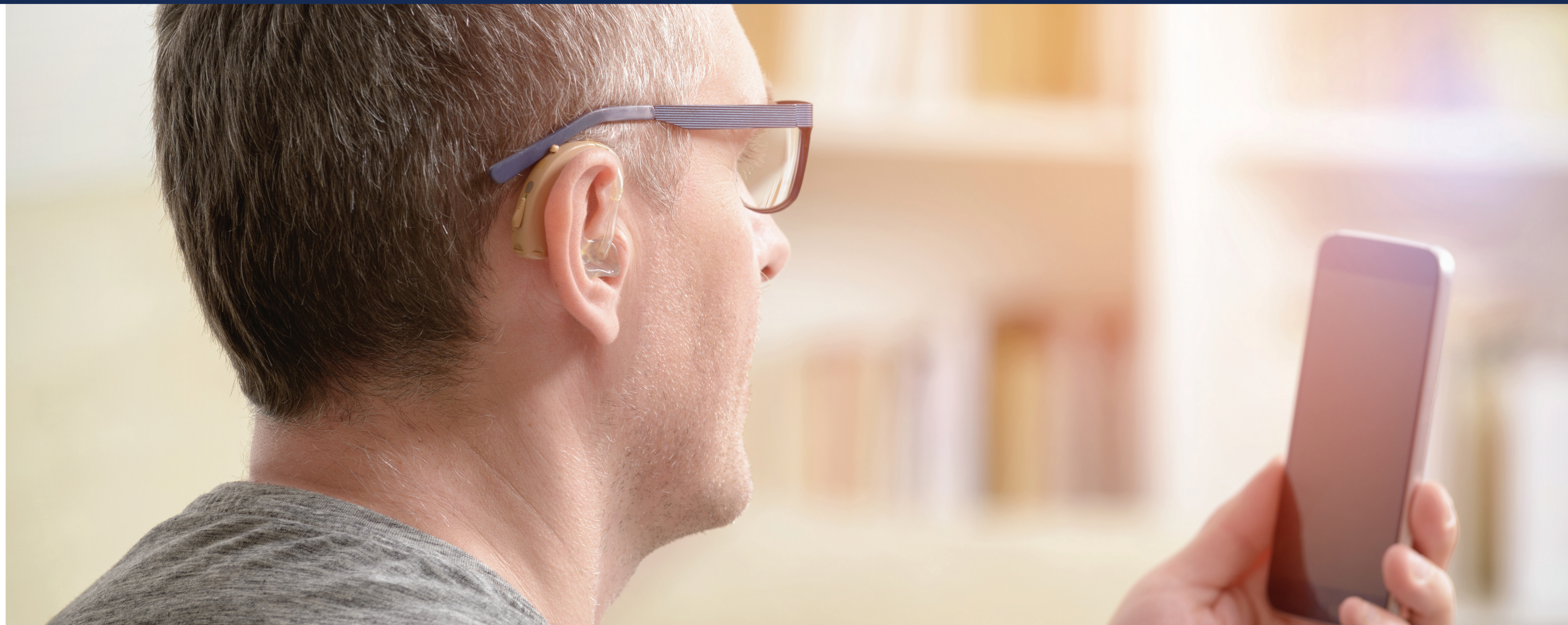


Speak “We” First: Developing a Center-wide Language Access Plan (LAP)

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Background

- Identified the need for a language access plan while attending the Leadership Institute for Cultural Diversity and Cultural and Linguistic Competence
- Existing LAPs with a standardized format were not readily available on campus
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) was concurrently developing their own LAP template for network reference
- Individual providers face challenges starting the LAP process, knowing what language access content to outline, and who to involve in the creation of an individualized LAP

Objectives

What is a language access plan?

A clear, comprehensive, and centralized document that outlines procedures for monitoring and accessing language services (summarized from criteria listed by U.S. Department of Justice, 2011)

- Understand and detail the components of a LAP
- Describe the process to create a LAP at a UCEDD
- Convey to other UCEDDs the importance of having a LAP
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act bans discrimination, including against those of Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Development Process

- Surveyed Diversity and Inclusion Committee members using the Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011)
- Researched other LAPs within universities, health settings, and disability service organizations
- Obtained LAP template from Massachusetts Legal Services (2013)
- Modified template for human service use, assigned responsibilities (to the Committee and WVU CED Communications Officer), and began developing the Center’s LAP
- Shared efforts with representatives from the National Center for Cultural Competence, who were concurrently providing the WVU CED with technical assistance for training development
- Drafted individualized LAP identifying current procedures and resources for language access services
- Submitted LAP draft to WVU CED Director, who provided feedback
- Began implementation of LAP
 - Identifying and compiling contact information for in-house interpreters
 - Researching options and feasibility for remote-based interpretation
 - Identifying and promoting professional development opportunities for additional multilingual staff training

Conclusions

- Making capacity judgments based on past need and demand (or the lack thereof) can undermine current and future capacity to provide adequate language access
- LAP should be viewed comprehensively as including services, policies, and procedures for those with LEP, including those with visual and hearing disabilities
- UCEDDs should closely examine existing policies and procedures to ensure staff can access needed language services
- Key steps for implementing and broadening language access services (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, 2018) include
 - Notices (e.g., “I Speak…” signs in multiple languages)
 - Training (on rationale, procedures, and resources of a LAP)
 - Evaluation of changing demographics, staff member skills, LAP utilization, and consumer satisfaction



Findings/Results

- Self-assessment revealed various, disconnected components were in place
 - Many staff were unaware of exact procedures or university contacts for efficiently addressing LEP needs
 - No single, centralized document outlining procedures
- Overall lack of formalized and unified policies and procedures for accessing language services
- Systems need to be in place to support the implementation of the LAP
 - Identified information dissemination, data collection, accounting, and assistive technology needs
- LAP needed, even among states with limited racial diversity
 - Braille, American Sign Language, transcription and translation services

References

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