

# TIPS

## Providing Effective Communication with Your Customers

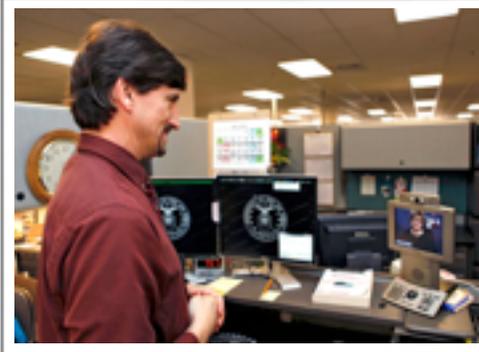
### What is Effective Communication?

Simply put, effective communication means that whatever is written or spoken must be as clear and understandable to people with disabilities as it is for people who do not have disabilities.

State and local government (Title II) must ensure effective communication for individuals with disabilities by providing auxiliary aids and services, which are key to the use of effective communication for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired and those who have speech-related impairments.

The key phrase in the provision of communication is **"as effective as communication as it is with others."**

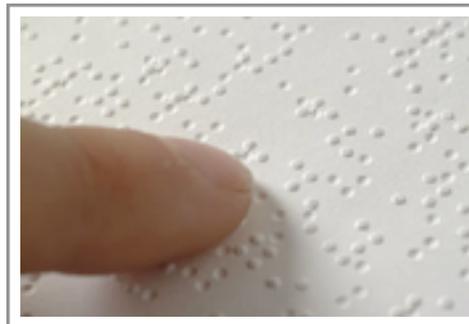
In short a public entity shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services when requested to afford a person with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of a service, program or activity conducted by a public entity. (continued on page 2)



**Picture of a man who is deaf talking on phone using Video Relay Service. (VRS)**



**Picture of communication board**



**Picture of person reading Braille**



**Two people looking at life size letters that says large print. Woman asks man, "Don't you have anything larger?"**



**Woman who is nonverbal communicating with a man using a speech board.**



**Picture of two individuals communicating by sign language**

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# Why is Effective Communication Important?

- People with disabilities cannot participate in government-sponsored programs, services or activities if they cannot understand what is being communicated.
- What good would it do for a person who is deaf to attend a city council meeting to hear the debate on a proposed law if a qualified sign language interpreter or real-time computer-aided transcription services was not available?
- The same result occurs when a patron who is blind attempts to access the internet on a computer at a county's public library when the computer is not equipped with screen reader or text enlargement software.
- Providing effective communication means offering auxiliary aids and services to enable someone with a disability to participate in the program, service or activity that is offered.

**Example:** A person who became deaf late in life is not fluent in sign language. To participate in her

defense of criminal charges, **she requests** real time computer-aided transcription service.

***Instead, the court provides a qualified sign language interpreter.***

**Is this effective? No.** Providing a sign language interpreter to someone who does not use sign language is not effective communication.

## Public Television, Videos, Websites and Web Training

- If your local government produces public service programs, videos or web training, they must be accessible. A common way of making them accessible to people who are unable to hear the audio portion of these productions is closed captioning.
- For persons who are blind or have low vision, detailed audio description may be added to describe important visual images.
- Websites must also be accessible.

## Who Chooses the Auxiliary Aid or Service?

When an auxiliary aid or service is requested by someone with a disability,

- the individual must have the opportunity to request the auxiliary aids and services of their choice, and
- primary consideration must be given to the individual's choice.

**“Primary consideration” means that the public entity must honor the choice of the individual with a disability, with certain exceptions.**

The individual with a disability is in the best position to determine what type of aid or service will be effective. The requirement for consultation and primary consideration of the individual's choice applies to aurally

communicated information (i.e., information intended to be heard) as well as information provided in visual formats.

The requesting person's choice does not have to be followed if:

- the public entity can demonstrate that another equally effective means of communication is available;
- use of the means chosen would result in a fundamental alteration in the service, program, or activity;
- the chosen auxiliary aid or service would result in an undue financial and administrative burden.

## Communication Occurs in Different Ways

**Speaking, listening, reading and writing are all common ways of communicating.**

**When these forms of communication involve an individual with a disability, an auxiliary aid or service may be required for communication to be effective.**

**The type of aid or service necessary depends on the length and complexity of the communication as well as the format. (continued on page 3)**

## Face-to-Face Communication

**Brief or simple face-to-face exchanges**, very basic aids are usually appropriate.

For example, exchanging written notes may be effective when a deaf person asks for a copy of a form at the library.

**Complex or lengthy exchanges**, require more advanced aids and services.

- consider how important the communication is,
- how many people are involved,
- the length of the communication anticipated, and
- the context.

### Examples of instances where more advanced aids and services are necessary

- meetings
- hearings
- interviews
- medical appointments
- training
- counseling sessions
- court proceedings

In these types of situations where someone involved has a disability that affects communication, providing auxiliary aids and services may be required such as:

- qualified interpreters
- computer-aided real-time transcription (CART)
- open and closed captioning
- video remote interpreting (VRI)
- assistive listening devices

- computer terminals
- written transcripts also may be appropriate in pre-scripted situations such as speeches

## Computer-Aided Real-Time Transcription (CART)

Many people who are deaf or hard of hearing are not trained in either sign language or lipreading.

CART is a service in which an operator types what is said into a computer that displays the typed words on a screen.

## Written Communication

Accessing written communication may be difficult for people who are blind or have low vision and individuals with other disabilities.

### Examples of Alternative Formats

- braille
- large print text
- e-mail
- compact discs (CDs) with the information in accessible formats
- audio recordings

In instances where information is provided in written form, ensure effective communication for people who cannot read the text.

- **Consider the context,**
- **the importance of the information,**
- **the length, and**
- **complexity of the materials.**

**Always plan ahead** if you are printing and producing documents for a meeting or other event. It is easy to print or order copies in

alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, audio recordings and documents stored electronically in accessible formats on CDs.

### Examples of events when documents are produced in advance

- training sessions
- informational sessions
- meetings
- hearings
- press conferences

In many instances, a request for an alternative format from a person with a disability will occur before the event.

If written information is involved and there is little time or need to have it produced in an alternative format, reading the information aloud may be effective.

For example, if there are brief written instructions on how to get to an office in a public building, it is often effective to read the directions aloud to the person.

Alternatively, an agency employee may be able to accompany the person and provide assistance in locating the office.

### Don't forget . . .

**Tax bills and bills for water and other government services are subject to the requirement for effective communication.**

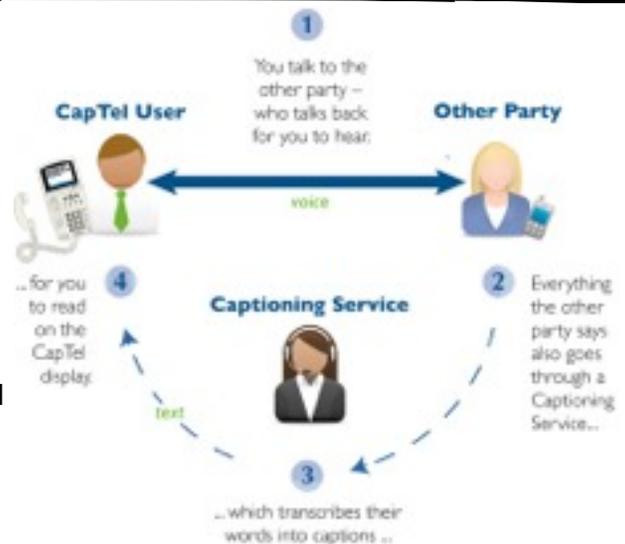
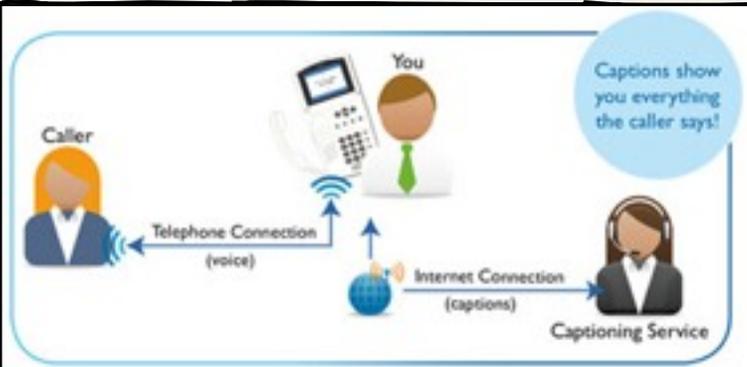
Whenever a state or local government provides information in written form, it must, when requested, make that information available to individuals who are blind or have low vision in a form that is understandable.

# Examples of Auxiliary Aids and Services

The following are examples of different auxiliary aids and services that may be used to provide effective communication for people with disabilities.

Keep in mind, not all aids or services work for all people with disabilities. **Always ask the individual to determine what is effective for him or her.**

- video remote interpreting service (page 6 for definition)
- qualified interpreters
- notetakers
- screen readers
- written materials
- telephone handset amplifiers
- assistive listening systems
- hearing aid-compatible telephones
- computer terminals
- speech synthesizers
- communication boards
- video relay service (see picture below and definition on page 6)
- text telephones (TTYs)
- open or closed captioning
- closed caption decoders
- video text displays
- description of visually presented materials
- exchange of written notes
- CapTel Service (see diagram below)
- e-mail
- text messaging
- instant messaging
- qualified readers
- assistance filling out forms
- taped texts
- audio recordings
- materials in Braille
- large print materials
- materials in electronic format



The picture above and to the right are describing CapTel Service.

The picture below illustrates Video Relay Service (VRS). VRS is a free service, see page 6 for more information.



For more information on new technology improving telephone communication with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing contact the Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing 208-334-0879

## Who are “Qualified Interpreters?”

Sign language interpreters, oral transliterators and cued language transliterators.

A qualified interpreter is defined as an interpreter who,

- via video remote interpreting (VRI) service or an on-site interpreter
- is able to interpret effectively,
- accurately,
- and impartially,
- both receptively and expressively,
- using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

## Who are Qualified Readers?

A qualified reader is defined as a person who is able to read effectively, accurately, and impartially, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

## Can Public Entities Require an Individual to Bring their own Interpreter?

- No, a person shall not be required to bring their own interpreters.
- Adults accompanying the individual can't be required to interpret except in rare circumstances.

## Only in emergency situations involving imminent threat to the safety or welfare of the individual or public, and

- interpreters are not available, or
- in specific situations where the person with a disability makes the request the accompanying adult agrees, and



**The Key to Good Customer Service  
is to Plan Ahead!**

**208-841-9422**

## Communication with Everyone Includes Companions

**Title II entities must also communicate effectively with companions who have disabilities, as appropriate.**

### Who are Companions?

Companions are defined as a “family member, friend or associate of an individual seeking access to a service, program or activity of a public entity. Anyone who accompanies the individual is an appropriate person with whom the public should communicate.”

*The ADA requires communication with everyone, not just the “primary” communicator.*

### Examples may include:

- In Medical Settings: a spouse who is deaf with a hearing patient
- In Court Settings: not just parties; also jurors and spectators

- reliance on that person is appropriate under the circumstances.

## Can Public Entities Require Children to be used as Interpreters?

Only permissible in an emergency involving imminent threat to the safety or welfare of an individual or the public where an interpreter is not available.

## Can Public Entities Charge the Individual for Interpreter Services?

No. A covered entity may not charge an individual with a disability or a particular group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids and services.

Remember before someone requests an auxiliary aid or service from your public entity, **plan ahead** to accommodate the communication needs of persons with disabilities. Always **be prepared** for the time when someone will request a qualified interpreter, Braille documents, large print, video relay services, or another auxiliary aid or service.

## What is the Difference between VRS and VRI?

### Video Interpreting-Based Services

**Video Relay Service (VRS):** A telecommunications relay service that is free and allows people with hearing or speech disabilities who use sign language to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment. The video link allows the Interpreter (also known as a Communication Assistant (CA) or Video Interpreter (VI) to view and interpret the party's signed conversation and relay the conversation back and forth with a voice caller.

The VRS is an Internet-based service that connects the Deaf consumer to an interpreter via a web cam or videophone. However, the hearing person does not see either the Deaf consumer or the interpreter and needs no special equipment other than a regular telephone.

**Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):** A video interpreting service that charges a fee for service. VRI is provided between two parties who may or may not be located in the same room or location. VRI is another delivery model for traditional interpreting services covered by the ADA.

## Communication Freedom For Individuals who are Deaf-Blind



### Deaf-Blind Communicator

The two-piece portable device was conceived by the state's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Seattle Washington, built by the Canadian company HumanWare and perfected with feedback from the members of Seattle's deaf-blind community.

Deaf-blind people most often speak to others in person through the use of American Sign Language, in which one person spells out or signs words into the palm of the other person's hand.

Those who have computers with Braille capabilities can get information through the Internet. However, it was virtually impossible for a person both deaf and blind to converse with a hearing, sighted individual without an interpreter. That ruled out almost all spontaneous,

private or face-to-face conversation with a person who did not know how to sign, said Eric Raff, director of the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The DeafBlind Communicator changes all that. It features a laptop-sized device that has either a regular or Braille keyboard. Beneath that keyboard is a second, smaller keyboard with Braille keys. There is also a second, smaller device that resembles a personal digital assistant, or PDA, in size and appearance.

When a deaf-blind person wishes to communicate with a non-signing person, he or she simply hands over the smaller device and sends the following message, which is both displayed on the text screen and electronically spoken through speakers:

"Hi, I am deaf-blind (I can't hear or see). To communicate with me, type a message and press" the return arrow. The return message is converted into Braille, which the deaf-blind person is able to read by touch on the smaller set of keys on the

keyboard device.

Robert Stepler says the device has made a profound difference in his life.



**Picture of Robert Stepler on the left signing to a man**

"I used to feel like a dog," said Stepler. "People would say, 'Tell him this or tell him that.' If there was a conversation and I wanted to know what was going on, someone would say, 'I'll tell you later.'"

"But now I am able to use this to talk and get messages back. I can communicate with my nephews and send text messages, just like any other person," Stepler said. "It's brought me out into the world and given me freedom."

*Story originally published in 2009 in the Seattle Times written by Christine Clarridge. Copyright © The Seattle Times Company"*

# Disability Etiquette Treating People with Respect

Individuals who are Blind or Visually Impaired	Individuals with Speech Impairments
Speak to the individual when you approach him or her.	If you do not understand the individual, do not pretend you do. Ask the individual to repeat their statement and repeat back to the person their message. This will make sure you understood the individual correctly.
State clearly who you are; speak in a normal tone of voice.	Be patient. Take as much time as necessary.
When conversing in a group, remember to identify yourself and the person to whom you are speaking.	Ask questions requiring only short answers or a nod of the head.
Never touch or distract a service dog without first asking the owner.	Concentrate on what the individual is saying.
Tell the individual when you are leaving.	Do not speak for the individual or attempt to finish his or her sentences.
Do not attempt to lead the individual without first asking; allow the person to hold your arm and control her or his own movements.	If you are having difficulty understanding the individual, consider writing an alternative means of communicating, but first ask the individual if this is acceptable.
Be descriptive when giving directions; verbally give the person information that is visually obvious to individuals who can see.	
Individuals who are Deaf	Individuals who are Hard of Hearing
Initial communication may feel uncomfortable.	May say, "yes" when the individual may not understand.
ASL is not English.	May not disclose that they are hard of hearing or recognize that their hearing limitation is a disability.
Face-to-face communications is valuable.	Get the person's attention before speaking.
Individuals who are deaf may create noise to get your attention.	Avoid noisy backgrounds.
In communication, it is ok to use gesture, body language and facial expression.	Avoid standing in bright windows that may reflect or glare.
When using an interpreter speak directly to the individual who is deaf and make eye contact.	Speak clearly at a normal pace, don't shout.
Frustration may look like anger.	Just because a person wears a hearing aid does not mean they always understand you.
Only one person should speak at a time in a group setting.	Keep your hands away from your mouth when speaking.

# Locating Auxiliary Aids & Services in Idaho

**The Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP)** is a federally funded program administered by the Center on Disabilities and Human Development at the University of Idaho.

Their goal is to increase the availability of assistive technology devices and services for older persons and Idahoans with disabilities.

The Assistive Technology (AT) Resource Centers are located across the state of Idaho. Each center provides AT demonstration and device loans for computer access, to support persons with sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, and physical disabilities, which include aids for recreational activities, daily living, educational, vocational and personal care aids.

All Resource Centers are prepared to take questions about assistive technology needs. Learn more about the Resource Centers by contacting the IATP's main office.

## **Idaho Assistive Technology Project**

University of Idaho  
Center on Disabilities and Human Development  
121 West Sweet Ave.  
Moscow, ID 83843  
Phone Toll-free: 1-800-432-8324  
Fax: 208-885-6145  
Email: [idaheat@uidaho.edu](mailto:idaheat@uidaho.edu)  
webpage <http://www.idaheat.org/Home.aspx>

**The Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CDHH)** was approved by the legislature in 1991. In 2010, the Council was moved from the umbrella of Health and Welfare to under the umbrella of Vocational Rehabilitation. With the move, the Council will continue with its mission, additionally supporting the mission of Vocational Rehabilitation in providing support for individuals with hearing loss to obtain and keep employment.

The Council has established a number of successful programs through the years to assist individuals with hearing loss. The Council will be useful for government entities to locate resources, auxiliary aids and services by contacting them directly and visiting their website.

To obtain the Idaho Directory of Sign Language and Oral Interpreter Resource Directory go to the Council's website [http://www.cdhh.idaho.gov/interpreting\\_services.htm](http://www.cdhh.idaho.gov/interpreting_services.htm)

## **Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

1720 Westgate Drive  
Boise, Idaho 83704  
Phone: (208) 334-0879  
Video Phone: 208-473-2122  
Fax: (208) 334-0952  
[www.cdhh.idaho.gov](http://www.cdhh.idaho.gov)

**Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ICBVI)** is a state agency serving Idahoans since 1967. The agency assists blind and visually impaired persons to achieve independence by providing education, developing work skills, increasing self-confidence and helping them remain employed or prepare for employment.

There are ICBVI stores located in Boise and in the regional offices, which stock many items, including magnifiers and talking, large print and Braille devices.

ICBVI consults with businesses and individuals needing materials transcribed into Braille.

## **Idaho Commission for the Blind**

341 W Washington St.  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0012  
Phone: (208) 334-3220  
1-800-542-8688 within Idaho  
Fax: (208) 334-2963  
webpage <http://icbvi.idaho.gov/default.asp>

# Seven Demonstration and Loan Centers: Deaf & Hard of Hearing

**The Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing through the University of Idaho Assistive Technology Project provides 7 demonstration and loan centers throughout the state.**

At the centers, persons who are deaf or hard of hearing can borrow equipment such as alerting devices, amplified telephones, TTY telephones,

and personal assistive listening devices free of charge.

The purpose of the loan program is to allow a person to determine if the equipment borrowed is the right equipment needed before buying. The centers provide catalogs where the equipment can be purchased from different merchants.

## **COEUR D'ALENE**

**North Idaho Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC)**

Mike Mann  
1031 N. Academic Way #130D  
Coeur D'Alene, Idaho 83814  
(208) 292-1406  
mmann@uidaho.edu

## **MOSCOW**

**Disability Action Center (DAC)**

Mark Leeper/Krista Kramer  
505 N. Main  
Moscow, ID 83843  
(208) 883-0523 (Voice/TTY)  
(208) 883-0524 (Fax)  
krista@dacnw.org

## **BOISE**

**Living Independence Network Corporation (LINC)**

Roger Howard/Terri Jones  
1878 W. Overland Rd.  
Boise, ID 83705  
(208) 336-3335 (Phone)  
(208) 322-7133 (FAX)  
tjones@lincidaho.org

## **CALDWELL**

**Living Independence Network Corporation (LINC)**

Heidi Caldwell  
1609 Kimball Suite B  
Caldwell, Idaho 83605  
(208)454-5511 (Phone)  
hcaldwell@lincidaho.org

## **TWIN FALLS**

**Living Independence Network Corporation (LINC)**

Melva Heinrich  
1182 Eastland Dr. Suite C  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
(208) 733-1712 (Phone)  
mheinrich@lincidaho.org

## **POCATELLO**

**Idaho State University**

Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology  
Josara Wallber  
650 Memorial, Building 68  
Pocatello, ID 83209  
(208) 282-3495 (Phone)  
walljosa@isu.edu

## **IDAHO FALLS**

**Living Independently for Everyone (LIFE)**

Dean Nielsen or Val Johnson  
250 S. Skyline #1  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
(208) 529-8610 (V/TTY)  
(208) 529-6804 (FAX)  
val@idlife.org

Northwest  Center  
Idaho

208-841-9422

**The Northwest ADA Center-Idaho** provides statewide training, technical assistance and non-legal guidance on the ADA.

DACnw is the main contractor for Idaho's ADA project. Our partners include Access Concepts & Training Inc.; the three Centers for Independent Living, DACnw, LINC and LIFE.

The Idaho State Council for Independent Living (SILC) recently joined our ADA team.

**Dana Gover is the main contact and can be reached at 208-841-9422.**

**dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com**

Northwest  Center

 Disability Action Center NW, Inc.

**The Northwest ADA Center-Idaho is funded by the Northwest ADA Center from a federal grant through NIDRR. DACnw is the main contractor for Idaho's ADA project.**



## Example Communication Assessment Form

Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff person conducting assessment \_\_\_\_\_

1. Contact information of person requesting auxiliary aids or services:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe the program, service or activity you plan to attend \_\_\_\_\_

3. Date of activity \_\_\_\_\_ Time of activity \_\_\_\_\_

4. Location of activity \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the nature of your disability that requires auxiliary aids or services?

- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Disability
- Blind
- Visually Impaired
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Relationship:

- Self
- Family Member
- Friend / Companion
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please check one of the boxes below next to your choice of Interpreter Services. If your preferred service is not listed, please identify and describe.

- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter
- Pidgin Signed English (PSE) interpreter
- Signed English interpreter
- Video Interpreting Services (VIS)
- Oral Translators
- Qualified Reader
- Cued Language Translators
- Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please check one or more of the boxes below if you are requesting any of the following auxiliary aids or services for effective communication. If your preferred aid or service is not listed, please identify and explain.

- TTY/TDD (text telephone)
- Video Relay Services (VRS)
- Assistive listening device (sound amplifier)
- Qualified note-takers
- Writing back and forth
- CART: Computer-assisted Real Time Transcription Service
- Other. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

We are requesting your information so you can participate in our programs, services or activities. All communication aids and services are provided **FREE OF CHARGE**. If you need further assistance, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ . If you have any questions please call our office \_\_\_\_\_ (voice), \_\_\_\_\_ (TTY), \_\_\_\_\_ email or visit us during business hours.

## Effective Communication Checklist

1. Does each department of your state or local government have policies and procedures in place to deal with requests from the general public for sign language, oral, and cued speech interpreters?

Yes No

2. If policies and procedures are in place, do they:

a. Specify that sign language, oral, and cued speech interpreters can be obtained within a short period of time when necessary? (In emergency situations, reasonable usually means within an hour of a request. In non-emergency situations, a public entity can require reasonable advance notice for interpreter requests.)

Yes No

b. Make clear that it is generally inappropriate to request family members and companions of deaf persons to serve as sign language interpreters?

Yes No

c. Specify that deaf persons requesting interpreters should not be charged for the cost of the interpreter?

Yes No

d. Specify that the public entity's decision to deny an interpreter based on undue financial and administrative burden must be made after considering all resources available for use in funding the operation of the program and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching the conclusion?

Yes No

e. Specify that, in any instance where the provision of an interpreter would result in an undue financial and administrative burden, the entity will take any other action that would not result in an undue financial and administrative burden but would nevertheless ensure that the individual with a disability receives the benefits or services provided?

Yes No

3. Does your state or local government have employees on staff who are qualified interpreters or have arrangements with one or more vendors to provide interpreting services when needed?

Yes No

4. Have the employees who interact with the public been trained on the correct procedures to follow when a person requests an interpreter?

Yes No

5. Review documentation and speak with personnel responsible for responding to requests for interpreter services. When requests for interpreters have been made in the past, were they granted:

a. For events such as meetings, interviews, hearings, court proceedings, and training and counseling sessions?

Yes No

b. Without the state or local government asking the individual to pay for the interpreter services?

Yes No

### Important Points to Remember

If you checked no to any of the questions on this page, these are red flags indicating that your government entity may not be complying with the effective communication requirement under Title II of the ADA.

- If your entity does not have policies and procedures, on the provision of interpreters they need to be established.

If your entity has policy and procedures make sure they comply with the following:

- Sign language, oral and cued speech interpreters can be obtained within a short time period when necessary 3 to 5 days.
- In emergency situations, sign language interpreters will be available either in person or by using video relay systems within a reasonable period, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – **usually, within an hour of receiving the request.**
- In non-emergency situations, sign language interpreters will be available when reasonable advance notice is provided.
- Family members and companions of deaf persons will not be asked to serve as sign language interpreters.
- Deaf persons requesting interpreters will not be charged or asked to pay for the cost of an interpreter.
- Arrange with vendors and keep an updated interpreter registry to locate interpreters when needed.

Page 11

## Effective Communication Checklist (continued)

6. Are policies and procedures in place to deal with requests from the general public for documents in Braille, large print, audio recording, and accessible electronic format (that is, an email or compact disc containing the document in plain text, word processing format, HTML or some other format that can be accessed with screen reader software)?

Yes No

7. Are policies and procedures in place to deal with requests from the general public for notetakers, computer-assisted real-time transcription services, and other auxiliary aids and services for providing effective communication?

Yes No

8. Does your entity have the equipment or arrangements with vendors so it can provide written materials in alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, audio format, electronic format)?

Yes No

9. Does your entity provide written materials in alternative formats when asked to do so?

Yes No

10. Does your entity give primary consideration to the requests of the person with a disability when determining what type of auxiliary aid or service to provide?

Yes No

11. Does your entity ensure that all videos and television programs it produces including on your website are available with captioning and audio description?

Yes No

12. Where telephones are available to the public for making outgoing calls, are TTYs available for people with hearing and speech disabilities?

Yes No

13. Does your entity handle calls placed using a Telecommunications Relay Service or a Video Relay Service in the same way as other telephone calls?

Yes No

### Important Points To Remember

- Ensure that policies and procedures are in place to provide auxiliary aids and services needed to ensure effective communication. Policies and procedures should address common requests, such as
  - 1) making documents available upon request in Braille, large print, audio recording, and an accessible electronic format, and
  - 2) providing notetakers, computer-aided real-time transcription, assistance in reading and completing forms, and other common auxiliary aids and services.
- Ensure that policies and procedures require decision makers to give primary consideration to the auxiliary aid or service requested.
- Purchase equipment or make arrangements with vendors so that documents can be provided in alternative formats when requested.
- Make all videos and television programs that your entity produces, distributes, or makes available to the public accessible to people with hearing and vision disabilities by providing captioning and audio description of important visual images.
- Train staff who interact with the public so they know what to do when they receive a request for an auxiliary aid or service.
- Publish the effective communication policy on your website in an accessible format so people with disabilities know about any reasonable advance notice requirements that your entity adopts.
- Provide access to a TTY or video relay phone wherever telephones are available for making outgoing calls.
- Provide written policies and training to employees who answer the telephone to ensure that incoming calls made through a relay service are handled as quickly and effectively as other calls.
- Meet with people with disabilities living in the community to discuss new technology to improve communication by phone and in person.