

Procedures for Providing Accessibility Aides and Materials in Alternate Format: Effective Communication

A. Sign Language or Oral Language Interpreters:

1. Generally. Outside of the law enforcement, corrections, and court contexts-requests for sign language or oral interpreters must be made to the **ADA Coordinator**:

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(432) 498-4025

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If a request is made directly to a department, the department head shall notify the ADA Coordinator immediately in writing of the request. Requests shall be made at least 48 hours prior to the need where possible. Assuming that sufficient advance notice has been received, the County will provide an interpreter at the requested date and time in the relevant department to assist the person requesting assistance. This is an interactive process, and if the date, time or place when/where the interpreter is needed changes, the requestor must notify the ADA Coordinator as soon as possible of the change. If for any reason beyond the control of the County an interpreter is not available for the requested date and time, the ADA Coordinator will work with the County department involved, the requestor, and the interpreter to promptly set up an alternative date and time. In certain circumstances, an emergency may exist requiring less advanced notice. The ADA Coordinator shall handle such situations in accordance with the need and circumstances.

2. Law Enforcement and Corrections: The County has a contract with a provider for sign language and oral interpreter services where needed in law enforcement and correctional settings/operations providing for coverage as needed.

Provider:

Securus

Video Relay Service | Sign Language Interpreter

(210) 219-8934

Contact Law Enforcement and Corrections Center to facilitate

(432) 335-3060



The response time for unscheduled services is between 30 minutes to one hour generally. Unscheduled services are those arising from a field encounter, booking, or other situation where a reasonable opportunity to schedule services does not exist. The individual in need of the services will generally let the officer know of the need, however, officers also should perceive the need where the need exists. No advance request for these services is required as they are unforeseen and require prompt action.

The officer and/or supervisor on duty will make a request for an interpreter directly to the service provider. Scheduled services are generally requested by an attorney for a detainee or inmate at the jail to meet with his or her client, or by a detective for an interview of a witness. For scheduled services at the jail, a request must be made to the Jail Administration. Where possible, 48 hours notice should be given to allow for scheduling. The Jail Administration contacts the service provider directly to schedule the services.

3. Courts. The courts generally obtain interpreter services for proceedings where the applicable court has been advised in advance that an interpreter is needed. The timing for requests, to whom requests should be made, and any required forms are matters set by the individual courts – so contacting the court directly is important. If an attorney is aware that their client needs an interpreter, but has not made a request to the applicable court, it is the attorney’s responsibility to ensure that an interpreter is scheduled.

One of the primary providers to the Court is:

Highland Council for the Deaf
Executive Director | Teresa Minchew
(432) 267-6779

Debra Derstine
(806) 577-6740

If assistance is needed in contacting the appropriate person at the court, or if the individual has made an attempt and cannot get information, assistance is available from:

Dana McWilliams
(432) 498-4025
dana.mcwilliams@ectorcountytexas.gov



4. Other. Do not suggest or require that an individual use a family member to assist as an interpreter. The person receiving the services cannot be charged for these services.

Communication Access Realtime Translation (“C.A.R.T.”) is a type of real time transcription. A request for C.A.R.T. services must be made to the ADA Coordinator if outside of the context of judicial proceedings; and if relating to judicial proceedings, that request must be made to the Court Coordinator for the applicable court.

Possible Sources:

See list of C.A.R.T. providers at <https://www.tcra-online.com/index.cfm?pg=CART>

B. Assistive Listening Devices:

Assistive listening devices are available in all courtrooms and in the County Commissioners Courtroom/meeting room, and are available on request made to court personnel in the courtroom or by request to the Court Coordinator of the applicable court (or the County Judge’s Office in the case of the Commissioners Courtroom/meeting room). Additional information is available from:

Dana McWilliams

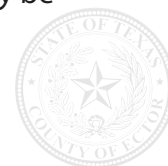
(432) 498-4025

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C. Requests for Documents in an Alternative Format:

1. **Request.** A request for a document in alternate format is made at the department level where the document is being requested. If the department has difficulty accommodating the request, or the request requires formatting beyond the department’s in-house capabilities, the ADA Coordinator shall be immediately contacted by the department.

2. **Interactive Approach.** Always discuss the request for materials in an alternative format with the requestor to ensure that the requestor’s needs will be met. Do not simply assume that you know what the requestor needs. Not all people who are blind read Braille. Many people who are blind prefer information via audio recording. Some people who are visually impaired can be accommodated by documents printed in large print. Persons with learning disabilities or visual impairment may be accommodated in some cases through provision of a qualified reader. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.



3. *Alternate Formats.* Alternative formats include large printed materials, qualified readers, taped text, audio recordings, documents e-mailed to a requestor in a form that can be enlarged or modified by a requestor with an accessibility program, or Braille. The County does not have the internal capability to convert documents to Braille. Possible providers identified would include Baylor University. A qualified reader means “a person who is able to read effectively, accurately and impartially using any necessary specialized vocabulary.” This can be an employee of the department.

4. *Timing.* Simple or small requests may be accommodated on the spot. For example, a qualified reader (a department employee who meets the definition) should assist a person needing assistance reading a short document or instructions at the time of request, or a short document may be able to be enlarged on a copier, or the font changed on an electronically stored document, to a size that the requestor can read. However, the more complex the request and more conversions necessary, the longer the timeframe may be required for provisioning of the information. Generally, the requestor should receive information in the alternative format within 10 business days of the request. However, depending on the size and complexity of the request, availability of outside providers, and other matters – meeting this timeframe may not always be possible. Again, all departments are reminded that if the requested format is not something that the department can achieve in-house, the ADA Coordinator must be contacted as soon as possible.

5. *Purpose.* An underlying goal of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act is for qualified persons with disabilities to have the same access to government materials and information, and the same ability to participate in government services/programs as the public in general. To the greatest extent possible, the purpose of these procedures is to implement and therefore achieve said goal.

6. *What is Not Required.* Although a person’s choice of auxiliary aid or service is given primary consideration, the requestor’s choice does not have to be honored where another equally effective means of communication is available; or the aid or service requested would fundamentally alter the nature of the program, service or activity provided; or the requested aid or service would result in undue financial or administrative burden. These decisions must be made in coordination with, and by, the ADA Coordinator and the applicable department head. The determination must be accompanied by a written statement documenting the reasons for reaching the conclusion. But even where a person’s primary choice of aid or service is not honored because of such a determination, the person still must be provided with another equally effective means of effective communication.



7. **Telecommunication Relay Service (“TTY”).** TTY, reached by calling 7-1-1, is a free nationwide service that uses trained communications assistants to act as intermediaries between persons with speech or hearing impairments and persons using voice telephones. The speech or hearing impaired person uses a text telephone (TTY) to text a message to the communications assistant, who relays the message to the person via the voice telephone, and conversely, texts to the speech or hearing impaired person what is said by the person on the voice telephone. Each department shall assure that employees taking calls from the public, have received TTY training. This training should be set up in coordination with the ADA Coordinator.

Resources:

Relay Texas

<http://relaytexas.com/>

Voice: (800) 676 - 3777

Speech to Speech: (877) 787-1989

TTY: (800) 676-3777

Voice Carryover: (866) 931-9027

Spanish: (800) 676-4290

Relay Texas has materials that explain TTY and proper TTY etiquette and training.

Public Utilities Commission

<https://www.puc.texas.gov/>

jay.stone@puc.texas.gov

(512) 936-7425

(888) 282-8477 Ext. 7425

