

OTTER TAIL COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY PLAN 2008

Fergus Falls Office Locations

Income Maintenance – 535 W. Fir
218-998-8230 / fax 218-998-8270

Social Services – 530 W. Fir
218-998-8150/ fax 218-998-8213

Child Support – 121 W. Junius
218-998-8640/fax 218-998-8652
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

New York Mills Office Location

118 N. Main
P.O. Box 247
New York Mills, MN 56567
218/385-3945/ fax 218-385-3987

Otter Tail County Human Services

Social Service Programs: 530 W. Fir Ave
Income Maintenance/Energy Assist: 535 W. Fir Ave
Child Support Program: 121 W. Junius Ave
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Social Service Programs: 118 N. Main
Income Maintenance Programs: 118 N. Main
New York Mills, MN 56567

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL Limited English Proficiency Plan

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OTTER TAIL COUNTY
Limited English Proficiency Plan¹
2008

1. BACKGROUND

Otter Tail County Department of Human Services initiated a language assistance protocol on April 1, 1997, due to an increase in the number and variety of non-English speaking people in our county. The diversity of multiple cultures prompted the agency to recognize its responsibility to develop, maintain and monitor the language assistance services to our non-English speaking clients through the implementation of this protocol.

2. POLICY

The mission of Otter Tail County Human Services is to maintain or enhance the quality of life for the residents of Otter Tail County, including persons with limited English proficiency. These services will be provided in a manner that is responsive to needs using the resources available and accessible by the agency and partner organizations, while meeting the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: 7CFR, 273 et seq.; and 42CFR 435 et seq.

3. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs Assessment - Otter Tail County will annually conduct a needs assessment to identify the various types of non-English languages that are most prevalent in Otter Tail County and those populations the County serves or might be eligible for services. Consultation will be made with the major school districts in the county; the LSS Refugee Service office located in Pelican Rapids; and Lutheran Social Services in Moorhead. The County will also utilize data provided by DHS to incorporate into our needs assessment. The Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Education reported the number of languages spoken by public school students for 2006-2007 school year in Otter Tail County: 260 Spanish; 14 Vietnamese; 3 Laotian; 5 Russian; 61 Somali; 32 Serbo-Croatian; 2 Cambodian. The following is information provided by the Department of Human Services on what languages have been spoken by applicants: 70 Somali; 14 Spanish;

¹ This plan has been updated, reviewed and approved by the Minnesota Department of Human Services on the following dates: 10/01/01, 3/28/02, 06/01/04, 12/01/05, 07/26/06, and 05/1/07. This process has been completed in accordance with federal legislation cited above and DHS Instructional Bulletins 00-89-4 and 03-89-01.

6 Russian; 2 Vietnamese; 2 Laotian; 13 Serbo-Croatian; 1 ASL. The number of applicants who have needed an interpreter are: 61 Somali; 7 Spanish; 4 Russian; 1 Vietnamese; 2 Laotian; 1 ASL; 9 Serbo-Croatian.

The most stable non-English speaking population is the Hispanic population. Next would be the Vietnamese and Hmong with the Bosnian population entering and leaving our county most frequently. From 2004 to current date, our Somali families have increased more than any other population, primarily due to the West Central Turkey Plant and the employment opportunities for non-English speaking people. The turkey plant, located in Pelican Rapids, is expanding production with the anticipation of adding 200 more jobs. This expansion should be completed in 2008.

4. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO MEANINGFUL ACCESS

No person will be denied access to Otter Tail County Human Services programs or program information because he/she does not speak English or speaks limited English. Otter Tail County will provide for effective communication between clients with LEP and Otter Tail County staff by making appropriate language assistance services available when clients need these services. Clients will be provided with meaningful access to programs and services in a timely manner and at no cost to the client.

5. UNCOMMON LANGUAGES: IN-PERSON INTERPRETER SERVICES

When interpreter services are needed in a language not commonly used, the client with LEP will be connected to Pacific Interpreters. This is a telephone interpretation service contracted through Otter Tail County Public Health.

See attachment A for instructions.

If an interpreter is needed *in-person*, rather than over the telephone, arrangements will be made to have an interpreter available at a time convenient for both the interpreter and client, keeping in mind certain program time lines. Contact the Qualified Interpreters (attachment A) directly for *in-person* interviews.

6. IDENTIFICATION OF LEP POPULATION

A recipient has limited English proficiency (LEP) if he/she is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows him/her to interact effectively with human services staff.

The specific language needs of applicants with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) will occur at the time of screening or application. This will be done by reviewing the language preference questions on the Health Care Application (HCAPP) and the Combined Application Form (CAF). Language preferences will be entered on the applicant's primary language field in the Maxis system. Some people may know enough English to manage basic life skills, but may not speak, read or comprehend English well enough to understand in a meaningful way some of the more complicated concepts they encounter within the human service system.

If the Receptionist or Financial Worker/Social Worker suspects that the applicant is a person with LEP, the worker will present the LEP person with the "I Speak" sheet that lists the ten major languages in order to determine which language is involved, if any (attachment C). It is expected that reasonable efforts will be made by Otter Tail County to provide same-day interpreter services.

If a client indicates a language preference, this is to be recorded in the recipient's case file. In turn, we will automatically send translated versions of regularly distributed forms to these recipients. A specific example is the Household Report Form (HRF). It may be necessary for the workers to use Dail/Tikl on MAXIS as a reminder to send the preferred language version of forms at the correct times.

Social Workers will also encounter clients with limited English proficiency while out in the field, after hours and on weekends when conducting child protection assessments, mental health assessments, vulnerable adult investigations, etc. They should have a copy of the "I Speak" sheet with them. (Attachment C)

7. SERVICES TO RECIPIENTS UNABLE TO READ THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

When the agency becomes aware that a client who is accessing our services cannot read in their primary language, access to services is complicated. This also applies to people whose primary language is English but cannot read English. Staff who are working with these clients must find a suitable interpreter, by following the "order

of preference" (#13). Use of Pacific Interpreters might not be helpful when forms need to be completed. A referral to the LSS Refugee Service office in Pelican Rapids for assistance would be appropriate for clients living in that area. Office support staff assist in completing form's for client's who do not read or write English and this also applies to any other person who cannot complete our forms. This would be done with the assistance of an interpreter.

See Attachment C for copies of the "I SPEAK" cards that are now available in 10 languages. They include Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Lao, Cambodian (Khmer), Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, Serbo-Croatian and Oromo. Attachment C will be shown to individual's who appear to have limited English to assist in identifying the appropriate language. These cards are available for downloading at www.dhs.state.mn.us/Forms/default.htm under *Forms & Apps*, then *Additional Forms #MS 1857*. (Attachment C)

8. TRANSLATION PLAN

Otter Tail County will rely on the Department of Human Services to produce translated documents. The website for translated versions of forms is www.dhs.state.mn.us/Forms.

9. RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Barb Dohrer, Income Maintenance Supervisor, 218-998-8245 / fax: 218-998-8270 and Bev Schoon, Income Maintenance Supervisor, 218-998-8254 /fax: 218-998-8270 will be responsible for monitoring the overall implementation and compliance of the LEP for the Income Maintenance Unit. They will be responsible for developing and maintaining a current list of qualified providers and handle any complaints regarding LEP services.

10. COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Competency contemplates that "the interpreter must be proficient in both English and the target language and be able to convey information in both languages accurately, have had orientation/training that includes the skills and ethics of interpreting, have basic knowledge in both languages of specialized program terms or concepts, and be sensitive to the client's culture." Only qualified interpreters

as determined by the local agency will be paid for their interpreter services. All Qualified interpreters will be given (Attachment B), Code of Ethics to review so they are aware of their role as an interpreter.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The following rate will apply to only those individuals the agency determines to have met the definition of "Qualified Interpreter."

- Hourly rate of \$15.00
- Mileage reimbursement: included in hourly rate

Staff is to complete a county voucher listing date of service, name of recipient, name and address of interpreter and length of time service was provided. Interpreter is to sign the back of the voucher. This voucher is routed to the accounting department for payment.

Under no circumstances will Otter Tail County staff indicate - either verbally or in writing - that any applicant or client in need of LEP services will be charged for interpreter or translation services.

12. INTERPRETER TURN AROUND TIME

Otter Tail County staff must inform all clients with LEP of their right to free interpreter services. The agency will make every effort to make interpreter services accessible during all normal business hours, and when necessary, during non-business hours when an emergency has been determined to exist. This applies to certain programs, which require same day services (i.e. Expedited Food Stamps, Emergency Medical Assistance). Otter Tail County's goal is to make the services accessible within the required time frame, whether that means using an interpreter or any other appropriate type of language assistance. Staff must also hand out fliers stating this information to all clients with LEP.

Notice of free interpreter and translation services will be posted on the bulletin board in the central reception areas of both human service buildings. All translated forms, pamphlets, etc provided by the Department of Human Services are available to the public in our agency lobbies. Staff will use "I Speak" cards to help clients with LEP identify their language needs. (See attachment C)

Posting: A copy of the agencies LEP plan will be displayed on the bulletin board in the lobby of each of the 3 agency offices: Government Service Center, the satellite office in New York Mills and in Child Support offices located in the courthouse in Fergus Falls. Interpreters will be made available to translate the LEP plan for those unable to read English.

13. ORDER OF PREFERENCE

Every effort will be made to follow the order of preference listed below when providing services to clients in their primary language.

1. Pacific Interpreter services will be utilized should no qualified interpreter be available or in an emergency situation, or when specifically requested by the client. (see page 8, attachment A for procedures)
2. Qualified interpreters will be the utilized whenever available. Keeping a current list of qualified interpreters is difficult, as families move in and out of the area often.
3. Family/Friends/Volunteers - Staff should never require, suggest, or encourage a client with LEP to use family members or friends as interpreters. Applicants/clients, who choose to do so, may bring their own interpreter, only as a last resort or when practical or emergency consideration necessitates. Keep in mind that family and friends may not be competent to act as interpreters because they may not be proficient enough in both languages, may lack training in interpretation, and may not be familiar with specialized program terminology.

13 C. Rule for Minor Children

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE WILL MINOR CHILDREN (UNDER AGE 18) BE USED AS INTERPRETERS, EVEN IF APPLICANTS OR CLIENTS BRING CHILDREN WITH THEM FOR THAT PURPOSE.

The worker needs to feel confident that the client's data privacy rights will be protected and that the quality of the interpretation done by family members or friends provide accurate and effective communication between the agency staff and client about types of benefits available and client's circumstances and does not violate the LEP person's confidentiality.

The worker must document in the case file the extenuating circumstances for the use of family or friends, particularly that the client was offered other interpreter services and that the client insisted the family member or friend be used. The worker must also document the name of the interpreter used in the client's case file.

A list of current interpretive services/ qualified interpreters is attached to the language protocol for staff information. (Attachment A)

Otter Tail County currently has no bilingual employee's. Job openings are advertised indicating bilingual skills are desirable.

14. DISSEMINATION OF LEP PLAN AND TRAINING

Copies of the LEP plan will be provided to all Otter Tail County employees who have ongoing client contact. A copy of the LEP will also become a part of the orientation handbook for new employees. Training will be conducted annually and will consist of a review of the LEP plan and provide staff with updated information of any changes in LEP procedures or interpreter services.

15. COMPLAINT PROCESS

Otter Tail County has an existing complaint resolution procedure used to resolve civil rights related disputes and complaints and this procedure would be used to resolve LEP-related disputes/complaints. The contact person listed below will provide information about this complaint procedure to all clients in a language they understand.

Larry Krohn, Coordinator
Otter Tail County
Government Service Center
520 Fir Avenue West
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
(218) 998-8060

NOTE: language assistance will be available for the duration of the complaint process for anyone with LEP who wishes to file a complaint.

For information on the procedure for filing a complaint, see Otter Tail County Personnel Rules 8.05 "c".

16. MONITORING

The language protocol will be reviewed annually, in January, for effectiveness and updates/changes made if necessary. Representatives of the Financial Assistance Unit and Social Services will review the plan to determine continued compliance with the LEP Plan, identification of any problem areas and any corrective action strategies. The review will cover the following:

1. Updated number of LEP people in Otter Tail County
2. Are the needs of people with LEP being met effectively in accordance with our plan?
3. Reviewing the language protocol with all employees of Otter Tail County Human Services
4. Update list of qualified interpreters.

17. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If interpreter services are needed after office hours, on weekends, or in an emergency, Diane Kimm, Program Manager, LSS Refugee Services can be reached at her home (218-863-5627) or you can contact any of the people listed below for interpreter services.

Attachment A

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES AVAILABLE IN OTTER TAIL COUNTY:

Otter Tail County currently has a contract with Pacific Interpreters through Public Health. The instructions are as follows: Dial 1-800-870-1069, give the following access code: 68276 to the representative and what language you need interpreting for and employee's name. (this is necessary for the bill to be directed to the proper department)

Instruction sheets for Pacific Interpreters are given to all employees to have available in their office or in their briefcase if staff are out in the field or in the event of after-hour emergencies or weekend calls. Also staff will carry a copy of the 10 "I SPEAK" language cards for their reference.

The process for contacting individuals for interpreting purposes is as follows: First, contact Diane Kimm, Program Manager for Lutheran Social Service in Pelican Rapids. Diane is familiar with people who could interpret and will assist in coordinating services.

Diane Kimm, Program Manager
Lutheran Social Service Refugee Services
30 W. Mill, P.O. Box 867
Pelican Rapids, MN 56572
(w) 218-863-2252, (h) 218-863-5627
www.pelican@lssmn.org

LISTING OF QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS

(The people listed below meet the county requirements as a "qualified interpreter" and are eligible to be paid for their services) payment rate is \$15.00 per hour - if here for 15 minutes we will pay for full hour. The list of qualified interpreters change frequently with families moving in and out of our community, so we have been using the language line more frequently.

BOSNIAN

- Language Line

VIETNAMESE

- Language Line

SOMALIAN

- Language Line

HISPANIC

Graciella Kretchman
Rt. 5 Box 210
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
(218) 739-4825
Cell phone (710) 361-7141 -DO NOT GIVE OUT CELL NUMBER-COUNTY USE ONLY!!!

Kevin Diaz-Lane
Fergus Falls, Mn 56537
218-589-7090

ARABIC

- Language Line

For information about the Language Line, refer to agency LEP plan, attachment A. pg. 9

Other Agencies Offering Interpreter Services

Cultural Diversity

303 Roberts St. N.

Fargo, ND 58102 (701) 526-3000 (formerly located in Moorhead)

- Contact Yoke Sim Ghmaratre, Director. Interpretation/translation for following languages: Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Creole, French, Kurdish, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese.

Centro Cultural de Fargo Moorhead

1014 19th St. S.,

Moorhead, Mn 56560 - (218)236-7318

- Serves Latino community

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Population

OtterTail County Human Services will use the Minnesota Relay Service to assist those individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. The telephone number is 1-800-627-3529 or dial 711.

For sign language interpreters, call the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services office at 1-877-456-7589 which is voice or TTY capable. The office is located in Moorhead.

ATTACHMENT B

Otter Tail County Limited English Proficiency Plan CODE OF ETHICS

As interpreters in any given setting, you are bound by a Code of Ethics, which dictates ethical behavior and sets out the appropriate role of the interpreter.

INTERPRETERS SHALL KEEP ALL ASSIGNMENT-RELATED INFORMATION STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Interpreters shall not reveal information about an assignment, including the fact that the service is being performed. Even seemingly unimportant information could be damaging in the wrong hands. Therefore, to avoid this possibility, interpreters must not say anything about any assignment. In cases where meetings or information become a matter of public record, the interpreter shall use discretion in discussing such meetings or information.

If a problem arises between an interpreter and other person(s) involved in an assignment, the interpreter should first discuss it with the person(s) involved. If no solution can be reached, then all parties should agree on a third person who could advise them.

When training new interpreters by the method of sharing actual experiences, the trainers shall not reveal any of the following information:

- The name, sex, age, etc., of the client.
- The day of the week, time of the day and time of the year the situation took place.
- The location, including city, state or agency of all situations and parties involved.

It only takes a minimum amount of information to identify the parties involved.

INTERPRETERS SHALL INTERPRET ALL MESSAGES FAITHFULLY, ALWAYS CONVEYING THE CONTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE SPEAKER, USING EXPRESSIONS MOST READILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE PERSON(S) WHOM THEY SERVE.

Guidelines:

Interpreters are not editors and must transmit everything that is said in exactly the same manner it was intended. This is especially difficult when the interpreter disagrees with what is being said or feels uncomfortable when profanity is being used. Interpreters must remember that they are not at all responsible for what is said, only for conveying it accurately. If the interpreter's own feelings interfere with rendering the message accurately, he/she should withdraw from the session.

While working from spoken English to a foreign language, the interpreter should communicate in the manner most easily understood or preferred by the non-English speaking person(s); be it verbally, or by gesturing, drawing, writing, etc. It is important for the interpreter and the non-English speaking person(s) to spend some time adjusting to each other's way of communicating prior to the actual assignment.

INTERPRETERS SHALL NOT COUNSEL, ADVISE OR INTERJECT PERSONAL OPINIONS.

Guidelines:

An interpreter may not omit from or add to anything that is said for interpreting in a session, even when they are asked to do so by any of the parties involved.

An interpreter is only present in a given situation because two or more individuals have a problem communicating due to a difference in language, and thus the interpreter's only function is to facilitate communication. The interpreter shall not become personally involved in the situation because in so doing he/she accepts some responsibility for the outcome, which is not rightly theirs.

INTERPRETERS SHALL ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS USING DISCRETION WITH REGARD TO SKILLS, SETTINGS AND THE CLIENTS INVOLVED.

Guidelines:

Interpreters shall only accept assignments for which they are qualified. However, when an interpreter shortage exists and the only ones available do not possess the necessary skills for a particular assignment, the situation should be explained to the client. If the client agrees that services are needed regardless of the skill levels, then the available interpreter will have to use his/her best judgment towards accepting or rejecting the assignment.

Certain situations may prove uncomfortable for some interpreters. Religious, political, racial, sexual differences, etc. can adversely affect the session. Therefore, an interpreter shall not accept any assignments that he/she knows will affect them personally.

Interpreters should refrain from providing services in situations where family members, close personal or professional relationships may affect their impartiality. Under these circumstances, it is difficult for the interpreter to mask their feelings. This is especially relevant in legal settings where the ability to provide oneself unbiased when challenged is lessened. In emergency situations, it is realized that the interpreter may have to provide services for family members, friends or close business associates. However, all parties involved should be informed that the interpreter might become personally involved in the proceedings.