



**NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM, INC.
*2020 ACCESSIBILITY PLAN***

I. Organization Mission Statement

The National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP) is an energetic instrument of compassion and change in the lives of children, youth and families and the systems, structures and practices that affect them.

NYAP advocates for stability and permanency for youth and families by:

- ✿ Strengthening the ties between youth and families;
- ✿ Improving and restoring their ability to function productively and independently within society;
- ✿ Promoting non-violent solutions;
- ✿ Educating the community about the special needs of children, youth, adults and families;
- ✿ Providing culturally relevant and diverse community based, family focused services.

II. Scope and Purpose

The organization is committed to creating a safe, respectful and affirming environment for all persons served. This accessibility plan seeks to articulate areas of operation which require additional attention to ensure the services provided and supervised by the organization meet the needs of individuals who are members of potentially vulnerable, disenfranchised and stigmatized populations. The accessibility planning process is designed to affirm the organization's mission and values based commitment to fair, inclusive and accessible environments for persons served and their families.

The goals of accessibility planning activities include:

- ✿ The provision of safe and equitable environments for all who work for, or are served by the organization as well as other stakeholders;
- ✿ The opportunity for people to clearly express themselves and state their needs through meaningful communication including the use of auxiliary aids and translation services as needed and at no additional cost;
- ✿ The protection and advancement of high quality child and family services funding through advocacy;
- ✿ The protection of the organization's reputation and goodwill within its communities and with regulatory and funding agencies.

III. Activities

Designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

The organization has established a designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for each site. This individual oversees the coordination involved in providing necessary auxiliary aids and services to customers and clients.

Employees are expected to access the SPOC for their site to obtain information needed to meet the needs of persons served, their families and visitors to the organization.

Civil Rights Notification Posters

All employee work sites have and will maintain postings for non-discrimination, hearing impairment and limited English proficiency. These postings will be visible and available to persons served, their families and visitors. Additionally, the postings will provide details for who to contact to file a complaint, whether with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Civil Rights, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights, or other state specific resources.

New Employee Orientation

As part of NYAP's orientation process, all new employees are required to complete the Health & Human Services (HHS) Modules 1-3 within 60 days of their hire date. This mandatory HHS training provides detailed instructions on how to provide auxiliary aids and services to persons with disabilities.

All employees are required to sign an Americans Disability Act (ADA) acknowledgement form prior to beginning employment with the organization. This form likewise details how to file an external complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights.

Annual Employee Training

All employees are required to participate in an annual employee training on how to assist persons with disabilities, those who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those who self-designate as Limited English Proficient (LEP). This training will be conducted by the Human Resources Department.

In addition, NYAP's SPOCs, Directors and Supervisors participate in annual training as it relates to ADA compliance.

Availability of On-Site Assistive Listening Devices

In cases requiring on-site assistive listening devices, pocket talkers are made available to communicate with persons served and their families. Pocket talkers are assistive listening devices designed to amplify noise in the direct proximity of an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing while lessening surrounding sounds.

Assessment of Need

At the time of interaction with a person or family member who may be in need of an auxiliary aid or service, employees are expected to assess their accessibility based need(s) to determine whether the individual wishes to officially request an auxiliary aid or service from the organization. Based on their preferences, corresponding action will be implemented including documentation that the assistive device has been provided or the individual has waived their right to request an auxiliary aid or service.

Record Retention

Employee at each respective NYAP location are expected to notify the designated SPOC, and the site will maintain records of all documents and forms detailing the provision of auxiliary aids and services to persons served and their families. As per best practices and organizational policy and procedure, original forms and documents are maintained in the file of the person served.

Self Determination

When assessing the need for an auxiliary aid or service, and unless it would cause undue hardship or disruption to the organization, its employees or services provided, employees are expected to defer to the particular preference and desires of the individual in need of accessibility assistance. For example, if the individual expresses a preference to interact with an interpreter in-person, rather than through a video remote interpreter, then the organization will honor this preference in the knowledge that the end goal is effective communication.

Timeline for Requesting an Auxiliary Aid or Service for Customers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Once it has been determined that an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing is requesting and in need of an auxiliary aid or service, employees are expected to ensure the request is fulfilled as quickly as possible and as follows:

- ✿ In an emergency situation, certified interpreters are expected to arrive within 2 hours; in cases of non-emergency, interpreters should arrive as soon as possible, but no later than the next business day;
- ✿ For scheduled visits, meetings and sessions, a certified interpreter or certified Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) provider will be accessible at the time of the pre-arranged visit;
- ✿ In the event an interpreter does not show up at the time of the pre-arranged visit, employees will take whatever steps necessary to ensure that a certified interpreter is made accessible as quickly as possible as and absolutely no later than 2 hours after the scheduled visit/meeting.

Contacting a Sign Language Interpreter on a 24/7 Basis

It is important that the organization serve all deaf and hard of hearing persons and their companions in a timely manner. If and when employee are made aware of the need for a sign language interpreter at after hours or on weekends, employees are expected to contact Absolute Quality Interpreting (AQI). Additional information may be found in Appendix A and B of this plan.

TDD/TTY Services, Relay Services and Video Remote Interpreting

The organization has access to a variety of resources for persons with sensory disabilities and will utilize the services of various agencies in order to appropriately communicate with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. Additional information may be found in Appendix A and B of this plan.

Foreign Language Interpreters

Please see Appendix A and B for a list of foreign language interpreter resources.

Reasonable Accommodation Provisions: Public Notices and Job Postings

The organization is committed, to the best of its ability, to provision all necessary auxiliary aids, accommodations and services for those individuals with accessibility needs included those who are LEP. As all such meetings, conferences, and seminars are pre-scheduled, the following standard notice on all public notices, advertisements, job postings and public meeting announcements will be included:

“NYAP welcomes all individuals with disabilities and those who are Limited English Proficient. We encourage participation in all agency conferences and meetings. If you have a sensory disability or are Limited English Proficient, we will provide you with all necessary auxiliary aids or interpreters, free of charge, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on NYAP. Please call (name of coordinating event employee member) at (phone number of coordinating event employee member) or send an email to (coordinating event employee member email) by (date) in order for us to provide necessary accommodations”.

NYAP’s online employment page will include the following notice, available for viewing by all candidates:

“NYAP maintains a policy of nondiscrimination, providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on NYAP. If an accommodation is needed in order to participate in the application process, please contact NYAP by calling 888-202-2965 and asking for the Human Resources Department”.

NYAP’s employee handbook will contain the following notice to employees:

“If you have a disability and believe you need a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of your job, contact the Human Resources Department. NYAP encourages individuals with disabilities to come forward and request reasonable accommodations”...

Rights of Persons Served and Employees

In the event a job applicant, employee, person served or other individual believes that they have been discriminated against by the organization or one of its employees, and would like to file a complaint, they may do so according to the organizations relevant policies and procedures. Employees in receipt of a complaint are required to forward all such complaints to the relevant state entity within 24 hours of receipt as applicable.

Verification of a Sign Language Interpreter’s Certification

Employees are expected to verify the credentials of any given American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter prior to using the services of the interpreter by requesting the credentials involving in-person visits by an ASL interpreter. All ASL interpreters must be certified through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) or the National Association of the Deaf (NAD).

Cases Involving Ineffective Communication through an Auxiliary Aid or Service

Once an auxiliary aid or service has been provided to a person served or family member, employees are expected to evaluate the effectiveness of the particular method of communication chosen. If the method of communication chosen is determined ineffective or inadequate, the employee is expect to work with the person served or family member to identify alternative methods in order to achieve effective communication.

Denial of an Auxiliary Aid or Service

Employees are expected to do their best to provide necessary auxiliary aids or services as requested. An auxiliary aid or service should rarely, if ever, be denied. In the event the organization is considering denying auxiliary aids or services, it should be based on discussion with the person served, their family, the treatment or service team. Denials will be based on determination of need of the requesting individual and/or undue hardship or disruption to the organization, its employees or services. Denials should be documented in the case record of the person served including the process by which the decision was made and the alternative plan to meet their needs.

Public Access to the NYAP Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan

The organizations Accessibility Plan is available on our website under the “Quick Links” at the bottom of our homepage: www.nyap.org. The plan Our AASP will be reviewed, with the potential for revision, on an annual basis. A current copy will be submitted to the DCF Office of Civil Rights by March 31 of each year. Employee will be notified and alerted to the availability of the newest most updated version of our AASP within 60 days.

Alternative Formats of the NYAP Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan






Alternative formats of the NYAP AASP will be made available upon request.

IV. Confidentiality of Records

Employees are expected to maintain confidentiality of all organizational, employee, and information about persons served according to the guidelines established by the American Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), relevant state law where applicable, including the Confidentiality Act in Illinois, and professional standards and ethics.

V. Annual Review of the Accessibility Plan

The Accessibility Plan is reviewed on an annual basis. The annual review addresses the following:

-  Achievement of the plan's overall purpose;
-  Achievement of accepted professional standards of practice;
-  Resolution of identified problems;
-  Assessment of the efficiency of accessibility activities; and
-  Effectiveness of related responses.

Recommendations for revision to the accessibility plan, resource list or process made to the Vice President for Organizational Excellence and implemented during the next reporting cycle, as appropriate.

VI. Authority and Responsibility

The President & CEO has designated the Vice President for Organizational Excellence for the oversight of the risk management committee. The Executive Director for each state will ensure that the risk management mediation responses are carried out for their programs. In jurisdictions where state or local requirements specify a defined level of license, credentialing or accreditation, the Executive Director will ensure those requirements are met.

Appendix A - National Resources

Absolute Quality Interpreting (AQI)

AQI provides professional sign language interpreting services, including video remote interpreting services, on a 24/7 basis

Phone: (813) 785-1214 –voice/text; Fax: (813) 200-3469

United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Attention: Office for Civil Rights

Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 3B70

61 Forsyth Street, S.W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8909

(404) 562-7888; TDD (404) 331-2867; Fax (404) 562-7881

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Director, Office of Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382(TTY)

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Attention: Office of Civil Rights

Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 8T36

61 Forsyth Street, S.W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3247

(404) 562-0532; TDD/TTY (202) 720-5964; or Fax (404) 527-4517

United States Department of Justice (USDJ)

Office for Civil Rights – Office of Justice Programs

810 7th Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20531

(202) 307-0690; TDD/TTY (202) 307-2027; Fax (202) 616-9865

United States Department of Justice (USDJ)

Civil Rights Division – Disability Rights Section

1425 New York Avenue

Washington, DC 20530

(800) 514-0301; (800) 514-0383

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)

VRI is a means of communication involving videoconference technology. VRI can be utilized on a spontaneous basis or by appointment. Interpreters through VRI can either interpret foreign languages or provide sign language interpretation. VRI services can be obtained by contacting Language People at: Phone: (707) 538-8900, Website: www.languagepeople.com

Language Line

24/7 translation service in over 200 languages

(866) 874-3972

<http://www.languageline.com/>

Appendix B – State Specific Resources – Florida

Florida Relay Services (FRS)

FRS is a service offered to all Floridians. This service works through the phone lines, allowing a hearing person to understand and effectively communicate with an individual having a sensory disability. A skilled operator acts as the facilitator of communication and is available on a 24/7 basis. Access to Florida Relay by dialing 7-1-1. Needs specific phone numbers are as follows:

- ☛ 1-800-955-8770 (voice)
- ☛ 1-877-955-8260 (VCO)
- ☛ 1-800-955-1339 (ASCII)
- ☛ 1-877-955-8707 (French Creole, 8am to 2am)
- ☛ 1-800-955-8771 (TTY)
- ☛ 1-877-955-5334 (STS)
- ☛ 1-877-955-8773 (Spanish)

District Director, Miami District Office (EEOC)

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
One Biscayne Tower, Suite 2700
2 South Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33131
(305) 808-1740; (800) 669-4000; Fax (305) 808-1855

Executive Director (FCHR)

Florida Commission on Human Relations
2009 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 200
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-4857
(850) 488-7082; Fax (850) 488-5291

Office of Civil Rights

1317 Winewood Blvd., Bldg. 1, Room 110
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700
(850) 487-1901; TTY (850) 922-9220; Fax (850) 921-8470

Coda Link

(954) 423-6893
(954) 423-2315
www.codalinkinc.com
employee@codalinkinc.com
8963 Stirling Road, Suite 6
Cooper City, FL 33328

Glades Initiative

Julio Mariaca, Sign Language and Language Interpreter
(561) 996-3310
<http://www.gladesinitiative.org/>

Accessible Communication for the Deaf

Lisa Gauntlett
(954) 578-3081; (954) 347-5749 (TTD/TTY)
<http://www.acdasl.com/>

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)

(703) 838-0030

TTY: (703) 838-0459

<http://www.rid.org>

Interpreters Network Inc.

ASL, Translation, and Language Interpretation

(305) 381-9555

jsbdomino@aol.com

Link Translations and Interpretation, Inc.

Translation and interpretation services

(305) 790-9071 or (877) 272-5465

<http://www.linktranslations.com/>

ltranslate@aol.com

16560 NW 1st Street

Pembroke Pines, FL 33028

A more extensive list can be obtained from the 2015 Statewide Auxiliary Aids and Service Plan for Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Limited English Proficiency, accessible at:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/servicedelivery/docs/DCFStatewideAuxiliaryAidsandServicesPlan.pdf>.

FLORIDA SPOCs BY REGION

Deerfield Beach

Christina Malcolm

700 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Bldg. 2, Suite 205

Deerfield Beach, FL 33441

(954)290-4161

Fort Myers

Wilma Davilus

2503 Del Prado Blvd., 3rd Floor

Cape Coral, FL 33904

(239)839-5666

Jacksonville

Diane Hall

2200 Rosselle Street

Jacksonville, FL, 32204

Cell: (904) 601-2191

Miami

Christin James

700 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Bldg. 2, Suite 205

Deerfield Beach, FL 33441

(786)724-2427

Palm Beach

Megan Livisay

400 Civic Center Way, Suite B

Royal Palm Beach, FL 33411

(954)263-2132

Pensacola

Jamilyn Ruckman

1924 N. Palafox Street

Pensacola, FL 32501

Cell - (850) 380-7041

Sarasota

Sonya Hernandez

1500 Independence Blvd.

Sarasota, FL. 34234

(941) 780-2169 Cell

Additional Information

Florida employees are expected to use the “Request by Customer or Companion Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing for Free Communication Assistance,” with persons served.

Employees are expected to document all interactions with persons served and family members considered to be deaf, hard of hearing, low vision, blind, or LEP using the “Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary and Service Record” form. (Instructions for completing this form are attached to the form itself).

Following an employee interaction with a client or customer who is deaf or hard of hearing, employee must provide them with a “Customer Feedback Form.” Employee are required to provide this form, whether or not the client or customer decides to complete it and send it to DCF.

Denial of a requested auxiliary aid or service will be documented, including the rationale for denial, on the “Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid and Service Record” form. DCF requires that final denial determinations be solely made by the Regional Director/Circuit Administrator/Hospital Administrator or their Designee or the Contracted Client Services Provider or their Designee.

External complaints are handled by several federal departments. Anyone wishing to file an external complaint should contact the DCF Office of Civil Rights or the local Civil Rights Officer.