**NEVADA GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**



**DRAFT Position on Language Access**

Currently in the World there are over 7,100 languages. It is critical for life that all members of the community can receive information and services in their native language. For many Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities this includes languages beyond English and includes American Sign Language, Braille, Large Print, and Audio.

Currently nearly one billion people or 15 percent of the world’s population have some form of disability, and 1 in 4 adults live with a disability that impacts their cognition, hearing, and/or vision. Language access allows for equal access to documents, products, services, and supports that meet the needs of all people, specifically those with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications, and access to state and local government programs and services. The ADA requires that state and local governments, as well as businesses and nonprofit organizations, communicate as effectively with people who have communication disabilities as those without.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires all federal agencies to maintain communications in an accessible format, including electronic information, web pages, and other digital content, including those accessed through mobile devices or smartphones. Additionally, all communications formats include Word, pdf, audio, video, and PowerPoint files.

**The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) believes that language access is vital to ensuring people with disabilities receiving timely, clear, and direct access to information that impacts their lives and the lives of their family members. By creating language access this reduces confusion, misunderstanding, delays in services, and creates empowerment, clarity, and higher quality care.**

**Policy Recommendations:**

* Create a language access plan that defines how to provide meaningful access to services to individuals whose primary language is anything other than English or who have limited English proficiency.
* Make reasonable efforts to eliminate or reduce barriers to accessing information for those whose primary language is anything other than English or who have limited English proficiency.
* Communicate all information as effectively to individuals with whose primary language is anything other than English or who have limited English proficiency, to the same level of access received by those whose primary language is not anything other than English or for those who do not have limited English proficiency.
* Provide interpretation or language translation of information into the primary language of the target audience that retains the same meaning, intent, and quality of the original messaging.
* Ensure language used is plain language and can be easily understood by all audiences.