

**Language Access Implementation Plan
2025**



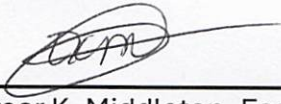
Queens County District Attorney's Office

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Language Access Coordinator title: Chief Diversity/EEO Officer
Published Date: TBD

This Plan includes information about:

1	Mission and Service	Introduces QDA mission
2	Agency Language Access Policy	Outlines the language access policy of QDA
3	Language Access Needs Assessment	Provides the language access goals for QDA
4	Notice of the right to language access services	How QDA ensures the public knows about their right to free language access services
5	Provisions of Language Services	Types of language services provided by QDA
6	Resource Planning	How QDA ensures adequate resources to provide language access services
7	Training	Training provided to QDA Staff
8	Continuous Improvement Planning	Outlines how QDA will continue to monitor and plan language access efficiencies
9	Goals and Action Planning	Outlines QDA language access goals

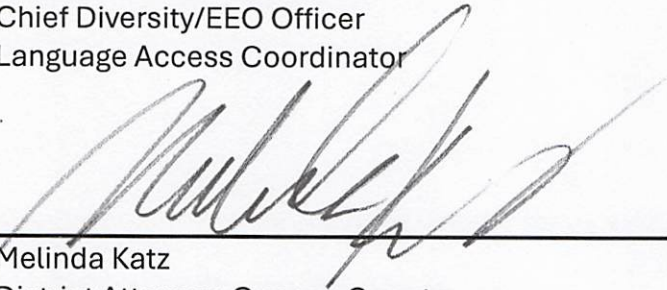
Signatures



Tyear K. Middleton, Esq.
Chief Diversity/EEO Officer
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9/30/2025

Date



Melinda Katz
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Date



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Mission and Services

The mission of the Queens District Attorney's office is to promote fairness for all participants in the criminal justice system and keep our communities safe. QDA recognizes that a large percentage of our Queens community members speak languages other than English. According to data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 – 2023 American Community Survey data, 55.2 % of the total population of 2.3 million spoke a language other than English at home.¹ Among this population in Queens, the most frequent languages spoken are Spanish (41.9 %), Chinese (17.3%), Bengali (6.4%), and Korean (3.4%).² As the most linguistically diverse neighborhood in the world, the well-being and safety of Queens and greater New York City residents are jeopardized if the public is unable to access our services and effectively communicate with QDA staff. QDA further recognizes that effective language access promotes community equity and enhances safety and stability.

QDA has engaged in agency-wide collaborations to develop and implement various elements outlined in Local Law 30 of 2017 (LL30). QDA has:

- **Appointed a Language Access Coordinator:**
 - Tyear K. Middleton, Esq. LAC@queensda.org or 718-286-6000
- **Developed and maintained a Language Access Plan:**
 - QDA Language Access Plan was published on July 27, 2023.
- **Provided interpretation services:**
 - QDA provides telephonic and video interpretation in at least 100 languages.
- **Translated vital documents:**
 - QDA translated our most commonly distributed documents into more than the 10 designated citywide languages.
- **Posted signage:**
 - QDA has posted signage about the availability of free interpretation services throughout our offices.
- **Met additional requirements:**
 - QDA addressed increased language access service needs in languages beyond the 10 designated citywide languages during emergencies by adding Notify NYC to all agency phones. Notify NYC is New York City's dedicated emergency public communications program. It currently offers most messages in fourteen languages, including English and American Sign Language.
 - QDA's Disability Service Facilitator (DSF) identifies areas to align language access policy with Local Law 12 of 2023, which requires every New York City agency to create and implement a five-year accessibility plan for the period 2024-2028

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/queenscountynewyork>

² https://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/dcp/assets/files/pdf/data-tools/census/acs/top_lang_2018sf1yr_nyc.pdf

Agency Language Access Policy

General Policy

- A. QDA recognizes that the population eligible for services includes individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HOH). The goal of QDA is to ensure meaningful access to our services for LEP and Deaf/HOH individuals. QDA adopts the following policy to ensure that LEP and Deaf/HOH persons can gain equal access to QDA's services and communicate effectively with our office. This Plan applies to all QDA offices and satellite offices.

B. Definitions:

For the purposes of QDA's Language Access Plan & Protocol, limited English proficient (LEP) persons are individuals who do not speak English as their primary or preferred language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

- a. An interpreter is a trained professional who is a neutral third party with language fluency, interpretation skills, knowledge of specialized content areas, and technical terminology. An interpreter effectively communicates between two or more parties who do not share a common language.
- b. A multi-lingual staff member is someone who, in the course of their professional duties, communicates directly with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person in a language other than English. A multi-lingual staff member may be asked to act as an interpreter but is not necessarily a trained professional interpreter.
- c. Interpretation is the process of orally rendering a spoken language or signed communication from one language into another.
- d. A competent interpreter is able to demonstrate proficiency in and ability to communicate accurately in both English and the other language using simultaneous interpretation, consecutive interpretation, or sight translation. A competent interpreter does not summarize any communication between the English speaker and the LEP, Deaf/HOH individual.
- e. Translation is the written text converted from one language into written text in another language.
- f. Deaf (with an upper case 'D') refers to an identity with its own culture, language, and diverse communities; 'deaf' refers to a physical condition.
- g. Hard of Hearing (HOH) refers to individuals who utilize their residual hearing through the assistance of hearing devices or hearing aids.

- C. All persons who are LEP or Deaf/HOH are entitled to language services at no cost. QDA shall provide free language assistance services to LEP or Deaf/HOH individuals as necessary or whenever an LEP or Deaf/HOH person requests language assistance services. QDA will inform LEP or Deaf/HOH populations that language assistance services are available free of charge.
- D. Persons can provide someone to interpret for them after they have been notified, in their native language, of their right to a free interpreter and the importance of having a competent interpreter. Absent emergency situations, staff shall endeavor to verify that the self-provided interpreter is competent and that there are no conflicts of interest. Suppose the LEP or Deaf/HOH person decides to provide another person to interpret. In that case, this individual and the LEP or Deaf/HOH person will sign the Interpreter's Confidentiality Agreement identifying potential conflicts of interest and indicating that using the LEP or Deaf/HOH person's self-provided interpreter may waive the attorney-client privilege. Suppose during the course of the meeting, the competence of the interpreter comes into question, or a conflict of interest arises. In that case, the staff should end the meeting and schedule another meeting with a competent interpreter present.
- E. Staff should not use minors, under the age of 18, to communicate with persons who are LEP or Deaf/HOH, except for the limited purpose of identifying language or communication around scheduling of an appointment or contacting an interpreter.
- F. QDA's Language Access Coordinator is Tyear K. Middleton, Chief Diversity/EEO Officer. The Language Access Coordinator serves as the primary point of contact for implementing New York State Executive Law Section 202-a and Local Law 30. In this role, the Language Access Coordinator works to:
- ✓ Increase the visibility of interpreter services to LEP and Deaf/HOH individuals.
 - ✓ Enhance support for QDA staff providing interpreting services.
 - ✓ In coordination with the LEP Working Group, manage document translations by determining which documents are sent for translation and into which languages documents should be translated.
 - ✓ Ensure the availability of translated forms and booklets to QDA staff by managing the distribution and accessibility of such materials to staff members.
 - ✓ Collaborate with others to address cultural and linguistic barriers relevant to QDA community members.

Language Access Needs Assessment

In accordance with LL30, QDA used the “Four Factor Analysis” to assess resources needed for the Language Access Policy Implementation Plan.

Factor 1: the number or proportion of LEP persons in the eligible service population:

QDA utilizes Department of City Planning’s Census data analysis to determine the proportion and number of languages spoken by LEP New Yorkers in Queens County who require translation and or interpretation services to access vital services and information.

According to the Department of City Planning’s Census data analysis and ACS data from 2019-2023, 55.2 percent of the population of Queens County, New York, speak a language other than English at home.³

Expanding on Executive Order 120, Local Law 30 and Executive Law § 202-a identified the following twelve Queens County languages, in order of number of LEP persons: Spanish, Chinese, Bengali, Korean, Russian, Tagalog, Polish, Greek, Punjabi, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Arabic.⁴

Factor 2: the frequency with which LEP individuals interact with the agency

QDA’s mission is to regularly engage with all communities through our community partnerships, programs, and outreach activities. The most frequent telephonic services were provided in the following languages: Spanish, Mandarin, Bengali, Korean, Russian, Punjabi, Arabic, Haitian Creole, French, Cantonese, Polish, and Uzbek.

The most frequent intake language services were provided in the following languages: Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, Bengali, Punjabi, Russian, Arabic, Polish, Cantonese, Hindi, Haitian Creole, and Greek.

Factor 3: the importance of benefit, service, information, or encounter to the LEP person:

It is imperative for QDA to provide access to information and services to our multi-lingual community in the language they feel most comfortable speaking. This includes reaching communities who are unable to participate in the city’s services due to a lack of language and/or disability access.

³ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/queenscountynewyork>

⁴ https://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/dcp/assets/files/pdf/data-tools/census/acs/top_lang_2018sf1yr_nyc.pdf

Factor 4: resources available

QDA contracts with translation, in-person, telephonic interpretation vendors, and in-house staff.

Notice of the Right to Language Access Services

QDA has clearly posted multi-lingual posters throughout the office that advise the availability of free interpretation services. We are continuously working to improve our language access services and inform those in need of language services. Grievance forms are made available to LEP persons in the QDA office and on our website, advising members of the public of their right to file a complaint if they feel that they have not been provided adequate language access services or have been denied access to services because of their limited English proficiency. QDA does not retaliate or take other adverse actions because an individual has filed a language access complaint. Additionally, all advertisements, posters, invitation, and other publicity materials for events open to the public contain information regarding accessibility at the event and the deadline for when request for language services must be received.

Provision of Language Access Services

Language Access Protocol

QDA provides interpretation and translation services through contracted vendors and in-house staff.

Walk-in, Telephone Inquiries & Intake

1. **Identify the person's language.** If the person cannot tell you their language, accompany the person to the "Your Right to an Interpreter"/ "I Speak" poster prominently posted in the office reception area. Ask the person to look at the posted languages and identify their language. If the person cannot find their language or cannot read, please call our language service provider, and the operator will assist you in determining which language the person speaks.
2. **If the individual is Deaf or Hard of Hearing,** communicate with that individual using TTY or the VRS (Video Relay System). These modes of communication are for initial contact and other basic communication. An in-person meeting with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person and an appropriate sign language interpreter is necessary for in-depth conversations and extended service. Please see Appendix 2 for further instructions on how to operate the TTY phone line.
 - a. For persons who are Deaf/HOH, staff may be able to contact the LEP or Deaf/HOH person using a traditional TTY system.
 - b. The Video Relay System (VRS) can be used to call an individual remotely or communicate with a walk-in at the office. If the individual has a VRS phone number, call this number, and you will be connected with a certified ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter who will call the

individual and appear on a screen at their home. This service is free for individuals who are Deaf/HOH and communicate using ASL. For walk-in persons who are Deaf/HOH, use a computer with video & audio capacity to connect to a VRS interpreter. The individual will use their own VRS code to call from a computer with a video camera. Sign in to the WEBEX account to make the call. If the individual does not have a VRS code, you may contact one of our language solution providers.

Provide in-house or telephone interpreting services

1. To determine the reason for the person's visit to the office and confirm eligibility. After identifying the language spoken, please find the appropriate interpreter in-house or by telephone to do an initial screening for eligibility. Bilingual staff, if available, should be used to communicate with LEP or Deaf/HOH individuals before contacting the telephonic interpreter service. A listing of staff by language skills will be available on the QDA Staff Directory.
2. Determine whether QDA can provide services or whether the LEP or Deaf/HOH person will be referred to another agency. If QDA is unable to assist the person, make a referral to an agency that can provide assistance. If QDA can provide assistance, complete the initial intake screening using a bilingual staff member or LANGUAGE LINE or refer them to the appropriate case handler for intake.
3. If planning to give victim, witness, or survivor advice or information, determine whether they will need an interpreter. In the case management system, identify the language of the person, country of origin and if necessary, check the "yes" box for needs an interpreter. Some LEP persons may speak enough English to complete an initial screening but will need an interpreter in order to effectively access further services. When it is clear that a LEP or Deaf/HOH person's first language is other than English, the LEP or Deaf/HOH person should be asked if they have a preferred spoken language, if so, the LEP or Deaf/HOH person should be asked to identify the language and be offered the opportunity to communicate through the language in which they prefer. Ask the LEP or Deaf/HOH person if they prefer to receive correspondence in English or another language and make a note of their preference in the case file. If they are illiterate, make a note of this in the case file as well.

Case Handling

1. The case handler will check in the case management system to confirm that the LEP or Deaf/HOH person's language and country of origin is entered in the appropriate fields and "YES" is entered in the field "Interpreter Needed."
2. Send an interpreter email request to assigned staff member. The email request should include, LEP or Deaf/HOH person name, or case number, language

needed for interpretation and an estimate of how many hours of interpreter services will be required in the case. Bilingual staff members should be used as interpreters if available. If a bilingual staff member is not available, then contact LANGUAGE LINE OR IN-PERSON SERVICES to get contact information for scheduling an interpreter. The purpose of the email request is to ensure that the most economical competent interpreter is used.

3. For in person meetings with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person, request an interpreter through the grand jury or the court.

Meeting with Persons who are LEP and Deaf/HOH

1. Introduce yourself to the LEP or Deaf/HOH person and the interpreter.
2. Conduct a pre-visit conference with the interpreter. This can be conducted with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person present unless sensitive issues need to be discussed. In the pre-visit conference, the staff member will (1) establish the style of interpretation for the meeting, (2) ask the interpreter for feedback if terms are not easily translated or not culturally appropriate, (3) indicate where the interpreter will sit, and (4) establish the context and nature of the visit. (See Appendix 3 for additional tips on working with an interpreter).
3. When using an interpreter from outside of QDA, the interpreter must agree to and sign the Interpreter Confidentiality Agreement before interpreting for the meeting. Persons who provide their own interpreter must also sign the bottom part of the Interpreter Confidentiality Agreement. This portion should be translated into their native language or sight translated by the interpreter before they sign. Include the signed copy of the agreement in the case file.
4. Ask direct questions to the LEP or Deaf/HOH person and not interpreter. Only address the interpreter if asking a question directed to him/her/them, and when doing so, tell the LEP or Deaf/HOH person why you are consulting with the interpreter.
5. Conduct a post-visit conference with the interpreter after the LEP or Deaf/HOH person has left if you have any concerns about the interview. This is an opportunity to address sensitive cultural issues that may affect the LEP or Deaf/HOH person at intake. Also, it can help determine if there was any difficulty in interpreting (e.g., the LEP or Deaf/HOH person and interpreter speak different dialects or the LEP or Deaf/HOH person has a mental disability which affects his/her/their ability to communicate).
6. Ask the interpreter whether they are available to interpret for future meetings with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person

7. Our language service providers encourage clients to provide feedback on interpreter performance and use quality surveys to monitor performance.

Translation

- QDA will provide translation of our most distributed documents for LEP persons. Most distributed documents shall include program informational brochures and necessary correspondence. Court documents will not necessarily be translated, unless there are special circumstances, but should be sight interpreted for LEP persons.
- QDA will make every effort to have the top 12 language translations done by approved bilingual staff/contractors. Translated documents will be reviewed by another bilingual staff person before being used.
- There may be certain court requirements when submitting a document that is in another language. If an advocate or systems personnel intends to submit a translated document to a court or other tribunal, the document should include a translator certification.
- When sending a letter to an LEP or Deaf/HOH person, QDA will make every effort to have that document translated into the LEP or Deaf/HOH person's preferred language. Some LEP individuals who are unable to read may prefer to receive letters in English to facilitate communication with others who may be assisting them. For LEP or Deaf/HOH persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and not able to read English, the staff member will ask if they need sight translation/interpretation of correspondence. Staff will make note of this in case files and Case Tracking.

Digital Communication

- QDA is dedicated to ensuring that our digital content is accessible to and usable by all New Yorkers. QDA provides brochures, informational flyers, and digital content in multiple languages. QDA utilizes human translation to ensure high quality accessible, and culturally appropriate translations that follows the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) international standard.
- QDA website is accessible in the following languages:
 1. English
 2. Arabic
 3. Bengali
 4. Chinese (simplified)
 5. Chinese (Traditional)
 6. French
 7. Hindi
 8. Italian

9. Korean
10. Polish
11. Punjabi
12. Russian
13. Spanish
14. Urdu
15. Hebrew
16. Haitian Creole

Emergency Communication

QDA address increased language access service needs in languages beyond the 10 designated citywide languages during emergencies by adding Notify NYC to all agency phones. Notify NYC is New York City's dedicated emergency public communications program. Notify NYC currently offers most messages in fourteen languages including English and American Sign Language. Additionally, our contracted vendors offer expedited services in the event of a requirement for rapid response to translate necessary materials in the event of an emergency as needed.

Resource Planning

QDA is committed to reducing the language and communication barriers that prevent meaningful access to QDA services and programs. QDA provides:

- Spoken Language Interpretation: In-person, over the phone, and through video remote interpretation
- Sign Language Interpretation
- Translation of our most commonly distributed documents
- Translation of written materials
- Assistive Listening Technology
- Simultaneous Interpretation Equipment

Bi/multi-lingual staffing

QDA plans to enhance bi/multi-lingual staffing by:

- Developing a standardized hiring framework to establish equitable qualifications for in-language positions, including a language proficiency assessment to evaluate the proficiency of job candidates when bi/multi-lingual skills are required
- Creating agency guidelines for internal language access practices to prevent overreliance on bi/multi-lingual staff
- Working to hire more full-time bi/multi-lingual interpreters

Language service vendor contracts

In FY 2024, QDA spent approximately \$230K on language assistance interpretation services. To identify shifts in language needs, the LAC periodically reviews contract services to identify new

needs and opportunities for improvement. This review includes an assessment of the demand for language services and any issues encountered with respect to contracted services.

FY24 Language Service Expenditure Report

Vendor Name	Procurement method	Purpose of the contract	Languages Provided	Total award amount of contract
Language Line Solutions	Micropurchase	Written translation	100+ Languages	\$112.02
Language Line Solutions	DCAS task order	Telephonic interpretation	100+ Languages	\$153,000.00
Language Line Solutions	DCAS task order	Video Remote Interpretation	American Sign Language	\$153,000.00
Individual Interpreters	Other	In-person interpretation; Written transcription & translation	100+ Languages	N/A
OnTheGoSystems Limited	Micropurchase	Written translation	100+ Languages	\$39.00

Partnerships with Community-based organizations (CBOs)

CBOs play a huge role in bridging the gap between City government and community members who do not primarily speak English. QDA works closely with various CBOs, however we do not rely on our CBOs to provide free language services. We do rely on our community partners to inform us on ways QDA can advance our language access with community feedback.

Training

All QDA staff were offered annual training on two dates that covered the available language access services. The training covered the following topics:

- How to identify the Preferred Language
- How to access an Over-the-Phone Linguist and Video Remote Linguist
- How to work effectively with a Linguist

QDA created guides for staff on how to use our language access provider (Appendix 1), the procedure for using TTY (Appendix 2), and effective communication when using an interpreter (Appendix 3).

Additionally, our Community Partnership Division was trained on the best practices for public events accessibility.

Continuous Improvement Planning

Data Collection & Case Management System

- QDA tracks LEP or Deaf/HOH person's language and need for interpreters in Case Tracking.
- QDA maintains a listing of multi-lingual staff capacity and contact information for interpreters and translators on the QDA Staff Directory.
- QDA will continue to reassess the need for additional languages of interpretation and translation based on an analysis of Case Tracking data on an ongoing basis.
- Any language access issues should be raised with the LAC about any issues requiring review or action.

Complaints

QDA appreciates feedback about our engagement and communication practices within our language access and information services. Feedback can be made through multiple channels to request additional language services or to make a complaint.

By mail: 80-02 Kew Gardens Rd., Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Email: LAC@queensda.org

Contact page: <https://queensda.org/language-access-plan/>

Telephone w/Interpretation available: 718-286-6000

Any member of the public can also call 311 to make a complaint about language access at QDA. To date, QDA has not received language access complaints. However, any reported concerns will be addressed promptly.

Goals and Actions Planning

The implementation of the LAIP will be led by the Chief Diversity/EEO Officer that serves as QDA's Language Access Coordinator. The LAC will form a working group that will include relevant stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of the LAIP is compliant with eliminating barriers to agency services and information. LAP will be updated every three years in compliance with LL30 and annual LAIP updates will be provided annually to MOIA.

Language Access Goal	Milestones	Responsible Staff	Timeline
Provide annual language access training for all staff	Offered training to QDA staff on language access services	LAC	FY 2025
Contract with additional vendors to provide	Procured additional telephonic and video interpretation vendor	LAC	FY 2024 -2025

language access services	Procured assistive listening devices to provide consecutive/simultaneous interpretation		
Increase translation offerings	Translate additional documents such as newsletters, flyers, and other guidance	LAC Communications	Ongoing
Increase the number of in-language community events	Provide simultaneous/consecutive interpretation at community events	LAC Community Partnerships	Ongoing
Hire more bi/multi-lingual staff members	Developed a standardized hiring framework Developed job vacancy announcement Identified language proficiency assessment Engage in the hiring process	LAC Administration and Finance	FY 2025
Create a centralized portal for language service requests	Modify the current requisition process to isolate language access request	LAC Information Technology	FY 2026
Create Language Assistance Advisory Committee	Create an internal working group that can meet with community stakeholders	LAC	FY 2026
Establish systems for monitoring and evaluation	Develop systems and processes for using data to drive improvements	LAC Policy Initiatives	FY 2026
Expand training for new hires during the onboarding process	Revise the onboarding process to include more robust information about language access services	LAC Human Resources	FY 2026

APPENDIX 1

How to Use Language Line Solutions for Telephonic Interpretation

To assist LEP/Deaf or HOH person over the phone:

1. Place the caller on hold with conference hold.
2. Dial LANGUAGE LINE. For assistance, press zero at any time or stay on the line.
3. Enter your 6-digit Client ID and select a language.
 - Press 1 for Spanish or
 - Press 2 for other languages. When prompted, say and confirm the language you need.
4. Enter your Access Code (if applicable).
5. Record the interpreter's name and ID number.
6. Brief the interpreter. Provide your agency name and objectives for the call.
7. Add the caller to the line.
8. Tell the interpreter to end the call when you are done.

To assist LEP/Deaf or HOH person in person:

1. Dial Language Line. For assistance, press zero at any time or stay on the line.
2. Enter your 6-digit Client ID and select a language.
 - Press 1 for Spanish or
 - Press 2 for other languages. When prompted, say and confirm the language you need.
3. Enter your Access Code (if applicable).
4. Record the interpreter's name and ID number.
5. Brief the interpreter. Provide your agency name and objectives for the call.
6. Tell the interpreter to end the call when you are done.

APPENDIX 2

Procedure for Using TTY

QDA's TTY system is a separate line for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Incoming Calls:

1. When a person is calling into the TTY, it will ring, and a message will be displayed across the screen: "line is ringing". To answer the call, start typing a greeting, "Hello, you have reached QDA; how may I help you, GA, or press the button labeled "greeting," and an automatic message will be typed to the caller.
2. After each sentence or statement, you will see the letters "GA" for Go Ahead. This acknowledges that either party is finished with their sentence or thought, and the other person can begin responding.
3. When your conversation is over, press the "on/off" button, and the screen will be blank.

Outgoing Calls:

1. When placing an outgoing call, you may need to dial nine and the number. Press the "dial." Button DIAL is displayed. Type the number you call, then press the "Enter" key.
2. When the other TTY line is ringing, the system will display "line is ringing". If the line is busy, it will display "line is busy."
3. When the other person answers, his or her greeting will be displayed on your TTY, now you can begin your conversation.
4. When your conversation is over, press the "on/off" button, and the screen will be blank.

DOH Service Operator:

In some instances, you may have a person calling the front desk using LANGUAGE LINE. If this is the case, the operator will ask you if you have ever used a relay service operator before. If not, they will explain how the system works and how to handle the conversation. You can also call a LEP or Deaf/HOH person who has a TTY through LANGUAGE LINE, and then the operator will dial out the LEP or Deaf/HOH person's number.

APPENDIX 3

Guide for Effective Communication When Using an Interpreter

This guide provides some suggestions that may make LEP or Deaf/HOH person interviewing, facilitated by interpreters, easier, more efficient, and more effective.

Basic Information: **The Role of an Interpreter**

A qualified interpreter brings language skills, interpretation ability, and cultural sensitivity.

- **TIP!** Recognize the value of an interpreter's advice that a question or statement may not be appropriate. The interpreter may have suggestions on how to reword a question to improve communication with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person.
- **Speaking English does not mean thinking in English.** Allow the interpreter time to restructure information in their mind and to present it in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.
- **Meet with the interpreter before and after a session** for comments and clarification of issues that arise during interviews. (Examples: emotional persons, confusion about a certain topic, cultural differences.)
- **TIP!** Feel free to request the interpreter's advice on the best ways to present issues, information, or questions to the LEP or Deaf/HOH person.

Helpful Suggestions: **How to Work with an Interpreter**

Speak directly to and make eye contact with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person in the first person.

- **TIP!** Remember that everything you say will be interpreted as it is said, so avoid statements like "tell her" (the LEP or Deaf/HOH person) or "ask her."
- **Use the interpreter as you would a telephone.** Do not ask the interpreter to meet alone with the LEP or Deaf/HOH person to prepare any documents or to discuss the case. The interpreter is your intermediary to communicate with your LEP or Deaf/HOH person.

➤ **Avoid needless lawyerisms, legalese, and wordiness.**

- **TIP!** Use simple sentence constructions and plain English that laypeople can easily understand. Avoid vague, generalized statements or questions when you want to elicit information. Interpreters may ask you to clarify some terms in order to interpret the meaning accurately.
- **Example:** "On Monday, we will go to court and talk to the judge. The judge will decide how much child support you will get after the judge reads your financial statement."

➤ **Adjust your vocabulary level to that of the LEP or Deaf/HOH person.**

- **TIP!** Use concrete examples and visual images to express complex legal concepts. Breaking down legal concepts and using one sentence per idea will give you better control of the interview and will make interpretation easier.
- **Language is better understood when spoken slower rather than louder.** Plan ahead for additional time needed to communicate with a LEP or Deaf/HOH person through an interpreter.
- **Make use of any knowledge of the LEP or Deaf/HOH person's language you may have at appropriate times**, such as when greeting a LEP or Deaf/HOH person. Many persons will see your attempt as a gesture of friendliness and caring.
- **Relax and take your time.**
 - **TIP!** The LEP or Deaf/HOH person may be nervous about having a serious legal problem and uncomfortable about working with a lawyer. Keep in mind that you and the interpreter are strangers to the LEP or Deaf/HOH person.

Important Reminders:

- **English is a rather direct and economical language.** Other languages, such as Spanish and some Asian languages, can be more figurative or indirect and may require extra words to express meaning.
- **Be patient. Do not expect a literal translation.** Legal concepts or terms may not have exact equivalents in another language. Even when they do, the LEP or Deaf/HOH person may not be familiar with the words. Therefore, sometimes, a more extended conversation is needed in a foreign language to communicate a seemingly simple point.
 - **TIP!** Encourage the interpreter and LEP or Deaf/HOH person to ask questions.

- **Listen attentively to your LEP or Deaf/HOH person's answers.** The interpreted answers will alert you to misunderstandings, miscommunication, or errors on the part of the LEP or Deaf/HOH person or the interpreter. It will also help you evaluate whether a clarification is necessary.
 - **TIP!** Make it a habit to think of legal ethics, consequences, and responsibilities. What if you missed or misunderstood an important fact? Is the LEP or Deaf/HOH person expressing herself as fully as she would in their own language?
 - **TIP!** Ask the LEP or Deaf/HOH person to “teach back” important concepts or tasks that you ask the LEP or Deaf/HOH person to do in order to ensure LEP or Deaf/HOH person's complete understanding.