

Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Supports

Policy

It is the policy of Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. (CFBHN) to comply with the deaf or hard-of-hearing requirements as defined in the master contract with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and meet requirements pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and CFOP 60-10, Ch. 4, “Auxiliary Aids and Services for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing.”

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for Network Service Providers (NSP) to provide deaf or hard-of-hearing supports to individuals served and their companions.

Procedures

A. CFBHN Responsibilities

1. All deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals served, and their companions, in need of auxiliary aids are offered these services at no additional cost as per federal law and contractual agreement.
2. A copy of this policy and procedure is posted on CFBHN’s website to be made available to individuals served, the public, and organizations for informational purposes. Upon request, to assist in ensuring effective communication, printed documents (including this policy and procedure) are made available in alternate formats and in the preferred method of the individual served, or their companion, Staff may be required to translate written documents in Braille, taped recordings, or large print.
3. CFBHN has designated a Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC), who is responsible for maintaining files that document the required information for the deaf or hard-of-hearing. SPOC duties include but are not limited to:
 - a. Ensuring that information regarding no-cost auxiliary aids is available to individuals served/companions that are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and posted to be easily visible when entering the building. This includes posting information related to: interpreter services for the hearing-impaired; the DCF non-discrimination policy; and limited English proficiency resources.
 - b. To determine the preferred method of communication, the SPOC (or designee) will complete the Customer Companion Communication Form and the Request for or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance form. The completed forms are stored on CFBHN’s shared drive (G drive).
 - c. The individual served/companion is provided with the preferred method of communication and auxiliary aid services needed.
 - d. If the individual/companion has a scheduled appointment, the preferred method of communication shall be available at the time of the appointment.
 - 1) If for any reason the preferred method of communication is unavailable, a reasonable substitute is made available as soon as possible, but no later than two hours after the scheduled appointment.

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- 2) For non-scheduled appointments, the SPOC (or designee) ensures that the preferred method of communication is available within two hours (or no later than twenty-four hours).
 - 3) If an auxiliary aid or service is found to be ineffective, the SPOC (or designee) shall re-assess to determine an alternative form of communication to be used in order to ensure the individual served, or their companion, fully understand the information that is being provided.
- e. Ensuring that individuals are aware of and know how to use the Florida Relay Service. To call the Florida Relay, dial 7-1-1, or use the following toll free numbers:
- 1-800-955-8771 (TTY)
 - 1-800-955-8770 (Voice)
 - 1-800-955-3771 (ASCII)
 - 1-877-955-8260 (VCO-Direct)
 - 1-800-955-5334 (STS)
 - 1-877-955-8773 (Spanish)
 - 1-877-955-8707 (French Creole)

CFBHN does not have access to TDD/TTY equipment, but can accept phone calls from individuals who use these items to communicate.

4. At no time shall an auxiliary aid or service to an individual served or companion who is deaf or hard-of-hearing be denied. Denial determination can only be made by the Regional Managing Director (or designee) or the Contracted Client Services Provider Administrator (or designee).
5. The SPOC (or designee) shall obtain verification of the interpreter's certification, and keep it on file for future reference. .
6. CFBHN will ensure that qualified foreign language interpreters (as requested) are available at time of scheduled appointments for deaf and or hard-of-hearing individuals served/ companions. The SPOC (or designee) shall obtain verification of the interpreter's certification, and keep it on file for future reference. .
7. CFBHN ensures that individuals served are aware of, and know how to use, the Federal Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and Video Relay Interpreting (also known as the Federal Video Relay service, or VRS) services. [Federal Relay – Telecommunication Access for the Government \(https://www.federalrelay.us/\)](https://www.federalrelay.us/). The phone number is (877) 689-7775, and the service is available Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 11:00pm EST. English-to-Spanish Translation is available with 24 hours' notice. CFBHN does not currently have access to the equipment needed for Video Remote/Relay Interpreting but can accept phone calls from those individuals who use these items to communicate.

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8. CFBHN ensures that individuals served are aware of and know how to use the Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services.
9. Employees of CFBHN are required to take the DCF online training for deaf or hard-of-hearing in their orientation when they are hired, but no later than 60 days from the commencement of employment. Annually, all CFBHN staff are required to take the DCF online deaf or hard-of-hearing training.
10. If the SPOC (or designee) is unavailable, CFBHN staff should DCF's SPOC for guidance. Contact information for the regional DCF SPOC is available at this website:
[HHS_CivilRightsOfficers-ADA-504Coordinators.pdf \(https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/individual-with-disability/docs/HHS_CivilRightsOfficers-ADA-504Coordinators.pdf\)](https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/individual-with-disability/docs/HHS_CivilRightsOfficers-ADA-504Coordinators.pdf)

B. NSP Responsibilities

1. NSPs that that employ 15 or more staff members are required to:
 - a. Designate a single point of contact to ensure effective communication with the deaf or hard-of-hearing and/or their companions.
 - b. Follow to the standards outlined in this policy.
2. NSP compliance related to services for deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals and companions are assessed as a component of the CQI monitoring process.

<p>Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing Supports</p>	<p>Date Issued: <u>08/12/2010</u></p>
<p>Approval:  Linda McKinnon, President/Chief Executive Officer</p>	<p>Last Revision: <u>06/10/2022</u></p>
	<p>Review Date: <u>06/10/2022</u></p>