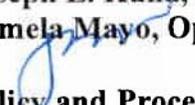


The Philadelphia Department of Human Services  
Children and Youth Division  
Policy and Procedural Guide

**Issue Date: March 20, 2008**

**TO:** All CYD Social Work Staff and Service Providers

**FROM:**  Joseph E. Kuna, Ph.D., Acting Deputy Commissioner, CYD  
 Pamela Mayo, Operations Director

**RE:** Policy and Procedure for Effective Communication with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Clients

**EFFECTIVE DATE: IMMEDIATELY**

The purpose of this Guide is to introduce and inform all staff of the new policy and procedural requirements relating to providing services to clients who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Overview:**

Consistent with federal, state, and local law, it is the policy and practice of the Children and Youth Division (CYD) of the Department of Human Services (DHS) that it does not discriminate in any of its policies or provision of services to clients. In keeping with this policy and to ensure meaningful access to the Department's services for all clients, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, the Children and Youth Division, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), has made provisions for free language assistance services to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

**POLICY**

**Effective Communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clients**

Effective communication is essential in ascertaining the needs of our deaf and hard of hearing clients and providing appropriate services. To ensure effective communication in every aspect of an investigation and delivery of service, free language assistance services are available to all individuals including dependent children, parents/legal guardians, reporters and others who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- Deaf/hard-of-hearing clients **must** be informed by the CYD social worker of the availability of *free* interpreter services and/or necessary assistive technology. **It is not the responsibility of the client to request interpreter services. DHS/CYD must ask deaf or hard-of-hearing clients what their preferred method of communication is and determine the most effective means of communication, even when such assistance is not requested or desired by the client. No staff may suggest or require that a client provide an interpreter in order to receive services.**

- It is not appropriate to avoid communicating, or to communicate less frequently, with parents or children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- CYD must provide professional interpretation services at all stages of working with the families who use sign language, from initial contact to closure of the case, including during all meetings, FSP's and communications with the client.
- Staff should obtain interpreter services when necessary, even when such assistance is not requested or is refused by the client.
- CYD contracts with its providers require that the providers must ensure effective communication and meaningful access to their services for all individuals, including children, parents/legal guardians, and others who are deaf or hard of hearing. Providers are responsible for providing and paying for interpreter services for our deaf and hard-of-hearing clients in all phases of contact, at provider-initiated events, and at events where the CYD social worker is not scheduled to be present.

### **Using Family Members, Volunteers and Others as Interpreters**

A qualified sign language or oral interpreter is one who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively using any necessary specialized vocabulary. The interpreter must be able to sign to the deaf or hard-of-hearing individual what is being said by the hearing person and voice to the hearing person what is being said by the deaf/hard-of-hearing individual. A qualified interpreter must be able to interpret impartially and be trained, skilled, and competent to do so.

Children are not to be used as interpreters. Friends, neighbors, other family members, SCOH and provider agency workers, untrained volunteers, or anyone potentially involved in the abuse or neglect that is being investigated should not be used as interpreters. The use of non-professional interpreters could result in a breach of confidentiality, a conflict of interest, or an inadequate interpretation.

**When there are circumstances that require an immediate response, such as the need to get identifying information about an injured child, volunteers who know sign language may be used, but only until a qualified sign language interpreter can be obtained. Any such conversations should be reviewed for accuracy with the client once the qualified interpreter is available.**

Volunteer employees who are qualified in sign language should only be used in urgent circumstances or as a last resort when all other services have been exhausted. The volunteer employee must be qualified in American Sign Language (ASL) complete interpreter training, and agree to abide by the established protocol. (as per Policy Guide, "Procedure for Effective Communication with Limited English Proficient (LEP) Clients" issued 11/15/04).

### **Interpreter Availability and Emergency Services**

Interpreter services are available 24-hours, seven days a week for scheduled appointments and emergency services. Use of an interpreter during critical times minimizes the chance of a misunderstanding that could escalate the emergency.

**Scheduled appointments:**

Interpreter service providers should be contacted a minimum of 48 hours prior to the date of the scheduled appointment to assure the availability of an interpreter.

**Emergencies:**

Interpreter Services are available for emergencies during normal business hours and after hours. When an interpreter is needed for an immediate response during normal business hours, call the contact person listed on the back of the *Request for In-Person Interpreter Services Form* (see attached). For after hours emergency requests an “after 5:00p.m.” phone number is also provided on the back of the *Request for In-Person Interpreter Services Form*.

**Cancellations:**

The interpreter service provider should be contacted immediately when a scheduled service has to be cancelled. There is a 2-hour minimum charge if cancellation notice is not provided at least 48 hours in advance.

**Court Interpreters and Court Ordered Services**

Requests for interpreters or assistive technology for court are directed to the Law Department. Requests must be made as early as possible in advance of the court hearing, when an Order for Protective Custody is requested, or as soon as the need is identified. Any subsequent need for an Interpreter is the responsibility of the courts. The court order for each hearing should reflect the client’s need for an interpreter or assistive technology.

**Documenting a Family’s Need for Interpreter Services**

The primary language and disability of all household members should be determined and documented during an investigation/assessment. DHS/CYD staff will document the primary language and any disabilities in the case record and in the FACTS database.

**Case Record Documentation**

- DHS/CYD staff will document in the case record:
  - the family’s primary language/noting if the client is deaf or hard of hearing,
  - the need for interpreter services,
  - all requests that have been made for interpreter services,
  - all interpreter services and other services that have been provided.
  - If an interpreter is not immediately available, the social worker will document all attempts to obtain one.

## FACTS Database

- In the FACTS database, the *Reports Referral* screen (F5) requires the input of a primary language and a response to whether or not interpreter services are needed. The input list for Primary languages (F1) includes an expanded list of spoken languages as well as American Sign Language. American Sign Language should be chosen when a family's primary language is English and the family is in need of interpreter services for the deaf or hard of hearing. The list also includes dual entries, such as *Chinese Cantonese Sign* and *Korean Sign*. These entries indicate that the primary language of the family is Chinese or Korean, but that the family is also in need of Interpreter services for the deaf or hard of hearing. The fields for Primary Language and the question of whether or not Interpreter services are needed must be completed to be able to update status determination.
- If the chosen language designation also includes "sign" (American or otherwise), then complete the fields in FACTS updating the Child's Personal Data screen and/or the Adult screen, noting that child and/or the adult is deaf or hard of hearing as a disability.

### **Accessing Resources and Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Families**

The Department has contracted with interpreter provider agencies to provide professional sign language and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services. Deaf and hard-of-hearing clients may also use operator assisted TTY/TDD and Video Relay services to communicate by telephone. To access a client by telephone and to use the corresponding relay services, a client must have the necessary equipment installed in his/her home. **DHS does not provide any relay equipment.**

### **Services available to Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients:**

1. **Sign Language** – A professional sign language interpreter is certified, highly skilled and is familiar with legal and specialized terminology. A professional interpreter can understand and express not only the message, but also convey the emotion of the message.
  - **Deaf/Hearing Teams** – Often a Certified Deaf Interpreter works as a team member with a certified interpreter who is hearing. The certified deaf interpreter, in addition to excellent communication skills, has specialized training and/or experience in use of gesture, mime, props, drawings and other tools to enhance communication. The deaf/hearing team can be used effectively when attempting to communicate with a person who does not know ASL or speaks a language other than English.
2. **Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)** – is the translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer, or television, and real-time software. A trained professional translates the text, which appears on a monitor and can be read by the deaf or hard-of-hearing person.
3. **Relay Services** – (equipment may be available in the client's home) is an operator service that allows people who are deaf or hard of hearing to place calls to standard telephone users via TTY, personal computer or other assistive telephone device.

- TTY (Teletypewriter, Text Telephone, TDD) – A voice message is relayed to a Communication Assistant (CA) who types the message and relays it to the TTY user. The TTY user then types the response to the CA who relays a voice message back to the hearing individual.
- Video Relay Service (VRS) - Sign Language is used instead of typing. The VI (video interpreter) uses a webcam or videophone to voice the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing person's signs to the Hearing person and sign the Hearing person's words to the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing person.

## Procedures

### 1. Sign Language through Interpreter Services and CART Services

Sign Language and CART services are obtained by utilizing contracted interpreter service providers.

- Obtain a *Request for Interpreter Services Form*, which is located on DHS Central, under Translation Services. (Copy is attached)
- The following providers are listed on the reverse of the *Request for Interpreter Services Form* and should be contacted to provide services to deaf or hard of hearing clients.
  - **The Deaf Hearing Communications Center** (610) 604-0452 – provides both American Sign Language and CART services.
  - **The Communication Connection** (610) 272-4948 - provides signing services only.

For emergency and/or after-hours service, contact the providers listed on the reverse of *Request for Interpreter Services Form*.

- The interpreter service provider should be contacted as soon as possible prior to the needed service, and immediately when a scheduled service has to be cancelled. There is a 2-hour minimum charge if cancellation notice is not provided at least 48 hours in advance.
- When completing the *Request for In-Person Interpreter Services Form*:
  - indicate the primary language of the family.
  - If the family speaks English and requires a sign language interpreter, put a check in the “Yes” box indicating that an American Sign Language Interpreter is needed.
  - If a family’s primary Language is other than English, or the deaf/hard of hearing person is not trained in ASL, or for any other specialized circumstance, check “Yes” to request a deaf/hearing team.
  - The need for CART services should also be specified.
- Fill out the form completely, specifying the date (or dates if recurring) that service is needed.
- Take the completed form to the Administrative Services Supervisor in the Accounts Payable Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor-OPB (3-6894). The agency will bill DHS/CYD directly. Requests must be submitted in a timely manner.
- For Court-ordered requests, a copy of the DRO must accompany the completed “Request for Interpreter Services” form submitted to the Accounts Payable Unit.
- Please note each individual agency’s “Notice” requirements and ensure that the Guidelines for requesting services are followed.

- For any problems accessing in-person, interpreter services contact the DHS/CYD Global Ambassador at 215-683-5869.

## Procedures

### 2. Relay Services (Telephone)

**Telephone calls should not be used to avoid the use of interpreters when an in-person contact is called for.**

#### **Video Relay Services**

When communication would ordinarily be accomplished by telephone, and the deaf or hard-of-hearing person has access to a video phone, the following procedure should be followed:

- Obtain the phone number of the deaf or hard-of-hearing person that you are trying to reach.
- Call the video relay service at 1-866-327-8877 to access a Sign Language Interpreter.
- Provide the phone number for the person you are trying to reach to the Sign Language Interpreter. The Sign Language Interpreter places the call and interprets as a neutral, non-participating third party.

#### **TTY (Teletypewriter, Text Telephone, TDD) Services**

If the deaf or hard-of-hearing person has a TTY, the following procedures should be followed:

- Call the Pennsylvania Relay Service by dialing 711 or 1-(800)-654-5988.
- Follow the prompts for voice relay service and enter the phone number of the person you are trying to reach when indicated.
- You will be connected to a Communications Assistant who will relay the call for you. While your call is being relayed:
  - a. talk as though speaking directly to the person you called. The CA will relay your conversation.
  - b. Each time you finish speaking, say "**Go Ahead**" to let the CA know you are ready for the TTY user's response.
- For any problems accessing relay services, the DHS Global Ambassador should be contacted at 215-683-5869.

Questions regarding this Procedural Transmittal or the policy it reflects may be addressed to:

Patricia Ripoll, Administrator	x4112
Freida Williams, Program Supervisor	x4115
June de Vries, Social Services Program Analyst	x4106

**Need an in-person interpreter in the office or field?**

Philadelphia Department of Human Services  
Request for In-Person Interpreter Services Form

**PLEASE NOTE: If you are requesting services through Intercultural Family Services, DO NOT FILL OUT THIS FORM. Call Tu Dong at 215-386-1298, ext. 216.**

Requestor:			
Phone #:	Fax #:	Today's Date:	
Reason for service:			
Family or Child's Name:		Case# & Suffix:	
Appointment Location:		Appointment Date: (or dates, if recurring)	
<b>Language Requested:</b>	Indicate client's primary language :		
	Indicate service requested for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing: American Sign Language: <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf/Hearing Team (ASL not used or other special circumstance): <input type="checkbox"/> CART Services: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Interpreting Agency:		Address:	
Tax ID #:			
Agency Contact Person:		Phone #:	

Anticipated Expenses:	
Hourly Rate:	Mileage:
Tolls:	# of Hours:
Transportation:	

**Steps for accessing interpreter services:**

- CONTACT QUANTUM, INC., ON THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM, FOR ALL IN-PERSON INTERPRETER SERVICES (EXCEPT DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING) PRIOR TO CONTACTING OTHER AGENCIES.** Let them know that you are calling from DHS for an interpreter. If Quantum, Inc. is unable to provide the needed service the worker will then contact one of the other agencies listed.
- For interpreter services for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing contact the two sign language providers on the reverse of this page.**
- Specify the language for which you will need an interpreter.
- Fill out the form completely, specifying the date (or dates if recurring).
- Take the completed form to the Administrative Services Supervisor in the Accounts Payable Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor-OPB, (3-6894). The agency will bill DHS directly. For court ordered services, submit a copy of the DRO with the completed form.
- Please note the individual agency's "Notice" requirements and ensure that you follow the guidelines for requesting services and submitting your requests in a timely manner.
- If you experience any problems with an agency, contact the DHS Global Ambassador at 215 -683-5869.

**(Please see reverse for detailed listing of agencies, rates and contact information)**

## Interpreter Services

**Quantum Inc.** Tax ID#: 23-2651602

**Contract:** Direct Pay      **Cost:** \$64/hr      **Hours:** 24hrs/7days

**Cancellation Notice for Quantum: 24 hr. cancellation notice or DHS will be billed for 2 hrs.**

**Notice:** 1 day for Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Cambodian & Russian (1 week for others – call to specify)

**Languages:** Indonesian, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Korean, Russian, Albanian, American Sign Language, Croatian, Czech, Fuzhou, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmong, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Laotian, Malaysian, Mandarin, Mandingo, Norwegian, Punjabi, Romanian, Serbian, Swedish, Tagalog, Taiwanese, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu Greek, Polish, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Yoruba

**Contact Persons:** Nicole Sotillo, Melanie Gotay, or Carmen Briganty at (215) 627-2251 from 9AM to 5PM (after 5PM – 8AM (215) 812-8935) Fax: 215 627-5570

**Intercultural Family Services** DO NOT FILL OUT THIS FORM. Call Charity Eremich at 215-386-1298, ext. 216.

**Cost:** \$50/hour      **Hours:** 9AM – 5PM

**Contract:** part of a larger dependent contract      **Contact Person:** Charity Eremich (215) 386-1298, ext. 216

**Notice:** two weeks, but can be flexible depending on interpreter

**Languages:** Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese), Vietnamese, Tagalog, Cambodian, Spanish, Italian, French Creole, Uraba, Romanian, Pakastani & Indian

**Aleman & Associates** Tax ID#: 01-0640902

**Contract:** Direct Pay      **Cost:** \$80/hr plus \$20 transportation      **Hours:** 24hrs/7days

**Notice:** 2 business days (possibly more depending upon language)

**Languages:** Spanish, Russian, Cambodian, Portuguese, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Croatian, Bosnian, all African dialects & many other languages – **Contact Person:** Sangraria Aleman (215) 947-2257

**Phoenix Language Services** Tax ID#: 23-2892849

**Contract:** Direct Pay      **Cost:** \$80-\$100/hr      **Notice:** 2 day notice      **Hours:** 24hrs/7days

**Language:** Laotian      **Contact Person:** Jodie Kinsler (215) 639-9950

**EZ Language** Tax ID#: 23-3086531

**Contract:** Direct Pay      **Cost:** \$80/hr up to 2 hrs      **Hours:** 9AM – 5PM

**Notice:** 2 days, but more difficult languages require longer notice

**Languages:** Spanish, Haitian, Creole, French, Portuguese, Russian, a number of African dialects (call for specifics), Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Cambodian & others

**Contact Person:** Giordani Jean Baptiste Office - (215) 473-5810 Cellular - (215) 432-7585  
Fax - (215) 473-5810#99

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## Deaf and Hard of Hearing Interpreter Services

**Deaf Hearing Communication Center** Tax ID#: 23-7407560

**Contract:** Direct pay      **Cost:** \$92 (up to 2 hrs) plus travel      **Hours:** 24hrs/7days

**Notice:** 2 days, but prefers longer notice time (48 hour cancellation policy or DHS will be billed for job)

**Languages and Services:** American Sign Language, Deaf/Hearing Teams, CART Services

**Contact Persons:** Jean Bonnes, Janine Stephens or Pam Wallace - (610) 604-0452/0453 9AM – 5PM. After 5 pm use the same phone numbers and follow the voice mail instructions.

**Communication Connection** Tax ID#: 23-2932178

**Contract:** Direct Pay      **Cost:** \$48/hr      **Hours:** 24hrs/7days

**Languages:** American Sign Language

**Contact Person:** Amanda Utain, Lesia Richman, (610) 272-4948, 8414, 5969 (after 5PM, (215) 314-1384, pager, type in your phone number for return call)