

**New Hope, Inc.**  
**Language Access Plan v2**  
**Summer 2023**

**Introduction**

The mission of New Hope, Inc. is to engage survivors, stakeholders and communities to build an anti-violence movement. Using a trauma-informed practice, we work with those impacted by sexual and domestic violence, as well as those persons who use abuse in their intimate relationships. We are committed to practices that promote racial and gender equity, while also elevating persons living with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ identified persons and immigrants. Our vision is a basic one – that every person has the right to live a life free of violence and exploitation. New Hope, Inc. recognizes that providing meaningful language access is critical to ensuring the safety and security of those affected by sexual and domestic violence. We understand that advocating for language justice, the right of survivors and others who are affected by these types of violence to communicate in the language that is most comfortable for them, is a necessary part of changing systems and social norms, which will ultimately prevent the root causes of sexual and domestic violence.

We understand that language access is an ongoing process of reducing and ultimately eliminating organizational barriers that prevent people who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability or an inability to speak, understand, read, or write English ('LEP' – limited English proficiency) from fully utilizing, participating in, and contributing to our programs and services. English-proficient advocates, survivors, and program participants access our resources through print and social media, in-person and on-line, via telephone, webinar, web-based virtual meeting software, etc. Ensuring that advocates, survivors, and program participants with limited English proficiency, hearing impairments, and deafness are also able to access our resources is a process of organizational change and capacity-building that we are committed to continuing through the future.

We must think about all of our work in terms of language access.

Words and meanings around sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault (collectively referred to as sexual violence), and domestic violence, look and sound very different in different languages and cultures. We cannot talk about sexual and domestic violence the same way in every language. Many of the terms and concepts used in English do not translate to other languages. Words and meanings around sexual violence also look very different among cultures who share language. We strive to be mindful of the connections among spoken and visual language, culture, religion, and national origin.

We must think about all of our work in terms of creating accessibility and promoting linguistic justice. Language access is integral to our guiding principles:

- the support of human rights
- self-determination
- equality for all
- social justice
- a commitment to advocacy and changes in systems which adversely affect victims, survivors and other community members.

This is the second Language Access Plan (LAP) prepared by New Hope, Inc. The first was limited to instructions on how to use the Language Line. We will periodically be reviewing and updating this LAP, in order to ensure our continued responsiveness to community needs, and our commitment to providing people of ALL identities appropriate and complete access to our services and programs.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this LAP is to ensure meaningful access to agency services, programs and activities on the part of persons who speak and read languages other than English. New Hope, Inc. is committed to this Language Access Plan as the appropriate response to meeting the needs of LEP individuals and families who participate in New Hope services, programs or activities.

An LEP person is defined as someone who is not able to speak, read, write or understand the English language at a level that allows them to interact effectively with New Hope's services, programs, or activities. Any person who self-identifies as an LEP person will be given the benefit of the language protocols described in this LAP.

New Hope notes that this Language Access Plan is intended as guidance and does not create individual rights or entitlements or establish New Hope duties or process beyond what is required under applicable law.

New Hope's provides the following programs and services in its 41-community service area:

- A toll-free 24/7 confidential hotline – 800-323-HOPE
- Emergency shelter
- Counseling
- Court advocacy (SAFEPLAN)
- Community-based advocacy
- Supervised visitation
- Housing stabilization
- Civilian police advocacy (CPA)
- Money School
- Medical Advocacy for Sexual Assault (SANE)
- Outreach, Prevention, and Education

### **Practices**

General Practice Statement:

New Hope, Inc. will never decline to provide services to an individual because of their limited English proficiency, and to those who identify as deaf or deaf, hearing, and/or speech impaired.

It is the practice of New Hope, Inc. to provide timely, meaningful access for people with limited English proficiency to all agency programs and activities. New Hope, Inc.'s staff will provide free language

assistance services to individuals with limited English proficiency, people who are deaf or deaf, hearing, and/or speech impaired, or will refer them to a resource that can provide these services.

New Hope's primary focus is to eliminate sexual and domestic violence and advocate for the rights of survivors. Therefore, we are committed to building the capacity to create sustainable language resources as needed in both oral and written form so that no survivor, program participant, community member, or survivor-serving professional will be denied access to information or services.

#### Minor Children as Interpreters Practice:

New Hope, Inc. will not use minor children to interpret, in order to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication, and to prevent re-traumatizing children. The use of minor children to interpret is strictly prohibited.

### **Approach**

This Language Access Plan represents New Hope's blueprint to provide meaningful access to our services, programs and activities on the part of LEP individuals. It outlines the tasks we will undertake to meet this objective. Our Language Access Plan will be implemented subject to the availability of resources.

New Hope administers a very wide variety of programs, some of which have more individualized Language Access Plans or language access protocols. This general LAP seeks to ensure reasonable, meaningful access to New Hope's services, programs and activities for persons with LEP consistent with fiscal limitations.

New Hope will evaluate the totality of circumstances and language access needs, including the factors mentioned below, to determine the tasks we will undertake to meet the objective of providing meaningful access to New Hope services, programs and activities to LEP constituents and clients. Factors such as volume or proportion of persons with LEP served, the frequency with which persons with LEP come in contact with our programs, the nature of the programs, the activities, events, documentation, information we provide, the language resources we currently have available and the costs involved in acquiring/contracting any additional, appropriate language resources will all be considered.

New Hope's main office is located at 247 Maple Street, Attleboro, MA 02073 and its main telephone number is (508) 226-4015. Our website is available at [www.new-hope.org](http://www.new-hope.org).

Over the years, New Hope has made significant efforts to increase the number of staff in our office who are linguistically and culturally diverse and reflect the client population served. These staff are able to help identify the language assistance needed and connect our clients with LEP to a translation service, depending on the language spoken by the client, or to have direct translation provided when it is included as part of a staff member's role. In particular, New Hope has several staff members who are fluent in Spanish, the language spoken by many of our LEP clients.

Financial Resources: Over the past couple of years, there have been some appropriated funding for the cost of translating documents, providing oral interpretation, and support implementing the LAP. However, the increased demand in funding may not allow full implementation of this LAP.

Language Service Protocols:

For New Hope's offices (Attleboro, Milford, Southbridge, Taunton, and Worcester):

- The greeting for the telephone numbers listed on the multi-lingual notices is in English and Spanish. Greetings in other languages will soon be added.
- Main office staff are surveyed periodically to determine who is available to provide interpretation for persons who use New Hope's programs, and those staff names and languages spoken have been given and posted at the Attleboro receptionist desk.
- Reception staff and others, including New Hope's Community-Based Advocates, are trained and will continue to be trained on how to provide language services to persons with LEP who arrive at the office needing language assistance.
- When staff are not available to interpret in the language of a person with LEP, New Hope has contracted with a telephone interpretation service.
- All staff have been asked to identify vital documents, and translations are being done and will continue to be done on a program by program basis, as resources permit.
- We will train staff on how to utilize the I Speak cards available at the reception desk at New Hope's Attleboro office, as well as the other New Hope offices; utilizing staff for interpretation; and for obtaining assistance from the telephone interpretation line.

For the New Hope, Inc. website ([www.new-hope.org](http://www.new-hope.org)):

The translation software, Recite Me, can be accessed and provides translation of web content on the New Hope website into different languages.

Vital Document Translation:

This year, New Hope will begin reviewing the forms, letters and documents used in administration of its programs, and identifying those documents considered vital. We are committed to translating vital documents, as resources permit, into the languages most encountered by specific programs. We will continue to review, identify and translate vital documents, so as to ensure it is taking reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to New Hope's programs and activities.

Staff Training:

New Hope is issuing guidance, instructions and training to staff regarding the provision of language assistance to persons with LEP. We will review and revise guidance and instructions and offer training, as needed, to ensure that language access planning is sufficient and consistent with New Hope's

regulations, policies and practices. Staff will be routinely educated on revisions to policy, revised initiatives, and best practices regarding the provision of language assistance services. This will be an ongoing process as language accessibility evolves over time.

#### Notice to the Public:

To assist visitors to New Hope's main office in identifying their language needs, the front desk has the U.S. Department of Commerce Language Identification "I-Speak" flashcards, which features over 30 languages. The flashcards will enable staff to effectively determine language needs, and provide language assistance to persons with LEP. The I-Speak flashcards have also been provided to the other offices in our service area.

New Hope's Language Access Plan will be posted on our website to notify the public that language assistance services are available, as needed, to meaningfully access our services, programs and activities.

#### Agency Monitoring:

On an on-going basis, New Hope will monitor the effectiveness of its LAP and evaluate areas for improvement of its policies, procedures, protocols and training. In addition, New Hope will solicit feedback from persons with LEP by asking them to participate in a survey.

#### Complaints:

Complaints about this Language Access Plan or services provided to clients in accordance with this LAP may be filed with the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at New Hope's Attleboro office.

#### Bilingual staff

New Hope, Inc. will consider second language proficiency as a preferred qualification when hiring new staff in roles that require direct communication with clients and program participants. In these cases, New Hope will ensure that these job postings clearly state that second language proficiency will be viewed favorably in our position-specific hiring decisions.

New Hope is committed to sending notices of our job openings to diverse community-based organizations in our service area.

2. When hiring for positions that require bilingual proficiency in English and another language other than spoken English, New Hope will seek to conduct interviews in both languages. When needed, we will contract with an outside consultant to conduct an interview (by phone, virtual meeting, or in person) with final candidate(s) in their primary language(s). In these cases, New Hope will provide the consultant with the job description and list of questions asked during the English-language interview. The consultant will interview the final candidate(s) and provide New Hope with a summary assessment of the candidate's language proficiency and qualifications.

3. When hiring for positions that require bilingual proficiency in English and another language other than spoken English, bilingual/bicultural staff will qualify for a salary differential based on language

proficiency, cultural knowledge, and ability to effectively support individuals with limited English proficiency.

4. New Hope will strive to not use bilingual staff as interpreters or translators for work inside the organization unless this work falls within the scope of their defined job responsibilities and roles. Additionally, bilingual staff will not be used as interpreters for other organizations as well. The Language Line will be used for interpretation outside of this scope.

### **New Hope, Inc.'s Best Practices for Working with Interpreters:**

*Identify language needed.* New Hope, Inc. will promptly determine the language for which interpreter services are needed, if necessary, with the aid of "I Speak" cards or by asking the interpretation service provider to assist with language identification, as needed.

*Do not use minor children.* New Hope, Inc. will not use minor children to interpret, in order to ensure the confidentiality of information and accurate communication, and to prevent re-traumatizing children.

*Family or friends as interpreters.* New Hope, Inc. will not use family members or friends of individuals who are limited English proficient, are deaf or deaf, hearing and/or speech impaired to interpret unless specifically requested by the individual and only after the individual has understood that they have the right to a professional interpreter at no cost to them. Whenever requested, New Hope will accommodate the client's wishes to have family or friends, excluding minor children, serve as interpreters. New Hope will consider issues of safety, confidentiality, privacy, conflict of interest, and interpreter competency, as well as potential vicarious trauma, traumatization, or re-traumatization when family members or friends have been requested to interpret.

*Medium of interpretation.* New Hope, Inc. will assess which medium of interpretation (telephone, video, or in-person) is appropriate based on the presenting situation, available resources, and preference of the individual with limited English proficiency, or is Deaf, hearing and/or speech impaired.

*Consistent process.* New Hope, Inc. staff will read a prepared statement at the beginning of each translation service to ensure that the client is in a safe situation to speak and to explain confidentiality as it relates to the translation process.

When working with interpreters:

New Hope, Inc. staff will strive to follow these recommendations when communicating through the use of an interpreter:

- Read prepared statement at the start of the translation service.
- Identify the purpose of your call/training/workshop
- Share documents, training slides, or other materials to interpreter in advance whenever possible so interpreter can become familiar with content, terms, etc., and can protect against vicarious trauma
- Enunciate and avoid contractions
- Speak in short sentences
- Speak slowly and pause frequently
- Avoid use of double negatives
- Speak in first person, i.e. speak directly to the individual/audience rather than to the interpreter
- Avoid colloquialisms and acronyms
- Briefly explain technical terms
- Check in with interpreter regarding their understanding and your rate and pattern of speech
- Check in with the individual/audience to ensure their understanding
- Be patient

## Language Line Instructions

Due to the high cost of the Language Line, we need to establish some procedures to follow, to ensure we are judicious in our use. First, as the Language Line is able to connect with an interpreter in quick fashion, please be sure you are with the participant at the time of the call, that you will be able to speak with the participant and interpreter uninterrupted, and have a clear outline of what you will need interpreted, so as to make the most efficient use of time.

**If you are attempting to use the Language Line with a hotline caller, please note you will have to use the conference call feature on the phone.**

To use the conference call feature:

Press the conference button and you will hear a dial tone.

Key in the Language Line # and when connected press conference button again. You should then have all parties on the line.

Below are the specific steps one should take before using the Language Line.

1. Any staff in need of an interpreter for a language for which we do not have capacity, should first review the DPH Language Capacity Chart, (on the Network> Everyone> Resources> RCC Language Capacity Chart) to see if another funded program has the needed language capacity.
2. If you are in need of Spanish or Portuguese language translation, you should also reach out to Safelink, as they often have staff that can provide translation.
3. If there are still no options, the employee should contact their supervisor for permission to call the language line. If the supervisor is not available, please call the hotline and ask to have the on-call person's cell number.
4. The form below needs to be completed and sent to your supervisor once the call is over, so we have back up for the billing.

LANGUAGE LINE INSTRUCTIONS: Language Line® Personal Interpreter Service

- To connect to an interpreter, dial 1 888 808-9008.
- At the prompt, enter your 8-digit PIN number: 18252648
- Speak the name of the desired language. (e.g. Spanish)
- If the language you requested is correct, press 1.
- An interpreter will be connected. Tell them what you want to accomplish and give them any special instructions.
- Provide the number if you need to have the interpreter call back. The call back number MUST be a New Hope number. Do not provide a participant telephone number.

NEW HOPE'S LANGUAGE LINE FORM:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Language required: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # used for the call: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for the translation: \_\_\_\_\_

Time call was initiated: \_\_\_\_\_

Time call was ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff person: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

Check if verbal approval was given: \_\_\_