

LANGUAGE ACCESS AT DTA: Policies and Advocacy

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Today's Topics

- Past advocacy
- DTA regulations
- DTA written policies
- Language access complaints

Past Advocacy

- Johnson v. Atkins, Stipulation of Dismissal (1990)
- HHS OCR Resolution Agreement - Haitian Multi-Service Center v. Gallant (1994)

Johnson v. Atkins

- No administrative disqualification if not given Food Stamp penalty warning in a language in which adult household member fluent
- Manual for Hearing Officers with detailed instructions for implementing right to interpreter

DTA Regulations: Client Rights

- Interpreter services
- Translated SNAP penalty warnings
- Notice of right to interpreter in SNAP hearings
- Interpreters at SNAP hearings

DTA Regulations: Duties of Hearing Officer

- Inform appellants who are not fluent in English of right to full & accurate interpretation
- conduct bilingual hearings in accordance with manual
- ensure all statements fully interpreted without alteration

DTA Operations Memo 2013-11

- Instructions for all staff who deal with clients
- Must offer DTA interpreter even if client presents with her own
- No magic words
- Must orally interpret application and recertification materials

DTA Language Access Plan

Complaint Procedure – Write to:

Lydia Conley, Deputy Assistant Commissioner
lydia.conley@state.ma.us

Ronald Marlow, Office of Access & Opportunity
ronald.marlow@state.ma.us