

# ***On-Demand Interpreter Services***

## **Non-English Languages**

211 TBC uses an on-demand interpreter service to communicate with an inquirer with a language barrier. We use a contracted certified on-demand interpreter service that provides qualified ASL and foreign language interpreters.

When an agent encounters an inquirer that speaks a language other than English, they will inform the inquirer to the best of their ability to connect them to a 24/7 on-demand interpreter service. The CRS will then call the on-demand interpreter service using 211's Client ID and department code and select the language they determine the inquirer is using. When a CRS knows a language barrier exists for outbound conversations to an inquirer, they will call the on-demand interpreter service at the beginning of the call and then connect to the inquirer. The CRS will inform the on-demand interpreter briefly on the nature of the call and give the interpreter as little information at a time as possible to facilitate an accurate and effective conversation.

## **Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing**

This operating procedure describes the process for ensuring that deaf or hard-of-hearing persons are afforded equal opportunity to receive services as are persons without disabilities. This operating procedure also sets the terms and conditions for a certified virtual interpreter service that provides both qualified ASL and foreign language interpreters as required by federal law and regulations and provides guidance and assistance regarding the scope and nature of sign language interpreter services. 211 TBC recognizes that within the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, there are many subsets of individuals with hearing loss ranging from mild to profound and hearing loss accompanied by other disabilities. This operating procedure applies to all deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing shall receive reasonable accommodations for service delivery activities through the use of auxiliary aids and services and certified interpreters at no cost.

This operating procedure applies to all organizational units within 211 Tampa Bay Cares, contracted consumer service providers, and subcontractors. Devices and services are free of charge to use.

## **Single-Points-of-Contact**

Ensure facilities are equipped with the resources necessary to ensure effective communication with customers or companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. All 211 TBC staff shall ensure that documented services are delivered to customers or companions who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, manage service records, report this data, and any resource and training needs to their designated ADA Section 504 Coordinator.

211 TBC's internal staff single point of contact is the President/CEO, Micki Thompson. She can be reached at 727-403-4062. If she is not available, please contact the Vice President of Programs and Services, Edward Perry, at 727-480-6755.

### **Staff Training**

Staff is trained on deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf/blind, or speech-disabled requirements and protocols within 60 days of employment. During new hire training, the staff is trained on connecting with the on-demand services and location of the technology-assisted devices. Annually, an annual staff refresher training for the deaf and hard-of-hearing is completed online as required by the State of Florida.

### **Verification of Interpreter Certification**

211 TBC contracts with a third-party vendor (Language Line) to provide certified on-demand interpreters. The vendor requires that each interpreter prior to hiring hold a certification from one of the following sources:

If 211 TBC is required to hire an on-site interpreter, we will hire a qualified individual to interpret for a consumer. 211 TBC will search the Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Member Directory for an appropriately certified interpreter. The Member Directory can find this list at <https://fridcentral.wildapricot.org/member-directory/>.

Individual interpreters are professional sign language interpreters who have passed the written and performance tests administered by or recognized by, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID). All Certified and Pre-Certified Associate Members are required to remain active members of both the Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (FRID) and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID). They mandate adherence to the RID-NAD Code of Professional Conduct and subject them to an Ethical Practices System (EPS). 211 TBC will request credentials for the on-site interpreter upon the interpreter's arrival.

### **Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)**

Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) service is a verbatim, word-for-word, instant translation of the spoken word into written text. CART helps make meetings, conferences, and seminars compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible to people with hearing loss. Hearing accessible technology and services are crucial to creating an inclusive event so that everyone can participate, regardless of how well they hear. Even people with good hearing sometimes struggle to comprehend completely, especially in loud or noisy environments. CART helps those people, too, and people for whom English is a second language. The text can be projected onto a screen, displayed on a computer monitor or laptop, or transmitted via the internet. People who need CART should be combined with PowerPoint or other presentation content—enabling people to view all content on one screen.

211 TBC uses the Zoom platform for its video conferencing needs during virtual events. Zoom has integrated live translation options for each session when hosting a virtual meeting or event. Within Zoom, the "Live Transcript" option is available to be set by the host. The platform allows hosts to assign a user in the virtual meeting to be the live transcriber or to enable a live transcription. 211 TBC staff are encouraged to "enable the live transcript" button for all sessions. When conducting a virtual meeting with a deaf or hard-of-hearing consumer, all 211 TBC staff are required to enable the live transcript button for all meetings.

Virtual meeting attendees can activate live transcription on their screens by clicking the "live transactions" button and choosing either "show subtitles" or "view full transcript". "Show subtitles" will display the conversation at the bottom of the screen while the conversation is progressing. It will not display who is speaking. "View full transcript" will open a side panel that details what each person speaking has said since the beginning of the virtual meeting. When the "View full transcript" is activated, this provides the attendee the option to download the entire conversation when completed.

During in-person meetings, conferences, and seminars where a deaf or hard-of-hearing person is in attendance, 211 TBC will employ a CART certified provider to provide in-person real-time transcription. 211 TBC will reference, select, and schedule a local Florida transcriber for the event from the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) PROLink Professional Directory located at <https://www.ncra.org/ncra-prolink>.

#### **Primary Service Delivery Model: Use of 711 (Florida Relay Services)**

Florida Relay is a service provided to residents in the State of Florida who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf/blind, or speech-disabled that connects them to standard (voice) telephone users. A deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled person uses a TTY to type their conversation to a relay operator, who then reads the typed conversation to a hearing person. Standard telephone users can quickly initiate calls to TTY users. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words to the TTY user and reads back the typed replies.

For translation phone calls, 211 TBC uses 711 to communicate with the deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf/blind, or speech-disabled as desired by the user. Deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf/blind, or speech-disabled consumers can call 711 to initiate a conversation.

#### **Secondary Service Delivery Model: On-Demand Interpreter Services**

211 TBC has implemented an on-demand interpreter service. This service employs certified virtual interpreters who provide qualified ASL and foreign language interpreters. This secondary service delivery model includes video relay services where the 211 TBC staff person, a certified ASL interpreter, and the consumer engage in a virtual Zoom meeting. This ensures the consumer is provided equal access to 211 services. These meetings are scheduled or held on-demand to engage with a certified interpreter.

A deaf and hard-of-hearing consumer can request 211 services through the contact us form on the 211 website. When received, 211 TBC will connect with the consumer to schedule a time to speak with an on-demand interpreter service through video relay. 211 TBC will schedule the consumer and on-demand interpreter for the chosen date and time and provide a virtual zoom meeting link. The request needs to be made by the 211 TBC staff person who is authorized to access the zoom platform and secure translation services using the 211 TBC customer ID. At the scheduled appointment, 211 TBC will secure an on-demand interpreter, usually within 1 - 2 minutes of the request being made. All parties will use the virtual zoom meeting link for a video relay conversation. 211 TBC will host the meeting and begin service delivery once all parties are present. 211 TBC staff will establish additional 211 appointments based on the outcome of the initial conversation. See the section for the detailed process on Requesting a Certified Interpreter below.

### **On-site Requests: Assessment for auxiliary aid or services for customers or companions**

211 Tampa Bay Cares does not provide direct consumer services in-person at their offices.

When meetings, conferences, and seminars are hosted at 211 TBC offices, 211 TBC staff will conduct a timely assessment for auxiliary aids or services with persons with disabilities, limited English proficiency, or the deaf or hard-of-hearing before the event to secure the needs of the consumer. This will include providing necessary aids and services for those in attendance. 211 TBC staff can find the form at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/individual-with-disability/consumers/docs/CCCAFormAndInstructionsRevised.pdf>

211 TBC would connect to a virtual interpreter for any virtual or in-person meeting. Interpreters are available 24 hours a day on-demand. If not possible or preferred, 211 TBC would seek an in-person interpreter. See the section for the detailed process on Requesting a Certified Interpreter below.

### **On-site Requests: Assistive Listening Devices and Systems (ALDs)**

Amplification systems improve hearing ability in large areas and interpersonal communications. These systems deliver the desired signal directly to the listener's ears, hearing aids, or cochlear implants, thus overcoming the negative effects of noise, distance, and echo. Some available examples include, but are not limited to: hardwire, loop, infrared, and FM system.

ALD devices are available at each 211 TBC location, upon request. 211 TBC staff can find assistive Listening Devices and Systems at the front desk at each location.

### **On-site Requests: Auxiliary Aids and Services**

These aids and services include qualified and certified interpreters or other effective methods of making aurally delivered materials available to the deaf or hard-of-hearing.

This includes qualified readers, taped texts, or other effective methods of making visually delivered materials available to individuals who are blind or who have low vision; acquisition or modification of equipment or devices; and other similar services and actions. These auxiliary aids and services will enable customers/consumers and companions to fully benefit from and participate in 211 TBC programs and services. Auxiliary aids and services include, but are not limited to, Braille and taped materials, qualified or certified ASL interpreters, qualified foreign language interpreters, readers, assistive listening devices and systems, television decoders, visual fire alarms using strobe lights, captioned films, and other assistive devices.

Auxiliary aids are available at each 211 TBC location, upon request. 211 TBC staff can find auxiliary aids at the front desk at each location.

### **Requesting a Certified Interpreter**

211 TBC does not compile a list of certified sign language interpreters. We use a contracted certified on-demand interpreter service that provides qualified ASL and foreign language interpreters.

211 TBC staff shall make a certified on-demand interpreter available, usually within 1 to 2 minutes, from when the request is made. The interpreter may take up to two (2) hours from when the consumer requests on-site requests.

The use of a minor as an interpreter is prohibited. Between the time an interpreter is requested and the time an interpreter arrives, 211 TBC staff shall continue to try to communicate with the customer or companion who is deaf or hard-of-hearing insofar as the customer or companion seeks to communicate. In such circumstances, 211 TBC staff shall use all available methods of communication, including, but not limited to, written communication, note-takers, sign language pictographs, and other communication graphics. This provision no way lessens 211 TBC's obligation to provide qualified interpreters in a timely manner.

At 211 TBC, on-demand interpreters are available via touch screen tablets for in-person situations or video calls for remote situations.

On-site interpreters will be made available by 211 TBC upon request by a consumer. 211 TBC staff shall make a certified on-demand interpreter available, as soon as possible, but no later than two (2) hours from when the customer, companion, or other 211 TBC personnel requests an interpreter, whichever is earlier.

### **Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Reporting**

Staff will complete the DCF "Assessment for auxiliary aid or services for customers or companions" form for each incident where an on-site assisted device or interpreter is requested. 211 TBC staff can find the form at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/individual-with-disability/consumers/docs/CCCAFormAndInstructionsRevised.pdf>

For each on-demand request for an interpreter, 211 TBC staff will track within each conversation record any instance where ASL or Non-English language were requested and used. In the conversational record in the 211 Data Platform, choose ASL or Non-English language from the "Which language did the caller require?" from the 211 TBC Conversation Header section of the record. Monthly a report will be generated with the 211 Database Platform outlining the calls where these services were used/requested.

All virtual and on-demand instances where a deaf and hard-of-hearing person requested 211 services will be documented and reported as required by state law and local contractual requirements. Annually, this data will improve service delivery for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.