



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street • Boston, MA 02111

MITT ROMNEY
Governor

TIMOTHY MURPHY
Secretary

KERRY HEALEY
Lieutenant Governor

JOHN A. WAGNER
Commissioner

Field Operations Memo 2005-34
August 1, 2005

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Department Interpreter Services

Overview

The Department, in conformance with federal law, is required to advise applicants/recipients of their right to interpreter services and provide interpreters to applicants/recipients whose primary language is not English or who use American Sign Language (ASL), regardless of language or national origin.

Applicants/recipients who do not speak English, or whose primary language is not English, or who are ASL users must not be turned away or told to return with their own interpreter. If an applicant or recipient calls or comes to a TAO, and prefers to use the services of his or her own adult interpreter, he or she must be allowed to do so. However, DTA shall not require an individual with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) to utilize family members or friends to provide interpretation or translation services and must make the LEP individual aware that he or she has the option of DTA providing an interpreter free of charge.

Currently, DTA employs interpreters for the following languages: Haitian Creole, Khmer, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. There are also statewide interpreter service contracts provided by Catholic Charities and the Somali Development Center. Finally, the Telelanguage Line is available and should be used when an interpreter for the particular language is needed and not readily available, including when an applicant or recipient calls or walks in, as well as for scheduled appointments.

**Receptionist's
Responsibilities
for Providing
Interpreter
Services**

The TAO receptionist is the first point of contact for applicants/recipients and may have an initial role in helping to assess interpreter needs of an individual in conjunction with the AU Manager. If an applicant/recipient requests an interpreter, or if there is an indication that he or she cannot communicate well in English, the TAO receptionist must:

- refer to the *Do You Need an Interpreter?* poster so the applicant/recipient can indicate the language(s) he or she speaks;
- record the applicant's/recipient's name, if possible, and the language(s) that was indicated on the poster; and
- inform the AU Manager, in accordance with TAO procedures, that an interpreter will be needed.

When an applicant/recipient *calls the TAO*, and it is determined that interpreter services are needed, the clerk working at the switchboard must:

- forward the call to the AU Manager, if the applicant/recipient is able to communicate the name of the AU Manager or his/her Social Security Number and he/she has an assigned AU Manager; or
- forward the call to the Director/designee if the applicant/recipient cannot communicate enough information for the call to be forwarded to the AU Manager.

**AU Manager's
Responsibilities
for Providing
Interpreter
Services**

By the time the applicant/recipient is referred to an AU Manager, it may already be established that interpreter services are needed. However, the AU Manager may also determine that an interpreter is needed if the individual cannot communicate well in English.

Once the AU Manager determines that an applicant/recipient needs an interpreter the AU Manager must:

- give the applicant/recipient the *I Speak* card (*FSP-LC Rev. 2/91*) and the *Your Right to Interpreter Services* brochure (Attachment A) in the appropriate language;
 - inform the applicant/recipient of the right to a Department-provided interpreter; and
 - check to see if there is a designated bilingual staff member who can assist with interpreting. If a designated bilingual staff member or TAO Interpreter who speaks the applicant's or recipient's language:
 - *is available*, the applicant or recipient must be seen that day and not be told to return another day, or
 - *is not available*, the Director/designee must be informed so that an appropriate interpreter can be provided in a timely manner through the use of the:
 - ❖ statewide contracted interpreter service; or
 - ❖ Telelanguage Line.
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**AU Manager's
Responsibilities
for Providing
Interpreter
Services
(continued)**

Currently, DTA employs interpreters for the following languages: Haitian Creole, Khmer, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese. See Attachment B for a list of these contracted interpreters and the corresponding contact person for making these requests. Although each contracted interpreter is assigned to a specific TAO, they are available to assist other TAOs via telephone. There is also a contracted statewide interpreter service provided by Catholic Charities and the Somali Development Center. Finally, the Telelanguage Line is available and should be used when an interpreter is needed and not readily available, including when an applicant/recipient calls or walks in, as well as for scheduled appointments.

After being informed of the right to a Department-provided interpreter, an applicant/recipient may choose to use their own adult interpreter, but must not be told to provide their own. If an applicant/recipient chooses to use a family member or friend to interpret, the AU Manager shall, using his or her best judgment, consider whether issues regarding the interpreter's competence, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, or other concerns exist that need to be raised to the applicant/recipient. If these are raised at any point, the AU Manager should speak with the applicant/recipient alone, with the aid of an available interpreter or as a last resort, the Telelanguage line, to discuss the concerns before the interview proceeds. Obvious concerns include conflicts of interest (e.g., potential domestic violence issues, the interpreter speaks negatively about the applicant/recipient) or apparent incompetent interpretation.

Children are not permitted to interpret except children over age 12 may interpret to inform an applicant/recipient of the date and time of a scheduled appointment.

**TAO Director's/
Designee's
Responsibilities
for Providing
Interpreter
Services**

Once the Director/designee is informed there is a need for an interpreter, the Director/designee must attempt to provide immediate interpreter services through TAO resources. If this is not possible, the Director/designee must:

- Call another TAO to arrange interpreter services from an offsite interpreter in that TAO for that same day, if possible, or for a future date depending on the nature of the situation; and
 - Give the applicant/recipient an appointment to return on the scheduled date; or
 - Access the Policy Online Forms option to complete the *Interpreter Request Form* either online or as a saved document and email it to Dennis Johnson at Dennis.C.Johnson@state.ma.us; and
 - Give the applicant/recipient an appointment either by mail or by telephone to return on the date indicated on the form that was emailed to Dennis Johnson and then returned to the TAO; or
 - Use the Telelanguage Line.
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**TAO Director's/
Designee's
Responsibilities
for Providing
Interpreter
Services
(continued)**

To use the Telelanguage Line, the Director/designee must:

- Call 1-800-514-9237;
- Provide the interpreter coordinator with the Director's/designee's name, employer's name and access code, which is 3000, followed by the TAO's unique 4-digit home unit (division) number, the language for which an interpreter is needed, and the need to use a speaker phone instead of a 3-way call for the translation; and
- Wait for the interpreter to come on the phone line.

Note: The Telelanguage Line should be used only after all other options for timely, competent language assistance have been explored.

**Preserving the
First Day of
Contact**

While every effort must be made to serve the applicant/recipient on the day he or she requests assistance, if no interpreter services are immediately available, an appointment must be made for a future date that accommodates all parties.

It is imperative that all timing related rights of the applicant or recipient be preserved as of the first date of contact, based on program rules. If the TAO is unable to provide interpreter services on the first day of contact, there must be a system in place to ensure that applicants/recipients who need interpreters are able to:

- apply for benefits retroactive to the first date of contact;
- apply for expedited FS benefits, get EA shelter placement and any other time sensitive service based on the first date of contact; and
- make timely reports of changes and submit timely verifications of good cause, effective on the first date of contact.

References

Transitional Cash Assistance Programs – 106 CMR 701.360.

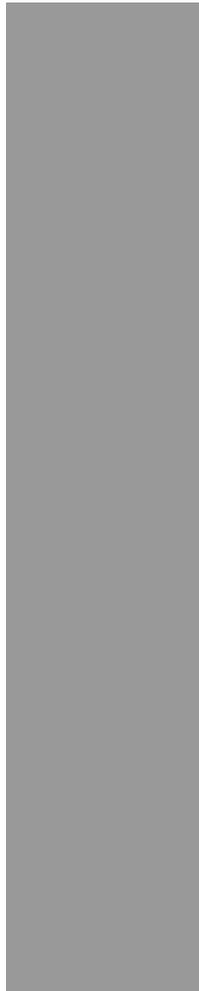
Food Stamp Program – 106 CMR 360.510.

**Obsolete
Material**

Field Operations Memo 2002-22 is now obsolete.

Questions

If you have any questions, your Hotline designee may call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.



Your Right to Interpreter Services



Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance
600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111

18-115-1102-05
(English)

Attachment B
Transitional Assistance Office Interpreters

CAMBODIAN (Khmer)			
Name	TAO	# Hours/week	Contact
Melody Eang	Lowell	37.5	Maureen Donovan 978.446.2442
HAITIAN CREOLE			
Name	TAO	# Hours/week	Contact
Ansie Mexil	Dorchester	37.5	Sam Rimini 617.989.6108
RUSSIAN			
Name	TAO	# Hours/week	Contact
Ludmila Kogan	Newmarket Square	37.5	Mary Flanigan 617.989.2331
Valentina Medvedev	Springfield Liberty	37.5	Nancy Dwyer 413.858.1137
SPANISH			
Name	TAO	# Hours/week	Contact
Elizabeth Ayala	Worcester	37.5	Sue Hince 508.767.3326
Janise Rosario	Lowell	37.5	Maureen Donovan 978.446.2442
Dora Terrass	Dorchester	37.5	Sam Rimini 617.989.6108
Mildred Espinal	North Shore	20	Zimma Mercer Drake 978.825.7400
Maria Cormier	New Bedford	30	Jeff Travers 508.961.2137
Irene Griffis	Newmarket Square	37.5	Mary Flanigan 617.989.2331
Abdon Bran	Lawrence	37.5	Ken Hamilton 978-725-7190
Antonio Arevalo	Lawrence	37.5	Ken Hamilton 978-725-7190
Celenia Gonzalez	Springfield Liberty	37.5	Nancy Dwyer 413.858.1137
Damaris Gonzalez	Springfield State	37.5	Alvina Brevard 413.858.1382
Idalia Olivieri	Springfield State	37.5	Alvina Brevard 413.858.1382
VIETNAMESE			
Name	TAO	# Hours/week	Contact
Sudjatmi Nguyen	Worcester	37.5	Sue Hince 508.767.3326
Huong T. Truong	Dorchester	37.5	Sam Rimini 617.989.6108