

Working With Clients Who Speak Limited English

According to 2005 statistics, 10% of Oregon's population is "foreign born" and 25% of them self-identify as not speaking English well. Thirteen percent indicate they do not speak English at all. Many landlords contact the FHCO to find out what their responsibilities are when it comes to working with clients who speak little or no English. (We usually refer to this population as LEP clients...short for "limited English proficiency "clients.) Unless the housing you own or manage is subsidized with federal funding, you currently do not have a requirement to provide translation (written) or interpretation (spoken) services for your LEP clients. However, HUD has recently published a four factor analysis, which applies to federally funded housing. This analysis is a good business tool to apply to your private market management

practice to ensure your clients understand their lease requirements and your expectations.

HUD's Four Factor Analysis:

1. 1000 or more individuals in a language group = translate vital documents
2. More than 5% of your clients (and more than 50 individuals) in a language group = translate vital documents
3. More than 5% of your clients (but , less than 50 individuals) in a language group = have a written notice in the language that interpretation services can be made available.
4. Less than 5% of clients and less than 1,000 individuals in a language group = no need for written translation of materials. More information on serving the LEP population is available at www.LEP.Gov.