



Kids In Distress, Inc. / Family Central, Inc.

**Auxiliary Aids and Service
Plan for Persons with Disabilities
And Persons with
Limited English Proficiency**

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Updated/reviewed July 10, 2019; July 3, 2020; July 15, 2021

** Please note that the majority of this plan comes from the DCF Statewide Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan for Persons with Disabilities & Persons with Limited English Proficiency, which can be found in its totality on the DCF website at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/deaf-and-hard-hearing/auxiliary-aids-plan> and in the office of the KID/FCI SPOC.

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INTRODUCTION

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended), requires recipients receiving federal financial assistance to develop procedures, policies, and protocol to provide auxiliary aids for persons with disabilities and Limited English Proficient.

This guide provides protocol for the implementation policy and procedures for the provision of auxiliary aids and services in ensuring accessibility to all programs, benefits, and services to persons with disabilities and foreign language interpreters for persons with Limited English Proficiency.

This resource guide will assist staff in identifying appropriate auxiliary aids to afford such persons an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the Department's programs and services. Staff should access the DCF Auxiliary Aids Plan for applicable forms and further details and instructions. The DCF Statewide Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan for Persons with Disabilities & Persons with Limited English Proficiency can be found in its totality on the DCF website at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/deaf-and-hard-hearing/auxiliary-aids-plan> and in the office of the KID/FCI Single Point Of Contact.

The Kids In Distress, Inc. (KID)/ Family Central, Inc.(FCI) 504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer)/Single Point of Contact is Wendy Salomon, whose office is located in Administration Room 104, and the backup 504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer)/Single Point of Contact is Jevhky Mocombe, whose office is located in Administration Room 105.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENTS/NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

No person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination under any program or activity receiving or benefiting from federal financial assistance and administered by the Department.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) POLICY

Kids In Distress, Inc. (KID/ Family Central, Inc.(FCI assures each applicant and employee Equal Employment Opportunity without regard to age, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, marital status, or disability, except when such requirement constitutes a bona-fide occupational qualification necessary to perform the tasks associated with the position. Equal Employment Opportunity is attained using both objective and subjective merit principles and applies to recruitment, examination, appointment, training, promotion, demotion, compensation, retention, discipline, separation, and other employment practices within KID/FCI.

Any applicant or employee who believes that he or she has been discriminated against may file a complaint with the Florida Commission on Human Relations or the Department's Office of Civil Rights, within 365 days of the alleged discriminatory act. All complaints shall be treated in accordance with the procedures set forth by law or in Chapter 60Y-5, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)

NON-RETALIATION POLICY

No person shall be retaliated against, harassed, intimidated, threatened, coerced or discriminated against for making a charge, testifying, assisting or participating in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing; or for opposing alleged unlawful discriminatory practices prohibited by state and federal laws.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The KID/FCI SPOC is responsible for ensuring that all necessary and appropriate steps are taken to inform and educate staff of this plan and its implementation. The KID/FCI SPOC, CQI Team and Human Resources are responsible for developing programmatic and agency-wide procedures for the implementation of the Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan. Procedures shall provide the necessary tools for staff to ensure equal access and effective communication, such as:

- (1) Assistive listening devices, certified sign language interpreters or readers, to ensure effective communication and equal access to persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing;
- (2) Foreign language interpreters to ensure effective communication and equal access to persons with Limited English Proficiency;
- (3) Physical modifications to ensure the accessibility of programs and services to persons with disabilities.

The SPOC is responsible for ensuring equal accessibility and equally beneficial services to all clients, customers and companions and coordinate the provision of auxiliary aids and services to customers or companions who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

DISSEMINATION

A copy of the KID/FCI Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan will be posted on the KID/FCI website and in the Public drive of the network. A hard copy will be available for review in the office of the KID/FCI SPOC. Copies in alternative format will be provided upon request.

REVISIONS

The Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan will be updated as needed. Staff shall be notified of all changes/updates to KID/FCI operating procedures and Auxiliary Aids and Service Plans within sixty days of such changes.

NOTIFICATION

KID/FCI and DCFs Non-discrimination Policy, Limited English Proficient and Interpreter Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing posters will be displayed in buildings' main entrances, lobby areas, waiting areas, and on bulletin boards.

The name, telephone number, and TDD number for the 504/ADA Coordinator or Civil Rights Officer will be listed on the poster for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to ensure accessible services to customers and companions.

TRAINING

Training is essential to the on-going success of providing auxiliary aids and services to persons with disabilities or those who are Limited English Proficient. New employee orientation will include training on the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the

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Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This will be accomplished within 30 days of commencing employment for staff providing direct client services.

All staff will receive training annually on how to provide assistance to persons with disabilities and persons who are Limited English Proficient. This training is mandatory and will be tracked in Human Resources.

COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Reviews will be conducted to ensure compliance with all civil rights regulations.

DOCUMENTATION/RECORD RETENTION

Records relating to the auxiliary aids and services provided shall be retained by each program and the original document shall be retained in the client or customer's file or records. All final requests for accommodations, along with relevant documentation, will be forwarded to the designated 504/ADA Coordinator (SPOC) who will maintain a record of documentation.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

504/ADA Coordinators or Civil Rights Officers: This is an individual charged with implementing the requirements of Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; ensuring the provision of auxiliary aids and services for customers with disabilities, requiring auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective access to services offered by the Department. Within the Department, Civil Rights Officers are designated 504/ADA Coordinators.

Aid Essential Communication Situation: Any circumstance in which the importance, length, and complexity of the information being conveyed is such that the exchange of information between parties should be considered as an aid essential communication situation, meaning that the requested auxiliary aid or service is always provided.

Assistive Listening Devices and Systems (ALDS): Amplification systems used to improve hearing ability in large areas and in interpersonal communications systems. These systems deliver the desired signal directly to the ears or hearing aids of the listener, thus overcoming the negative effects of noise, distance and echo. Three main types are available: hardwire loop, infrared, and FM radio.

Auxiliary Aids and Services: Is making aurally delivered materials available to individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and includes; qualified readers, taped texts, or other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual limitations; acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and other similar services and actions. These auxiliary aids and services will enable clients to fully benefit from and participate in programs and services.

Blind: See Visual Disability.

Captioning (Closed): This is a process of displaying text on a television, video screen or other visual display to provide additional or interpretive information to individuals who wish access. Closed captions typically show a transcription of the audio portion of a program as it occurs (either verbatim or in edited form), sometimes including non-speech elements. The term "closed" in closed captioning indicates that not all viewers see the captions—only those who choose to decode or activate them.

Captioning (Open): Refers to converting the spoken word to text displayed in the visual media (videos, television, etc.) so that it is seen by everyone who watches the film (i.e., it cannot be turned off).

Captioning (Real Time): This is the simultaneous conversion of spoken words to text, through computer-assisted transcription or court reporting, and displaying that text on a video screen. This communication service is beneficial to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing that do not use sign language or for whom assistive listening devices and systems are ineffective.

Certified Interpreter: A person who is certified by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) or other national or state interpreter assessment and certification program.

Civil Rights Officers: An individual charged with implementing the requirements of Executive Order 13166 – Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons; ensuring the provision of auxiliary aids and services for Clients who are Limited English Proficient, requiring effective access to services offered by the Department. Within the Department, 504/ADA Coordinators are designated Civil Rights Officers.

Client: As used in this plan, this term includes anyone applying for or participating in the services provided by KID/FCI. It includes persons making general inquiries or in any way seeking access to or receiving information from KID/FCI, either in person, in writing or via telecommunications. This may also be referred to as “customer or customers”.

Companion: As defined in the HHS Settlement Agreement, is any individual who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing (including LEP who has low vision or blind, Deaf and Hard of Hearing) and is one of the following:

- (1) A person whom the customer indicates should communicate with KID/FCI staff about the customer, such as a person who participates in any treatment decision, a person who plays a role in communicating the customer’s needs, condition, history, or symptoms to KID/FCI staff, or a person who helps the customer act on the information, advice, or instructions provided by KID/FCI staff;
- (2) A person legally authorized to make healthcare or legal decisions on behalf of the customer; or
- (3) Such other person with who staff would ordinarily and regularly communicate about the customer.

General Services Unit: Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) of 2008, and ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG), State and local government facilities must

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ensure accessibility and remove any barriers which may deny individuals with disabilities from full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, or facilities. This Unit is responsible for providing assistance to the Regions and Mental Health Treatment Facilities in new facility design and construction to ensure building design standards compliance.

Contract Oversight Unit: Section 402.7305(4), F.S. requires the Department of Children and Families to create contract management units in each region/circuit, to be staffed by individuals specifically trained to perform contract monitoring. These Units are responsible for monitoring the administrative and programmatic terms and conditions of the Department's contracts with providers of client services.

Contracted Client Services Providers: This is any public, private or nonprofit agency or corporation that has entered into a contractual agreement with DCF to provide services directly to the public. This may also be referred to as "DCF Contract Provider."

Customer or Customers: This is any individual who is seeking or receiving services from the Department, its Contracted Client Services Providers and their subcontractors. This may also be referred to as "client or clients".

DCF Contract Agency: This is any public, private or nonprofit agency or corporation that has entered into a contractual agreement with DCF to provide services directly to the public. This may also be referred to as "Contracted Client Services Provider."

DCF or Department: This refers to the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Deaf: A term used to describe a person having a permanent hearing loss and being unable to discriminate speech sounds in verbal communication, with or without the assistance of amplification devices.

Disability: A condition that substantially limits a major life activity, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, lifting, sleeping, and working.

Discrimination: The failure to treat persons equally because of their race, sex, color, age, religion, marital status, national origin, political beliefs, or disability.

Dual Sensory: A term used to describe a person having both a visual disability and a hearing disability. The term includes all ranges of loss, which would necessitate the use of auxiliary aids and services for communication.

Employee: This refers to all persons working for KID/FCI.

Florida Relay Service (FRS): A service offered to all persons in the state that enables a hearing person to communicate with a person who has a hearing or speech disability and must use a TDD/TTY, through a specially trained operator called a communications assistant.

Hard of Hearing: A term used to describe a person having permanent hearing limitations, which is severe enough to necessitate the use of auxiliary aids or services to discriminate speech sounds in verbal communication.

Hearing Disability: An all-inclusive term used to describe any hearing loss. A person with a hearing disability could be either Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Interpreters for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

(1) **Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI):** An individual who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing and has been certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as an interpreter.

(2) **Certified Interpreter:** A interpreter who is certified by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, or other national or state interpreter assessment and certification program.

(3) **Intermediary Interpreter:** A Certified Deaf Interpreter or Deaf Interpreter, also known as a relay or intermediary interpreter, can be used in tandem with a qualified sign language interpreter.

(4) **Oral Transliterates/Oral Interpreters:** Individuals who have knowledge and abilities in the process of speech reading, speech production and the communication needs of speech readers.

(5) **Qualified Interpreter:** An individual who is able to interpret competently, accurately, impartially and effectively, both receptively and expressively, using any specialized terminology necessary for effective communication with a Customer or Companion who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

(6) **Sign Language Interpreter:** A person who engages in the practice of interpreting using sign language.

(7) **Tactile or Close Vision Interpreter** (For Individuals who are Deafblind): An individual who accurately facilitates communication between individuals who are deaf and blind.

NOTE. Someone who has rudimentary familiarity with sign language or finger spelling is not a qualified sign language interpreter. Likewise, someone who is fluent in sign language but who does not possess the ability to process spoken communication into proper signs or to observe someone else signing and change their signed or finger-spelled communication into spoken words is not a qualified sign language interpreter.

Interpreters for Persons who are Limited English Proficient: There are two (2) types of language assistance services:

(1) **Interpretation:** Interpretation is an oral language assistance service. Oral language assistance service may come in the form of “in-language” communication (a demonstrably qualified staff member communicating directly in an LEP person’s language) or interpreting.

(2) **Translation:** Translation is a written communication service. Translators convert written materials from one language into another. They must have excellent writing and analytical ability, and because the translations that they produce must be accurate, they also need good editing skills.

Limited English Proficient (LEP): Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English.

Manual Disability: A term used to describe a condition, which limits or prevents the use of a person's upper extremities (arms, hands).

Mental Disability/Limitation: Any mental or psychological disorders such as developmentally disabled, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

Mobility Disability/Limitation: For the purpose of this procedure, this term is used to describe a condition that substantially limits a person's upper or lower body mobility. It includes those persons who have limited use of arms, shoulders; persons who are in wheelchairs or on crutches; people of short stature; those who cannot perform certain hand movements or have difficulty controlling movement; and people with breathing difficulties or stamina limitations. It also includes person with visual disabilities.

On-Aid Essential Communication Situation: A situation where the Department is provided the flexibility in its choice of an appropriate auxiliary aids or services for customers or companions to ensure effective communication.

Physical Disability/Limitation: A broad term, which includes physiological disorders or conditions, cosmetic disfigurement and anatomical loss. It includes orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, HIV disease (symptomatic or asymptomatic), tuberculosis, drug addiction and alcoholism.

Program Accessibility: An American with Disabilities Act standard, which means a public entity's programs, services, or activities, when viewed in their entirety, must be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. The concept of program accessibility is intended to make the contents of the program, service or activity equally available and accessible to persons with disabilities without excessive renovations of facilities.

Sensory: This is a general term, which is used to describe vision or hearing limitations. For the purpose of this document, it also includes speech limitations.

Single Point of Contact: An individual charged with implementing the terms of the HHS Settlement Agreement within each DCF Direct Service Facility and shall also mean any individual within each DCF Contract Agency charged with coordinating services to customers and companions who are deaf and hard of hearing according to their obligations under Section 504 and/or the ADA.

Staff: As used in this plan, defines all employees of the Department other than managers.

Translator: An individual who is able to interpret the meaning of a text in one language (the "source text") and the production, in another language (the "target language") of an equivalent text (the "target text," or "translation") that communicates the same message.

TTY/TDD: TTY (Teletypewriter) or TDD (Telecommunications Device for Deaf) devices that are used with a telephone to communicate with persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing or who have speech limitations by typing and reading communications.

US Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Office of Civil Rights: The federal agency responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies for FNS customers and employees. The Office of Civil Rights also facilitates equal and timely access to FNS programs and services for all customers.

US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – Office for Civil Rights: The federal agency responsible for Departmental compliance with federal regulations including but not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title IX, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act of 1978, and the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, as amended.

US Department of Justice (DOJ) – Office for Civil Rights: The federal agency responsible for Departmental compliance with federal regulations including, but not limited to: Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination As It Affects Persons with Limited English Proficiency - Executive Order 13166, 28 CFR 42.104 (b) (2).

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI): VRI uses videoconferencing technology, equipment, and a high speed Internet connection with sufficient bandwidth to provide the services of a certified interpreter to people at a different location. Entities may contract for VRI services to be provided by appointment or to be available “on demand” 24 hours a day, seven days per week. If a deaf client or companion is offered VRI and expresses the request for a live interpreter, a live interpreter should be scheduled.

Video Relay Service (VRS): VRS allows deaf and hard of hearing individuals to have telephone conversations with hearing people. Using a videophone with real-time video connection, an interpreter relays the conversation between the two parties.

Visual Disability/Limitation: A generic term used to describe any loss of vision.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

1. General.

This plan provides for the implementation of KID/FCI policy and procedures for the provision of auxiliary aids ensuring accessibility to all programs, benefits, and services to persons with disabilities.

2. Scope.

The provisions described in this procedure apply to all KID/FCI programs who provide direct services to customers or potential customers.

3. Policy.

KID/FCI will provide, at no cost to the client/customer or companion, appropriate auxiliary aids, including certified American Sign Language interpreters, to persons with disabilities where necessary, to afford such persons an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the KID/FCI programs and services.

a. All qualified and potential customers are entitled to an equal opportunity to use and benefit from the programs and services of KID/FCI. This includes reasonable accommodations to ensure that programs and services are equally accessible to and equally effective for otherwise qualified persons with disabilities.

b. Auxiliary aids will be available for use by customers and potential customers in each phase of the service delivery process (e.g., telephone inquiries, requests, intake interviews, service delivery, counseling, complaints, testing, treatment, and training, etc.) This service will be at no cost to the client/customer or companion.

4. Ensuring Accessibility for the Provision of Services Provided.

The following procedures are to be followed by KID/FCI to ensure accessibility of programs and services to customers or companions with disabilities.

a. For Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

(1) Staff will conduct an assessment, prior to services, to determine the customer or companion's preferred method of communication. Staff shall consult with the customer to determine his or her preferred communication method, and if applicable, with assigned caseworkers, counselors, parents/caregivers, family members, guardians or other representative. Staff shall accomplish this by first completing the Customer Companion Communication Assessment Form and the Request for or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance Form.

(2) The communication options for persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing may include, but not limited to: the CART, Florida Relay Service, VRS, VRI, TDDs (Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf), FAX (Telephone Facsimile Transmittal), phone amplifiers, qualified or certified sign language interpreters, flash cards, lip-reading, written notes, supplementary hearing devices, charts, signs or a combination of these, as appropriate.

(3) If an interpreter is needed, staff shall contact a certified interpreter from their listing of interpreter services. Staff shall obtain verification of the interpreter's certification.

(4) KID/FCI SPOC (or designee) with budget approval over the unit or facility, has the responsibility for approving the request and obtaining the appropriate auxiliary aid and service.

(5) The use of auxiliary aids, certified sign language interpreters, or translators will be at no cost to the customer or companion.

(6) Documentation of Customer Companion Communication Assessment form shall be recorded in the case file or record.

(7) Each customer or companion who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall be provided a Customer Companion Feedback form by the Single Point of Contact, or designee, following their visit. The Customer Companion Feedback form is provided to the customer or companion to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the auxiliary aid or service provided and the performance of the interpreter provided. Staff shall document the case notes indicating the form was provided. Staff will provide assistance, if requested, in completing the form.

b. For Persons who have Low Vision or Blind (Except those that are Deaf and Hard of Hearing).

(1) It is a common perception among the public that persons who are blind read Braille. Most persons who are legally blind do not use Braille as a reading medium. Among legally blind students registered as such by the American Printing House for the Blind, only 10 percent use Braille as their primary reading medium. It is estimated that 8 percent of all legally blind adults are able to use Braille.

(2) It is important that staff determine the best method of communication for persons who have low vision or are blind. While Braille may be offered as an alternative, always communicate with the customer to determine the best method of providing services to them in an equitable and effective manner.

(3) Staff shall document in the client's file the type of auxiliary aid and service provided during their contact with the client.

c. For Persons who have Sensory, Speech or Mobility Limitations.

The following are procedures and minimum requirements for ensuring accessibility of meetings, conferences and seminars.

(1) Facilities used for meetings, conferences and seminars will be reviewed for accessibility by the unit sponsoring the activity in coordination with the designated 504/ADA Coordinator.

(2) When meetings, conferences and seminars are scheduled, information will be included in advertisements, conference registration materials or meeting notices that participants will be provided with the necessary auxiliary aid at no cost to them. The information will include the name of a contact person and a date by which the person must request such assistance. The registration

process will include a method for determining the number and type of persons with disabilities needing assistance as well as the type of personal assistance or accommodation requested.

(3) Certified or qualified interpreters for persons with speech, sensory or mobility limitations and accessibility to Teletype (TTY) or Telecommunications Device for Deaf (TDD) equipment.

NOTE: When telephones are provided for use by participants or residents (customers, employees or the public), TTYs/TDDs must be provided for participants or residents who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

(4) Adequate lighting in meeting rooms so signing by an interpreter can be readily seen.

(5) Readers or cassette recordings to enable full participation by person with visual limitations.

(6) Agenda and other conference materials translated into usable form.

(7) Parking spaces clearly marked with appropriate ramps and curb cuts will be provided for persons with disabilities.

(8) Where parking is available on or adjacent to the site, one 96" wide space with a 60" access aisle shall be set aside for the car of each participant, with mobility limitations, requesting it in advance of the meeting. Two accessible parking spaces may share a common access aisle.

(9) Where parking is not available on or adjacent to the site, alternative accommodations for participants with mobility limitations will be provided.

(10) Entrance ramps will be available and appropriate (36" wide or wider, level with adjacent surface and a manageable slope or incline of no more than one-inch rise per foot, 1:12).

(11) Meeting rooms will be all on one level or capable of being reached by elevators or ramps that can be independently traversed by a participant with mobility limitations.

(12) Stages, platforms, etc., to be used by persons in wheelchairs will be accessible by ramps or lifts.

(13) Seating arrangements for persons in wheelchairs will be adapted to integrate persons who are mobility limited rather than to isolate them on the group's perimeter.

(14) Sufficient accessible guestrooms (at the same rate as guestrooms for other participants) will be located in the facility where the meeting, etc., is held or in a facility housing the other participants. One unobstructed entrance to each facility. Doors operable by single effort. Door handles no more than 48" from floor.

(15) Elevator provided, if over one story: Sensitive safety edges provided. Controls no more than 48" from floor. Controls with Braille numbers or letters. Accommodates wheelchair 29" X 45".

(16) Accessible restrooms: Level access for each gender on each floor. Turn around space 5' X 5'. Door clearance of 32". Grab rails provided. Shelves, racks, dispensers, etc., not more than 48" for forward reach or 54" for side reach. Restroom signs indicating accessibility.

(17) Wheelchair accessible telephones.

(18) Accessible drinking fountains.

(19) Audible and visible fire alarms.

NOTE. Staff shall ensure that written documentation of accessible accommodations are properly documented.

5. Translation of Written Materials.

Translating documents to ensure effective communication will depend upon the customer or companions preferred method. Staff may be required to translate written documents in Braille, taped recordings or large print to ensure equal access to services offered by the Department.

6. Competency of Interpreters and Translators.

It is the responsibility of directors, managers, coordinators/supervisors, and staff to become familiar with and follow the standards of etiquette when communicating with customers/clients with disabilities. It is the responsibility of program managers and coordinators/supervisors to ensure the competency of qualified and certified sign language interpreters.

7. Provision of Interpreters in a Timely Manner.

Staff shall provide interpreters for customers and companions who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in a timely manner in accordance to the following standards:

a. If it is a scheduled appointment, you must have a certified interpreter at the time of the scheduled appointment. If the interpreter fails to appear, staff shall take whatever additional actions are necessary to make a certified interpreter available to the customer or companion as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours after the scheduled appointment, or as convenient to the customer or companion.

b. If it is a non-scheduled appointment or non-emergency situation, you must provide a certified interpreter within two (2) hours of the request, or at least by the next business day. In emergency situations an interpreter shall be made available as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours from the time the customer or companion requests an interpreter, whichever is earlier.

c. Non-Scheduled Interpreter Requests. If the situation is not an emergency, staff shall offer to schedule an appointment (and provide an interpreter where necessary for effective communication) as convenient to the customer or companion, but at least by the next business day.

d. Scheduled Interpreter Requests. For scheduled events, staff shall make a certified interpreter available at the time of the scheduled appointment. If an interpreter fails to appear for the scheduled appointment, staff shall take whatever additional actions are necessary to make a certified interpreter available to the customer or companion who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours after the scheduled appointment.

8. Other Means of Communication.

Staff shall continue to try to communicate with the customer or companion who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing insofar as the customer or companion seeks to communicate, between the time an interpreter is requested and the time an interpreter arrives.

- a. Sign language interpreters must be certified, unless they are a DCF employee who has been determined qualified by an Independent Agency.
- b. The use of assistive devices (vibratory alarms) will be incorporated with relevant services (tactile communication) for persons with multiple disabilities such as deafness and blindness.
- c. If the individual declines the use of the sign language interpreter, or other auxiliary aids, the client's file must be noted, utilizing the Customer or Companion Request For Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance form. The use of this form does not waive the Department or its Contracted Client Services Providers' responsibility to ensure effective communication; meaning the client's right to waive services does not void the agency from obtaining an interpreter to ensure effective communication is occurring.
- d. Minor children should never be used as an interpreter.
- e. Never use family members, children, friends and untrained volunteers as interpreters because it is difficult to ensure that they interpret accurately and may have ethical conflicts.

9. Effectiveness of Communication.

In the event that communication is not effective or if the nature of the communication changes significantly after the initial communication assessment, Department or provider staff shall reassess which appropriate auxiliary aids and services are necessary for effective communication. This shall be accomplished where possible in consultation with the person seeking the auxiliary aids or services.

10. Denial of Auxiliary Aids and Services.

- a. If KID/FCI determines after conducting the communications assessment that the communication situation is not Aid Essential and does not warrant provision of the auxiliary aid or service requested by the customer or companion, KID/FCI shall advise the person of the denial of the requested service and shall document the date and time of the denial, the name and title of the staff member who made the determination, and the basis for the determination. KID/FCI shall provide the customer (and companion, if applicable) with a copy of the denial.
- b. Staff shall record the denial of the requested auxiliary aid or service on the Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid/Service Record. Staff shall also record the denial of requested service in the customer's case file or medical chart. Notwithstanding the denial, Department or provider staff shall nonetheless ensure effective communication with the Customer or Companion by providing an alternate aid or service which must be documented on the above form and in the customer's file. Denial determinations can only be made by the Regional

Managing Director or Hospital Administrator (or designee) or the Contracted Client Services Provider Administrator (or designee).

NOTE: Staff who are unfamiliar with the auxiliary aid or service requested shall contact their Single Point of Contact (SPOC)/504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer) or their Supervisor, for assistance in locating appropriate resources to ensure effective communication with clients, customers and companions.

PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

1. General.

This section of the plan provides for the implementation of KID/FCI policy and procedures for the provision of auxiliary aids ensuring accessibility to all programs, benefits, and services to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

2. Scope.

The provisions described in this procedure apply to all KID/FCI programs who provide direct services to customers or potential customers.

3. Policy.

KID/FCI will provide, at no cost to the client, appropriate auxiliary aids, including qualified or certified language interpreters, where necessary, to afford such persons an equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from the Department of Children and Families' programs and services.

a. All clients and potential clients are entitled to an equal opportunity to use and benefit from the programs and services of KID/FCI. This includes language access to ensure that programs and services are equally accessible to and equally effective for otherwise qualified persons with Limited English Proficiency.

b. KID/FCI will take reasonable steps to provide services and information in the appropriate language, other than English, to ensure that persons who are Limited English Proficient are effectively informed and can effectively participate in and benefit from its programs, services and activities.

c. Language interpreters will be available for use by clients and potential clients in each phase of the service delivery process (e.g., telephone inquiries, requests, intake interviews, service delivery, counseling, complaints, testing, treatment, and training, etc.) This service will be at no cost to the client.

4. Ensuring Language Access for the Provision of Services Provided.

It is important to understand how individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) interact with KID/FCI.

Provide notices to LEP persons letting them know that language access services are available and that they are free of charge. This notice should be provided in a language that the LEP person will

understand. This will include: Posting signs in intake areas and other entry points. When language assistance is needed to ensure meaningful access to information and services. It is important to provide notice in the appropriate language in intake areas or initial points of contact so that LEP person can learn how to access those language services. The signs should be translated in the most common language encountered. Stating in outreach documents that language services are available from the agency. Announcements could be in brochures, booklets, and in outreach and recruitment information.

5. Competency of Interpreters and Translators.

a. When providing oral assistance you must ensure competency of the language service provider. Competency requires more than self-identification as bilingual. Some bilingual staff and community volunteers, for instance, may be able to communicate effectively in a different language when communicating information directly in that language, but may not be competent to interpret in and out of English. Likewise, they may not be able to do written translations. Competency to interpret, however, does not necessarily mean formal certification as an interpreter, although certification is helpful. When using interpreters, staff should ensure that the interpreter:

I. Demonstrate proficiency in and the ability to communicate information accurately in both English and in the other language and identify and employ the appropriate mode of interpreting (e.g., consecutive, simultaneous, summarization, or sight translation);

II. Have knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or concepts peculiar to the program or activity and or any particular vocabulary and phraseology used by the LEP person;

III. Understand and follow confidentiality and impartiality rules to the same extent the Department's employee for whom they are interpreting and/or to the extent their position requires;

IV. Understand and adhere to their role as interpreters without deviating into role as counselor, legal advisor, or other roles (particularly in court, administrative hearings, or law enforcement contexts),

V. Be able to show sensitivity to the person's culture.

b. If bilingual staff is used to interpret between English speakers and LEP persons, or to orally interpret written documents from English into another language, they should be competent in the skill of interpreting. In addition, there may be times when the role of the bilingual employee may conflict with the role of an interpreter.

c. Effective management strategies, including any appropriate adjustments in assignments and protocols for using bilingual staff, can ensure that bilingual staff is fully and appropriately utilized. When bilingual staff cannot meet all of the language service obligations, then other options should be used.

d. It is the responsibility of program Directors and Managers, Coordinators/Supervisors to ensure the competency of foreign language interpreters.

e. It is the responsibility of managers, supervisors, and staff to become familiar with and follow the standards of etiquette when communicating with clients who are Limited English Proficient.

6. Translation of Written Materials.

Written material (vital documents) routinely provided in English to applicants, clients and the public should be available in regularly encountered languages other than English. It is vital that documents be identified and translated into the non-English language of each regularly encountered Limited English Proficient group eligible to be served or to be directly affected.

7. Provision of Interpreters in a Timely Manner.

When interpretation is reasonable and is needed, staff shall provide interpreters in a timely manner. To be meaningfully effective, language assistance should be timely. While there is no single definition for “timely” applicable to all types of interactions at all times by all types of recipients, one clear guide is that the language assistance should be provided at a time and place that avoids the effective denial of the service, benefit, or right at issue or the imposition of an undue burden on or delay in important rights, benefits, or services to the LEP person. The client’s file shall be documented identifying the auxiliary aid or services provided, as well as any future services needed to ensure effective communication. When language assistance services are not readily available at a given agency, LEP persons will be less likely to participate in or benefit from its programs and services. As a result, many LEP persons may not seek out agency benefits, programs, and services; may not provide beneficial information or file complaints; and may not have access to critical information provided by the agency because of limited access to language assistance services. Thus, self-assessments of the number of current LEP contacts may significantly underestimate the need for language services. Crime perpetrators can also take advantage of this misconception and discourage their victims from seeking law enforcement or prosecutorial protection.

8. Other Means of Communication.

Staff shall continue to try to communicate with the client insofar as the client seeks to communicate, between the time an interpreter is requested and the time an interpreter arrives.

a. Language services include, as a first preference, the availability of a qualified bilingual staff that can communicate directly with clients in their preferred language.

b. When bilingual staff is not available, the next preference is face-to-face interpretation provided by a qualified contracted or volunteer language interpreter.

c. Telephone interpreter services should be used as a supplemental system when an interpreter is not available, or when services are needed for unusual or infrequently encountered language.

d. Minor children should never be used as an interpreter.

e. Avoid using family members, children, friends and untrained volunteers as interpreters because it is difficult to ensure that they interpret accurately and may be an ethical conflict.

9. Identifying Language Trends.

To ensure meaningful access to all Department programs and services, each program office and contracted client services provider will identify language trends by:

a. Identifying the non-English languages that are likely to be encountered in its programs and estimating the numbers of Limited English Proficient persons eligible for services that are likely to be affected by its program. This can be done by reviewing census data, client utilization data, and community's organizations. The estimate should be used as a guide for employee recruitment.

(1) Informing customers of the purpose for collecting data on race, ethnicity and language, purposes,

(2) A client does not have to provide the information if he or she chooses not to provide such information, unless required by law,

a. Identifying the points of contact in the program or activity where language assistance is likely to be needed,

b. Identifying resources needed, location and availability of these resources, and

c. Reporting the identified language needs to the Office of Civil Rights or the Regional Civil Rights Officer.

NOTE: Staff who are unfamiliar with the auxiliary aid or service requested shall contact their Single Point of Contact (SPOC)/504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer) or their Supervisor, for assistance in locating appropriate resources to ensure effective communication with clients, customers and companions.

KID/FCI Single Point of Contact (SPOC)/504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer):

Wendy Salomon, Extension 1225; Administration Room 104

Backup; Jevhky Mocombe, Extension 1246; Administration Room 105

STATEWIDE CIVIL RIGHTS OFFICERS/ SECTION 504-ADA COORDINATORS/ HIPAA COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Carolyn Dudley, Human Resources Manager for Civil Rights

1317 Winewood Boulevard – Building 1, Room 110 – Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Phone: 850-487-1901 Work Cell: 850-445-6704

Fax: 850-921-8470 TDD: 850-922-9220

Shenna M. Fluriach – Civil Rights Officer Southern Region;

Acting/Interim Civil Rights Officer Southeastern Region

401 NW 2nd Avenue, S-962C

Miami, Florida 33128

shenna.fluriach@myflfamilies.com

Phone: 786-257-5218 / Cell: 786-385-2008

Updated/reviewed July 10, 2019; July 3, 2020; July 15, 2021

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IN-PERSON COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

1. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF

Deaf people have many different communication needs. People who were born deaf (pre-lingual deaf) may have more difficulty with speech than those who lost their hearing after they learned a language (post-lingual deaf). The way a person communicates will vary according to the environment in which he or she was raised, type of education received, level of education achieved, and many other factors. Their ability to communicate in a language will vary from not very well to very well.

Some people use American Sign Language (ASL) or other sign language; some read lips and speak as their primary means of communication; some use Signed Exact English (SEE), where every word is signed in the exact sequence it is spoken in English, and there is a vocabulary which has a one-to-one relationship to English words. People who became deaf later in life may never have learned either sign language or lip-reading. Although they may pick up some sign and try their best to read lips, their primary means of communicating may be reading or writing.

Lip-reading ability varies greatly from person to person and from situation to situation. It is greatly hindered by people who do not enunciate clearly, have mustaches shielding the lips, do not speak or directly look at the person, or that speaks with an accent affecting the way words appear on their lips. Therefore, when speaking with a person who reads lips, look directly at the person while speaking, make sure you are in good light source, and keep your hands, gum and food away from your mouth while you are speaking.

When to use Interpreters: Since communication is vital in the workplace and in service delivery, and the deaf person knows how he or she communicates best, supervisors and staff should follow the wishes of the person who is deaf regarding communication methods. In casual situations and during initial contact, it is often acceptable to write notes to determine what the person needs.

2. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING

Persons who are hard of hearing may or may not know how to sign, and their means of communication will depend on the degree of hearing loss, when they became hard of hearing, etc. A person who is hard of hearing may or may not wear a hearing aid.

Employees should be aware that many hard of hearing people will not admit having a hearing loss, so it is important employees be alerted to the signs of hearing loss: The person asks you to repeat yourself several times; and The person does not respond appropriately, especially if you have been talking with your back to them.

The key to communication with a person who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing – as with all people – is patience and sensitivity. Please use the following guidelines: Ask the person how he or she prefers to communicate. If you are using an interpreter, the interpreter may lag a few moments behind what is being said, so pause occasionally to allow time for a complete translation. Talk directly to the person, not the interpreter. However, the person will look at the interpreter and may not make continuous eye contact with you during the conversation. Before you speak, make sure

you have the attention of the person you are addressing. If you know any sign language, try using it. It may help you to communicate and at least demonstrates your interest in communicating and willingness to try. Speak clearly and distinctly at a moderate pace in a normal tone of voice, unless asked to raise your voice. Do not shout or exaggerate your words. Look directly at the person. Most people who are hard of hearing need to watch a person's face to help them understand what is being said. Do not turn your back or walk around while talking. If you look away, the person may assume the conversation is over. Do not put obstacles in front of your face. Do not have objects in your mouth, such as gum, cigarettes, or food. Do not turn to another person in their presence to discuss other issues with them. Write notes back and forth, if feasible. Use facial expressions and gestures. Do not talk while writing, as the person cannot read your note and attempt to read your lips at the same time. Use a computer, if feasible, to type messages back and forth. Offer to provide an assistive listening device. If the person has a service animal, such as a dog, do not divert the animal's attention. Do not pet or speak to the animal.

3. GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WHO USE SIGN LANGUAGE

You may get the attention of a person who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing by positioning yourself within the line of vision, or by a gentle tap on the shoulder, a small wave or a slight rap on the table. Maintaining eye contact is vital whenever you are communicating with a person who has a hearing loss.

While waiting for an interpreter to arrive, have a paper and pen ready for simple conversation. Do not attempt to address complex issues, such as forms, in the absence of a certified interpreter.

When a sign language interpreter is present, talk directly to the person with the hearing loss. It is inappropriate to say to the interpreter, "Tell her..." or "Ask him..." Look directly at the consumer, not the interpreter. Everything you say should be interpreted. It is the interpreter's job to communicate the conversation in its totality and to convey other auditory information, such as environmental sounds and side comments. In using questions requiring a "Yes" or "No" response, do not assume that a head nod by a consumer who has a hearing loss means affirmation or understanding. Nodding of the head often indicates that the message is being received or may be a courtesy to show that you have the attention of the receiver. Ask the interpreter to identify that the specific signs indicating "Yes" or "No" were used in situations where such confirmation of the response is crucial. If you know basic sign language or finger-spelling, use it for simple things. It is important to realize that the ability to interpret is much more than knowing how to sign. Having taken one or more sign language classes does not qualify a person to act in a professional interpreting role. If the conversation is stopped for the telephone or to answer a knock at the door, let the person know that you are responding to that interruption.

4. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPEECH LIMITATIONS

If you have trouble understanding someone's speech, ask him or her to repeat what he or she has said. It is better for the person to know you do not understand than to assume that you do. Give the person your undivided attention. Do not simplify your own speech or raise your voice. Speak in a normal tone. Write notes back and forth or use a computer, if feasible. Ask for help in

communicating. If the person uses a communicating device, such as a manual or electronic communication board, ask the person how to use it.

5. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE A PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Do not make assumptions about what the person can or cannot do. Always ask if the person would like assistance before you help. Your help may not be needed or wanted.

Do not touch a person's wheelchair or grab the arm of a person walking without first asking if he or she would like assistance.

Do not hang or lean on a person's wheelchair because it is part of the wheelchair user's personal space.

Never move someone's crutches, walker, cane, or other mobility aid without permission.

When speaking to a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, try to find a seat for yourself so the two of you are at eye level. Speak directly to the person in a wheelchair, not to someone nearby as if the wheelchair user did not exist.

Do not demean or patronize the wheelchair user by patting him/her on the head.

Do not discourage children from asking questions about the wheelchair. Open communication helps overcome fearful or misleading attitudes.

When a wheelchair user "transfers" out of the wheelchair to a chair, toilet, car or bed, do not move the wheelchair out of reach.

Do not raise your voice or shout. Use normal speech. It is okay to use expressions like "running along." It is likely that the wheelchair user expresses things the same way.

Be aware of the wheelchair user's capabilities. Some users can walk with aid and use wheelchairs because they can conserve energy and move about quickly.

Do not classify persons who use wheelchairs as sick. Wheelchairs are used for a variety of non-contagious disabilities.

Do not assume that using a wheelchair is in itself a tragedy. It is a means of transportation/freedom that allows the user to move about independently.

6. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION

The first thing to do when you meet a person who is blind is to identify yourself.

When speaking, face the person directly. Speak in a normal tone. Your voice will let the person know where you are.

Do not leave without saying that you are leaving.

Some individuals who want assistance will tell you. You may offer assistance if it seems needed, but if your offer is declined, do not insist. When offering assistance, say, "Would you like to take

my arm?” and allow the person to decline or accept. The movement of your arm will let the person know what to expect. Never grab or pull the person.

When going through a doorway, let the person know whether the door opens in or out and to the right or left.

Before going up or down stairs, let the person know that you are going up or down, and advise if there is a handrail and where it is. Ask the person if he or she would like assistance – he or she will let you know.

When giving directions, or describing where things are in a room or in the person’s path, be as specific as possible, and use clock clues where appropriate. When directing the person to a chair, let the person know where the back of the chair is, and he or she will take it from there.

If the person has a service animal, do not distract or divert the animal’s attention. Do not pet or speak to the animal unless the owner has given you permission.

The person’s single greatest communication need is to have access to visual information by having information either read or provided in an accessible format (Braille, audio).

7. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DUAL SENSORY LIMITATIONS

The means of communication with a person with dual sensory limitations will depend on the degree of hearing and vision loss. Use all of the suggestions in the above sections on referencing interaction with people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, blind or have low vision. The person with dual sensory impairments has unique and very challenging communications needs. Staff is to use every possible means of communication available.

8. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Some of the people who are eligible for services cannot effectively use those services because they are not proficient in English. Language barriers prevent us from effectively providing services to this group of people. Breaking down these barriers will allow individuals with Limited English Proficiency to participate in the programs administered by the Department. The way a person with Limited English Proficiency communicates in English will vary from some to no English at all.

Use the following guidelines when communicating with a person with Limited English Proficiency: Ask the person if he or she needs a translator. If you are speaking through an interpreter, remember the interpreter may lag a few moments behind what is being said, so pause occasionally to allow time for a complete translation.

Talk directly to the person, not the interpreter. However, the person who is Limited English Proficient may look at the interpreter and may not make eye contact with you. If you know a little of the language, try using it. It may help you communicate and it also demonstrates your interest in communicating and willingness to try.

Do not simplify your speech or raise your voice. Speak in a normal tone.

The person's single greatest communication need is to have access to the information by having the information either orally translated or provided in their language written form.

Be patient and sensitive to the needs of the person who is Limited English Proficient.

9. INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE MENTAL ILLNESSES

Mental illnesses include schizophrenia, depressive disorders, and bipolar disorder, as well as many others. Mental illnesses are much more common than most people realize. You probably encounter people with mental illnesses every day, even if you don't realize it. These illnesses affect the individual's thoughts and emotions, and sometimes may make the individual behave in ways that seem strange.

Individuals with schizophrenia often have hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are not real) or delusions (unreasonable beliefs, which are sometimes bizarre). Individuals with bipolar disorder experience extreme moods. They sometimes experience mania (highly excited, talkative, and jumping suddenly from one topic to the next). At other times they experience depression (low mood, sadness, lack of motivation or interest in activities).

Keep in mind that people with mental illnesses are people first. The mental illness is not the most important thing about who they are. Individuals with mental illness deserve to be treated with respect, and treated as individuals, just like everyone else.

If an individual you are interacting with becomes agitated:

1. Remain calm and try to understand what the customer is asking for.
2. Try not to become angry or confrontational, even if the individual seems unreasonable.
3. Respect the person's space.
4. Do not put your hands on the person.

Most individuals with mental illness are not dangerous. However, occasionally, an individual with mental illness may become dangerous because of their hallucinations, delusions, or mood swings.

If you believe that an individual may represent a danger to themselves or others due to mental illness call 9-1-1 and explain the situation, even if the individual has already left the premises.

In such cases, a law enforcement officer has authority to initiate involuntary examination under the Baker Act. This allows the individual to be taken to a psychiatric facility for examination, observation, and treatment, even if the individual is not willing to go.

10. WHEN REFERRING TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, CHOOSE WORDS THAT REFLECT DIGNITY AND RESPECT.

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Inappropriate language	Appropriate Language
The disabled The blind The deaf Deaf people Legally blind person Disabled person	People with disabilities The disability community (“disabled” is an adjective, so must be accompanied by a noun) The blind community The Deaf community People who are deaf or who are hard of hearing Person who is blind People who are blind or who have low vision
Crippled Suffers from Afflicted with Stricken with Victim of Invalid	Has a disability Is a person with a disability Is physically disabled Walks with a cane Uses leg braces
Normal person Healthy Whole	Non-disabled Person without disabilities
Impaired Impairment	Has a disability
Hearing impaired Hearing impairment	Person who is deaf, Person who is hard of hearing Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Wheelchair bound Confined to a wheelchair Wheelchair person	Wheelchair user Person who uses a wheelchair
Handicap parking Disabled parking	Accessible parking Disability parking
Dumb Mute	Person who cannot speak Has difficulty speaking Uses synthetic speech Is non-vocal or non-verbal
Stutterer Tongue-tied	Person who has speech or communication limitations
CP victim, Spastic	Person with cerebral palsy
Epileptic	Person with epilepsy Person with seizure disorder
Fit Attack	Seizure Epileptic episode or event
Crazy Lunatic Insane, Nuts Deranged, Psycho	People with emotional disorders Mental illness A mental disability A psychiatric disability
Retard	People who are developmentally disabled

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Mentally defective Moron, Idiot, Imbecile Down's person Mongoloid	Developmentally delayed Person with mental retardation Person with Down syndrome
Slow learner Retarded	Has a learning disability Person with specific learning disability
Dwarf, Midget	Person of small stature or small stature Little person
Paraplegic Quadriplegic	Man with paraplegia Woman who is paralyzed Person with spinal cord injury
Birth defect	Person who has a congenital disability People who have congenital disabilities Disabled from birth
Post-polio Suffered from polio	Person who has polio
Homebound	A person who stays at home It is hard for the person to get out.

ABOUT FLORIDA RELAY 711

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Florida Relay is the communications link for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Limited. Through the Florida Relay, people who use specialized telephone equipment can communicate with people who use standard telephone equipment.

To call Florida Relay, dial 7-1-1, or use the following toll free numbers

1-800-955-8771 (TTY)

1-800-955-8770 (Voice)

1-800-955-3771 (ASCII)

1-877-955-8260 (VCO-Direct)

1-800-955-5334 (STS)

1-877-955-8773 (Spanish)

1-877-955-8707 (French Cr)

Types of Florida Relay Calls

Thousands of Floridians depend upon Florida Relay every day to make both personal and business phone calls. Here are examples of how the specialized telephone equipment and services work.

Voice (for a hearing caller)

Standard telephone users can easily initiate calls to TTY users. The Relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words to the TTY user and reads back the typed replies.

1. Dial 7-1-1 for the Florida Relay Service.
2. You will hear, "Florida Relay operator (number), May I have the number you are calling please?"
3. Give the Relay operator the area code and telephone number you wish to call and any further instructions.
4. The Relay operator will process your call, relaying exactly what the TTY user is typing. The Relay operator will relay what you say back to the TTY user.
5. When you finish the conversation and are ready to hang up, don't forget to say "SK" which stands for "stop keying" (which alerts both the Relay operator and the other party that you are ready to end the conversation) then hangs up.

TIPS FOR HEARING CALLERS:

Be sure to talk directly to your caller.

Avoid saying "tell him" or "tell her".

Say "GA" or "Go Ahead" at the end of your response.

Say "Signing Off" before you hang up.

Text Telephone (TTY)

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled uses a TTY to type his/her conversation to a Relay operator, who then reads the typed conversation to a hearing person. The Relay operator relays the hearing person's spoken words by typing them back to the TTY user.

1. Dial 7-1-1 for the Florida Relay Service.
2. The Relay operator will answer with "FL Relay OPR 8234" (for Relay operator identification), "F" or "M" (for Relay operator gender) and "GA." ("GA" denotes "go ahead.")
3. Type in the area code and telephone number you wish to call and then type "GA."
4. The Relay operator will dial the number and relay the conversation to and from your TTY. Type in "GA" at the end of each message.
5. When you are finished with the conversation, type "SK" for "Stop Keying" then hang up

Voice Carry-Over (VCO)

Voice Carry-Over is an ideal service that enables a hard-of-hearing or deaf user to use his/her voice to speak directly to a hearing person. When the hearing person speaks to back, the Relay operator serves as the "ears" and types everything that is said on a TTY or text display.

1. Dial the Florida Relay Service VCO number 1-800-955-8771.
2. The Florida Relay operator will answer "FL OPR 8234M (For relay operator identification) "F" or "M" (for Relay operator gender) GA".
3. Voice the area code and telephone number of the party you want to call.
4. The Relay operator will type the message "Voice Now" to you as your cue to start speaking. You speak directly to the hearing person. The Relay operator will not repeat what you say, but only type to you what the hearing person says. You both need to say "GA" at the end of your response.

Hearing Carry-Over (HCO)

Hearing Carry-Over (HCO) allows speech-disabled users with hearing, to listen to the person they are calling. The HCO user then types his/her conversation for the Relay operator to read to the standard telephone user.

Dial Florida Relay 7-1-1. A Florida Relay operator will answer "FL Relay OPR 8234M GA", where "8234" for relay operator identification, "F" or "M" for operator gender and "GA" denotes "go ahead."

Type in the area code and telephone number you wish to call and then type "HCO PLEASE GA." The Relay operator will make the connections and voice the typed conversation to the called party.

Speech-to-Speech (STS)

Speech-to-Speech (STS) allows speech-disabled persons to voice their conversation. A specially trained Florida Relay Operator will listen and repeat the speech-disabled user's dialogue to the called party. No special telephone equipment is needed to use this service. A STS call can be made from any standard telephone.

Dial Florida Relay STS number 1-877-955-5334. You will hear “Florida Relay Speech-to-Speech operator (number). May I have the number you are calling to please?” Voice the area code and telephone number of the party you want to call.

The Relay operator will say “Voice Now” to you as your cue to speak directly to your party. The relay operator will then re-voice what you have said if the called party does not understand you. There may be instances where you will be asked to repeat your message to ensure that it is conveyed correctly. Remember to say “Go Ahead” when you are ready for the other person to respond.

CapTel

The CapTel phone is ideal for a hard of hearing individual to use his/her own voice to speak directly to hearing person. When the hearing person speaks back, the CapTel user can read the response on a text display. CapTel allows users to place a call in the same way they would when using a traditional phone - by dialing the number directly. The CapTel™ phone automatically connects to the Captioning Relay Service when the number is dialed. When the person answers, you hear everything that he/she says, just like a traditional phone call.

Here's how to make a CapTel call:

1. Get a special CapTel phone at no-cost from FTRI.
2. When dialing out, simply dial the number of the person you want to call.
3. Your CapTel phone will automatically connect to both the captioning service and the party you wish to reach.
4. A captionist transcribes everything the party says to you into written text (captions) using the very latest in voice-recognition technology.

Here's how to receive a call using a CapTel:

1. The voice user calling should first dial 1-877-243-2823 (toll free).
2. Once connected, the voice user then enters your area code and phone number followed by the # symbol.
3. Whether it's an incoming or outgoing call, everything the voice user says to you is transcribed into captions that display in an easy-to-read window on your CapTel phone. An assistive listening device (ALD) is any type of amplification device that can help you and your customer communicate more effectively. ALDs can be used with or without hearing aids and can improve

hearing in the presence of background noise, listening on the phone or to television, as well as improve hearing at a distance. The individual using one of these devices may even notice less stress and fatigue in addition to improved hearing. The Department has two types of assistive listening devices available for times when we interact with customers and companions who are hard of hearing.

The Pocketalker is used for one-on-one communications, and the Motiva Personal FM Listening Device for group and/or large room meetings. The Pocketalker works best for one-to-one conversation and is completely portable (about the size of a cell phone). The Pocketalker comes with an ear bud or headphones (with ear covers that are disposable). It is best used to amplify sound 10 feet or less from the listener.

How to use the Pocketalker:

- Check the Pocketalker before you meet a customer to see that it is working properly
- Insert the batteries
- Connect the ear buds or headset cord to the Pocketalker
- Once your customer has agreed to use the Pocketalker, show them how to use it
- Turn it on
- Adjust the volume to the lowest setting
- Have your customer insert the ear buds or headphones
- Have the customer slowly adjust the volume
- Test to see if this improves their hearing
- Continue with your discussion, checking now and then to see if they can hear properly.
- Once you have completed your meeting, remove the batteries, dispose of the used ear buds or headphone covers
- Be sure to have all parts together and ready to return to the appropriate place when finished

The Motiva Personal FM Listening System is for large groups and meetings. Like the Pocketalker, the Motiva Personal FM Listening System amplifies sound. It comes with a transmitter, microphone and two receivers with ear buds or a headphone. Use this device to communicate with customers who are Hard-of-Hearing at a table or in a meeting at a distance from 10 feet or more. The Motiva Personal FM Listening System has a built in microphone.

How to use the Motiva Personal FM Listening System: A detailed and illustrated instruction card is attached to the inside of the Motiva zippered case to guide you through the setup process.

Check the Motiva Personal FM Listening System before you meet a customer to see that it has all the parts and is working correctly. Follow the instructions inside the case for proper functionality. Turn it on, have your customer insert ear buds or headphones. Test and adjust the volume as

necessary. Ask if this improves their hearing. Continue with your discussion, checking now and then to see if they can hear properly.

Once you have completed your meeting, remove the batteries from the transmitter and receiver, dispose of the used ear buds or headphone covers, gather all the components of the Motiva and return them to the zipper case. Return the set to the appropriate place when finished.

The instructional guides and job aids for operating the assistive listening devices may also be found on the DCF Internet Website under Administration/Service Delivery for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing section at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/deaf-and-hard-hearing>. Additional resources that will help you with Service Delivery for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are also posted here. Look on the left side of the internet page under quick links for the small banner “Service Delivery for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.” Click on that banner and look again on the left side bar for numerous resources that will assist you when serving our customers and companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The instructional guides and job aids for operating the assistive listening devices are located under “Assistive Listening Device (ALD) Pilot Central Region.” You’ll also find the Process Map for Accessing ALD equipment on that page.

LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES

Language Line, Inc. provides interpreter services to clients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as mandated by federal and state civil rights regulations. There is a fee for services provided through Language Line, Inc. Each program will be charged for their use of the telephone interpreter services. Telephone interpreter services can be accessed 24 hours a day by following these instructions (unless alternative contracts are in place) when placing a call to a non-English speaker, begin at step 2:

When receiving a call:

1. Place the non-English speaker on hold.
2. Dial: 866-874-3972
3. This is an automated answering system. Please have your 6-digit client ID available as well as the language needed, and your name.
4. Once an interpreter has been added to your call, provide your information in three to four sentences in a logical order so the interpreter can retain the information and interpret it accurately to your LEP client.
5. Please inform the interpreter if you are using a hand held phone, versus a speakerphone, so they will allow time for the phone to be passed back and forth, before relaying the information.

Note: To access the Language Line Tutorial: <http://www.language-line.com/training>.
<https://www.language-line.com/>

If you are not a language line Customer, you can contact them at: Call them at 1-800-752-6096 option 4/ 1-831-648-7548 (International).

VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING

A video telecommunication service that uses devices such as web cameras or videophones to provide sign language or spoken language interpreting services. This is done through a remote or offsite interpreter, in order to communicate with persons with whom there is a communication barrier. It is similar to a slightly different technology called video relay service, where the parties are each located in different places. Contact Language People at www.languagepeople.com <https://www.languagepeople.com/> or (707) 538-8900 for additional information.

Local Area Resources

Updated/reviewed July 10, 2019; July 3, 2020; July 15, 2021

** Please note that the majority of this plan comes from the DCF Statewide Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan for Persons with Disabilities & Persons with Limited English Proficiency, which can be found in its totality on the DCF website at <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/deaf-and-hard-hearing/auxiliary-aids-plan> and in the office of the KID/FCI SPOC.

ASL Interpreters

1. Accessible Communication for the Deaf (ACD) 954-578-3081; videophone: 954-519-2975
www.acdasl.com
2. Deaf Services Unlimited 800-930-2580 www.deafservicesunlimited.com
3. CODA Link, Inc. 954-423-6893; 24-Hour Emergency Service: 954-557-5166
www.codalinkinc.com
4. Nationwide Interpreter Resource (NIR) 561-362-0594, 888-NIR-9788
www.nationwideinterpreterresource.com
5. Signs of Excellence, LLC 561-305-1320 www.signsofexcellence.cc
6. Tavia Mays 772-240-8655 taviamays@gmail.com
7. Translations USA 772-223-2101 www.trans-usa.org

VRI

1. Accessible Communication for the Deaf (ACD) 954-578-3081; videophone: 954-519-2975
www.acdasl.com
2. Deaf Services Unlimited 800-930-2580 www.deafservicesunlimited.com

CART

1. Caption Crew 954-767-6363, 954-684-1259 www.floridarealtime.com – captioning, accessible video, CART
2. Lew Balaban 954-767-0361

Relay Services

1. Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. 711 Voice: 800-222-3448; Customer Care: 888-554-1151; TTY 888-447-5620 www.ftri.org – free amplified & captioned phones

ALDs

1. Harris Communications www.harriscomm.com

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support

1. Center for Hearing and Communication 954-601-1930 www.chchearing.org – free hearing screenings, hearing aids, assistive device counseling, free specialized telephone distribution program, ASL instruction, educational workshops
2. Coalition for Independent Living Option, Inc.

PBC: 561-966-4288; St. Lucie/Okeechobee Counties: 772-878-3500; Martin County: 772-485-2488 www.cilo.org – free hearing tests

3. Deaf and Hearing Resources (FKA Deaf Service Center of PBC – Delray Office Closed) 561-802-3353; VIDEOPHONE: 561-501-2003 www.mydhr.org – free hearing tests, free specialized phones, help with ALD

General ADA Compliance

1. ADAhelp, Inc. 954-484-3539 www.adahelp.org
2. Coalition for Independent Living Option, Inc.
PBC: 561-966-4288; St. Lucie/Okeechobee Counties: 772-878-3500; Martin County: 772-485-2488 www.cilo.org – Suitcase/wheelchair ramps, Vehicle Repair & Modifications, wheelchair lifts, scooter batteries, directory of accessible medical & dental offices, free loans of adaptive equipment, disability awareness & sensitivity training, referrals & info for disability-related information

Blind

1. Lighthouse of Broward County 954-463-4217 www.lhob.org
2. Braille International 772-286-8366 or 888-336-3142 info@brailleintl.org

Foreign Language

1. Language Line 800-752-6096 option 4 www.language-line.com
2. Translations USA 772-223-2101 www.trans-usa.org
3. Gateway Languages 877-393-2424 www.gatewaylanguages.com
4. [Optimal Phone Interpreters](http://www.callopi.com) 877-746-4674 www.callopi.com