

## Administrative Policy No. 7.20

**Subject:** Communication Access for Persons Who Are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deaf Plus and/or Speech Disabled

**Information Contact:** Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
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**Authorizing Source:** [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)](#)  
[Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)  
[Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#)  
[RCW 43.19.190](#)  
[RCW 43.20A.725](#)  
[Chapter 49.60 RCW](#)  
[Chapter 388-818 WAC](#)  
[Executive Order 96-04](#)  
[Administrative Policy 7.02](#)  
[Administrative Policy 7.21](#)  
[Administrative Policy 14.10](#)  
[Administrative Policy 18.81](#)

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**Approved By:** **Original signed by Lori Melchiori**  
Senior Director, Office of Policy and Rules

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### Purpose

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is responsible for making its programs, services, and activities accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deaf Plus, and speech disabled due to communication barriers. This policy directs DSHS and its contractors to take appropriate steps to provide accommodations in order to ensure equal access and effective communication for applicants, participants, members of the public, and companions with disabilities.

### Scope

This policy applies to DSHS staff, and relates to the verbal, auditory, visual, and written features of programs, services, meetings, trainings, facilities, telecommunications, and publications provided or made available by DSHS and its contractors.

## Definitions

**Accommodations** means modification or adjustment to a policy, practice, or procedure that enables a qualified individual with hearing loss or who is speech disabled to enjoy equal access opportunity to effective communication.

**Alternative format** is a term used to describe various alternative formats, including Braille Grade 1, Braille Grade 2, Large Print, or information on disks, CDs or audiotapes that allow a person with vision loss to obtain information written in standard text.

**American Sign Language (ASL)** is the visual and tactile language of the Deaf and DeafBlind community in the United States. ASL includes its own syntax and grammar structure, is different from English and any other spoken language. ASL requires the use of facial expressions, hand shapes, body language, and gestures.

There is an important difference between ASL, Contact Signs, and 'Manually Coded English'. ASL is a recognized language. It has its own structure that contains all the fundamental features of language with its own rules and complex grammar whereas Contact Signs is use of ASL in English grammatical order. Manually Coded English is a group of sign systems coded by each English word, e.g. Sign Exact English (SEE) 1, SEE 2, and Linguistics of Visual English (LOVE).

**Assistive communication technology (ACT)** means a device or system that delivers sound directly through a telecoil to a hearing aid or cochlear implant, which eliminates noise, distance, and echoing problems. There are three types of ACT equipment available: FM (radio), Infrared (light), and Induction Loop (electromagnetic). Each consists of a transmitter with a microphone used as the sound source and can be connected into one of the above mentioned ACT systems. An ACT equipment can be used with or without hearing aids to help people with hearing loss to better understand amplified sounds and speech. Each type of ACT equipment has different uses, but all can be used in 1:1 meetings, small to large group meetings, and public forums or conferences

**Assistive technology** means any products, devices, or equipment used to maintain, increase, or improve effective communication including visual signaling **alerts** (telephones, doorbells, alarm clocks), visual signaling **alarms** (carbon dioxide or fire alarms).

**Auxiliary aids** include a wide range of services and devices that ensures effective communication. The type of auxiliary aid or service necessary to ensure effective communication will vary according to the length and complexity of the communication involved.

Examples of auxiliary aids and services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing include the following: qualified interpreters, note takers, Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART), written materials, hearing aid-compatible amplified telephones, assistive listening systems, open and closed captioning, telecommunications devices for the deaf (TTY/TDD), or other specialized text, voice or video-based telecommunication equipment such as videophone and captioned telephones, videotext displays, and service animals.

Examples of auxiliary aids and services for individuals who have both vision and hearing loss include the following: qualified interpreters, qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, magnification devices, Braille or large print materials, assistance in locating items, service animals, and support service provider (SSP).

Examples of auxiliary aids and services for individuals who are speech disabled include the following: TTY/TDD, computer terminals, speech synthesizers, communication boards, other communication devices, and artificial larynxes.

**Captioning** means the text display of the spoken word. Captioning includes open/closed captioning formats on broadcasting and recorded media and live captioning.

**Certified Deaf Interpreter** is a specialist who is Deaf and provides interpreting services utilizing American Sign Language and other visual and tactile communication forms used by individuals who are Deaf, Hard of hearing, or DeafBlind. Being Deaf, the Deaf Interpreter utilizes a distinct set of formative linguistic, cultural, and life experiences. This enables nuanced comprehension and interaction in a wide range of visual language and communication forms influenced by region, culture, age, literacy, education, socio-economic bearing, and/or physical, cognitive, and mental health. These experiences, coupled with professional training, give the Deaf Interpreter the ability to communicate successfully across all types of interpreted interactions, both routine and high risk. The use of a Deaf Interpreter enables a level of linguistic and cultural bridging that is often not possible when hearing ASL-English Interpreters work alone. A certified deaf or hard of hearing interpreter has been awarded interpreter certification by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and/ or the Board for Evaluation of Interpreter (BEI). In order to provide effective interpreting service, CDI requires a team interpreter who is hearing. Deaf Interpreters teamed with hearing Interpreters are imperative in legal and other high-stakes settings, as well as valuable in routine interactions.

**Certified interpreter** means an interpreter who has demonstrated their ability to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially. They obtained national interpreter certification by taking national performance and knowledge tests. A certified interpreter has been awarded interpreter certification by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), or the Board for the Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI).

**Communication Access real-time Translation (CART)** is considered open captioning on the site or remote captioning on a computer system. The certified CART provider listens to the speaker and instantaneously transcribes speech to text. The captioning is projected on a screen or

computer, or incorporated on the same screen as a PowerPoint presentation. CART is generally used at public meetings, virtual meetings, events, forums and conferences.

**Communication preferences** is a term used to describe various modes of communication preferred by individuals with hearing loss. The mode of communication must be considered with the provision of auxiliary aids to ensure effective communication.

Many deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind people communicate in sign language. Communication modes using signs include American Sign Language (ASL), Manually Coded English, Signed Exact English (SEE), and visual gesture communication. Depending on the degree of vision loss and preferences DeafBlind individual may communicate by using any one or more of the following: *tactile signing, close-up signing, or ProTactile*. They may or may not be familiar with Braille.

Whereas hard of hearing and speech disabled people communicate through the use of spoken language, Hard of Hearing and some deaf people use oral communication and speech reading.

**Contractor** means an agency, firm, provider organization, individual, or other entity under contract with DSHS. It includes any subcontractor retained by the primary contractor.

**deaf (with a lowercase “d”)** is term that describes people who have permanent severe to profound hearing loss with little or no residual hearing, which affects verbal and auditory communication. Generally, people who are deaf are unable to receive spoken language without use of auxiliary aids. They may communicate through a preferred communication method to express themselves and use auxiliary aids to receive spoken language. Some but not all deaf people are members of the Deaf community and Deaf culture.

**Deaf (with uppercase “D”)** is a cultural term that describes people who identify themselves as members of a Deaf community and culture. In the United States, their native or primary language is usually American Sign Language. These Deaf individuals share common experiences, traditions, norms, and values.

**deafblind (with lowercase d and b)** means a person with hearing loss and vision loss that affects verbal, auditory and visual communication. Generally, people who are deafblind are unable to receive spoken language without use of auxiliary aids and signed language without adaptations, such as the use of touch or a smaller signing space. Deafblind people may communicate through a preferred communication method to express themselves and use auxiliary aids to receive spoken or visual language. Some but not all deafblind people are members of the DeafBlind community and DeafBlind culture.

**DeafBlind (with uppercase D and B)** is a cultural term that describes people who identify themselves as members of a DeafBlind community and culture. DeafBlind individuals also use “DB” (uppercase) as a cultural identity. In the United States, their native or primary language is usually American Sign Language, Tactile American Sign Language and/or ProTactile.

Deaf Plus denotes a deaf person who has a secondary disability to hearing loss that may or may not affect language comprehension.

**Department** means the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS or department) and includes administrations, divisions, offices, and other organizational units within DSHS.

**Direct access** means telephone services that directly receive calls from VIDEOPHONE, TTYs, and other means without relying on relay services or third party services. Telephone access through a third party or through a relay service does not satisfy the requirement for direct access.

**Dual language employees with assignment pay** are DSHS employees who are bilingual and use their sign language proficiency for face-to-face communications, and may be eligible for assignment pay at 5% premium of the base salary.

**Effective communication** is a term to describe communication with people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deaf Plus, and speech disabled that is equally effective to communication with people without disabilities. Effective communication requires that expressive and receptive communication is conveyed effectively, accurately, and impartially.

**Hard of Hearing (HH)** is a term that describes people who have some degree of hearing loss with some residual hearing, either permanent or fluctuating, which affects communication. Generally, people who are hard of hearing are able to express or speak for themselves and may or may not use auxiliary aids to receive or understand spoken language. They may communicate through auditory means, with or without amplification, and may or may not have the ability to lip-read. Some prefer to use sign language, some don't.

**International Sign Language (IS)** is a highly variable type of signed communication between two signers who lack a common sign language and includes highly iconic signs that can be understood by a large audience. IS is strongly influenced by American Sign Language and also includes a lexicon of signs from various countries and is used in a variety of different contexts, and informally when travelling and socializing. When a Deaf person from another country needs Sign Language Interpreter Services, a Deaf Interpreter will be assigned to use IS for effective communication.

**Interpretation, interpreting, interpret (Sign Language)** means the process of translating communication between spoken language and sign language. Sign language interpreters must be able to accurately comprehend and convey the words and signs, inflection, and intent of both the spoken and signed languages being used. Consumer may indicate a preferred Interpreter with whom they communicate most effectively.

**Interpreter preference** means the consumer has indicated that a specific interpreter communicates effectively with the individual and they prefer to work with that interpreter. Sign language and interpreters vary; it is important to find an effective match for consumer. Sign language interpreters may be fluent in ProTactile, which is used by some DeafBlind people, or

be trained in close vision interpreting. Some interpreters have special certification that is crucial for work in legal or medical settings.

**Magnification devices** means a type of assistive technology designed to assist people with limited vision to read documents. Such assistive technology may include closed circuit TV (CCTV), hand-held magnification, and electronic magnification.

**Minimal language skills (MLS):** This is an outdated term used to describe language dysfluent individuals. Many consumers served in mental health settings show significant language dysfluency in their best language, in the United States this is usually American Sign Language (ASL). Sign language dysfluency in deaf people has four major causes: neurological problems associated with the etiology of deafness, language deprivation, aphasia, and psychotic disorders. Deaf people from other countries may be fluent in their language such as Russian Sign Language. This is not MSL.

**Non-certified interpreter** is an interpreter who has not demonstrated their ability to interpret through any formal evaluation or test. They have not obtained interpreter certification, but are deemed qualified by three references when registering with ODHH to provide sign language interpreter services.

**Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)** A DSHS division administering and delivering various programs and services. ODHH is a resource to assist DSHS in providing culturally competent and culturally sensitive services to Deaf and DeafBlind staff and consumers by promoting awareness with the identification, arrangement, and provision of appropriate auxiliary aids including telecommunication relay services, specialized telecommunication equipment, assistive communication technology, and sign language interpreter services. ODHH provides consultation, advocacy, information, and referral services.

**People with hearing loss** is a term to describe all people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind. Use of the term "hearing impaired" is discouraged. People with hearing loss may be a client, employee, a contractor, or community member. A client is any person who is applying for, has been determined eligible for, or is receiving services from DSHS. A community member is any person who may or may not be a client (for example: a citizen at a public meeting).

**ProTactile** is a socio-cultural philosophy with its own sets of philosophy, attitude, culture, and language. This emerging concept has become a way of life for the DeafBlind community. DeafBlind people explore the world through touch, and communicate through touch. ProTactile is a language that the DeafBlind community embraces and benefits from as a way of life.

**Purchaser:** formerly called an authorized requester, means an employee of the State of Washington governmental entity, Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Master Contract Usage Agreement (MCUA) member, or a DSHS contracted service provider requesting the services of a Sign Language Interpreter, and who is responsible for paying for such service. Current MCUA members can be found at

<http://des.wa.gov/services/ContractingPurchasing/Purchasing/Pages/MasterContractsUsageAgreement.aspx>

**Qualified interpreter:** A sign language interpreter who is able to interpret or transliterate effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. A qualified interpreter may be either a certified or a non-certified interpreter and has been determined to be competent. Qualified interpreters must submit a registration form and all required documentation and be approved to interpret for DSHS by ODHH prior to providing interpreting services.

**Relay** means telecommunications relay services (TRS) features involve a communication assistant (CA) who uses both a standard telephone and specialized telecommunication equipment to relay a telephone conversation between deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or speech disabled relay users and a standard telephone user, generally someone without disabilities. All TRS services are free to eligible relay users, which includes TRS, video relay service (VRS), Internet Protocol Relay Services (IP-Relay), and Internet Protocol Caption Telephone Services (IPCTS). Relay services are conducted through landline, wireless telecommunications services, and the Internet. ODHH administers and funds the Washington State TRS program. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) funds the Internet Protocol based relay services.

**Specialized telecommunication equipment** is a term inclusive of various specialized equipment, including text telephones (TTY/TDD), amplified telephones, and visual signaling alerts. These are used to achieve effective communication through telephone services generally enjoyed by people without disabilities. DSHS consumer may be eligible to receive specialized telecommunication equipment for their homes through ODHH.

**Speech disabled** is a term that describes people who are unable to speak or may have various types of speech-related disabilities that functionally limit their communication. Use of the term “speech impaired” is discouraged. Some people with speech disabilities may have problems with language expression and/or comprehension and may need assistance. Individuals who are speech disabled may or may not have a hearing loss or other physical disabilities.

**Transliterate / transliterating** means the process of facilitating communication between individuals using spoken English and individuals using an English-based sign system such as manual coded English or sign exact English (SEE). This process requires an ability to receptively receive information from an English-based sign language and expressively voice the information into spoken English (sign-to-voice) and vice versa (voice-to-sign).

**Video relay service (VRS)** is a form of telecommunications relay service that enables Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened and Deaf Plus people who use Sign Language to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text. Video equipment links the VRS user with a communications assistant (CA) – so that the VRS user and the CA can see and communicate with each other in signed conversation. Because the conversation between the VRS user and the CA flows much more quickly than with a text-

based TRS call, VRS has become an enormously popular form of TRS. For more information about other forms of TRS, see the FCC's consumer guide on telecommunications relay service (<https://www.fcc.gov/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs>).

**Video remote interpreting (VRI)** is a video telecommunication service that charges a per minute fee and uses devices such as web cameras or videophones to provide sign language or spoken language interpreting services. VRI is often used when two people who do not have a common language are in the same room, while the Interpreter is working remotely. VRI should only be used when in-person interpreter is not available. VRI is not regulated by the FCC.

**Virtual interpreters (VI)** is similar to an in-person Interpreter, but the connection occurs in a virtual room such as Skype, ZOOM, or other video conference platforms. VI are requested and paid for the same way we request and pay for in-person interpreters. This option allows Deaf and Hard of Hearing participants to continue to have visual access to meetings and everyone has the option to see the Interpreter as well.

## Policy Requirements

### A. General:

1. See [Administrative Policy 7.02](#) – Equal Access to Services for Individuals with Disabilities in the consideration of accommodations and provision of auxiliary aids
2. DSHS must provide equal access opportunities to people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deaf Plus, or people with speech disabilities so they may participate in or benefit from DSHS programs, services, trainings, webinars, WebEx, or activities in accordance with the ADA. DSHS must make available appropriate auxiliary aids and services where taking appropriate steps to provide effective communication.
3. DSHS must inform people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, Deaf Plus or who are speech disabled of their right to request specific accommodations and their auxiliary aids and of the process to submit this request.
4. In reviewing the request, DSHS must consider:
  - a. The person's hearing identity or speech disability;
  - b. The person's preferred communication method;
  - c. The program, service, training, or activity the person is participating in;
  - d. The barrier created; and
  - e. The auxiliary aid requested.
5. DSHS must honor the person's choice of auxiliary aid, unless it can demonstrate that another equally effective means of communication is available, or the requested accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration in the service, program, or activity or result in an undue financial and administrative burden to DSHS.



6. See [Administrative Policy 18.69](#) – Delegation of Authority for Civil Rights Complaint Investigations in the consideration of filing *civil rights* complaints and the process for submitting complaints.

**B. Programs, services, or activities:**

1. See [Administrative Policy 18.81](#) – Nondiscrimination in Direct Client Services in the consideration of providing direct services to consumer without discrimination.
2. DSHS should provide contractors with access to information regarding compliance. DSHS requires contractors to comply with their obligation to provide accommodations and auxiliary aids per the [ADA](#) and this Administrative Policy 7.20.
3. DSHS must provide accommodations or auxiliary aids upon request to effectively establish and maintain eligibility for and benefit from programs, services, trainings, or activities.
4. DSHS must take appropriate steps to conduct services, programs and activities that demonstrate cultural competency and cultural sensitivity to the Deaf and DeafBlind communities.

**C. Meetings:**

1. See [Administrative Policy 14.10](#) – Accessible Meetings and [Administrative Policy 7.21](#) – Access to Services for Consumers who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) when providing auxiliary aids.
2. When scheduling appointments with clients or employees who use interpreters, DSHS should immediately process or submit interpreter requests. Making your requests a minimum of 3 weeks in advance is highly encouraged to secure qualified sign language interpreters.
3. Notices of public meetings or public hearings must include information on how to obtain accommodations such as sign language interpreters and communication access real-time captioning (CART). For other accommodation or auxiliary aids, a contact person's name and information must be provided with a deadline. Please note, a client or employee missing the deadline for access requests does not exempt DSHS from making every effort to provide access.
4. Handouts and presentations should be available to interpreters and CART reporters preferably at least 3 days in advance, or at a minimum, one full business day prior to the public meeting for their use in preparation.

**D. Facilities:**

1. DSHS facilities must post signage using recognized international symbols for accessibility identifying text telephones, videophones, assistive listening systems, signing staff, and interpreters where available.
2. DSHS must provide fire alarms that conform to requirements for visual and audible signaling in public, common use, and employee work areas as detailed in the National Fire Protection Association code (NFPA 72) adopted by the local jurisdiction.

**E. Telecommunications:**

1. DSHS offices with employees that communicate by telephone must provide equally effective communication to people with hearing loss and speech disabilities. The telecommunications relay services (TRS) may be used to meet this requirement. DSHS should provide TTY/TDD, captioned telephone or videophone in offices that have extensive telephone contact with the public to ensure more immediate direct access.
2. DSHS must provide employees with adequate training on how to accept and handle TRS calls from TTY/TDD, captioned telephone or videophone callers. DSHS employees must not hang up on people calling through the relay service until the call is completed.
3. If an individual places a relay call to emergency services through a relay service, emergency service must accept the relay call. Under no circumstances is the caller to be advised to hang up and call back on a different device, such as the TTY/TDD.

**F. Publications:**

1. Written documents and other materials including videos, websites, or other media developed by DSHS must follow the requirements for effective communication.
2. DSHS must provide publications, handouts, applications, forms, or other written materials in alternative formats upon request. Publications include those identified in [Administrative Policy 2.07 Publications Policy](#).
3. DSHS must include the following as alternative format(s): large print, Braille Grade 1 or Grade 2, depending on the deafblind individual's vision loss and communication need. DSHS must provide large print in Bold, Black, and 18 points Arial Font on buff (beige or goldenrod) paper. See [American Council for the Blind](#)

**G. Auxiliary Aids:**

1. DSHS must comply with requirements regarding the following auxiliary aids:

2. **Captioning** - Audio portions of any recorded programming produced or purchased by DSHS are subject to the captioning requirement to provide equally effective communication. All video production produced or purchased by DSHS must be captioned including but not limited to:
  - a. Videotapes or DVDs;
  - b. Public Service Announcements;
  - c. Television programming broadcasting DSHS-related programs;
  - d. Web-based videos, including communication with the general public, communication with employees, and training videos for employees and contractors.
  - e. Video and audio recordings used in events, presentations, trainings and workshops.
3. **Dual language employees: Determine eligibility for assignment pay** – See Collective Bargain Agreement Article 42.25 (42.27 after July 1, 2007) Assignment Pay Provisions and Administrative Policy 7.21 Access to Services for Consumers who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) when providing auxiliary aids.

DSHS may recognize and compensate certain employees for their ASL and English proficiency.

- a. DSHS must determine employees' eligibility for assignment pay based on the following criteria:
    - i. Classification as a Washington General Service (WGS) employee;
    - ii. English proficiency in written or spoken English;
    - iii. ASL proficiency as a document requirement showing the result from ASLPI assessment in the position description form;
    - iv. The caseload of clients using ASL or level of interaction with employees using ASL;
    - v. ASL proficiency assessment coordinated with ODHH and Gallaudet University and
    - vi. Supervisor approval.
  - b. Supervisors must refer employees to ODHH to take the ASLPI assessment.
  - c. Supervisors must not approve assignment pay for dual language until the employee satisfactorily passes the ASLPI assessment of the employee's ASL proficiency with a score of 3 or higher.
4. **Dual language employees: Determining usage of employees**
    - a. DSHS may assign eligible dual language employees with ASL proficiency in meetings to communicate directly with consumer or general public where appropriate.
    - b. For appointments, DSHS may assign consumers who use ASL to dual language employees' caseloads.

- c. DSHS must not allow any employee to interpret on behalf of DSHS, unless they are registered and approved by ODHH as a qualified sign language interpreter.
5. ***Sign Language Interpreters:*** DSHS must use ODHH approved interpreters who are deemed qualified for each appointment type. Using a client or employee's family members or friends to interpret for DSHS business is inappropriate and unethical due to potential personal or emotional involvement or considerations of confidentiality that may adversely affect the ability to interpret "effectively, accurately, and impartially."

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **A. Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing must:**

1. Provide resources to DSHS through information and referral activities, including but not limited to fact sheets, pamphlets, vlogs (prerecorded videos), and websites on compliance with the ADA and this policy.
2. Provide the consultation and resources to help DSHS achieve cultural competency and sensitivity.
3. Provide technical assistance regarding requests for accommodations and arranging the provision of auxiliary aids. Technical assistance may include review and guidance on programs, services, activities, and related procedures, and providing resources or helping resolve complaints. Technical assistance may also include speakers for workshops, seminars, video training, and in-service training opportunities.
4. Administer purchased services contracts on behalf of DSHS to obtain sign language interpreter services. ODHH administers the statewide master contract in cooperation with Department of Enterprise Services (DES).
5. Provide subject matter expert consultation on the DSHS ADA Advisory Council/Language Access Advisory Council (ADAAC/LAAC).
6. Administer activities on behalf of DSHS to streamline the provision of CART, Communication Assistive Technology or other auxiliary aids in an effective and efficient manner as a service delivery system or through contracted services.
7. Coordinate ASL proficiency interview with established vendor to provide skills assessment to determine employees' ASL proficiency as a process toward eligibility for dual language assignment pay.
8. Maintain procedures regarding filing complaints about the performance of sign language interpreters, captioners, or Telecommunications Relay Service providers.

**B. Department of Social and Health Services must:**

1. Follow all procedures listed in the "Procedures" section of Administrative Policy 7.20.
2. Must invite ODHH for subject matter expert consultation on any hearing loss issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), communication, and language access.

**Procedures**

**A. Sign Language Interpreter Services:**

1. Interpreter request process

DSHS must follow the process described below for all sign language interpreter requests: To request a sign language interpreter, DSHS must use a master purchased service contract.

DSHS will submit sign language interpreter requests using the master contract sign language interpreter request form. The request can be made through telephone, email, or fax, but the requestor still has to fill out and submit the required form.

The form must include the following information:

- a. Date, time, and duration of the appointment;
  - b. Location of the appointment (if this is an online appointment, include the videoconferencing platform and meeting information, including any passwords required to get in the meeting room);
  - c. Purchaser's name, place of business, and contact information;
  - d. Name(s) of the consumer(s), to the extent known at the time of the request;
  - e. Nature and venue type of the appointment, such as a one-on-one meeting, a conference, or webinar;
  - f. Contact information of the consumer, if that individual is different than the Purchaser;
  - g. Preferred interpreter(s), if any;
  - h. Required amount of travel time to and from the appointment;
  - i. Mileage to and from the appointment; and
  - j. Billing details
2. The contractor will acknowledge a complete request from a purchaser with a telephone call, voice mail message, or email message to the purchaser within two (2) business hours, or by the end of that business day, whichever occurs first.
    - a. The Contractor will send email confirmation that the request has been filled to the purchaser, and the consumer (if different person) as soon as possible and no less than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the appointment.

- b. If the contractor is unable to reach the preferred interpreter within this time frame, the Contractor will communicate with the purchaser to inform them and offer the option of requesting and contacting a different Interpreter (or interpreters).
- c. If the purchaser is not in agreement, they may choose to terminate the request and seek elsewhere without negative repercussion from the contractor.

**1. Scheduling Interpreters**

- a. DSHS must follow the contractor's recommendation regarding the appropriate number of interpreters needed for a specific appointment. If DSHS disagrees, DSHS should contact ODHH for second opinion.
- b. Circumstances requiring two (2) or more interpreters, regardless of the length of the appointment, may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. Type of request;
  - ii. Appointment involving a consumer who is DeafBlind and requires the use of ProTactile or close vision sign language;
  - iii. Appointment involving a consumer who requires additional language support that can be provided by a Deaf interpreter (especially in appointments which may involve determinative action) may include, but are not limited to:
    - 1. Psychiatric evaluation;
    - 2. Psychological, neuropsychological, or forensic evaluation;
    - 3. Assessment for independent living;
    - 4. Administrative hearings; and
    - 5. Trainings
  - iv. Appointment of any length involving two (2) or more consumers who might need to split up to join different trainings, group discussions, etc.
- c. If a scheduled Interpreter is unable to make a confirmed appointment, it is the responsibility of the contractor to make arrangements for another interpreter (with similar experience and language skills), and to notify DSHS of the change.
- d. The contractor must be able to provide a Deaf interpreter.
- e. The contractor and DSHS may consult with ODHH to make the best determination regarding whether or not a Deaf interpreter is needed for an appointment.

**B. Assistive Communication Technology:**

- 1. DSHS may contact the following agencies for loaner availability of an assistive communication technology system:
  - a. Hotel or venue facility manager
  - b. Department of General Administration
  - c. ODHH

- d. Regional Service Centers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
2. Regarding specialized telecommunication equipment, DSHS should refer consumers to the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution program, located at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh/telecommunication-equipment-distribution> to determine the client's eligibility to receive specialized equipment. ODHH is available to provide assistance with the application process.

**C. Unavailability of Auxiliary Aids**

1. Should an auxiliary aid be unavailable, DSHS must consider the following options:
  - a. Where the auxiliary aid loaner is not available, purchase the auxiliary aid (e.g. assistive communication technology);
  - b. Provide an alternative auxiliary aid; or
  - c. Reschedule the meeting or appointment.

DSHS Official