



Auxiliary Aids Plan

PURPOSE:

To ensure the accessibility of auxiliary aids in all child placing services, programs, terms and conditions of employment and benefits to persons with disabilities and persons with Limited-English Proficiency (LEP).

SCOPE:

This procedure only applies to methods of effective communication and does not cover other requirements under the American's with Disabilities Act or Section 504, such as physical modifications of buildings or surrounding areas to accommodate for persons with disabilities.

GENERAL:

IMPOWER, Inc. (IMPOWER) is required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids to persons with disabilities and persons with LEP, to ensure that such persons have an equal opportunity for accessibility to programs, terms and conditions of employment, benefits, and services. The type of aid or service will vary depending on the complexity of the communication and the needs of the person with a disability. This plan will be disseminated to persons and agencies working with people living with a disability and LEP and will be posted on IMPOWER's website effective 10/1/2019¹.

IMPOWER will provide Auxiliary Aids to qualified Customers or Companions, who have disabilities including hearing, vision, or mobility impairments, and those with impaired speaking skills. Auxiliary Aids will also be provided, for all qualified Customers or Companions who have LEP, by taking reasonable steps to provide services and information in appropriate languages.

IMPOWER will at all times recognize the customer or companion's preference is the primary consideration in determining what auxiliary aids or services to provide. If communication through a specific auxiliary aid or service is deemed to be ineffective, staff will ask the customer or companion to determine a more effective auxiliary aid or service for communication. Documentation shall be made in the customer's file regarding the attempt to improve the effectiveness of auxiliary aids and services.

IMPOWER shall designate a **Single Point of Contact** (SPOC) to coordinate services according to the obligations of the DCF/HHS Settlement Agreement and the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Section 504.

The SPOC will coordinate the provision of auxiliary aids and services to deaf or hard of hearing Customers or Companions. They shall ensure that all staff are equipped with resources necessary to ensure effective communication with deaf or hard-of-hearing

¹ Due to the website update with merger.

Customers or Companions and shall ensure that all staff document the delivered services. This information includes, but is not limited to:

- a. records relating to the Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan for Persons with Disabilities and LEP, such as the Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid/Service Record, Request/Waiver of Free Communication Assistance, and Customer Feedback Forms; and
- b. request for brochures, letters, memoranda, newspaper notices, and announcements.

PROCEDURE:

Every effort will be made to obtain Auxiliary Aids in a timely fashion. The use of these aids will be provided at no cost to the client or potential client.

Staff that is unfamiliar with the auxiliary aid or service requested shall contact their Single Point of Contact, 504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer) or their Supervisor, for assistance in locating appropriate resources to ensure effective communication with clients, customers and companions.

IMPOWER will assess its Auxiliary Aids and Services by:

- 1) identifying non-English languages that are likely to be encountered by reviewing demographics of the Seminole, Brevard, Orange, Osceola, Hendry, Glade, Highlands County population; and
- 2) reviewing any documented logistic data based on disabilities for the Seminole, Brevard, Orange and Osceola County population.

I. Ensuring Accessibility

The following procedures are to be followed by IMPOWER to ensure accessibility of programs and services to Customers or Companions with disabilities or those who have LEP:

A. Timing of Communication Assessment

Staff are required to determine, prior to providing service, the type of auxiliary aid or service that is needed to ensure effective communication with the disabled or LEP Customer or Companion.

1) Scheduled Appointment

If a Customer or Companion who has a disability or has LEP is scheduled for an appointment, staff shall do a Communication Assessment as defined in Section I(B) at the time of the scheduling of such appointment.

2) Non-Scheduled Appointment

If a Customer or Companion comes in without an appointment staff shall do a Communication Assessment as defined in Section I(B) upon their arrival.

B. Communication Assessment to Determine Services

- 1) Assess needs by consulting with the Customer or Companion regarding his/her preferred communication method, and if applicable, with assigned caseworkers, counselors, parents, family members, guardians or other representatives. A determination will need to be made as to whether the aid needed is "Aid Essential" or "Non-Aid Essential."

a. Aid Essential Communication

- i. Any circumstance in which the importance, length, and complexity of the information being conveyed is such that the exchange of information between parties should be considered essential. *See* Section I(C) below.
- ii. Staff shall provide requested auxiliary aids services to Customers or Companions.

b. Non-Aid Essential Communication

- i. Any circumstance not considered Aid Essential (as defined above).
 - ii. IMPOWER has the flexibility to determine the appropriate auxiliary aid or service to provide, to ensure effective communication and whether it is necessary to provide such aid.
 - iii. If it is determined that the communication issue does not warrant provision of the auxiliary aid or service requested, staff shall advise the Customer or Companion of the denial, the name and title of the person who made the determination, and the basis for the determination. *See* Section I(D)(1) for more information.
 - iv. When making this determination, IMPOWER staff shall account for all relevant facts and circumstances, including without limitation of the following:
 1. the type of auxiliary aid or service requested by the Customer or Companion;
 2. the nature, length, and importance of the communication at issue;
 3. the individual's communication abilities; and
 4. the number of people involved in the communication.
 - v. If communication is not effective or if the nature of the communication changes significantly after the initial assessment, staff shall reassess which appropriate auxiliary aids and services are necessary, when possible, with the Customer or Companion.
- 2) If a Customer or Companion does not request auxiliary aids and services, but staff have reason to believe after conducting the Communication Assessment that such person would benefit from appropriate auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, staff should reiterate that these services are

available free of charge.

C. Communication Options

1) Interpreters

a. Resources

1. To the extent such resources result in effective communication, staff may utilize any of the following interpreter resources for Aid Essential Communication:
 - a. Certified contract sign language and/or language interpreter
 - b. Qualified Interpreter from IMPOWER personnel
2. When communicating with a Customer or Companion in a Non-Aid Essential situation, staff may also utilize the following:
 - a. Traditional Relay Service (text only) through a TTY or via the Internet
 - b. Video Relay Service using a videophone or a computer webcam with a sign language interpreter
3. Family members and advocates/friends of customers or companions should not be used to interpret or facilitate communication unless the following five (5) factors are present:
 - a. the Customer or Companion desires such person to provide communication assistance and the person agrees to do so;
 - b. such use is appropriate under the circumstances, considering any privacy and confidentiality issues that may arise;
 - c. the Customer or Companion has been made aware of the full range of auxiliary aids and services options available, free of charge, using the materials and formats described herein;
 - d. the Customer or Companion provides written confirmation that he/she was made aware of relevant auxiliary aids and services available, free of charge, and agrees to the use of such person to interpret or facilitate communication.
 - e. The Interpreter of their choosing is eighteen (18) years of age or older.

b. Timely Provision

1. Staff shall provide interpreters for Customers and Companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing or LEP in a timely manner in accordance to the following standards:
 - a. Non-Scheduled Interpreter Requests:
 - i. For any emergency that is not a scheduled

appointment, staff shall make an interpreter available as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours from the time the Customers, Companion or staff requests an interpreter, whichever is earlier.

- ii. If the situation is not an emergency, staff shall offer to schedule an appointment as convenient for all parties, but at least by the next business day.

b. **Scheduled Interpreter Requests:**

- i. For scheduled events, staff shall make a qualified interpreter available at the time of the scheduled appointment. If an interpreter fails to appear for the scheduled appointment, staff shall take whatever additional actions are necessary to make a qualified interpreter available to the Client or Companion who is deaf or hard-of-hearing as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours after the scheduled appointment.

- 2. Staff shall continue to try to communicate with the Customer or Companion who is deaf or hard-of-hearing insofar as the Customer or Companion seeks to communicate, between the time an interpreter is requested and the time an interpreter arrives.

c. **Definitions**

- 1. **Certified Interpreter**

Shall mean a qualified interpreter who is registered by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or other national or state interpreter assessment and certification program. All interpreters' certifications shall be verified.

- 2. **Qualified Interpreter**

Shall mean a person who is able to interpret competently, accurately, impartially and effectively, both respectively and expressively, using any specialized terminology necessary for effective communication.

2) **Other Communication Assistance**

See Attachment "A" for information on other communication assistance available for Non-Aid Essential Communication.

D. Documentation

1) **Customer/Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid/Service Record Form**

- a. This form must be filled out each time the Customer or Companion

needs services from the Organization, marking whether it is an initial appointment, a subsequent appointment, or a reassessment of the Customer or Companions need for auxiliary aid services. The original is to be kept in the associated Client's Case File.

- b. A Communication Plan should be developed & attached to the Customer/Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid/Service Record Form for Customers or Companions who need long- term services from the Organization. Communication plans should be updated at least quarterly, but also each time there is a change or reassessment. The Communication Plan should include the following:
 - 1. a listing of service situations such as weekly staffings, group classes, etc.;
 - 2. whether communication assistance at these service situations is Aid Essential or Non-Aid Essential;
 - 3. what type of Auxiliary Aid or Service will be provided at these service situations; and
 - 4. the staff member responsible for arranging for or providing the Auxiliary Aid or Service.
- c. If the communication is deemed Non-Aid Essential and there is a denial of Auxiliary Aid or Service, this must be documented in the designated section on this form. The information should include the name and title of the person who made the determination, the basis for the determination, the date and time of denial. At IMPOWER, a denial determination can only be made by an officer of IMPOWER.

2) Customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance Form

- a. This form must be filled out each time the Customer or Companion needs services from IMPOWER. The original is to be kept in the associated Client's Case File.
- b. If a Customer or Companion chooses a family member or advocate/friend to interpret for them (*see* Section I(C)(1)(a) for a listing of standards), a Certified or Qualified Interpreter should be hired to verify that communication is happening effectively and accurately.

3) Customer/Companion Feedback Form

- a. Each Customer or Companion who is provided an interpreter or other appropriate auxiliary aid or service shall be provided with this form.
- b. The purpose of this form is to collect data on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the auxiliary aids or service provided and the performance of the interpreter provided.
- c. This form is not to be collected by IMPOWER. The Customer or Companion should submit this form directly to DCF.

- d. Staff shall offer assistance, including additional interpreter services, for customers or companions to complete the feedback form.
 1. An American Sign Language video interpretation of instructions for completing & submitting this form are posted on the DCF website.

E. Dissemination & Notification

IMPOWER will provide notification of its Auxiliary Aids Plan to clients, potential clients, providers, candidates for employment and staff.

- 1) The IMPOWER SPOC will distribute copies of the Auxiliary Aids policy to staff, each time it is updated.
- 2) The IMPOWER SPOC will distribute copies of the Auxiliary Aids policy to those organizations that hold a contract, letter of agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding with IMPOWER.
- 3) IMPOWER will display the following posters at all of its service locations in order to provide information about the availability of appropriate auxiliary aids and services at no-cost to customers or companions with disabilities and how to request them:
 - a. DCF Hearing Impaired Poster which includes the contact info for the DCF ADA/Section 504 Coordinator;
 - b. DCF LEP Poster;
 - c. DCF Non-Discrimination Poster; and
 - d. Auxiliary Aids Information Poster.
- 4) 60 s Notices
 - a. When meetings, conferences, interviews, or staffings are scheduled where candidates, clients or potential clients may attend, information will be included in the advertising or notice of the meeting that sensory impaired or LEP participants will be provided with the necessary auxiliary aids or interpreters at no cost to themselves.
 - b. Notice must include contact information and date by which clients or potential clients must request this assistance. If assistance must be provided by IMPOWER, the scheduler of the meeting should notify the SPOC.
 - c. The following is required if auxiliary aids are needed at meetings, conference and staffings:
 - i. Qualified/Certified Interpreter (as described herein);
 - ii. Adequate lighting in meeting rooms for sign language interpretation;
 - iii. Readers or recordings for visually impaired persons; and
 - iv. Agenda or other materials translated into usable formats for visual, hearing impaired or LEP participants.

F. Staff Training

Training is essential to the on-going success of providing Auxiliary Aid/Service to persons with disabilities, deaf or hard-of-hearing or those who are LEP.

- 1) IMPOWER's SPOC will attend, within thirty (30) days of assignment to the

SPOC position, the DCF "HHS Effective Communication with our Deaf and Hard-of- Hearing Customers: For Single Points of Contact-Online" Training and will attend periodic training as policies are updated & training is released by DCF.

- 2) All staff will attend the DCF "Effective Communication" training annually (and also within sixty (60) days of hire) on how to provide assistance to persons with disabilities and who are LEP Customers and Companions in obtaining assisting devices and/or aids or other reasonable accommodations. This training is mandatory and will be tracked. This training is available on the DCF website & includes:
 - a. procedures for serving Customer and Companions who are hearing impaired, sight-impaired mobility impaired and LEP;
 - b. awareness of deaf or hard-of-hearing, speech impairments, sight impairments and blindness, reading impairments and dyslexia and mobility impairments;
 - c. communication options available;
 - d. how to provide reasonable accommodations for certified Customers and potential Customers, i.e. – how to access or purchase auxiliary aids, interpreter services and physical modifications;
 - e. requirements for making meetings, conferences and services accessible; and
 - f. awareness of the Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan, including how to access the Plan for reference.
- 3) SPOCs and staff members must fill out the Support to the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Attestation Form Essential Communication trainings. This Attestation Form should be kept in the employee's personnel file.

G. Reporting, retention and monitoring

1) Reporting

- a. By the 5th day of each month IMPOWER is required to compile & submit a Monthly Summary Report documenting the details of any Auxiliary Aids services that were provided. Reporting will be accomplished through DCF's document submission setup through FormSite:

<http://fs16.formsite.com/dcfuser/form3/index.html>
1

- b. Along with completing the Monthly Summary Report, IMPOWER is required to upload any "Customer/Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid/Service Record" and "Customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance" Forms filled out for services on a monthly basis via the upload feature on this website.
- c. DCF staff will send a confirmation of report submission via e-mail along with a copy of the submitted Monthly Summary Report. IMPOWER' s SPOC will forward all confirmation of Monthly

Summary Report submission to the DCF Contract Manager.

2) Document Retention

- a. IMPOWER's SPOC shall collect copies of the Customer/Companion Communication Assessment, Auxiliary Aid/Service Record, and customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance Forms from IMPOWER staff, to upload to the FormSite platform with the Monthly Summary Report.
- b. Any documentation collected by SPOCs should be maintained for at least ten (10) years.

3) Monitoring

- a. The SPOC will be responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the plan at least on an annual basis.
- b. The monitoring will include the review of client's files who have received Auxiliary Aid support for customer/companion communication assessment and auxiliary aid service record, customer/companion request for free communication assistance or waiver of free communication assistance, communication plan when ongoing services are provided, entry in the file about distribution of customer/companion feedback form and a file entry about the auxiliary aid services provided.
- c. The monitoring will also include the review of the employee HR file to ensure that it contains the attestation of "Support to the Deaf and Hard-of- Hearing form." Certificate of auxiliary aid training within sixty (60) days of hire and annual auxiliary aid refresher training.
- d. The monitoring will also include the review, if any, of complaints/grievances regarding the provision of auxiliary aids.
- e. Conduct a review of notifications or materials available to the public to ensure accommodations are made for individuals with disabilities.
- f. Should IMPOWER have any auxiliary aid equipment, it will be monitored for inspection and maintenance.

Attachment A

Other Communication Options

The following information will provide a description of communication options available at IMPOWER for Non-Aid Essential Auxiliary Aids use only. The SPOC should be contacted if there is a question about the availability of these items or any items not listed.

Hearing Impaired:

Communication options available for the hearing impaired should include but are not limited to Telephone Facsimile Transmittal, sign language interpreters & relay services interpreters, flash cards, lip-reading, written notes, charts, signs or a combination of these.

1) Telephone Facsimile Transmittal:

- a. Telephone Facsimile Transmittals are a communication option for hearing impaired communicating remotely. They can be used to communicate back & forth by written word through a FAX machine.

2) Interpreter Services:

- a. Florida Relay Service - communications link for people who are Deaf, hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired. People who use specialized telephone equipment can communicate with people who use standard telephone equipment.

To call Florida Relay, dial 7-1-1, or use the toll-free numbers below:

1-800-955-8771 (TTY) - Allows a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind, or speech impaired to communicate with anyone by phone.

1-800-955-8770 (Voice) - Allows standard telephone users to make phone calls to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired.

1-800-955-1339 (ASCII) - Allows customers to call the relay from their personal computer, which will display two split windows (horizontal or vertical). One window displays ASCII's user's text and the other displays the OPR's text.

1 -877-955-8260 (VCO-Direct) - Allows Voice (VCO) calls to go to a group of agents specially trained for VCO calls.

1-800-955-5334 (STS) - Allows speech impaired customers to have their calls processed by a trained Relay OPR familiar with speech patterns. The OPR then makes the call and repeats the words exactly.

1-877-955-8773 (Spanish)

1-877-955-8707 (French Cr)

- b. Sign Language Interpreters - Below is a listing of two organizations for sign language interpreters currently being utilized by IMPOWER.

American Sign Language Services
<http://www.aslservices.com> 1-888-744-6275
Availability - 24 hours a day

Interpretek
<http://www.interpretek.com> 407-339-4835

- 3) Flash Cards: Flash cards may be used with hearing impaired Customers or Companions to communicate in person.
- 4) Lip Reading: Some hearing-impaired Customers or Companions can read lips, so this also may be used as a communication tool if the option is available.
- 5) Written Notes, Charts & Signs: The Customer or Companion may use written notes, calls and/or signs to communicate with a staff member who has been trained in Auxiliary Aids.

Visually Impaired:

Communication options available for the visually impaired should include but are not limited to magnification devices, taped material, readers, or a combination of these:

- 1) Magnification Devices: IMPOWER has on hand one (1) magnification device at each its service location that can be utilized on request by any client or potential client.
- 2) Taped Material: Any form of written material used for services information can be audio recorded so that it may be utilized by visually impaired Customers or Companions.
- 3) Readers: Any staff member that has had Auxiliary Aids training may read materials to Customers or Companions who need assistance.

Speech Impaired:

Communication options available for the speech impaired should include but are not limited to sign language interpreters & relay service interpreters, written notes, or a combination of these.

- 1) Interpreter Services:
 - a. Sign Language Interpreters - *see* section under Hearing Impaired
 - b. Florida Relay Service - *see* section under Hearing Impaired
- 2) Written Notes: The Customer or Companion may use written notes to communicate with a staff member who has been trained in Auxiliary Aids.

Mobility Impaired:

Communication options available for the mobility impaired will depend on their disability and may include using a combination of any of the communication modes available in this plan.

Video Remote Interpreting:

Through a video remote interpreter people can use an interpreter via technology to communicate with a participant instead of an in person interpreter. This is a good resource for emergency situations with limited time to get an in person interpreter as well as if there are few local community resources for certified interpreters. Below is the phone number for the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf which will provide contact information for certified video remote

interpreting.

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: (703) 838-0030 (Video Remote Interpreters)

Limited English Proficiency:

Communication options available for persons with LEP should include but are not limited to language interpreters & translators, written notes, charts & signs, or a combination of these.

- 1) Interpretation/ Translation services:
 - a. Qualified Staff Member - Interpretation/Translation services can be rendered by a Qualified Staff Member in accordance with Section I(C)(1)(c).
 - b. Certified Interpreter – Below is a listing of two (2) organizations for LEP interpreters and/or translators.
 - i. Alina Paradoa Interpreting Services
<http://www.speak4u.us>
407-222-2631
Languages: Spanish, Portuguese
 - ii. Transphoto--
<http://www.transphoto.com> 407-896-1776
Languages: Most Modern Languages
- 2) Written Notes, Charts & Signs: The Customer or Companion may use written notes, charts and/or signs to communicate with an IMPOWER staff member who has been trained in Auxiliary Aids.

CART-Captioning Real Time and Providers:

Captioning Real Time or CART is the simultaneous conversion of spoken words to text, through computer-assisted transcription or court reporting, and displaying that text on a video screen. This communication service is beneficial to individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing who do not use sign language or for whom assistive listening devices and systems are ineffective.

Kaptions4U, LLC
Brandi Kent, RPR, CBC, CRR, CCP
352-516-8310

Tanya Ward English, CRR-CCP-CBC
CAPTION CREW
Florida Realtime Reporting
954.767.6363
tanya@floridarealtime.com

Marianne E. Sayers, RPR, CRR
Fort Myers Court Reporting
2231 First Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901

941-334-1411
941-334-1476 fax

HOW TO REPORT A COMPLAINT:

If you believe you were wrongfully denied access to services or discriminated against:

1. Inform the person who denied access to services that you believe they wrongfully denied you services and why you believe that is the case.
2. Ask to speak to a manager, immediately.
3. You may submit your complaint/grievance in writing or verbally. Direct your concern to the Director or Manger. Include the following information:
 - a. What service were you denied?
 - b. What were you told was the reason you were denied service?
 - c. What person denied you services?
 - d. What was the date you were denied service?

Florida Commission on Human
Relations 2009 Apalachee Park
way, Suite 200
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Phone: (850) 488-7082
Fax: (850) 488-5291
Web Site: <http://fchr.state.fl.us>
E-N ail: fchrinfo@fchr.myflorida.com

For Those with Communication
Impairments: The Florida Relay Service
Voice (statewide) 711

IMPOWER will provide accommodations, including American Sign Language interpreters, assistive listening devices, alternative formats of printed materials and real-time captioning upon request for persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or are living with disabilities. To ensure accommodations, please make your request within seven days prior to the event to [Amy Kryszan at Akryszan@impowerfl.org](mailto:Amy.Kryszan@impowerfl.org).