Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

# Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan

August 2022 Update



#### **INTRODUCTION**

#### The Need for an LEP Plan

Individuals with a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English are limited English proficient or "LEP." This language barrier may prevent individuals from accessing public services and benefits—including public transit services.

#### **Federal Requirements**

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Executive Order 13166 signed on August 11, 2000, are the federal legislation necessitating LEP plans from public agencies receiving federal funds.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq., and its implementing regulations provide that no person in the United States 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 that receives Federal financial assistance. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that LEP is a component of the protected class of national origin.

Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services with Limited English Proficiency," requires Federal agencies to examine the services they provide, identify any need for services to those with LEP, and develop and implement a system to provide those services so LEP persons can have meaningful access to them. Executive Order 13166 also requires that the Federal agencies work to ensure that recipients of Federal financial assistance provide meaningful access to their LEP applicants and beneficiaries. The Executive Order applies to all federal agencies and all programs and operations of entities that receive funding from the federal government—including state agencies, local agencies and governments, private and non-profit entities, and sub-recipients such as public transit agencies.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published revised LEP guidance for its recipients on December 14, 2005. The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) references the DOT LEP guidance in its Circular 4702.1B, "Title VI and Title VI-Dependent Guidelines for FTA Recipients," which was published on April 13, 2007. This Circular reiterates the requirement to take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to benefits, services, and information for LEP persons and suggests that FTA recipients and sub-recipients develop a language implementation plan consistent with the provisions of Section VII of the DOT LEP guidance.

#### KCATA's LEP Plan

The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) is the regional transit authority for the Greater Kansas City bi-state region and by federal compact is authorized to provide transit services in the Missouri counties of Cass, Clay, Jackson, and Platte and the Kansas counties of Leavenworth, Johnson, and Wyandotte. KCATA is a designated direct recipient of FTA funding and is required to develop and routinely update its LEP plan as part of its Title VI Program.

KCATA's LEP plan is a critical component to best serving the transit needs of the diverse communities comprising its service area. Providing language assistance in a competent and effective manner will help ensure that KCATA's

services are safe, reliable, convenient, and accessible to LEP persons in the community. Ideally, these efforts will attract additional LEP riders to KCATA's services.

#### The "Four Factor Analysis"

The DOT guidance outlines "four factors" recipients are to consider when assessing language needs and determining appropriate steps to ensure meaningful access to services for LEP services. Through conducting the "Four Factor Analysis," KCATA is better positioned to formalize and implement a cost-effective and appropriate mix of proactive language assistance measures and to respond to requests for LEP assistance from constituents. The four (4) factors are as follows:

- 1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.
- 2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
- 3. The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the recipient to the LEP Community.
- 4. The resources available to the recipient and the overall cost.

#### KCATA's "Four Factor Analysis"

### Factor 1: The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by a program, activity, or service of the recipient or grantee.

For planning purposes, KCATA considers its current service area to be the twelve (12) communities it has annual service contracts with to provide transit services. The ten (12) communities include the Missouri cities of Blue Springs, Gladstone, Independence, Kansas City, Lee's Summit, Liberty, North Kansas City, Raytown, Riverside, and Unity Village, and Kansas City, Kansas. Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2017 5-Year estimate (2016 – 2020) data was conducted to estimate the LEP population in KCATA's service area. See Figure E-1 for a map of KCATA's service area.

Examination of America Community Survey table C16001, "Language Spoken at Home: Population 5 Years and Over," by geographic place determined that there are ten (10) non-English languages spoken at home by over 1,000 persons in KCATA's service area (Table E-1). People who speak Spanish at home represent 8.1% of KCATA's service area population. Each of the other nine (9) languages were spoken by 0.50% or less of the population five (5) years and older in KCATA's service area or, when totaled, comprised 2.3% of the service population five (5) years and older.

Table E-1: Language spoken at Home by 1,000+ Persons in KCATA's Service Area

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME	PERSONS 5 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER	PERCENTAGE OF KCATA SERVICE AREA POPULATION FIVE YEARS AND OVER
English	845,023	87.4%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	77,913	8.1%
Arabic	4,989	0.5%
Vietnamese	3,928	0.4%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	3,727	0.4%
Chinese	3,079	0.3%
German	1,732	0.2%
Russian, Polish, or Other Slavic Languages	1,615	0.2%
Filipino (Tagalog)	1,593	0.2%
Korean	1,194	0.1%
Other Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	8,861	0.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey 2020, 5 – Year Estimate (2016 – 2020), Table C16001, "Language Spoken at Home".

Note: "Other Asian and Pacific Islander Languages" are not further broken down into individual languages. However, it is highly unlikely that any have more than 1,000 speakers in the Kansas City region. This is because the major Asian and Pacific Islander languages are already included in the table as individual languages.

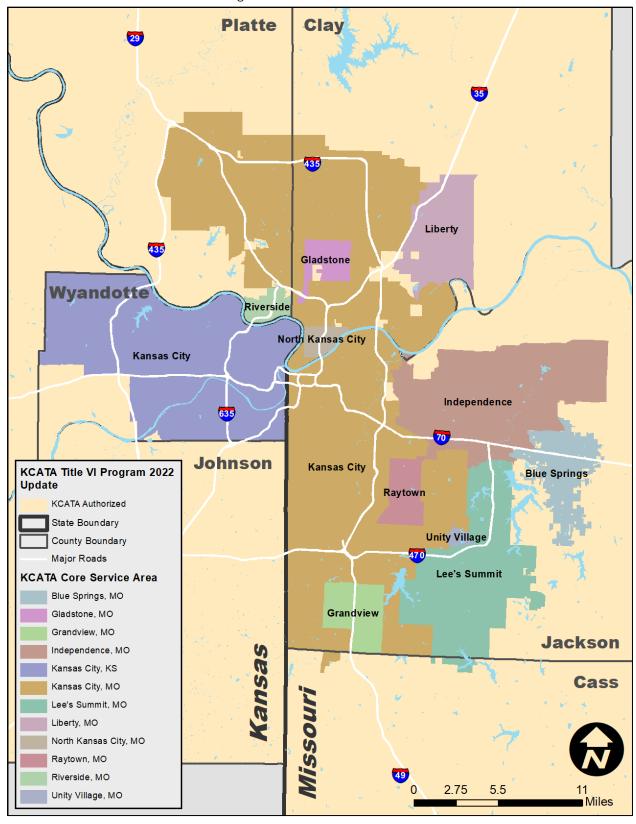


Figure E-1: KCATA Service Area

American Community Survey table B16004, "Ability to Speak English: Population 5 Years and Over by Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English," by geographic place were also examined. Using FTA guidelines, the LEP population—the population that speaks English less than "very well"—was estimated by summing the Census responses for Speak English "well," "not well," and "not at all." The data is categorized by the language groups spoken by respondents: "Spanish," "Indo-European," "Asian or Pacific Islander," or "Other."

Study determined that approximately 5.45% (52,700 / 966,813) of the population over the age of 5 in KCATA's service area speaks English less than "very well" and hence is characterized as LEP (See Table E-2). The majority of the LEP population—approximately 33,532 of the 52,700 LEP non-English speaking persons—speak Spanish. The remaining non-English speaking persons presumably speak one or more of the Indo-European, Asian/Pacific Islander, or Other languages. Corresponding maps of concentrated populations/languages by Census block group are provided further in this appendix.

Table E-2: Ability to Speak English by Place in KCATA's Service Area

			Speak English Less than "Very Well"											
GEOGRAPHIC AREA (PLACE)	POPULATION AGE 5+	SPEAK ONLY E	English	Spanish		OTHER INDO- EUROPEAN		Asian or Pacific Islander		ALL OTHER LANGUAGES		ESTIMATED TOTAL LEP POPULATION		
Blue Springs, MO	50,978	48,611	95.4%	253	0.5%	50	0.1%	251	0.5%	48	0.1%	602	1.2%	
Gladstone, MO	25,587	23,751	92.8%	176	0.7%	93	0.4%	120	0.5%	168	0.7%	557	2.2%	
Grandview, MO	23,271	21,024	90.3%	814	3.5%	12	0.1%	68	0.3%	46	0.2%	940	4.0%	
Independence, MO	110,065	102,347	93.0%	2,141	1.9%	203	0.2%	579	0.5%	61	0.1%	2,984	2.7%	
Kansas City, KS	140,683	99,452	70.7%	15,926	11.3%	1,090	0.8%	3,533	2.5%	734	0.5%	21,283	15.1%	
Kansas City, MO	458,713	402,325	87.7%	12,702	2.8%	2,703	0.6%	4,339	0.9%	3,101	0.7%	22,845	5.0%	
Lee's Summit, MO	92,844	86,641	93.3%	785	0.8%	341	0.4%	778	0.8%	80	0.1%	1,984	2.1%	
Liberty, MO	29,819	28,644	96.1%	216	0.7%	56	0.2%	135	0.5%	8	0.0%	415	1.4%	
North Kansas City, MO	4,363	4,102	94.0%	149	3.4%	0	0.0%	45	1.0%	0	0.0%	194	4.4%	
Raytown, MO	27,349	25,249	92.3%	355	1.3%	193	0.7%	107	0.4%	75	0.3%	730	2.7%	
Riverside, MO	3,076	2,813	91.4%	15	0.5%	1	0.0%	35	1.1%	115	3.7%	166	5.4%	
Unity Village, MO	65	64	98.5%	0	0.00%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.00%	
KCATA SERVICE AREA	966,813	845,023	87.4%	33,532	3.5%	4,742	0.5%	9,990	1.0%	4,436	0.5%	52,700	5.5%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey 2020, 5 – Year Estimate (2016 – 2020), Table B16004, "Language Spoken at Home"

Conclusions: Spanish is the most prevalent language spoken by LEP persons in KCATA's service area and should be the primary focus of any translation or language assistance activities. There are populations in the community that speak non-English languages other than Spanish and it remains important to consider providing additional language assistance services as necessary and economically feasible. The most prominent of these languages are Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic, although specific neighborhoods within the service area may have a concentration of people who speak other languages as well. The LEP Plan Implementation section identifies strategies for providing language assistance to these individuals.

#### Factor 2: The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with KCATA services.

RideKC operates the Regional Call Center (RCC) to provide customer assistance and travel planning information for customers seeking to use RideKC services in areas around the Kansas City Metro area in both Missouri and Kansas. The current language line, Index Lingua, is available for riders requiring interpretive services in several languages. Records show that only 191 (0.05 percent) of the total calls (379,341) placed to the RCC between September 2019 and April 2022 requested assistance from the language line. The largest number of calls requesting interpretive services was for Spanish (97.4 percent) followed by Punjabi and Chinese(2 requests each), and Hindi with only one request.

LEP individuals currently have infrequent and unpredictable contact with the RCC and KCATA services. However, the small and growing size of the LEP population in the KCATA service area will likely increase its future contact with KCATA services and it will be important to continue monitoring its population trends.

#### Factor 3: The nature and importance of service provided by KCATA.

Access to public transportation is critical for many to fully participate in society. KCATA provides a range of important transportation options to the community through its fixed-route, flex-route, and paratransit services. Riders use KCATA services for their multiple travel needs within the community, including trips to work, school, job interviews, grocery stores and retail shops, medical offices, community service agencies, and more.

#### Factor 4: The resources available to KCATA and the overall cost.

KCATA's annual operating budget has for many years funded outreach efforts and translation services to effectively communicate with LEP persons in the community. As funding allows, KCATA intends to continue such efforts into the foreseeable future.

The KCATA Marketing Department spends approximately \$5,000 annually in bilingual advertising placements in local community newspapers. Modest funding is available for translation services, which are typically used for news releases, route information, passenger bulletins, and other marketing effort targeted at Spanish speaking audiences.

The RideKC Regional Call Center (RCC) annually budgets \$3,000 to support the "TeleLanguage" translation phone line. Actual annual costs are dependent upon usage.

#### **IMPLEMENTING THE LEP PLAN**

The DOT LEP Guidance recommends that recipients develop an implementation plan to address the needs of the LEP populations they serve. The DOT LEP notes that effective implementation plans typically include the following five (5) elements:

- 1. Identifying LEP individuals who need language assistance;
- 2. Providing language assistance measures;
- 3. Training staff;
- 4. Providing notice to LEP persons; and
- 5. Monitoring and updating the plan.

#### **KCATA LEP Plan Implementation**

#### Element 1: Identifying LEP Individuals who need language assistance

- 1. Census data: As discussed above, the 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimate (Table B16004) data indicates that Spanish-speaking LEP persons are the primary group requiring language assistance in KCATA's service area. In general, the highest concentrations of Spanish-speaking LEP persons are in the Argentine, Armourdale, Downtown, Kensington, Rosedale, and Quindaro neighborhoods of Kansas City, Kansas, the Northeast and Westside neighborhoods of Kansas City, Missouri, Grandview, southern Lee's Summit, and Riverside, Missouri. KCATA will continue monitoring and using Census data releases to identify and locate significant and emerging LEP populations.
- 2. **Customer Satisfaction Survey:** Approximately every two (2) to three (3) years, KCATA conducts a "Customer Satisfaction Survey" which provides detailed information about passenger demographics and travel patterns. Future passenger satisfaction surveys will include questions to quantify LEP riders, their travel patterns, and route use. This will become important information in further identifying and understanding the transit needs of LEP persons. The last customer satisfaction survey was conducted in 2021/2022.
- 3. **Documenting Staff Encounters with LEP Persons at KCATA Public Meetings:** When open houses or public meetings are held, KCATA staff will have the Census Bureau's "I Speak" flashcards available to help identify LEP persons. While KCATA staff may not be able to provide translation assistance at the time, the flashcards will be an important asset in identifying language needs for future public events. A continuous record will be kept detailing the primary languages of LEP persons attending KCATA's public meetings.
- **4. Tracking Calls to the Language Line:** KCATA will continue to monitor and quantify the volume and trends of calls to the "TeleLanguage" line for language assistance.

#### **Element 2: Providing Language Assistance Measures**

KCATA currently employs various methods and strategies to provide LEP customers with information critical to using KCATA services. Many of these efforts focus on reaching Spanish-speaking persons, the dominant LEP population in KCATA's service area.

KCATA's current and planned efforts to provide language assistance to LEP customers into the near future include the following:

1. Translation services via phone – "TeleLanguage": KCATA has access to interpreters who can assist riders with bus schedule information in more than 50 languages. Callers to the Regional Call Center (816) 221-0660) needing language assistance are personally directed to the language line services. This free service is available from 6AM to 6PM., Monday through Friday.

KCATA has access to the following (and more languages if needed) through this interpreter service: Arabic, Burmese, Cambodian, Cantonese Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Mongolian, Persian, Portuguese, Pulaar, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Serbian, Slovenian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Swazi, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tibetan, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, and Xhosa.

2. Pocket schedules and route maps in Spanish: Many route pocket schedules and maps are printed in both English and Spanish. Bilingual route literature is primarily available for routes serving Kansas City, Kansas, and the northeast and west side neighborhoods of Kansas City, Missouri—specific areas with concentrations of Spanish-speaking persons.

Pocket schedules have been created that combine information from local routes in each segment of the region. These new schedules provide information in both English and Spanish, as shown in Figure E-2. Review of future biennial "Customer Satisfaction Survey" results will provide information about other routes frequented by LEP riders and needing bilingual printed passenger information.

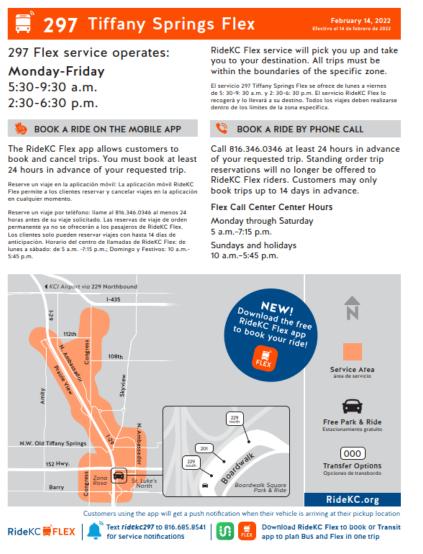


Figure E-2: Local Route Combined Pocket Schedules (Effective February 2022)

- **3. On-Board Announcements in Spanish:** From review of future "Customer Satisfaction Survey" results, routes frequented by Spanish-speaking riders will be identified and automated, on-board audio announcements in Spanish may be initiated on these routes to best communicate with riders.
- 4. "Non-English Resources" section of KCATA's website: KCATA has dedicated a section of its website that discusses specific services available to non-English speaking persons and provides links to critical translated documents for download. KCATA will continue to promote and build this section of the website, found at the following link: <a href="http://ridekc.org/rider-guide/non-english-resources">http://ridekc.org/rider-guide/non-english-resources</a>
- **5. KCATA Website translation:** Cost-effective methods to provide translation services to the entire KCATA website, i.e. Google Translate, will be researched and considered for future implementation.
- **6. Critical documents in Spanish:** For existing and potential LEP customers and the general public, KCATA provides Spanish translations of the following critical documents:

- Applications for the RideKC Freedom ADA and Non-ADA paratransit programs, available at <a href="http://ridekc.org/mobility-services">http://ridekc.org/mobility-services</a> or upon request.
- Overview of the KCATA Title VI program and the Title VI Complaint form, available at <a href="http://ridekc.org/rider-guide/civil-rights-and-title-vi">http://ridekc.org/rider-guide/civil-rights-and-title-vi</a> or upon request.
- The Title VI Non-Discrimination Policy is posted on buses and in the lobby of the KCATA Breen Building, the primary location where LEP populations seek information on services. This poster is shown in Figure E-3.
- On a case-by-case basis, KCATA provides important materials, such as community surveys, in multiple languages for projects or planning studies impacting specific neighborhoods.



Figure E-3: Non-Discrimination Policy Posted in the KCATA Breen Building Lobby

Note: This is a temporary location for the poster due to ongoing renovation of the lobby.

- 7. Assisting LEP Persons on-board KCATA Buses: Written KCATA protocol for providing LEP passenger assistance is included in the operator route book (bus operations manual). If an LEP passenger needs assistance while on-board a KCATA bus, recommended approaches to understand and appropriately respond to the passenger's needs and situations are as follows:
  - The bus operator may inquire if another passenger can serve as a translator;
  - The driver directs the LEP person to any translated schedule and route information that has been placed aboard the vehicle or to the KCATA customer service line for language assistance; and
  - More difficult or emergency situations may necessitate contacting Transportation Supervisors or Dispatch for additional help and phone access to language line interpreters.
- 8. Planning Project Outreach: KCATA conducts planning studies in support of expanding or improving RideKC services throughout the region. When conducting these studies, KCATA will assess the need to provide materials in multiple languages based on the needs of the LEP populations at the neighborhood level, with priority given to public input opportunities such as community surveys. KCATA staff will utilize the following methods to determine the need for translated materials:
  - Consulting the LEP Plan and the maps provided in the appendix
  - Reviewing customer service records for information requests on specific routes or from certain jurisdictions
  - Coordinating with municipalities and with non-profit and community organizations that frequently work with people in the study area or impacted neighborhoods.

An example of a survey provided in Vietnamese for the is shown in Figure E-4. This survey was also provided in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Swahili, based on the known LEP populations in the impacted neighborhoods.

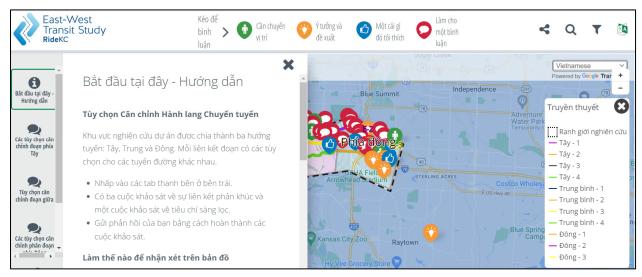


Figure E-4: Community Survey Translated in Vietnamese

**Element 3: Training of Staff** 

In order to establish meaningful access to information and services for LEP individuals, various personnel and departments that regularly interact with the public will be trained on KCATA's LEP plan for providing language assistance.

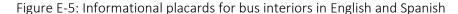
Programmed training efforts include the following:

- On an annual basis, the LEP Plan is reviewed with the executive staff to reinforce its importance and ensure its implementation by KCATA;
- LEP protocol is reviewed with Planning & Special Services Department and Marketing Department staffs
  in preparation for KCATA public meetings and open houses to quantify and engage LEP persons who
  attend and participate;
- The Customer Service Department, which is responsible for the Regional Call Center and the KCATA's onsite reception area, has annual refresher training on directing LEP callers and walk-in customers to the
  "TeleLanguage" phone line for interpretation services. New hires to the Regional Call Center receive LEP
  protocol training during orientation activities; and
- The Transportation Department trains dispatchers, roadside supervisors, and operators on best practices and procedures for assisting LEP passengers.
  - LEP passenger assistance protocol training is incorporated into the formal curriculum for new operators and refresher training for current operators. Training for new operators occurs during orientation; refresher training sessions for current operators are scheduled on a monthly basis.
  - An annual operations bulletin is issued to all Transportation personnel to increase awareness and reinforce LEP passenger assistance protocol.

#### Element 4: Providing Notice to LEP Persons of the Availability of Language Assistance

KCATA's current and planned measures to inform LEP persons of the availability of language assistance includes, but is not limited, to the following:

1. Placards on buses: KCATA has informational placards on buses in Spanish that inform riders of KCATA's language line and translation services and the Title VI non-discrimination policy. The placards also provide information about route information and other documents available in Spanish. See Figure E-5 for current examples.





- Local non-English newspapers: KCATA will continue to issue media press releases in Spanish and purchase advertisements in local non-English newspapers publicizing language assistance measures offered by KCATA.
- 3. Direct engagement with LEP populations and community organizations: Through working with various community organizations, KCATA will seek to identify and engage LEP populations in the community and inform them of available public transportation services and related language assistance mediums. Conducting "How to Ride" clinics in partnership with community organizations continues to be a great tool in educating LEP persons how to use KCATA services. Direct engagement with LEP persons will also help KCATA learn what additional agency information may need translation.

#### **Element 5: Monitoring and Updating the LEP Plan**

KCATA will routinely review and update its LEP Plan as new demographic information becomes available. Anticipated updates will include the incorporation of new Census data, LEP ridership trends identified through the "Customer Satisfaction Survey," and public comments about the LEP Plan. KCATA will continue to work with its regional transit and transportation partners—namely, Johnson County Transit, Unified Government Transit, the City of

Independence, and Mid-America Regional Council—in coordinating language assistance measures for transit riders in the region. Full review of the LEP Plan will occur with each triennial Title VI program submission.

#### **DISSEMINATION OF KCATA'S LEP PLAN**

KCATA posts its LEP plan on its website at the following link: <a href="http://ridekc.org/rider-guide/non-english-resources">http://ridekc.org/rider-guide/non-english-resources</a>. Any person or agency with Internet access will be able to access and download the plan from the KCATA website.

Alternatively, any person or agency may request a copy of the plan via telephone, email, fax, mail, or in person and shall be provided a copy of the plan at no cost. Requests for copies of KCATA's LEP plan and questions or comments about the plan should be directed to the following:

KCATA Planning Department 1200 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street Kansas City, MO 64108

Phone: (816) 346-0200 Fax: (816) 346-0305 Email: <u>metro@kcata.org</u>

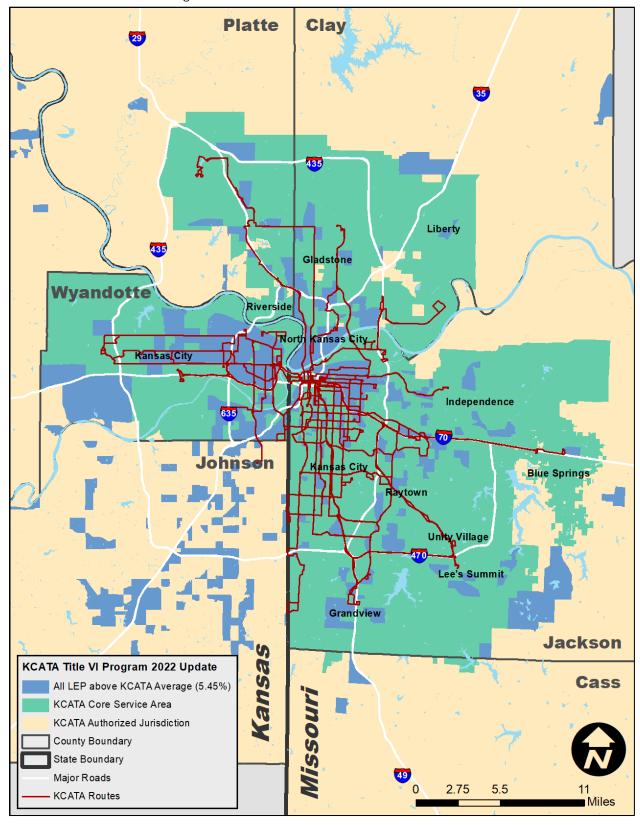


Figure E-6: Census Tracts with LEP Concentrations

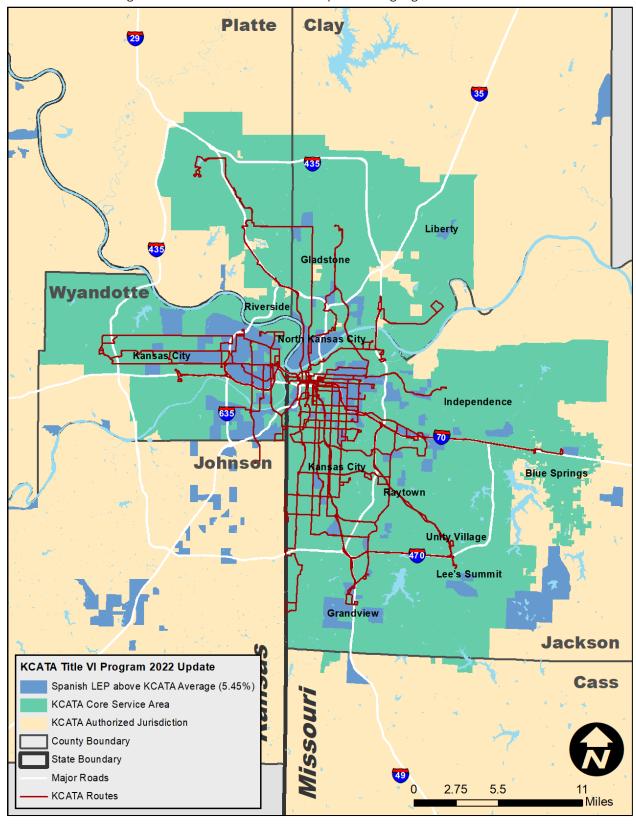


Figure E-7: Census Tracts with LEP Spanish Language Concentrations

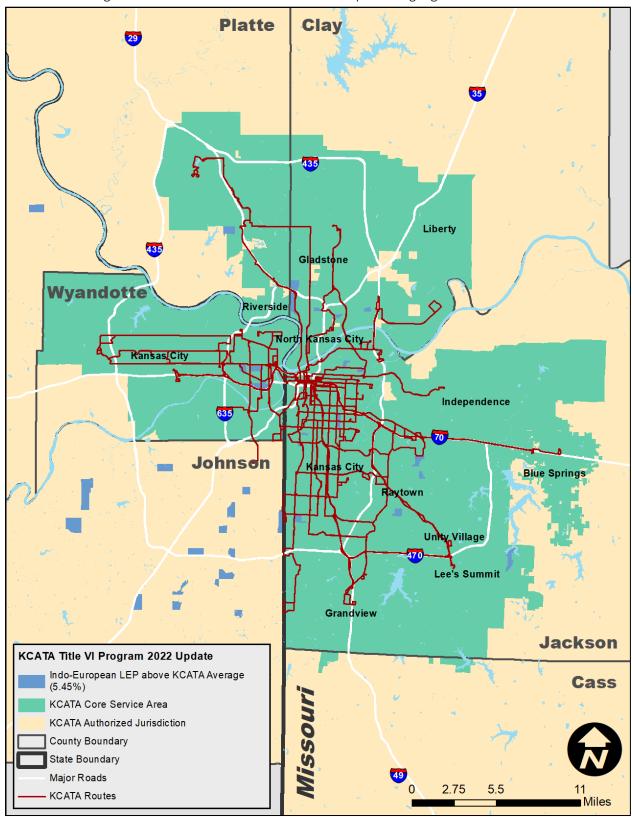


Figure E-8: Census Tracts with LEP Indo-European Language Concentrations

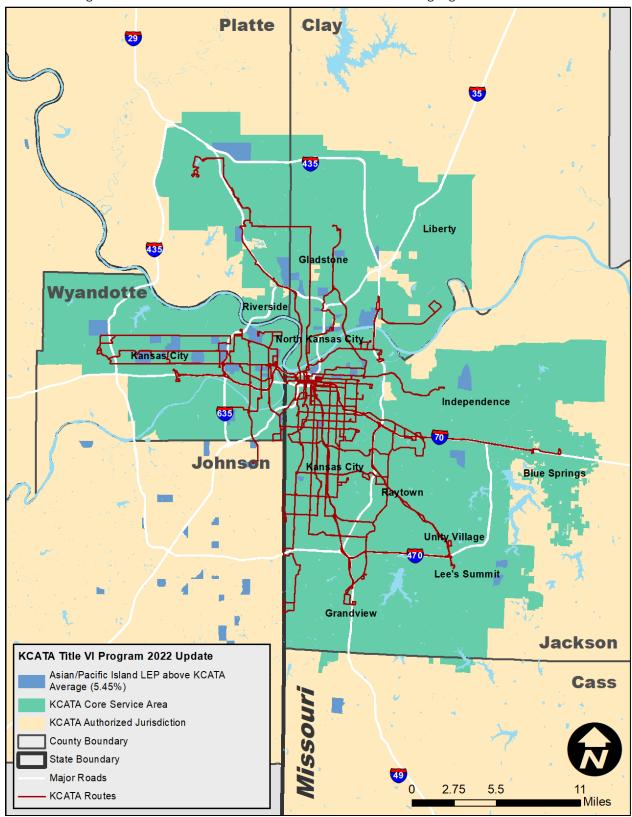


Figure E-9: Census Tracts with LEP Asian & Pacific Island Language Concentrations

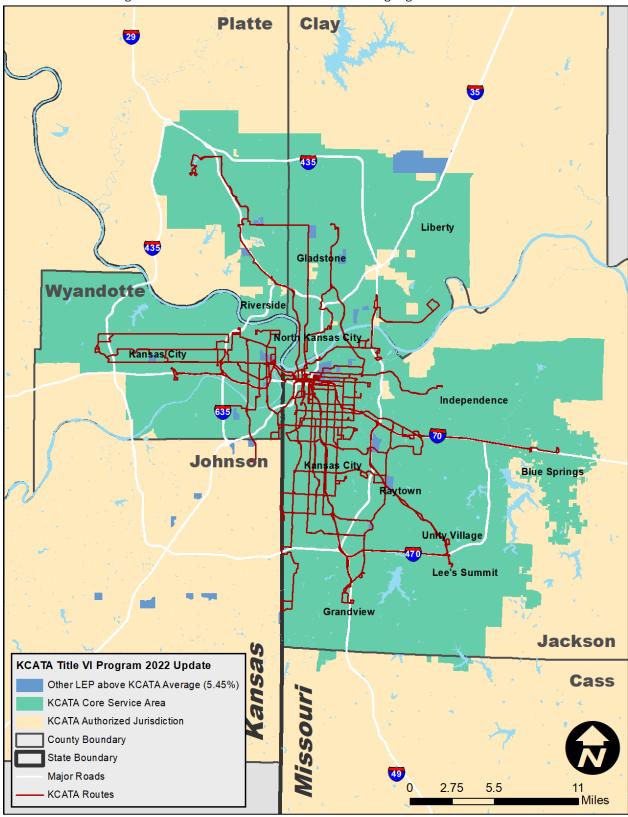


Figure E-10: Census Tracts with LEP Other Language Concentrations