

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



Department on Disability Services	Policy Number: 2012-DDS 5-22
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Related/Cross Referenced:	
Subject: Language Access	

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 individuals 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**

Department on Disability Services 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.*); D.C. Law 2-137, the “Mentally Retarded Citizens Constitutional Rights and Dignity Act of 1978,” effective March 3, 1979 (D.C. Official Code § 7-1301.01 *et seq.*); and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 701 *et seq.*) (1998).

**4. POLICY**

It is the policy of DDS to ensure that all individuals receiving services and supports as part of the DDS service system have access to and receive interpretation services that meet their individual 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 individuals 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 individual'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 individuals, 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 individuals who have an identified need for interpretation services in order to ensure the individual'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 individual 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 individuals for medical appointments, team meetings (e.g., Intake and Eligibility Determination, Pre-ISP meetings, ISP/POC development), or meetings where the individual being supported requires interpretation services.



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Approval Date