

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES**



POLICY	
Department on Disability Services	Subject: <i>Language Access Policy</i>
Responsible Program or Office: <i>Department on Disability Services</i>	Policy Number: <i>2015-DDS-0020</i>
Date of Approval by the Director:	Number of Pages: 2
Effective Date: January 29, 2015	Expiration Date, if any:
Supersedes Policy Dated: May 15, 2012 (Updated to comply with People First Language Policy)	
Cross References, Related Policies and Procedures, and Related Documents:	

All underlined words/definitions can be found in the **Definitions Appendix**.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the standards and guidelines by which the Department on Disability Services (DDS) will evaluate access to interpretation services, including American Sign Language, written translation and oral language translation for people served who have limited English proficiency.

2. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all DDS employees, subcontractors, and providers that provide services and supports for people with disabilities receiving services as part of the DDS service delivery system, regardless of the funding source (e.g., local funds, federal funds, grants).

3. AUTHORITY

The authority for this policy is established in the Department on Disability Services ("DDS") as set forth in D.C. Law 16-264, the "Department on Disability Services Establishment Act of 2006," effective March 14, 2007 (D.C. Official Code § 7-761.01 et seq.); and D.C. Law 2-137, the "Citizens with Intellectual Disabilities Constitutional Rights and Dignity Act of 1978," effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Official Code § 7-1301.01 et seq.).

4. POLICY

It is the policy of DDS to ensure that all persons receiving services and supports as part of the DDS service system have access to and receive interpretation services that meet their personal needs,

including the need for sign language, and written and oral translations that are appropriate to their specific language needs. Certain service recipients or certain activities may have specific designated funding sources for interpretation services. The Medicaid funded interpretation services are intended for medical appointments, team meetings (e.g., Intake, Pre-ISP meetings, ISP/POC development), or meetings where the individual being supported requires interpretation services.

For people who are not Medicaid eligible, DDS will fund with local dollars the necessary interpretation services for the purposes noted above. For all other ongoing services, the DDS Service Provider is responsible for the provision of the necessary interpretation service to ensure the person's full participation and understanding of the services provided to them.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for this policy is vested in the Director, Department on Disability Services. Implementation for this policy is the responsibility of the Deputy Directors or the highest-ranking manager in each administration.

6. POLICY STANDARDS

A. DDS will:

- i. Arrange for interpretation services for Intake and Eligibility Determination, initial DDA ISP/LOC development, or RSA IPE development.
- ii. Pay for interpretation services for non-Medicaid eligible people, for Intake and Eligibility Determination and initial ISP/LOC or IPE development.
- iii. Keep providers informed of how to access Medicaid funded interpretation services.
- iv. Review Provider's policies and procedures for compliance with this Policy.

B. DDS service providers will:

- i. Establish and maintain policies and procedures on how to access and provide interpretation services for people who have an identified need for interpretation services in order to ensure the person's full participation and understanding of the services provided.
- ii. Train staff on how to provide ongoing interpretation services.
- iii. Immediately advise DDS when they are unable to meet the interpretation needs of any person referred for services by DDS.

C. DDA service providers, in addition to section 6,B above will:

- i. Establish policies and procedures that specify how they will utilize the Medicaid or locally funded interpretation services to support people for medical appointments, team meetings (e.g., Intake and Eligibility Determination, Pre-ISP meetings, ISP/POC development), or meetings where the person being supported requires interpretation services.


Laura L. Nuss, Director

1/28/15
Date