

## 2.4 Government Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Nova Scotians

### Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to ensuring that persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing benefit equally from services offered to the general public and will make reasonable accommodation for the provision of interpreter services.

### Definition

Interpreter services may be provided to persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing through a variety of mediums, and these are outlined in Appendix 2-E.

### Policy Objectives

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to provide services to persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing in a fair and non-discriminatory manner through the provision of interpreter services.

### Application

This policy applies to all government departments, their agencies, boards, and commissions.

### Policy Directives

The government will make reasonable accommodation for the provision of interpreter services to ensure effective communication in the delivery of government services to persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing.

To ensure effective communication in the delivery of government services to persons who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing, consideration will be given to factors such as:

- the complexity and importance of the information to be communicated
- the context in which the communication takes place.

## **Policy Guidelines**

Policy guidelines will be developed by government departments to ensure that their agencies, boards, and commissions provide services in a fair and non-discriminatory manner by ensuring effective communication in the delivery of government services to persons who are deaf and hard-of-hearing through the provision of interpreter services. Such guidelines will be established within one year of the effective date of this policy.

## **Accountability**

Ministers/Deputy Ministers are responsible for ensuring that their respective government departments develop policy and procedures that are consistent with the policy and directives contained in the Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Nova Scotians.

## **Monitoring**

Departments shall review the Interpreter Services Policy of their agencies, boards, and commissions on a periodic basis to ensure compliance with the Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy for Deaf and Hard-of-hearing Nova Scotians.

## **References**

*Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*

Government of Nova Scotia Affirmative Action Policy

Government of Nova Scotia Fair Hiring Policy

## **Enquiries**

General Enquiries, Public Service Commission (902) 424-7660

## **Appendix**

Appendix 2-E: Definitions

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*Approval date: September 25, 1998*

*Approved by: Executive Council*

*Manual release date: January 9, 2003*

*Most recent review:*

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## Appendix 2-E

# Definitions

The following definitions are provided for the understanding and proper implementation of this policy:

### **AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL)**

A visual gestural language with its own linguistic structure and grammar; the language used by most Deaf people in the U.S. and Canada.

### **COMPUTERIZED NOTE-TAKING**

One form of technical assistance provided to persons who are hard of hearing or late deafened. Computer note-takers are commonly used in large-group or educational settings. A hearing person sits beside the hard-of-hearing or late-deafened person and types information verbatim onto a laptop computer. The user of this service then reads the screen as information is being written and is thus able to more fully participate. When a group is relying on this service, information can be projected onto a large overhead screen for all to view simultaneously.

### **DEAF**

In recent years the capital “D” Deaf has emerged as the name preferred by people who identify with, and belong to, a group with a culture distinct from that of non-Deaf people. Like any cultural group, Deaf people have a language and set of social norms, behaviours and folklore that reflect the values of their group.

### **deaf**

When written, “small-d” deaf is becoming more accepted as a reference to a hearing deficit only and detached from any discussion of culture and/or language. One term represents a social-cultural perspective and the other a medical-pathological view.

### **DEAF-BLIND**

Describes a person who is unable to hear and unable to see. However, very few deaf-blind people are both profoundly deaf and totally blind.

### **HARD-OF-HEARING**

A person who is unable to follow a conversation between three or more people without the assistance of a hearing aid.

**HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

A diagnosed auditory deficit ranging from mild to profound that may or may not respond to medical intervention or amplification and that results in functional limitations in one or more areas of daily living.

**INTERPRETATION**

The process of changing a message from one language to another, conveying all essential elements of meaning and maintaining dynamic equivalence.

**INTERVENOR**

A person who provides interpretation, orientation, and mobility services to a person who is deaf-blind.

**LATE DEAFENED**

Describes a person who becomes deafened later in life due to illness, accident, disease or the normal process of aging.

**TRANSLATION**

The process of changing a message in a “frozen form” (written, videotape, audiotape) of one language to a “frozen form” of another language.