



Polk County Social Services Comprehensive Civil Rights Plan (CCRP)

Polk County Social Services
612 N Broadway, Room 302, Crookston, MN 56716
218-281-3127 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
(877) 281-3127 (toll free)

Civil Rights Coordinator: 218-470-8405 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
ADA Coordinator: 218-470-8405 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
Limited English Proficiency Coordinator: 218-470-8405 (voice) or use your preferred
relay service

This CCRP is posted in the lobby next to the reception desk

Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats to individuals with disabilities and for information about equal access to services, call (218) 281-3127 (voice) or (877) 281-3127 (toll free) or your preferred relay service.

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1. Purpose

As a recipient of federal financial assistance, Polk County Social Services is responsible for providing core services to assist and support Minnesota's most vulnerable individuals and families so they can meet their basic needs and be treated with respect and dignity. Polk County Social Services has a CCRP to ensure that all eligible individuals receive equal access to program services and information. Its programs are operated in a nondiscriminatory way, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, creed and public assistance status. In medical programs, sex includes sex stereotypes and gender identity under any health program or activity receiving federal funds. This CCRP also serves as a source of information for county agency staff and the general public. It sets out Polk County Social Service's civil rights administrative policies and procedures, identifying key contacts within the agency and linking the reader to applicable state and federal civil rights laws and resources.

2. Legal Authorities (See full list in Appendix, Attachment A)

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; State and local government services (disability)
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age)
- Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (added sex discrimination in health care programs)
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex)
- Bilingual Requirements in the Food Stamp Program, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
- FNS Instruction 113-1, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement – Nutrition Programs and Activities, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2005)
- Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363A

3. Civil Rights Contact

Polk County Social Services designates Karen Warmack to serve as the agency's Civil Rights Contact, agency point person on civil rights matters.

Karen Warmack, Director
(218) 470-8405 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
(877) 281-3127 (toll free)
karen.warmack@polkcountymn.gov

4. Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedure

Polk County Social Services Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedure

It is the policy of Polk County Social Services to make sure that program benefits and services are available to everyone and provided to all eligible individuals without discrimination, in compliance with civil rights laws.

Polk County Social Service employees, services, programs, benefits and policies will not discriminate against applicants, clients or members of the public because of race, color, national

origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, creed, religion, political beliefs, disability or public assistance status. "Sex" includes sex stereotypes and gender identity under any medical or health program receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, CHIP programs, health clinics, insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges.

This policy covers Polk County Social Service's full range of services, programs and benefits, including, but not limited to, access to information about services, eligibility determinations and intake, admission procedures and treatment. The policy applies to the agencies and providers receiving federal and state funds under contracts, licenses and other arrangements with Polk County Social Services. The Minnesota Human Rights Act also applies to the work of Polk County Social Services and those agencies carrying out its programs.

Program Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Polk County Social Services and all of its services, programs and benefits, are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, including people with hearing loss, low vision and other sensory disabilities.

To avoid disability discrimination, Polk County Social Services will:

- Notify the public about rights and protections for people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Designate an ADA Contact and maintain a complaint procedure
- Make sure that its buildings are physically accessible for people with disabilities
- Assist individuals with disabilities to apply and qualify for benefits based on their eligibility
- Provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including accessible formats, to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities
- Provide services, programs and benefits that are accessible to and usable by qualified people with disabilities

Physical access includes:

- Convenient off-street parking designated specifically for people with disabilities
- Curb cuts and ramps between parking areas and the Polk County Social Services building
- Level access into the first floor of the Polk County Social Services buildings with elevator access to all other floors of Polk County Government Center.

Reasonable Modifications to Policies, Procedures or Practices

Polk County Social Services will make reasonable modifications to its policies, procedures or practices when necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless Polk County Social Services can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the services, programs or benefits.

Effective Communication and Auxiliary Aids and Services

Polk County Social Services will take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with people with disabilities and companions with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To ensure effective communications, Polk County Social Services will provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including accessible formats, so that people with disabilities can receive services, programs and benefits and participate in them in the same way as people without disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services include qualified readers, writers and interpreters who convey information effectively, accurately and impartially using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

To determine what types of auxiliary aids or services are necessary, Polk County Social Services will give primary consideration to the requests of people with disabilities. Polk County Social Services will honor the choice of the person requesting the auxiliary aid or service unless it would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or benefit or cause an undue administrative or financial burden. If this happens, Polk County Social Services will find another equally effective auxiliary aid or service.

5. Complaint Resolution Procedure

Polk County Social Services Civil Rights Complaint Procedure

You have the right to equal access to services, if you are an applicant, client or member of the public trying to gain access to human services program information or benefits. Polk County Social Services has a civil rights complaint procedure that provides prompt and thorough resolution of civil rights complaints.

Civil rights complaints allege discrimination. You have a right to file a civil rights complaint if you believe you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, creed, religion, political beliefs, disability or public assistance status. Sex includes sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in medical or health programs and clinics receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, MNCare, CHIP programs, insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges.

It is against the law for anyone who works for Polk County Social Services to retaliate against a person who files a complaint or who cooperates in the investigation of a civil rights complaint.

To file a complaint, ask for Polk County Social Service's equal opportunity policy, complaint procedure and complaint form. Use the contact information below to help you to file your complaint. You can also review the law and regulations that outlaw discrimination in the Civil Rights Contact's office at Polk County Social Services:

Karen Warmack, Director
Polk County Social Services
612 N Broadway, Room 302
Crookston, MN 56716
(218) 470-8405 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
(877) 281-3127 (toll free)
(218) 281-7347 (fax)
Karen.warmack@polkcountymn.gov

Procedure:

1. Civil rights complaints **must** be submitted to the Civil Rights Contact within 180 days of the date the alleged discrimination occurred.
2. A complaint **must** be in writing and contain the name and address of the person filing it. You should also give your telephone number or relay service number if you are deaf or hard of hearing. Give your email address if it helps get in touch with you. The complaint **must** state the problem or action alleged and the relief desired. If you need assistance with your complaint, the Civil Rights Contact will help you.
3. Polk County Social Services **must** conduct an investigation of the complaint. The investigation may be informal, but it **must** be thorough and timely. People who have an interest in the complaint **must** have an opportunity to submit relevant evidence about the complaint. Polk County Social Services will issue a written decision on the complaint within 90 days after its filing. Polk County Social Services will maintain the complaint records and files for three years. Complaints about program rules are not civil rights complaints and will be resolved through a different complaint process.
4. The person filing the complaint may appeal the decision by writing to the agency's Civil Rights Contact within 15 days of receiving the written decision. The Civil Rights Contact **will** issue a written decision in response to the appeal, no later than 30 days after the filing. This decision is final. – This appeal process is not the same as filing a fair hearings appeal with the Department of Human Services' Appeals and Regulations Division.
5. The person filing the complaint must be informed that he/she can file a discrimination complaint **directly** with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the SNAP Program.

- (a) The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights** prohibits discrimination in its programs because of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex and religion. Sex includes sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in medical or health programs and clinics receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medicaid, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges under Title I of the Affordable Care Act. Contact the federal agency directly:

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights**

Region V
233 N. Michigan Avenue
Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601
312-886-2359 (voice)
800-368-1019 (toll free)
800-537-7697 (TTY)

- (b) USDA requires that the following nondiscrimination statement be provided **exactly** as it is shown below:
-

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and **U.S. Department of Agriculture** (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who required alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDS office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

6. Filing Complaints with State Agencies:

The person filing the complaint **must** also be informed that he/she can file a discrimination complaint **directly** with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

(a) The Minnesota Department of Human Rights prohibits discrimination in public services programs because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or public assistance status. Contact the Minnesota Department of Human Rights directly:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
Freeman Building, 625 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-539-1100 (voice)
800-657-3704 (toll free)
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)

- (b) The **Minnesota Department of Human Services** prohibits discrimination in its programs because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, public assistance status, age, disability, or sex, including sex stereotypes and gender identity discrimination that occurs in health programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance, such as Medical Assistance, MNCare, CHIP programs and insurance companies and state health insurance exchanges. Contact the Equal Opportunity and Access Division **directly** only if you have a discrimination complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Equal Opportunity and Access Division
P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

- (c) County agencies are not permitted to investigate civil rights complaints in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) because counties directly administer SNAP benefits. County agencies **must** refer SNAP civil rights complaints to DHS or the USDA regional office in Chicago. The USDA regional address is:

Civil Rights Director
Midwest Regional Office
USDA/Food and Nutrition Service
77 W. Jackson Blvd., 20th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-3591
(312) 353-6657 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
Tamara.earley@fns.usda.gov

7. Arrangements for People with Disabilities:

Polk County Social Services **will** make appropriate arrangements to ensure that people with disabilities are provided accommodations to participate in the complaint process in an equal manner to people without disabilities. Appropriate arrangements include, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing; accessible formats for people who are blind or have low vision; and assuring a physically accessible location for complaint proceedings. The Civil Rights Contact or designee is responsible for making these arrangements.

8. Polk County Social Services will refer all SNAP civil rights complaints to DHS or the USDA regional office in Chicago as soon as possible after received.

6. Complaint Notification Form

Polk County Social Services will use the *Complaint Notification Form* to notify DHS in writing of all service delivery discrimination complaints filed against Polk County Social Services and resolved on the county agency level. Polk County Social Services will make sure the complaint notification form is completed and sent to DHS within 90 days of the date the complaint was filed in the county, so DHS can report the complaint to the appropriate federal office. A copy of the *Complaint Notification Form* is located in the Appendix; Attachment B.

7. Disability Compliance

- a. **Disability Law and Standard of Access for State and Local Government Services**
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination based on their disability in federally funded programs and services.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II of the ADA) protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of their disability when the discrimination occurs in state or local government services. An agency does not have to receive federal financial assistance to be required to comply with Title II of the ADA. An agency just has to be a state or local government entity.

County human services agencies must ensure that people with disabilities are able to use their programs and services. Disability laws set out an equal access standard for providing services. This means that individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal access to human services programs; the same standard of access that applies to people without disabilities.

A public agency must reasonably modify its policies, procedures and practices to avoid discrimination. A public agency must also take appropriate steps to ensure that its communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

b. **ADA Contact**

Polk County Social Services has designated an ADA Contact person to serve as its point person on disability matters raised by applicants, clients and members of the public. ADA Contact information is located on the cover page of this CCRP.

Karen Warmack, Director
Polk County Social Services
612 N Broadway, Room 302
Crookston, MN 56716
(218) 470-8405 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
(877) 281-3127 (toll free)
karen.warmack@co.polk.mn.us

c. **Disability Complaints**

People filing disability complaints will use Polk County Social Service's civil rights complaint procedure.

d. **ADA Notice Document**

Polk County Social Services will use the DHS brochure: *Do you have a disability* (DHS-4133-ENG) as its ADA notice document. This notice document informs applicants, clients and members of the public that Polk County Social Services does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The notice document also gives information to the public about the rights of people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Polk County Social Services has a copy of DHS brochure: *Do you have a disability* (DHS-4133-ENG) posted in the lobby next to the reception desk.

A copy of the DHS brochure: *Do you have a disability* (DHS-4133-ENG) is located in the Appendix; Attachment C.

e. Disability Policy Prohibiting Discrimination

Polk County Social Services Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedure includes provisions which prohibit disability discrimination in human services programs. This policy is located in the agency lobby.

8. Limited English Proficiency Plan (see Attachment E)

9. Annual Civil Rights Training for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Polk County Social Services will conduct annual SNAP civil rights training for all staff who administer the SNAP program and all staff who have direct contact with the public, such as support staff, supervisors and managers.

Polk County Social Services will have all staff review the DHS PowerPoint presentation online. We will document the date that each staff has completed their review of the presentation annually.

10. Civil Rights Assurance of Compliance

The Polk County Social Services director and county attorney representative have signed the *2016 Civil Rights Assurance of Compliance*. A copy is located in the Appendix; Attachment D.

11. CCRP Administration

Polk County Social Services will:

- Post a copy of its CCRP in the agency lobby where members of the public can review it and in the employee break room where staff can review it
 - Post the CCRP on the agency's public website
 - Post the CCRP annually on all employee bulletin boards.
 - For the benefit of applicants, clients and members of the public, prominently post in the lobby a copy of the equal opportunity policy and procedure that includes provisions prohibiting disability discrimination and a copy of its civil rights complaint procedure
 - Post a copy of the DHS brochure: *Do you have a disability* (DHS-4133-ENG) in the lobby next to the reception desk
 - Conduct annual SNAP civil rights training for all staff who administer the SNAP program and all staff who have direct contact with the public, including support staff, supervisors and managers. Polk County Social Services will document the date of the training each year and document who attends the training.
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12. Attachments

- A. Full List of Legal Authorities**
 - B. Complaint Notification Form**
 - C. DHS Brochure – Do you have a disability? DHS-4133-ENG**
 - D. Signed copy of the 2016 Civil Rights Assurance Compliance Document**
 - E. Limited English Proficiency Plan**
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Attachment A – Full List of Legal Authorities

Federal

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin)
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
3. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability)
4. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; State and local government services (disability)
5. Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age)
6. Community Service Assurance Provisions of the Hill-Burton Act (health facilities receiving Hill-Burton Funds)
7. Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (added sex discrimination in health care programs)
8. Nondiscrimination Provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (Federal Block Grants):
 - Community Services Block Grant (race, color, national origin, sex) **Remaining block grants** (race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, religion)
 - Social Services Block Grant
 - Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant
 - Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Block Grant
 - Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant
 - Community Mental Health Services Block Grant
 - Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant
9. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex)
10. Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, religion)
11. Food Stamp Act of 1977
12. Nondiscrimination Compliance Requirements in the Food Stamp Program, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
13. Bilingual Requirements in the Food Stamp Program, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
14. FNS Instruction 113-1, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement – Nutrition Programs and Activities, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2005)
15. Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations Regulation

State

Minnesota Human Rights Act, Chapter 363A

Attachment B – Complaint Notification Form

**POLK COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE COMPLAINT NOTIFICATION FORM
COMPLAINTS ALLEGING DISCRIMINATION IN SERVICE DELIVERY**

AUTHORITY: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Instruction 113-1.

REQUIREMENT: County human service agencies must notify the DHS Civil Rights Coordinator within 90 days of all service delivery discrimination complaints (i.e., civil rights complaints) filed against them (see bottom of Page 2 for contact information).

ACTION REQUIRED:

Complete this form and send it to the DHS Civil Rights Coordinator within 90 days of the date the complaint was filed.

1. Name, address, telephone number of complainant:

2. Name and address of county agency delivering the benefits, including names of any employees accused of wrongdoing:

3. Type of discrimination alleged:

4. Describe the alleged discrimination, including the dates it happened. Give names and contact information of any witnesses:

5. Give a summary of the investigation findings, including any corrective action ordered:

CONTACT INFORMATION: DHS Civil Right Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Equal Opportunity and Access Division
P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service
651-431-7444 (fax)
joann.daSilva@state.mn.us

Attachment C – DHS Brochure: *Do you have a disability*; DHS-4133-ENG
(Posted with plan and available on request)

Attachment D – Signed Copy of the *2016 Civil Rights Assurance of Compliance*

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES CIVIL RIGHTS ASSURANCE OF
COMPLIANCE

NONDISCRIMINATION IN STATE AND FEDERALLY FINANCED PROGRAMS

Polk County Social Services
(HEREAFTER CALLED THE “COUNTY AGENCY”)

THE COUNTY AGENCY provides this civil rights Assurance of Compliance (hereafter called the “Assurance”) in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all federal financial assistance from the United States Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture. The County Agency agrees that compliance with this Assurance is a condition of continued receipt of federal financial assistance and that it is binding upon the County Agency directly or through contract, license, or other provider of services, as long as it receives federal or state financial assistance; and shall be submitted with the required Comprehensive Civil Rights Plan update.

THE COUNTY AGENCY ASSURES that it will comply with:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Department of Health and Human Services, Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons; Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. 6101, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010; Federal Block Grant Programs of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981; as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; Family Violence Prevention and Services Act; Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, including the Nondiscrimination Compliance Requirements in the Food Stamp Program and the Bilingual Requirements in the Food Stamp Program; FNS Instruction 113- 1, Civil Rights Compliance and Enforcement – Nutrition Programs and Activities, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2005); and Interethnic Adoption Provisions of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 (formerly Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994).

PURSUANT TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS PLAN for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, by accepting this Assurance, the County Agency agrees to allow access, by authorized personnel of the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the United States Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture, during normal working hours, to private and/or confidential data maintained by the County Agency (or other sub-recipient of federal financial assistance) to the extent necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation into any complaint of discrimination, including to compile data, maintain records and submit reports as required to determine compliance with the above mentioned laws, rules and regulations. The Minnesota Department of Human Services agrees to comply with all requirements of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes,

section 13.01 et seq.). No private and/or confidential data collected, maintained or used in the course of an investigation shall be disseminated except as authorized by statute, either during the period of the investigation or after it has been concluded. If there are any violations of this assurance, DHS shall have the right to invoke fiscal sanctions or other legal remedies in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 256.017. THE PERSON WHOSE SIGNATURE APPEARS BELOW is authorized to sign this Assurance and commit the County Agency to its terms.

Date

Director's Signature

I CERTIFY that the signatory for the County Agency has lawful authority to bind the County Agency to the terms of this civil rights Assurance.

Date

County Attorney's Signature

Attachment E- LEP Plan

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan Polk County Social Services Effective Date: January 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to document the policies and procedures as it applies to providing meaningful access (language access) to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) while accessing services and information at Polk County Social Services in East Grand Forks, Crookston and McIntosh, MN.

2. Authorities

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000 et seq.; 45 CFR §80, Nondiscrimination Under Programs Receiving Federal Financial Assistance through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) (Section 1557). <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-05-18/pdf/2016-11458.pdf>
- Office for Civil Rights Policy Guidance, Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 68FR 47311 (2003). <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/resources/specialtopics/lep/policyguidancedocument.html>
- Department of Justice regulation, 28 CFR §42.405(d)(1), Department of Justice, Coordination of Enforcement of Non-discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs, Requirements for Translation. http://www.justice.gov/crt/grants_statutes/corregt6.txt
- Bilingual requirements in the Food Stamp program, 7 CFR §272.4 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Service. <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-1998-title7-vol4/pdf/CFR-1998-title7-vol4-sec272-4.pdf>
- Communications Services, Minnesota Statutes § 15.441, subd (1), (2), (3), (4). <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=15.441&format=pdf>
- Information for persons with limited English language proficiency, Minnesota Statutes §256.01 subd 16. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=256.01>
- National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care. <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdfs/EnhancedNationalCLASStandards.pdf>

3. Definitions

- **Culturally appropriate services** – Is the utilization or application of services, testing, and any other methodology that does not have the effect of subjecting individuals with LEP, and/or their families to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin, or do not have the effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the program with respect to individuals of a particular race, color, or national origin.- 45 CFR 80.3(b)(2).
 - **Effective communication** - In a healthcare and social services delivery settings such as financial services, child support, fiscal and social work, effective communication occurs when provider staff have taken the necessary steps to make sure that a person with Limited English Proficiency is given adequate information to understand the services and benefits available and receives the information and services for which they are eligible. Effective communication also means that a person with Limited English
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Proficiency (LEP) is able to communicate the relevant circumstances of their situation to the provider, and for the provider has access to the adequate information to do their job.

- **I Speak Cards** - “I Speak” Cards say both in English and target language “I need a (target language) interpreter.”
- **Individual with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** – A person with Limited English Proficiency or “LEP” is not able to speak, read, write, or understand the English language well enough to allow them to interact effectively with healthcare, social services agencies, and other providers.
- **Interpreting** - Interpreting means the oral, verbal or spoken transfer of a message from the source language into the target language. There are different modes of interpreting such as consecutive, simultaneous, sight-translation, and summarization.
- **Language Block (LB)** – Is a block of text that informs readers, in ten different languages, how they can get free help interpreting the information on a particular document or included as an insert in appropriate documents.
- **LEP Implementation Team** - Individuals appointed by Karen Warmack to review LEP Implementation activities within Polk County Social Services.
- **Meaningful access** - Meaningful access to programs, information, and services is the standard of access required of federally funded entities to comply with language access requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To ensure meaningful access for individuals with Limited English Proficiency, service providers must make available to clients and their families language assistance that is free of charge and provided without undue delay resulting in accurate and effective communication.
- **Office for Civil Rights (OCR)** - The Office for Civil Rights is the civil rights enforcement agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. OCR Region V is the regional office that enforces Title VI in Minnesota for health and human services agencies and providers.
- **Primary languages** - Primary languages are the languages other than English that are most commonly spoken by clientele as identified by Polk County Social Services collection of demographic data. Currently there is one primary language: English.
- **Qualified Bilingual staff** - Is the person who has met and demonstrated the minimum linguistic proficiency and fluency requirements in both languages (target and source languages), AND has demonstrated cultural responsiveness, AND Polk County Social Services has documented the above.

If the bilingual staff is going to act as interpreter for others, the above criteria are required, AND at least 8 hours annually of interpreting Continuing Education (CE), AND at least one of the following documented by Polk County Social Services:

The bilingual staff:

- i. Is a Healthcare Certified Interpreter (CHI, or CoreCHI), Certified Medical Interpreter (CMI), Federal or State Court certified interpreter?
 - ii. has received healthcare interpreting training (minimum of 40 hours)
 - iii. has received community interpreting training (minimum of 40 hours)
-

- iv. has developed skills and abilities as an interpreter
- v. understands boundaries and roles as an interpreter
- vi. abides by the National Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Healthcare Interpreters by NCIHC, or Canons and professional code of ethics
- vii. Polk County Social Services keeps documentation of the above readily available upon request, audits, or in the process of investigations.

- **Qualified Interpreter** - A person who either has met training and competency requirements, or who is a certified healthcare, certified federal or state court interpreter and in good standing before their certifying body, AND adheres to the interpreter National Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care (National Council on Interpreting in Health Care –NCIHC), the canons of ethics or the conduct for court interpreters, etc.
- **Sight translation** - The verbal translation (transfer) of a written document from the source language into the target language.
- **Translation** - Translation means the written transfer of a message from the source language into the target language.

4. Methods of Providing Services to individuals with LEP

The primary methods used are Language Line Services and bilingual staff if employed and qualified.

Contracted Qualified Interpreters: Leonor Valderrama de Sillers, 218-233-7841

Telephone Interpreter Services: We contract with Language Line Services.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Services: we do not contract with any video remote interpreting services.

Bilingual staff: we do not currently have any bilingual staff who meet the requirements above.

LEP Liaison & Coordinator: LeAnn Holte – leann.holte@polkcountymn.gov

LEP Liaison Back-up: Jon Street and Betty Solie – Jonathon.street@polkcountymn.gov

and betty.solie@polkcountymn.gov

5. Interpreter Services

Polk County Social Services, without undue delay and at no cost to individuals with LEP and/or their families, provides meaningful access to information and service to all individuals with LEP and/or their families receiving services.

6. Translation of Documents

Polk County Social Services contracts qualified translators or translating agencies to assist individuals with LEP in translating all vital documents, or documents needed to perform services.

7. Dissemination and Mandatory Training to Agency Staff , Volunteers, and Others

Polk County Social Services is committed to providing LEP training to:

- All staff at new employee orientation, AND
- At least once a year to all staff, volunteers, and contractors

Polk County Social Services will keep record of those training sessions and individual record of attendance to training will be part of personnel files. Record of this training will be kept for a minimum of five years and readily available during DHS audits, investigations, or any proceeding and as required by the law.

This training is to include at least the following:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- How to work effectively with interpreters, and
- Any other cultural issues related to delivery of information and services to individuals with LEP served by Polk County Social Services.

This policy is added to the Manual of Policies and Procedures of Polk County Social Services.

Dissemination of Language Access Information in Public Areas

Polk County Social Services makes available to individuals with LEP:

- Notice of language access services by posting in public areas the “[Language Poster](#)”, available through DHS public Web site (<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-4739-ENG>)
- “[I need an interpreter](#)” card available in ten languages and from DHS public Web site (<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-4374-ENG>)
- Catalogue of Languages (<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Legacy/DHS-4059-ENG>)

8. Annual Review of LEP Plan

Polk County Social Services reviews annually its LEP plan to adjust or modify its contingencies based on demographic data collected by Polk County Social Services during its delivery of information and services to individuals with LEP throughout the year.

Polk County Social Services upon DHS request will complete and submit DHS LEP Plan review on an annual basis or as often as requested by DHS.

9. Collection of Data & Its Analysis

Polk County Social Services is committed to monitor and make reasonable adjustments to comply with Title VI requirements. Polk County Social Services will collect:

- Data regarding language line usage.
- This data will be used to determine what languages an interpreter is most often needed.
- The outcome will be to determine if it would be beneficial to the agency and the client, based on the above data, to contract with an in-person interpreter for the identified language(s) above.

10. Complaint Process:

Individuals with LEP have the right to file a formal complaint with:

- Polk County Social Services:
 - Karen Warmack
218-470-8405
612 N Broadway, Room 302
Crookston, MN 56716
Karen.warmack@polkcountymn.gov

- Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Coordinator:
 - Alejandro Maldonado
651-431-4018
P.O. Box 64997
Saint Paul, MN
55164-0997
alejandro.maldonado@state.mn.us
Fax 651-431-7444
MN Relay 711 or 1-800-627-3529
- Office for Civil Rights (OCR), Region V – Chicago, IL
 - Celeste Davis, Regional Manager
Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
233 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 240
Chicago, IL 60601
Voice Phone (800) 368-1019
FAX 312-886-1807
TDD 800- 537-7697
 - <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/civilrights/complaints/index.html>

This LEP Plan is available in public areas of Polk County Social Services, to all staff, volunteer, and contractors, and to members of the community.

Revisions to this LEP Plan

Creation November 2023 By LeAnn Holte

No changes made at this time as this is the creation of the new version of the LEP plan.

First Revision

Second Revision

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Attachment A: Interpreter Services

Attachment B: How to find and work with interpreters (DHS 7916)

Attachment A
Interpreter Services

Language Interpreter Services:

By Phone:

- Language Line Services
 - 1-800-774-4344
 - Languages: Multiple
 - Reference: Language Line Quick Reference Guide
 - Code 612 for Income Maintenance
 - Code 712 for Social Services
 - Code 812 for Child Support

In person:

- International Translation Services – Leonor Valderrama de Sillers
 - Languages: Spanish; Arabic; Bosnian; Swahili; Nepali; Kurdish; Somali; others
 - Based out of Moorhead
 - 218-233-7841
 - Reference: International Services _ Moorhead _ Information
 - Referral Request form: International Translation Services _ Interpreter Request
- Minnesota Court interpreters
 - www.mncourts.gov
 - Languages: Multiple
 - Reference: MN Court Interpreters _ how to locate interpreter list

Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter Services:

In person:

- ASLIS – Sign Language Interpreters
 - American Sign Language
 - Reference: ASL _ Sign Language interpreter Services _ information
 - Referral Request form: ASL – Sign Language interpreters _ Request form _ ASLIS

Other interpreter information:

Pocket Talkers / Personal Amplification Device:

- Device to help you communicate with those that are hard of hearing.
 - One (1) device is Located in each office: Crookston, East Grand Forks, & McIntosh
 - Reference: Pocket Talkers _ Personal Amplification Devices
-

How to find and work with interpreters

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local governments, businesses and nonprofit organizations to provide communication access to people who are deaf and hard of hearing. For many deaf people, this means providing an American Sign Language/English interpreter.

Step 1: Find an interpreter

Collect the details

- Name, address and telephone number of a contact person for confirmation and billing.
- Date and time interpreter is needed. Events longer than two hours may require two interpreters.
- Event location and address.
- Number of participants who are Deaf and hard of hearing and their names.
- Type of event. Events with many speakers or technical content may require two interpreters.
- Type of interpreter needed. See our [Types of interpreters](#) fact sheet for more information.

Contact an interpreter referral agency

- Select an agency.
 - Find a current list of interpreter referral agencies serving your area on our website.
 - Consider contacting more than one agency. This is especially helpful in Greater Minnesota where there are fewer interpreters.



- Ask for the agency's cancellation policy and payment procedures.
 - Cancellations after the cancellation deadline often require full payment.
 - If you need to cancel, contact the agency as soon as possible to avoid being billed.
- Contact an agency at least two weeks prior to the event date for best results.

Watch for confirmation

- Watch for a confirmation from the agency with the name of the interpreter(s).
- When you receive confirmation from one agency, cancel your request to other agencies to avoid double booking (and double billing).
- Follow up with the agency if you do not receive a confirmation.

Step 2: Work with the interpreter

Meet with the interpreter beforehand

- Discuss unique vocabulary, technical terms, acronyms, jargon, seating arrangements, lighting and other needs.
- Provide the interpreter with any written materials ahead of time.

Reserve seats for the deaf or hard of hearing participants

- Provide a clear view of the speaker and interpreter.
- Deaf or hard of hearing participants may still choose to sit elsewhere.

Offer the interpreter space near the speaker or action

- This allows deaf or hard of hearing participants to pick up visual cues and expressions of the speaker and see any presentation materials.
- In small group discussions, consider using a circle or semi-circle seating arrangement instead of a theater-style arrangement.

Provide good lighting

- Good lighting helps the participants see the interpreter clearly.
- Do not place the interpreter in front of a window if blinds cannot be adjusted.
- If lights will be turned off or dimmed, make sure the interpreter can still be seen clearly. If necessary, use a spotlight or small lamp to direct light toward the interpreter.

Speak naturally

- Speak at your normal pace. Interpreters will ask you to slow down or repeat if necessary.
- Interpreters listen for concepts and ideas, not just words, to render an accurate interpretation.

Know that everything the interpreter hears will be interpreted

- Do not ask the interpreter to censor any portion of the conversation.
- Ask the deaf or hard of hearing person directly if they are following the conversation.

Ask participants to speak one at a time

- An interpreter can only interpret for one speaker at a time. Remind the group to take turns speaking.
- If you are facilitating a group discussion, be aware that the interpreter will be several seconds behind. Pause before recognizing the next speaker to allow the interpreter to finish with the current speaker.
- Ask participants to identify themselves by name before speaking.

Talk directly to the deaf or hard of hearing person

- Maintain eye contact with the deaf or hard of hearing person.
- Speak directly to the deaf or hard of hearing person.
- Avoid directing comments to the interpreter. Do not say “Tell him...” or “Ask her...”

Do not ask the interpreter to comment on the content of the meeting

- Interpreters follow a code of ethics that requires impartiality and confidentiality with all assignment-related information.
- Do not assume the interpreter knows the Deaf person or will be interpreting future appointments.

Provide a short break every hour

- Interpreting is mentally and physically taxing.
 - Do not expect the interpreter to interpret during these breaks.
-

800-657-3663

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

သတိ။ ဤစာရွက်စာတမ်းအားအခမဲ့ဘာသာပြန်ပေးခြင်း အကူအညီလိုအပ်ပါက၊ အထက်ပါနံပါတ်ကိုခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

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請注意，如果您需要免費協助傳譯這份文件，請撥打上面的電話號碼。

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

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알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

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Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenname bilbili.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la'aan ah ee tarjumaadda qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

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Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.

LBR (8-16)

ADA1 (2-18)



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