



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 12/17/2024

File #: 24-1602

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Human Resources

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Revisions to Limited English Proficiency Policy in Compliance with California Government Code Section 7299.7

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve revisions to the Humboldt County Limited English Proficiency Policy, ensuring compliance with California Government Code Section 7299.7; and
2. Adopt resolution regarding revisions to the Humboldt County Limited English Proficiency Policy.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Core Services/Other

Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:

The County of Humboldt is committed to providing meaningful access to all county programs and activities to all persons with limited English proficiency, while not imposing undue burdens on county employees. On April 28, 2020 the Board approved Humboldt County's Limited English Proficiency Policy to clearly outline access to a variety of services available to assist any persons with limited English proficiency (Attachment 1).

California Assembly Bill 1638 was approved by the Governor on Oct. 8, 2023, adding Section 7299.7 to California Government Code. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 7299.7, commencing on Jan. 1, 2025, all local public agencies providing emergency response services must offer emergency information in all languages spoken by at least 5% of the population who do not primarily speak English. Additionally, all agencies must conduct an assessment to determine which languages are spoken by 5% or more of the resident population, which must be updated every five years.

In order to ensure county policy complies with California Government Code 7299.7, staff is proposing revisions to Humboldt County's Limited English Proficiency Policy to state that the county will use all reasonably available tools to provide emergency information and resources in all languages spoken by approximately 5% or more of the population.

The proposed revisions also note that in the event of a disaster or proclaimed emergency, Qualified Bilingual Employees, in their capacity as Disaster Service Workers, will be reassigned to the Emergency Operations Center to ensure essential emergency information is provided to the community in languages spoken by approximately 5% or more of the population. Revisions to this policy can be found in Section IV.D of the revised policy (Attachment 2).

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

All county funds with Qualified Bilingual Employees

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The county's Limited English Proficiency Policy is a mandatory provision of many federal, state and local grants. Failure to approve revisions to this policy may negatively affect the county's ability to obtain grant or reimbursement funding.

STAFFING IMPACT:

In the event of an emergency, Qualified Bilingual Employees, in their capacity as Disaster Service Workers, may be reassigned to the Emergency Operations Center to ensure essential emergency information is provided to the community in languages spoken by approximately 5% or more of the population. These essential reassignments may temporarily disrupt regular workflow in their regular assignments.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board could choose not to approve the proposed revisions to the Limited English Proficiency Policy; however, this is not recommended as that action may have a negative impact to grant funding and reimbursement funds for the county.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution 20-30 and Limited English Proficiency Policy
2. Revised Resolution and Limited English Proficiency Policy

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: April 28, 2020

File No.: 20-513