



SECTION: RISK MGMT- ADA
TOPIC: SIGN LANGUAGE
INTERPRETER SERVICES
JANUARY, 2013

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES MANUAL

SUBJECT: SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Dane County to use its best efforts to purchase or arrange for Sign Language Interpreter services in compliance with the requirements of State and Federal law. It is the responsibility of the Dane County ADA Coordinator to monitor compliance and to prior-authorize the use of sign language interpreter(s) in specific circumstances.

It is the policy of Dane County to provide sign language interpreter services to people receiving services, and if appropriate, to their “companion” who is also Deaf. It is also the policy of Dane County to provide a sign language interpreter to a “companion” who is Deaf if that person is accompanying an individual with a different kind of disability.

Wisconsin law requires all Sign Language Interpreters to be licensed by the State. Although, the Dane County ADA Coordinator regularly checks licensure, Sign Language Interpreter Licenses expire throughout the year. Therefore, staff needs to ask the sign language interpreter if they have a current Wisconsin license.

DEFINITIONS

Legally Certified Sign Language Interpreter Services: These services are required whenever a person requests a sign language interpreter in a setting where legal terms will be used, (trials, court hearings, meetings with lawyers, and more).

Standard Sign Language Interpreter Services: These services are acceptable if the setting will essentially only be using conversational language

For purposes of this section, “**companion**” means a family member, friend, or associate of an individual seeking access to a service, program, or activity of a public entity, who, along with such individual, is an appropriate person with whom the public entity should communicate.

Dane County Sign Language Interpreter List: Dane County’s ADA Coordinator maintains a list of individuals and organizations who have agreed to provide sign language interpreter services to Dane County. The list also contains their contact information, their qualifications and their general availability. The list is available in the **Administrative Practices Manual on dcinet**.

PROCEDURE

- 1.0 Each Department or Division within a Department should designate staff to handle requests for sign language interpreters.
 - 1.1 When a request is received, staff will follow the DC Administrative Practices Manual’s “Approval Policy- Hiring a Sign Language Interpreter.”



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PROCEDURE (CONTINUED):

- 2.0 When an individual requests a sign language interpreter, the designated Dane County employee should ask if the requestor if he/she has a preference for a sign language interpreter.
 - 2.1 If the individual expresses a preference, then the designated Dane County employee should look on the list of Sign Language Interpreters who have agreed to work with Dane County.
 - 2.2 If the requested interpreter is on the list, and available, and appropriately qualified (for example, if it is a legal setting, the interpreter must be properly certified to perform services in a legal setting), then the Dane County employee should first try to schedule the service with that interpreter.
 - 2.3 If the requested interpreter is not on the Dane County list or is unavailable or is not qualified to perform services in the particular situation, then go to step 3.
- 3.0 If the individual does not express a preference, or requested interpreter is not on the Dane County list or the requested interpreter is unavailable or the requested interpreter is not qualified to perform services in the particular situation, then the designated Dane County employee should make every effort to schedule an interpreter using the **"Dane County Sign Language Interpreter List."** Here are some tips on using the list:
 - 3.1 When possible, the *sign language interpreter service* should be scheduled well in advance of the need.
 - 3.2 When a "Standard" Sign Language Interpreter will meet the requester's needs, the designated Dane County employee should not schedule a "Legally Certified" Sign Language Interpreter (unless there are no Standard Sign Language Interpreters available).
 - 3.3 When a "Legally Certified" Sign Language Interpreter is needed, the designated Dane County employee should contact the **P.I.E. (Professional Interpreting Enterprise)**, listed on the Dane County Sign Language Interpreter List. P.I.E. is Dane County's primary contracted agency for legally certified sign language interpreters.
 - 3.4 Many interpreters charge fees for canceling appointments without 24 hours (or more) notice.
 - 3.5 Because sign language interpreters charge for travel time, the designated Dane County employee should consider the interpreter's proximity to the assignment when scheduling.
- 4.0 If there is any doubt about a Sign Language Interpreter's qualifications, or the designated staff person experiences difficulty scheduling a sign language interpreter, please contact Dane County's ADA Coordinator at 267-1520.