

Language Access Policy

is a culturally sensitive and survivor-centered agency providing a multitude of services to survivors of trauma. Our language access policy is to provide all services without discrimination, in order to ensure meaningful access for all limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. Advocates shall provide services in a reasonable time and manner, at no cost to the survivor.

was created in order to serve individuals and their children overcome domestic violence and other forms of abuse, focusing on LEP individuals who did not have linguistically available access in mainstream society. The purpose of this policy is to solidify our commitment to our community's needs.

As an agency that receives federal funding, this policy establishes guidelines for language access that is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the American with Disabilities Act, Executive Orders as well as state and City laws that relate to language access.

Language Assistance Procedures

Identifying language needs and preferred language

- A. **Identify need:** At the initial point of contact, advocates need to keep in mind the need for language access for all individuals. Advocates should be aware that not everyone speaks English or prefers to speak English.
 - a. Notification of rights: Clients should be informed that they have the right to receive services in their preferred language.
 - b. There will be signs at community offices and residences that are in visible locations to notify that they have language access at no cost. This notice will be translated into 's core languages.
 - c. The information will also be provided to individual on the helpline, available in all core languages.
- B. **Identify language:**
 - a. The LEP individual may speak more than one language, or may have limited proficiency in a secondary language. Advocates should identify the preferred language of the LEP individual and work to provide assistance in that language. Preferred language should be chosen by the client.
 - b. Advocates should assess other languages spoken prior to case assignment to identify the preferred language of service.
 - c. To assess the need for language, advocates should ask open ended questions and avoid questions that would allow for yes or no answers. This is done to eliminate guesswork based often on stereotypes.
 - d. Advocates may request the assistance of a bilingual/multilingual staff in the identification of the language or dialect.
 - e. Advocates can use 's "I speak" card or poster to help identify the languages spoken by the client.

- f. A Deaf individual may also have limited English proficiency and may not be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL). Advocates should work to identify the preferred language, and provide language access for the individual in their preferred language. If the individual is deaf or hard of hearing, the Advocate should use the 'I speak' card to help identify the language signed by the individual.

Procedures for language services

There are four main points of contact for clients – 1) helpline/phone intake; 2) Community Office (in person intake); 3) and 4) Agency referral. Contact with clients or potential clients at outreach events do not constitute a point of contact for the purposes of this policy.

A. Helpline or Phone intake - If a caller is requesting services in a language not spoken by the advocate answering the call, Advocate should:

- a. Transfer the call to the language group that corresponds with the requested language.
- a. If there is no group available for that language, Advocates should access the staff language list to view which staff members that speak the language of the individual requesting services.
- b. If no Client Services staff is available then locate administrative staff as interpreting for advocates in order to access the needs of the caller.
- c. If none of the above methods is available, transfer the call to the request language voicemail so that the caller can leave a message. An advocate that speaks that language will follow up with the client.
- d. If a client is willing to communicate in simple English, try to take the caller's information to complete a case assignment form so that a staff member speaking the preferred language can contact the individual. A call back might also be necessary if no one on staff speaks that language, as we would need to arrange for a volunteer to interpret or access language line services.

B. Community Office

- a. Once the language is identified, if possible, an advocate that speaks the client's preferred language should meet with the client.
- b. If not one at that community office speaks the client's preferred language, the following should be done:
 1. Call the language group to access an Advocate that speaks the client's preferred language.
 2. If no language group is set up for that particular language, then access staff language list to view which advocates speak the language of the individuals seeking service and connect them via phone.
 3. If the above is not available, offer to send the client to a staff member who is stationed out of the . The staff member will have access to language line in order to assist.
 - As a courtesy, let the staff member at the know that you are sending an individual over.
 4. If a client is willing to communicate in simple English, try to take the caller's information to complete a case assignment form so that a staff member speaking the preferred language can contact the individual.

C.

- a. After identifying the preferred language in the screening process, Advocates working at the 's should use language line to effectively communicate with the individual.

D. Agency Referral

- a. First, ask referring agency if they know what language the client prefers. If they do not know, follow instructions for a phone intake (above) to use language group as necessary when language is identified.
 1. If referring agency is able to direct us on what client's preferred language is, have staff that speaks that language reach out to client (via phone or walk in).
 2. If no counseling staff speaks the particular language, first check staff language list to see if any other administrative staff or volunteers speak the language.
 3. If no one at speaks the language, refer client to the .

Individual accessing services who is deaf or hard of hearing

1. Advocates should identify what is the deaf individual's preferred mode of communication, for example, video conferencing or TTY, emailing or text.
2. 711 may be used for phone relay services to communicate with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
3. If the individual would like to use ASL or another form of sign language interpreter, the advocate should arrange for the sign language interpreter, and may use their work Skype account to arrange for video interpretation if needed.
4. Advocates should offer referrals to agencies that specialize in services to deaf or hard of hearing individuals; however, Advocates should never deny services from simply because of their language need, including sign language.

Translation of Vital documents

1. vital documents must be translated into the 7 core languages, and be available on the shared drive for all to use. Please find a list of " vital documents" in the Appendix.
2. Sight translate for other documents –
If document is not translated into a language they speak (if the document has not been deemed a vital document or the language is not one of the core languages), advocates should sight translate the document, or arrange for an interpreter who can sight translate the document with client's permission.
 - a. There should be an indication on the form that it has been sight translated for them by Advocate or an interpreter who client authorizes to translate for them.
 - b. A client does have a right to refuse to sign the acknowledgment of sight translation, or refused to sign any documents not in their language. Advocate should try their best to find a way to translate the document but must inform client that some services might be delayed.

Interpreting and Translating

- A. Prohibition against using children as interpreters:** Children should not ever be use to interpret for individuals when receiving services. The only time they can be used is in the identification of the individual's preferred language and life-threatening medical emergencies.
- B. Advocates:** Advocates should NOT act as an interpreter for clients in setting in which they are legal required to provide language access. For example, if client is seeing their attorney at legal services agency or applying for benefits through the public assistance office. The Advocates role should be to ensure that the client is receiving meaningful language access.
 - a. Legal Services: In a legal setting, which is when an attorney meets with their client, advocates should play the role solely as an interpreter. They should explain to the client that their role will be solely as an interpreter and not as their Advocate. They should not write any notes about what has been said,

and cannot take what is said in the meeting back to session. If they do so, attorney-client privilege has been compromised.

- b. Government agency: Since government agencies are required by law to provide language access, Advocates should attempt to aid in ensuring the client is provided with access. If that does not occur, they can step in to assist. The only time they should not step in to assist is any court proceedings.

If in any instance an advocate does play the role as an interpreter, the following should occur:

C. Accuracy

- a. Advocates should ensure that the rendition sounds natural in the preferred language and there is no distortion of the original message.
 1. Translate documents If they are translating written documents they should ensure the following:
 - The Advocate will ensure that the document is translated accurately
 - The Advocate should ensure that the document has been read by another individual who is fluent in the language of the document who can check the accuracy.

D. Impartiality

- a. When an Advocate is acting in the role of interpreter or translator, they shall maintain impartiality.
- b. Their role is not to counsel, advise or project their own judgement or belief.

E. Confidentiality

- a. Anything that is interpreted or translated should be kept confidential at all times.
- b. If an individual that you are working with, asks that the information be provided to a third party, written consent is needed.

Internal Compliance

Staff compliance

- A. Every staff and volunteer will receive training on the policy at least once a year.
 - a. Included in the training will be an overview of the policy, overview of federal, state and city mandates, identifying and providing language services and working with deaf or hard of hearing individuals.
 - b. Recordings of this training will be provided in the event that a staff or volunteer comes on board at a time where no trainings will be conducted.

B. Internal Language Access Contacts

The organization has a Language Access committee (LAC). To reach the committee please email at

Language Data, Monitoring and Assessment

- A. The language access committee (LAC) will be responsible for oversight and co-ordination of Language access policy and procedure and also ensuring compliance with _____'s language access policy.
- B. Language Access committee will annually review the following:
 - a. Language Access survey: A yearly survey will be provided to staff on the effectiveness of the policy when put into practice.
 1. Client satisfaction survey. Results of the client satisfaction survey will be reviewed. One of the questions relates to language access and a review of the feedback will be conducted.

2. Review of vital documents.
 3. Review of language data both internally and externally
- b. The results of the review will determine if any changes need to be made.

Grievance Procedure

In order to support survivor's ability to access our services in their preferred language, _____ has implemented the following grievance procedure that is given to each client upon being enrolled and will be posted with our community offices:

Here at _____'s, your satisfaction and well-being is our top priority. If you would like to voice a grievance with regards to any services you are receiving within the agency the following are options that are available to you:

- A. You can contact our helpline:
 - a. Ask to speak to the staff member's supervisor.
 - b. You can also ask to speak with an Associate Director/Director of your designated program to voice your grievance.
- B. If these channels are not appropriate for you, you may also submit your complaint by writing a letter detailing the complaint, you can address this letter to the Executive Director who oversees all programs within the agency.
- C. Another option available to you is to go on our website and write your complaint, anonymously, using the following link:

For all grievances, a supervisor, Associate Director, or Director will follow up with you within 3 business days. You have the option to discuss your grievance via phone or in person. You are also free to write your grievance complaint in their preferred language.

All grievances will be investigated within a reasonable time. You are entitled to a written resolution of your grievance. You can also to ask for an appeal within 3 months of the resolution, if you believe the resolution to be inappropriate in relation to your grievance.

Appendix I Definitions

Limited English Proficient (LEP)	Persons who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) shall be defined as people who do not speak English as their primary language or who are limited in their ability to read, write, speak, or understand English to an extent that effective communication in English, particularly with regard to complicated matters, is not possible. People who are LEP can include people who are deaf or hard of hearing. LEP designations are context-specific; an individual may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting, but may find these skills are insufficient in other situations.
Preferred or primary language	A client's preferred or primary language is the language in which he or she is most comfortable speaking. A client able to speak English may have a primary language other than English. If it is not obvious, the preferred or primary language should generally be chosen by the client him/herself.
Interpretation	It is the process of orally rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another language.
Translation	It is converting written text from one language into written text in another language. 'Translation' is a written medium, which differs from interpretation.
Sight translation	This happens when a written document in one language has to be read aloud in another language so the content of the document can be easily understood by the client.
Qualified interpreter or translator	A qualified interpreter or translator is a trained professional who is a neutral third party with the requisite language skills, experienced in interpretation or translation techniques, and knowledgeable in specialized content areas and technical terminology in order to effectively facilitate communication between two or more parties who do not share a common language.
Bilingual	It is the ability to use two (2) languages efficiently and fluently.
Multilingual	It is the ability to use three (3) or more languages efficiently and fluently.
Vital Documents	Vital Documents are any materials that are essential to an individual's ability to access services provided by Womankind, or are required by law.
Initial Point of Contact	It is when an individual initiates contact with Womankind to request services for the first time. Initial point of contact can happen either by phone, email or in person, but it excludes requests at Womankind outreach events.
Core Languages	Core languages are – Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Tagalog.

Appendix II Vital Documents

The following is a list of "vital documents" at :

1. Consent Release form
2. Client's Bill of rights
3. Legal Retainer
4. Legal confidentiality form
5. s Confidentiality and Responsibility agreement form
6. Shelter policies agreement form
7. Discharge agreement
8. CACFP participation Agreement
9. DFR legal residence statement
10. Federal Poverty level guidelines
11. Revoke Consent Release form