

§ 55.13

citizens who are members of the language minority group.

(c) *Unwritten languages.* Many of the languages used by language minority groups, for example, by some American Indians and Alaskan Natives, are unwritten. With respect to any such language, only oral assistance and publicity are required. Even though a written form for a language may exist, a language may be considered unwritten if it is not commonly used in a written form. It is the responsibility of the covered jurisdiction to determine whether a language should be considered written or unwritten.

§ 55.13 Language used for oral assistance and publicity.

(a) *Languages with more than one dialect.* Some languages, for example, Chinese, have several dialects. Where a jurisdiction is obligated to provide oral assistance in such a language, the jurisdiction's obligation is to ascertain the dialects that are commonly used by members of the applicable language minority group in the jurisdiction and to provide oral assistance in such dialects. (See § 55.20.)

(b) *Language minority groups having more than one language.* In some jurisdictions members of an applicable language minority group speak more than one language other than English. Where a jurisdiction is obligated to provide oral assistance in the language of such a group, the jurisdiction's obligation is to ascertain the languages that are commonly used by members of that group in the jurisdiction and to provide oral assistance in such languages. (See § 55.20)

[Order 655-76, 41 FR 29998, July 20, 1976, as amended by Order 1246-87, 53 FR 736, Jan. 12, 1988; Order No. 1752-93, 58 FR 35373, July 1, 1993]

Subpart D—Minority Language Materials and Assistance

§ 55.14 General.

(a) This subpart sets forth the views of the Attorney General with respect to the requirements of section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c) concerning the provision of minority language materials and assistance and some of the factors that the Attorney General will con-

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sider in carrying out his responsibilities to enforce section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c). Through the use of his authority under section 5 and his authority to bring suits to enforce section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c), the Attorney General will seek to prevent or remedy discrimination against members of language minority groups based on the failure to use the applicable minority language in the electoral process. The Attorney General also has the responsibility to defend against suits brought for the termination of coverage under section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c).

(b) In discharging these responsibilities the Attorney General will respond to complaints received, conduct on his own initiative inquiries and surveys concerning compliance, and undertake other enforcement activities.

(c) It is the responsibility of the jurisdiction to determine what actions by it are required for compliance with the requirements of section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c) and to carry out these actions.

§ 55.15 Affected activities.

The requirements of sections 4(f)(4) and 203(c) apply with regard to the provision of “any registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots.” The basic purpose of these requirements is to allow members of applicable language minority groups to be effectively informed of and participate effectively in voting-connected activities. Accordingly, the quoted language should be broadly construed to apply to all stages of the electoral process, from voter registration through activities related to conducting elections, including, for example the issuance, at any time during the year, of notifications, announcements, or other informational materials concerning the opportunity to register, the deadline for voter registration, the time, places and subject matters of elections, and the absentee voting process.

§ 55.16 Standards and proof of compliance.

Compliance with the requirements of section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c) is best

measured by results. A jurisdiction is more likely to achieve compliance with these requirements if it has worked with the cooperation of and to the satisfaction of organizations representing members of the applicable language minority group. In planning its compliance with section 4(f)(4) or section 203(c), a jurisdiction may, where alternative methods of compliance are available, use less costly methods if they are equivalent to more costly methods in their effectiveness.

§ 55.17 Targeting.

The term “targeting” is commonly used in discussions of the requirements of section 4(f)(4) and section 203(c). “Targeting” refers to a system in which the minority language materials or assistance required by the Act are provided to fewer than all persons or registered voters. It is the view of the Attorney General that a targeting system will normally fulfill the Act’s minority language requirements if it is designed and implemented in such a way that language minority group members who need minority language materials and assistance receive them.

[Order No. 655-76, 41 FR 29998, July 20, 1976, as amended by Order No. 1752-93, 58 FR 35373, July 1, 1993]

§ 55.18 Provision of minority language materials and assistance.

(a) *Materials provided by mail.* If materials provided by mail (or by some comparable form of distribution) generally to residents or registered voters are not all provided in the applicable minority language, the Attorney General will consider whether an effective targeting system has been developed. For example, a separate mailing of materials in the minority language to persons who are likely to need them or to residents of neighborhoods in which such a need is likely to exist, supplemented by a notice of the availability of minority language materials in the general mailing (in English and in the applicable minority language) and by other publicity regarding the availability of such materials may be sufficient.

(b) *Public notices.* The Attorney General will consider whether public notices and announcements of electoral

activities are handled in a manner that provides members of the applicable language minority group an effective opportunity to be informed about electoral activities.

(c) *Registration.* The Attorney General will consider whether the registration system is conducted in such a way that members of the applicable language minority group have an effective opportunity to register. One method of accomplishing this is to provide, in the applicable minority language, all notices, forms and other materials provided to potential registrants and to have only bilingual persons as registrars. Effective results may also be obtained, for example, through the use of deputy registrars who are members of the applicable language minority group and the use of decentralized places of registration, with minority language materials available at places where persons who need them are most likely to come to register.

(d) *Polling place activities.* The Attorney General will consider whether polling place activities are conducted in such a way that members of the applicable language minority group have an effective opportunity to vote. One method of accomplishing this is to provide all notices, instructions, ballots, and other pertinent materials and oral assistance in the applicable minority language. If very few of the registered voters scheduled to vote at a particular polling place need minority language materials or assistance, the Attorney General will consider whether an alternative system enabling those few to cast effective ballots is available.

(e) *Publicity.* The Attorney General will consider whether a covered jurisdiction has taken appropriate steps to publicize the availability of materials and assistance in the minority language. Such steps may include the display of appropriate notices, in the minority language, at voter registration offices, polling places, etc., the making of announcements over minority language radio or television stations, the publication of notices in minority language newspapers, and direct contact