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**Date:** July 12, 2013 **MEPD Policy Bulletin Number: 13-09**

**To:** Eligibility Services – Regional Directors for MEPD  
Regional Attorneys  
Hearings Officers

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**Subject:** Vietnamese Interpreter and Translation Information Page

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The information in this bulletin is for **MEPD**. If you have any questions regarding the policy, follow regional procedures. The information in this bulletin is available at the following websites:

- Eligibility Services - <http://ofs.hhsc.state.tx.us/mepd/mepd-bulletins.aspx>, and
- MEPD Handbook - [http://www.dads.state.tx.us/handbooks/mepd\\_policy/index.htm](http://www.dads.state.tx.us/handbooks/mepd_policy/index.htm).

## **Background**

HHSC has identified Spanish and Vietnamese speaking applicants/recipients as the two largest Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations served by translation assistance using the Language Line. HHSC already sends eligibility notices in Spanish, but does not send notices in Vietnamese.

At present, the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS) is not capable of providing notices or forms in languages other than English and Spanish. However, HHSC eligibility staff currently ensures access to benefits and services to LEP clients who speak or understand a language other than English or Spanish by utilizing the Language Line, community resources for interpreter and translations services or agency employees who have demonstrated sufficient proficiency in the language needed. Also, HHSC's 2-1-1 vendor staff along with the Language Line offers translation assistance to applicants/recipients who need help understanding information sent to them by HHSC.

## **Policy/Procedure Update**

To provide better communication to applicants/recipients who are LEP, MEPD Eligibility Specialists are instructed to comply with the policies below. Additionally HHSC has developed an interpreter/translation information page to be implemented.

Requirement to Provide Interpreter or Translation Services, advises eligibility specialists to provide interpreter and translation services in writing or verbally over the telephone to applicants/recipients who are LEP.

Availability of Translated Written Material, advises staff must follow the two procedures explained below.

- When eligibility specialists verbally communicate with LEP applicants/recipients at application, redetermination (including special reviews), and change actions, staff is required to ensure the applicants/recipients understand the eligibility action (request for missing information, and TF0001/certification, or denial) being taken and what they are required to do to complete the application process (including any missing information being requested). This requirement is met by providing a verbal explanation to all LEP applicants/recipients in their preferred language regarding the eligibility action being taken and/or missing information being requested.

**Note:** This requirement is not applicable for special reviews and change actions when staff process the case action without talking with the applicants/recipients.

- At a complete action for applications and redeterminations (including special reviews), eligibility specialists must ensure the State Office approved interpreter/translation information page (written in the applicant's/recipients preferred language) is included with all eligibility notices (H1020s/request for missing information, TF0001s/certification, or denial) provided (mailed or in person) to LEP applicants/recipients who speak Vietnamese when:
  - Applicants/recipients indicate on their application their preferred language is Vietnamese,
  - Applicants/recipients are interviewed with assistance from a Vietnamese interpreter (Language Line or any other interpreter), or
  - Applicants/recipients are interviewed by an eligibility specialist who speaks Vietnamese and conducts the interview in Vietnamese (eligibility specialist does not need an interpreter).

To ensure the Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page is included with applicable eligibility notices, eligibility specialists must follow the steps below:

**Step 1:** Print the eligibility notice locally (do not print using batch process).

**Step 2:** Print the Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page from the following link under “Announcements” or from the “Bulletins” page:

<http://ofs.hhsc.state.tx.us/mepd/default.aspx>

**Step 3:** Insert a copy of the Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page and applicable client notices/forms in an envelope.

**Step 4:** Mail or provide a hard copy of the documents to the applicant/recipient, whichever is applicable (for telephone/in person interviews or special reviews).

**Note:** The Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page is not required to be scanned or imaged.

### **Automation**

State office will also facilitate an annual mail out of the interpreter/translation information page to recipients who indicate (as coded in TIERS) Vietnamese is their preferred language. The first mailing will be sent to recipients by July 31, 2013.

A request will be drafted for TIERS to automatically include the Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page with applicable notices on all case actions where a notice is generated to applicants/recipients who indicate their preferred language is Vietnamese. Other languages may also be included in the request for automation.

Until TIERS can be updated to support automatically including Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page with applicable notices, **staff must follow the guidance provided in this bulletin** to ensure applicants/recipients receive the required Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page when applicable.

### **Handbook**

Section 9000 was added to Chapter C of the MEPD Handbook and is effective September 2013. The handbook will be further updated with the December 2013 revision.

### **Training**

MEPD New Hire Training and Continuing Skills Training will be updated to reflect this new update.

**Effective Date**

Eligibility specialists must begin providing the Vietnamese interpreter/translation information page with eligibility notices (H1020s, H1020MAs, and TF0001s) as outlined in this bulletin no later than July 31, 2013.