



Dane County Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Language Access Guide

Dane County Department of Human Services

Disability & Aging Services



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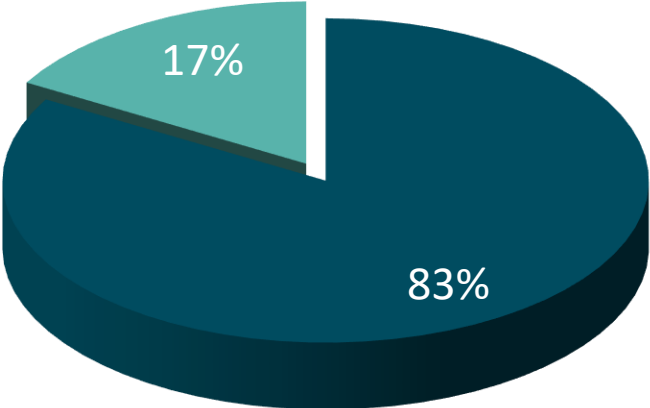
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Dane County CLTS Language Access— By the Numbers

Effective January 1, 2025:

- 2,655: Number of children enrolled in Dane County’s CLTS program
- 17-20%: Average percentage of children, parents or primary caregivers and any given moment that have a preferred or primary language other than English.

CLTS Language Access Needs



83% English preferred or primary language 17% Language other than English preferred or primary

Commitment to Improving Language Access through Collaboration

Two of Dane County Department of Human Service’s core values involve the support of racial justice and diversity. Language access is essential to realizing both of those values. The Dane County CLTS program collaborates with its provider community to improve language access for all participants and families. That partnership includes:

- On-going workshops on language access and cultural sensitivity
- Access to interpretation and translation services at no cost to contracted providers
- Robust, individualized follow-up on every language access and civil rights complaint received

In 2023-2024:

- 90 staff from 30 agencies participated in 10 Language Access workshops
- 69 staff from 19 agencies participated in Cultural Sensitivity workshops
- Offered first cohort of Empowering Cultures
- 35 providers accessed interpretation or translation services through Interpreter’s Co-op of Madison
- 15 language access complaints requiring County manager follow-up and support

What is Meaningful Language Access?

Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEPP). For individuals with LEP, meaningful access denotes access that is not unduly restricted or unnecessarily delayed, and is equal to programs and activities provided to English-proficient individuals.

Why is Language Access Important to CLTS Providers and Participants?

- **Improves Understanding for All:** Interpreters and translators facilitate mutual understanding between parties who do not share a common language. English speaking case managers and providers gain a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of child and family needs. Children and families gain increased knowledge of available resources, and how to navigate the human service system.
- **Ensures Informed Consent:** To deny access to communication in a person's primary language risks denying informed consent. Professional codes of ethics typically state people have a right to information before making decisions. Two examples include:
 1. American Medical Association (Code of Ethics Opinion 2.1.1) which states a "person has the right to receive information and ask questions before they make a decision so they can make a well-considered choice."
 2. The National Association of Social Workers', ethical responsibilities to clients, Section 1.03 (b) which states: "In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible."
- **Respects Confidentiality:** Certified interpreters must follow a professional ethics to maintain confidentiality when discussing private matters. A family or friend has no similar professional obligation.
- **Maintains Appropriate Boundaries Between Parents, Children, Siblings, Extended Family Members and Community Members:** Imagine the discomfort of a child interpreting for a parent's medical appointment or sibling's school meeting, or the trauma of a child having to interpret in situations involving domestic violence and sexual assault.

- **Increases Accuracy of Message:** Without interpretation or translation, messages may not be conveyed properly to the person sending or receiving the communication. This can lead to misunderstandings about the services provided, their purpose, and how they work.
- **Increases Family Engagement:** Families are more involved in their children's supports when they understand them. The creation of self-directed goals and child-centered plans requires cultural sensitivity and language access. A lack of language access compromises a CLTS participant and their family's ability to self-direct their services.

Language Access is Required

CLTS is a MEDICAID funded program for which Dane County authorizes services. All providers receiving federal funds are required to make language services available to those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) under:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which requires recipients of Federal financial assistance to take reasonable steps to make their programs, services, and activities accessible by eligible persons with limited English proficiency.
- Rehab Act of 1973, Section 504 which forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services. This includes language access.
- National Origin is a protected group. National origin discrimination involves treating people unfavorably because they are from a particular country or part of the world, because of ethnicity or accent, or because they appear to be of a certain ethnic background. The characteristic of having limited English proficiency falls under the protected category of national origin.

Did You Know?

The Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) program is a Medicaid program, paid for with a combination of state and federal tax dollars. Approximately 60% of service costs are funded with federal dollars and 40% are covered by the State of Wisconsin.

Accessing Spoken Language Interpretation and Translation for Dane County CLTS Participants

The Dane County CLTS program collaborates with The Interpreters Co-op of Madison for interpretation and translation. To get started:

Step 1:

Figure out the language needs of the person you are supporting. Be explicit. Ask yourself:

- What is the child or family’s primary or preferred language?
- Do we need an interpreter to help us understand each other’s spoken language?
- Do we need written documents translated?
- Do we need both interpretation and translation?

Step 2:

For interpretation: Figure out where service will occur.

Do you want to meet:

- Over the phone
- Using a video platform such as Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, etc.?
- In person?
- If meeting in person, do you have a preference whether the interpreter attends in-person or virtually?
- What if any technology will you need access to?
Can the meeting space accommodate those needs?

For translation of important documents:

- Ensure that the format and content for the translated document is clear.
- Specify the date by which you need the document.
- If requesting a quote, make sure to upload the document you want translated.

Step 3:

Schedule interpretation or translation services following the instruction provided by the CLTS Provider Network Specialist Ross Hazlewood. To obtain a copy of these instructions email Hazlewood.Ross@danecounty.gov

Note: Staff time and mileage cost money. Interpreters will charge for their time even if there is a last-minute cancellation or no-show. Out of respect for everyone’s time, people should make every effort to keep scheduled appointments.

Did You Know?

Interpretation and translation are not the same. “Interpretation” is spoken, and “translation” is written. Many people confuse them, and it’s not a big deal, but you’ll hear us using them distinctly. Both ensure that the original content of the message is preserved.

Working with Interpreters: Getting the Most Out of the Interaction

Always suggest translation and interpretation before a family has to ask. Even if ONE family member does not speak English, plan to schedule an interpreter for important meetings. Ensure that key documents and written materials are translated into their primary language.

While families always have the right to decline interpretation, CLTS providers should avoid asking a family member to interpret for one another. Providers should never request a young child or minor to interpret for their family.

Considerations when working with interpreters over the phone.

- Allow the interpreter time to introduce themselves.
- Speak slowly and clearly, enunciating your words. Speak at a pace easy to understand.
- Keep sentences short. Use straightforward language and avoid long, compound sentences.
- Use plain language, avoiding acronyms, jargon and slang.
- Pay attention to the speaker's tone, emotions, and nuances.
- Repeat what you heard to ensure clarity and accuracy.
- Ask for clarifications as needed.
- When asking for information, ask one question at a time.
- Acknowledge each interaction is unique.
- Be respectful and patient.
- Avoid assumptions.

Considerations when working with interpreters in person.

- Allow the interpreter time to introduce themselves.
- You, the provider, lead the interaction. The interpreter is there to facilitate the communication, not be part of the conversation.
- Speak directly to the child or family in the first person.
- Speak in a clear tone.
- Allow for more time as everything will be communicated at least twice (once by the speaker and once by the interpreter).
- Allow time after a phrase for the interpreter to relay the information to the child and family in their language.
- Be thoughtful of your body language and the best place for the interpreter to sit in relation to you and the child or family.
- Maintain eye contact with the CLTS participant or family member, not the interpreter.
- Remember all interactions are confidential.
- The interpreter may take notes, which they will destroy after the interaction. The interpreter cannot share their notes with either party.

- Remember not all languages have interpretations for all words. The interpreter may need to explain certain concepts when there is not a direct translation for a specific word.

Commonly Used Language Access Definitions

American Sign Language (ASL): A language predominately utilized by the deaf community. Includes language expressed by movements of hands and face.



Interpretation: The way of communicating one person’s language to another person who uses a different language, while preserving the meaning of original message. Individuals can use interpretation for both spoken languages and sign language.

Sign Language Interpretation: Bridges the gap between deaf, hard-of-hearing people in various situations through hand signs, facial expressions, and body postures to communicate a message accurately and efficiently.

Specialized Interpretation: Interpreters often have areas of focused expertise or additional certification. Examples include medical and legal interpretation, CLTS case managers and providers may need to advocate for these specialized services when the people they support interface with medical providers or the legal system.

- **Legal Interpreters:** The Wisconsin Judicial Department defines legal interpreters as a legal language service. CLTS case managers and providers may need to advocate for these services when the people they support are involved in legal matters.
- **Medical Interpreters:** The Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) defines a Certified Healthcare Interpreter as “a person who is able to perform the functions of a healthcare interpreter competently, independently, and unsupervised in any setting and in any modality where health care is provided, with the knowledge, skill, and ability required to relay messages accurately from a source language to a target language in a culturally competent manner and in accordance with established ethical standards.”

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individual: When a person whose primary language is not English and has limited ability to speak, write, or read English.

Qualified Bilingual Staff: A staff member who can provide services in two different languages. Their language skills have been through rigorous examination to ensure that their fluency aligns with what is required to provide services.

Translation: The written way of communicating one language to another. This includes making sure original content of message is preserved.

Video Relay Service (VRS): A form of Telecommunications Relay Service that enables persons with hearing disabilities who use American Sign Language to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text. (fcc.gov)



Did You Know?

A bilingual staff performs a different role than interpreters and translators. They are not interpreters nor translators for other providers. They work directly with children and their families to provide a specific service in the family's preferred language. Each provider must ensure children and families understand their services and how to access them. This means every provider must arrange for interpretation and translation when necessary.

What Happens When Someone Expresses Concern Over a Lack of Language Access?

CLTS case managers are the first line of contact for both families and providers. When case managers become aware of a language access concern, they notify Dane County's CLTS Provider Network Specialist, Ross Hazlewood, Hazlewood.Ross@danecounty.gov. Typically, this entails completing a Language Access Complaint Form.

The CLTS provider network specialist or someone under their direction, follows up on every complaint or concern regarding language access. The process may include a phone, email or in-person exchange to review available resources and provide additional support, based on the specific situation.

Complaints are recorded and reviewed to identify patterns. A provider's repeated disregard for language access may be reported to Wisconsin DHS staff for further follow-up.

Resources for Situations When a Provider Cannot Access Interpretation or Translation

While not a substitution for translation and interpretation, there are many strategies for communicating effectively in a multilingual workplace. UW Madison’s Cultural and Linguistic Services office has created a learning video on this topic:

- Effective Strategies in a Multilingual Workplace: Strategies for Success.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Inh0rXu2wO8>

How Can I Champion Language Access?

- Make it a regular part of what you do. Needs of families will continue to change. Staying informed about language accessibility is vital.
- Be curious. Attend regular trainings, do research, and ask questions! For information on upcoming language access and cultural sensitivity workshops hosted by Dane County, contact Ross Hazlewood, Hazlewood.Ross@danecounty.gov.

Testimonies From Providers and Case Managers

“A young woman with a disability found herself with her primary care giver, i.e., her parents unable to care for her. Both parents got sick with COVID and had to leave the family home temporarily.

“Other family members were willing and able to step in, but needed hands-on training around her complex cares. These family members did not speak English. Unfortunately, due to COVID precautions – an in-person interpreter was not an option. One of our outreach nurses was able to provide the needed hands-on training and demonstrate the needed cares by using her smart phone and an over-the-phone Interpretation service.”

UW-Waisman Center, WIN (Wellness Inclusion Nursing) Program

“The world is a better place because of the time and effort you put into educating us about language access and cultural sensitivity.”

CLTS Case Manager

“After taking this professional development training, I will truly never second guess someone's ability to communicate in English and truly understand what is being said to them. I think it's easy to assume that if a person has some basic English language skills that they will understand the messages and communication that we have to present to them. And this is an incorrect assumption.”

CLTS Case Manager

“I work with a wonderful family that speaks Iraqi Egyptian Arabic and while we have had a few different translators, the family overall, has expressed that they appreciate the patience of the team, that we review all the information more than once to confirm their understanding and approval, and that there is always room for questions. The interpreters have been very helpful and reframing questions or asking more questions from me if there is any confusion.”

CLST Case Manager

“I work with a Cambodian family that speaks Khmer and we have been fortunate to have the same interpreter for several meetings. He has gotten to know the family and is a part of the team. He is patient, helpful, interested, and repeats and reframes information as often as needed to confirm the information is understood. In addition, he has gotten to know the family and we have a lot of laughter and dialogue about how the family and child are doing above and beyond the agenda. He has been so helpful and the parents have shared their appreciation for him.”

CLTS Case Manager

“Working with an interpreter has helped our family because my husband does not speak English well. Working with an interpreter has helped him understand and talk to our son’s doctors. One day we went to the doctor and we requested an interpreter for my husband. He was able to understand everything that the doctors explained to him. If he had not had an interpreter, he would only have understood part of the conversation. We have an interpreter at my son’s speech therapy sessions. If my son had not had an interpreter, he would not have been able to understand anything because I always speak to him in Spanish at home. When my son started going to school and receiving therapy, I had to explain to him what was being said. Over time, he was able to understand English but he could not speak it so we requested an interpreter. The interpreter allowed my son to express himself and communicate with the therapist properly.”

Client Experience Reported from Bilingual CLTS Case Manager

“It has been an absolute pleasure working with the family who utilizes our services. Their case manager recommended them for our services but was unsure how they would be able to access them considering the language barrier and if translation services would be effective at addressing the complex issues around parenting and behavioral issues that we address. After more than half a year working together the family and their son have made incredible progress. The process as a provider has been eye opening and helpful for me to understand critical cultural differences and our interpreter was great at helping me identify these cultural sensitivities where appropriate so that I could integrate them into the context of our sessions and my approach. I would encourage any and all Dane county support services to make use of translation services whenever possible. It helps everyone move towards what is most important in each interaction, rather than allowing language to and misunderstandings create unnecessary barriers to supporting families where they are!”

Board Certified Behavior Analyst

“We always use an interpreter; it is essential in our initial meetings with families so that they are able to fully understand the services that CLTS services provides.”

CLST Intake Staff

“I think the most underlying principle of what I learned was the need to respect families' rights to communicate with their case manager, and that it is truly our responsibility to support this.”

CLTS Case Manager