

## **VIRGINIA BOARD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Commonwealth of Virginia**

---

#### **Board Policy 15.0: Language and Disability Access Policy**

It is the policy of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) to ensure that all persons participating in Board sponsored activities, such as in-house training programs, grant funded projects, Board meetings and other Board funded events or programs, have access to and receive interpretation services that meet their personal needs including the need for sign language interpreter services, and oral and written translation that are appropriate for their specific language needs. To achieve compliance with this policy, the VBPD follows the Board approved Language and Disability Access Plan.

#### **Language and Disability Access Plan**

The Board's Language and Disability Access Plan ensures free, meaningful access to information and Board sponsored programs and activities for people with disabilities and people who have limited English proficiency (LEP).

The Board will make every effort, as is financially possible within the agency budget, to ensure individuals have free, meaningful access to information produced by the Board and to Board sponsored activities or events. These efforts for meaningful access include the arrangement and provision of accommodations such as interpreters, captioning and other auxiliary aids. Additionally, all documents provided to the public by the Board will meet a series of standards as applicable.

#### **I. Fulfilling Requests for Accommodations**

- A. Agency staff will make efforts to fulfill accommodation requests for events when the requests are submitted in a timely manner and as budget allows. The length of time that is considered to be a "timely manner" is subject to change depending on the deadline provided for requests for accommodations and availability of vendors.
- B. Staff may use discretion for fulfilling accommodation requests for events when the request is not made in a timely manner, and when fulfillment is not possible due to budget constraints.
- C. Staff may use discretion to arrange for accommodations without request if one or more attendees have historically made these requests.

- D. Staff may use discretion to provide written materials in an alternative format without request if the intended audience is likely to need the format.
- E. In event marketing materials, agency staff will explicitly list the accommodations that will already be provided at the event.
- F. Event registration forms will include a section through which people can request additional accommodations by a specific deadline.

## **II. Interpreters, Captioning and Other Auxiliary Aids**

### **A. American Sign Language and Non-English Language Interpreters**

An interpreter is a person who translates oral or sign communication in real time. Because an interpreter must translate quickly in real time, and because the translation must make sense in the cultural context of the target language, the interpreter may interpret the intent and meaning of the origin language instead of providing a direct word-for-word translation.

- 1. For Board-organized events, upon request from attendees who require interpretation into American Sign Language (ASL) or a language other than English, agency staff will schedule at minimum one interpreter for the attendee's preferred language.
- 2. For events lasting one hour or longer, agency staff will schedule at minimum the number of interpreters recommended in accordance with the contracted vendor's policy, such as the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) Interpreter Services Program Agreement and Manual for State Agencies and Sign Language Interpreters in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

### **B. Captioning**

Agency staff will schedule captioning services from an outside vendor, such as Virginia Relay, upon event attendee request. Captioning services may include English or Spanish.

### **C. Other Auxiliary Aids**

Agency staff will arrange for other auxiliary aids by request, when possible. Auxiliary aids may include but are not limited to providing materials in advance or providing materials in another format such as large print, braille or clear/plain language.

## **III. Standards for Documents**

A. Screen Reader Accessibility

At a minimum, all documents produced by the Board that are provided to the public should be accessible for people who use screen readers. Documents should include but are not limited to use of

1. accessible headings and styles,
2. color contrast that meets at least the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA standard
3. and alt text for images and other graphics including but not limited to charts and tables.

B. Clear/Plain Language Standard

1. At a minimum, agency staff will consistently create a clear/plain language version of the agency's state plan and state plan summary updates.
2. Clear/plain language formatting will generally follow best practice guidelines.

C. Language Translation Standard

A translation vendor is a company that, at minimum, translates written content from one language to another.

1. VBPD will use standard procurement processes to contract with outside translation vendors for translation of documents.
2. At a minimum, the 2024 top five most frequently accessed VBPD documents (listed in the Language and Disability Access Policy Background attachment) and policy assessment infographics will be translated into the language most commonly spoken by Virginians with LEP. VBPD staff will regularly monitor download trends to determine whether new documents have become the top five most frequently accessed documents and need translation.
3. Every year, agency staff will use U.S. Census or similar data to determine the top language spoken by Virginians who are LEP or speak English "less than very well." This top language will be the standard language for translation and interpretation services.
4. As of 2023 U.S. Census data, the top language spoken by Virginians with LEP is Spanish.

5. A Statement to the Public, which can be found in Section IV Subsection B, will be included in the Board's website Contact Form. The Statement will be in English and the 2023 top three languages spoken by Virginians with LEP: Spanish, Vietnamese and Korean.

#### IV. **Agency Website**

- A. The Communications and Information Manager will manage the Board website to ensure that it meets or exceeds Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 at Level AA by April 24, 2026, as per the Department of Justice's final rule on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These guidelines consider accessibility standards, such as color contrast, screen reader accessibility and more.
- B. Members of the public are welcome to provide feedback regarding website accessibility through the website's Contact Form.

#### V. **Additional Requests by the Public**

- A. Due to budgetary constraints, VBPD is unable to regularly translate all documents. However, aside from the documents listed in Section II Subsection C1, VBPD will endeavor to honor requests for translation of documents when possible.
- B. Statement to the Public

The following statement (or a variation of it) will be included on the Board's website in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Korean:

We welcome comments, questions, and feedback on our website.  
[Please contact us](#) if you

- are using assistive technologies and are having difficulty using our website,
- need something from our website in:
  - your language,
  - large print,
  - braille,
  - clear/plain language
- or need something else.

We will do our best to assist you and resolve issues. Your input can improve the experience for other visitors!

**VI. Staff Training**

- A. All agency staff will receive training on this Language and Disability Access Plan and internal procedures to implement this Plan. Any new agency staff will receive this training during onboarding. Through this training, staff will become familiar with the agency's standards for public-facing documents and processes and practices for communicating with the public.
- B. The Board's Executive Director may assign additional training to various staff as needed to continuously improve Board practices and procedures related to language and disability access.

Adopted by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities: June 3, 2025