STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OCTOBER 3, 2001

BULLETIN NO. 34
FA-01-27

TO: ALL DISTRICT, COUNTY AND AREA STAFF

FROM: NATASHA K. METCALF, COMMISSIONER

DATE: OCTOBER 3, 2001

SUBJECT: LANGUAGE LINE OVER-THE-PHONE TRANSLATION SERVICES

BACKGROUND

Family Assistance staff now has access to over-the-phone translation services through Language Line Services LLC, for the purpose of communicating with Food Stamp, Medicaid and Families First applicants and clients who do not speak or write English. This service is available immediately.

ACCESS TO BENEFIT PROGRAMS

In Bulletin Number 17 FA-01-11, dated June 12 2001, the Department of Human Services distributed policy guidance for Family Assistance staff regarding citizenship, immigration status, and social security numbers. The bulletin contains vital information and guidelines to help you provide meaningful access to the Food Stamp, Medicaid, and Families First programs for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Please review this area of the bulletin, especially with regard to the rule that the applicant or recipient must first be advised that a free translator is available and that it is our responsibility to accommodate this need in Family Assistance programs.

TRAINING

Training materials are being sent to the county offices. These materials include a 10-minute training video that outlines the process of contacting a Language Line translator. Additional materials include written instructions, in the form of a Language Line Instructions Sheet along with Language Line Quick Reference Guides, Language Identification Brochures, and a poster-size quick reference guide to help your staff identify languages during client interviews. Also, the assigned list of county access codes that must be used when calling Language Line for a translator is being distributed to the Area Managers for each county.

Planning and coordinating the training sessions for caseworkers will be the responsibility of the Area Managers. Each local office must identify and train all staff who may have contact with any customer who has Limited English Proficiency. At a minimum, the staff is to view the video, go through the written instructions, and then listen to the over-the-phone demonstration program at 1-800-996-8808. Staff who use Language Line will also need to be trained in the following:

- **How to initiate and receive three-way conference calls from their local office**
- **How to use the 6-digit Client ID and**
- **How to use the 6-digit county Access Code(s)**

OVER-THE-PHONE TRANSLATION PROCEDURES

INBOUND CALLS

When staff receives calls from applicants or clients who don't speak English, the most important thing to do is **keep the customer on the line, and place the caller on hold**. The training video provides some useful information on what the caseworker may want to say when he/she talks to an applicant or client who does not speak English. Once the caller is on conference hold, please follow the instructions as provided on the Language Line Instructions Sheet, which are included in the packet being mailed to your county office.

It is important that calls not last more than one (1) hour. Most calls are expected to take far less time. Also, remember that Language Line translators identify themselves as 'Answer Points,' and each translator has a unique ID. You may want to jot down the Answer Point's name, ID, and primary language translation for use in future calls to Language Line.

OUTBOUND CALLS

When making outbound calls needing Language Line services, have the language identified and the customer's telephone number at hand. Follow the instructions provided on the Language Line Instructions Sheet. **The main difference with outbound calls is that the Language Line Answer Point will add the conference call for you**. This means that the Answer Point will get the third party on the line for you.

ON-SITE TRANSLATION PROCEDURES

OFFICE INTERVIEWS

Language Line translation services may also be utilized during live interviews with LEP individuals. Staff trained to use Language Line must have the Language Identification Quick Reference Brochure and the Language Identification Quick Reference Poster ready at all times. When a LEP individual comes into the county office, show them to the language identification brochure or poster. These materials show the names of the most common languages along with brief sentences which ask the individual to point to his or her language and that a translator will be called. The easiest way to do this is to point to the names of the languages in a way that encourages the individual to identify the language(s) he or she is using.

Once the language is identified, make a call to Language Line Services using the same procedures as shown above under Outbound Calls. You will already know the name of the language to be translated. Have the **6-digit Client ID** and the **6-digit county Access Code(s)** used to make Language Line calls ready. Follow the instructions provided on the Language Line Instructions Sheet, and when the Answer Point (Interpreter) answers the call, tell the Answer Point which language is being used and any other special circumstances. If you do not know the name of the language being used, just say ‘help’ at the prompt and you will be connected to a live representative from Language Line. **The main difference with on-site calls is that you will need to conduct a conference call with the Answer Point and the potential customer using a speaker phone.**

TRACKING CALLS

Each county office must maintain accurate records of all calls to Language Line Services. This may be either a paper log or an electronic database form. These logs must be retained for future reference and verification. Also, the billing cycle for this program is by calendar month, so your logs need to reflect all calls made using your access codes and your telephones by calendar month. Remember that Language Line Services cannot be used to make or receive international or out-of-state calls. At a minimum, each log needs to include the following:

- **names of staff and their access codes**
- **dates and times of the calls**
- **access codes used to make the calls**
- **approximate duration of the calls**
- **supervisor approval**

Remember that the call logs need to be approved by your supervisor on a monthly basis. A copy of a usable call log is attached to this memo. If you have additional questions, or need assistance with this program, please contact your district Family Assistance staff.

NKM/dh

Attachment