

# DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY SERVICES (DBHIDS)

## LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN & PROTOCOL

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### PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

- A. In Cooperation with the Mayor's Office, the **Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS)** is committed to compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006), and the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter § 8-600 and § A-200, in ensuring meaningful access to City services and programs for individuals who are Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and/or Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DFHH). DBHIDS believes in a community where everyone can thrive, be authentic and included, have a voice, feel valued, and achieve health, well-being, and self-determination. DBHIDS celebrates differences and advocates for equity and justice. DBHIDS strives to shift the culture boldly by collecting, reporting, and monitoring data and building partnerships and collaborations with various stakeholders. Above all, DBHIDS recognizes that diversity includes you.
- B. The purpose of this document is to establish an effective plan and protocol for DBHIDS personnel to follow when providing services to or interacting with LEP and/or DFHH individuals.
- C. Following this plan and protocol is essential for the success of the mission of DBHIDS to improve the health status of all Philadelphians in need of behavioral health and/or intellectual disability services.
- D. The mission of DBHIDS is to educate, strengthen, and serve individuals and communities so that all Philadelphians can thrive. DBHIDS seeks to support the behavioral health of all Philadelphia residents, including those who are DFHH and all immigrants and

refugees with or without English proficiency, documentation status, insured, and uninsured.

### **GENERAL POLICY**

- A. DBHIDS recognizes that the population eligible for services includes individuals with LEP and/or DFHH. It is the policy of DBHIDS to ensure meaningful access to behavioral health and/or intellectual disability services for LEP and/or DFHH individuals. DBHIDS adopts the following policy to ensure that LEP and DFHH individuals can gain equal access to DBHIDS' services.
- B. It is the City's policy to grant access to services or programs to everyone, even when they have a limited ability to speak, understand, read, or write English. DBHIDS aims to take reasonable steps to provide LEP and DFHH persons with meaningful access to services and programs. DBHIDS seeks to reduce barriers by increasing its capacity to deliver services and benefits to people in their primary language.
- C. DBHIDS, rather than the LEP and/or DFHH member, bears the following responsibilities:
  - (1) Identifying and recording language needs of LEP and/or DFHH members at the initial point of contact.
  - (2) Providing language-appropriate services to all LEP and/or DFHH individuals seeking services utilizing city-contracted vendors.
  - (3) Discouraging the use of informal interpreters such as family or friends of the person seeking services.
  - (4) Prohibiting the use of minor children from acting as interpreters.
  - (5) Suggesting or requiring that an LEP and/or DFHH member provide an interpreter in order to receive services is prohibited.
- D. The preferred method of serving LEP persons is by:
  - (1) Using competent and trained bilingual staff who can provide services directly to the members in their primary language without the need for an interpreter.
  - (2) Available, trained, competent bilingual staff may be used for in-person or telephone interpreting to support other staff members.
  - (3) Staff should seek assistance from professional in-person (preferred) or telephonic interpreters when staff cannot meet language needs.
  - (4) Offices should recognize that certain circumstances may require specialized interpretation and translation services even when staff with bilingual abilities are available (for example, situations concerning HIPAA, confidentiality, or

anything that may have a legal implication). Staff must be authorized to provide language services to communicate effectively even when the LEP and/or DFHH person does not request such assistance.

- E. Tips for communicating with an individual who is DFHH.
  - (1) Many can speak even though they cannot hear.
  - (2) Always face a DFHH person.
  - (3) Make eye contact and keep it while you are talking.
  - (4) Check noise and lighting.
  - (5) Keep your distance.
  - (6) Speak clearly, slowly, and steadily.
  - (7) Take turns.
  - (8) Repeat and re-phrase if necessary.
  - (9) Write it down.

### **DIRECT CONTACT WITH LEP AND DFHH INDIVIDUALS**

DBHIDS has several points of contact with the public:

1. **Office walk-ins** - at any time of the week, DFHH and/or LEP individuals may come into DBHIDS offices or a DBHIDS resource table looking for help in obtaining services. In these instances, if bilingual staff is not available to provide interpretation, the staff member must use telephone or video interpretation on demand. Please refer to DBHIDS Language Access protocol on the DBHIDS Intranet.
2. **Phone calls** - at any time of the week, LEP and/or DFHH individuals may call DBHIDS offices or staff for help obtaining services. In these instances, staff members receiving the phone call can use telephonic or video interpretation on demand. Please refer to DBHIDS Language Access protocol on the DBHIDS Intranet.
3. **Meetings/Information Sessions** - DBHIDS sometimes holds meetings or information sessions. If language needs are anticipated, DBHIDS will utilize in-person/video interpretation for appropriate language.

### **LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES AND PROTOCOLS**

#### **A. INTERPRETATION**

##### **1.) Services Provided**

LEP and/or DFHH residents of Philadelphia have rights and privileges to access services. DBHIDS will continue to provide interpretation to LEP and/or DFHH individuals at no cost.

Services offered include in-person, telephonic, and video interpretation for LEP and/or DFHH.

**Definitions:**

- a) **Primary Language:** means an individual's native tongue or the language in which an individual most comfortable and effectively communicates.
- b) **Limited English Proficiency (LEP):** designates individuals whose primary language is not English and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. LEP individuals may be competent in certain types of communication (i.e., speaking or understanding) but still be LEP for other purposes (i.e., reading or writing). Similarly, LEP designations are context-specific; an individual may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting but may find these skills insufficient in other situations.
- c) **Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing (DFHH):** The deaf and hard of hearing community is diverse. There are variations in how a person becomes deaf or hard of hearing, level of hearing, age of onset, educational background, communication methods, and cultural identity. For more information, click here: <https://www.nad.org>.
- d) **Interpretation:** the act of listening to communication in one language (source language) and orally translating it to another language (target language) while retaining the same meaning.
- e) **Translation:** the transposition of contents (written) into another language in line with the intended meaning. An activity that aims at conveying the meaning or meanings of a given linguistic discourse from one language to another.
- f) **Bilingual:** the ability to fluently utilize two (2) languages.
- g) **Oral interpretation:** for those individuals with hearing disabilities trained in speech reading (lip reading). Interpreters are specially trained to articulate speech silently and clearly, sometimes rephrasing words or phrases to give higher visibility on the lips.
- h) **Cued speech interpretation:** a cued speech interpreter functions in the same manner as an oral interpreter, except they also use a hand code, or cue, to represent each speech sound.
- i) **Computer Assisted Real-time Transcription (CART):** a service in which an operator types what is said into a computer that displays the typed words on a screen.

## 2.) Protocols

It is the policy of DBHIDS to provide timely, meaningful access to behavioral health and intellectual disability services for LEP and DFHH residents of Philadelphia. To ensure that the inability to communicate in English does not deprive the public of rights and privileges, our department will continue to provide interpretation (verbal) and translation (written) services at no cost for LEP and/or DFHH individuals. This includes translations of vital documents, signage, and relevant materials.

DBHIDS staff will ensure that LEP and DFHH individuals receive language assistance when accessing behavioral health and intellectual disability support services. All DBHIDS staff will inform service recipients that language assistance is available to LEP and DFHH persons and that the Department will provide these services to them at no cost.

## 3.) Procedures

1. When an LEP and/or DFHH person walks in or approaches an employee and appears to be asking for help but has difficulty communicating, the employee shall utilize DBHIDS Language Access Protocol to provide interpretation services or
2. When a request for an interpreter is made either orally, in writing, or by pointing to a language signage, the employee shall utilize the DBHIDS Language Access Protocol to provide language assistance.

### ACCESSING INTERPRETATION OR TRANSLATION SERVICES

DBHIDS staff and providers can request interpretation services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as follows:

1. For all **CBH members** (Medicaid recipients):  
Services are arranged through the CBH Member Services Department at **888-545-2600** or sent via Protected Trust email to [CBH.Interpretation.Services@phila.gov](mailto:CBH.Interpretation.Services@phila.gov).
2. For uninsured or underinsured LEP and/or DFHH individuals who need language access assistance, please refer to the DBHIDS Language Access Protocol available on DBHIDS intranet, under Resources, under Policies and Procedures, and under DBHIDS-Wide.
3. For questions or concerns about DBHIDS Language Access Services, please email [DBHIDS.LanguageAccess.Services@phila.gov](mailto:DBHIDS.LanguageAccess.Services@phila.gov)

4. For questions or concerns not related to DBHIDS, please email the Philadelphia Office of Immigrant Affairs at [OIA@phila.gov](mailto:OIA@phila.gov)

**Cancellation of Scheduled Interpretation:**

If a request for an interpreter will not be needed, please call the appropriate vendor to cancel the request at least a full business day in advance of the scheduled time to cancel it. If the request is not canceled in a timely manner, DBHIDS will be billed.

**B. TRANSLATION**

**1) Services Provided**

To ensure that the inability to communicate in English does not deprive the public of rights and privileges, our department will continue to provide interpretation (verbal) and translation (written) services at no cost for LEP and/or DFHH individuals. This includes translations of vital documents, signage, and relevant materials.

**2) Protocols for Document Translation**

- a. Vital Documents: DBHIDS is not a direct service provider. However, various offices and units within the department conduct outreach and host workshops, trainings, conferences, community meetings, and mental health screenings yearly. These offices and units may identify the need for translation. Vital documents may include but are not limited to DBHIDS Resource Guide, Healthy Minds Philly Brochure, and flyers for workshops, trainings, conferences, and community meetings.
- b. DBHIDS will ensure that vital documents are translated into the top ten languages in Philadelphia. The [Language Access Dashboard](#) can be used to obtain Philadelphia's top 10 languages.

**2. Procedure for Submitting a document for translation:**

- a. DBHIDS staff are strongly encouraged to notify the Language Access Steering Committee by emailing [DBHIDS.LanguageAccess.Services@phila.gov](mailto:DBHIDS.LanguageAccess.Services@phila.gov) while developing materials that must be translated so that collaboration can occur before translation.
- b. Language Access Committee will consult for translation and cultural relevance during the development before DBHIDS Centralized System for Requests (CSR) approval.
- c. Requestor must ensure that CSR approves documents before submitting the document to the language access team for translation.
- d. Any DBHIDS staff needing translation, please email an editable document complete to [DBHIDS.LanguageAccess.Services@phila.gov](mailto:DBHIDS.LanguageAccess.Services@phila.gov) at least two weeks in advance.
- e. Once it is reviewed and approved, the language access team will submit the document to a city-contracted vendor, OIA, and the requestor will be copied.

- f. Vendor will email a quote to the language access team, OIA, and the requestor.
- g. Quote must be reviewed and authorized by the language access team.
- h. Vendor will provide translated material to the requestor, OIA, and language access team.

**NOTE:** Before submitting a document for translation, please review your document and ensure the following:

- ✓ The content has not already been translated into another document.
- ✓ Your supervisor has approved the document and translation procedure.
- ✓ Terms you do not want to be translated are highlighted, i.e., the name of your unit, program, or street.
- ✓ The document is written in a way that readers with lower literacy skills can understand.
- ✓ Specify if the translation is for a new document, a revised document that had been translated, or a continuation of a series or collection of documents so the same vendor can be utilized to keep the translation consistent.

#### **4.) Signage**

DBHIDS is not a direct service agency. However, to request interpretation, DBHIDS has multilingual signage on language access at the front desks for the public to see and request.

### **C. BILINGUAL STAFF**

#### **1) Current Staff**

- a. DBHIDS will maintain a list of multilingual staff who can provide services in a language other than English and/or serve as interpreters if available. This list will be maintained by the Human Resources department.
- b. **Staff Interpreters** – Competent and trained bilingual staff can also function as interpreters for other teams when needed and staffing permits. DBHIDS currently does not have a formally trained interpreter on staff but has staff that can interpret in a non-technical, non-legal setting. DBHIDS will work with OIA to explore and provide training to bilingual staff as needed.

#### **2) Hiring**

- a. If bilingual or multilingual skills are desired for any job opening, a candidate's language proficiency should be assessed during selection. Assessment may include Certification, transcripts, diplomas, or other evidence of language proficiency in English and another language.

### **D. TRAINING STAFF ON POLICY, PLAN AND PROTOCOLS**

## 1) Training Protocol

- a. DBHIDS staff will have access to an electronic copy of the Language Access Policy on the intranet after completing the Language Access E-Learning Course on the Learning Hub.
- b. DBHIDS Language Access training is required annually for all staff and will be a part of the employee onboarding process.
- c. Language access training will include information on the following topics:
  - i. Legal obligation to provide language assistance.
  - ii. Language access plan and protocols.
  - iii. Cultural humility.
  - iv. How to use/request current language services

## Language Access Goals:

- a. **Use telephonic and in-person interpretation and ensure that the public knows about the availability of these services:** DBHIDS will continue to Increase awareness of available resources through information dissemination and visible multilingual signs and will train new hires and existing staff annually on how to use telephonic interpretation and access ASL services.
- b. **Hire bilingual staff:** DBHIDS will continue to assess, plan, and recruit bilingual/bi-cultural staff who can provide services directly to the members in their primary language without needing an interpreter. DBHIDS will also engage in efforts to encourage providers to hire more bi-lingual/bi-cultural staff representatives of the community that they serve.
- c. **Video Remote Interpretation:** DBHIDS will continue to expand the usage of contracted vendor applications among public facing/frontline staff for video remote interpretation. DBHIDS will also facilitate training for application users by contracted vendors as needed.
- d. **Data Collection:** DBHIDS will continue to develop and streamline the data collection process for DBHIDS and providers.
- e. **Translation Vetting Process:** DBHIDS is committed to ensuring that vital documents are translated into the top ten languages spoken in Philadelphia.
- f. DBHIDS will continue to include multiple internal and external stakeholders, including community members, to ensure translated materials are linguistically and culturally relevant.

- g. DBHIDS will make all translated materials available through the website, during community engagement outreach efforts, etc.
- h. Taglines will be included in the DBHIDS website and public documents to explain to LEP individuals that they can obtain a translation of documents or that interpretation can be available in our office.
- i. Hiring bilingual staff: Desired language(s) will be included in the job announcement, and Language skills and competency will be assessed.
- j. Create a process for soliciting and addressing feedback from providers and community members with any language access-related issue.

### **E. ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS**

*This section applies to departments that hold administrative hearings. State law (2 C.S. § 561 et seq. (Act 172 of 2006)) requires the appointment of certified or otherwise qualified interpreters for local administrative hearings. This section lists the protocols for language access in administrative hearings.*

Currently, DBHIDS does not hold administrative hearings.

### **NOTICE OF THE RIGHT TO LANGUAGE ACCESS**

- 1) Posters notifying LEP individuals of their right to language services are displayed in our main offices, which are mainly the area of public contact. These posters contain information regarding free interpretation services and different languages for the individual to indicate which language they need assistance.
- 2) Department notices and flyers will also provide information on the availability of language services with simple instructions on requesting language assistance.
- 3) Taglines will be included in or attached to public documents and notices that explain that LEP individuals can obtain a translation of the document or that an interpreter can be made available.
- 4) In all public contact areas, DBHIDS will post and maintain clear and readable signs in the languages most prevalent in the city, notifying LEP individuals that free translation and interpretation services are available to them.
- 5) Display a “Language Card” where an LEP individual can point to the language that they need help in:

## DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING

### A. Data Collection

The following information will be required to be monitored and collected by departments and will be collected via annual reports by DEI's Immigrant Affairs and Language Access Services and submitted to the Office of Immigrant Affairs:

- (1) Number of LEP Encounters (By Language)
- (2) Type of Language Services Provided to LEP Customers
- (3) Number of Documents Translated
- (4) Language Services Expenditures

Additionally, the Language Access Director will be required to report annually on the following:

- (1) Number of bilingual staff
- (2) Number of staff trained in Language Access/Cultural Competency

The following information will also be collected from DBHIDS providers:

- 1) Number of bilingual staff
- 2) List of provider documents that are translated routinely.
- 3) Provider's language access plans

### B. Annual Report/Evaluation

- 1) DBHIDS will conduct an annual evaluation of its Language Access Plan to determine its overall effectiveness, review the progress of department goals, and identify new goals or strategies for serving DFHH and LEP residents. The Language Access Steering Committee will lead the evaluation. The evaluation will include the following:
  - a. Assessment of telephonic interpretation, in-person interpretation, and translation services.
  - b. Assessment of data collected about the DFHH and LEP's primary language.
  - c. Assessment of the number and types of language requests during the past year.
  - d. Assessment of whether staff members are taking the Language Access Training annually and whether language assistance resources and arrangements for those resources are up-to-date and accessible to staff.
  - e. Assessment of complaint information; and
  - f. Assessment of soliciting feedback from DDHH and LEP individuals and community groups.

Evaluation results and recommended changes will be shared with OIA's Language Access Coordinator and incorporated into the **annual report, which must be filed under Philadelphia**

**Home Rule Charter § 8-600.** The Language Access Director will also record any language access services provided and make this information available during the annual review process.

### **1. LANGUAGE ACCESS GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

LEP persons may file a formal Language Access grievance with the Office of Immigrant Affairs if they believe they have been wrongly denied the benefits of this Language Access Plan.

LEP residents may file a formal Language Access grievance with the City of Philadelphia Office of Immigrant Affairs if they have been wrongly denied language assistance services. You must file your complaint within six months of the alleged denial. To file a formal complaint, you must fill out a Language Access Grievance Form and submit the form in person, by mail or e-mail to:

Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA)

Municipal Services Building, Suite 1430, Philadelphia, PA

Email address: [OIA@phila.gov](mailto:OIA@phila.gov)

OIA Language Access Grievance Form can be accessed [here](#).

For more information about OIA, [click on this link here](#).

Additionally, any person, regardless of immigration status, may submit a formal legal complaint through the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR). To do so, please complete a Public Accommodations Discrimination Intake Form and present it in person or by mail to:

Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations

The Curtis Center, 601 Walnut Street, Suite 300 South, Philadelphia, PA 19106

Or send email to [pchr@phila.gov](mailto:pchr@phila.gov)

For more information, visit [www.phila.gov/humanrelations](http://www.phila.gov/humanrelations)

### **2. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation Plan Logistics

Major milestones in our plan will include:

- 1.) Continuing to provide interpretation and broadly translate vital documents.
- 2.) Updating agency language access tools and resources to all offices
- 3.) Establishing a data collection and reporting system
- 4.) Ensure that new DBHIDS staff and contracted-provider workforces are trained on Language Access during the orientation and every two years.

## Key Personnel for DBHIDS Language Access Services

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Chair of Language Access Steering Committee  
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### **SIGNATURE PAGE**

*Sarorng Sorn*

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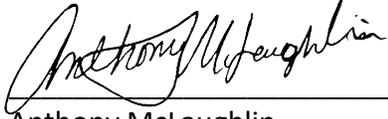
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Commissioner

DBHIDS