

## Children, Youth and Families Department's Language and Communication Access Plan

### Overview

The New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) is committed to providing language services (interpretation, translation, and access) to individuals who receive CYFD services or come into contact with the agency generally. Communication plays a central role in effectively delivering CYFD services and supports positive outcomes for CYFD clients and families. This Language Access and Communication Plan outlines the requirements and responsibilities of CYFD to provide language services to all individuals who come into contact with the agency. The Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued responsiveness to community needs and compliance with State and federal law.

### Policy

CYFD must ensure that effective language services are provided to all individuals who come into contact with the agency. Individuals may provide their own interpreters but are not required to do so. CYFD will provide oral interpretation and written documents intended for individuals in their preferred language. CYFD must also ensure that CYFD allows for communication access and provides accommodations to individuals with communication disabilities, including individuals who are deaf; deaf-blind; hard of hearing; are blind; have low vision, or have cognitive disabilities. These services shall be provided promptly and without undue delay.

### Language Identification

All CYFD lobbies/waiting areas and restrooms shall have language access materials available and posted to aid in identifying visitors' preferred language.

### Language Interpretation Services

Whenever reasonably possible, cases shall be assigned to a CYFD employee who can communicate in the same language(s) as the clients. If a client needs or requests language services please follow these steps:

1. The CYFD employee shall confirm with the client their preferred language.
2. The CYFD employee should consult with their supervisor or lead worker.
3. The CYFD employee or the supervisor shall consult a list of CYFD employees in the same bureau or unit within that office who are receiving the multi-lingual pay differential and determine if any are available to facilitate communication or work directly with the client to provide the necessary language interpretation service.
4. If there is no employee (meeting that description) available, then the CYFD employee or the supervisor shall determine whether a CYFD employee is available in another office within that bureau or unit who is receiving the multi-lingual pay differential and is available to facilitate communication.
5. If the CYFD employee or the supervisor cannot locate an employee from another office to facilitate communication, the CYFD employee or the supervisor shall determine whether an employee receiving the multi-lingual pay differential from another bureau or service area within the building is available to facilitate communication.
6. If none of the options outlined above result in the identification of a CYFD employee who is available to facilitate communication within a reasonable time, the CYFD employee or the supervisor shall use Voiance Language Services phone interpretation services.

When obtaining an authorized interpreter is impossible, the CYFD employee shall document their active efforts. The CYFD employee, in consultation with the supervisor, shall reschedule the client interaction or meeting for a reasonable time so as not to cause undue delay.

#### Written Translation Services

The CYFD employee shall make the client aware that documents may be available in the client's preferred language. All pertinent written documents shall be translated to the client's preferred language. The CYFD employee, in consultation with the supervisor, must contact the CYFD Immigration Unit, which serves as the coordinator for document translation, at [cyfd.immigration@state.nm.us](mailto:cyfd.immigration@state.nm.us), to request translation. If the form is not already translated, the Immigration Unit shall arrange the translation of documents to a client's preferred language. In an emergency, if a document is not readily available in the client's preferred language, the CYFD employee shall have the document read to the client in their preferred language.

#### Communication Access for Clients with Disabilities

CYFD will, upon request, provide appropriate auxiliary aides and services leading to effective communication for qualified individuals with disabilities so they can participate equally in CYFD programs, services, and activities. Auxiliary aides and services can include:

- Qualified sign language interpreters, communication boards
- Documents in Braille or large print
- Assistive listening devices and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision disabilities

When an auxiliary aid or service is required for effective communication, a CYFD staff member will offer accommodations to an individual with a disability. Said individual may request the auxiliary aid or service of their choice. CYFD will give primary consideration to the choice expressed unless another equally effective means of communication is more readily available.

##### 1. Accommodations for Individuals Who Are Deaf, Deafblind, or Hard of Hearing

Depending on the level of hearing loss, an individual may be offered many different accommodations, including:

- Written notes (paper and pen) for basic communication
- Written information on a sturdy surface that can be cleaned and reused
- Communication Boards and Apps
- Personal Sound Amplification device or Telecoil Loop (such as but not limited to FM, Pockettalker, Portable InfoLoop)
- Captioning programs or Apps for mobile devices
- Cart Captioning
- Clear masks for clients who lip read
- Authorized Sign Language Interpreter
- Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)
- Person who is DeafBlind may have a person with them who is a support service provider (SSP)

Resource: New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing [www.cdhh.state.nm.us](http://www.cdhh.state.nm.us)

Resource: Community Outreach Program for the Deaf – New Mexico <http://www.copdnm.org/>

Resource: RGC-Access [rgc-access.org/](http://rgc-access.org/) for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services

Resource Contact: Nathan Gomme, Executive Director, Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, 505-383-6530 [nathan.gomme@state.nm.us](mailto:nathan.gomme@state.nm.us)

Employees should not ask a bystander, including any adult or minor child accompanying an individual, to interpret or facilitate communication unless there is an imminent threat to the safety or welfare of an individual or the public.

2. Accommodations for Individuals Who are Blind or Have Low-Vision

Depending on the level of vision loss, an individual may be offered many different accommodations, including:

- Materials in Braille, large print (18+ Font), digital formats or through use of a screen reader (i.e., Text to Speech Apps)
- CYFD staff reading documents to the individual
- Magnifying glass or digital/video screen magnification

Resource: New Mexico Commission for the Blind [www.cfb.state.nm.us/ Technology for Children](http://www.cfb.state.nm.us/Technology%20for%20Children)

Resource Contact: Kelly Burma, Computer Support Specialist, NM Commission for the Blind, 505-841-8844, Toll-Free: 1-888-513-7958 [kelly.burma@state.nm.us](mailto:kelly.burma@state.nm.us)

3. Accommodations for Individuals with Autism, Dyslexia, and Cognitive or Speech Disabilities

Depending on the disability, an individual may be offered many different accommodations, including:

- Communication Boards and Apps
- Clear and plain language whenever possible
- One-one communication avoiding multiple speakers

Resource: New Mexico Developmental Disability Council <https://www.nmddpc.com/>

Resource Contact: Alice Lou McCoy, Executive Director, Developmental Disabilities Council, 505-225-4973 [AliceLiu.McCoy2@state.nm.us](mailto:AliceLiu.McCoy2@state.nm.us)

For questions or consultation, a CYFD employee may contact the CYFD Director of Children’s Rights and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator Eli Fresquez [eli.fresquez@state.nm.us](mailto:eli.fresquez@state.nm.us), call or text 505-629-9626 TTY: 800-659-8331, Relay: 7-1-1.

Relevant Law

CYFD will draft, maintain, and update its regulations and rules found in the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) to reflect this plan. To maintain compliance with State and federal law, this plan will include an annual public assessment submitted to the governor, that details the need for departmental services to improve access for individuals with limited English proficiency. Submission of this an annual report to the governor and the legislative finance committee will include information regarding the implementation of the CYFD’s language access plan.



Barbara J. Vigil  
CYFD Cabinet Secretary

12/01/2022

Effective Date