

**Center for Family Services  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

<b>DEPARTMENT</b>  Agencywide	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>  February 3, 2012 March 2015 May 18, 2016
<b>REFERENCE TO STANDARDS</b>  DCF	<b>POLICY DEVELOPED BY:</b>  Barbara L. Hernandez, LMHC Updated S. Spezia QA Director Updated Alice McDonald, LMFT

**AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**POLICY:**

Center for Family Services of Palm Beach County, Inc. (CFS) will ensure compliance by staff with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1990, as amended, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The agency will take appropriate steps to ensure that persons, including clients or companions, with disabilities, including persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind, or who have other sensory or manual impairments, as well as consumers with limited English proficiency have an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits through the provision of auxiliary aids and services. The procedures outlined below are intended to ensure effective communication with patients/clients or companions involving their medical conditions, treatment, services and benefits. The procedures also applies to other types of communication such as communication of information contained in important documents, including but not limited to waivers of rights, consent to treatment forms, customer companion feedback forms, financial and insurance benefits forms, treatment plans, treatment plan reviews, etc.. All necessary auxiliary aids and services shall be provided without cost to the person, including clients or companions, being served.

All staff will be provided with written notice of this policy and procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with individuals with disabilities will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of interpreters.

**PROCEDURES:**

**1. Single Point of Contact – SPOC**

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The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for CFS is the Support Staff Manager (Stacey Hunt). The back-up SPOC for the agency is the Quality Improvement Director (Alice McDonald). The SPOC and back-up SPOC can be reached at 561-616-1222.

The SPOC will ensure that CFS employees are aware of the requirements, roles, responsibilities, and receive the required training upon hire and an annual refresher course thereafter.

CFS will ensure that all employees receive annual refresher training on serving deaf or hard-of-hearing consumers and a civil rights training.

The SPOC will ensure that the CFS auxiliary aids and services plan and auxiliary aids monitoring plan is updated as needed, with any updates communicated to the agency management team.

This plan can be made available in different formats, if requested by staff, clients, companions or stakeholders.

This plan is also available on our website: [www.ctrfam.org](http://www.ctrfam.org).

CFS staff at any time during the process of assessing and providing for auxiliary aids/services can request the assistance of the CFS SPOC or backup SPOC at 561-616-1222 on a 24/7 basis.

## **2. Assessing for Communication Needs**

At the initial contact with a client or companion who is deaf or hard-of-hearing, the staff will immediately notify the CFS SPOC or backup SPOC. An assessment of communication needs will be conducted for all individuals or companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing using the required Florida Department of Children and Families documents. The required documents will be completed at each interactions/service to the client or companion. The purpose of these tools will be to facilitate the collection and coordination of auxiliary aids and services to meet the needs of consumers or companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

CFS will at all times recognize that the consumer or companion's preference is the primary consideration in determining what auxiliary aids or services to provide. If communication through a specific aid or service is deemed to be ineffective or a request for an auxiliary aid or service is denied, the staff will immediately notify the CFS SPOC who will assist the consumer or companion in determining a more effective aid or service for communication. Agency staff will reassess which appropriate auxiliary aids and services are necessary for effective communication. This will be accomplished where possible in consultation with the person seeking the auxiliary aids or services.

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Documentation will be made in the consumer's file regarding the attempt to improve the effectiveness of auxiliary aids and services. Once the assessment is completed, the SPOC or assigned agency staff will obtain auxiliary aids according to the communication and request for services assessment.

**3. Provision of Interpreters/Services**

CFS staff will provide qualified interpreters for consumers and companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in a timely manner in accordance with the following standards:

- a) For unscheduled emergency appointments, staff will make an interpreter available as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours from the time the customer or companion or staff request an interpreter, whichever is earlier. If the situation is not an emergency, staff will offer to schedule an appointment and provide an interpreter for effective communication at the convenience of the consumer or companion, or at least by the next business day.
- b) For scheduled events, staff will make a qualified interpreter available at the time of the scheduled appointment. If an interpreter fails to appear for the scheduled appointment, staff will take whatever additional actions are necessary to make a qualified interpreter available to the consumer 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. The CFS SPOC will be notified immediately, in the event a scheduled interpreter fails to appear.

In such event, staff will continue to try to communicate with the deaf or hard-of-hearing client or companion insofar as the client or companion seeks to communicate. In such circumstances, staff will use all available methods of communication, including, but not limited to, written communication, note-takers, and sign language pictographs. These efforts in no way lessen staff's obligation to provide qualified interpreters in a timely manner as required by the Agreement Settlement.

The agency SPOC or staff will be responsible for providing documented verification of the interpreter's certification.

If a deaf or hard-of-hearing client or companion does not request auxiliary aids and services, but staff has reason to believe after conducting the communication assessment that such person would benefit from appropriate auxiliary aids and services for effective communication, staff will inform the client or companion that appropriate auxiliary aids and services are available free of charge. The agency will honor a client/companions' refusal for auxiliary aids when the information exchanged is considered to be essential on an individualized case-by-case basis.

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At no time will it be acceptable for staff to deny services to a consumer without notifying the SPOC. If staff determines after conducting the communications assessment that the communication situation is not Aid Essential and does not warrant provision of the auxiliary aid or service requested by the client or companion, the agency staff will advise the person of the denial of the requested service and will document the date and time of the denial, the name and title of the staff member who made the determination, and the basis for the determination. Agency staff will provide the client or companion with a copy of the denial on the Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid/Service Record. Staff will also record the denial of the requested service in the client's file. Notwithstanding the denial, the agency staff will nonetheless ensure effective communication with the client or companion by providing an alternate aid or service which will be documented on the same form.

The agency will provide the same auxiliary aids and services to a companion of a client. The term companion will mean any individual who is deaf or hard-of-hearing and is one of the following: (a) a person whom the client indicates should communicate with staff about the client, such as a person who participates in any treatment decision, a person who plays a role in communicating the client's needs, condition, history or symptoms, or a person who helps the client act on the information, advice or instructions provided by staff; (b) a person legally authorized to make healthcare or legal decisions on behalf of the client; or (c) such other person with whom the staff would ordinarily and regularly communicate about the client.

#### **4. Auxiliary Aids Documentation**

CFS staff will document the consumer or companion's preferred method of communication and any requested services provided in the consumer's record. Documentation will be kept for record keeping with the SPOC and in the consumer's record. Documents and forms evidencing when and how the staff provided aids and services to consumers or companions will be retained in the consumer's record for seven (7) years. Forms include but are not limited to the following:

- Consumer or Companion Assessment and Assessment Aid and Service Record – to be filed in the client's case record;
- Consumer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver – to be filed in the client's case record; and
- Consumer or Companion Feedback Form – to be mailed directly by the client to the Office of Civil Rights in Tallahassee, Florida.

#### **5. Referrals**

If consumers or companions are referred to other agencies, the staff and/or SPOC will ensure that the receiving agency is notified of the consumer or companion's preferred method of communication and any auxiliary aid for service needs. In order to accommodate

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this effectively, the attending staff and/or SPOC will ensure that the referral is approved by the participant and that he or she signs a Release of Information for each referral being made. These actions will be recorded and maintained in the consumer's record.

**6. Florida DCF Customer Feedback Form**

The staff will distribute the required Florida DCF Consumer and Companion Feedback Form to consumers or companions that are deaf or hard-of-hearing and provide assistance in completing the forms if requested by the Consumer or Companion. Consumers and companions will be instructed to mail the original feedback form to Florida DCF, Office of Civil Rights, 1317 Winewood Boulevard, Building 1, Room 110, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700, or if requested by the consumer or companion, by the CFS SPOC. A copy of the Consumer/Companion Feedback Form will not be kept in the consumer record/file.

**7. Limited English Proficiency Consumers**

CFS will provide foreign language interpretation for any consumer who requests such assistance.

For foreign language interpretation, CFS will utilize a foreign language interpretation service such as LanguageLine.com <http://www.language.com/solutions/interpretation/> or Global Translations and Interpretations of West Palm Beach at 1-800-352-0717; 561-641-3973.

**8. Documentation/Record Retention**

The following is a brief description of the forms that will need to be completed when providing auxiliary aids and services:

- a) Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid and Service Record – to be completed by agency staff to assess the client or companion's communication abilities and needs and to identify the type of auxiliary aid or service requested.
- b) Customer or Companion Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver of Free Communication Assistance – to be completed by the client or companion to request free communication assistance or to waive free communication assistance.
- c) Customer or Companion Feedback Form – to be completed by the client or companion and mailed directly to the Office of Civil Rights in Tallahassee, Florida.

Detailed instructions are provided with the forms. If there are any questions, staff may contact the agency SPOC or back-up SPOC for assistance. The forms are available at the Receptionist desk in the main office.

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Records relating to the provision of auxiliary aids and services will be retained by the agency for at least seven (7) years from the date of case closure.

**9. Signage**

The CFS SPOC will ensure that conspicuous notices which provide information about the availability of appropriate auxiliary aids and services at no-cost to the deaf or hard-of-hearing consumers or companions are posted near public entrances and locations where consumers and companions receive services. The CFS SPOC's name and contact information will be available on the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Poster as well as the name and contact information for the Florida DCF Regional Civil Rights Officer/ADA 504 Coordinator. [Approved notices can be downloaded from the Department's website.]

The CFS SPOC will ensure submission of the monthly HHS Report, no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, for the previous month. Submission will be made to the Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network's (SEFBHN) Contract Manager and to the Regional Civil Rights Officer/ADA 504 Coordinator.

**10. Event Accommodations**

CFS will ensure accessibility to meetings, conferences and seminars to persons with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Facilities used for meetings, conferences and seminars will be reviewed for accessibility by the SPOC and program supervisor. When meetings, conferences and seminars are scheduled, information will be included in the advertisements, conference registration materials or meeting notices that sensory impaired or limited English proficiency participants will be provided with necessary auxiliary aids or interpreters at no cost to them. The information will include the name of a contract person and a date by which the person may request such assistance. Special provisions will be made for sensory, speech, mobility impaired or limited English proficiency persons plan to attend the specific meeting, conference or seminar. CFS will notify the public by placing the following statement on all notices and advertisements prior to the event:

*CFS will provide accommodations, including American Sign Language interpreters, assistive listening devices, alternative formats of printed materials and real-time captioning upon requests for persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or are living with disabilities. To ensure accommodations, please make your request within 7 days prior to the event to [Shunt@ctrfam.org](mailto:Shunt@ctrfam.org) and CC to [Amcdonald@ctrfam.org](mailto:Amcdonald@ctrfam.org).*

**11. Staff Training**

New employee orientation will require staff to complete the Florida DCF approved training Service Delivery for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and a general Civil Rights Training within 60 days of hire. Staff members will be required to complete annual refresher training on how

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to provide assistance to persons with disabilities and those who are limited English proficient clients or companions in obtaining assisting devices and/or aids, or other reasonable accommodations. The SPOC will be responsible for conducting staff training on a quarterly basis on how to use the auxiliary aid equipment available at the agency. Staff will also be required to complete annual refresher training on Civil Rights. Training documentation will be maintained in each employee's file. All agency staff will be required to sign the "Support to the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing" Attestation Form and the Employee Receipt of Auxiliary Aids and Services Plan for Persons with Disabilities.

**12. CFS Monitoring Plan**

See the CFS Auxiliary Aids and Services Monitoring Plan for detailed information on these processes.

**13. CFS Auxiliary Aid Services for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Consumers and Persons Living with Disabilities**

A. For Persons Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing

For persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and who use sign language as their primary means of communication, the CFS SPOC will be responsible for providing effective interpretation or arranging for a qualified interpreter when needed. All sign language interpreters will be required to be certified through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID).

In the event that an interpreter is needed, the CFS SPOC will be responsible for the following:

- 1) Maintaining a list of certified sign language interpreters on staff and in the local area showing their names, phone numbers, qualifications and hours of availability (list is attached to this plan);
- 2) Maintaining a list of qualified foreign language interpreters on staff and in the local area showing their names, phone numbers, qualifications and hours of availability (list is attached to this plan);
- 3) Contacting the appropriate interpreter on staff to interpret, if one is available and qualified to interpret;
- 4) Obtaining an outside interpreter if a qualified interpreter is not available on staff; and/or
- 5) Obtaining necessary auxiliary aids and services as needed for clients or companions.

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**Signs of Excellence, LLC**, has agreed to provide certified interpreter services for CFS. The agency's telephone number is **(561) 305-1320**. Signs of Excellence is on-call 24 hours a days, seven (7) days a week.

Additional certified interpreters may be obtained through the local **Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)**. The local phone number is **904-419-3743**. CFS has a designated office space available for VRI communications.

CFS also has a "Pocket Talker" assistive listening device available on-site. The above deaf and hard-of-hearing auxiliary aid services can be obtained by calling the above-referenced telephone numbers 24/7.

The CFS SPOC will be responsible for providing the following aids and services in a timely manner:

Note-takers; computer-aided transcription services; telephone handset amplifiers; written copies of oral announcements; assistive listening devices; assistive listening systems; telephones compatible with hearing aids; closed caption decoders; open and closed captioning; telecommunications devices for deaf persons (TDDs); videotext displays; or other effective methods that help make aurally delivered materials available to individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Some persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may prefer or request to use a family member or friend as an interpreter. However, family members or friends of the person will not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by that individual and after an offer of an interpreter at no charge to the person has been made by the facility. Such an offer and the response will be documented in the person's file.

If the person chooses to use a family member or friend as an interpreter, issues of competency of interpretation, confidentiality, privacy and conflict of interest will be considered. If the family member or friend is not competent or appropriate for any of these reasons, competent interpreter services will be provided.

NOTE: Children and other residents will not be used to interpret, in order to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication.

**B. For Persons Who are Blind or Who Have Low Vision**

Staff will communicate information contained in written materials concerning treatment, benefits, services, waivers of rights, and consent to treatment forms by reading out loud and explaining these forms to persons who are blind or who have low vision.

The CFS SPOC will be responsible for providing the following auxiliary aids and services in a timely manner:



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Qualified readers; reformatting into large print; taping or recording of print materials not available in alternate format; or other effective methods that help make visually delivered materials available to individuals who are blind or who have low vision. In addition, staff are available to assist persons who are blind or who have low vision in filling out forms and in otherwise providing information in a written format.

### **C. For Persons with Speech Impairments**

To ensure effective communication with persons with speech impairments, the CFS SPOC will be responsible for accessing **Speech to Speech (STS) services by dialing 877-955-5334**.

### **D. For Persons with Manual Impairments**

For persons who have difficulty in manipulating printed materials, staff will provide assistance by holding the materials and turning pages as needed, or by providing one or more of the following:

Note-takers; computer-aided transcription services; speaker phones; or other effective methods that help to ensure effective communication by individuals with manual impairments.

For these and other auxiliary aids and services, staff will contact the CFS SPOC at 561-616-1222 who is responsible to provide the aids and services in a timely manner.

Each site has a Pocket Talker for client use. In West Palm Beach it is kept at the front desk in a locked drawer. At Pat Reeves Village it is kept in the Director's office.

## **14. Auxiliary Aid Resources**

Florida Relay – 7-1-1

CFS utilizes relay services for external telephone with TTY users. Calls are made and accepted through a relay service. To call Florida Relay, dial 7-1-1, or use the appropriate toll free number below:

1. Dial 7-1-1 (or the Florida Relay Toll-Free Number appropriate for the specific call listed below);
2. A specially trained Florida Relay Operator will answer and identify themselves by their Operator Number;
3. Give the Operator the phone number of the person you are calling; and

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4. The Operator will connect you with the person you are calling and will assist you with the communication.

NOTE: If the phone from which you are calling does not accept 7-1-1, there is a list below of dedicated toll free numbers for each call-type that can be used for the same service.

TTY	800-955-8771	If you are using TTY equipment.
Voice	800-955-8770	If you are a standard (voice) user, and are trying to connect with a Relay user.
ASCII	800-955-1339	If you are utilizing a computer.
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.
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.
Spanish to Spanish	877-955-8773	If you prefer to conduct your conversations in Spanish.
Spanish to English	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.
French to French	877-955-8707	If you prefer to conduct your conversation using the French language.

Language Line

800-752-6096 or to set up a pay as you need service go to:

<http://www.languageline.com/solutions/interpretation/personal-interpreter/>

CART-Captioned Real Time Resources

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

Caption Crew

Florida Realtime Reporting Services

110 E. Broward Boulevard, Suite #1850

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33301

954-767-0450

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Glenda M. Powers, CRR, RPR, FPR  
Powers Certified Realtime Reporting, Inc.  
13050 S.W. 6<sup>th</sup> Court  
Davie, Florida 33325  
954-829-1758

**15. Consumer Complaints**

If a consumer or companion believes they were wrongfully denied access to services or discriminated against, they should take the following actions:

- 1) Ask to speak to the CFS Compliance Officer or SPOC immediately;
- 2) Submit a compliant/grievance in writing and mail it to:

Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network  
Attn: Compliance Officer  
140 Intracoastal Pointe Drive  
Suite 211  
Jupiter, Florida 33477

- 3) Complaints/grievances can also be sent via email to: [nancey\\_verro@sefbhn.org](mailto:nancey_verro@sefbhn.org) or go on the SEFBHN website at: [civilrightscomplaint@sefbhn.org](mailto:civilrightscomplaint@sefbhn.org); and include the following information in the grievance/complaint:

- What service were you denied?
- What were you told was the reason you were denied service?
- What person denied you services?
- What was the date and time you were denied service?

Discrimination complaints may also be filed externally with the state and federal government:

Assistant Staff Director for Civil Rights  
1317 Winewood Boulevard  
Building 1, Room 110  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700  
850-487-1901

Executive Director  
Florida Commission on Human Relations  
2009 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 100  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-4857  
850-488-7082

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Disability Rights Florida  
2473 Care Drive, Suite #200  
Tallahassee, Florida 32308  
800-342-0823

US Department of Health & Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights  
Atlanta Federal Center  
61 Forsyth Street, SW, Suite 3B70  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8909  
404-562-7881

**CFS NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

No person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination under any program or activity receiving or benefiting from federal financial assistance and administered by CFS.

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**Employee Receipt of  
AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES PLAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

I acknowledge that I have been advised, and have been given a copy of the Auxiliary Aids and Services Plan for Persons with Disabilities.

I understand that I am subject to complying with all of the policies and procedures outlined in this document. I further acknowledge that I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the application of these procedures to my work.

I am also aware that I am responsible for familiarizing myself with the emergency procedures for my satellite office if I am assigned to a satellite office.

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_