

ITASCA COUNTY ASSISTIVE DEVICES AND/OR ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

This Assistive Devices and/or Accommodations Policy describes Itasca County's commitment to providing communication and services and is written in two parts. The first, Section A, pertains to people with disabilities. The second, Section B, pertains to all people.

SECTION A

A.1 Itasca County is required to ensure effective communication and provision of services to people with disabilities, pursuant to 31 CFR Part 51 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

A.2 In order to provide equal access to benefits and services, Itasca County must ensure that auxiliary aids such as assistive devices and accommodations are provided for people with disabilities. Assistive devices are literally that—they are devices that assist the individual with a disability, i.e. telecommunication device for persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing, also known as a TDD which is a small, portable unit weighing between one and eight pounds, with an LED read-out and printed copy of the communication that creates instantaneous telephone communication between hearing-impaired people, their family, friends, and professional associates; operation of a TDD requires the same type of skills as a typewriter and can be used with any stationary wall or desk phone.

A.3 Accommodations include other alternatives that are not devices, but also assist the individual with a disability, i.e. writing the information on paper for a hearing-impaired individual. The purpose of assistive devices and accommodations is to equalize the opportunity for individual's with disabilities to benefit from all county services and programs offered.

I. DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

I.A A Person Who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing Should Determine His/Her Accommodation

I.A.1 Persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing may have varying needs for an auxiliary aid, depending on the individual's background, degree of hearing impairment, prior communication training, and the setting. Some people who are Deaf or hard of hearing may prefer to rely on lip-reading or written notes in an informal one-to-one setting but need a qualified interpreter, cued speech transliteration (lip-reading support system which uses 8 different hand shapes and vowel placement near the mouth), captioning services (real time captioning where communication is typed and projected on a laptop or screen) in a group or formal

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setting. Other accommodations that may be requested include assistive devices such a pocket talker (mini amplification system that looks like a walkman player) or FM system (portable microphone with person in audience wearing the receiver).

I.A.2 In determining which auxiliary aid will provide effective communication, judgment of the person who is Deaf or hard of hearing should govern to the greatest extent possible. The person who is Deaf or hard of hearing knows best their most effective communication method and auxiliary aid needs.

I.B. Implementation of a Policy to Provide Interpreter Services

I.B.1 In order to communicate effectively, Itasca County employees should immediately inform clients, applicants, etc. who are Deaf or hard of hearing that they may request an interpreter, cued speech transliteration or captioning services at agency expense. Notice of the availability of these interpreter services should also be conspicuously posted. In the case of an appointment with an individual who is known to be Deaf or hard of hearing and in need of an interpreter service, the employee should make advance arrangements for the interpreter service to be present during the interview. If the employee does not know in advance of the need for an interpreter service, the appointment should be rescheduled with interpreter services available. Interpreter services shall be provided at any stage of an agency proceeding. If the person with hearing impairment feels that interpreter service is needed for effective communication to explain written forms or documents to the hearing-impaired person, interpreter services shall be made available for such situations. Interpreter services may also be needed to explain written forms or documents to the hearing-impaired person and shall be made available for such situations. Interpreter services should also be provided at public meetings, classes, and other county-sponsored events provided that Itasca County is notified within **ten working days** of the auxiliary need. Advertisements or notices of county-sponsored events should include notification of the availability of auxiliary aids.

I.C. Sign Language Interpreters must be Qualified

I.C.1 A qualified sign language interpreter must be able to send and receive signs accurately and simultaneously to the communication being interpreted to provide effective communication to the individual with hearing impairment. Contact Interpreter Referral at 1.877.456.3839 or www.interpreterreferral.org for sign language interpreters, cued speech transliteration or captioning services.

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I.C.2 For EMERGENCY interpreter service needs after hours (8 AM until 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday), call the:

Voice/TDD: 911, Itasca County Sheriff's Department and ask for the names and numbers of interpreters off of the Emergency List of Interpreters

I.C.3 When requesting interpreter services from Interpreter Referral, please include the following information:

1. Date, time, and length of assignments.
2. Name, address, and phone number of a contact person for confirmation.
3. Information on who is to receive the bill and what the payment procedures are.
4. Type of meeting, appointment, and information to be interpreted (i.e. staff meeting, doctor appointment, parent-teacher conference, etc.).
5. Location of the interpreter job.
6. Names of Deaf/deafblind/hard of hearing participants.
7. Any special information that interpreter should be aware of.

Before hiring an interpreter, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services from the Department of Human Services advises asking:

1. Is the interpreter certified?
2. Does the interpreter follow the code of ethics?
3. What are the interpreter's rates?
4. Is there a referral agency involved and if so, what referral fee does the agency charge?

I.C.4 Interpreters work on a free-lance basis at a rate of approximately \$25 to \$35/hour or portal-to-portal rate with a two hour minimum call-out.

I.D. Agencies Must be Accessible by TDD

I.D.1 Equal opportunity to benefit from and participate in Itasca County government services and programs cannot be guaranteed without providing Deaf or hard-of-hearing people telecommunication access. The TDD units in the Administrative Services Department **(327-2806)** Sheriff's Department **(327-2807)** and Human Services Department **(327-5549)** provide people with speech impairments and Deaf or hard-of-hearing people the same opportunity to communicate. Persons with any of these impairments may call **327-2806**, **327-2807** or **327-5549** for information regarding County business. The caller is to leave his/her name, phone number, and the nature of their question(s) or request(s) with

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the operator at that number. The operator will relay the information to the appropriate party. The appropriate party will get in touch with the individual via the office TTD or the Minnesota Relay System.

I.D.2 In the event the caller cannot get through the Itasca County TDD lines or an Itasca County office does not have a TDD unit but must make communication with someone who has a TDD unit, the Minnesota Relay System may be used. The Relay System can take calls from TDD units and relay messages to regular phones or take calls from regular phones and relay messages to TDD units. As long as either the sender OR the receiver has a TDD unit, the Minnesota Relay System can act as a third party to relay communications. The Minnesota Relay System number is 711 OR 1-800-627-3529 (TDD/Voice/ASCII accessible-please wait a couple of seconds when calling the number to switch from TDD to voice).

II. VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

II.A. A Person Who is Visually Impaired Should Determine His/Her Auxiliary Aides

II.A.1 Persons who are visually-impaired may have varying auxiliary aid need(s) depending on the individual's background, degree of visual impairment, prior communication training, and the setting. Some visually-impaired people may prefer enlarged print, braille materials, taped materials, or ask that information be read to them.

II.A.2 In determining which auxiliary aid will provide effective communication, judgment of the person who is visually impaired should govern to the greatest extent possible. S/he knows best their most effective communication method and auxiliary aid needs.

II.B. Implementation of a Policy to Provide Assistive Devices

II.B.1 Itasca County employees should immediately inform clients, applicants, etc. with visual impairments that in order to communicate, they may request materials be: read to them, taped materials, in enlarged print, or in braille and at agency expense.

II.B.2 Braille or taped materials may be received from the State Services for the Blind by calling 1-800-652-9000. The charge for taped materials is approximately \$54.65/cassette. An estimate on the cost of braille material is \$1.75/braille page. One 8.5 by 11 inch paper filled with text approximately equals 2.5 to 3 pages of braille pages. The amount of time needed by the State Services to produce taped or braille materials depends on the

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volume of materials and their work schedule. You are best advised to contact them as soon as you know of needing their services. Please call the State Services for the Blind or check their website www.mnssb.org for current fee schedules.

The State Services does not produce enlarged print materials. You can go to your local printer or perhaps do it in-house. 14 point sans serif or simple serif is considered enlarged print but 18 point is recommended. (If sans serif or simple serif are unavailable, use arial or arial black.)

II.C. Notification of Meetings

II.C.1 For those individuals with visual impairments, notification of meetings should be sent to area radio stations and newspapers.

The Minnesota Radio Talking Book is a reading service of the Communication Center and State Services for the Blind. Minnesota Radio Talking Book is a closed-circuit reading network broadcasting 24 hours daily to more than 7500 disabled persons (with a potential of 35,000) in Minnesota and South Dakota. The purpose of the Minnesota Radio Talking Book is to provide current newspapers, magazines and the latest best selling books at the same time that they are available to the print reading public. Minnesota Radio Talking Book is not available to the general public nor is the signal available on conventional radios. For more information about Minnesota Radio Talking Book, call 1.800.652.9000 or access their website at www.mnssb.org

III. SPEECH IMPAIRMENT

III.A.1 Speech-to-Speech (STS) telephone revoice service allows people with mild to moderate speech disabilities to communicate over the telephone with people who would otherwise have difficulty understanding them. STS uses specially trained Communication Assistants, similar to the Minnesota Relay used by those with hearing loss.

Everything a speech-disabled person says is revoiced by an STS Communications Assistant. A person with a speech disability may also use a voice synthesizer, voice enhancer or soundboard. The speech-disabled person simply listens to the voice of the other party.

III.A.2 Make sure to have the speech-disabled person's phone number ready, then dial 1.877.627.3848 and ask for STS. When STS answers, the STS Communications Assistant will give you their identification number. Note the number for quality control purposes. Tell the Communications Assistant the area code and

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phone number you wish to call. When the person you are calling answers, the Communications Assistant will revoice the conversation of the speech-disabled person.

IV. MOBILITY AND/OR OTHER IMPAIRMENTS

IV.A.1. Individuals with other mobility or other impairments shall be afforded the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations dependent on the nature of their disability. Until such time all services are offered in an accessible location, it will be the policy that services be reasonably accommodated, i.e. relocated, rescheduled, etc., to meet the person's needs. For instance, if an individual with a disability cannot get to the point of where a service is rendered, s/he may request that the service be brought to them at another location. One of the counties in our area does this with their driver's license division-the office is located on an upper story floor that is inaccessible so they bring the camera to the individual with a disability so his/her picture can be taken.

V. ALLEGED COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

V.A.1 Itasca County has established a grievance procedure with regard to alleged complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability. It is included in the Personnel Policy or you may obtain a copy from the Administrative Services Department. All complaints are to be initiated with the head of the department in which the complaint arose and are to be done in accordance with the policy.

V.A.2 The Coordinator is named as the ADA Coordinator. Should you have suggestions or concerns, you are invited to share them with the Coordinator.

*Original policy approved by the County Board on 10/16/84
Policy reconsidered in 1990 by the Handicap Awareness Committee with no suggestions or concerns for changes. County Board approved update and made part of PP as appendix section on 9/22/92.*

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SECTION B

B.1. Itasca County will make reasonable efforts to provide communication and services to all people or as otherwise mandated to make such provisions.

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I. ACCOMMODATE NURSING MOTHERS

I.B.1. Per M.S. 181.939, enacted by the 1998 Minnesota Legislature, an employer (includes political subdivisions) must provide reasonable unpaid break time each day to an employee who needs to express breast milk for her infant child. An employer is not required to provide break time under this law if to do so would unduly disrupt the operations of the employer.

I.B.2. The employer must make reasonable efforts to provide a room or other location, in close proximity to the work area, other than a toilet stall, where the employee can express her milk in privacy.

I.B.3. Accommodation to nursing mothers for this purpose will be made by Itasca County. Please contact the Administrative Services Department or off-site facility manager so arrangements may be made.

11/01/96; 07/29/98; 08/2002; 11/01/2002 (corrected "cued speed" to "cued speech")

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