



# Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

## **Parent Advisory Group (PAG)**

### **Meeting Minutes**

March 13, 2024 – 7:00p.m.- 8:30p.m.

Virtual Meeting

#### **Welcome, Virtual Meeting Protocols and Introductions**

DCYF Community Engagement Manager, Emily Morgan welcomed attendees and the group walked through virtual meeting protocols and introduced themselves in the chat.

#### **Language Access Plan (LAP)**

Language Access Compliance Manager, Cameron Dunlop and Dual Language Coordinator, Yolanda Arellano provided a brief overview of LAP the procedures, processes, and best practices to help DCYF promote language-based inclusion and enhance our capacity to serve families with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

- [Language Access Plan presentation](#)

<b>Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does Language Access mean to you?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ It opens the world to WA residents, and it's good for WA students, adventurers, businesses, and job seekers.</li><li>○ Communicating at the level which is understood best by the client. It means not using a family member to translate. When communicating medical information, using terms that are understood by the client.</li><li>○ Language services help community members gain access to necessary resources and help ensure their total understanding and their true needs. It also helps take the responsibility off children and using them to translate so much for parents. This can cause them to miss school or cause the parents to not have proper translations when the child is not with them.</li><li>○ Polleverywhere.com you can put the QR code all over WA. It will help with Data Science. We need this program to be up at the Office of Equity so it can be at ALL WA government services and agencies.</li></ul></li><li>• In the past DCYF has had issues with interpreter contracts for families with different languages. Is there a plan to secure interpreters for families?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Yes, we have a different contract in place for those interpreters' vendors. You touch on an important point, certain languages that are underrepresented are challenging to find or schedule on-demand interpreters. For example, it can be challenging to find interpreters for certain Indigenous (Mexican and Central America) languages, but there is a coalition in Oregon that works specifically with those languages. It's about understanding what languages may be underrepresented and accounting them, so they have a seat at</li></ul></li></ul>
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the table. If we don't have a direct contracting vendor, we may have to work with different organizations for those interpreter services.

- Sometimes (DCYF) language is not accessible, for example written policy. There can be fear and shame associated with asking for help. What are you doing to ensure you're serving all communities inclusively?
  - Great question, we are collaborating with the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice team (ORESJ). They have published different cultural related terms for cultural awareness and humanity. We work to make sure what is being conveyed to everyone is understood and make things simpler. This gives us the opportunity to facilitate the whole process (scheduling and getting translation services). Maybe this is a conversation with the ORESJ team to work together on making things more accessible for all audiences.
    - Anytime there is a translation request, it's an opportunity to review our English language and our plain talk. This is an important ongoing conversation to have with our internal DCYF staff as well.
- Are there specialized complaint processes in other divisions of DCYF, or just language access?
  - DCYF conducts investigations that are CPS, Licensing, and Subsidy Fraud specific. In the future we want to develop a process specific to language access.
    - There's a [constituent relations team](#) for resolving complaints as well. Email: [constrelations@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:constrelations@dcyf.wa.gov)
- What's the budget for translation services to implement this plan? Has that budget been approved by the legislature?
  - There's a ballpark budget of 2 million dollars until 2025 and will be up for review. There's a proposal to expand it as well.
- Do you have an estimate of what the increased budget would need to be?
  - We see that there will be a need for interpretation and translation services which will increase the expenditure of our team and services.
- What about Thriving Wages? For example, one issue we have in this state is caregiving and doesn't pay Thriving Wages and so only agency executives benefit instead of residents.
  - If there are childcare deserts and that need our services, that could be through language access plan grant proposal.



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- Are you talking about thriving wages for DCYF staff working on language access or interpreters?
  - As a taxpayer my concern is from a social justice cause. Contracting agencies that don't pay a thriving wage still profit, but lead to long waitlists for families and less access to services.
- When it comes to language services, has DCYF investigated hiring communities who have experience with DCYF and training them for the language services (creating job opportunities for Washington residents from different communities)?
  - The Language Access Services team has experience outside of DCYF including Early Learning and the University of Washington (UW).
    - DCYF should create job opportunities within communities to serve their own communities. If you're going to foster a level of trust, give opportunities for people on the outside too. It's rewarding for people who have the lived experience to service those communities and families as interpreters and DCYF should be hiring these people.
      - That's a great point and this might look like working collaboratively with other agencies.
        - Our Language Access Coordinators are very aware of the lack of trust that exists and are actively working to make connections with certain community based organizations. And I would include how do we contract with those organizations to offer language services. That's a great question!
- We use a system at our hospital that allows for us to choose male/ female (for cultural practices) and it's on demand services called Indy.
  - We do provide on demand services, but the challenge is making sure our internal DCYF trainings have direct communication and interaction with the community members and partners. Again, we want to make everything simpler for community.
    - We ensure that family is not there to interpret.
- There's a [WA Able Account](#), which could be used to pay for translation services and get a tax refund, this could help with the budget as well. [State 529](#) (Washington Dream Account) provides apprenticeships for students



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	<p>and could be used as trainings and provides benefits, <a href="#">Washington Dream Ahead</a> and Vocational Rehabilitation I would highly recommend looking into those programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Thank you, that's a great point and this could pave a pathway for future interpreters' jobs within communities.</li><li>● <a href="#">Northwest Access Fund</a> could be a potential resource for building a language access partnership.</li><li>● Add LAP survey to the Facebook DCYF page.</li></ul>
<b>Follow up</b>	Please reach out to <a href="mailto:dcyf.languageaccess@dcyf.wa.gov">dcyf.languageaccess@dcyf.wa.gov</a> for any follow up questions.

#### **Closing Remarks/Adjourn**

<b>Next Steps/Follow Up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The remainder of PAG 2024 will be held virtually.</li><li>● There is an open PAG seat on the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) please submit your biography to <a href="mailto:dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov">dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov</a> if you're interested in serving.</li><li>● Beginning this summer we will start sending emails out from Emily Morgan's account (<a href="mailto:Emily.morgan@dcyf.wa.gov">Emily.morgan@dcyf.wa.gov</a>) instead of the Community Engagement team account (<a href="mailto:dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov">dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov</a>). You should continue to include <a href="mailto:dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov">dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov</a> for support needs until we officially make the change.</li></ul>
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