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March 13 Memo

Dear Legal and Victim Service Providers,

As we all closely monitor developments regarding the coronavirus, Ayuda's Language Access Program would like to share with you the plans that we have in place.

We know that you are all weighing competing priorities: containing the virus for the benefit of society as a whole (including the benefit of your staff and clients) and continuing to provide your clients with the vital legal and victim services that they need.



The Language Access Program is also faced with many competing priorities: avoiding a situation in which interpreters and translators are unnecessarily deprived of their source of income, containing the virus for the benefit of society as a whole (including for the benefit of interpreters, our staff, our clients, your staff, and your clients), and continuing to provide you with excellent language access services so that you may responsibly and effectively offer vital legal and victim services to your clients.

- To the extent that you are continuing to see clients in person and would like to work with an in-person interpreter, we ask that you take appropriate measures to proceed as safely as possible:
 1. Do not request to meet with an interpreter in-person if you are sick or have had direct contact with anyone known to you to have COVID-like symptoms.
 2. Consider whether the meeting can be held in a more open space (in which more distance can be put between you, your client, and the interpreter).
 3. Reconsider holding any meetings larger than 10 people (such as group therapy sessions); it may be ideal to offer the meetings virtually (if possible) or have smaller group gatherings.
 4. Have conversations with your clients regarding [CDC recommended measures](#) to curb the spread of the virus.
 5. Engage in social distancing and encourage others with whom you are meeting to do the same. That is, maintain at least six feet between individuals.
 6. Offer hand sanitizer, bathroom breaks, disinfecting wipes and tissues, as needed.
 7. Encourage sick clients to reschedule their appointments with you (in addition to offering any advice regarding seeking medical care).
 8. Communicate with the interpreter in advance about any precautions or measures that you, or the interpreter, would like to take during the meeting.

We are sending separate communication to the independent contractors who accept assignments from our language access banks about measures that they should take to proceed as safely as possible.

- To the extent that you would like to work with a telephonic interpreter or a video remote interpreter (either because you will be meeting with your client through video/telephonically or because you would like to reduce the number of people attending the meeting in person), please consider the following:
 1. Short, administrative communication should likely still be accomplished using telephonic interpretation or video remote interpretation (for sign language) through LanguageLine (assuming that we offer LanguageLine access to your organization for



the type of client you wish to contact). If we do not provide your organization with access to LanguageLine under one of our grants, we can put you in contact with our LanguageLine account executive for your organization to open an account (to be paid for by your organization).

2. Independent contractors with Ayuda's language access banks have specific training on working in legal and victim services (which is not always true of LanguageLine interpreters). In addition, independent contractors with our language access banks are local and have extensive experience working with your organization or similar local organizations. These interpreters may be willing to work over the phone or by video, even though they usually complete assignments in person for our banks. Please contact us if you would like to explore this option.
 3. For Deaf clients, you may also consider calling the clients on the phone (using [video relay service](#), which is free to you and the client).
- To the extent that you are cancelling client meetings altogether, we are available to arrange for the translation of any written communication that you may need to provide to your clients (about their particular situation or about your organization's response to coronavirus in general). If there is any change in our ability to process translations, we will let you know. For the time being, Ayuda's Language Access Program is primarily teleworking (and able to process your requests). When we send documents off to be translated, that work is done remotely and should be able to continue in spite of the disruptions caused by the coronavirus.

As always, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out to us at interpreterbank@ayuda.com. If we do not answer our phones, it may be because we are teleworking and have not been able to forward our calls. Please leave a voicemail (which will immediately appear in our email inboxes as a sound file for us to access).

Please share this communication with everyone at your organization.

We will keep you apprised of any developments. Please stay safe and take appropriate measures.

March 25 Memo



Dear Legal and Victim Service Providers,

We know that many of you are meeting with clients over the phone or by video at this time, instead of having the in-person meetings that might have occurred before the coronavirus outbreak.

We are writing to offer you information about how to **continue meeting with limited English proficient and Deaf clients** when conducting meetings remotely.

Please keep in mind the following:

1) Interpreters who contract with Ayuda's interpreter banks are **specially trained in working in legal and victim services, are local, and have experience working with your organization** (or similar local organizations).

- a. These interpreters can join telephone or video meetings with you and your clients
- b. Place a request on Salesforce as you usually would, indicating in the "Short Description of Session" box that this session will be over the phone or over video
 - i. Once you receive a confirmation email, contact the interpreter directly to discuss plans for conducting the meeting over the phone or over video.
 - ii. Ensure that both the interpreter and your client understand how and when to join the remote meeting. **Do not provide clients with the cell phone numbers of interpreters provided to you by Ayuda or vice versa.** You should be the one conferencing together the parties.

2) **Video calls offer more personalized communication (and a better chance at accurate interpretation)** than phone calls.

- a. There are many free and low-cost options for hosting a video conference call. Below are some options:
 - i. <https://www.gruveo.com/>
 - ii. <https://www.cyph.com/faq>
 - iii. <https://www.resourceconnect.com/>
 - iv. <https://www.owllabs.com/blog/video-conferencing-tools>



v.

<https://www.inc.com/jason-aten/these-5-tech-companies-are-providing-free-remote-working-tools-during-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

vi. <https://www.voipreview.org/free-web-conferencing>

b. Meeting with your clients over video should be low-barrier and accessible. There are options that will not require your client to register for anything or download anything.

c. Video calls with Deaf clients require special attention, particularly if a team of interpreters will be involved. Please provide extra time for planning, and please contact Ayuda before placing your request.

d. Ideally, **the company that provides the technology should not be able to access identifying information about your clients**, including the content of the conversation and information about the conversation that would identify your client (phone number, IP address, user name, geolocation, etc.). This is particularly true for victims of domestic violence. [Learn more here](#). You can also attend [a webinar on Friday, March 27](#) for front-line advocates who are navigating using technology to continue providing support to survivors. See also the notification from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services entitled "[Notification of Enforcement Discretion for telehealth remote communications during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency](#)."

e. Make sure that you, the interpreter, and your client have the needed equipment and internet access to successfully meet over video.

f. **Have a back-up plan** for conducting the meeting over the phone if the video option does not work.

g. Run a practice meeting using video before trying it for the first time with the interpreter and the client.

h. Ensure that your client understands how to join the meeting by video. Ayuda may be able to assist you by translating any written instructions that you wish to share. You can also discuss options with the client over the phone in advance.



3) If you decide not to meet with your client over video, then for clients who speak languages other than English, an interpreted session can likely be achieved using any conference call function over the phone.

a. Consider [privacy and safety issues](#), particularly when working with clients who are victims of domestic violence.

b. **Do not provide clients with the cell phone numbers of interpreters provided to you by Ayuda or vice versa.** You should be the one conferencing together the parties.

c. If you need to communicate with your client for something quick or administrative (such as setting up a longer meeting), use LanguageLine or another telephonic interpretation service to conference together you, your client, and an interpreter. You may have access to LanguageLine through Ayuda's Community Legal Interpreter Bank or Ayuda's Victim Services Interpreter Bank.

4) If you decide not to meet with your client over video, then for Deaf clients, you may be able to call your client directly on the phone, using [video relay service](#). This service is free to you and your client. Your client will know whether they have the needed equipment to use this service. When you use this service, you will hear the voice of an interpreter through the phone and your client will see an interpreter signing through video.

5) Finally, there may be instances in which you will want to use LanguageLine in the first instance (instead of local interpreters). For instance, when a client calls you and begins speaking to you in a language that you do not understand, you will want to conference in LanguageLine. Through Ayuda, you may have access to LanguageLine, which offers quick connection over the phone to spoken language interpreters and over video to sign language interpreters.

If you would have asked Ayuda's interpreter banks to send an in-person interpreter to a client meeting before the coronavirus outbreak, we encourage you to continue requesting the assistance of those interpreters now. Thank you for everything that you are doing to continue serving your clients during this very difficult time.

Ayuda's website now has a section dedicated to [updates related to our response to coronavirus](#). There, you will find a section labelled "Language Services." Click the plus button to learn more.

Ayuda's Language Access Program is working remotely and available to answer your questions. Please contact us as interpreterbank@ayuda.com. **If you call us and we do not answer, please leave a voicemail** (which will immediately be sent to a monitored account as an email with an attached sound file). Someone will call you back or email you as soon as possible.



Additional Resources

[Language Access in Times of Crisis: Getting Started With Video Remote Interpreting](#)

[Language Justice During COVID-19](#)