

PROVIDING TRANSLATION SERVICES FOR CUSTODIAL PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY

OVERVIEW

In order to provide equal access to benefits for custodial parents (CPs) who have limited English speaking ability (LESA), HRA policy mandates that all such CPs have the right to free interpretation services. All frontline workers in OCSE BOs, especially Interviewers/Caseworkers and Reception Area staff, are required to know how to provide translation services. In addition, all BO Supervisors will serve and support their particular staff as LESA liaisons.

POLICY BACKGROUND

HRA's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs (ORIA), the central access point for translation resources, contracts out for interpretation services to assist HRA staff in communicating with LESA CPs, either in person or by phone. ORIA gives BO Supervisors/LESA liaisons instructions and unique numerical codes to access these interpreters; supervisors are to share these codes with their Interviewers/Caseworkers.

In addition: (1) Application kits for all HRA programs include the **W515W** form, *Interpretation Services Notice for the Application/Recertification Kits*, which informs CPs of their right to free interpretation service; (2) Local Law 73 requires that all client documents produced by New York City OCSE must be translated into six languages (Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish); and contracted interpreters can be used to verbally translate them into other languages as needed; and (3) posters in the client waiting areas of Office of Child Support (OCSE) Borough Offices (BOs) announce the availability of free translation services.

REQUIRED ACTIONS

This procedure details the steps that BO workers and Supervisors/LESA liaisons are to follow in order to provide CPs with translation services. It includes instructions for:

- Determining what language a CP speaks.
- Selecting an interpreter.
- Accessing a telephone interpreter.

It also includes:

- Important tips for working with an interpreter (Appendix A).
- A list of current ORIA contacts and interpretation vendors (Appendix B).

DETERMINING WHAT LANGUAGE A CP SPEAKS



Help

When a CP indicates a need for *sign language* interpretation, the BO Receptionist calls HRA's Office of Equal Opportunity: **212-331-5114/5**. ORIA is not responsible for this service.

To determine what language a CP speaks, and to provide him/her with translation services:

- All BO staff should have **W194 Language Cards**. These cards are used to determine a CP's language if (s)he has limited English speaking ability. If you do not have a card, contact your Supervisor.
- A Receptionist who notices that a CP may require translation services uses the **W194 Language Card** to determine what language the CP speaks.
- Once the Receptionist has determined the CP's language, (s)he assigns the CP, *whenever possible*, to an on-site bilingual Interviewer/Caseworker who speaks that language.
 - If such a bilingual Interviewer/Caseworker is available, (s)he conducts the interview with the CP and ensures that the CP's language preference(s) is entered into the Welfare Management System (WMS).
 - If a bilingual Caseworker is **not** available, the Receptionist assigns the CP to an Interviewer/Caseworker who calls the ORIA vendor and arranges for a telephone interpreter; an interpreter can be accessed within minutes of placing the call.



Note

If the CP's language is not listed on the **W194** form, Reception Area staff contacts a Supervisor/LESA liaison, who calls Language Line Services (LLS), HRA's vendor for telephone interpretation. The Supervisor will request assistance from LLS in determining the CP's language before assigning the CP to an Interviewer/Caseworker.

SELECTING AN INTERPRETER

Interpreters are to be selected based upon the following criteria, which are *listed in order of preference*:

- **An on-site bilingual Interviewer/Caseworker**, if one is available in the client's language.
- **A telephone interpreter**, available at all times in more than 180 languages.
 - Whenever possible, the Interviewer/Caseworker should conduct the interview with the LESA CA at a desk with a dual-handled telephone. If one is not available, a desk with a telephone that has speaker capability can be used. If neither is available, the Caseworker and the CP pass the handset back and forth. Make sure that the interpreter is aware of this situation.
 - To request dual-handled phones, refer to Appendix B.
- **An interpreter brought to the BO by the CP**. In this instance, the Caseworker informs the CP of his/her right to free translation services. If the CP still wants to use his/her own interpreter, that interpreter must be at least 18 years of age.



An on-site interpreter is to be used only when the physical presence of the interpreter is required, such as visits to homebound CPs. In this instance, the Supervisor/LESA liaison of the assigned Caseworker arranges for the contracted interpreter's visit. In the absence of the Supervisor, the BO Director can either arrange the appointment or contact ORIA to give another staff member temporary access to do so; see Appendix B.

ACCESSING A TELEPHONE INTERPRETER

If the Receptionist or Interviewer/Caseworker has not already done so, the Supervisor/LESA liaison uses the **W194 Language Card** to identify the language needed. If the language cannot be identified by using the **W194**, the Supervisor/LESA liaison or Interviewer/Caseworker requests the assistance of an LLS Agent.



If the Caseworker or Supervisor needs assistance at any time when placing a call to LLS, (s)he presses **0** or says “help,” in order to be connected to one of their agents.

To access the LLS Agent, the Interviewer/Caseworker or Supervisor/LESA liaison follows the steps below:

1. Dials **(privileged information)**.
2. Enters on the telephone keypad, or tells the LLS Agent, the 6-digit HRA **Client ID: (number is privileged information)**.
3. Follows the prompts to press **1** for Spanish, **2** for Vietnamese, or **3** for all other languages. At this point, (s)he speaks the name of the language needed.
4. Enters the unique **Access Code** for the BO, to identify which HRA site is calling.
 - Makes sure to enter both the **Client ID** and the **BO Access Code** correctly; they are always two different numbers.
 - Calls ORIA at **(privileged information)** if (s)he does not know the correct **Access Code** for the BO.
5. Speaks to the interpreter who comes on the line; identifies the name and unit of his/her program, briefs the interpreter on the situation, summarizes what needs to be accomplished, and provides any special instructions.
6. Adds the LESA CP to the line/call, either by using the dual-handled phone, activating the speakerphone, or passing the handset back and forth.

APPENDIX A: TIPS FOR WORKING WITH AN INTERPRETER

1. **Brief the interpreter.** As noted in the procedure, identify the name of your unit and program, provide specific instructions about what needs to be done or obtained, and let him/her know if you need help with placing a call. If you need the interpreter to help you place a call to the LESA CP, you may ask for a dial-out. Since the amount of time allotted for placing a dial-out is limited once an interpreter is on the line, it is important to be brief and specific in providing instructions to the interpreter.
2. **Speak directly to the CP.** You and the CP can communicate directly with each other as if the interpreter were not there. The interpreter will relay the information and then communicate the CPs' response directly back to you.
3. **Speak naturally, not louder; and speak at your normal pace, not slower.**
 - a. **Segments:** Speak in one sentence at a time, or two short ones. Try to avoid breaking up a thought. Since your interpreter is trying to understand the meaning of what you're saying, express the whole thought if possible. If necessary, the interpreter will ask you to slow down or repeat. Pause to make sure you give the interpreter time to deliver your message to the CP.
 - b. **Clarifications:** If something is unclear, or if the interpreter has been given a long statement, (s)he will ask you to repeat or clarify what the statement meant.
4. **Ask if the CP understands.** Do not assume that a LESA CP understands you. In some cultures, a person may say "yes" as you explain something, not because they understand it but because they want you to keep talking, as they are trying to follow the conversation. Keep in mind that a lack of English does not equal a lack of education.
5. **Do not ask for the interpreter's opinion.** His/her job is only to convey the meaning of the source language. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES may (s)he allow personal opinion to color the interpretation. Also, do not hold the interpreter responsible for what the CP does or does not say – for example, if a CP does not answer your question.

6. **Everything you say will be interpreted.** Whatever the interpreter hears will be interpreted – therefore, avoid private conversations. If you think that the interpreter has not interpreted everything, ask him/her to do so, and always avoid interrupting the interpreter while she (s)he is interpreting.
7. **Avoid jargon and technical terms.** Do not use jargon, slang, idioms, acronyms, or technical medical terms. Clarify any unique vocabulary and provide examples if they are needed to explain a term.
8. **Length of the interpretation session.** When working with an interpreter. The conversation can often take twice as long as one conducted in English. Many concepts you express have no equivalents in other languages, so the interpreter may have to describe or paraphrase many terms you use. Often, interpreters will use more words to interpret what the original speaker says, simply because of the grammar and syntax of the target language.
9. **Reading scripts.** People often talk more quickly when reading a script. When you are reading a script, prepared text, or disclosure, slow down to give the interpreter a chance to keep up with you.
10. **Culture.** Professional interpreters are familiar with the culture and customs of the LESA CP. During the conversation, the interpreter may identify and clarify a cultural issue that they may not think you are aware of. Also, if the interpreter feels that a particular question is culturally inappropriate, (s)he might ask you to rephrase the question or ask if (s)he can help you get the information in a more appropriate way.
11. **Closing of the call.** The interpreter will wait for you to initiate the closing of the call. When appropriate, the interpreter will offer further assistance and will be the last to disconnect from the call. Remember to thank him/her at the end of the session for his/her efforts.

APPENDIX B: CURRENT ORIA AND INTERPRETATION VENDOR CONTACTS

Note: This information is privileged and will not be included on this site.