

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION & PROVISION OF AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY:

Owen County will take appropriate steps to ensure that persons with disabilities, including persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind, or who have other sensory or manual impairments, have an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits. The procedures outlined below are intended to ensure effective communication with all members of the public. The procedures also apply to, among other types of communication, communication of information contained in important documents, including but not limited to waivers of rights, consent to treatment forms, financial and insurance benefits forms, etc... All necessary auxiliary aids and services shall be provided without cost to the person being served.

All staff will be provided written notice of this policy and procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with individuals with disabilities will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of interpreters. The County will be using *The Disability Guidelines & Etiquette Handbook Appendix B* of this document, as a guide for practices and procedures when interacting with persons with disabilities.

PROCEDURES:

1. Identification and assessment of need

Owen County provides notice of the availability of and procedure for requesting auxiliary aids and services through notices on our website and in our brochures, handbooks, letters, print/radio /television advertisements, etc. and through notices posted in public meeting rooms and in each County department office. When an individual self-identifies as a person with a disability that affects the ability to communicate or to access or manipulate written materials or requests an auxiliary aid or service, staff will consult with the individual to determine what aids or services are necessary to provide effective communication in particular situations.

When an auxiliary aid is requested, staff will fill out the *Request for Auxiliary Aids and Services Form, Appendix A* of this document. Fill out section A of the form completely and give to the County's ADA Coordinator immediately or within an hour of receipt of the request in order to provide adequate time to accommodate the request.

2. Provision of Auxiliary Aids and Services

All requests for auxiliary aids and services should be directed to the County's ADA Coordinator. The ADA Coordinator is responsible for providing these aids and services in a timely manner. If a person knows in advance that they will need a particular aide or service, the County requests a 48-hour advance notice in order to better accommodate the request.

The ADA Coordinator is also responsible for maintaining records of all requests for auxiliary aids and services.

The name and contact information of the Owen County ADA coordinator is listed below:

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|-------------------------|--|
| ADA Coordinator: | Jack White |
| Address: | 908 W. Hillside Ave. Spencer, Indiana 47460 |

E-Mail: jack.white@owencounty.in.gov
Phone: (812) 829-5035 **TTY:** 711

Owen County shall provide the following services or aids to achieve effective communication with persons with disabilities:

A. For Persons Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

(i) For persons who are deaf/hard of hearing and who use sign language as their primary means of communication, the ADA coordinator is responsible for providing effective interpretation or arranging for a qualified interpreter when needed. In the event that an interpreter is needed, she is responsible for obtaining an outside interpreter if a qualified interpreter on staff is not available. The agencies that the County has made arrangements with and their information are listed in the Disability Guidelines and Etiquette Handbook for Employees **Appendix B** of this document.

(ii) Communicating by Telephone with Persons Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Owen County utilizes relay services for external telephone calls with TTY users. We accept and make calls through a relay service. The state relay service number for Relay Indiana is 711 or 1-800-743-3333. The instructions for using this service are located in the *Disability Guidelines and Etiquette Handbook*

(iii) For requests for other auxiliary aids and services, staff will contact, Owen County ADA Coordinator.

(iv) Some persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may prefer or request to use a family member or friend as an interpreter. However, family members or friends of the person will not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by that individual and after an offer of an interpreter at no charge to the person has been made by the facility. Such an offer and the response will be documented in the person's file. If the person chooses to use a family member or friend as an interpreter, issues of competency of interpretation, confidentiality, privacy, and conflict of interest will be considered. If the family member or friend is not competent or appropriate for any of these reasons, competent interpreter services will be provided.

NOTE: Children and other residents will not be used to interpret, in order to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication.

B. For Persons Who are Blind or Who Have Low Vision

(i) Staff will communicate information contained in written materials concerning treatment, benefits, services, waivers of rights, and consent to treatment forms and any other important information by reading out loud and explaining these forms to persons who are blind or who have low vision. In addition, all the staff is available to assist persons who are blind or who have low vision in filling out forms and in otherwise providing information in a written format.

(ii) For requests for other auxiliary aids and services, staff will contact, Owen County ADA Coordinator.

C. For Persons with Speech Impairments

(i) To ensure effective communication with persons with speech impairments, staff will contact Owen County ADA Coordinator.

(ii) For requests for other auxiliary aids and services, staff will contact, Owen County ADA Coordinator.

D. For Persons with Manual Impairments

(i) Staff will assist those who have difficulty in manipulating print materials by holding the materials and turning pages as needed.

(ii) For requests for other auxiliary aids and services, staff will contact, Owen County ADA Coordinator.

Maintenance of Auxiliary Aids and Equipment

The ADA Coordinator will be responsible for the maintenance of all auxiliary aids, equipment, and accessible features.

28 CFR 35.130-135.135

II-3.10000 Maintenance of accessible features. Public entities must maintain in working order equipment and features of facilities that are required to provide ready access to individuals with disabilities. Isolated or temporary interruptions in access due to maintenance and repair of accessible features are not prohibited.

A. Procedure for Maintenance of Accessible Features

- (i) The ADA Coordinator will check all accessible features within all County facilities monthly, ensuring all parts are intact and in working order, batteries are charged/or are working. If any features are not working properly, they should be fixed immediately. If maintenance of any feature requires more than 24 hrs, document the issue and the amount of time taken to remedy the problem.
- (ii) For assistive listening systems and devices, the ADA Coordinator will use specifications outlined in the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design Section 706, regarding checking and maintaining the operation of assistive listening systems and devices.