

AUXILIARY AIDS PLAN FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DISABLED AND FOR LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

1.1 PURPOSE

This plan provides for the implementation of Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc. (YFA) policies and procedures for the provision of auxiliary aids to ensure the accessibility of all of YFA's programs, services and employment to persons with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills. This plan also applies to those persons who have Limited English Proficiency as well as persons who are disabled.

1.2 SCOPE

The policies and procedures described in this plan apply to YFA programs that provide direct services to clients or potential clients, and/or their companions and employees or potential employees with impaired sensory (hearing and vision), manual or speaking skills, or those with Limited English Proficiency or disabilities.

1.3 POLICY

YFA will provide appropriate auxiliary aids to persons with disabilities and for persons with Limited English Proficiency where necessary to afford such persons an equal opportunity to benefit from services and employment opportunities. Auxiliary aids may include but are not limited to audio formats, large print, interpreters, assistive listening devices and other aids for persons with disabilities and who have a Limited English Proficiency.

- a. All qualified consumers and/or potential consumers and/or their companions are entitled to an equal opportunity to use and benefit from the programs and services of YFA. This includes reasonable accommodations to ensure that programs and services of YFA are equally accessible to and equally effective for otherwise qualified persons with disabilities and persons with Limited English Proficiency. YFA will take reasonable steps to ensure that services are provided in appropriate languages other than English and that Limited English Proficiency persons are effectively informed and can adequately communicate in order to benefit from our program, services and activities.
- b. Auxiliary aids and language interpreters will be available for use by consumers, potential consumers, their companions, employees and applicants with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills in each phase of the service delivery or employment process, e.g., such as telephone inquiries, request, intake interviews, employment interviews, terms and conditions of employment, service provision, counseling, and grievances. These services will be made available typically through contractual arrangements or agreements with community providers of these services when the lack of such aids may result in the denial of service accessibility, hinder service effectiveness or deny persons with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency reasonable accommodations to ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.

1.4 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Vice President of Human Resources is responsible for the development and implementation of auxiliary aids and Limited English Proficiency plan for employees and applicants for employment who require reasonable accommodations. The Vice President of Administrative Support Services is responsible for the development and implementation of auxiliary aids and Limited English Proficiency plan for consumers or potential consumers who may need reasonable accommodations to access services. In addition, the VP of Administrative Support Services is the agency Single Point of Contact (SPOC) as it relates to DCF requirements. This plan provides for assistive devices, interpreters or readers and physical modifications to ensure accessibility of programs and services to clients, potential clients, their companions, employees and potential employees.

1.5 NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Brochures, pamphlets, agency websites, meeting and training announcements and other agency information will include the following statement: *It is the policy of Youth and Family Alternatives to provide equal opportunity in employment to all employees and applicants for employment, as well as equal opportunity for consumers and potential consumers and their companions in securing appropriate services as provided by Youth and Family Alternatives. No person is to be discriminated against in employment or services provided because of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, co-occurring disorders, or sexual orientation and disabled veterans or veterans of the Vietnam era.*

1.6 PROCEDURES

The following procedures are to be used by YFA employees in providing auxiliary aids to ensure the accessibility of programs and services to consumers, potential consumers, employees or potential employees with disabilities and Limited-English Proficiency.

- a. Needs are assessed through consulting with the consumer/potential consumer, their companions, employee/applicant concerning his/her preferred communication mode, and if applicable, with the assigned YFA counselor, parent, or other family member, guardian or other representative and the auxiliary aids service provider. The consumer's preferred communication mode should always be provided and documented in the record if one exists; the preferred communication mode cannot be denied unless approved by the Vice President of Administrative Support Services.
- b. For essential services that significantly impact the consumer's life (such as assessment or service plan development) or for consumers who are involved or potentially involved in the court system (such as Child Welfare or CINS/FINS), a certified interpreter must be used.
- c. The communication options for hearing impaired persons will include but not be limited to FTRI (Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.), Fax (Facsimile Transmittal), email, certified language interpreters, lip-reading, written notes, supplementary hearing devices, charts, Remote Video Interpreting (VRI), C.A.R.T. (Communication Access Realtime Translation), or signs or a combination of these. Programs must provide auxiliary aids within two hours and complete any required documentation.
- d. Auxiliary Aids must be available and accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- e. The Chief Administrative Officer is the designated official with budget authority to approve appropriate auxiliary aid or interpreter services for employees or applicants. The Chief Operating Officer is the designated official with budget authority to approve appropriate auxiliary aid or interpreter services for consumers or potential consumers in programs.
- f. Auxiliary aids or interpreters will be provided within two hours of a request or as otherwise required or as soon as possible. Delaying services is not always practical or appropriate; therefore, diligent attempt will be made for communication alternatives when advance notice for an auxiliary aid is not given.
- g. The use of auxiliary aids will be at no cost to the consumer, potential consumer, companion, employee or potential employee.
- h. When appropriate, auxiliary aids should be obtained within YFA's current resources. If an auxiliary aid is required and must be purchased or leased, payment will be made from the appropriate operating budget.
- i. Language services may include the availability of bilingual staff who can communicate directly with consumers, potential consumers, employees or applicants in their own language, for services. When bilingual staff is not available, a face-to-face interpretation provided by trained staff, or contract or volunteer interpreters may be used by the program, if appropriate, for services.
- j. Telephone services should be used as a supplemental system when an interpreter is needed instantly or when services are needed for an infrequently encountered language or in those cases in which a face-to-face interpreter is inaccessible. YFA contracts with Language Line Services, which can provide telephone interpreter services for over 200 languages (800-874-9426; YFA account number is 503033; program codes are included in Supplemental Documents - 2).
- k. The Limited English Proficiency individual must be offered free interpreter services first. If the individual declines the use of free interpreter service, YFA staff must document in the record (if one exists) that the individual declined the use of a free interpreter. Staff should suggest that a trained interpreter be present during the encounter to ensure accurate interpretation. The interpreter must be proficient in both English and the other language and should have received orientation and training which includes the ethics of interpreting and possess fundamental knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms and concepts peculiar to the program or activity.
- l. Minor children must never be used as interpreters or be allowed to interpret for a parent when the minor child is the consumer's child. The use of family members or friends as interpreters could result in breach of confidentiality or reluctance on the part of the beneficiaries to reveal personal information critical to their situation. A family member or friend may be used as an interpreter if this approach is requested by the beneficiary and the use of such person does not compromise the effectiveness of services or violates the beneficiary's confidentiality, and the beneficiary is advised that a free interpreter is available.

- m. The Vice President of Administrative Support Services will maintain a list of staff who may be used as interpreters or translators.
- n. When meetings, trainings or seminars are scheduled at YFA locations, information will be included in the advertisement that participants with mobility or sensory impairment will be provided with necessary auxiliary aids at no cost. The information will include the name of the contact person and a date by which the person must request assistance. The following provisions are required only if sensory or mobility impaired persons or persons with Limited English Proficiency plan to attend the specific meeting, training or seminar:
 - 1) Agenda and other conference materials translated into useable form for visually and hearing impaired participants.
 - 2) Parking spaces provided for handicapped persons clearly marked with appropriate ramps and curbs.
 - 3) Entrance ramps will be available for mobility impaired person(s).
 - 4) Meetings will be conducted on the first level or will be available by way of an elevator or ramps that can be independently managed by a person in a wheelchair.
 - 5) Seating arrangements for persons in wheelchairs will be adapted to integrate mobility-impaired persons rather than to isolate them on the group's perimeter.
 - 6) At least one unobstructed entrance to the facility.
 - 7) Restrooms available to mobility impaired.
 - 8) Telephones are wheelchair accessible.
 - 9) Accessible drinking fountains with cup dispensers.
 - 10) Certified interpreters for hearing impaired persons.
- o. The Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI) is a service provided to residents in the State of Florida (24/7, 365 days a year) who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Disabled that connects them to standard (voice) telephone users. Access can be made by dialing 7-1-1 throughout the state of Florida or toll-free Voice callers can dial (800) 955-8770 (see below for more options). YFA staff are able to telephone a job applicant, consumer or potential consumer who is hearing impaired and applicants and consumers who are hearing impaired will be able to call and speak, through the aid of a FTRI operator to YFA staff. An example of appropriate use of this service would be to schedule a meeting. *Under no circumstances is the FTRI service to be used as a substitute for interpreting services.*
 - 1) **TTY:** 800-955-8771, if you are using TTY equipment.
 - 2) **Voice:** 800-955-8770, if you are a standard (voice) user, and are trying to connect with a Relay user.
 - 3) **ASCII:** 800-955-1339, if you are utilizing a computer.
 - 4) **Voice Carry Over (VCO):** 877-955-8260, if you prefer to speak directly to the hearing person. When the hearing person speaks to you, the Relay Operator serves as your "ears" and types everything said to your TTY or VCO phone.
 - 5) **Speech to Speech (STS):** 877-955-5334, if you have a speech disability and would prefer to have our specially trained Relay Operators serve as your voice and repeat your responses to the called party.
 - 6) **Video Assisted STS:** 877-955-5334, Video-Assisted STS supports a one-way video call between the CA and STS user. The video connection assists the CA in understanding the STS user's speech. Callers can enter contact information in the STS Profile to reduce set-up time. In order to use Video-Assisted STS, please inform the Operator after dialing the toll free number that you would like to utilize

Video-Assisted STS. You can make this request before or during the call. You may also add this to your customer profile if you would prefer Video-Assisted STS on all calls.

- 7) **Spanish to Spanish:** 877-955-8773, if you prefer to conduct your conversations in Spanish.
 - 8) **Spanish to English Translation:** 844-463-9710, if your primary language is Spanish, however your caller is an English speaker. Our Relay Operators are able to translate your conversation into English.
 - 9) **French to French:** 877-955-8707, if you prefer to conduct your conversation using the French language
 - 10) **900 Pay Per Call:** 900-230-6868, with Pay per calls the Relay user is responsible for direct billing. Rates vary
- p. Each YFA Program is to have a designated Auxiliary Aids Contact who will be a resource to the program, especially when staff is not familiar with an auxiliary aid or service request. In addition, any Staff may contact the YFA SPOC for assistance in locating appropriate resources to ensure effective communication for consumers.
- q. If the auxiliary aids provided were not effective, the program must make every effort to acquire effective communication; the SPOC must be contacted immediately if auxiliary aids provided were ineffective (727-843-1915 or mphillips@yfainc.org).
- r. The consumer/companions choice of an auxiliary aid must always be provided. If an auxiliary aid is not provided for any reason, the program's Vice President and the SPOC must be contacted immediately.
- s. Each agency site has a Pocketalker. Please see Attachment #8 for a location list.

1.7 **NOTIFICATION**

Youth and Family Alternatives Nondiscrimination Policy and hearing-impaired poster will be displayed at the main entrances to lobby area in each YFA facility. The name, and telephone number for the designated YFA Single Point of Contact (SPOC) as well as the Florida Relay Service number, (800) 955-8770 (Voice) and (800) 955-8771 (TTY) will be listed on the hearing impaired poster.

1.8 **TRAINING**

YFA management staff, direct services staff and clerical staff will be trained on how to assist sensory and mobility-impaired consumers and potential consumers of service in obtaining assistive devices and aids, or other reasonable accommodations. Such training will include:

- a. procedures for serving hearing impaired, sight impaired and mobility impaired consumers and potential consumers
- b. awareness people with disabilities
- c. communication options available
- d. requirements for making meetings, seminars and trainings accessible

- e. annual review of YFA's Auxiliary Aids Plan
- f. all YFA staff who provide direct service to consumers or their companions must complete, "Serving Our Customers who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing," must be completed annually and a signed "Attestation of Understanding" must be included in the employee's Relias training file. New hires must complete the training within 30 days of employment or within contract requirements, whichever is sooner

1.9 DOCUMENTATION/RECORDS RETENTION

Records relating to the auxiliary plan methods and implementation as well as sample copies of materials, such as brochures, letters, memoranda, newspaper notices, minutes of staff meetings, etc. used to inform employees, consumers or potential consumers of this nondiscrimination policy will be documented and maintained for six years by YFA or within contract requirements, whichever is longer. This Plan will be reviewed yearly and updated as required.

1.10 IDENTIFYING RESOURCES

YFA will assess the language needs of the populations served or likely to be directly affected. The United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights has issued a policy on guidance entitle "Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination as it affects Persons with Limited-English Proficiency" which is the reference to this section. YFA will access language needs by:

- a. Identifying the non-English languages that are likely to be encountered in our programs and by estimating the number of Limited-English Proficiency persons that are eligible for services and that are likely to be directly affected by our programs;
- b. Identifying at first contact the preferred language including dialect and American Sign Language of each Limited-English Proficiency consumer and recording this information in the consumer's case record as well as that of accompanying parent or legal guardian;
 - 1) The consumer will be informed about the purpose of collecting the information on race, ethnicity and language.
 - 2) It will emphasized that this information is confidential
 - 3) Consumers do not have to provide the information if he/she chooses not to
 - 4) Information will be collected on all new consumers
- c. Identifying the point of contact in the program or activity where language assistance is likely to be needed;
- d. Identifying the resources in each of our service areas that will be needed to provide effective language assistance;
- e. Identifying the location and availability of these resources; and
- f. Identifying the arrangements that must be made to access these resources in a timely manner.

1.11 TRANSLATION OF WRITTEN MATERIALS

An effective language assistance program ensures that written material that is routinely provided in English is also available in regularly encountered languages other than English. It is particularly important that vital documents be identified and translated into the non-English language of each regularly encountered Limited-English Proficiency group eligible to be served or to be directly affected. It is important to note that in some circumstances verbatim translation may not accurately or appropriately convey the substance of what is contained in materials written in English.

YFA will provide translation of written materials for Limited English Proficiency consumers and potential consumers consistent with Title VI obligations regarding “safe harbor” requirements:

- a. The covered entity provides translated written material, including vital documents, for each eligible Limited-English Proficiency language group that constitutes ten percent or 3000 whichever is less, of the population of persons eligible to be served or likely to be directly affected by the covered entity’s program.
- b. Limited-English Proficiency groups that constitute five percent or 1,000, whichever is less, of the population of eligible persons to be served or likely to be directly affected will have vital documents translated into appropriate non-English languages. Translation of other documents, if needed, can be provided orally.
- c. Covered entity’s with fewer than 100 persons in a language group eligible to be served or likely to be directly affected by the covered entity’s program, does not translate written materials but provides written notice in the primary language of the Limited-English Proficiency language group of the right to receive competent oral translation of written materials.

1.12 COMPETENCE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS

Competency does not necessarily mean formal certification as an interpreter, though certification is helpful. However, competency requires more than self-identification as bilingual. The competency requirement contemplates demonstrated proficiency in English and the other languages, orientation and training that includes the skills and ethics of interpreting (e.g. issues of confidentiality), fundamental knowledge in both languages and accuracy. A covered entity must ensure that those persons it provides as interpreters are trained and demonstrates competency as interpreters.

Competent translators must complete translation of written materials. It is important to note that in some circumstances verbatim translation of materials may not accurately or appropriately convey the substance of what is contained in the written materials.

For Limited-English Proficiency persons whose language does not exist in written form, an interpreter must be available to explain the content of the documents.

Interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing must be certified through the Registry of Interpreters (RID). Staff must request a copy of their registration card each time services are provided include it the client record.

1.13 GRIEVANCE

All Customers and/or Companions will be advised of the Agency grievance procedure and given the opportunity to file a grievance when they are dissatisfied with any aspect of the Agency's programs or if they believe to have been discriminated against in regard to disabling condition or the provision of auxiliary aids.

1.14 RESOURCES

The agency SPOC will update annually this plan which will include a list of employees who speak language(s) other than English, contact information for interpreters for the deaf or hard of hearing, location of all pocket talkers. In addition this plan, along with resources will be maintained by the SPOC on the agency intranet.

1.15 DISTRIBUTION

The agency SPOC will coordinate with the agency IT Administrator in posting the most recent version of the agency's Auxiliary Aids Plan on the YFA website. In addition, the agency SPOC will provide a copy of the plan to anyone who requests a copy.