



STARBRIDGE LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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Starbridge is committed to providing meaningful access to information, programs and services to all people, including individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), Deaf, and Hard of Hearing (DHH). As part of this commitment Starbridge provides language assistance services to assure effective communication, whenever possible, by utilizing Bilingual Staff when available or contracted interpreter providers at no cost to the person with LEP and DHH. This Plan explains how Starbridge make sure that people with LEP, deaf and hard of hearing are provided access to our agency information, programs and services.

In this Plan, Limited English Proficient (LEP) refers to individuals who do not speak English as the primary language and have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English.

Deaf, and Hard of Hearing (DHH) refer to varying degrees of hearing loss. "Deaf" typically describes a profound hearing loss, where there is very little or no functional hearing that significantly impairs the ability to understand spoken language. "Hard of hearing" describes a milder hearing loss, where there may be enough residual hearing that the individual may use assistive devices.

Other Definitions:

Language Access: Language access refers to the ability of individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), Deaf, and Hard of Hearing (DHH) to effectively communicate and access information, services, and opportunities in their preferred language.

Interpretation: The process of rendering a spoken or signed communication from one language into another language accurately and completely.

Translation: involves conveying information in writing from one language to another (e.g. translating documents).

Necessary documents: Documents (deemed by Starbridge) with information that are critical for accessing or obtaining services.

This Language Access Plan includes information about:

- Agency Services, Mission, Vision and Values
- Languages Identified in our Service Area
- Language Services Provision
- Staff Training
- Monitoring and Review of Language Services

Starbridge: For the Hope and the How

Agency Services, Mission and Vision

Starbridge's mission is "Transforming communities to include everyone by partnering with people with disabilities, their families and those who support them". Our Vision is "Ensuring every person has the right to define and lead a fulfilling life". Our Values are "Collaboration, Inclusion, Integrity and Trust. We at Starbridge partner with people who have disabilities, their families, and others who support them, to achieve success in education, employment, and healthy living. We work side by side with people who have disabilities and their circles of support across our services: Education, Transition planning, Employment, Family Support program, Self-Directed Services & Support, Home and Community Supports and Family Reimbursement.

Our content and services are tailored to the unique needs, concerns, values and beliefs of people from a variety of backgrounds. By providing information, ideas, and linkages, we help people see possibilities. In our partnership with individuals, we serve as a resource by providing the responsiveness, support, coaching, and flexibility to create opportunities and achieve success; however, they define it.

We collaborate with schools, organizations, community groups and others to create positive and meaningful opportunities. We develop and nurture positive relationships and build bridges so that individuals and families can access what they need when they need it. By partnering, we create impact and achieve better outcomes. Through education, collaborations and awareness, we increase the community's ability to embrace individuals with disabilities, thereby creating opportunities. Starbridge empowers individuals with disabilities and their families to advocate for themselves and realize their personal goals. Together we build strong, welcoming communities by increasing the ability of community members to support and value all individuals.

Starbridge and its community partners serve the entire state of New York except for New York City. Starbridge serves people with disabilities and their families in urban, suburban, and rural communities by collaborating with schools, community-based organizations, and local, state, and federal agencies. Our office is in Rochester, NY, in an accessible building which is located on a public bus line.

We provide a welcoming environment where each person is respected, valued and celebrated. We remain relevant by developing and maintaining our awareness of the needs of communities. Our definition of culture is broad and includes but is not limited to gender, race, age, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, education, abilities, and birth origin.” We value all people and we believe that every person is important. We build relationships and a sense of belonging by connecting with each person. Through education and awareness, we help communities to include people with disabilities and promote a sense of belonging.

Starbridge combines culturally competent services and true advocacy for people to access what they need – wherever and whenever in life they need it – providing the education and leadership required to improve practices and transform communities.

We help individuals and families identify what they need, and we help them access it wherever it is, regardless of whether we provide it. We are knowledgeable about community resources, including self-awareness regarding our strengths as an organization. We use our resources and connections to help people realize their goals.

We provide education to increase awareness about disabilities and strengthen the community’s ability to include and support people with disabilities. This awareness and knowledge transform communities through a ripple effect. Through our own leadership and the development of community leaders, we empower communities to create positive change.

Languages Identified in our Service Area

Our agency uses U.S. Census data to identify the top 12 languages most commonly spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State. The top 12 languages spoken by individuals with LEP in New York State are:

Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Yiddish, Bangla, Haitian Creole, Korean, Arabic, Italian, French, Polish, and Urdu.

Language Services Provision

Our agency tracks interactions with individuals with LEP, deaf and hard of hearing in the following ways:

- Starbridge tracks interactions with individuals with LEP by documenting calls and in-person meetings, as well as all written correspondence that occur when interpreting and translation services are requested and/or provided. This documentation includes noting the language assistance service provided, when it

was provided, how it was provided and the specific language in which it was provided.

- Each department keeps record and maintains documentation of the language assistance needs and services of people with LEP and DHH through each department Language Access Tracker and/or database used by the program (if applicable).

Communication of Availability of Language Access Services

Our agency informs individuals with LEP about the agency language assistance services in the following ways:

- Individuals with LEP are directly informed by our staff
In which ways? Starbridge Programs Intake staff inform individuals with LEP, Deaf and Hard of Hearing about the agency language assistance services during the intake process. If the person's first contact is with Starbridge Receptionist or other staff, they are trained to triage language support needs. This helps ensure that people are receiving information about Starbridge services in their primary language at initial contact. Staff are directed to utilize the language access resources available to assist with providing access to language services.
- Outreach and presentations at schools, parent groups, and other community organizations:
What are the populations with LEP targeted? Starbridge Staff in partnership with community organizations and groups target Spanish speaking populations with LEP through the continuous offering of Spanish workshops and the dissemination of Starbridge Pamphlet, along with other identified resources translated to Spanish. In addition, through the use of Starbridge Website google translator tool we are able to target the most common languages used in the area by providing access to website translations in the top 12 languages identified in New York State.
- Telephonic voice mail in non-English language:
In which languages? Starbridge Voice mail is in English and Spanish. Additionally, staff who manage office main lines are provided with and trained on instructions for using telephonic contracted Interpreting Services to communicate with people with LEP, Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Determining the Need for Services-

During in person encounters and/or on telephone calls our agency uses the following tools and steps to determine whether an individual has Limited English Proficiency, Deaf and Hard of Hearing and what the preferred language according to the situation:

- Through the utilization of the "Starbridge Language Identification Guide." The I Speak guide noted in the 12 identified most common languages spoken in New York State will be used when needed by staff to help identify and schedule an

interpreter to contact and communicate effectively at no cost to the person with LEP.

- During office in-person encounters and telephone calls: Reception staff, Intake Staff will assist in identifying the language needs of individuals with LEP. In addition, and if necessary, they will take the appropriate necessary steps to arrange an interpreter provider to communicate with the person with LEP and/or DHH to find out more about the nature of the contact and what further assistance is needed.
- At initial contact in the community: Starbridge staff are trained to connect the person with LEP and/or DHH to the agency appropriate contacts. Once connected to the appropriate staff, they will arrange language services to find out more about the nature of the contact and how to further assist.

Arrangement and approach of language access services-

- Reception staff, Intake Staff, Bilingual staff members where available, will arrange and/or provide language access services and communicate with the person with LEP and/or DHH in a timely manner.
- Languages other than English on an ongoing basis are supported through a diverse bilingual workforce, partnerships with community agencies and contracted services. Starbridge staff provides services and serve as a connector to other agencies to assure language needs.
- For pre-planned appointments with individuals with LEP, Deaf and hard of Hearing seeking information on Starbridge services or receiving Starbridge services: Bilingual staff will be used whenever possible or Starbridge staff will schedule an interpreter provider for pre-planned appointments and meetings hosted by Starbridge at no cost to the person with LEP. This applies to both in-person and remote video meetings.
- All Interpretations may be conducted in person or by phone and determine one on one basis according to the needs.

Our agency provides people with LEP, deaf and hard of hearing language access services in the following ways:

- Through agency's website Google Translator tool -we provide accessibility to information and resources in the most common used 12 languages in our area.
- Callers and visitors to the office are greeted by our office receptionist who is bilingual (English and Spanish) and if additional interpretation services are needed, other Bilingual staff when available or contracted interpretation services are arranged and provided in a timely manner. Starbridge contract with additional providers for interpretation in other languages for phone conversations, in person and/or video call for ASL.

- The agency answering machine messages are in both Spanish and English. Bilingual Receptionist, Bilingual Staff and/or contracted services are used to contact and communicate with people with LEP contacting Starbridge.
- Agency program departments utilize Bilingual Staff where available or contracted interpreter providers for interpretation in person, by phone and/or video calls. In addition, Starbridge staff will also serve as a connector to other agencies to assure language needs are met.
- Necessary documents (deemed by Starbridge) with information that are critical for obtaining or accessing programs and services are interpreted or translated to ensure accessible and clear communication. Starbridge routinely reviews documents on an ongoing basis to determine additional documents that may require translation.
- Starbridge Education departments along with its Core Community Partners across the state to provide access to educational workshops, resources and services to people with LEP particularly in Spanish. Available workshops in Spanish can be found on our website and can be requested by agency and community groups and organizations. Additional information on workshops can be obtained by visiting Starbridge website Starbridgeinc.org.
- Starbridge routinely distributes flyers, pamphlet, and other printed materials in particularly Spanish, through outreach activities that highlighting Starbridge programs services targeting particularly Spanish people with LEP to be served by Starbridge.
- Starbridge provides ASL languages services at Agency wide Conferences, fundraiser and other identified by Starbridge community engagement activities.

STAFF TRAINING

In order to establish meaningful access to information and services for people with LEP and DHH, staff that regularly interact with the public are trained by supervision staff on Starbridge Language Access policies and procedures. Training will ensure that staff members are effectively able to work in person and/or by telephone with people with Limited English Proficiency, Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Management staff are included in the training, even if they do not interact regularly with people with LEP and DHH to ensure and support implementation by staff.

- All staff providing intake, technical assistance, training or receiving in-bound calls receive Language Access training, or training upon employment or when deemed necessary by management staff.
- Starbridge provides staff with process/practices to enhance the capacity of staff to effectively provide language access to and serve families with Limited English Proficiency.

Program departments training include information on:

- Agency Language Access Policy
- Department procedures and best practices (e.g. identifying language needs, obtaining interpreters, using and working with interpreters, translations and tracking).

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Starbridge conducts annual evaluation to determine its overall language Access delivery outcomes and needs. The Vice president of Culture, Access & Belonging will lead the evaluation with the assistance of other Directors and/or pointed staff as well as ensure this annual review occurs. The evaluation will include the following:

- Assessment of the number of LEP, DHH individuals served and language preferred provided by each program.
- Identify how many were met and with which services.
- Directors will review departmental funding (if applicable) to determine if additional resources or reimbursement is available to support department language needs.