




FIA INFORMATION MEMO

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
 DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT,
 FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND CASE MANAGERS**

FROM: LA SHERRA AYALA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 

RE: TRANSLATION SERVICES

PROGRAM AFFECTED: ALL PROGRAMS

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF OPERATIONS

SUMMARY

Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) Language Access Policy requires all Limited English Proficient (LEP) customers to receive timely, and meaningful access to all DHS programs and activities. All Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) are to provide free language assistance services to all LEP customers they encounter or whenever an LEP person requests language assistance services. All DHS personnel will inform members of the public that language assistance services are available free of charge to LEP persons.

This Information Memo discusses the communication needs of individuals with Limited English Proficiency by providing guidance and resources to meet their needs.

REQUIRED ACTION:

All LDSS must accept an application for assistance and conduct an interview with customers who have limited English proficiency. The LDSS must use the approved services of an interpreter for an interview if the customer requires assistance with language. The LDSS must

advise LEP customers, at every contact with the Agency, that they may request an interpreter at no charge. The LDSS must narrate in the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system that the offer was provided and/or the customer's request for interpretation assistance.

The LDSS may use the options listed below to access interpreter and translation services on behalf of LEP customers. The LDSS must request customers not use friends or family members, especially minor children, as interpreters. However, a customer has the option to decline free interpretation assistance and elect to use their own interpreter. The LDSS must note the customer's request to use their own interpreter instead of free interpretation assistance in the case narrative. If the LDSS has concerns about conflicts of interest, potential violations of confidentiality and privacy, or the competency of the interpreter that a customer provided, the LDSS should provide independent interpretation assistance as a supplement or replacement and narrate action taken in E&E.

When the LDSS communicates with LEP customers by telephone, in person, or in writing, please use the following statewide language services providers. Statewide Foreign Language Interpretation/ Translation Services (FLITS) 2019/2024

<https://dbm.maryland.gov/contracts/Pages/statewide-contracts/LanguageContractHome.aspx>

For Telephonic Interpretation

Language Line Services, LLC provides services via telephone
Toll-Free: 1800-752-6096

For On-Site Interpretation & Written Document Translation:

Ad Astra, Inc., provides on-site interpretation and written document translation services.

Telephone number: 1-301-408-4242

Email request: interpreting@ad-astrainc.com

NOTE: The LDSS must ensure that when LEP customers report their primary language verbally, or in writing, such as on the application, E&E must be updated to indicate the preference. If an interpreter is needed it must be narrated in Case Narrative.

When looking for the customer's Language Preference in E&E, it can be found on the Case Home page under Head of Household Information (See image below).

The screenshot shows the 'Change Reporting: Case Home' interface. At the top, it displays 'HOH: [redacted]', 'Case ID: [redacted]', 'Programs: SNAP', and 'Status: Open'. The main content is divided into two sections:

- Head of Household Information:** A table with columns for Name, Relationship, Preferred Language, Residential Address, Phone Number, and Email. The 'Preferred Language' is set to 'English'. Below this, there are fields for 'Residential Address' and 'Mailing Address' (noted as 'Mailing address is same as residential address').
- Program Status:** A table with columns for Program Details, Program Name, Application Date, Program Status Date, and Status. The 'Program Name' is 'SNAP', 'Application Date' is '01/01/2021', 'Program Status Date' is '02/24/2016', and 'Status' is 'Approved'. Below this, there is a 'Worker Assignment' section with 'District Office: WASHINGTON LDSS-210' and 'Worker: Performance Tester2903'.

The language preference can be selected in E&E during Application Registration under Contact Information. In Section 1 of the image below, the Language and Interpreter Needs can be indicated. In addition, in Section 3 of the image, the Language for Communication Letters can be selected. See How-To-Guide: Register a Paper Application in E&E V6 for more information.

The screenshot shows the 'Contact Information' screen with four numbered callouts:

- Section 1:** Language dropdown set to 'English' and 'Interpreter Needed' checkbox.
- Section 2:** Residential Address fields including C/O, Line 1, Line 2, City, State, ZIP Code, and Country (set to 'Kent'). A checkbox for 'Mailing address is same as residential address' is checked.
- Section 3:** Phone and Alternate Phone fields with 'Type' dropdowns. The 'Preferred Mode Of Communication' is set to 'Mail', and the 'Communication Lang.' dropdown is set to 'English'.
- Section 4:** Navigation buttons for '< Back' and 'Next >'.

The Language Preference can also be updated from the Case Home Screen in E&E under Contact Information. In the image below the Contact, Information Screen can be selected from the Left Navigation. In Section 1 of the image below, the Language and Interpreter Needs can be indicated. In addition, in Section 3 of the image, the Language for Communication Letters can be selected.

References:

[17-12 AT Civil Rights Compliance - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Policy](#)

[19-15 AT Change to Foreign Language Written Document Translation Services](#)

[DHS Language Access Policy Rev. 81919](#)

INQUIRIES:

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the [FIA Policy Information Request Form](#) found on Knowledge Base or via email at fia.policy@maryland.gov for Montgomery County only.

For systems questions, please email fia.bsdm@maryland.gov.

- c: DHS Executive Staff
- Constituent Services
- DHS Help Desk
- FIA Management Staff
- Office of Administrative Hearings