



Communication Accessibility During a State of Emergency:

[Guidance for State Agencies]



April 2020

[Purpose]

During the COVID-19 State of Emergency, declared by Governor Northam in 2020, all messaging and communication must be accessible to people of all abilities. This document provides key guidance to state agencies for communicating information to people who are:

- Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind
- Limited English Proficiency
- Blind or visually impaired

Note: Guidance regarding accessible communication in a State Coordinated Regional Shelter environment may be found in the COV SCRS Plan.

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[Contributors]

- COVID-19 Unified Command Health Equity Working Group, Access and Functional Needs Officer (AFNO) for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)
- Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH)
- Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI)
- Department of General Services (DGS)

[**General Guidance**]

1. All information provided regarding a State of Emergency should be accessible for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those who are blind and visually impaired. All printed informational materials should also be made available in the most [commonly spoken minority languages](#), with [cultural and linguistic competence](#).
2. Ideally, all materials shared by any state agency in relation to a State of Emergency, whether for training or informational purposes, internal or external use, will also be provided in accessible formats.
3. Messaging should be made available in multiple formats and multiple languages. Messaging should include print media (available to those who do not have internet access) and digital media.
4. All media content, as well as any apps that may be developed, should be checked for accessibility.
5. Please note that the preferred terms are “Deaf and hard of hearing” or “people with hearing loss,” as opposed to “hearing impaired.”

[**Press Briefings, Remote Meetings, and Public Service Announcements**]

Press briefings, remote meetings (teleconference and video conference), and public service announcements should include:

- A sign language interpreter who remains on screen throughout the briefing along with the speaker, with the camera zoomed in enough for signs to be seen clearly
- Live captions when broadcast by television stations

Streaming of live press briefing videos via internet platforms and social media should follow that protocol as well, and a transcript of the spoken message should be provided for those blind/visually impaired individuals who utilize screen readers, since captions are not always accessible to DeafBlind individuals.

Certified interpreters are required for high level meetings and events, including but not limited to: press briefings, public service announcements, and public comment forums.

Captioning remote meetings on conference call platforms (Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc.) is possible with the guidelines on Page 6 of this document.

[**Digital Content**]

All digital content must at a minimum meet Section 508 standards to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act, and at least Level A Conformance for website accessibility if posted online.

Digital print materials (including content such as graphs and charts released in file formats such as .pdf) should meet visual information guidelines for accessibility. This includes:

- screen reader compatibility
- description of visual content
- adjustments to font size, format, color, and contrast
- live captions when broadcast by television stations

Digital video content may use sign language interpreters to translate recorded audio and video, and written English materials, into sign language during the post-production process. Post-production is also the time to add captions to content, translating it into different languages or making it accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Digital media should be made compatible with mobile devices. Individuals with low vision often utilize mobile devices in conjunction with smart phones or tablets, and individuals who do not have broadband internet access often use their mobile devices to receive critical information. All media content, as well as any apps that may be developed, should be checked for accessibility.

Section508.gov and the Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired can provide further guidance.

How SLIs can provide services

SLIs can work onsite (face-to-face), through [Video Remote Interpreting \(VRI\)](#) services (where the interpreter is remote such as via video conferencing platforms), or through [Video Relay Services \(VRS\)](#) (a form of telecommunication governed by the FCC).

Finding a qualified sign language interpreter in Virginia

VDDHH has two resources posted on its [website](#) to assist you in locating a qualified SLI.

- 1.** Interpreters who participate in the agency's *Interpreter Services Program Manual and Service Agreement*. These interpreters are all eVA registered and many are SWAM/MI

CRO certified. VDDHH is updating this list to note which interpreters are available to provide services remotely via video during times of social distancing.

2. *Directory of Qualified Interpreters.* This includes interpreters who may not yet have signed on to the Service Agreement.

State agencies and the public may contact interpreters directly by utilizing the VDDHH [Directory of Qualified Interpreters](#).

State agencies may also request an interpreter through the VDDHH Interpreter Services Program by emailing the [Interpreter Request Form](#) to isprequests@vddhh.virginia.gov, and VDDHH will work to find an interpreter for the assignment.

State agencies may also obtain SLIs directly through interpreting service agencies: when booking a sign language interpreter, the use of interpreting service agencies which specialize in sign language interpretation versus spoken language interpretation is recommended.

SLI service costs

Interpreters on the VDDHH ISP Service Agreement have accepted the rates set in that agreement. For nationally certified interpreters, the base rate for General (non-legal) assignments is currently \$50 per hour for onsite time, with a two hour minimum. Travel time for certified interpreters is \$40 per hour. Rates for SLIs who do not participate in the ISP Service Agreement may be higher.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Services are being made available, temporarily, through VDDHH during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. VRI provided through the Service Agreement will be paid at the base rate for onsite interpreting services, as established in the Service Manual. Add-On Rates will apply. No travel time will be paid. A one-hour minimum or actual time, whichever is greater, will be paid for each Video Remote Interpreting Services request. Any time over the one-hour minimum will be billed in 15-minute increments of the base rate.

[Spoken Language Interpretation and Translation]

Spoken language interpreters commonly facilitate communication with people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) during States of Emergency. Spoken language access for people with LEP is required by [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). Spoken language interpreters can work remotely or onsite and may be obtained through service contracts with state agencies, but are not coordinated through VDDHH.

Written content may be translated from English into a spoken language other than English, and it is recommended that emergency-related information be [translated into multiple foreign languages](#) common to the impacted area.

Contact your procurement/fiscal agent to find out which spoken language services vendors are available to your agency, and see Addendum.

[**Captioning Services**]

About Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation (CART)

The [National Court Reporters Association](#) (NCRA) describes Computer Assisted Real-time Translation (CART) services as “the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software.” The text produced by the CART service can be displayed on an individual’s computer monitor, projected onto a screen, combined with a video presentation to appear as captions, or otherwise made available using other transmission and display systems. CART services may be provided on site or remotely.

Finding a qualified CART provider

There are a number of fee-based CART services provider, including but not limited to:

- Cavalier Reporting & Videography
415 4th Street, NE, Suite 4
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Telephone: (434) 293-3300
- iYellow Captions, LLC
requests@iYellowCaptions.com
(785) 633-5665

Service fees for CART providers will vary.

Captioning for remote meetings on conference call platforms

Platforms like CISCO, Zoom, WebEx, Google Meet, GoTo Meeting, and more, may utilize a dial-in phone number. Some of these platforms offer the ability to request live real-time captioning through third party vendors, like Streamtext.net, who are contracted to the platform. Contact your web meeting platform customer service to request these integrated live captions.

Additionally, Virginia Relay offers Remote Conference Captioning (RCC). RCC allows people who have difficulty hearing what is said during conference calls to have a clearer under-

standing of the conversation and participate in the call more effectively. To request RCC services, complete the [RCC Scheduling Request Form](#) or call Virginia RCC Customer Care at 877-339-2665 (Voice). The person scheduling the call must be a resident of Virginia. Virginia Relay users are guaranteed access to RCC Services if scheduled at least 24 hours in advance. RCC Services may also be available for emergency situations with a two-hour notice. Note, there is no charge for RCC provided through Virginia Relay.

Remote captioning for online training platforms

Remote captioning URL links can be integrated into some online training platforms for seamless delivery. The process for integration varies, so ask the captioning provider and/or platform customer service for details on how this can be done. Some platforms have auto-generated captioning available, which uses voice-recognition software. Auto-generated captions have a higher error rate than real-time captioning, are occasionally blocked by internet security firewalls, and are, therefore, not preferred. Always test your captioning features prior to the start of the call or training event.

Captioning for pre-recorded content

All media content, whether it is pre-recorded or live streamed, should have captioning enabled. Post-production captioning may be added to pre-recorded content, either through captioning features built into online platforms, or as professionally produced captioning tracks added by the content creator or a captioning vendor. A full transcript of the audio content should also be attached. This allows individuals using assistive technology like braille displays, such as those who are both deaf and blind, to access the information successfully.

[Payment]

The agency providing the service is responsible for the cost of provision of accommodations to the consumer, or for providing accommodations for a general audience such as for press conferences, training content delivery, and public events and announcements. This includes:

- Sign language interpreting/translating
- CART services and captioning
- Spoken language interpreting/translating

If your agency decides to hire a vendor, payment must come from funds your agency has available for programs and services. During declared emergencies, some payments may be reimbursable by FEMA.

For More Information on Interpreters, Translation, and Captioning

VDDHH Interpreter Services may be reached at isp@vddhh.virginia.gov, or by calling Leslie Hutcheson, ISP Manager, at 804-662-9703.

The Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired may be contacted for further guidance regarding how to make visual information accessible to those who are blind or visually impaired. Contact the Program Director for Rehabilitation Technology, Dr. Peggy Fields, at 804-371-3776 or at Margaret.Fields@dbvi.virginia.gov.

Contacting the AFNO for VDEM

The acting Access and Functional Needs Officer, Karen Brimm, may be reached at karen.brimm@vddhh.virginia.gov.

This Addendum is provided only as a summary of the Contract. A complete and official copy of the Contract and any associated changes are available on the eVA State Contracts webpage OR at the offices of the Division of Purchases and Supply.

Contract Summary: E194-76604



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

DIVISION OF PURCHASES & SUPPLY (DPS)
111 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219

Contract Number E194-76604 INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION SERVICES	
CONTRACT PERIOD	November 1, 2019 through October 31, 2020
CONTRACT TYPE	Optional Statewide
RENEWALS REMAINING	2
AUTHORIZED USERS	Commonwealth of Virginia state agencies institutions of higher education & other public bodies as authorized and defined in the Code of Virginia §2.2-1110, 2.2-1120, and 2.2-4301
CONTRACTOR & eVA ID#	Lionbridge Global Solutions II - E10343 Propio LS LLC - VS0000205815 Voiance Language Services - VS0000056552
CONTRACTOR(S) POINT OF CONTACT	Multiple Award (See Contact Information below)
MINIMUM ORDER	No minimum
PAYMENT TERMS	Net 30
DELIVERY	Special (See Overview below)
DPS CONTRACT OFFICER	Shawnda M. Brown, 804-786-3858 Shawnda.brown@dgs.virginia.gov
COMMODITY CODE(S)	96146, 96175
LAST UPDATE & PURPOSE	Updated: 01/24/2020 Correction: Propio's Contact Information

[Information]

- 1. Ordering Method:** Unless otherwise instructed or exempted by DPS, all Authorized Users placing orders against this Contract must place purchase orders through eVA.
- 2. Purchase Order Information:** When placing an eVA order, follow the Buyer Guide. This guide may be found on eVA (Click on "I Buy For Virginia", then on "eVA Buyer Training", then on "Buyer Guide").
- 3. Authorized User Acceptance:** Inspection and acceptance upon delivery and approval of Contractor's invoice is the responsibility of the receiving Authorized User.

Contractor Name	eVA Vendor ID#	Location Address	Contact Information (Name, Phone and Email)
Lionbridge Global Solutions II	E10343	1050 Winter Street Suite 2300 Waltham, MA 02451	John Drugan Phone: 781-801-2929 Email: John.Drugan@Lionbridge.com
Propio LS LLC	VS0000205815	11020 King Street Suite 420 Overland Park, KS 66210	April Buckley Phone: 913-686-6581 Email: ABuckley@Propio-LS.com
Voiance Language Services	VS0000056552	5780 N. Swan Road Tucson, AZ 85718	Bill Martin Phone: 866-742-9080 Ext. 1708 Email: bmartin@voiance.com

The Contractor(s) shall perform services as described below:

1. Spoken Language Interpretation Services:

- a. Provide 365-days a year/7-days a week/24-hour a day telephone and/or video conference access to interpreters, with an average answer time (measured from when a specific language is requested to when an interpreter for the requested language comes on the line) of:

- i. **Under one (1) minute** for the following most frequently spoken languages in Virginia:

Amharic	Arabic	Bengali
Chinese – Cantonese	Chinese – Mandarin	Farsi
French	German	Greek
Gujarathi	Hindi	Italian
Japanese	Khmer	Korean
Polish	Portuguese	Punjabi
Russian	Somali	Spanish
Tagalog	Thai	Urdu
Vietnamese	Cambodian	Persian

- ii. **Under three (3) minutes** for the lesser known spoken languages including, but not limited to, the following languages with heavy concentrations in specific regions in Virginia:

Acholi	Albanian	Bangla
Bantu	Bosnian	Bulgarian
Burmese	Dari	Dinka
French Creole	Hmong	Indonesian
Kirundi	Krahn	Krio
Kurdish (<i>Kurmanji</i>)	Lao	Maay Maay
Mongolian	Nepali	Serbo – Croatian
Swahili	Tamil	Telegu
Tigrinya	Turkish	Twi
Ukranian	Wolof	Tedim
Haitian	Pashto	Karen
Karenni		

b. Utilize interpreters who:

- i. have been screened and tested for proficiency in both English and the target language(s);
- ii. have received a minimum of 30 hours of training as professional medical/health care interpreters (the training should include, but not be limited to, the following topic areas: ethics and confidentiality, medical terminology, basic anatomy and physiology, roles, cultural competence, and behavioral health);
- iii. adhere to an interpreter Code of Ethics, a statement of confidentiality, and are aware of and comply with HIPAA related privacy guidelines;
- iv. participate in ongoing medical/behavioral/health care interpreter continuing education; and
- v. are covered by liability insurance.

c. Provide basic training to Authorized Users on how to use the services of the Contractor(s) and how to request interpreter services. The training will, at a minimum, include hard copy documentation and/or web-based documentation of processes and procedures. The documentation will also include processes and procedures for obtaining customer service/technical assistance and for complaint resolution.

- d. Provide interpretation services during public health events/emergencies and/or disaster/catastrophic events (e.g., infectious disease outbreaks, epidemics, bioterrorism, earthquakes, power outages, etc.). This includes, but is not limited to, the capacity to support a Public Inquiry Center (PIC) to provide accurate information to callers from the general public that may call for information. For example, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) intends for the PIC to be established within 24 hours of an event or decision to activate the call center. Through the PIC, VDH wants to be able to ensure that 90% of the callers receive accurate information. VDH will provide real-time training to all PIC phone operators. The Contractor must be willing and able to participate in training activities related to the PIC when/if it becomes activated. Additionally, VDH wants to ensure that 90% of calls are answered within 5 minutes.
- e. Provide service utilization tracking and billing through the use of access codes or other mechanisms that differentiate the Authorized Users.

2. Document Translation Services:

- a. Provide document translation services (which may consist of consent forms, immunization records, pamphlets, brochures, etc.) for the following, but not limited to, spoken languages in Virginia:

Amharic	Arabic	Bengali
Chinese – Cantonese	Chinese – Mandarin	Farsi
French	German	Greek
Gujarathi	Hindi	Italian
Japanese	Khmer	Korean
Polish	Portuguese	Punjabi
Russian	Somali	Spanish
Tagalog	Thai	Urdu
Vietnamese	Cambodian	Persian
Pashto	Dari	Tigrinya
Swahili	Kurdish (<i>Kurmanji</i>)	Nepali

- b. Provide review, editing, and proofreading services for previously translated documents.
- c. Manage document translations electronically.

- d.** Provide translated materials that meet the following requirements:
- i.** Accurate content
 - Correct spelling
 - Correct grammar
 - Correct language structure (while remaining faithful to English content)
 - ii.** Appropriate manner for the target audience, taking into consideration:
 - Reading level (i.e., assuming 5th - 6th grade reading level of consumers)
 - Culturally appropriate terminology & content
 - Clarity of message (easy-to-read and understand)
 - Regional dialect and idiomatic differences
 - iii.** Appropriate formatting to match the layout of the original document.
- e.** Have quality assurance mechanisms such as:
- i.** Peer review of the draft
 - ii.** Review by translators proficient in medical/mental health behavioral terminology
 - iii.** Field-testing of drafts (*as appropriate*)
 - iv.** Testing in a sampling of the potential target audience of material in both:
 - Language
 - Imagery
- f.** Utilize translators who:
- i.** have subject matter expertise in medical, behavioral, and health care and have prior experience translating medical/health documents;
 - ii.** are able to write at an appropriate reading level for target audience;
 - iii.** have been screened and tested for proficiency in both written English and the target language(s) with affiliation/accreditation by the American Translators Association preferred;
 - iv.** are able to act as a cultural bridge, providing Authorized Users with feedback not only on grammatical and linguistic accuracy, but also on cultural appropriateness;
 - v.** adhere to a translator Code of Ethics, a statement of confidentiality, and are aware of and comply with HIPAA related privacy guidelines;
 - vi.** participate in ongoing medical/behavioral/healthcare translator continuing education;
 - vii.** are covered by liability insurance; and
 - viii.** do not rely on software based translation programs.

- g.** Provide training to Authorized Users on how to use the services of the Contractor(s) and how to request translation services. The training will, at a minimum, include hard copy documentation and/or web-based documentation of processes and procedures. The documentation will also include processes and procedures for obtaining customer service/technical assistance and for complaint resolution.
- h.** Provide an average turnaround time of:

 - i.** <10 pages in two days
 - ii.** 10,000 words per week
- i.** Provide rapid translation services during public health events/emergencies and/or disaster/catastrophic events (e.g., infectious disease outbreaks, epidemics, bioterrorism, earthquakes, power outages). This includes, but is not limited to, the capacity to:

 - i.** translate up to ten (10) press releases (1/2 page – 1 page) per month in Spanish with under 4 hours of turnaround time
 - ii.** translate up to ten (10) press releases (1/2 page – 1 page) per month in other languages with under 6 hours of turnaround time
- j.** Provide service utilization tracking and billing through the use of access codes or other mechanisms that differentiates the Authorized Users.

Written English to ASL translation of documents:

Deaf Access Solutions, Inc.

6900 Wisconsin Avenue #31111
Bethesda, MD 20824
Phone: (202) 391-0074 Extension 2

Deaf Interpreter Services, Inc.

Marilyn Weber
marilyn@deaf-interpreter.com
210-885-3522
15600 San Pedro, Suite 302
San Antonio, TX 78232

VAVS

John Nelson
804-935-3933

[Pricing]

(Note, it is not encouraged to use spoken language interpreting companies for ASL interpreting and translating services. Please see guidance document above.)

PROPIO					
Telephone Interpretation Spanish \$0.58	Telephone Interpretation All Other \$0.58	Video Conference Interpretation Spanish \$0.99	Video Conference Interpretation All Other \$1.09	Document Translation Spanish \$0.12	Document Translation All Other \$0.23
American Sign Language Onsite \$79.00		American Sign Language Video Remote Interpretation \$1.69		Braille N/A	

LIONBRIDGE					
Telephone Interpretation Spanish \$0.45	Telephone Interpretation All Other \$0.60	Video Conference Interpretation Spanish \$1.79	Video Conference Interpretation All Other \$1.99	Document Translation Spanish \$0.10	Document Translation All Other \$0.17
American Sign Language Onsite N/A		American Sign Language Video Remote Interpretation \$3.50		Braille N/A	

VOIANCE					
Telephone Interpretation Spanish \$0.65	Telephone Interpretation All Other \$0.65	Video Conference Interpretation Spanish \$0.65	Video Conference Interpretation All Other \$0.65	Document Translation Spanish \$0.16	Document Translation All Other \$0.27
American Sign Language Onsite \$85.00		American Sign Language Video Remote Interpretation \$0.95		Braille \$4.00	