



**OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY  
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

*Serving Marion, Lake, Citrus, Sumter, Hernando Counties*

**Auxiliary Aids Plan  
State Attorney's Office Fifth Judicial Circuit  
and Domestic Violence Programs**

The State Attorney's Office Fifth Judicial Circuit shall comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794, as implemented by 45 C.F.R. Part 84 (hereinafter referred to as Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 12131, as implemented by 28 C.F.R. Part 35 (hereinafter referred to as ADA).

This plan is available in alternative formats at the request of staff and participants. This plan will be disseminated to persons and agencies working with people living with a disability and Limited English Proficiency and will be posted on the State Attorney's Office, Fifth Judicial Circuit's website.

**Single Point of Contact**

The Single Point of Contact, Tiffany Ledford, will ensure effective communication with Deaf or Hard-of-

Hearing victims/witnesses in accordance with Section 504 and the ADA. The Single Point of Contact shall ensure that employees are aware of the requirements, roles, responsibilities, and contact points associated with compliance with Section 504 and the ADA.

**Provision of Auxiliary Aids and Services**

The State Attorney Fifth Judicial Circuit (hereinafter referred to as SAO) will at all times recognize that the victims' or witnesses' preference is the primary consideration in determining what auxiliary aids or services to provide. If communication through a specific auxiliary aid or service is deemed to be ineffective, staff will ask the victim/witness to determine a more effective auxiliary aid or service for communication. Documentation shall be made in the victim's file regarding the attempt to improve the effectiveness of auxiliary aids and services.

If a victim or witness is deaf or hard of hearing, the SAO staff shall obtain auxiliary aids according to the communication assessment and requested for services. All ASL interpreters' certifications shall be verified.

Staff that is unfamiliar with the auxiliary aid or service requested shall contact their Single Point of Contact (SPOC), 504/ADA Coordinator (Civil Rights Officer) or their Supervisor, for assistance in locating appropriate resources to ensure effective communication with victims/witnesses or family.

**Provision of Interpreters in a Timely Manner**

The SAO staff shall provide interpreters for victims/witnesses who are deaf or hard-of-hearing in a timely manner in accordance to the following standards:

a. **Non-Scheduled Interpreter Requests:** For any emergency situation that is not a scheduled appointment, staff shall make an interpreter available as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours from the time the victim/witness or staff requests an interpreter, whichever is earlier. If the situation is not an emergency, staff shall offer to schedule an appointment (and provide an interpreter where necessary for effective communication) as convenient to the victim/witness, but at least by the next business day

b. **Scheduled Interpreter Requests:** For scheduled appointments, staff shall make a qualified interpreter available at the time of the appointment. If an interpreter fails to appear for the scheduled appointment, the SAO shall take whatever additional actions are necessary to make a qualified interpreter available to the victim/witness who is deaf or hard-of-hearing as soon as possible, but in no case later than two (2) hours after the scheduled appointment

### Auxiliary Aids Documentation

The SAO shall document the victim/witnesses preferred method of communication and any requested auxiliary aids and services provided in the victim's file. Documents and forms evidencing when and how the SAO provided auxiliary aids and services to victims/witnesses shall be retained within the victim's corresponding file for seven years. Forms include but are not limited:

- Victim/Witness Assessment and Assessment and Auxiliary Aid and Service Record**
- Victim/Witness Request for Free Communication Assistance or Waiver**
- Victim/Witness Feedback form**
- Auxiliary Aid Service Record Monthly Summary Report**

This documentation will continue to be kept for record keeping with the SPOC.

### Denied Auxiliary Requests

Documentation, with supporting justification, must also be made if any request was not honored. The SAO's Executive Director is the only person that can deny auxiliary aid requests made by a victim/witness. If a staff person is not familiar with an auxiliary aid request, please contact the SPOC for information as well as ask the survivor for any information that you may need to secure this aid, but reiterate that the cost of any auxiliary aid is the responsibility of the agency and not the participant.

### Referrals

If victims/witnesses are referred to other agencies, the provider must ensure that the receiving agency is notified of the victim/witnesses preferred method of communication and any auxiliary aid or service needs. In order to accommodate this, the SAO will ensure that the referral is desired by the participant and that he or she signs a Release of Information Form.

### **Customer Feedback Form**

The provider shall distribute Victim/Witness Feedback Forms to victims/witnesses that are Deaf or hard of hearing and provide assistance in completing the forms if requested by the victim/witness. The original Victim/Witness Feedback Form shall be mailed to DCF, Office of Civil Rights, 1317 Winewood Boulevard, Building 1, Room110, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700 by the participant or if requested, by the SAO. A copy of the Victim/Witness Feedback Form shall not be kept in the file.

### **Documentation/Record Retention**

Records relating to auxiliary aids and services provided shall be retained by each local office and the original document retained in the victim/witnesses file or records. All final requests for accommodations, along with relevant documentation, will be forwarded to the designated 504/ADA Coordinator.

### **Signage**

The Single-Point-of-Contact will ensure that conspicuous Notices which provide information about the availability of appropriate auxiliary aids and services at no cost to the deaf or hard-of-hearing victims/witnesses are posted near where people enter or are admitted within the center locations. The SPOC's name and contact information should be on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Poster as well as the name and contact information for the ADA 504 Coordinator.

### **HHS Reports**

The SAO shall submit HHS Reports monthly, no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month, to the FCADV Contract Manager.

### **Event Accommodations**

The State Attorney's Office shall ensure accessibility to meetings, conferences and seminars to persons with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency and Deaf or hard of hearing by placing the following statement on all event notices and advertisements prior to the event: The State Attorney's Office will provide accommodations, including American Sign Language interpreters, assistive listening devices, alternative formats of printed materials and real-time captioning upon request for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or are living with disabilities. To ensure accommodations, please make your request within 7 days prior to the event to Tiffany Ledford at [tledford@sao5.org](mailto:tledford@sao5.org) or 352-341-6670.

### **Staff Training**

The staff shall receive training on how to provide auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency (LEP) within 60 days of commencing employment. The SAO staff shall receive an annual refresher training on auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency (LEP). The SAO staff shall be trained to use the TTY phone and video relay call. Training documentation shall be maintained in each employee's training file.

## **AuxiliaryAid Resources**

### **Florida Video Relay – 7-1-1**

Through the Florida Relay Service, people who use specialized telephone equipment can communicate with people who use standard telephone equipment. To call Florida Relay, dial **7-1-1**, or use the appropriate toll free numbers below:

1-800-955-8771 (TTY)

1-800-955-8770 (Voice)

1-877-955-8773 (Spanish)

1-877-955-8707 (French Creole)

### **Video Remote Interpreting**

Through a video remote interpreter people can use an interpreter via technology to communicate with a participant instead of an in-person interpreter. This is a good resource for emergency situations with limited time to get an in-person interpreter; or if there are few local community resources for certified interpreters. Below is the phone number for the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf which will provide contact information for certified video remote interpreting.

**Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: (703) 838-0030 (Video Remote Interpreters)**

### **Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida**

Certified sign language interpreting services on a fee basis.

Ocala Office: 3445 NE 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Ocala, FL 34470; 352-368-3788; toll-free 877-629-8840.

### **CART-Captioning Real Time and Providers**

Captioning (Real Time). This is the simultaneous conversion of spoken words to text, through computer-

assisted transcription or court reporting, and displaying that text on a video screen. This communication service is beneficial to individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing that do not use sign language or for whom assistive listening devices and systems are ineffective.

Kaptions4U, LLC

Brandi Kent, RPR, CBC, CRR, CCP

352-516-8310

Tanya Ward English, CRR-CCP-CBC [tanya@floridarealtime.com](mailto:tanya@floridarealtime.com)

CAPTION CREW

Florida Realtime Reporting

954.767.6363

Marianne E. Sayers, RPR, CRR

Fort Myers Court Reporting

2231 First Street

Fort Myers, FL 33901

941-334-1411 941-334-1476 fax

**Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: (703) 838-0030**

*Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf*

[www.fridcentral.org](http://www.fridcentral.org)

**Certified Sign Language Interpreters:**

(703) 838-0030

[www.fridcentral.org](http://www.fridcentral.org)

**For Limited English Speaking Survivors:**

Please use the following service:  
Optimal Phone Interpreters (OPI)

**Before Call:**

Know the language that is needed

Be prepared to brief the interpreter about the nature of the call before he/she speaks to your Limited English Speaker

If you have non-English Speaker on the phone call OPI and connect a 3 way call

For outbound calls, provide the operator with a dial out number and she will make a 3 way conference call

**During the Call:**

- Speak in short phrases or sentences
- Avoid slang, jargon, and technical terms
- Check for understanding from you Limited English Speaker throughout the call. If needed, rephrase the questions or statements until understood
- When speaking to the interpreter, do not give and/or ask too much information at one time.
- Ask questions in the first person

**Ending the Call:**

Be sure the Limited English Speaker and Optimal Interpreter know that the call is ending.

**Customer Complaints**

If you believe you were wrongfully denied access to services or discriminated against:

1. Inform the person who denied access to services that you believe they wrongfully denied you services and why you believe that is the case.
2. Ask to speak to a manager, immediately.

3. You may submit your complaint/grievance in writing or verbally. Direct your concern to the Advocate Services Manager or Director of Victims Services. Include the following information:
- a. What service were you denied?
  - b. What were you told was the reason you were denied service?
  - c. What person denied you services?
  - d. What was the date you were denied service?

In addition to the above actions, discrimination complaints may also be filed externally with the state and federal government.

Assistant Staff Director for Civil Rights  
1317 Winewood Boulevard  
Building 1, Room 110  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700  
850-487-1901

Executive Director  
Florida Commission on Human Relations  
2009 Apalachee Parkway, Suite 100  
Tallahassee, FL 32301-4857  
850-488-7082

US Department of Health & Human Services  
Office for Civil Rights  
Atlanta Federal Center, Suite 3B70  
61 Forsyth Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909  
404-562-7881

US Department of Justice  
Coordination & Review Section  
Civil Rights Division  
P.O. Box 66118  
Washington, DC 20035-6118

202-514-0301