

I. Introduction

The Agency has prepared this Language Access Plan (“LAP” or “Plan”), which defines the actions to be taken by Agency to ensure meaningful access to agency services, programs and activities on the part of persons who have limited English proficiency (LEP). The Agency will review and update, on a biannual basis, this LAP in order to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to ensure clients of the Agency meaningful access to services, programs and activities although they may be limited in their English language proficiency.

The Agency is committed to this Language Access Plan as the appropriate response to meeting our clients’ needs. The Plan is consistent with the DBHDS Policy 1023 Workforce and Service Delivery Cultural and Linguistic Competency (or) Departmental Instruction 209 Ensuring Access to Language and Communications Supports.

III. Language Access Plan:

Approach: The Agency Language Access Plan shall be fully implemented subject to the availability of fiscal resources to implement said language access plan. This Language Access Plan represents Agency administrative blueprint to provide meaningful access to Agency services, programs and activities on the part of LEP individuals. This Language Access Plan outlines the tasks Agency will undertake to meet this objective.

- **Cultural Competency Committee/Agency Communication Coordinator**
The Agency *Cultural Competency Committee* is responsible for developing recommendations for Senior Leadership on language access. Senior Management is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Agency’s Language Access Policy Directives, Plan and Procedures. This Committee serves as the Agency Communication Coordinator in the absence of a designated staff member in that position
- **Agency Language Access Needs Assessment:**
The 2nd most common language, after English, in the Hampton-Newport News catchment area is Spanish.
 - **Language Makeup of Client Population**

- 7.3% of the Hampton City population and 10.4% of the population in Newport News speak a language other than English in the home according to the USCensus.
 - After Spanish, Arabic, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Vietnamese are the most common languages found in the area (State Supreme Court, 2015).
 - Hampton City School systems report Vietnamese and Nepali as the 2nd and 3rd most commonly spoken languages other than English in the school system
 - Newport News City Schools report Arabic and Nepali as the 2nd and 3rd most commonly spoken languages other than English in the school system
- **Language Resources Assessment:**
 - The *Cultural Competency Committee* will work with staff and leadership to identify existing staff who are linguistically, culturally, and technically able to deliver services in a language other than English and/or to serve as bilingual staff interpreters. (Actual staff need not be identified; languages spoken should be.)
 - Community-based resources available to be deployed to assist agency in meeting language access needs.
 - Commonwealth Catholic Charities Language Services
 - The Language Group
 - Propio Language Services
 - Northern Virginia Area Health Education Center – Language Services
 - DBHDS Partnership for Equity Advancement (PEAC) Advisory Committee
 - Virginia Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, and Deaf Blind
 - Propio Language Line
 - American Sign Language Interpreters
 - Internal Resources available to staff.
 - Bilingual staff
 - Propio Language Line
 - Propio Virtual Remote Interpretation Services
 - Mobile Video Interpretation Carts
 - Scheduling of Interpreters
- **Language Service Policy & Protocols:**
 - Language service policy and protocol will be developed and disseminated to agency staff through information and training.
 - Policy will establish the process for accessing, providing, and training on language services.
 - Protocol will include identification of specific types of resources – in-person interpretation, phone interpretation, community-based resources, etc., that are available to provide language access and how the resources will be deployed to meet language access needs)
 - Protocol will also define how a client will be able to access and utilize language services.

- **Vital Document Translation:**
 - a. The *Cultural Competency Committee* will work with programs and leadership to identify list, the name of vital documents, in whole or in part, to translate including timeframe for translation.
 - b. Evaluation of agency website content will be completed to determine if changes are needed to enhance effective communication (i.e. translation, plain language, and health literacy) including timeframe for revisions.
 - c. Signage and other non-verbal communication tools will be evaluated.

Notice to Public:

In accordance with the federal laws on Civil Rights, Hampton-Newport News will ensure that individuals seeking services have a right to free language assistance and explain how a client may access such assistance. This will be communicated via posters and flyers in public areas.

Agency Monitoring:

This plan will be reviewed and revised annually and as needed between annual reviews. The *Cultural Competency Committee* (in the absence of a designated Communications Coordinator) will provide an annual progress report by updating this Language Access Plan.