

## Limited English Policy

Options, Inc. will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits. The policy of Options, Inc. is to ensure meaningful communication with LEP survivors and their authorized representatives involving their services. The policy also provides for communication of information contained in vital documents, including but not limited to, Crime Victims' Rights, consent to release information forms, and brochures. All interpreters, translators and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided without cost to the person being served, and survivors and their families will be informed of the availability of such assistance free of charge.

Language assistance will be provided through use of competent bilingual staff, staff interpreters, contracts or formal arrangements with local organizations providing interpretation or translation services, or technology and telephonic interpretation services. All staff, Board members and volunteers will be provided notice of this policy and procedure, and staff or volunteers that may have direct contact with LEP individuals will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter or telephonic interpretation services.

Options, Inc. will conduct a regular review of the language access needs of our client population, as well as update and monitor the implementation of this policy and these procedures, as necessary.

### Procedure

- **Identifying LEP persons and their language**
  - Staff or volunteers will promptly identify the language and communication needs of the LEP person. If necessary, staff will use a language identification card (or "I speak cards," available online at [www.lep.gov](http://www.lep.gov)) or posters to determine the language.
  - In addition, when records are kept of past interactions with survivors, the language used to communicate with the LEP person will be included as part of the record.
- **Obtaining a qualified interpreter**
  - Staff are responsible for:
    - Maintaining an accurate and current list showing the name, language, phone number and hours of availability of bilingual staff (provide the list);
    - Contacting the appropriate bilingual staff member to interpret, in the event that an interpreter is needed, if an employee who speaks the needed language is available and is qualified to interpret;
    - Obtaining an outside interpreter if a bilingual staff or staff interpreter is not available or does not speak the needed language.
  - When interpreters are not available, staff/volunteers can access **LanguageLine Solutions** at \$3.95 per minute. The phone number is 800-752-6096. The cost of using the language line will be borne by Options, Inc. and not the survivor.
  - Some LEP persons may prefer or request to use a family member or friend as an interpreter. However, they will not be used as interpreters unless specifically

requested by that individual and after the LEP person has understood that an offer of an interpreter at no charge to the person has been made by the agency. If the LEP person chooses to use a family member or friend as an interpreter, issues of competency of interpretation, confidentiality, privacy, and conflict of interest will be considered. If the family member or friend is not competent or appropriate for any of these reasons, competent interpreter services will be provided to the LEP person.

- Children and other survivors will not be used to interpret, in order to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication.

- **Providing written translations**

- When translation of vital documents is needed, the agency will submit documents for translation into frequently-encountered languages to the Executive Director, who is responsible to find a qualified translator. Original documents submitted for translation must be in final, approved form with updated and accurate legal and medical information.
- The agency will provide translation of other written materials, if needed, as well as written notice of the availability of translation, free of charge, for LEP individuals.
- Options, Inc. will set benchmarks for translation of vital documents into additional languages over time.

- **Providing notice to LEP persons**

- Staff and volunteers will inform LEP persons of the availability of language assistance, free of charge, by providing written notice in languages LEP persons will understand. At a minimum, notices and signs will be posted and provided in intake areas and other points of entry.

- **Monitoring language needs and implementation**

On an ongoing basis, Options, Inc. will assess changes in demographics, types of services or other needs that may require reevaluation of this policy and its procedures. In addition, the agency will regularly assess the efficacy of these procedures, including but not limited to mechanisms for securing interpreter services, equipment used for the delivery of language assistance, complaints filed by LEP persons, feedback from survivors and community partners, etc.

- **Staff Training and Access to LEP Resources**

Staff will be trained on the LEP policy and procedures, and how to use the Language Line and Interpreters upon initial hire during orientation. In addition, annual training will be conducted by the agency each November to ensure all staff are up to date on new practices and procedures. This training will be documented in staff employment files.

In addition to the procedures listed here in the employee handbook, detailed instructions for using the Language Line and Interpreters as well as additional resources will be provided to staff in the Advocate Instruction Manual, upon initial hire.