



Limited English Proficient Plan

MISSION:

The mission of Affirming Heart Victim Services (AFVS) is:

- To provide child abuse prevention and awareness training to children within their reach;
- To provide forensically sound child interviews to service agencies;
- To provide SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) services;
- To refer victims to appropriate follow-up services.

All these services and any others are to be provided with the ultimate goal of protection and enhancement of the well-being of victims and children.

PLAN STATEMENT:

Affirming Heart Victim Services is committed to providing access to its services to all persons regardless of their ability to speak English. Individuals who access victim services should not receive services that are more limited or lower in scope than services provided to callers who speak English. Affirming Heart Victim Services will provide services to clients regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, language needs, or immigration status.

Definition

“Limited English Proficiency” or “LEP” is defined as the inability to speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits the patient to fully understand the nature of the services they are receiving.

Overview

To ensure LEP services are provided, all staff are instructed to abide by the following procedures:

- Each staff person will ensure that they understand the special needs of clients and accommodate those needs when possible.
- Notice shall be provided to persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) of the right to access services and the right to use a competent interpreter.
- Competent interpreters shall be provided for LEP persons.
 - Competent interpreter is defined as a person with proficiency in both English and the language of a person in need, who has a commitment to confidentiality, ethics and an understanding of the boundaries of the role of the interpreter, as well as understanding of the setting in which they will be providing interpreter services. All efforts shall be made to provide a confidential, competent interpreter who has no other relationships with the person receiving interpreter services.

- All paperwork which requires the client’s signature regarding expectations, rights and responsibilities and consent shall require an interpreter to explain the paperwork in detail or be available in a translated version.
- Callers should be assisted by the staff member that is best able to serve their needs. Callers should not receive services that are more limited or lower in scope than those available to callers who speak English.

When to Consider Interpretation

Interpreting services should be considered when:

- When a caller speaks (or seems to speak) more English than she/he seems to understand.
- When a caller seems to understand more English than she/he seems to speak.
- When a caller requests an interpreter.
- When a caller is in crisis (language proficiency decreases in a crisis situation).

AHVS Staff will be trained to inform an individual that AHVS has interpreter services available at no charge to the caller. Even if a caller refuses the use of an interpreter at first, if during the interaction, an interpreter is appropriate, inform the caller about the availability of interpreters more than once or simply solicit the services of the interpreter on behalf of the LEP individual eliminating the need for the caller to request these services.

Interpretation In-Person and Language Procedures

Affirming Heart Victim Services volunteers and staff should follow these procedures to comply with its policy of language accessibility to LEP persons:

- Inform client of their right to interpreter and ask if they need one.
- Identify language needs and record on intake.
- If available, access in person interpretation by AHVS staff via face-to-face interaction, video conference, or phone call.
- If AHVS staff interpretation is not available, and client is comfortable speaking with an interpreter via language line, AHVS staff should immediately access an interpreter via language line.
 - To access language line:
 - Dial 1-888-877-8353
 - Provide your access code: 55845
 - Provide the language needed
 - Caller will then be connected with your interpreter
 - Documentation: Language of the client and need for an interpreter shall be noted in NCAtrak client file or “Phone Call” file.
 - Identify language needs and record on intake.
 - Documentation: Language of the client and need for an interpreter shall be noted in NCAtrak client file or “Walk In” file.

Equipment

The AHVS is equipped with portable conference phones and laptops/tablets that can be utilized in speaker/video conferencing mode to access the language line in a hands free manner.

Training and Outreach

- All staff will be trained annually in recognizing limited English proficiency, how to use interpreters, and current interpreting resources, including both the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the use of interpretation language line services.
- Staff will be trained annually in how to access interpretation language line services and what to expect once activated.
- Staff will demonstrate how to access current materials that have been translated and other resources and materials as acquired.
- Staff will practice a handful of phrases in the common language other than English and will be competent in their initial response to bi-lingual speakers who access AHVS services until further interpretation services are obtained.
- The Affirming Heart Victim Services' Language Access Plan will remain active and updated on a yearly basis. Copies of this plan will be provided to all existing staff. Copies of the plan will also be provided to all new staff at the time of their hire.
- As the AHVS seeks to do outreach in our communities, all efforts will be made by staff to ensure that individuals who are non-English speaking are able to participate in the presentations.
- All interpreters provided by Affirming Heart Victim Services shall sign a confidentiality statement.

Printed Materials

In New Mexico, the primary language spoken, other than English, is Spanish which will be the primary alternate language of printed materials. Educational materials will be purchased in both English and Spanish versions. Affirming Heart Victim Services may have documents and materials available in languages other than English. Priority of translated materials will be given to documents that the client takes with them after receiving AHVS services. Translation of AHVS documents and materials will be completed by competent translators and reviewed by individuals who are proficient in the language to ensure the translation is accurate.

Implementation and Expense

The Executive Director of Affirming Heart Victim Services will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Limited English Proficiency Plan. Any questions regarding the LEP Plan should be directed to the Executive Director.

Affirming Heart Victim Services is committed to ensuring all persons seeking AHVS services are provided competent care. Affirming Heart Victim Services will always work to cover expenses related to interpretation services for victims of abuse and their non-offending family members.