languages including, but not limited to:
 - a. Brochures
 - b. Rider Guides
 - c. Service alerts
 - d. Website
3. We conduct culturally appropriate outreach to increase awareness among potential LEP customers including, but not limited to:
 - a. Presentations
 - b. Engaging and partnering other non-profits
 - c. Enlisting business community support
 - d. Posting Flyers

ATTACHMENT A

ACS LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY LEP PERSONS AGE 5 AND OLDER IN TRI-COUNTY AREA

Language Spoken at Home	LEP Population Estimate	Percent of Total Population	Percent of LEP Population
Spanish	53,067	3.06%	44.35%
Vietnamese	13,822	0.80%	11.55%
Chinese (incl. Cantonese and Mandarin)	10,689	0.62%	8.93%
Russian	9,627	0.56%	8.04%
Korean	2,721	0.16%	2.27%
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	2,458	0.14%	2.05%
Arabic	1,917	0.11%	1.60%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	702	0.04%	0.59%
German	591	0.03%	0.49%
Other languages	24,058	1.39%	20.1%
Total	119,652	6.91%	100%

Source: US Census American Community Survey Table 16001: Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over (2022 1-Year Estimate)

<https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.C16001?q=C16001%20&g=050XX00US41005,41051,41067>

ATTACHMENT B



Fiscal Year 2020 Customer Satisfaction Survey - Monthly

This is an opportunity for you to honestly tell us how we are doing as an organization and how we might do better. Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential. Nothing you say in this survey will affect your ability to participate in Ride Connection's services in any way. Thank you for your feedback!

1. How likely is it that you would recommend Ride Connection to a friend or family member in need of transportation services?

Not at all likely

Extremely likely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. What is Ride Connection good at?

3. What could Ride Connection do better?

4. Overall, how well has Ride Connection met your needs?

- Not well at all
- A little bit
- Fairly well
- Very well
- Extremely well

5. How often does Ride Connection staff and/or volunteers treat you with respect?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Mostly
- Always

6. How easy is it for you to get services at Ride Connection?

- Not at all easy
- A little bit easy
- Fairly easy
- Very easy
- Extremely easy

7. Please explain your answer.

8. How often do you interact with Ride Connection?

- Every day
 - A few times a week
 - A few times a month
 - Once a month
 - Once every few months
 - Less often than that
-

Here are some additional questions.

9. To which Ride Connection transportation group do you belong?

- Ride Connection - East Multnomah County
- Ride Connection - Mid Multnomah County
- Ride Connection - Beaverton
- Ride Connection - Forest Grove
- Ride Connection - General Public
- Ride Connection - Hillsboro
- Ride Connection - King City
- Ride Connection - NW Portland
- Ride Connection - Tualatin
- Ride Connection - RideWise Travel Training
- Ride Connection - SPD
- Asian Health & Service Center
- Canby Adult Center
- Centro Cultural
- Estacada Community Center
- Gladstone Senior Center
- Hoodland Senior Center
- Impact Northwest
- Metropolitan Family Services - Project Linkage
- Molalla Community center
- Milwaukie Center
- Neighborhood House
- Pioneer Community Center
- Sandy Senior Center
- Transportation Reaching People (TRP, Clackamas County)

10. For which purpose(s) do you use Ride Connection's transportation services?

- Medical Appointment
- Shopping
- Volunteer Opportunity
- School/Work
- Recreational
- Nutrition
- Life Sustaining Medical treatments (Dialysis, Chemotherapy, etc)
- Personal Business

11. How often do you use Ride Connection's transportation services?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely

12. If the transportation service you use was NOT available, what other means of transportation would you use?

- I would be unable to travel
- I would rely friends, family, or a neighbor
- TriMet LIFT
- Public transit - City Bus & MAX trains
- Taxi
- Uber/Lyft
- Medical Transportation Program
- I would drive myself
- Other

13. Does this service improve your ability to live independently?

- Yes
- No

14. Does this transportation service improve your overall quality of life?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know / I'm not sure

15. Is there anything you would like to change about the transportation services Ride Connection offers?

The following questions are optional.

16. What is your age?

- Under 13 years old
- 13 - 17 years old
- 18 - 24 years old
- 25 - 34 years old
- 35 - 44 years old
- 45 - 54 years old
- 55 - 64 years old
- 65 - 74 years old
- 75 years or older

17. How do you identify?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe

Self-describe below:

18. What is your race or ethnicity?

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino, or Spanish origin
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Multiracial or multiethnic
- Native American or Alaska Native
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- Another race, ethnicity or origin

Self-describe below

ATTACHMENT C

Ride Connection

INCIDENT INFORMATION REPORT

Highlight one of the following:

Service Complaint	No Ride Investigation	Incident	Policy Complaint	Compliment	Documentation	Comment
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SAFETY RELATED? Highlight one: YES / NO

Title VI: YES / NO ADA: YES / NO

NOTE:

Please determine immediately if this report involves either a safety issue or an injury.

- **Please walk reports of unsafe vehicles or unsafe driving to Chief Quality Assurance & Compliance Officer (or another supervisor if unavailable).**
- **Please walk reports involving injuries or potential injuries to Chief Quality Assurance & Compliance Officer (or another supervisor if unavailable).**
- **For all other reports please fill out what you know and forward to Customer Service Coordinator.**

Date of Report:	
Event Date/Time:	
Customer:	
Phone/email:	
Provider or other party Involved:	
Please initial:	

Narrative:
Follow up:
Complaints Only *(highlight one) Substantiated Unsubstantiated Unfounded Undeterminable N/A: _____ Date filed: