

# Appendix D: Limited English Proficiency Language Assistance Plan

## Introduction

Title VI prohibits discrimination by recipients of Federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, and national origin, including the denial of meaningful access for limited English proficient (LEP) people. As a recipient of Federal funds, Marin Transit District (or “The District”) must “take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities by LEP persons.”<sup>1</sup>

On August 11, 2000, President William Jefferson Clinton signed Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" that requires Federal agencies and recipients of Federal funds to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with limited English proficiency (LEP), and develop and implement a system to provide those needed services so that LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. Further guidance was provided in 2012 with the release of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) circular--FTA C 4702.1B—that further codified the FTA’s objective to “promote full and fair participation in public transportation decision-making without regard to race, color, or national origin; and ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.”<sup>2</sup>

As a means of ensuring this access, the FTA Office of Civil Rights has created a handbook for public transportation agencies to use that includes step-by-step instructions for conducting the required LEP needs assessment and developing a Language Assistance Plan (LAP). The LAP becomes a blueprint for ensuring that language does not present a barrier to access to the agency’s programs and activities.

To develop the LAP necessary to comply with the guidance, an individualized agency assessment is required that balances the following four factors:

- Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to encounter a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee;
- Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
- Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to people's lives; and
- Factor 4: The resources available to the recipient and costs for translation services.

To ensure compliance with federal guidance, the District undertook an assessment with the goal that all reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that members of our customer base are not denied access to their services due to a limited ability to speak, read, write and understand English. The District believes in the rights of all residents within its community, and furthermore supports the overriding

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Register Volume 70, Number 239 (Wednesday, December 14, 2005)

<sup>2</sup> FTA Circular 4702.1B- Title Vi Requirements And Guidelines For Federal Transit Administration Recipients, October 1, 2012.

goal of providing meaningful access to its services by LEP persons. Eliminating the barrier to persons of limited-English-speaking abilities will have a positive impact not only on LEP individuals themselves, but also on the impact that Marin Transit has in the community.

## Agency Background

Marin County Transit District (Marin Transit) was formed by a vote of the people of Marin County in 1964 and was given the responsibility for providing local transit service within Marin County. Marin Transit operates a variety of programs and services including fixed route bus service, supplemental school bus service, demand-response services, and a suite of mobility management programs. Marin Transit services are operated under purchased transportation contracts and one interagency agreement. The District's bus and shuttle services carry over 2.4 million passenger trips each year (3.2 million pre-COVID).

## Marin Transit Language Assistance Plan Methodology

A variety of data points provide the basis for development of the LAP. The District consulted census data for Marin County to assist in determining the languages in which it is necessary to provide assistance. The LAP was also informed by the translation services being provided through existing District programs, as well as by employees who may provide frontline interaction with the community.

## Summary of Findings

By consulting the data sources identified above, the findings reveal the top three languages in the service area that will inform the LAP:

- Spanish
- Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese)
- Vietnamese

By a large margin, Spanish remains the most prominent non-English language spoken within the County, followed by Chinese and Vietnamese. As a result, while other languages may be considered for translation assistance, as reflected in the LAP, continued care should be taken to translate information into Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese to ensure that Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese language speakers are not presented with barriers to access Marin Transit's services and planning processes based on their English language ability. Other languages, including those falling under the "Safe Harbor" provision, will be provided translation services upon request.

For Chinese, due to the greater prevalence of Mandarin speakers in Marin County, documents will be translated into Simplified Chinese which is the written form of Mandarin.

# Limited English Proficiency: Four Factor Framework Analysis

## Factor 1: Determining the number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area who may be served or are likely to encounter Marin Transit's services or activities

The first step in the LAP development process was to quantify the number of persons in the service area who do not speak English fluently and would benefit from language assistance. This process included examining the District's prior experience with LEP populations and using census and Department of Education data to identify concentrations of LEP persons in the county.

### Data Sources

The following data were consulted to determine the most prevalent languages spoken in the service area, as well as those that may benefit from language assistance:

- American Community Survey 2021 1-year sample languages of people that speak English less than "Very Well"<sup>3</sup>
- California Department of Education (DOE) 2021-22 Census of English Learners
- 2017 Rider survey (the most recent survey that is available)

### Data Analysis

Using data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2021 1-Year Estimate within Marin County, the estimated percentage of the population that indicated they speak English "Less than Very Well" is approximately 9%. Table 1 presents the breakdown by language for those within the county that speak English "Less Than Very Well."

Per Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) guidelines regarding "Safe Harbor Provision" for translation of written materials that requires the identification of "Safe Harbor Languages," careful attention must be paid to the absolute numbers as well as the percentage of the population that do not speak English in the development of the LAP. FTA Circular 4702.1B states the following with respect to the Safe Harbor Provision:

*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.*

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<sup>3</sup> This represents the most recent 1-year estimate at this time, per Census Branch Chief, Data Products Development Branch, American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

There are three languages that have more than 1,000 persons who speak English less than “Very Well”: Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. Thus, per the guidelines, these would qualify as “Safe Harbor” languages requiring the translation of vital documents. According to FTA guidance under C4702.1B, vital written documents include, but are not limited to, consent and complaint forms; intake and application forms with the potential for important consequences; written notices of rights; notices of denials, losses, or decreases in benefits or services; and notices advising LEP individuals of free language assistance services. LEP populations that qualify as Safe Harbor Languages and their share of the total LEP population is summarized in Table 2.

This table does not include several groups of languages (for example, “Other Indo-European Languages”) that may have more than 1,000 individuals represented because the languages cannot be disaggregated to determine if each individual language is above the threshold.

It is important to note that due to the size of the service area, the 1,000-person Safe Harbor threshold can sometimes represent a very small percentage of the overall population. For instance, while approximately 1,200 Chinese speakers indicate that they speak English “Less Than Very Well”, this equates to only about 0.5% of the total population in the service area. Regardless, this language constitutes more than 1,000 individuals and would qualify for “Safe Harbor Provisions” along with another language (Vietnamese) that also represents less than 1% of the service area population.

Table 1: Marin County Residents That Speak English “Very Well” and “Less than Very Well” by Language

Language	Population in Marin County		Speak English less than “very well”	
	Population	% of Total County Population	Population	% of Total County Population
Spanish	31,695	12.7%	15,786	6.3%
Other Indo-European languages	9,526	3.8%	3,064	1.2%
Chinese (incl. Mandarin, Cantonese)	2,061	0.8%	1,269	0.5%
Vietnamese	1,693	0.7%	1,100	0.4%
Russian, Polish, or other Slavic languages	2,122	0.9%	821	0.3%
Other Asian and Pacific Island languages	1,745	0.7%	550	0.2%
Tagalog (incl. Filipino)	2,098	0.8%	507	0.2%
Other and unspecified languages	1,227	0.5%	432	0.2%
Arabic	788	0.3%	278	0.1%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	3,154	1.3%	141	0.1%
Korean	604	0.2%	109	0.0%
German or other West Germanic languages	2,267	0.9%	64	0.0%
<b>Total Non-English</b>	<b>58,980</b>	<b>23.7%</b>	<b>24,121</b>	<b>9.7%</b>
Speak only English	189,973	76.3%		
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>248,953</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

Source: Table C16001 American Community Survey 1-year Estimate 2021

Table 2: Safe Harbor Languages in Order of Prominence

Language Spoken	Individuals Speaking English “Less than Very Well”	Percentage of Total LEP Population
Spanish	15,786	65.4%
Chinese	1,269	5.3%
Vietnamese	1,100	4.6%
All other non-Safe Harbor languages	5,966	24.7%

Additional data was also analyzed using the American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates from 2021 to help understand the percentage of the community that may experience language barriers. The Census defines a “linguistically isolated” household as one in which no member over the age of 14 years speaks English only or the household members speak a non-English language and don’t speak English “very well.” Individuals in these households may face significant language barriers because they may not be able to rely on an adult relative who speaks English well to provide translation assistance. This data confirms that Spanish is the predominant language of those who are linguistically isolated. Table 3 shows percentages of the total households in Marin County that would be considered linguistically isolated along with the languages of those households.

Table 3: Linguistically Isolated Households in Marin County

Household Language Spoken	% of Marin County Linguistically Isolated Households
Spanish	51.1%
Other Indo-European languages	33.9%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	13.7%
Other languages	1.2%
<b>Percent of Marin County households Considered “Linguistically Isolated”</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Source: Table S1602 American Community Survey 1-year Estimate 2021

According to the guidelines set forward by the FTA, the LEP analysis should also review alternate and local sources of data. For this analysis, the California Department of Education (DOE) 2021-22 Census of English Learners provides an overview of the primary languages of the English Learners in the service area. The English Learner survey does not provide the most useful data for the LEP analysis, as it is collected among students and not the population as a whole. However, it provides another means of cross-checking census data analyses. All three languages identified as “Safe Harbor” languages by the census data analysis appear in this list. Spanish remains the most predominant language of all the language learners by a large margin, representing over 90% of the language learners, while Vietnamese, Mandarin and Cantonese represent very small numbers and shares of the language learners.

Table 4 provides the results of the Department of Education English Learners Census for the school districts in Marin County that have greater than 5 speakers in the school year beginning in 2021. The “Safe Harbor” languages are highlighted.

Table 4: Department of Education Language Learners in Marin County

Language Name	Total	Percent of Total
Spanish	4,725	90.07%
Portuguese	89	1.70%
Other non-English languages	77	1.47%
French	48	0.91%
Russian	43	0.82%
Vietnamese	32	0.61%
Japanese	26	0.50%
Mandarin (Putonghua)	24	0.46%
Arabic	17	0.32%
Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)	16	0.30%
Gujarati	16	0.30%
Punjabi	15	0.29%
Korean	14	0.27%
Farsi (Persian)	11	0.21%
Hindi	10	0.19%
Urdu	9	0.17%
Swedish	9	0.17%
Telugu	9	0.17%
German	6	0.11%
Cantonese	6	0.11%
Thai	5	0.10%
Italian	5	0.10%
Khmer (Cambodian)	5	0.10%

Source: California Department of Education English Language Learners SY 2021-22

### Rider Surveys

According to the 2017 On Board Survey, 63% of riders speak a language other than English at home. Of this, the vast majority indicate Spanish as their home language. Further, of these riders, over half speak English “not well” or “not at all,” indicating a high need for translation. It is also worth noting that the other languages found above to be “Safe Harbor” languages indicate speaking English “well” or “very well.”

Table 5: On Board Survey Results of languages other than English at home

Language Name	# respondents	% of Total	Share of language by English Ability			
			Very Well	Well	Not Well	Not at all
<b>Spanish</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>8%</b>
French	50	3%		60%	40%	
<b>English and Spanish equally</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	
Tagalog/Filipino	30	2%	67%		33%	
Portuguese	28	1%		100%		
Farsi/Persian	24	1%	25%	25%	50%	
Fijian	24	1%	100%			
Japanese	19	1%		100%		
Hindi	18	1%	100%			
Russian	18	1%	100%			
Urdu	17	1%	100%			
<b>Cantonese</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>			
Nepali	13	1%		100%		
Tibetan	12	1%	100%			
German	11	1%		100%		
<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0%</b>		<b>100%</b>		
Amharic	7	0%	100%			
English-Only	711	36%				
ASL	16	1%				
<b>Total All Respondents</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>100%</b>				
<b>Total Non-English</b> (excl. English-Only, ASL)	<b>1245</b>	<b>63%</b>				
<b>Share of Grand Total by level of language ability</b>			<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>4%</b>

### Factor 1 Findings

Factor 1 of the LEP Plan was undertaken to determine the number of persons in the service area who do not speak English fluently and may benefit from language assistance. The findings reveal:

- 3 languages qualify under the “Safe Harbor Provision” for written materials including Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese.
- Spanish represents the predominant non-English language spoken in the county and the highest need for translation.

Table 6, below, combines the outputs of the data considered, and presents a ranking of the languages spoken by LEP populations by the different data sets. Using this comparison to confirm the prevalence

of the Safe Harbor languages, the 3 languages are identified as those that should be considered for written or verbal translation service. However, only Spanish could be considered predominant languages using all data sets, as it is over four times as prevalent as other languages in all of the data sets.

Table 6: Predominant Languages within Marin County

Safe Harbor Languages	American Community Survey	Department of Education	Rider Survey (Speak English less than “very well”)
Spanish	1	1	1
Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese)	2	8	
Vietnamese	3	6	9
Portuguese		2	3
Other non-English languages		3	6
French		4	2
Russian		5	
Japanese		7	
Arabic		9	
Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)		10	8
Gujarati		11	
Punjabi		12	
Korean		13	
Farsi (Persian)		14	4
Hindi		15	
Urdu		16	5
Swedish		17	
Telugu		18	
German		19	7
Thai		21	
Italian		22	

## Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP Populations come in contact with Marin Transit’s programs, activities and services.

Assessing the frequency with which LEP populations come in contact with Marin Transit’s services, programs and activities helps the agency determine which languages need to be considered for language translation services. Generally, “the more frequent the contact, the more likely enhanced language services will be needed.”<sup>4</sup> Strategies that help serve an LEP person on a one-time basis will be very different from those that may serve LEP persons on a daily basis. For purposes of estimating the frequency of contact with LEP individuals and refining the languages encountered, Marin Transit

<sup>4</sup> Implementing the Department of Transportation’s Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients’ Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons--A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers, 2007

reviewed their programs and services in addition to consulting front-line employees that may have direct connection with LEP populations.

### Marin Transit’s Service and Programs

Table 7 presents a general description of Marin Transit’s programs, activities and services that may be encountered by LEP populations.

Table 7: Marin Transit’s Services and Programs

Program	Description of Activities or Services	
General Administration	1	General agency administration including soliciting public input, conducting public hearings and providing Language Assistance for Board meetings as requested
	2	Planning activities as related to service, fare, or other policy changes
	3	Providing information about Title VI policies, processes, and protections, including filing a complaint
	4	Marin Transit and Marin Access websites
	5	Marin Access Mobility Management Services and outreach efforts
Transit Service Operations	1	Signage using visual and tactile methods for non-English speaking riders
	2	Kiosks and signs at Transit Centers and stops with display information
	3	Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries located onboard buses, at stops and at administrative offices
	4	Call in Customer Service, wayfinding and trip planning

### Data Sources

The following data were consulted to determine the frequency with which LEP Populations come in contact with Marin Transit’s staff, programs, services and activities, as well as those that may benefit from language assistance:

- Annual call center data for Marin Access and Customer Service call centers
- Annual Language Line usage data
- Marin Transit Staff & Contracted Staff Language Survey

### Frontline Staff Interactions and Capabilities

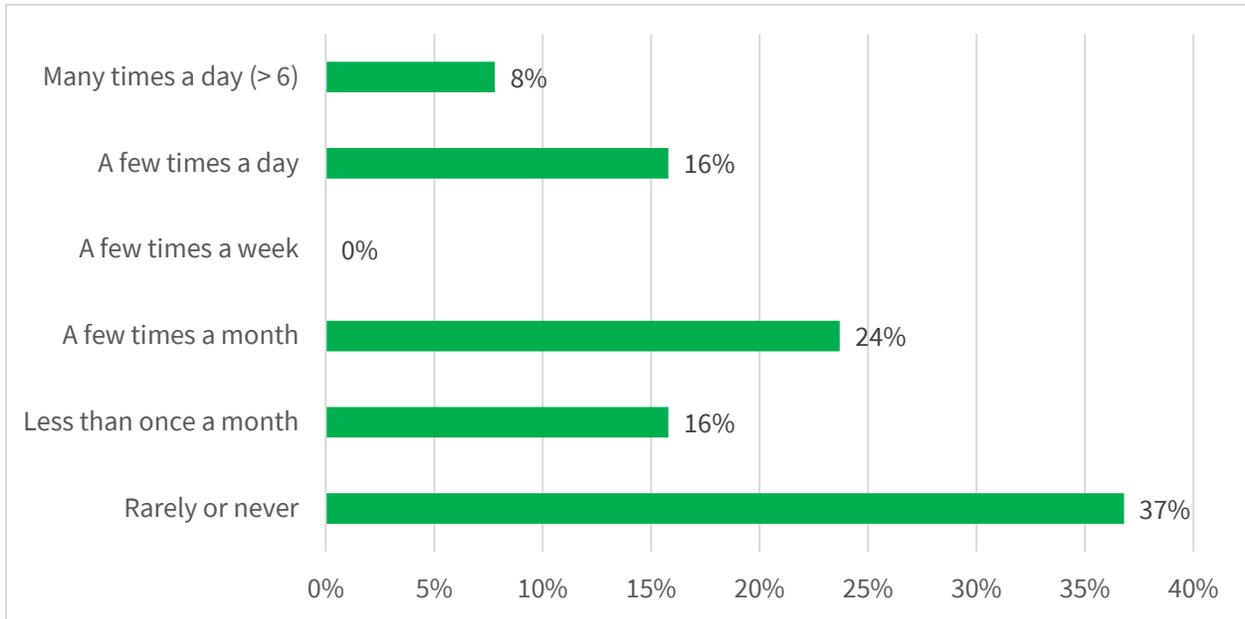
Staff collected feedback from internal and contracted frontline staff via a web-based survey to understand staff language capabilities and the frequency with which frontline staff interacted with LEP populations. 38 individual respondents completed the survey.

Currently, when staff members interact with LEP populations, staff either assist the patron by utilizing their ability to communicate in the necessary language, refer to another staff member for support, or indicate that they will engage the use of Language Line to assist with the call and complete the request.

Approximately 24% of the surveyed staff or contractors responded that they had somewhat frequent interactions with LEP populations. However, the remainder (76%) indicated that they had very little or

no interactions with LEP populations. This would signify that while interpretation services may be needed by some LEP populations, they are not the preponderance of encounters of those frontline employees. The findings of this survey are displayed in Figure 1 below:

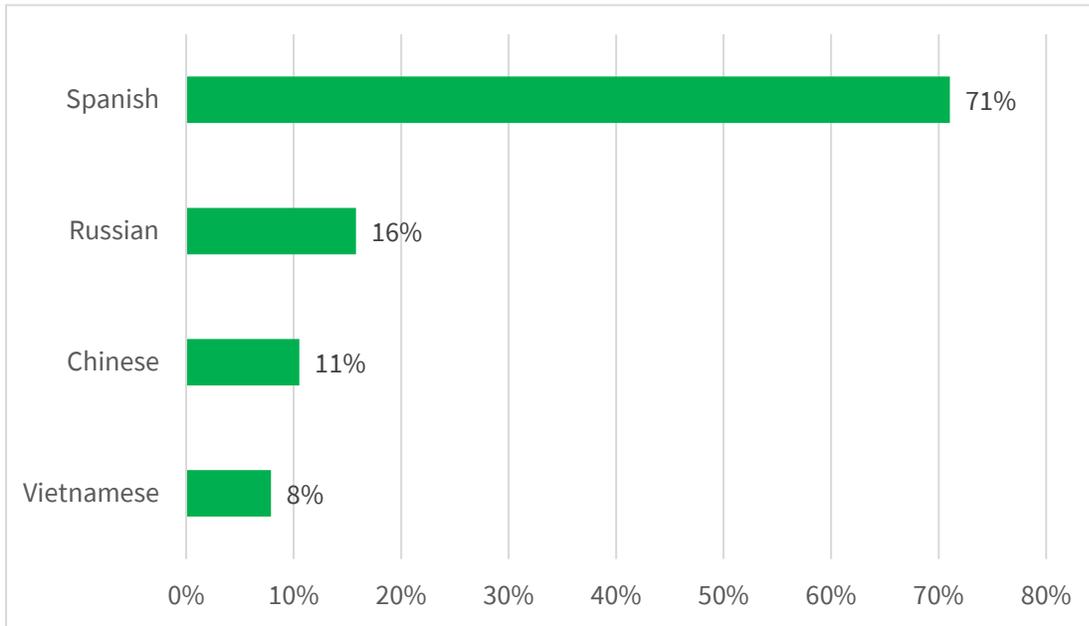
Figure 1: Survey Responses regarding Staff and Contractor Interactions with LEP Populations



We also consulted data regarding the frequency with which interpretation or translation requests are received for various live meetings or events. Interpretation or translation requests must be received no less than five working days prior to each meeting or event to allow staff sufficient time to coordinate resources. However, in the last year, there have been no requests for interpretation or translation requests.

The survey also confirmed that Spanish remains the language most often encountered by frontline employees. About 70% of those who responded had identified Spanish as the most predominant language, followed by Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian. Figure 2 presents the findings; due to staff reporting encountering more than one language on a frequent basis, the totals below do not sum to 100%.

Figure 2: Survey responses of top languages frequently encountered by staff



Survey data also shows that Marin Transit has a large percentage of staff that can speak another language, with the most common language being Spanish. Approximately 42% of the total staff and contractors indicated that they were proficient in Spanish, while other languages including Vietnamese, Portuguese, Laotian and Arabic are also spoken by employees. Table 8 presents the staff language capabilities that could provide in-house interpretation services; some staff speak multiple languages thus the totals do not sum to 100%.

Table 8: Staff Language Capabilities

Language	Proficient Internal Staff	Proficient Staff Contractors	Total Proficient	Percent of Total
Spanish	8	8	16	42%
Vietnamese		1	1	3%
Portuguese	2		2	5%
Laotian		1	1	3%
Arabic	1		1	3%
Total Speakers	10	10	20	53%
Total Respondents	21	17	38	100%

Data from the staff survey aligned with census data and demonstrated that Spanish remains the most predominant language requested by a large margin, representing over 90% of the translation assistance requested, while Vietnamese, Mandarin and Cantonese represent very small numbers. Additional languages also emerged that may be considered for translation in the future.

Staff who reported that they regularly interact with the public largely cited Spanish as the language most frequently spoken with Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese following in small percentages.

### Call Center

Call Center data was reviewed regarding both the languages requested via Language Line as well as the percentage of total calls received in order to determine whether language assistance requests uncovered insights about those seeking information. This does not include calls that were handled independent of Language Line by Call Center employees who speak Spanish and could address the language assistance directly. Languages of these representatives include Spanish and Vietnamese. Spanish was the predominant language for Language Line assistance, representing approximately 90% of the Language Line assistance needed. A summary of the call center data is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Call Center Language Assistance (FY2023 - July - March)

	Customer Service Calls	Assistance via Language Line	% of Customer Service Calls with Language Assistance Provided	% of Total Language Assistance
English	18,862	-	-	-
Spanish	-	170	0.90%	87%
Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese)	-	4	0.02%	2%
Vietnamese	-	6	0.03%	3%
French	-	2	0.005%	1%
Russian	-	8	0.04%	4%
Japanese	-	1	0.01%	1%
Korean	-	2	0.01%	1%
Haitian - Creole	-	1	0.005	1%
Hindi	-	1	0.005%	1%
Total	18,862	195	1%	100%

### Marin Access Survey & Client Information

Staff consulted other data sources to assess the interactions of LEP populations with other services. Marin Access survey data and client database indicate that a little more than 7% speak a language other than English as their primary language, with Spanish representing a little less than 4% of the total Marin Access database. For this reason, language services may not be as important on Marin Access as other services. However, ensuring that vital documents related to Marin Access services are available in other languages is still a crucial element to ensure that language is not a barrier to Marin Access services.

This data aligns with the other data consulted and demonstrates that Spanish is the most predominant language by a large margin, while Vietnamese, Mandarin and Cantonese represent very small numbers. This data does not provide the most useful data for the LEP analysis, as it represents a small sample size and is collected among Marin Access participants only and not the rider population as a whole. It does, however, afford the opportunity to confirm other findings. A summary of the findings from Marin Access data sources is shown below in Table 10.

Table 10: Marin Access Database - Primary Language

Primary Language Spoken	% Total Eligible
English	92.7%
Spanish	3.6%
Russian	0.9%
Farsi (Persian)	0.8%
Vietnamese	0.7%
Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese)	0.5%
Other non-English languages	0.2%
Korean	0.2%
Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)	0.1%
Hindi	0.1%
Urdu	0.1%
Japanese	0.1%
Arabic	0.1%
Portuguese	0.0%
French	0.0%
<b>Total Limited English Proficiency</b>	<b>7.3%</b>

### Factor 2 Findings

- Contact with LEP members of the public is significant among a limited number of employees and contractors; the majority have little or no contact with non-English speaking customers.
- While Marin Transit provides language assistance services for non-English speakers, ensuring that vital documents are translated is warranted to ensure access for Marin Access riders.
- The languages most often heard by staff correspond to the languages identified in Factor 1.
- A large percentage of employees and contractors speak languages other than English, enabling them to engage members of the LEP community directly and providing staff to which LEP persons could be referred if necessary.
- Language Line service remains an important component of the Marin Transit language assistance measures in order to provide assistance for languages beyond Spanish.

**Factor 3: The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to people's lives.**

“The more important the activity, information, service, or program, or the greater the possible consequences of the contact to the LEP individuals, the more likely language services are needed.”<sup>5</sup>

**Use of Marin Transit Bus Services**

Marin Transit fixed route operations serve all residents of and visitors to Marin County, but the service is especially important for low-income residents, who are more likely to be transit-dependent and more likely to be using transit to reach a wide variety of destinations, many of which are not served by regional transit. In addition to serving commute trips within the county, fixed route services provide access to medical facilities, schools, senior programs, groceries, and other destinations within Marin County.

There are three regionally designated Equity Priority Communities in Marin, and all three receive high-quality, frequent fixed route services to support mobility for these communities. The Canal district of San Rafael has an especially large low-income and transit-dependent population and is served by five (out of fifteen total) local routes, with greater frequency than any other area of the county (outside downtown San Rafael and the San Rafael Transit Center). A Marin Transit Rider Guide is currently provided in both English and Spanish to assist the most common language spoken by LEP riders.

According to the on-board survey results, about 95% of the Marin Transit riders use the bus at least once each week. About two-thirds of these riders speak English “Not Well” or “Do Not Speak English.” This also holds true for more casual riders who use the service 3 or fewer times per month. This data helps to better understand how important Marin Transit service is to the LEP community. Table 11 presents the 2017 On Board Survey Results comparing frequency of riding the bus with the ability to speak English.

*Table 11: Frequency of Riding Bus and English Proficiency*

Frequency of Riding Bus	Speak English “Very Well”	Speak English “Well”	Speak English “Not Well”	“Do Not Speak English”	Total “Not Well” or “Do Not Speak English”	Percentage of Total Population
5 times per week or more	11%	24%	55%	11%	66%	75%
1-4 times per week	11%	18%	55%	17%	72%	20%
1-3 times per month	7%	7%	56%	30%	86%	2%
Less than 1 time per month	21%	25%	38%	17%	55%	2%

Source: MTC Marin Transit On-board survey 2017

<sup>5</sup> Implementing the Department of Transportation’s Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients’ Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons--A Handbook for Public Transportation Providers, 2007

## Customer Service

Marin Transit provides a call-in customer service number that provides trip planning and other transit-related customer services. This includes calls in non-English languages for which translations or interpretations are required. Marin Transit uses Language Line interpretation service; consequently, in many cases, the customer service agents are the first line of communication for those who may not speak English. As reflected in Factor 2, a good percentage of all employees are bilingual and are able to provide language assistance in addition to the Language Line service.

Marin Transit offers riders several options to access a call-in customer service. These options include:

- Assistance for General Public Riders via Customer Service Center at San Rafael Transit Center
  - A team of customer service staff assist with trip planning and other transit-related customer service requests.
  - This team has bilingual staff that speak Spanish on duty during all hours of operation and access to the Language Line to support requests in other languages.
- Assistance from Staff at the Marin Transit Administrative Office
  - Marin Transit staff assist with trip planning and other transit-related customer service requests.
  - Several staff members are bilingual and are available to assist callers or visitors to the Marin Transit Administrative Office in Spanish. Callers or visitors that need assistance in other languages are referred to the Customer Service Center or Travel Navigator Call Center for assistance via the Language Line.

## Marin Access

Marin Transit initiated an innovative mobility management program, Marin Access, to develop and deliver efficient travel options and improve information for older adults and persons with disabilities. A team of Travel Navigators coordinate and match eligible riders with different types of mobility programs, including local paratransit, travel training, volunteer driver, and subsidized taxi (Catch-A-Ride) as described below.

Assistance is available for Marin Access Riders via the Travel Navigator Call Center in San Rafael, which includes:

- A team of Travel Navigators that provide information and eligibility assistance for the Marin Access suite of mobility programs, including: ADA mandated paratransit; a subsidized taxi / TNC program; a volunteer driver reimbursement program; and, a fare assistance program. The Travel Navigators also assist with trip planning and technical assistance so that riders can select the most appropriate option to make their trips.
- The Travel Navigators have bilingual staff that speak Spanish on duty during all hours of operation and access to the Language Line to support requests in other languages.

As demonstrated in Factor 2, there is a small number of LEP riders who use the service. However, providing translations for vital documents related to Marin Access will help ensure that English proficiency is not a barrier to ride.

### **Factor 3 Findings**

Marin Transit services provide an essential mobility connection for transit riders to reach important destinations within the county. Insofar as it is practical, ensuring that critical information is available in the most commonly spoken languages in the county is important to ensure access to critical services and programs for LEP populations. Given the services that Marin Transit provides, the following represent the most important general areas where the District should ensure that language is not a barrier to access:

- Information about how to use fixed route bus services, this includes written information, schedules and pictograms at transit centers and stops and the Rider Guide
- Call-in Customer Service that provides general information on bus service, including trip planning
- Application forms and/or other forms required to use services (e.g. Clipper card application, ADA Paratransit application)
- Notice to beneficiaries of Title VI protections and complaint forms
- Information regarding how to obtain translation services for those who do not speak English

Marin Transit will continue to assess and identify critical areas that require language assistance to ensure LEP access to services. Marin Transit will periodically assess information that is available about programs and activities to understand and remedy language barriers that could have serious consequences to LEP customers. Marin Transit will also seek input on its programs, activities and services from LEP customers to help identify how to best meet their needs; this will include working with the community directly as well as through Community-Based Organizations to ensure the benefits of services are equally experienced by English-speaking and LEP riders and the general community.

### **Factor 4: The resources available to Marin Transit and costs associated with translation services**

Marin Transit assessed the cost of currently available resources that are used to provide LEP assistance. Marin Transit has several resources available for translation services including in-house translation or interpretation support by staff, contracted staff translation or interpretation support, written materials translation, and on-demand language interpretation services. However, costs associated with some bilingual staff that provide language assistance are embedded in salaries and thus, are not included in this estimate.

Marin Transit currently provides translation or interpretation assistance in Spanish by default; and provides other languages as requested by the public. Internal resources are used as often as possible for Spanish translation and interpretation support as these staff understand the context and nature of transit services that may be useful to ensure translations accurately convey the information. Contracted staff are provided a pay incentive for fluency in Spanish.

External resources are used for Vietnamese, Chinese, and other languages as needed. Table 12 below shows costs for various services provided. As previously mentioned, Marin Transit staff are called upon to provide some language assistance at no additional cost to the agency. This practice will continue if staffing continues to offer this skill set.

Table 12: Translation Assistance Costs

Service	Consecutive Interpreting	Simultaneous Interpreting
ASL Interpreting	\$120 / hour	\$240 / hour
Face-to-Face Interpreting	\$95 - \$120 / hour depending on language	\$110 - \$195 / hour depending on language
Virtual Interpreting	\$95 - \$120 / hour depending on language	\$110 - \$195 / hour depending on language
Document Translation	\$45 / hour	\$45 / hour

Other annual expenses may include:

- In-house translation support by staff including training
- Contracted staff translation support
- Written materials translation (such as complaint forms, if needed)
- In-person / virtual language interpretation support
- Language line on-demand language interpretation

Marin Transit’s budget does not provide a specific line item for translations at this time. Translations of specific documents such as printed materials or Language Line services are included in the program-level costs. However, an upcoming review of the need for and cost of translation services will render a method of more accurately tracking some of these costs.

### Language Line Costs

Staff reviewed Language Line costs to provide a better understanding of Marin Transit’s costs associated with providing on-demand interpretation services. Table 13, below, provides the summary of Language Line’s costs for the Customer Service Call Center and the Marin Access Call Center in both an annual total and monthly average (rounded to nearest \$10). This total is similar to other agencies in the Bay Area who have similar language assistance needs.

Table 13: Language Line Costs

	FY22 Monthly Average	FY22 Total	FY23 Monthly Average	FY23 Total
Customer Service Call Center	\$90	\$1,130	\$60	\$460
Marin Access Call Center	\$200	\$970	\$210	\$1,700
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$2,090</b>		<b>\$2,160</b>

#### **Factor 4 Findings**

It is recommended that budgeting for and tracking the costs of translations or interpretation services would provide a better understanding of the costs associated with all language assistance measures that the agency undertakes as well as the languages that are served. While it may not be possible to have all language assistance measures fall under one line-item in the budget due to contracting mechanisms, it is recommended that project-specific budgets that have outreach activities or front-line employee interactions should include a line-item for language services costs. This is a best practice that allows the agency to monitor the usefulness of the translation expenses and ensure that translation services are taken into consideration during the development of outreach efforts.

# Limited English Proficiency: Language Assistance Plan

## Language Assistance Plan Overview

### 1. Identifying LEP Individuals Who Need Language Assistance

The Four Factor analysis considered several data sets to determine the languages that would require “Safe Harbor” consideration and prominent languages used by county residents. These data included Census data (American Community Survey 2021 1-year sample) and the Department of Education English Learners data and the last rider survey. Approximately 9% of the population in Marin County speak English less than “Very Well” and would be considered an LEP population.

The following represents the findings from Factor 1:

- Three languages qualify under the “Safe Harbor Provision” for written materials due to having greater than 1,000 individuals in Marin County: Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese and thus would require translations of vital documents.
- Spanish represents the principal non-English language spoken in the county and the highest need for translation.

Because Spanish remains the predominant language of LEP households, Marin Transit will continue to focus language assistance to Spanish speaking populations. However, based on the Four Factor Findings, there is a need for language translations beyond Spanish especially for Complaint Forms and Notices to Beneficiaries in all “Safe Harbor” languages.<sup>6</sup>

Marin Transit may identify LEP persons who needs language assistance through the following activities:

- Examining customer service center records for language assistance provided in person or over the phone;
- Having Marin Access Mobility Management Program eligibility coordinators and dispatchers record and report on passenger requests for language assistance;
- Scheduling public meetings in neighborhoods where LEP residents are concentrated and advertise the availability of translation assistance at least two weeks in advance and then tracking requests received;
- Providing Census Bureau Language Identification Flashcards at Marin Transit events near the registration table. While Marin Transit may not be able to accommodate individuals that self-identify as persons not proficient in English at an event, this information assists staff in anticipating needs for future events; and
- Educating bus operators and front-line staff on identifying specific language assistance needs and potential demographic trends among riders and connecting LEP passengers to Customer

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<sup>6</sup> Due to the greater prevalence of Mandarin speakers in Marin County, documents will be translated into Simplified Chinese which is the written form of Mandarin.

Service for language assistance; enabling passengers to easily connect with the Language Line service that provides immediate translation in 200 languages.

## **2. Providing Language Assistance Measures**

Marin Transit is committed to providing meaningful access to their services for LEP customers. Marin Transit uses various methods to accomplish this goal but is planning on enhancing those methods to include all necessary languages. Methods pertaining to general rider and public outreach/engagement are discussed in Marin Transit's Public Participation Plan (PPP); methods related to bus service and rider customer service are identified here.

Currently, Marin Transit's primary language assistance tools include:

- Providing Title VI Notice to Beneficiaries and Title VI complaint form in Spanish, with plans to include Chinese (Written Simplified Chinese) and Vietnamese
- Spanish-speaking Customer Service staff to assist those with limited English proficiency
- Language Line assistance for those who call in and need on-demand interpretation services
- Providing notification of available translation services on website and printed materials in Spanish, such as Board meeting notices
- Rider Guide translated into Spanish, with plans to include a statement in Chinese (Written Simplified Chinese) and Vietnamese about how to get a translated copy
- Having "Google Translate" bar on the website ([www.marintransit.org](http://www.marintransit.org))
- Spanish translations on informational brochures and meeting notices
- Translators for public hearings
- Posting Marin Transit public hearing notices, news releases and advertisements to newspapers in other languages as determined by project need
- CBO and other agencies' assistance in outreach to LEP populations for major planning or environmental efforts

LEP Attachment 1 provides some examples of documents that have been translated in the past.

The following are recommendations that would improve the level of service that Marin Transit provides to its LEP customers and that can be implemented within the next several years:

- Provide Notice to Beneficiaries and Complaint Forms in all of the Safe Harbor Languages
- Continue to use a variety of Social Media in other languages
- Continue to work with CBOs to serve multilingual communities
- Continue to track language needs and identify new translation needs

### **Vital Documents Guidelines**

Marin Transit is committed to full compliance with Title VI and Executive Order 13166 to provide meaningful access and reduce barriers to services and benefits for persons with limited English proficiency. An effective Language Assistance Plan includes the translation of vital and other documents into the languages of frequently encountered LEP customers. According to federal

guidance, vital written documents include, but are not limited to, consent and complaint forms; intake and application forms with the potential for important consequences; written notices of rights; notices of denials, losses, or decreases in benefits or services; and notices advising LEP individuals of free language assistance services.<sup>7</sup> Classification of a document as “Vital” depends upon the importance of the program, information, service, or encounter involved, and the consequence to the LEP person if the information in question is not provided accurately or in a timely manner.

Based on the Four Factor analysis, the “Safe Harbor” Languages for vital document translation are Spanish, Chinese (Written Simplified Chinese) and Vietnamese

Table 14 below lists both vital and non-vital documents and categories of documents (such as promotional materials) and identifies the language category into which they should be translated. However, the District may provide a summary of a vital document and/or notice of free language assistance in the “Safe Harbor” languages, rather than a word-for-word translation of the vital document.

Marin Transit reserves the right to translate documents into more languages as circumstances dictate and resources allow. Additionally, due to the critical nature of safety and security information, Marin Transit may rely on pictographs to the extent possible, so that information is communicated regardless of language spoken.

*Table 14: Vital and Non-Vital Document List*

Document	Languages	Vital Document?
Title VI Public Notice	All Safe Harbor Languages	Yes
Title VI Complaint Form and Procedures	All Safe Harbor Languages	Yes
Notice of Free Language Assistance	All Safe Harbor Languages	Yes
Public Hearing Notices	Spanish and translations upon request	Yes
Participation Applications or Forms	Spanish and translations upon request	Yes
Safety and Security Information	Use of Pictographs or translations	Depends on subject matter
General Promotional Materials (including Marin Transit Rider Guide)	Spanish (plus notice of language assistance in all Safe Harbor languages)	No
Construction Notices	As determined by location	No

The following represents the current documents that are translated into Spanish per the Vital Document table, above:

- Title VI Public Notice
- Title VI Complaint Form and Procedures
- ADA Public Notice
- ADA Complaint Form and Procedures

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<sup>7</sup> FTA Circular 4702.1B

- Reasonable Modification Public Notice
- Reasonable Modification Form and Procedures
- Notice of Free Language Assistance
- Public Hearing Notices
- Rider Guide
- Other documents such as marketing materials have been translated into other languages as determined by project outreach strategies.

### **3. Training Staff**

Marin Transit trains staff on its role and responsibilities in providing meaningful access to services for LEP persons through the following activities:

- Develop curriculum and a corresponding PowerPoint that educates Marin Transit staff and contractors on the Title VI requirements for providing meaningful access to services for LEP persons, including sensitivity to cultural differences. Conduct training for all current and new staff;
- Distribute LEP curriculum and training materials to contractors for their use in training drivers and front-line staff who deliver and support Marin Transit fixed route services;
- The above two trainings will include the following
  - A description of language assistance services offered by Marin Transit;
  - Specific procedures to be followed when encountering an LEP person, including how to handle a potential Title VI/LEP request or complaint; and
  - Instructions on use of the U.S. Census Bureau Language Identification Flashcards and/or Language Line brochure.

With the adoption of the Language Assistance Plan, all training materials will be refreshed to reflect the new data, languages, and language assistance strategies.

### **4. Providing Notice to LEP Persons of Language Assistance Measures**

The methods that Marin Transit will use to notify LEP customers of language assistance services include the following:

- Post Language Assistance Notification on the marintransit.org website
- Provide Language Assistance Notification on Board agendas and public hearing notices
- Provide Language Assistance Notification on Rider Guide and other educational materials as appropriate
- Provide Google Translate on website to promote language inclusion
- Use of foreign language media outlets as appropriate whenever possible

## ***5. Monitoring and Updating the Plan***

This plan is designed to be flexible and will evolve with changes in Marin County's population and Marin Transit ridership. As such, it is important that the District monitor changes in demographics and consider whether new documents and services need to be made accessible for LEP persons.

Marin Transit updates this Language Assistance Plan (LEP Plan) every three years as required by the Federal Transit Administration. Staff will review and update the plan when it is clear that higher concentrations of LEP individuals are present in Marin Transit service area, especially those speaking languages other than Spanish. As the basis for updating the LEP Plan, Marin Transit will monitor and evaluate its LEP activities through analysis of:

- Input from customers through Marin Transit's System-wide Passenger Surveys, which will be conducted every three to five years;
- Needs identified by front line staff during employee training activities related to Limited English Proficiency populations or in the course of day-to-day operations of the system;
- Needs identified by community partners or LEP individuals during outreach activities or other interactions with Marin Transit staff, including informal meetings with leaders of community-based organizations and social service providers;
- Complaints from LEP individuals received by Marin Transit or its contract operators; and
- Assessment of usage of translation services
- Assessment that may include surveys of coach operators and other front-line staff, including Travel Navigators, dispatchers, schedulers, and the District's service development planners on their experience concerning contacts with LEP persons.

## ***Dissemination of Marin Transit Language Assistance Plan (LEP Plan)***

Marin Transit disseminates the Language Assistance Plan to customers and Marin County residents through the following:

- A link to Marin Transit LEP Plan and Title VI Program is provided on Marin Transit website, [www.marintransit.org/titlevi](http://www.marintransit.org/titlevi);
- Marin Transit distributes the LEP Plan with human service and multicultural organizations in Marin County; and
- Any person or agency with internet access can access and download the plan from Marin Transit's website. Alternatively, any person or agency may request a copy of the plan via telephone, fax, mail, or in person, and shall be provided a copy of the plan at no cost. LEP individuals may request translated copies of the plan that Marin Transit will provide as feasible.

## LEP Attachment 1: Examples of Translated Materials

Below are examples of translated materials for a variety of campaigns.

*Image posted to Marin Transit social media sites on free transit to vaccination sites (Feb. 2021)*



*Poster displayed in Marin Transit vehicles and activity centers on promotional fare campaign offering free transit for older adults and people with disabilities (Oct. 2021).*

**PROMOCIÓN DE TARIFA**  
¡A partir de octubre!

free marintransit rides  
For Older Adults & ADA  
oct 2021-mar 2022

**Viajes gratuitos para personas mayores (65+) y personas con discapacidades**  
Oct 2021- Mar 2022

Para calificar, debe tener un comprobante de edad o discapacidad que incluya una tarjeta de Medicare válida, una tarjeta / licencia de identificación del DMV, una tarjeta RTC, un pase de autobús LIFA válido o una tarjeta de identificación para personas mayores o personas con discapacidades de otro servicio de tránsito de California.

Esta oferta no es válida en las rutas de Paratransit, Catch-A-Ride, Dial-A-Ride, Connect, Muir Woods Shuttle y Golden Gate Transit.

Visite [www.marintransit.org/farepromotions](http://www.marintransit.org/farepromotions) para obtener más información.

Poster displayed in Marin Transit vehicles on promotional fare campaign offering free transit for youth (June 2022)

**Viajes GRATIS para estudiantes y jóvenes**  
12 de junio - 14 de agosto

**Estudiantes y jóvenes menores de 18 años pueden viajar GRATIS en servicios de rutas local de Marin Transit este verano 2022.**

Paratransit, Catch-A-Ride, Dial-A-Ride, Connect y Muir Woods Shuttle están exentos de la promoción de tarifa gratis. Pasajeros deben proporcionar prueba de edad, si el conductor la solicita.

Para más información visite [marintransit.org/farepromotions](http://marintransit.org/farepromotions)

Visite [marintransit.org](http://marintransit.org) para planificar su próximo viaje

Poster displayed in Marin Transit vehicles on promotional fare campaign offering free transit to the Marin County Fair (June 2022)

**fare free marin transit** during the **FAIR**  
30 de junio - 4 de julio

Deje el coche en casa y viaje en transporte público ¡**GRATIS!** Marin Transit ofrecerá viajes de transporte local gratuitos en todo el condado en servicios locales de ruta fija durante la Feria del Condado de Marin.

La oferta no es válida en los servicios Demand Response y Muir Woods Shuttle.  
**30 de junio - 4 de julio**

**VIAJE ¡GRATIS! EN MARIN TRANSIT DESDE EL 30 DE JUNIO HASTA EL 4 DE JULIO**

Visite [marintransit.org](http://marintransit.org) para planificar su próximo viaje

Para más información sobre la feria de Marin County visite [marinfair.org/2022](http://marinfair.org/2022)

## MARIN ACCESS

# Encuesta de Pasajeros 2021

Paratransit | Catch-A-Ride | Volunteer Drivers | Travel Navigators | Travel Training | Connect

### Ayúdenos a comprender su experiencia al usar los servicios de Marin Access:

Si no utiliza el servicio mencionado marque la casilla que está a la derecha.

1. Califique **Marin Access Paratransito** en cada uno de los siguientes aspectos:

	Excelente	Bien	Regular	Mal	Muy mal
Desempeño de puntualidad	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Limpieza /condición del vehículo	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Cortesía de conductores	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Facilidad para programar viajes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Experiencia general	<input type="checkbox"/>				

No utilizo este servicio

2. Califique **Catch-A-Ride** en cada uno de los siguientes aspectos:

	Excelente	Bien	Regular	Mal	Muy mal
Costo de viajes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Cortesía de conductores	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Facilidad para programar viajes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Experiencia general	<input type="checkbox"/>				

No utilizo este servicio

3. Califique **Connect** en cada uno de los siguientes aspectos:

	Excelente	Bien	Regular	Mal	Muy mal
Facilidad para programar viajes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Área de servicio y horas de servicio	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Cortesía de conductores	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Experiencia general	<input type="checkbox"/>				

No utilizo este servicio

4. Califique los programas de Conductor Voluntario **STAR / TRIP** en cada uno de los siguientes:

	Excelente	Bien	Regular	Mal	Muy mal
Facilidad de reembolso	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Encontrar un conductor voluntario	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Experiencia general	<input type="checkbox"/>				

No utilizo este servicio

5. Califique **Marin Access Entrenamiento de Viaje** en cada uno de los siguientes aspectos:

	Excelente	Bien	Regular	Mal	Muy mal
Ayudarme a entender mis opciones	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Experiencia general	<input type="checkbox"/>				

No utilizo este servicio