

OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY

Policy Summary



Information on Language Services and Communication Support

The following is only a summary of OYA policy [I-D-2.1 Use of Language Services](#). Please refer to the policy for full details and as the official policy record. For other policies, visit <https://www.oregon.gov/oia/aboutoia/pages/policies.aspx>.

Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) is committed to making sure all youth and their families can communicate effectively, regardless of their language or hearing abilities. This includes providing interpretation and translation services for people who speak limited English, do not speak English, or are deaf or hard of hearing.

Why is This Important?

OYA values diversity, equity, and inclusion. We want every youth and family member to:

- Understand important information about youth rights, responsibilities, and case plans.
- Participate fully in meetings, legal processes, and other important discussions.
- Communicate comfortably in their preferred language.

When Are Language Services Needed?

OYA will provide language services in situations such as:

- **Important Meetings:** Such as Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings and case plan discussions.
- **Youth Rights and Responsibilities:** Explaining youth rights, responsibilities, and the grievance process.
- **Medical or Psychological Information:** Communicating about medical, psychological, or other technical matters.
- **Legal Matters:** Investigations, disciplinary actions, legal proceedings, or when seeking consent.
- **Probation or Parole Information:** Explaining probation, parole, or release conditions and violations.

How Do We Decide Who Needs Language Services?

OYA staff will provide language services if:

- A youth or their family member asks for it.

- There was a need for language services in court or during a previous OYA placement.
 - Communication is difficult due to limited English.
 - A hearing screening shows the youth is deaf or hard of hearing.
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Who Provides Language Services?

OYA uses the following resources in this order:

1. **Bilingual Staff:** Staff members who have been identified as fluent in the required language except for medical, psychiatric, or psychological matters;
 2. **Emergency Help:** Other fluent staff may help in emergencies.
 3. **In-Person Interpreters:** Contracted interpreters when bilingual staff are unavailable.
 4. **Phone Interpreters:** Contracted telephonic interpreters if no in-person interpreter is available.
 5. **Temporary Emergency Help:** Youth, family members, or volunteers may only help in emergencies while waiting for an official interpreter.
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Encouraging Multilingual Communication

- Youth and staff, youth and their families, and youth amongst each other can communicate in their preferred language, as long as it does not create safety or security concerns.
 - Communication among staff in their native language is also supported.
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Creating an Inclusive Environment

This policy helps create a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for everyone involved.