

# The Daily Blurb

## 'Blurb' 25: Interpreter Services

### Access to an interpreter

As we are all aware, to comply with federal law, the Department must advise our clients of their right to professional interpreter services regardless of language, national origin or noncitizen status, and **must** provide interpreter services to clients whose primary language is not English. **Interpreter services must be provided to clients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) at the first point of contact.** *This service must always be offered to a client.*

So, what does this mean for you? It means that clients with LEP **must not** be turned away or told to return with an interpreter. Regardless of whether the client is in the office or on the telephone, with an adult intending to act as an interpreter or without, we must advise them that DTA will provide a professional interpreter **free of charge**.

Here are some important points to remember:

- 1) Always offer interpreter service to all clients with LEP regardless of whether or not you think they need one..
- 2) After being informed, the client can decline the use of professional interpreter services. It is their choice.
- 3) At any point during a transaction, if a client requests interpreter services, you must make every effort to provide that service.
- 4) Children over age 12 may interpret *only to schedule an appointment*. Children age 12 and under must not be asked to interpret for any purpose

For more assistance, please read the [Getting a Telephone Interpreter Job Aid](#) available on the [Interpreter Service Information](#) page on [Policy Online](#), or by clicking the link above.

Example: Ben is sitting with his client Imane, a fluent French and Arabic speaker but with limited proficiency in English. While taking Imane's application Ben notices that the client's preferred language in BEACON is Arabic. There are no Arabic speakers in Ben's office. Rather than asking the client to speak slowly in hopes of gathering information for the application or to come back with an assisting person to help translate, Ben informs Imane that DTA offers free, professional translation services. Using his "I Speak Card", Ben confirms Imane's preferred language and contacts CenturyLink to help facilitate the application interview.