FORUM ON
LANGUAGE & DISABILITY ACCESS

https://dmas.virginia.gov/for-members/forum-on-language-and-disability-access/

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Insights on Implementing a Language and Disability Access Plan

December 3, 2024 (1PM-3PM)

DMAS

Logistics

- This presentation is being recorded and will be available for viewing on the DMAS website at a later time.

- This presentation is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

- Add your name, job title and organization you represent in the chat

- Remote Conference Captioning (RCC) available through Virginia Relay. Find link in the chat

- American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL) available through the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH)
    - To Pin the ASL: Click on the ASL video feed and then select the three-dots menu icon on the feed. A drop-down menu appears. Select Pin for me.

- If you experience technical difficulties during this call, e-mail: civilrightscoordinator@dmas.virginia.gov

- If you have questions, please enter them in the chat and we will address them at the end of this presentation as time allows

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Today's Agenda

1:00 P.M. – 1:05 P.M.	**Welcome and Introductions**
1:05 P.M. – 1:10 P.M.	**Opening Keynote -** Teri Morgan, Executive Director - Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
1:10 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.	**Presentation** – A Sample Approach to the Implementation of the DMAS Language and Disability Access Plan. By Montserrat Serra, DMAS Civil Rights Coordinator
1:30 P.M. – 2:45 P.M.	**Panel Discussion** – Building Language and Disability Access Plans

- Craig Fifer, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner - Virginia Department of Social Services
- Yvonne Simpson, Senior Director - Language Access and Cultural Advocacy, University of Washington Medicine
- Jason Hubbard, Associate Director, Spanish & Foreign Language Interpreters - University of Rochester Medical Center
- Morgan Underwood, Associate Director of ASL Interpreter Services, Patient Care - University of Rochester Medical Center

2:45 P.M. – 2:55 P.M.	**Q&A and Public Comments**
2:55 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.	**Closing**

Teri Morgan

Executive Director

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Presentation

A Sample Approach to the Implementation of the DMAS Language and Disability Access Plan

By Montserrat Serra, DMAS Civil Rights Coordinator

Overview

- Understanding **regulatory requirements** (CMS Final Rule - Section 1557) for compliance by 2025.

- The **importance** of having a Language and Disability Access Plan for compliance and service delivery.

- The **steps** involved in creating an effective plan: Needs assessment, plan development, training, and monitoring.

- Practical **resources** and tools to help agencies and organizations implement and refine their own plans.
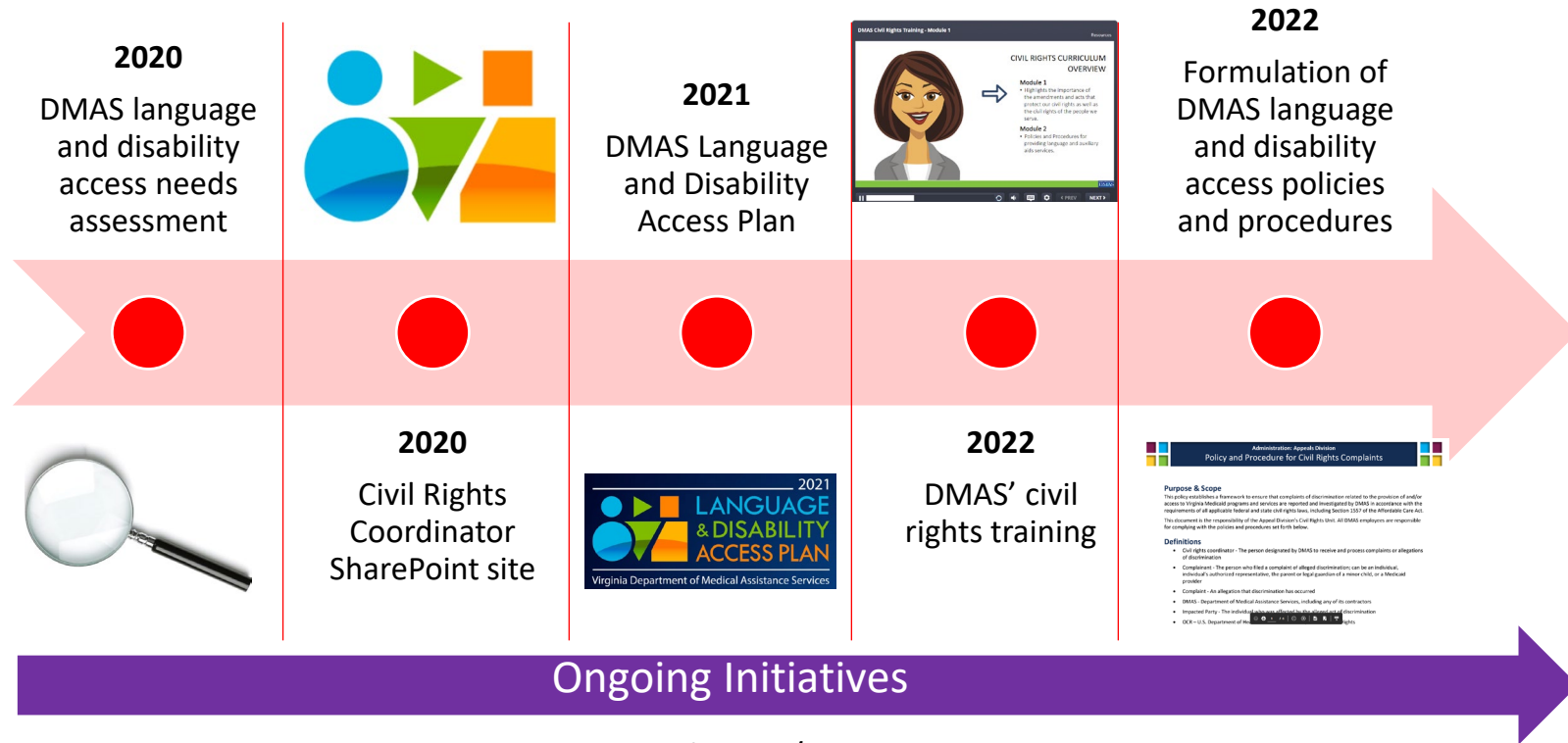
Regulatory Requirements - CMS Final Rule (Section 1557)

- **Key Regulation:**
  - **Section 1557:** Requires written policies and procedures for language and disability access.
  - **Deadline:** Must be implemented by May 6, 2025.
- **Impact:** Compliance with federal regulations to provide services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals and people with disabilities.

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DMAS Language & Disability Access Plan Overview

- **DMAS's Commitment:**
  - Provide equitable services for LEP individuals and those with disabilities.
  - Implement a comprehensive plan to meet legal requirements and address gaps in service delivery.
- **Core Components:**
  - **Needs Assessment:** Evaluation of language and disability access needs.
  - **Plan Development:** Write the Language & Disability Access Plan.
  - **Implementation:** Provide guidelines, resources, and staff training.
  - **Monitoring & Updating:** Track trends and update the plan as needed.

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DMAS Timeline

2020

DMAS language and disability access needs assessment

2021

DMAS Language and Disability Access Plan

2022

Formulation of DMAS language and disability access policies and procedures

2020

Civil Rights Coordinator SharePoint site

2022

DMAS' civil rights training

Ongoing Initiatives

- **Language Access Services Requests:** translations/interpretations
- **Auxiliary Aids Requests:** Webinar Remote Close Captioning (RCC) services, among others
- **Monitor compliance of language and disability access policies**
- **Monitor language usage data**

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Conducting a Needs Assessment

- **Purpose:** Helps agencies determine if they effectively communicate with LEP individuals and people with disabilities.

- **Process:**
  - Use DOJ's Language Access Assessment & Planning Tool (Source: DOJ)
  - Assess LEP and disabled communities, language assistance services, staff training, and more.

Components of a Needs Assessment

- **Focus Areas:**
  - Understanding interactions with LEP and disabled individuals.
  - Identifying and Assessing LEP and Disability Communities
  - Identifying language and disability access gaps.
  - Evaluating staff training needs.
  - Monitoring and tracking trends.
- Methods for Conducting a Needs Assessment:
  - Surveys/Questionnaires
  - Interviews/Focus Groups
  - Data Analysis
  - Stakeholder Engagement
  - Community Feedback

What is a Language & Disability Access Plan?

- **Definition:** A document detailing how an organization will provide accessible services to LEP individuals and people with disabilities.

- **Customization:** Tailored to individual agencies but with common elements.

Best Practices for Writing Your Plan

- **Engage Leadership:** Ensure leadership buy-in for successful implementation.

- **Involve Stakeholders:** Gather feedback from staff and the communities served.

- **Publish:** Make the plan accessible (e.g., on your website).

Key Take Aways

- **Compliance Deadline:** HHS agencies must have a Language & Disability Access Plan in place by May 6, 2025, per CMS Section 1557.
- **Needs Assessment:** An essential first step in understanding language and disability access needs and identifying service gaps.
- **Tailored Plans:** Each organization should develop a customized plan with critical components like training, language services, and ongoing evaluation.
- **Resources Available:** Utilize DOJ's assessment tools, and LEP.gov for guidance and templates.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Continuously track and update your plan to meet the evolving needs of LEP individuals and those with disabilities.

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Panel Discussion:

Building Language and Disability Access Plans

Virginia Department of Social Services

- **Craig Fifer**, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner

University of Wasington Medicine

- **Yvonne Simpson**, Senior Director - Language Access and Cultural Advocacy

University of Rochester Medical Center

- **Jason Hubbard**, Associate Director, Spanish & Foreign Language Interpreters

- **Morgan Underwood**, Associate Director of ASL Interpreter Services, Patient Care

Panelists Questions

1. Please describe your role and the services your agency provides to the community.

Panelists Questions

2. Did you encounter any unexpected challenges during the implementation process of writing your plan? If so, how did you address them?

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Panelists Questions

3. How do you ensure ongoing compliance and effectiveness of your language and disability access plan?

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Panelists Questions

4. What role did stakeholder engagement (e.g., employees, customers, or clients) play in shaping your plan?

Panelists Questions

5. What advice would you give to organizations just starting to build a language and disability access plan?

6. What motivated your organization to develop a language and disability access plan? And has your organization met your goals as part of this initiative?

Panelists Questions

7. How did you secure buy-in from leadership or other departments in your organization for this initiative?

Q&A and Public Comments

Questions and comments will be addressed during today's event as time allows.

- Type your question on the chat, or
- Email your question to civilrightscoordinator@dmas.virginia.gov

Unaddressed questions will be published on the DMAS website

Closing Remarks and Resources

- **CMS Final Rule (Section 1557)**

- **LEP.gov: Comprehensive Language Access resources**.

- **Title VI Guidance: Title VI Guidance for Recipients**.

- **DMAS Plan: DMAS Language & Disability Access Plan**.

- **Self-Assessment Tool: DOJ's Language Access Assessment & Planning Tool**.