

# Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS)

## FY 2025 Limited English Proficiency Plan

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## ***Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries***

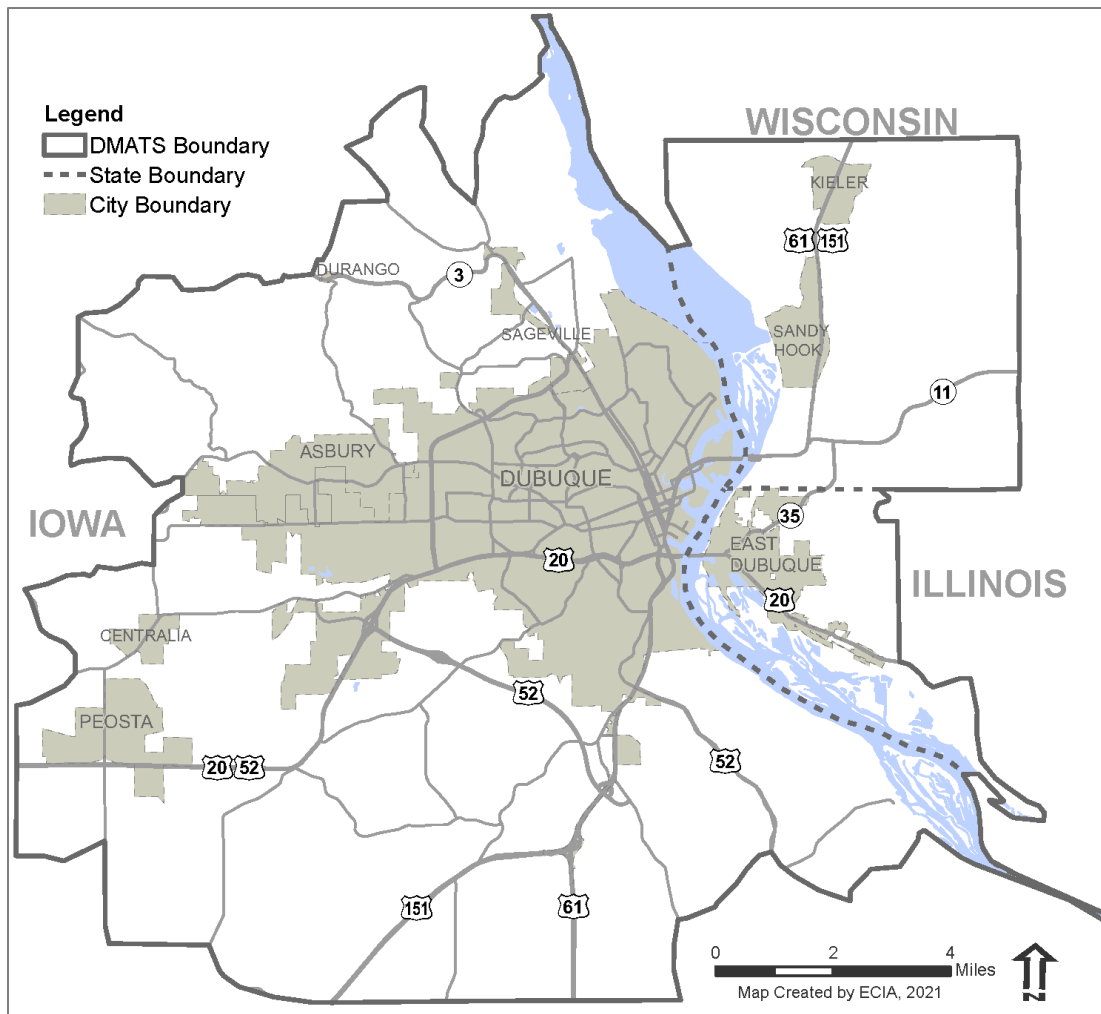
*The Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within DMATS Title VI Program consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, DMATS provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.*

# THE DUBUQUE METROPOLITAN AREA

The Dubuque Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (DMATS) is a tri-state Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) located at the boundary intersections of the states of Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The 2020 population for the DMATS planning area was 82,623 with approximately 93.2% of the total population living in the Iowa portion of the region, 4.3% residing in Illinois, and 2.5% living in Wisconsin. The major transportation routes in, around, and through this area include US Highways 20, 52, 61, and 151. These major highways all come to a junction at the base of the Julien Dubuque Bridge over the Mississippi River.

Dubuque is Iowa’s oldest city and is among the oldest settlements west of the Mississippi River. Dubuque’s early economy developed around lead mining, trading, and river transportation. Over time, the area added a rail transportation center where major railroad companies converged on the banks of the Mississippi River for easier distribution of product. Highway transportation followed and developed into the major mode of transportation in the area. Today the area continues to improve quality of life by expanding the region’s bicycle and pedestrian network, improving access to public transit, and creating a modern and efficient freight transportation system. Figure 1 maps the DMATS planning area.

Figure1: DMATS Planning Area



As an MPO, DMATS is directly responsible for ensuring that the expenditure of funds on existing and future transportation projects and programs is based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process, commonly referred to as the 3-C process. All transportation projects and programs that receive federal funds go through the 3-C planning process. DMATS also provides overall program management of an annual work program - the Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP). In addition, DMATS also provides policy direction and oversight in the development of the federally-mandated Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Funding for production of this document was provided principally by grants from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The contents of the Limited English Proficiency Plan (LEP) were compiled by DMATS, which is responsible for the accuracy of the facts and data presented herein.

## BACKGROUND

As a sub-recipient of federal funds, DMATS is obligated to comply with *Presidential Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*.

***Who is a LEP Individual? Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language AND who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.***

**Federal law:** Executive Order 13166 clarifies Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with regards to national origin discrimination against persons with limited English proficiency. Its purpose was to ensure accessibility to programs and services to eligible persons who are not proficient in the English language. This Executive Order states that individuals who do not speak English well and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English are entitled to language assistance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter. It reads in part:

***Each Federal agency shall prepare a plan to improve access to its federally conducted programs and activities by eligible LEP persons. Each plan shall be consistent with the standards set forth in the LEP Guidance, and shall include the steps the agency will take to ensure that eligible LEP persons can meaningfully access the agency's programs and activities.***

Executive Order 13166 also required Federal departments and agencies to develop and make available guidance on how recipients of Federal funds should assess and address the needs of LEP individuals seeking assistance. The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) developed guidance titled *Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Persons*.<sup>1</sup> This guidance was issued to ensure that persons in the United States are not excluded from participation in DOT-assisted programs and activities simply because they face challenges communicating in English.

The intent of this plan is to ensure that where substantial numbers of residents of the region exist who do not speak or read English proficiently; there will be access to DMATS transportation planning process, plans, and published information, and that public notification is provided in other languages. The production of multilingual publications and documents and/or interpretation at meetings/events will be provided to the degree requested and needed, and as funding permits based on current laws and regulations.

## **FOUR FACTOR ANALYSES: DETERMINING THE NEED**

As a sub-recipient of federal funding, DMATS must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to the information and services it provides. In determining “reasonable steps” there are four factors to be considered:

1. The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area;
2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with DMATS;
3. The importance of the service provided by DMATS; and
4. The resources available to the recipient.

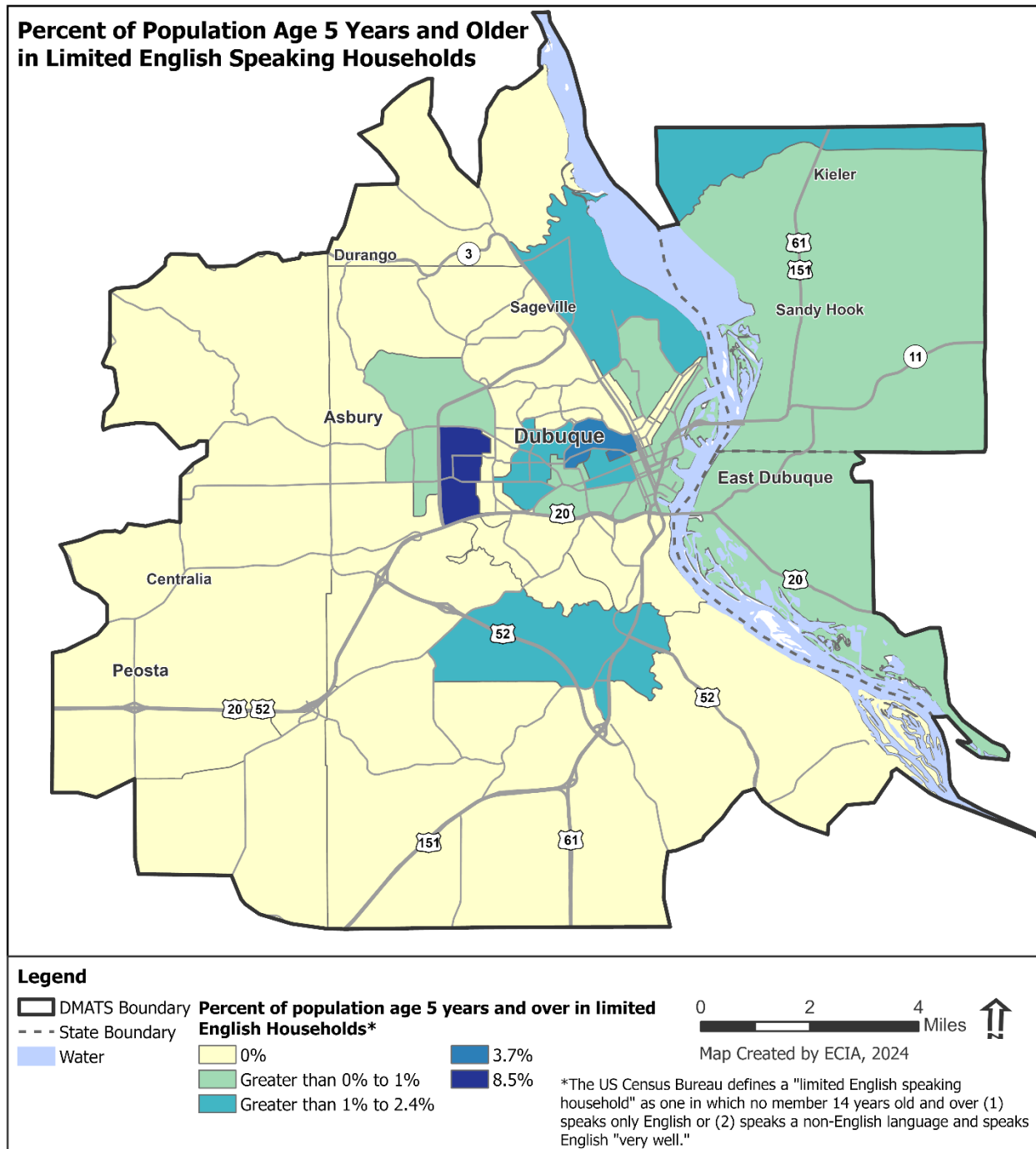
The USDOT Policy Guidance gives recipients substantial flexibility in determining what language assistance is appropriate based on a local assessment of the four factors listed above. The following is an assessment of need in the DMATS area in relation to the transportation planning process.

### **1. The number and proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service area.**

DMATS uses American Community Survey (ACS) data from the US Census Bureau to assess the ability to speak English for the population 5 years and over. According to 2018-2022 ACS estimates, 868 DMATS area residents aged 5 years and over or 0.93% of the DMATS area’s 5 years and over population live in LEP households. The US Census Bureau identifies a LEP household as one in which no member 14 years and over (1) speaks only English or (2) speaks a non-English language and speaks English “very well.”

The ACS values for the DMATS area were estimated by summing the values for a selection of census tracts that most closely align with the DMATS boundary. However, it should be noted that census tract boundaries do not align exactly with the DMATS area boundary. Consequently, the selected census tracts cover some areas outside the DMATS boundary. Figure 2 maps LEP data in the DMATS area by census tract.

Figure 2: DMATS Limited English Proficient Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates, Tables B16003, B16004.  
 GIS layer created by ESRI. Accessed via the ESRI Living Atlas on 4/18/2024. Data Updated: 12/7/2023  
 Map Scale: 1:160,000  
 Data Link: [https://services.arcgis.com/P3ePLMys2RVChkXj/arcgis/rest/services/ACS\\_English\\_Ability\\_and\\_Lingusitic\\_Isolation\\_Households\\_Boundaries/FeatureServer](https://services.arcgis.com/P3ePLMys2RVChkXj/arcgis/rest/services/ACS_English_Ability_and_Lingusitic_Isolation_Households_Boundaries/FeatureServer)

DMATS also uses ACS data to identify the languages spoken by people in the area. For this analysis DMATS relies on county-level ACS data instead of census tract. DMATS prefers county-level data for this analysis due to the fact that, with language data at the census tract level, sample sizes become small, and data reliability becomes an issue. County level data provides a bigger sample size and a more reliable estimate of the languages spoken in the DMATS area. It should be noted, however, that the DMATS planning area covers only a portion of Dubuque County, and as a result, the county-level data will include areas outside of the DMATS boundary and will not include the portions of the DMATS area in Illinois and Wisconsin. While the county-level data does not match exactly with the DMATS area, DMATS feels that it provides the most accurate estimate of languages spoken in the planning area. Table 1 provides a summary of the languages spoken at home by the population 5 years and over in Dubuque County.

Table 1: Language Spoken at home by the population 5 years and over in Dubuque County

Language spoken at home by the population 5 years and over	Dubuque County 2018-2022 Estimate					
	Speak English "very well"			Speak English less than "very well"		
	Estimate	Margin of error	Percent	Estimate	Margin of error	Percent
Speak only English	88,658	(+/-)551	95.47%	-	-	
Spanish	1,470	(+/-)245	1.58%	546	(+/-)205	0.59%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	28	(+/-)23	0.03%	36	(+/-)48	0.04%
German or other West Germanic languages	95	(+/-)56	0.10%	9	(+/-)14	0.01%
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	123	(+/-)81	0.13%	192	(+/-)190	0.21%
Other Indo-European languages	354	(+/-)177	0.38%	57	(+/-)55	0.06%
Korean	26	(+/-)28	0.03%	0	(+/-)24	0.00%
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	51	(+/-)60	0.05%	36	(+/-)38	0.04%
Vietnamese	9	(+/-)14	0.01%	52	(+/-)49	0.06%
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	188	(+/-)97	0.20%	161	(+/-)105	0.17%
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	237	(+/-)78	0.26%	260	(+/-)164	0.28%
Arabic	72	(+/-)67	0.08%	58	(+/-)67	0.06%
Other and unspecified languages	135	(+/-)112	0.15%	12	(+/-)18	0.01%
Total (excluding only English)	2,788	-	3.00%	1,419	-	1.53%

Total Dubuque County population 5 years and over: 92,865 (+/-)56

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022. Table C16001 State Data Center of Iowa.

According to the 2018-2022 ACS estimates, 1,419 people in Dubuque County speak English less than “very well” which accounts for 1.53% of the county’s total population 5 years and over. Spanish is the most common language spoken by non-English speakers (0.59% of the population), followed by Other Pacific Island languages (0.28%), and Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages (0.21% of total population).

**Safe Harbor Provision:** USDOT has adopted the US Department of Justice’s (USDOJ) Safe Harbor Provision, which outlines circumstances that can provide a “safe harbor” for recipients regarding translation of written materials for LEP populations. The Safe Harbor Provision stipulates that, if a recipient provides written translation of vital documents for each eligible LEP language group that constitutes five percent (5%) or 1,000 persons, whichever is less, of the total population of persons



eligible to be served or likely to be affected or encountered, then such action will be considered strong evidence of compliance with the recipient's written translation obligations.

Translation of non-vital documents, if needed, can be provided orally. If there are fewer than 50 persons in a language group that reaches the five percent (5%) trigger, the recipient is not required to translate vital written materials but should provide written notice in the primary language of the LEP language group of the right to receive competent oral interpretation of those written materials, free of cost. These safe harbor provisions apply to the translation of written documents only. They do not affect the requirement to provide meaningful access to LEP individuals through competent oral interpreters where oral language services are needed and are reasonable.

## **2. The frequency with which LEP persons come in contact with DMATS Planning**

To date, DMATS has never received a request for language assistance services such as a request for translation services at a meeting or a request to have a document translated. DMATS staff is housed within ECIA and less than 5% of the DMATS area population are non-English speaking. The growing minority and LEP population in the DMATS area increases the probability of future contact with the MPO.

Agendas for all DMATS Policy Board meetings include a notice about the availability of an interpreter or materials in alternative formats if requested 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The MPO has not had a request for interpreter services at any of its meetings.

## **3. The importance of the service provided by the program**

DMATS uses USDOT funds to plan for future transportation projects, and therefore does not include any service or program that requires vital, *immediate*, or emergency assistance such as medical treatment or services for basic needs (food, housing, education, etc.) or transportation services. DMATS does not conduct compulsory activities (applications, interviews, or other activities prior to participation in our programs and/or events). Public involvement with the DMATS or its committees is done entirely on a voluntary basis.

While DMATS does not provide an essential service, the MPO is committed to ensuring that all segments of the population, including LEP persons, are involved or at the very least have the opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process. Special efforts are made to involve LEP persons and other traditionally under-represented populations in the planning process. The MPO also evaluates the impact of proposed transportation investments on under-served and under-represented population groups as part of the planning and programming process consistent with Title VI, Executive Order 12898, and other federal guidance.

## **4. The resources available to the recipient**

While the cost of translating transportation plans is high, DMATS will continue to monitor and adjust its resources as necessary to respond to LEP population needs. Furthermore, DMATS will make efforts to partner with state, local agencies, cities and towns with large LEP populations, to provide language translation and interpretation services when needed for agency lead hearings or public workshops.

The MPO will seek to identify any existing Spanish outreach materials from organizations such as federal, state, and local transportation agencies that can be effectively used as outreach tools to these communities. The MPO will also expand efforts to collaborate with state and local agencies and educational facilities to provide language translation and interpretation services when practical, in consideration of funding limitations.

## **MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS: DMATS LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN (LEP)**

Providing needed services to the diverse population within the MPO planning area is important and DMATS has completed the following assessment and plan for providing them to the LEP population. All language access activities detailed below will be coordinated by DMATS staff with assistance from the Title VI coordinator, cities, counties, and other organizations within the DMATS area.

### **Identifying LEP Individuals Who Need Language Assistance**

US Census American Community Survey data indicates that the probability of encounters with Spanish LEP residents is the most likely scenario. Data will continue to be collected from the U.S. Census to monitor the changing language demographics within the state. A record will be kept of staff contacts and other interactions with LEP persons and groups. This office will maintain a list of the points of contact where a LEP person interacts with the organization. At this time, it is anticipated that the key points of contact for LEP individuals are during public workshops and hearings. As interaction with LEP individuals increases, additional points of contact will be identified. Data and language needs will continue to be identified through our public outreach and participation efforts.

### **Outreach to Community Organizations that Serve LEP Persons**

DMATS will work with local social services agencies like Lantern Center in Dubuque to disseminate information to the LEP population and to collect information regarding unmet needs. The Lantern Center's mission is to offer hospitality, educational opportunities, and advocacy to adult immigrants, especially women, who are striving to better their lives. The Center welcomes all who would like to learn English or improve their current English language skills in the areas of: reading, writing, speaking or listening.

### **Language Assistance Measures**

DMATS utilizes several measures to aid the LEP populations when needed. Translation services will be offered upon request. When DMATS posts a notice for a public hearing or workshop, a minimum 48-hour notice for oral language interpretation service is requested for those who require such services. Regular meetings of the DMATS and all of its standing committees contain a note on their meeting notices that interpreters can be provided on request and such requests should be made to our office as soon as possible.

DMATS will provide interpreters as needed in Spanish, Chinese, and any other language requested through the Iowa International Center's Interpretation and Translation Services, local community college and Loras College.

## **Staff Training**

In order to establish meaningful access to information and services for LEP individuals, employees in public contact positions and those who will serve as translators or interpreters should be properly trained. Such training, when available, will ensure that staff are fully aware of LEP policies and procedures and are effectively able to work in person and/or by telephone with LEP individuals.

Although DMATS staff have never been contacted by LEP individuals, staff and management have attended Title VI and Environmental Justice Training.

## **Monitoring, Updating, and Performance Measures for the LEP Plan**

DMATS will periodically determine whether new documents, programs, services, and activities need to be made accessible for LEP individuals and will conduct further assessment and work to meet the following goals, objectives, and actions from this plan to gauge progress:

- Stay knowledgeable of the current LEP population in DMATS area. Staff will monitor changing population levels and the language needs of LEP individuals in the state (US Census data).
- Monitor the frequency of contact with LEP persons and groups and keep records of any LEP services provided both in-office and in public venues.
- Requirements for additional language translation services will be determined by change in LEP population. Updates to policies and procedures will be made if such guidance is directed by the DMATS Board.

## **Title VI Notice and Provisions for Complaint Access by LEP Populations**

### **Notice to Beneficiaries**

DMATS operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#), the [Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987](#), and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the [Federal Highway Administration](#), the [Federal Transit Administration](#), or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within the SPP's Title VI Program consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, the Special Preparatory Program (SPP) provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with [US Department of Transportation](#) policy and guidance on federal [Executive Order 13166](#).

## **Title VI and LEP Complaint Procedure**

As a sub-recipient of USDOT financial assistance, the DMATS has in place the following Title VI complaint procedure and will follow this complaint procedure and process that meets Title VI requirements.

**Submit complaint:** Any person who believes that he or she, or any specific class of persons, has been subjected to discrimination or retaliation, from DMATS during the administration of federally funded programs, as prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and related statutes, may file a written complaint form. Complaints may be submitted in writing to the Title VI Coordinator.

A complainant may file a complaint directly with the following agencies:

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) by filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, Attention Civil Rights Officer, Region VII, FTA, 901 Locust Street, Ste 404, Kansas City, MO 64106.

Iowa Civil Rights commission, Attention: Title VI Program Coordinator, 6200 Park Ave Ste 100, Des Moines, IA 50321-1270.

Iowa Department of Transportation (IADOT) by filing a complaint with the Office of Employee Services, Attention: Civil Rights Section, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010

A Title VI complaint may be filed by completing and submitting the complaint form below or by sending an email or letter with the necessary information to:

East Central Intergovernmental Association  
Attn: Title VI Complaint  
Holly McPherson  
Director of Human Resources and Program Development  
7600 Commerce Park  
Dubuque, IA 52002