

## Assessment of Language Needs

Applies to both Interpreter and Translation modules

It is recommended that the language needs of the population of the WIC service area be assessed at least annually to ensure meaningful access.

- Identify the non-English languages that are currently or likely to be encountered in the project service area and estimate the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons that are eligible for services and who are likely to be affected by the WIC Program. Include the LEP parent(s) or guardian(s) of children.
- Identify the resources that will be needed to provide effective language assistance, including the location and availability. For example, telephone interpretation can occur with the use of dual handsets, a speaker phone, or by passing one handset back and forth. Passing a handset may lead to summarizing what is being said rather than interpreting every statement.
- Identify the arrangements that must be made to access these resources in a timely manner (e.g., at a time and place that avoids the effective denial or delay of the service, benefit, or right). Consider the clinic flow to accommodate the interpreting. For example, for telephone interpretation, have a telephone in each room where the telephone interpreter is needed or consider holding the appointment in one room and have the various staff members come to the room.
- Follow requirements for scheduling appointments. See details in Policy 2.2
- Use uniform procedures for timely and effective telephone communication between staff and persons with limited English proficiency, including voice mail out-going messages. This must include instructions for English speaking employees to obtain assistance from interpreters or bilingual staff when receiving calls from or making calls to persons with limited English proficiency.
- Evaluate if current procedures for providing language assistance is meeting the needs of persons with limited English skills in the service area.
- Review the most current Civil Rights Compliance Plan written by the agency for the Department of Health Services Affirmative Action/Civil Rights Compliance Office to: identify the non-English languages that are currently or likely to be encountered; evaluate if the agency employs members of the diverse populations it serves; and evaluate how the WIC Director could work with other agency staff to assure that civil rights laws are followed, staff receive annual training, and resources are shared.
- Review the most current signed contract that the WIC agency has with the Department of Health Services for additional civil rights provisions.
- Determine how staff should obtain translation services and respond to written communications from persons with limited English skills. Review the most current Civil Rights Compliance Plan written by the agency for the Department of Health Services Affirmative Action/Civil Rights Compliance Office to identify the language translation needs.

### Advantages of using an interpreter in-person instead of by telephone:

Interpreter becomes familiar with the WIC clinic terminology and clinic flow.  
Interpreter has access to visual information.  
Necessary documents can be given to the Interpreter.  
Interpreter can see participant's non-verbal communication.  
Cultural framework can be provided more readily.  
Advocacy can be provided (i.e., giving directions within the building for other services).  
Builds greater confidence and trust in the participant.