



Oelwein Policy and Procedures for Communication with Persons with Limited English Proficiency

The City of Oelwein will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits. The policy of the City of Oelwein is to ensure meaningful communication with LEP patients/clients and their authorized representatives involving their medical conditions and treatment. The policy also provides for communication of information contained in vital documents, including but not limited to, utility payments, building permits, shelter reservations, etc. All interpreters, translators and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided without cost to the person being served, and patients/clients and their families will be informed of the availability of such assistance free of charge.

Language assistance will be provided through use of contracted qualified interpreters. All staff will be provided notice of this policy and procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with LEP individuals will be trained in effective communication techniques, including when to alert the City Clerk that an interpreter is needed.

The City of Oelwein will conduct a regular review of the language access needs of our patient population, as well as update and monitor the implementation of this policy and these procedures, as necessary.

Procedures:

- 1. Identifying LEP Persons and Their Language**
 - a. The City of Oelwein will promptly identify the language and communication needs of the LEP person. If necessary, staff will use a language identification card (or "I speak cards," available online at www.lep.gov) or posters to determine the language. In addition, when records are kept of past interactions with patients (clients/residents) or family members, the language used to communicate with the LEP person will be included as part of the record. Once staff has identified that an interpreter is needed, they will alert the City Clerk.
- 2. Obtaining A Qualified Interpreter**
 - a. The City Clerk is responsible for:
 - i. Maintaining an accurate and current list showing the name, language, phone number and hours of availability of bilingual contractors.
 - ii. EMBARC out of Waterloo, Iowa will be contacted for qualified interpreter services. The agency's telephone number is 319-214-0178, and they are located at 620 W 5th Street Floor 4 Waterloo, Iowa 50702.
 - b. Some LEP persons may prefer or request to use a family member or friend as an interpreter. However, family members or friends of the LEP person will not be used as interpreters unless specifically requested by that individual and after the LEP person has understood that 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 LEP 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 to the LEP person.

- c. Children and other clients/patients/residents will not be used to interpret, to ensure confidentiality of information and accurate communication.
- 3. Providing Written Translations**
 - a. When translation of vital documents is needed, each unit in the City of Oelwein will submit documents for translation into frequently encountered languages to the City Clerk. Original documents being submitted for translation will be in final, approved form with updated and accurate legal and medical information.
 - b. Facilities will provide translation of other written materials, if needed, as well as written notice of the availability of translation, free of charge, for LEP individuals.
 - c. The City of Oelwein will set benchmarks for translation of vital documents into additional languages over time.
 - 4. Providing Notice to LEP Persons**
 - a. The City of Oelwein will inform LEP persons of the availability of language assistance, free of charge, by providing written notice in languages LEP persons will understand. At a minimum, notices and signs will be posted and provided in intake areas and other points of entry, including but not limited to City Hall, Fire Station, Police Station, the Library, and Public Works. Notification will also be provided through one or more of the following: the City's Website and Social Media.
 - 5. Monitoring Language Needs and Implementation**
 - a. On an ongoing basis, the City of Oelwein will assess changes in demographics, types of services or other needs that may require reevaluation of this policy and its procedures. In addition, the City of Oelwein will regularly assess the efficacy of these procedures, including but not limited to mechanisms for securing interpreter services, equipment used for the delivery of language assistance, complaints filed by LEP persons, and feedback from community members.