**ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY**

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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| **Program/Area:** | Operations | | |
| **Title:** | Sign and Non-English Language Interpretation Services | | |
| **Number:** | E 21 | **Status:** | Updated |
| **Effective Date:** | 6/26/14 | **Revision Date:** | 6/26/14 |

## I. PURPOSE

To provide a process to obtain sign and non-English interpretation services.

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## II. POLICY

Social Services Agency (SSA) will provide hearing-impaired and non-English and limited-English speaking applicants and recipients equal access to and participation in programs and activities without undue delay.

All non-English or limited-English language and sign language interpreters shall adhere to the confidentiality of information. Any interpreter who is not an SSA employee is required to complete the Certification of Confidentiality- Non-SSA Interpreter Form (Attachment A).

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## III. BACKGROUND

SSA offers and administers a certification process to employees who wish to be certified as non-English or limited-English language interpreters. SSA Human Resources (HR) maintains a list of certified Agency bilingual employees. In addition, a list of County volunteer interpreters is available through the County Intranet (Attachment B). The County list of volunteers consists of certified and non-certified non-English or limited-English language interpreters that are updated every September. For sign language interpreters, SSA contracts with qualified vendors.

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## IV. PROCEDURE

A. Non-English Language Interpretation

1. Staff shall first seek assistance within their own agency/department. Qualified bilingual employees, who are certified through a process administered through

   SSA, shall provide interpretation services to meet the needs of non-English speaking population and individuals with disabilities. This process will ensure that effective interpretation services are provided to applicants and recipients of social services programs and activities.

2. When no other resources are available, interpretation services may be obtained through the contracted service providers (Attachment C). Translation of written text from one language to another is also available by sending the materials to the contract service provider (Attachment D). Each division will follow its internal procedures for accessing services including the approval of invoices for Accounts Payable.

B. Sign Language Interpretation

1. Sign language interpretation services shall be obtained directly through the Agency contractor for the hearing impaired. SSA Contract Services Unit provides each division with the name(s) and phone number(s) of its contractor(s). Updated information is disseminated accordingly as changes occur. Specific procedures are indicated on Attachment E. The form, Verification of Sign Language Interpretation Services (Attachment F), must be completed, signed, and returned to SSA Contract Services after the services have been completed.

2. It is also acceptable to communicate with hearing-impaired applicants and recipients by using the telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD), including services such as the California Relay Services. Operating instructions on how to use these devices are indicated on Attachment G. Use of these devices to provide needed services does not constitute a breach of confidentiality. Staff can use these services to communicate with deaf, hearing and speech-impaired applicants, and recipients.

3. For court-ordered sign and non-English interpretation services, an interpreter must be certified or must have a documented evaluation of performance at an equivalent level of competency from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or the National Association for the Deaf.

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## V. ATTACHMENT

A. Certification of Confidentiality – Non-SSA Interpreter
B. Access to County Volunteer Language Interpreter Web Site
C. Non-English Language Interpretation Services
D. Written Translation Request Form

E. Sign Language Interpretation Services
F. Verification of Sign Language Interpretation Services
G. Telecommunication Device for the Deaf or Telephone to Telephone Typewriter