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**REPORT TO THE MINNESOTA
STATE LEGISLATURE**

**PROTOCOLS FOR PERSONS LACKING
PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH
PILOT PROJECT**

Authorized by 1995 Minnesota State Legislature
Chapter 178, Article 2, Section 2

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Maria R. Gomez, Commissioner

Assistance Payments Division
444 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3834

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 1995 Minnesota State Legislature (Chapter 178, Article 2, Section 2) directed the Department of Human Services (DHS) to implement a language protocol pilot in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. The purpose of the pilot is to develop a formal structure (protocols) for providing language assistance to applicants and recipients whose primary language is not English in order to provide meaningful access to all services that those agencies administer.

Minnesota's population is growing increasingly diverse, both culturally and in terms of the primary languages spoken. This legislation was the product of concerns expressed by individuals and organizations that represent people who have limited English proficiency (LEP). These concerns revolved around a sense of inadequate communication between county agencies and LEP persons leading to an incomplete or inaccurate exchange of information.

The established protocols apply to all programs that are solely or jointly administered by DHS. They incorporate input from community and legal advisory groups, county social service agencies, service providers and other interested groups. The statute requires the project to focus on the non-English languages that are most common to applicants and recipients in the pilot counties. Those languages are Spanish, Hmong, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Russian. The pilot will be used to develop recommendations for possible statewide implementation of language protocols.

In addition to the development of these language protocols the Combined Application Form-I & II (CAF) is to be translated into the identified languages.

This report includes a copy of the protocols and the status of the pilot implementation.

REPORT REQUIREMENT

The 1995 Minnesota State Legislature (Chapter 178, Article 2, Section 2) directed the Department of Human Services (DHS) to implement a language protocol pilot in Hennepin and Ramsey counties (Attachment A). The purpose of the pilot is to develop a formal structure for providing language assistance to applicants and recipients whose primary language is not English in order to provide meaningful access to all services that those agencies administer.

The established protocols apply to all programs that are solely or jointly administered by DHS. They incorporate input from community and legal advisory groups, county social service agencies, service providers and other interested groups. The statute requires the project to focus on the five non-English languages that are most common to applicants and recipients in the pilot counties. The pilot will be used to develop recommendations for possible statewide implementation of language protocols.

In addition to the development of these language protocols the Combined Application Form-I & II (CAF) is to be translated into the five identified languages.

This report includes a copy of the protocols, the status of the pilot implementation and recommendations for statewide implementation.

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BACKGROUND

Minnesota's population is growing increasingly diverse, both culturally and in terms of the primary languages spoken. For example, the number of Asian and Hispanic people in Minnesota who are receiving cash assistance and food stamps has almost doubled over the last eight years. As of November 1995, these two groups of people make up the following percentages of the program population:

	<u>Statewide</u>	<u>Hennepin</u>	<u>Ramsey</u>
AFDC/RCA	17.3%	13.9%	36.8%
General Assistance (GA)	29.5%	33.6%	45.8%
Minnesota Supplemental Assistance (MSA)	5.6%	6.8%	14.1%
Food Stamps (FS)	16.3%	14.0%	35.5%

A significant number of the members of these and other communities who have settled in Minnesota have limited English proficiency or do not speak English at all. With this diversity comes the need to provide assistance in ways that can provide meaningful access to the services administered by DHS.

This legislation was the product of concerns expressed by individuals and organizations that represent people who have limited English proficiency (LEP). These concerns revolved around a sense of inadequate communication between county

agencies and LEP persons leading to an incomplete or inaccurate exchange of information. This often reflects itself in violations of client confidentiality and client's general lack of basic program information. The potential results of this communication barrier are services not being provided on a timely basis, incomplete services being offered, or services for which the client is eligible being denied.

PROCESS AND STATUS OF PILOT

This project was assigned to the Assistance Payments Division (APD) of the Economic and Community Support Strategies (ECSS) area in DHS. A team was appointed that included representation from the Office of Equal Opportunity, Department of Economic Security (DES) and ECSS staff. The team included bi-cultural/bi-lingual members.

Early in the process it was decided that the counties would be the primary authors of their own protocols. Each county would need to develop protocols consistent with its organizational structure. They were given the option to develop one set of protocols for the entire agency or to develop different protocols for the various departments within the agency allowing for flexibility to address the unique functions of those departments. In order to accomplish this task each county was asked to assemble an internal team made up of representatives from each of the departments within the agency. These teams had the primary responsibility of drafting their agency's protocols.

The first task in this project was to gather information on how the needs of LEP persons were currently being met. Three meetings were scheduled in the community to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current systems and what changes should be made to improve services for those people. Invitations were sent to forty-four individuals and community organizations plus the county agency, DHS and DES staffs. Twenty-five of the community members that had been invited were able to participate in at least one of the meetings (Attachments B1 & B2).

The initial meeting commenced with a presentation by county agency representatives summarizing their current procedures. This was followed by a group discussion focusing on the following questions:

- ▶ What is working well under the current system?
- ▶ Where are the holes in the system?
- ▶ Where is the greatest need for flexibility?
- ▶ What critical elements need to be included in the protocols?

The feedback received from this meeting and the following meetings was compiled and refined into a list of what were considered the "critical elements" that need to be addressed in the final protocols. From this list evolved the attached "Outline for

Language Assistance Protocols" (Attachment C). At the same time DHS staff met with representatives of line staff from each county agency to obtain their perspective on how effectively the counties' current policies were working. This information has also been incorporated into the "Outline for Language Assistance Protocols".

The solicitation of input from such a diverse group of people has been an essential part of this project. It has also resulted in this being a lengthy process. The "Outline for Language Assistance Protocols", which provides the basic structure for the language protocols, were in place by October 1995. The counties were asked to draft their protocols based on the outline and to submit them to DHS. They were also asked to immediately implement the protocols they were drafting. DHS reviewed the drafts and provided comments to counties for revisions to be incorporated into their final protocols. The revised documents are Attachments D1 & D2.

DHS scheduled a followup meeting with the community on January 31, 1996. The purpose of this meeting will be to:

- ▶ review each county's protocols with the community participants,
- ▶ discuss an evaluation plan and the role the community will have in the process, and
- ▶ discuss a plan for regular and ongoing community input related to future revisions of the protocols.

In addition to the protocols the legislation also requires the CAF be translated into the five primary non-English languages used by applicants and recipients in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. Based on input received from the community and the county agencies there are six primary non-English languages used in these counties. These languages are Spanish, Hmong, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Russian. DHS made the decision to provide the CAF in all six languages. The Spanish translation has been completed and is available for use in all counties. Translation bids have been requested for the remaining languages. These translations will be distributed as they become available.

EVALUATION

The evaluation portion of this type of project is subjective and difficult to quantify. DHS wants the evaluation to be an ongoing process with a role for the community. This process will start with the January 1996 meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE IMPLEMENTATION

The above process has taken longer than anticipated, but has resulted in a more complete product. It has emphasized the importance of clearly defined protocols as

shown in the attachments. It has also emphasized the need for protocols that are flexible enough to meet changing needs.

Until more information is available following full implementation of the protocols, DHS is not in a position to make an informed recommendation about possible statewide implementation.

COST OF PREPARING THE REPORT

The cost of preparing this report is less than \$2,000.

15 Subd. 13. [PILOT PROJECT; PROTOCOLS FOR PERSONS LACKING
16 PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH.] The commissioner of human services
17 shall establish pilot projects in Hennepin and Ramsey counties
18 to provide language assistance to clients applying for or
19 receiving aid through the county social service agency. The
20 projects shall be designed to provide translation, in the five
21 foreign languages that are most common to applicants and
22 recipients in the pilot counties, to individuals lacking
23 proficiency in English, who are applying for or receiving
24 assistance under any program supervised by the commissioner of
25 human services. As part of the project, the commissioner shall
26 ensure that the Combined Application Form (CAF) is available in
27 these five languages. The projects shall also provide language
28 assistance to individuals applying for or receiving aid under
29 programs which the department of human services operates jointly
30 with other executive branch agencies, including all work and
31 training programs operated under chapters 256 and 256D. The
32 purpose of the pilot projects is to ensure that information
33 regarding a program is presented in translation to applicants
34 for and recipients of assistance who lack proficiency in
35 English. In preparing the protocols to be used in the pilot
36 programs, the commissioner shall seek input from the following
1 groups: advocacy organizations that represent non-English
2 speaking clients, county social service agencies, legal advocacy
3 groups, employment and training providers, and other affected
4 groups. The commissioner shall develop the protocols by October
5 1, 1995, and shall implement them as soon as feasible in the
6 pilot counties. The commissioner shall report to the
7 legislature by February 1, 1996, on the protocols developed, on
8 the status of their implementation in the pilot counties, and
9 shall include recommendations for statewide implementation.

**Protocol Resource List
Participants**

Attachment B1

DHS-

Ann Sessoms
Director, Assistance Payments Division
Kate Wulf
Supervisor, Assistance Payments Division
Tim Horn
Project Coordinator, Assistance Payments Division
Mary Jean Turinia Anderson
Director of the Office of Civil Rights
Joann daSilva
Civil Rights Coordinator
Mayjoua Ly
Refugee Assisatnce
Hugo Villarreal
Customer Services Division
Steve Erbes
Department of Jobs and Training

Hennepin-

Rex Holzemer
Principal Administrative Assistant
Jill Alverson
Children & Family Services
Donna Mae Johnson
Training & Employment Assistance
Paul Norman
Adult Services

Ramsey-

Marcia Moore-Foster
Diversity Specialist
Sue Hauwiller
Income Maintenance Division

Community-

Eng Amphavannasouk
Lao Assistance Center
Jim Anderson
Ramsey County Refugee & Immigrant Services

Kathy Botelle
Community member
Jim Carlson / Maggie Zalamea
Spanish Speaking Affairs Council
Jasmine Dinh
Asian Women United
Sopia Dong
Wilder Social Adjustment Program
Norma Garces
Chicanos Latinos Unidos en Servicios
Sam Hernandez
Community member
Thao Ho
Wilder Social Adjustment Program
Kathy Jenkins
Community Interpreter
Barbara Kuhn
Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis
Xue Lee
Lao Family Community
Phouratsamay Littana
Lao Assistance Center
Bob Lyman
Migrant Legal Services
Olivia Mares
Ramsey Action Programs
Henry Nelson
United Cambodian Association of Minnesota
Gloria Perez-Jordan
Casa de Esperanza
Phu Phan
Community University Health Care Center
Gloria Rosario
Neighborhood House
Maria Rubin
Minnesota Department of Health
Gayle Saeks
Jewish Family Services
Nattaya Souvannasouk
Center for Asian Pacific Islander
Sy Vang
Community University Health Care Center
Thomas Vang
Wilder Social Adjustment Program
Ger Yang
ACORN

Hoa Young
St. Paul City Hall
Pam Zeller
Battered Women's Advocacy Project

**Protocol Resource List
Invited**

Attachment B2

DHS-

Ann Sessoms
Director, Assistance Payments Division
Kate Wulf
Supervisor, Assistance Payments Division
Tim Horn
Project Coordinator, Assistance Payments Division
Mary Jean Turinia Anderson
Director of the Office of Civil Rights
Joann daSilva
Civil Rights Coordinator
Mayjoua Ly
Refugee Assisatnce
Hugo Villarreal
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Rex Holzemer
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Jill Alverson
Children & Family Services
Donna Mae Johnson
Training & Employment Assistance
Paul Norman
Adult Services
Barb Schroeder
Economic Assistance

Ramsey-

Marcia Moore-Foster
Diversity Specialist
Sue Hauwiller
Income Maintenance Division
Bette Hart
Child Support
David May
Social Services Division

Community-

Victoria Amaris
United Way, Community Affairs Department
Eng Amphavannasouk
Lao Assistance Center
Jim Anderson
Ramsey County Refugee & Immigrant Services
Asian American Student Cultural Center

Eustolio Benavides
Neighborhood House
Kathy Botelle
Community member
Jim Carlson / Maggie Zalamea
Spanish Speaking Affairs Council
Gilbert de la O
Neighborhood House
Jasmine Dinh
Asian Women United
Sopia Dong
Wilder Social Adjustment Program
Luz Maria Frias
Centro Legal, Inc.
Norma Garces
Chicanos Latinos Unidos en Servicios
Dr. Louis Gonzales
Centro Cultural Chicano
Sam Hernandez
Community member
Thao Ho
Wilder Social Adjustment Program
Jose Luis Ibanez
Hispanos en Minnesota
Kathy Jenkins
Community Interpreter
Barbara Kuhn
Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis
Esperanza Ladron
Centro Cultural Chicano
Xue Lee
Lao Family Community
Phouratsamay Littana
Lao Assistance Center

Bob Lyman
Migrant Legal Services
Olivia Mares
Ramsey Action Programs
Loan Meak
United Cambodian Association of Minnesota
Shirley Mertens
St. Paul Rehabilitation Center
Henry Nelson
United Cambodian Association of Minnesota
Laura Nystrom
West Side Health Care Center
Gloria Perez-Jordan
Casa de Esperanza
Phu Phan
Community University Health Care Center
Patricia Ray
Ombudsperson for Spanish Speaking Families
Kathy Regalado
State Office Building
Gloria Rosario
Neighborhood House
Maria Rubin
Minnesota Department of Health
Gayle Saeks
Jewish Family Services
Southeast Ministry

Nattaya Souvannasouk
Center for Asian Pacific Islander
John Vance Tranberg
Vietnamese Minnesotans Association
Lolita Ulloa
Domestic Abuse Service Center
Sy Vang
Community University Health Care Center
Thomas Vang
Wilder Social Adjustment Program
Lee Pao Xiong
Asian Pacific Council
Ger Yang
ACORN
Hoa Young
St. Paul City Hall
Pam Zeller
Battered Women's Advocacy Project

OUTLINE
FOR
LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL

1. **Develop a written policy and procedure for providing language assistance services.**
 - this may include legal basis and other reasons for providing language assistance services.
 - suggest interpreters and former/actual clients be involved in the process

2. **Identify the person who implements and oversees the language assistance protocols in the agency.**

3. **Identify the languages the protocols will cover and address how the agency will arrange to meet the needs of other non/limited English speaking persons beyond the five languages designated by the legislation.**

4. **State the means of providing interpretive services and any order of preference for utilizing interpreters:**
 - bilingual staff (identify different types, e.g., bilingual caseworkers vs. bilingual back-up staff)
 - contractors/consultants (identify different types, e.g., contractors who are housed in the agency vs. those who are not)
 - language lines (if more than one used, state order of preference/limit use to certain circumstances)
 - use of language lines should have a low priority
 - volunteers from community agencies or individual volunteers
 - family or friends of applicants/clients
 - while recognizing the "real world", work toward the "ideal world" of not relying on backup staff as interpreters
 - identify what is necessary to achieve the "ideal world"

5. **Maintain lists and/or directory of bilingual staff and other interpreters and update regularly.**
 - identify screening tools used when placing people on the list
 - list only people who meet the criteria developed in #6

6. **Develop rules that govern the use of all interpreters:**

- how, when and by whom interpreters will be provided (bilingual staff, contractual and/or other arrangements, etc.).
 - avoid use of staff that results in conflict of roles, e.g., using family advocates to interpret
 - identify situations that create conflict
 - consider how standards referenced in item #10 apply to specific situations, i.e.- What level of competency is required by the situation?
- make provisions for how various situations will be handled and identify staff who would assist in these situations:
 - how to provide assistance to clients who need help filling out forms?;
 - the method to use when contacted by a person with limited English proficiency, e.g., how to respond when the contact is by telephone, face-to-face, etc.? This could include use of speaker phones, language lines, etc.
 - the method to use to provide written communication with persons with limited English proficiency
- prioritize how staff should be used for providing language assistance
- scheduling procedures
- work coverage for bilingual staff
- back-up staff/bilingual staff who are not trained as interpreters:
 - should not be used as interpreters or should be at the bottom of the priority list and there should be clear rules regarding when they will be used
 - establish a reference document (do's & don'ts) for backup staff to refer to when called on to interpret
 - consider the impact on a staff member when used as an interpreter. (When a staff member is used as an interpreter the community will view him/her differently than they do other staff people who do not interpret. This will have an impact on how they are able to carry on their normal responsibilities.)
- additional pay for bilingual staff (if applicable)
- recognize that union contracts and other controlling agreements, etc. will place limits on provisions of the protocols

7. **Account for how physical accommodations will be provided:**

- signage
- physical privacy with regards to use of language lines, conference calls, etc.
- consider needs of deaf/hard of hearing and visually impaired clients who have limited English

8. **Develop procedures for documenting in the case file important information about interpretive services, such as:**
- an offer of an interpreter was made and whether the applicant/client accepted the offer
 - if the applicant/client does not accept the offer, documentation must include that an offer was made and rejected and the reasons why rejected
 - the name of the person who provided the interpretation, whether staff, contractor/consultant, volunteer, etc.
 - use an authorization form to document the name of the person who provides the interpretive services when applicants/clients use their own interpreters
 - suggest using a check list as a means of documentation instead of recording documentation in case notes
 - procedure should indicate whose responsibility it is to do the documentation
9. **Identify how initial contacts with applicants/clients will be handled, this includes issues such as:**
- how staff will initiate an offer for an interpreter
 - how staff will identify who needs an interpreter
 - do staff make the offer to all or some groups of people and what are the identifying factors?
 - providing clients a "bill of rights" related to language access in an appropriate method (writing, audio, etc.)]
10. **Reference the need/desire/preference for qualified/certified interpreters whether staff, contract/consultant and/or volunteer. For example:**
- define/describe "qualified interpreter" for purposes of the pilot project
 - include necessary knowledge, skills and abilities, e.g., staff should be bilingual and bicultural
 - incorporate how the definition/description of "qualified" will apply to this project
 - determine if there should there be different standards applied to contractors/full time interpreters vs backup staff used to interpret
 - refer to the guidelines/standards for American Sign Language as a possible resource in developing standards

Include statements such as:

- "Non-English speaking clients will not be turned away from the agency."
- "It is acceptable to use family and friends only when expressly requested by the applicant/client or in an emergency."
- "No minor children (under 18) will be used as interpreters, even if the client brings them for that purpose" (Develop a procedure for determining if a person is a minor.)

11. **Disseminate the protocols agency-wide**, provide some training to staff on the protocols so staff know what they are and why and how and when to use them. In addition, service providers should get training on how to select and use interpreters/translators.

12. **Disseminate the protocols to community organizations** and provide any necessary instruction on how and when protocols should be used.

13. **Indicate that protocols and/or information about the protocols will be posted** in areas where applicants, clients and the general public will see them.
 - have protocols available in languages other than English
 - have protocols available in audio/video format for people who don't read
 - develop a "hotline" in the different languages to answer questions about the "bill of rights" (see #9)

14. **Establish a complaint process for applicants/clients** who are not satisfied with any situation related to interpretive services. This process would:
 - include methods for addressing situations where an interpreter was requested, but not provided
 - include methods for changing/assigning different interpreters if applicants/clients are not satisfied
 - be available to a client in his/her native language (maybe it could be combined with the "hotline" suggested in #13)

15. **Translate essential materials** into written and audio forms and maintain up-to-date lists of these materials.

- define criteria used in determining what material is considered essential
- make sure any materials are double checked once translated (back translating is suggested)

16. **Develop mechanisms for ongoing:**

- **evaluation of protocols** including, but not limited to, cost effectiveness and overall effectiveness.
- **community review of protocols** including, but not limited to, community and client participation in outcome based surveys.

Hennepin

Mem

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To	Tim Horn	From	Rex Holzemer
Co.		Co.	Hennepin
Dept.		Phone #	348-3456
Fax #	215-1812	Fax #	348-8222

DATE: January 19, 1996

TO: Tim Horn

FROM: Rex Holzemer

SUBJECT: Language Assistance Protocol

Enclosed is the most recent revision of the Hennepin County Language Assistance Protocol. The revisions I made are based on those requested in your 12/13/95 memo to me. However, not all areas have been address, as the Language Assessment Protocol Committee will be meeting in late January and February to complete the following work:

1. Each committee member will be responsible for assuring his/her department has completed its procedures by the end of the first quarter of 1996.
2. Develop consistent standards to assure that all internal staff providing services are qualified to do so by the end of the second quarter of 1996.
3. Work with property management to assure consistent signage regarding availability of interpreters and TDD phones.
4. Develop a plan for training staff across departments by the end of the first quarter of 1996.
5. Establish mechanisms for evaluation of the protocol and effectiveness of the MCS telephone translation service.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me at 348-3456.

Thanks.

LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROTOCOL
Hennepin County
(Revised 1/96)

BACKGROUND

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners approved the recommendations of the Task Force on Interpretive Services in March 1992, and acknowledged the responsibility of the County for providing interpreter services to clients accessing or using County services. The Task Force, which consisted of Hennepin County and community agency staff, developed recommendations addressing the need to move away from ad hoc and inappropriate ways of providing interpreter services and toward creating a more stable and professional system.

As part of the effort to move toward a more professional system of services, various departments have worked on developing and improving language assistance services to non-English speaking clients over the last several years. In 1995, the state legislature required the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services to establish pilot projects in Hennepin and Ramsey County to develop and implement protocols for providing language assistance services to clients whose primary language is not English and who are applying for or receiving aid through the county. The following Language Assistance Protocol is the result of these two initiatives.

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Carol Ogren, Associate County Administrator, Community Initiatives, 348-4806, is responsible for monitoring overall implementation of the Hennepin County Language Assistance Protocol.

Department implementation responsibility is as follows:

Adult Services	Paul Norman	348-5733
Children & Family Services	Susan Covnick	348-6603
Community Corrections	Sig Fine	348-3681
Community Health	Sue Moore	348-3044
Economic Assistance	Barbara Schroeder	348-8339
Medical Center Systems	Barbara Klatt	347-2244
Human Resources & Employee Relations	Jerry Duffee	348-7635
Primary Care	Susan Dolphin	520-8981
Training Employment & Assistance	DonnaMae Johnson	348-9732

LANGUAGES

This protocol is intended to cover all languages used by clients whose primary language is not English, including American Sign Language. It should be acknowledged that developing effective language assistance services for such a wide range of languages will take some time, and that there will likely always be an uneven level of response due to the disparity in the number of clients utilizing any given language. Efforts will be made, however, to provide language assistance services to all clients as effectively as possible, and within a reasonable period of time. Services will be provided to all clients regardless of their primary language.

ORDER OF PREFERENCE

Efforts will be made in all departments to follow the order of preference list below as closely as possible in providing services to clients in their primary language. However, practical considerations, such as budgetary constraints, scheduling issues, ensuring timely service to clients, etc., may make it difficult for departments to consistently adhere to the preferred order.

1. **Bilingual Staff** (Staff hired to provide specific services to clients, are bilingual, and expected to provide services to clients in the primary language of the client, not English) As a long-term goal, bilingual staff will be the primary source of language assistance services in Hennepin County. The county will strive to provide staff who speak the languages and reflect the diverse cultures of the population served. Efforts will be made to recruit and hire persons who are bilingual or multi-lingual. This will be an ongoing goal and practice of Hennepin County. Whenever there are a sufficient number of applicants/clients who speak a certain language, ideally enough staff will be hired to provide services to those clients in their own language.
2. **Staff Interpreters** (Staff hired exclusively to provide interpreter services) - Staff interpreters will be utilized when bilingual staff are not available or when it may present a conflict of interest for bilingual staff to interpret for clients on their caseload; i.e., in court, consultations with attorneys, medical services/appointments, etc.
3. **Contracted Interpreters** (Independent interpreters contracted by Hennepin County to exclusively provide interpreter services on an as needed basis). Contracted interpreters will be utilized when bilingual staff and staff interpreters are not available.
4. **Bilingual Back-up Staff** (Hennepin County bilingual staff providing interpreter services to clients outside their individual caseloads or assigned areas). Bilingual back-up staff will be utilized when bilingual staff, staff interpreters, and contracted interpreters are not available.
5. **On-line Telephone Interpreter Services** (Interpreter services provided via telephone by outside agencies/individuals) - Departments should use contracted on-line services prior to non-contracted services. On-line services will be utilized when bilingual staff, staff interpreters, contracted interpreters and bilingual back-up staff are not available.
6. **Family/Friends/Volunteers** - Interpreter services will be provided by family or friends of applicants/clients or by volunteers, only as a last resort or when practical or emergency considerations necessitate. No minor children (under age 18) will be used as interpreters, even if applicants or clients bring children with them for that purpose. Interpreter Authorization and Release of Information Forms will be used when applicants/clients need to use their own interpreter. (Attachment A contains sample forms for department use.) Applicants/clients will sign the forms indicating they are authorizing this person to interpret for them. The interpreter will sign the form indicating he/she has interpreted each question to the applicant/client and reported the answer to the worker.

Hennepin County recognizes that it may take some time to become fully staffed internally to meet all language needs. County departments will work with the Human Resources and Employee Relations Department to utilize all appropriate methods to hire bilingual staff, such as intermittent employees, selective certification, sub-registers, etc. Speaker phones will be available at locations where language assistance services may be needed. Every county department will have adequate TDD phones and Minnesota Relay, as well as adequate specialists skilled in the use of TDD phones. Departments are encouraged to be creative in their attempts to provide language assistance services to clients with complex needs.

RULES GOVERNING INTERPRETERS

Departments shall develop procedures for language assistance services specific to the situations and needs of the department. (Department procedures shall be established by the end of the first quarter of 1996.) Scheduling of internal staff providing services will be determined by individual departments. Additional pay for bilingual staff, staff interpreters, and bilingual back-up staff shall be determined via the established personnel process.

In lieu of the development of State standards, departments shall work together to establish uniform and consistent standards to determine that all internal staff providing language assistance services are qualified to do so. These standards will attempt to ensure culturally competent interpreter services. (Uniform and consistent standards shall be established by the end of the second quarter of 1996.)

An established "Code of Ethics" (Attachment B) and "Guidelines" (Attachment C) shall be followed by all staff and contracted interpreters providing language assistance services for Hennepin County applicants/clients. Services shall be provided in private areas, unless practical considerations necessitate otherwise.

STAFF DIRECTORY

Departments shall maintain a listing of Bilingual Staff, Staff Interpreters, Contracted Interpreters, and Bilingual Back-up Staff. Department listings shall be updated at least annually and made available to all department staff.

SIGNAGE

Departments shall have consistent signage in intake and reception areas indicating that interpreters and TDD phones are available. Receptionists and intake staff shall have cards/information sheets available in a variety of commonly used languages from which clients can select the language needed for services. (Attachment D is a sample card/information sheet for department use.)

DOCUMENTATION

Departments shall develop procedures to ensure that the provision of language assistance services is documented in client case files. (Department procedures shall be established by the end of the first quarter of 1996.) Specific documentation is not required of Bilingual Staff when providing services to clients on their caseload in the primary language of the client. Documentation should include the following:

1. Agency name/department/program
2. Interpreter name
3. Appointment date, time, and location
4. Name and gender of client, and whether the client is an adult or minor.
5. General description of the subject matter discussed.
6. Authorization and Release of Information Form (Attachment A) documenting the name of the person who provided the interpreter services when applicants/clients use family/friends/volunteers.

TRAINING

The Hennepin County Language Assistance Protocol and specific department procedures will be disseminated to all staff of county departments providing language assistance services. Staff shall receive implementation training in the protocols/procedures and in how and when to use them. Staff shall also receive training on an ongoing basis to help them better understand clients and their cultures. Protocols/procedures shall be made available to community organizations or applicants/clients, as requested. (Training plans will be established by the end of the first quarter of 1996.)

FORMS TRANSLATION

Departments will translate forms as is deemed practical or useful by the department. Translation of forms will be conducted by competent translators. The Combined Application Form for financial assistance, as translated by the Department of Human Services, shall be used.

COMPLAINT PROCESS

Established department complaint/dispute resolution processes shall be used to resolve applicant/client complaints related to language assistance services. If complaints cannot be resolved at the department level, the Human Resources and Employee Relations Department, Diversity Services Division shall provide consultation and dispute resolution assistance.

ATTACHMENT A

INTERPRETER AUTHORIZATION FORM
HENNEPIN COUNTY

SAMPLE

Interpreter Authorization

I, _____
(applicant/client name)

authorize _____
(interpreter name)

to interpret these proceedings to me in _____
(language being interpreted)

Date: _____ Signature _____
(applicant/client)

Interpreter Oath

I, _____
(interpreter name) _____
(address) _____
(phone)

affirm that, to the best of my ability, I will make a true interpretation of these proceedings to _____
(applicant/client name) _____
(relationship)

Furthermore, I agree to maintain confidential all matters that are discussed or communicated to me in these proceedings. I also agree to render services neutrally to the best of my ability. If I am unable to render an accurate or unbiased interpretation, I will request to be removed as an interpreter.

Date: _____ Signature _____
(interpreter)

Witnessed by: _____
(worker name)

**RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM
(Sample)**

Client Name _____

Birthdate _____

Case Number _____

SSN _____

I give permission to _____
_____ about my case.

This information will be used to decide if I am eligible for assistance or to facilitate the provision of ongoing services.

I know that I may cancel this permission at any time. This form expires in one year.

I know that I do not have to give this information. If I do not, I might not be able to get the help I asked for.

NOTICE TO THIRD PARTIES: Clients can see certain information in their files. If the client asks, this Department may have to show the client the information requested by this form.

Signature of Client/Authorized Representative

Date

Signature of Witness if Client is unable to sign

Date

Signature of Spouse if needed

Date

ATTACHMENT B**CODE OF ETHICS**

As interpreters in any given setting, you are bound by a Code of Ethics which dictates ethical behavior and sets out the appropriate role of the interpreter.

INTERPRETERS SHALL KEEP ALL ASSIGNMENT-RELATED INFORMATION STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Guidelines:

Interpreters shall not reveal information about an assignment, including the fact that the service is being performed. Even seemingly unimportant information could be damaging in the wrong hands. Therefore, to avoid this possibility, interpreters must not say anything about any assignment. In cases where meetings or information become a matter of public record, the interpreter shall use discretion in discussing such meetings or information.

If a problem arises between an interpreter and other person(s) involved in an assignment, the interpreter should first discuss it with the person(s) involved. If no solution can be reached, then all parties should agree on a third person who could advise them.

When training new interpreters by the method of sharing actual experiences, the trainers shall not reveal any of the following information:

- The name, sex, age, etc., of the client.
- The day of the week, time of the day and time of the year the situation took place.
- The location, including city, state or agency of all situations and parties involved.

It only takes a minimum amount of information to identify the parties involved.

INTERPRETERS SHALL INTERPRET ALL MESSAGES FAITHFULLY, ALWAYS CONVEYING THE CONTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE SPEAKER, USING EXPRESSIONS MOST READILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE PERSON(S) WHOM THEY SERVE.

Guidelines:

Interpreters are not editors and must transmit everything that is said in exactly the same manner it was intended. This is especially difficult when the interpreter disagrees with what is being said or feels uncomfortable when profanity is being used. Interpreters must remember that they are not at all responsible for what is said, only for conveying it accurately. If the interpreter's own feelings interfere with rendering the message accurately, he/she should withdraw from the session.

While working from spoken English to a foreign language, the interpreter should communicate in the manner most easily understood or preferred by the non-English speaking person(s); be it verbally, or by gesturing, drawing, writing, etc. It is important for the interpreter and the non-English speaking person(s) to spend some time adjusting to each other's way of communicating prior to the actual assignment.

INTERPRETERS SHALL NOT COUNSEL, ADVISE OR INTERJECT PERSONAL OPINIONS.

Guidelines:

An interpreter may not omit from or add to anything that is said for interpreting in a session, even when they are asked to do so by any of the parties involved.

An interpreter is only present in a given situation because two or more individuals have a problem communicating due to a difference in language, and thus the interpreter's only function is to facilitate communication. The interpreter shall not become personally involved in the situation because in so doing he/she accepts some responsibility for the outcome, which is not rightly theirs.

INTERPRETERS SHALL ACCEPT ASSIGNMENTS USING DISCRETION WITH REGARD TO SKILLS, SETTINGS AND THE CLIENTS INVOLVED.

Guidelines:

Interpreters shall only accept assignments for which they are qualified. However, when an interpreter shortage exists and the only ones available do not possess the necessary skills for a particular assignment, the situation should be explained to the client. If the client agrees that services are needed regardless of the skill levels, then the available interpreter will have to use his/her best judgment towards accepting or rejecting the assignment.

Certain situations may prove uncomfortable for some interpreters. Religious, political, racial, sexual differences, etc., can adversely affect the session. Therefore, an interpreter shall not accept any assignments which he/she knows will affect them personally.

Interpreters should refrain from providing services in situations where family members, close personal or professional relationships may affect their impartiality. Under these circumstances, it is difficult for the interpreter to mask their inner feelings. This is especially relevant in legal settings where the ability to provide oneself unbiased when challenged is lessened. In emergency situations, it is realized that the interpreter may have to provide services for family members, friends or close business associates. However, all parties involved should be informed that the interpreter may become personally involved in the proceedings.

INTERPRETERS SHALL FUNCTION IN A MANNER APPROPRIATE TO THE SITUATION.

Guidelines:

Interpreters should conduct themselves in a manner that brings respect to themselves, the clients and the national organization. The term "appropriate manner" refers to:

- a. Dressing in a manner that is appropriate for and not distracting from the proceedings.
- b. Conducting oneself in all phases of an assignment in a manner befitting a professional

INTERPRETERS SHALL STRIVE TO ACQUIRE FURTHER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS, PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS, IN INTERACTION WITH PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES AND THROUGH CURRENT LITERATURE IN THEIR FIELDS.

ATTACHMENT C**THE PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF
THE COMMUNITY INTERPRETER**

The role of the foreign language interpreter has in recent years become increasingly vital to the smooth transition of the immigrants into their new lives in the United States. The interpreter provides the communication link between government agencies and private organizations dedicated to service the non-English speaking community in our state. Working as a community interpreter therefore requires a high degree of professional responsibility because the interpreter must accurately convey to both English and non-English speaking clients, not only the content of the speaker's words, but also their feelings, thoughts and cultural differences.

In many instances the government agency or private organization may choose to or is required to provide an interpreter for its non-English speaking clients. The interpreter is in turn accountable to aid the non-English speaking person and the English speaking client in fulfilling the affairs of the non-English speaker in a competent, unbiased and expeditious manner.

THE COMMUNITY INTERPRETER

Community interpreting is performed within extremely varied environments. The service can take place in courtrooms, medical facilities, day care centers, social services centers and may also include the non-English speaking client's residence, which involves interacting with people of varying backgrounds and interests. Within the required environment the interpreter has to work for indefinite periods of time without direct supervision or electronic aids, while having to cope with the complexities of professional jargons and sets of specific, though unfamiliar, facts, names and procedures. The interpreter's ability to adjust to these extremely varied and sometimes difficult settings plays an important role in their services as does their technical and linguistic proficiency. An important part of the interpreter's adaptability is to be able to adjust his/her interpreting techniques in accordance to the demands of the situation.

TECHNIQUES OF THE COMMUNITY INTERPRETER

CONSECUTIVE INTERPRETATION

Consecutive interpretation is defined as the oral translation of a statement once the speaker has finished speaking. The statement may be a short phrase or a complex one and it may also last several minutes. In translating the statement, the interpreter may rely on memory, written notes, or a combination of both. The notes may be written in long-hand, shorthand, speed writing or in graphic symbols.

In community interpreting, the consecutive method is most commonly used in situations where there is an exchange of questions and answers between the client and the foreign language speaker. In the majority of cases no notes are required and the interpreter merely repeats the questions or answers, as literally as possible in English, or in the foreign language, as soon as the statement is finished. The interpreter takes notes while the speaker is talking or when a question is being asked. The interpretation is then read aloud. However, when a question or answer goes beyond three or four sentences, it may be necessary to rely on the written notices, or interrupt the speaker in order to maintain accuracy and allow for interpretation. If possible, before starting an interpreting session, an explanation on how the interpreter may interrupt, in the form of signals, should be given to all the parties involved. Discreet signals may be used to indicate to the speaker (e.g., raised fingers) the need for an interruption and they should be timed in order to avoid confusion and disruptions in the speaker's questions or responses.

SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION

In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter begins the oral translation of a statement before it is completed. The time lag between the speaker's statement and the interpretation may be several seconds long. Rapid or close proximity interpretations are not indicative of a "good" interpretation. In fact, the linguistic structure of some foreign languages may not allow for close proximity interpretations. This mode of interpretation may be used in some community sessions, and is the recommended technique for interpretations where English conversation is taking place between participants other than the non-English speaker, and the interpreter needs to convey the conversation to the non-English speaker.

Mastery of the techniques of consecutive and simultaneous interpretation may be acquired through specialized training and/or through on-hand experience.

PARAPHRASING

In certain situations, due to conflicts, a faithful interpretation in either the consecutive or simultaneous mode may prove to be impossible. Conflicts may arise due to the vast volume of the material involved; the required speed of the delivery is too fast (time may be of essence); or the wording of a phrase may require the aid of a dictionary or a lengthy explanation (proverbs are the most common examples). In cases where the allocated time for the session is limited the interpreter can give the gist of the spoken or written material.

In such situations the interpreter can paraphrase or give a summary or running account of what is being said in order to avoid lengthy explanations. It should be stressed, however, that this form of interpretation is less desirable than word-for-word interpretation and should be used only in conflict situations or when requested and with the specific authorization of the client.

PHYSICAL AND VERBAL PRESENTATION

The community interpreter must act as his/her own sound engineer by directing and altering his/her voice level, in relation to the speaker(s) and listener(s) in the room. In general, the voice should always be directed towards the ears of the listener(s). Since in the case of community interpretations all statements are recorded or reviewed by individuals essential to the situation, we urge you as a professional to carry out this responsibility in an audible and precise manner.

SUMMARY OF TECHNIQUES

The community interpreter must be accurate, confidential, neutral and professional in all assignments, conveying the ideas of both English and non-English speaking clients. The interpreter's responsibility should not only include a clear content of the speaker's words, but must also include their feelings, thoughts and cultural differences.

CONSECUTIVE interpretation may be used in any situation where there are exchanges of questions and answers between the provider and the non-English speaking person.

SIMULTANEOUS interpretation may be used in situations in which conversations do not actively involve the non-English speaking person, where the information is conveyed to him or her for their benefit.

PARAPHRASING interpretation may be used when the provider is informed that a word-for-word interpretation is impossible due to cultural and social differences. This method should also be used when the sheer volume of material is too vast or in situations where the interpreter, due to constraints in the provider's time and responsibilities, is forced to condense what is being said. Interpreters should note that this method, however, is less desirable than consecutive or simultaneous interpretation and should be used only if authorization is given by the provider.

VOICE MODULATION must be under constant control. The direction of the voice as well as the physical positioning of the interpreter, in relation to the position of the speakers and listeners, is of vital importance.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING

The interpreter should only utilize the consecutive and simultaneous methods when interpreting. Paraphrasing or the summarizing of information should never be done without the authorization of the provider.

The interpreter should refrain from attempting to guess at interpreting a word, a statement or any cultural difference while a session is in progress. If the interpreter is forced to do so, he/she must first consult with and get authorization from the provider.

The interpreter should never lessen the vulgarisms of a term of statement made in either languages. All vulgarisms, abusive and/or obscene words and slang terms should be interpreted as given in the spoken language.

The interpreter should never introduce a statement or question with the first words of "He or She says that." Statements should be introduced in the first person.

The interpreter should stand slightly aside and between the non-English speaking person and the provider so as not to obstruct the view of all of the participants.

The interpreter should bring all matters of miscommunication between him/her and the non-English speaking person, to the attention of the provider, in order to resolve all conflicts immediately.

The interpreter should not leave the session until he or she is officially excused.

The interpreter should inform the provider if he/she believes that the quality of their interpretation is being hampered due to fatigue or any other physical or emotional discomfort.

The interpreter should not be interpreting proper names. They should be left in their original language.

The interpreter should avoid unnecessary discussions with the provider(s) involved in the interpreting session or any other interested parties inside or outside the session. These actions can be perceived to appear prejudicial in the minds of people from diverse cultures.

The interpreter should always interpret the question as asked and not volunteer what the interpreter thought the English or non-English speaking person meant. Correcting facts presented in questions or testimonies is considered an advocacy action which is not part of your responsibilities as a professional community interpreter.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS

>> Use qualified interpreters to interpret.

The most basic requirement is that you have access to an experienced and qualified interpreter who can truly aid communication rather than getting in the way or distorting the messages that you and the client want to communicate. Being bilingual in English and the client's language is only a prerequisite for being able to interpret (just as speaking English is only a prerequisite for teaching it; being a native speaker doesn't make you a language teacher). A qualified, professional interpreter has the special skills needed to fully understand anything another person wants to say and to make that person's message clear to another person in a different language. In addition, like any professional, a qualified interpreter knows his/her role, his/her limitations, and his/her responsibilities as an interpreter for others.

>> Don't depend on children or other relatives and friends to interpret.

Do NOT ask children or relatives or friends of the person you are going to meet with to interpret. Do not call upon staff members or others unskilled in interpreting unless more qualified professionals are not available. If bilingual staff with other responsibilities do the interpreting, they must not try to do two things at once, e.g., interpreting and counseling.

>> Have a brief pre-interview meeting with the interpreter.

Plan to meet with the interpreter for a couple of minutes before the interview to explain the situation and any background needed for understanding what you plan to talk about. Agree with the interpreter in advance on such things as how the interview will start and where the interpreter should sit.

>> Establish a good working relationship with the interpreter.

If possible try to work with the same interpreter over time so that you can establish a comfortable working relationship. Although your roles are quite different, you need to be able to work together as a team.

>> Plan to allow enough time for the interpreted session.

Schedule enough time for the interview, remembering that an interpreted conversation requires every statement or question to be uttered twice.

>> Address yourself to the interviewee, not the interpreter.

Speak directly to the client, not to the interpreter, addressing the client rather than the interpreter as "you." Your eye contact should be with the client, not with the interpreter--because it is the client you are talking to, not the interpreter.

>> Don't say anything that you don't want the other party to hear.

Expect everything you say to be translated as well as everything the client says. But remember that what can be said in a few words in one language may require a lengthy paraphrase in another.

>> Use words, not just gestures, to convey your meaning.

Use words as much as possible to express your meaning, not gestures. The words are easier for the interpreter to deal with, and anyway the client won't be hearing your words at the same time as your gestures.

>> Speak in a normal voice, clearly, and not too fast.

Speak in your normal voice, not louder or slower (unless the interpreter asks you to slow down). Sometimes it is easier for the interpreter to interpret speech produced at normal speed, with normal rhythms, than artificially slow speech.

>> Avoid jargon and technical terms.

Avoid idioms, technical words, or cultural references that the interpreter either might not understand or might have difficulty translating. (Some concepts may be easy for the interpreter to understand but extremely difficult to translate.)

>> Keep your utterances short, pausing to permit the interpretation.

For consecutive interpreting, you should speak for a short time--one longer sentence or three or four short ones, and then stop in a natural place to let the interpreter pass your message along. Be aware of the length or complexity of your speech so as not to unduly tax the interpreter's memory. Short simple sentences are obviously easier. Do not pause for interpretation in the middle of a sentence, since the interpreter may need to hear the whole sentence before he/she can even start to interpret it.

>> Ask only one question at a time.

If you chain questions together, you may not be able to match questions with answers.

>> Expect the interpreter to interrupt when necessary for clarification.

Be prepared to have the interpreter interrupt when necessary to ask you to slow down, to repeat something he/she didn't quite get, to explain a word or concept he/she might not be familiar with, or to add an explanation for something the client may not be able to understand without some background information.

>> Expect the interpreter to take notes if things get complicated.

Don't be surprised if the interpreter takes notes to facilitate recall. This is an aid to memory, not an interruption.

>> Be prepared to repeat yourself in different words if your message is not understood.

If mistranslation is suspected (for example, if the response doesn't seem to fit with what you said) go back and repeat what you said in different words.

>> Have a brief post-interview meeting with the interpreter.

Meet with the interpreter again after the interview to assess how things went, to see if the interpreter is satisfied or has questions or comments about the process of communication.

If your interpreter has a limited command of English or limited interpreting skills, you may need to do some of the following:

>> Make sure the interpreter understands his/her role before you begin.

Urge him/her to speak directly to you and the other party, using the first person pronoun to refer to the speaker. Instruct him/her not to add or delete anything, and especially not to add his/her own comments about what is said, or to offer advice, suggest questions or answers to your questions to the client, etc.

>> Use the simplest vocabulary that will express your meaning.

>> Speak in short and simple sentences.

>> Check to see if the message is understood.

For important messages, such as instructions, directions, etc., ask the interpreter to repeat the message back to you in English, so you can make sure he/she has got it, and encourage him/her to ask for clarification of anything he/she doesn't fully understand, before he/she attempts to interpret your message to the client. You can also ask the client to confirm his/her understanding of what you said if this will not unduly embarrass them.

When interpreting is used you will be communicating THROUGH the interpreter but TO the client. Dealing with cultural differences and the personality of the client is primarily your job, not the interpreter's. However, ensuring that there is an understanding of cultural differences is the responsibility of all parties involved. Here are some things to keep in mind with regard to the linguistic and cultural differences between you and the client.

EXAMPLE:

There may be less eye contact on the part of the client than you would normally expect, and the eye contact may be with the interpreter rather than with you.

EXAMPLE:

A smile or nod on the part of the client may not mean what it would mean if done by you or someone from your culture.

Remember that if the client comes from a different culture, then so do you.

Remember that if the client has trouble grasping your way of thinking and the concepts and metaphors involved, you are probably having the same trouble dealing with the client's way of thinking and the abstractions and metaphors of another culture.

If the client has language problems when talking to you, then you have language problems, too. Probably the client knows more of your language than you do of his/hers.

Remember that the interpreter is not there (just) to interpret for the client or to interpret the client's language. The interpreter is there to interpret for two clients who don't know each other's languages, you and the client. The interpreter is there to facilitate communication between the two of you. The interpreter is there to render each speaker's utterances in the other person's language, in such a way that the meaning of each utterance can be understood.

RAMSEY COUNTY COMMUNITY HUMAN SERVICES LANGUAGE PROTOCOL

POLICY:

The mission of the Ramsey County Community Human Services Department (RCCHSD) is to enhance the quality of life for the people of Ramsey County by providing resources to meet the basic human needs, assuring protection for the vulnerable, and assisting in achieving self-sufficiency, all in the most cost-effective manner.

Ramsey County Community Human Services will provide for communication with limited English-proficient persons, including current and prospective clients, family, interested persons, etc. to ensure them meaningful access to program services. The procedure outlined below will ensure that information is communicated to limited-English proficient persons in a language which they understand.

Interpreters will be provided, within a reasonable period of time, when requested by the person seeking services in our county or if deemed necessary by department staff conducting business with a person accessing our services. Persons lacking proficiency in English will not be turned away from the department.

PROCEDURE:

I. INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

The primary resource for interpretive services will be the department's contracted interpreters. These contracts currently are with International Institute. Based on client need, Ramsey County will provide interpreters in Hmong, Thai, Lao, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Russian. As language needs change within our county these needs will be addressed.

Translators are available in our office and are scheduled for in office contacts. Translators are available by phone (bilingual message) and have voice mail. Calls can be made from within or outside our department.

A secondary resource for interpretive services will be the department's bilingual staff. The department continues to make an effort to hire and recruit staff who reflect the diverse population within Ramsey County.

Family, friends and or volunteers interpretive services will be used only as a last resort. Authorization will be needed when clients use their own interpreters. Minor children will not be used as interpreters except in emergent situations.

II. HIRING PROCESS FOR INTERPRETERS

Contracted interpreters are involved in a two part hiring process that includes the International Institute and the department. The International Institute seeks recommendations

from community agencies when considering candidates as well as an interview process. The Institute then sends the best candidates based on their criteria to the department for another interview. The department then makes the selection of an interpreter from the candidates.

III. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF NON-DEPARTMENT INTERPRETERS

RCCHSD prefers to use department interpreters for scheduled appointments. Clients will be offered the services of an interpreter. If the offer is refused, documentation will be made stating the reason for refusal in the case record.

Clients/applicants who choose to do so may bring their own interpreter. An authorization form, documenting the name of the interpreter used, appointment date, time and location will be completed and kept in the case record.

The department is currently considering the use of written material to inform clients with language needs about department interpreter services. The material would be translated into Spanish, Hmong, Lao, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Russian.

IV. BILINGUAL STAFF

RCCHSD continues to hire bilingual staff to reduce the need for separate interpretive services. The department bilingual staff will be used to interpret if contracted interpreters are unavailable or not available within a designated amount of time.

V. STAFF AND INTERPRETER TRAINING

Department interpreters and staff using interpreters will have access to training about the appropriate use of interpretive services. The training will include instruction about case notes reflecting the use of interpreter services. Use of an interpreter will be indicated in the case record (Maxis for Public Assistance cases).

Language Protocol training will be provided to all new staff joining RCCHSD. All existing staff will receive a copy of the RCCHSD Language Assistance Protocol. The Language Protocol will be posted in public information areas at the department.

VI. PHYSICAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Client information signage at the Community Human Service Building will be in English, Spanish, Hmong, Lao, Vietnamese, Cambodian. Other languages can and will be added as need is indicated. Signage written in Braille is also located in the building.

TDD phones are available for hearing impaired clients. The numbers are 266-3750 (Income Maintenance) or 266-4002 (Social Services). The department also uses Minnesota Relay for communicating with deaf/hard of hearing clients.

Client interviews take place in private interviewing rooms. The building is also accessible for physically challenged clients.

VII. BILINGUAL STAFF AND INTERPRETERS DIRECTORY

Lists of contracted interpreters and bilingual staff will be kept, updated and distributed regularly by Personnel. Contracted interpreters daily schedule is available on our department computer system (PRIME).

VIII. TRANSLATED WRITTEN MATERIALS

The department will make available all forms translated by DHS to our clients lacking proficiency in English. The department additionally makes emergency resource information available to clients in five languages. Please see attached examples.

IX. PERSONS RESPONSIBLE

RCCHSD Division Directors will be responsible for the implementation of the Language Protocol in the department. The person designated to coordinate compliance and handle client complaints will be: Marcia Moore-Foster, Diversity Specialist
RCGC-East
160 E. Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
Room 9800
(612) 266-4497

1/5/96