



# AUXILIARY AID PLAN

**Auxiliary Aid Plan in accordance with  
Title I, Title II, Title III & Title VI Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990 and the  
Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)  
ADA Deaf and Hard of Hearing Settlement Agreement January 2010  
Developed: May 2016  
Revised: December 2020**

**Purpose**

This plan outlines the implementation of procedures governing the use of auxiliary aids for persons with disabilities and the use of qualified foreign language interpreters for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

**Scope**

This plan applies to all programs and services within Gulf Coast JFCS. The plan provides for assistive devices, interpreters or readers and physical modifications to ensure accessibility of programs and services to clients, potential clients, companions, employees and potential employees.

**Notification**

All agency locations will post the following in their main reception area:

- DCF Interpreter Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing notice
- DCF Non-discrimination notice
- DCF LEP notice
- LEP language card
- Gulf Coast JFCS ADA/Single Point of Contact (SPOC) notice
- Gulf Coast JFCS Complaint/Grievance notice

The plan shall be posted on the agency website and copies may be distributed to persons with disabilities or LEP clients upon request. The plan shall also be made available in alternate formats upon request. Staff can access the plan via the agency's intranet.

During the intake and orientation process, staff shall notify clients, potential clients and companions of the availability of auxiliary aids to persons with disabilities. Potential employees are notified of the availability of auxiliary aids to persons with disabilities during the application and interview processes. The availability of auxiliary aids to persons with disabilities is outlined for employees in the Gulf Coast JFCS Employee Handbook.

Agency publications, position advertisements, brochures, posters and pamphlets shall include the following statement:

- “No person shall, on the ground of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving or benefiting from federal financial assistance.”

For space limitations on some marketing materials and supplies throughout the agency, the following statement may be used:

- “Services are provided without any discrimination in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We provide reasonable accommodations to those with a disability as defined under the ADA.”

### **Provision of Auxiliary Aids and Services**

Gulf Coast JFCS will provide, at no cost to the individual, appropriate auxiliary aids to persons with disabilities and for persons with LEP where necessary to afford an equal opportunity to benefit from services and employment opportunities. The preference of the person with disabilities shall be the primary consideration in what auxiliary aid or service is provided. Auxiliary aids may include but are not limited to audio formats, large print, interpreters and assistive listening devices. Gulf Coast JFCS staff can access interpreter services, for both LEP and deaf and hard of hearing clients, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Only certified sign language interpreters shall be utilized unless another form of communication has been requested by a deaf or hard of hearing client, companion, employee or potential employee. Minor children should never be used as voice or sign language interpreters or be allowed to interpret for a parent when the minor child is the client’s child. A family member or friend may be used as a voice interpreter, not a sign language interpreter, if this approach is requested by an LEP client and the use of such a person does not compromise the effectiveness of services nor violate the client’s confidentiality, and the client is advised that a free interpreter is available.

Staff will conduct an assessment, prior to services, to determine the client or companion’s preferred method of communication. Staff shall consult with the individual to determine his or her preferred communication method. If an interpreter is needed, staff shall contact a certified interpreter from their listing of interpreter services. Each client or companion who are deaf and hard of hearing shall be provided a feedback form following their visit to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the auxiliary aid or service provided and the performance of the interpreter provided. Information regarding the Customer/Companion Feedback Form is made available in ASL format on video in English, Spanish, and Creole on the DCF website. Staff shall document in the client record that the form was provided. Staff will provide assistance, if requested, in completing the form.

### **Assistive Listening Devices and other Resources**

Gulf Coast JFCS maintains on hand two auxiliary aid hearing devices per location, purchased by the agency and provided at no cost to the client. If a client, potential client, companion, employee or potential employee requests an auxiliary aid hearing device, one shall be provided immediately. Staff shall inspect these devices at each location on at least a quarterly basis to ensure that it is in proper working order. Should the device not be functioning properly, staff shall request a replacement via Gulf Coast JFCS Policy PM020 – Methods of Procurement.

Additional resources utilized by staff to secure auxiliary aids shall include:

- Certified Interpreters:
  - Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) – Interpreter Agency/Referral Service
    - <http://rid.org>
    - 703-838-0030
- Florida Relay Service: A service through which people can use specialized telephone equipment to communicate with people who use standard telephone equipment.
  - 7-1-1
  - 1-800-955-8771 (TTY)

- 1-800-955-8770 (Voice)
- 1-800-955-8773 (Spanish)
- 1-800-955-8707 (French Creole)
- Video Remote Interpreting: A video telecommunication service that uses devices such as web cameras or videophones to provide sign language or spoken language interpreting services through a remote or offsite interpreter.
- Video Relay Services (VRS):
  - Purple Communications, Inc.
    - <http://purple.us>
    - 1-877-885-3172
  - Sorenson VRS
    - <http://sorensonvrs.com>
    - 1-866-756-6729
- Communication Access Real Time (CART): A service that provides simultaneous conversation of spoken word into text through computer assisted transcription or court reporting of that text on a video screen.
  - National Court Reporters Association – CART Provider Directory
    - <http://www.ncra.org>
    - 1-800-272-6272

For LEP clients, language services shall include, as a first preference, the availability of bilingual staff who can communicate directly with clients in their preferred language. While Gulf Coast JFCS has in its employ several bi-lingual employees, the agency utilizes the program VOICES program for language interpretation. VOICES allows the provision of interpreters in a multitude of languages so that we can adequately meet the needs of the client. When bilingual staff are not available, the next preference is a face-to-face interpretation provided by trained interpreters. In the absence of face-to-face interpretation, the agency has contracted with a telephonic language interpretation service. An interpreter must be available to explain the content of the documents for LEP persons whose language does not exist in written form. Gulf Coast JFCS Policy FCST 730 – Accessing Interpreter Services outlines how employees can access translation services for LEP clients.

Each Gulf Coast JFCS program/location also has an Auxiliary Aid and Service Plan for Persons with Disabilities and LEP binder outlining these auxiliary aids and other resources.

### **Translation of Written Materials**

Translating documents to ensure effective communication will depend upon the client, companion, employee and potential employee’s preferred method. 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.

Gulf Coast JFCS will provide translation of written materials for LEP consumers and potential consumers consistent with the requirements of Title VI and Department of Health and Human Services regulations 45 C.F.R. Section 80.3(b)(2) using the following factors:

- The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or grantee;
- The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program;
- The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to its clients; and
- The resources available to the grantee/recipient or agency, and the costs of interpretation/translation services.

### **Competence of Interpreters**

Interpreters for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing must be certified through the RID. A copy of the interpreter's registration card must be requested each time services are provided and included in the client record.

### **Provision of Interpreters in a Timely Manner**

Gulf Coast JFCS staff shall provide interpreters for clients and companions who are deaf or hard of hearing in a timely manner in accordance to the following standards:

- Non-Scheduled Interpreter Requests: For any emergency situation that is not a scheduled appointment, staff shall make an interpreter available as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours from the time the client or companion or staff requests an interpreter, whichever is earlier. If the situation is not an emergency, staff shall offer to schedule an appointment (and provide an interpreter where necessary for effective communication) as convenient to the client or companion, but at least by the next business day
- Scheduled Interpreter Requests: For scheduled events, staff shall make a certified interpreter available at the time of the scheduled appointment. If an interpreter fails to appear for the scheduled appointment, staff shall take whatever additional actions are necessary to make a certified interpreter available to the client 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

### **Effectiveness of Communication**

In the event that communication is not effective or if the nature of the communication changes significantly after the initial communication assessment, staff shall reassess which appropriate auxiliary aids and services are necessary for effective communication. This shall be accomplished where possible in consultation with the person seeking the auxiliary aids or services.

### **Denial of Auxiliary Aid Requests, Complaints and Grievances**

Upon receipt of a request for reasonable accommodations through the provision of auxiliary aid from an employee or applicant for employment, the appropriate member of the Leadership Team, Vice President of Human Resources (HR), Vice President of Quality, Contracts and Compliance, and Director of Safety as required, will determine if the request can be reasonably accommodated. Requests for accommodation will be reviewed on a case by case basis. If it is determined that the communication situation is not aid essential and does not warrant provision of the auxiliary aid or service requested, the Vice President of HR shall advise the employee or applicant of the denial of the requested service. The Vice President of HR and shall document the date and time of the denial, the name and title of the staff who made the determination, and the basis for the determination in the employee's personnel file. The employee or applicant shall be provided with a copy of the denial.

If staff determines after conducting an assessment with a client or companion 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, staff shall advise the person of the denial of the requested service and shall 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 in the client record. The client or companion shall be provided with a copy of the denial.

Staff members in programs funded by the DCF, a Community Based Care organization and/or a managing entity shall record the denial of the requested auxiliary aid or service on the Customer or Companion Communication Assessment and Auxiliary Aid/Service Record (DCF Form CF 761, Appendix B). All staff shall record the denial of requested service in the client's file. Notwithstanding the denial, staff shall nonetheless ensure effective communication with the client or companion by providing an alternate aid or service which must be documented. All denials of the provision of auxiliary aids or services requested by a client or companion shall be submitted to the appropriate member of the Leadership Team for final review.

If an individual declines the use of free voice or certified sign language interpretation, staff must document the declination of said service in the client and/or personnel file. Staff shall suggest that a trained interpreter be present during the encounters to assure that accurate interpretation occurs. Staff must document that every means necessary has been used to assure the individual that the service is available before documenting that the declination. This information must be placed in the client's file. Documentation, with supporting justification, must also be made if any request was not honored.

Persons who believe they have been wrongfully denied access to services or have been discriminated against may file a grievance in accordance with Gulf Coast Policy QI190 Consumer Grievance or via the resources listed below:

- Florida DCF  
Office of Civil Rights  
1317 Winewood Boulevard, Building 1, Room 110  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700  
(850) 487-1901; TDD (850) 922-9220; or Fax (850) 921-8470
- United States Department of Health and Human Services  
Attention: Office for Civil Rights  
Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 3B70  
61 Forsyth Street, SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8909  
(404) 562-7888; TDD/TTY (404) 331-2867; or Fax (404) 562-7881
- United States Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division  
Office of the Assistant Attorney General  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20531  
(202) 514-4609 (voice); TDD (202) 514-0711; or Fax (202) 307-2839

## **Accountability**

The Vice President of HR is responsible for the implementation of auxiliary aids and the LEP plan for employees and applicants for employment who require reasonable accommodations. The Vice President of Quality, Contracts and Compliance is the ADA 504 Deaf and Hard of Hearing SPOC for the agency. Each Gulf Coast JFCS location shall have a designated SPOC who will be an on-site resource to staff. Any staff member may contact the agency SPOC for assistance in locating appropriate resources to ensure effective communication.

In addition, each program funded by the DCF, a Community Based Care agency and/or a managing entity shall designate a SPOC for the purpose of fulfilling DCF compliance and reporting requirements.

## **Auxiliary Aids Documentation and Records Retention**

Gulf Coast JFCS staff shall document the client and/or companion's preferred method of communication, and any requested auxiliary aids and services provided in the client's record. Documentation of an employee or potential employee's preferred method of communication, and any requested auxiliary aids and services provided shall be included in the employee's personnel file.

All records regarding auxiliary aids and services provided to clients, companions, employees and potential employees shall be retained in accordance with Gulf Coast JFCS Policy MR050 Records Retention and Destruction.

## **Meeting, Training and Event Accommodations**

When meetings, trainings or seminars are scheduled at Gulf Coast JFCS 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. If someone with sensory or mobility impairments or persons with LEP plan to attend, the following provisions must be in place:

- Agenda and other related materials translated into useable form for visually and hearing impaired participants.
- Parking spaces provided for handicapped persons clearly marked with appropriate ramps and curbs.
- Entrance ramps will be available for mobility impaired person(s).
- 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.
- Seating arrangements for persons in wheelchairs will be adapted to integrate mobility-impaired persons rather than to isolate them on the group's perimeter.
- At least one unobstructed entrance to the facility.
- Restrooms available to mobility impaired.
- Telephones are wheelchair accessible.
- Accessible drinking fountains with cup dispensers.
- Certified interpreters for hearing impaired persons.

## **Staff Training**

All Gulf Coast JFCS staff shall complete training on auxiliary aids within 30 days of hire and annual refresher training in accordance with the Gulf Coast JFCS Training Plan. This training shall include the needs of clients/applicants/employees with disabilities, community resource options, how to

access/use auxiliary aids assistance technology, and Reasonable Accommodations requirements for disabled employees, and equal opportunity employment. Staff members in programs funded by the DCF, a Community Based Care organization and/or a managing entity shall also sign the DCF Support to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Attestation form upon completion of said training. All training certificates and attestation forms shall be maintained in personnel files.

### **Monitoring**

Complaints and/or grievances related to the provision of auxiliary aids shall be reviewed in accordance with Gulf Coast JFCS Policy QI010b – Professional and Clinical Committee Procedures. Monitoring of the provisions of auxiliary aids in client and personnel files shall be conducted in accordance with the Gulf Coast JFCS Quality Improvement Plan. The Gulf Coast JFCS Accessibility and Auxiliary Aid Plans shall be reviewed on at least an annual basis and updated as needed.