00:00:26:19 - 00:00:32:22

Shaun Wood

[Shaun Wood] I'd like to introduce Trish from Clark County. And Trish, if you can start with introductions, introduce yourself. That'll be great.

00:00:34:22 - 00:00:55:15

Trish Buescher

[Trish Buescher] Thanks Shaun. Hi, everybody. My name is Trish Buescher. I'm Clark county's developmental disabilities program manager. Coming to you here from southwest Washington, Vancouver, Washington, specifically on the ancestral lands of the Clark or the Cowlitz and Chinook people.

00:00:57:21 - 00:01:55:08

Trish Buescher

So I'm excited to be here. I have to tell you, all that being asked to be here is an honor. And it's not one because I have vast expertize in this area. I think that I was asked to be here today because myself, my team and our department has prioritized language access as part of our larger efforts around equity, specifically around racial equity, but also to include LGBTQ I A Plus, and people who speak different languages I so when I talk about equitable outcomes, you know, that's what we're trying to get to.

00:01:55:15 - 00:02:57:03

Trish Buescher

I'm talking about access to information and also for us, that means looking at our program outcomes and kind of taking the pieces of the data that we have and pulling that apart by these different identities that I mentioned so that we can see if we're having equitable outcomes or not. We also want to pay attention to the quality of the experience of the people that we're supporting their families as well as staff some of the things that are working for us is that we have probably our most successful effort has been the Family Transition Training series, and this came about because I'll have to say that it came about because families asked for access we

00:02:57:03 - 00:03:49:11

Trish Buescher

had families that started coming to the family training series and we had been providing interpretation services. We provided the interpreter for the events and kind of patted ourselves on the back as if we had done something that made sense we began hearing about families that the interpreter, the interpretation maybe wasn't good enough the interpreters would we would hear that they were having trouble interpreting the information on but we really didn't know what to do about that until we, I think, made it a priority to do that.

00:03:50:14 - 00:04:09:15

Trish Buescher

And, you know, things had to come to a head a little bit where we had interpreters that really just could not do what we were asking of them. So we had to really look at what we were doing and reassess and see if there's something else that we could do differently.

00:04:13:23 - 00:04:36:09

Trish Buescher

So speaking of doing things differently, I can't see if somebody comes up and tells me that I am talking too fast. So if there is any issue with the interpretation, somebody is going to have to come on and tell me so that I can hear it with my ear. So I hope that one of the wise staff can do that for me.

00:04:39:18 - 00:05:15:11

Trish Buescher

So in that training, we moved from an ask and answer model. So meaning that we didn't we decided not to wait for families to ask us and tell us that they needed an interpreter. We made the decision to provide Spanish language interpretation and American Sign Language at all of the family training series, and we did that because we had a priority, and those were the two languages that we had had requests for in the past.

00:05:17:01 - 00:05:35:13

Trish Buescher

We believe that by doing this and really making an effort to increase the quality of the information that's provided to families in this way, that we can learn from that and be able to expand that to other languages.

00:05:38:10 - 00:06:30:04

Trish Buescher

We have also had we've experimented with different things. So I know that the Parent Coalition has their language in their newsletter in six different languages. We did. We do a survey for our comprehensive plan that we provided in six different, different languages I think that we still have a lot more work to do in order to keep this going and be able to provide information in a way that makes sense for families let's see here resources that are available.

00:06:30:04 - 00:07:04:17

Trish Buescher

So we're still working on this, but we have made these interpreters and translation available through our information and education dollars we've also used local funds if needed. So I've talked a little bit about interpretation for these events. I also want to talk about translation a little bit. So as I said earlier, we have been providing interpreters for our trainings and thought that we were doing a good thing there.

00:07:05:22 - 00:07:33:21

Trish Buescher

I remember one particular event and I was there. We had a table of handouts. This was back when we were in person. We had a table of handouts laid out, and I saw one of our Spanish speaking families walk up to that table and it registered to her and I registered that we didn't have any of our handouts that were translated.

00:07:34:22 - 00:08:11:07

Trish Buescher

So we have learned through that through kind of some trial and error. We bring a willingness to be able to we're trying to get it right for the families that we support and we have a lot more work to do and some of the things that we've tried is that we have provided translation of presentations and handouts to provide to families and to provide to interpreters.

00:08:11:07 - 00:08:51:21

Trish Buescher

Prior to our trainings, we've done things like developing vocabulary lists and having them translated and provided to families and interpreters prior to the training some of the things that we still need to work on include having a systemic approach to language access in our system. So there's a lot more that we can be doing to make sure that our forms and information that we use on a regular basis are available in the languages that our customer base speak on.

00:08:52:05 - 00:09:16:23

Trish Buescher

And we can know that I talked to a central office where I let them know that I was going to tell you all this, but there are reports that we can get about the language spoken at home and also the guardian language of the people that we're supporting so we can get that information. So that we know what Link need to provide information in.

00:09:17:16 - 00:10:05:17

Trish Buescher

And that's something that we're working on right now. We need to do more in the day to day access that our contractors are providing and we have a process and we still need to do some work to assure that our contractors understand the skills necessary to access, but also in using interpreters and working with families who might not speak English as a first language and I want to emphasize that this is a priority, a priority to us.

00:10:06:06 - 00:10:22:06

Trish Buescher

Our advisory board has identified equity as a priority in our comprehensive plan. Language access is a requirement that we want to make available to our customers and families and we still have work to do to be able to do that.

00:10:26:10 - 00:10:58:04

Trish Buescher

You know, I just want to mention that, you know, I'm not here as an expert. I'm here as a funder who has tried some things. And there have been a lot of other people who have championed this effort, aside from me. And I just want to mention open doors for multiple multicultural families who have been advancing the needs and concerns of families with language needs for many years.

00:10:58:14 - 00:11:36:16

Trish Buescher

And that will continue to look for ways to support their work and partner together. Our department head, Vanessa Gaston, has led our department through our work with Equity and in our focus around equity. I have learned a lot from her, and she has consistently identified that the work around equity is a priority for us in our department. Our program coordinator, Angela Gomez, listens and advocated for families and brought her Expertize that she had from previous roles to this work.

00:11:37:04 - 00:12:24:20

Trish Buescher

She has expertize in using and working with families who don't speak English as a first language. And last but certainly not least, the families that showed up and spoke up about their need for clear and understandable information you know, we need families to keep showing up and asking, but or and we also understand that we need to do better and make it kind of normalize the idea that we're going to be using language access tools that we have available to us to make sure that we are providing information that makes sense.

00:12:29:16 - 00:12:32:19

Shaun Wood

Thank you so much, Trish. Is that everything you wanted to share?

00:12:33:06 - 00:12:40:14

Trish Buescher

I think that that's it. I hope I touched on all of the things that you wanted yeah.

00:12:40:15 - 00:13:05:21

Shaun Wood

[Shaun] We asked you to talk about what is working, what resources are available, how do customers access language access services in the system that you that you work in and your ideas for the future? I'm really excited for this philosophy of putting things and resources up front as opposed to waiting for people to ask. It helps families, but it also helps direct service providers from not having to be responsible for knowing what's out there.

00:13:06:20 - 00:13:19:00

Shaun Wood

And I'm really excited to see what Clark County does in implementing that information you get from the state about languages that are spoken at home and from The Guardian. So Trish, can you keep us up to date on what what happens there in Clark County?

00:13:19:15 - 00:13:20:10

Trish Buescher

[Shaun] I will do that.

00:13:20:20 - 00:13:49:03

Shaun Wood

Thank you. I also want to second your recommendation to check out Open Doors for Multicultural Families, an incredible organization which we're partnering with for this language access forum. I put their website into the chat box, so you'll have to check out their website. You can look at it there OK. Now, I believe just that actually you're going next and then DVR unless unless we all want to switch that.

00:13:49:17 - 00:13:54:19

Cassie Viegas

[Cassie Viegas] Yep. Shaun this is Cassie. We are going to switch and I'm going to go before Jeff today.

00:13:54:21 - 00:13:56:19

Shaun Wood

[Shaun] Wonderful. OK, thank you. Take it away, Cassie.

00:13:56:23 - 00:14:32:01

Cassie Viegas

[Cassie] Yeah, thanks. Hi, everybody. I am Cassie, Viegas. I am the equity excuse me, equity, diversity, access and inclusion administrator for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. I'm also our statewide tribal liaison and I'm also our language access administrator. So I wear a lot of hats over at DVR, but all of those things connect to each other to make sure that our services are accessible and equitable for customers, partners and for our staff.

00:14:33:09 - 00:14:49:17

Cassie Viegas

So thanks so much for having me. I'm really happy to be here. I'm already learning so much from all of you. I'm I'm honored to be a part of the panel and to share, but mostly to learn from all of you. I already have some ideas to take back with me to make things better. So thank you so much up front.

00:14:50:13 - 00:15:16:10

Cassie Viegas

So first, I'm just going to go over what's working and what resources are available so it's a little challenging with DVR. I'm not sure that everybody has experience with DVR. We're very niche. We do job services, job training, things like that. And while we don't necessarily have a lot of resources available for all of you in terms of funding, there are some things that I may be able to offer to you.

00:15:16:10 - 00:15:42:12

Cassie Viegas

And also, like I said, new ideas for how we can move forward. So right now, DVR counselors, those that are working with our customers directly, they can assist all of you service providers or family members, even in determining language access needs for the customer. We can work with all of you to determine primary languages, spoken, written and sign.

00:15:43:02 - 00:16:18:23

Cassie Viegas

And those things are typically determined and documented before our customers are referred out to a service provider. And so if we have that information, we share that information with service providers during consultation and during intake, we can assist service providers with securing interpreters or securing translation services. You all are able, as service providers and counties are able to access the contracts that we use for interpreters and translators.

00:16:19:09 - 00:16:42:15

Cassie Viegas

It doesn't mean that we can guarantee you'll get the same rates that we have through the Department of Enterprise Services. That's the state agency that holds all of the contracts for the all of us in the state. So we can't guarantee you'll get the same rates, but you can also ask for them. We can't tell you that the honor them, but sometimes they do, which is really cool.

00:16:43:06 - 00:17:17:08

Cassie Viegas

And sometimes they don't, which is really unfortunate. But we can get those lists to you. So that way you can see yeah, we can share those resources with you. So that way you know who is available in the state and who we use. So that's one resource at this time. DVR does expect that you as a service provider would pay for language access services in most cases.

00:17:17:18 - 00:17:47:01

Cassie Viegas

So in the jobs service contract that we have with counties and other providers, we do have language in there that says you pay for ADA accommodations American, but Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations as well as civil rights, which includes language access. There are some rooms for exceptions to that however, those are determined on a case by case basis.

00:17:47:14 - 00:18:25:07

Cassie Viegas

And those exceptions go through our director. So if you did not know that and this is a news to you, I'm glad I'm glad to share that information. If you need to make exceptions, please contact the counselor that you're working with and they'll direct you to our director and the information that would be needed for that if a provider knows that a customer is going to need translation or interpretation services, one thing you can do is use that as a reason to negotiate a higher service level for the service.

00:18:26:07 - 00:18:52:05

Cassie Viegas

So it DVR. We have different service levels. And if someone say a level one, you tend to get paid less because the idea is there's less work that goes into serving that person. But if you know that they need interpretation or translation services, any language access service talk to the counselor and ask them to increase the service level.

00:18:55:11 - 00:19:39:03

Cassie Viegas

So accessing language access in DVR for eligible or potentially eligible customers, they would work with the counselor or the DVR representative that is helping them fill out applications or paperwork. The language access needs can be addressed at any time. So say we don't know that there's a language access barrier until later in the service. That doesn't mean we can't fix that barrier and can't approach the situation to figure out what is needed for the customer right now due to the pandemic.

00:19:39:03 - 00:20:11:16

Cassie Viegas

We have more options for on demand or over the phone virtual interpreters than we have had in the past. DHS right now is in the process of ensuring that we keep that so we can continue to have access to virtual interpreters. Previously, that was a challenge for us. So we're in the process right now of working on a contract to ensure that that stays that way for at least I think it's the next two, maybe three years.

00:20:12:06 - 00:20:26:14

Cassie Viegas

So that's something that's really awesome that's working for us right now. We have other contracts that we use that don't allow virtual services and won't in the future. So we have to look at other solutions for that moving forward.

00:20:28:17 - 00:20:53:16

Cassie Viegas

And then ideas for the future opportunities to grow. So again today I've heard so many opportunities for us to take back I saw on the pad what things like making it clear to all of you what the process looks like. So if you're working with DVR, having some sort of training or even if it's just a handout on how to contact interpreters or translators.

00:20:54:07 - 00:21:31:11

Cassie Viegas

So that's something I'm taking back with me. But DHS the Department of Social and Health Services where DVR and Jeff from DTA, where we said we have a language access plan that is department wide so we are all expected to operate under this plan and that's IDSA, DVR, DDA, some of you may be familiar with Alyssa, a L, TSA and then behavioral behavioral health administration and we all follow this language access plan.

00:21:32:10 - 00:22:01:12

Cassie Viegas

And in this plan there's a link in the chat if you want to look at it. It is only in English at this time. I'll look into seeing if we can find translated versions of this document. I believe we have them, but this plan includes ASP demands that all of our what we call vital documents are forms and template letters, things like that are translated into our top 13 languages and also large print English.

00:22:01:23 - 00:22:41:01

Cassie Viegas

And hopefully in the future we will be able to include ASL interpreted videos of written materials because we know that not everybody who signs is fluent in English. So that's coming too, which is really exciting. DVR is in the process of getting a new digital case management system, so that will be implemented July one of this year. And what's really cool about this new system is that we have included a new section on language access questions that we ask our customers during intake.

00:22:42:00 - 00:23:12:04

Cassie Viegas

We ask them what their primary languages are, and then we break that down into written, spoken or sign. So that way we know from the very beginning how to best communicate with a customer. And then like I said before, if we need to change that we can this new system allows us to really track the data that we need to ensure that we have the resources available to support language access for everybody.

00:23:12:12 - 00:23:39:09

Cassie Viegas

Before our old system didn't track those things. So it's hard to find the data that was useful. So we will be tracking that it's just a benefit to the work that we do. So it will also one other thing that's great about that is that it can inform our policies and practices to ensure that we're being the most effective in language access, not just for DDR, but also for DSA just as a whole.

00:23:39:22 - 00:23:50:09

Cassie Viegas

So with that, I'm going to stop and I'm going to give Jeff some time because I took up a lot of time. So thank you everybody again for sharing all of your ideas. Got a lot of room for growth here.

00:23:54:23 - 00:24:29:19

Jeff Flesner

[Jeff Flesner] Thank you, Cassie. My name is Jeff Flesner. I am the Language Access and Logistics Administrator for the Developmental Disabilities Administration. I work out of headquarters with two other people who are the Air Administrator as well as the tribal administrator. And we work as a team to try to provide great services for all DDA clients.

00:24:32:10 - 00:24:53:00

Jeff Flesner

Like Cassie said, we try to provide services from the get go if needed, if and when needed. And if services are needed, even in filling out the admissions form that is certainly available as well.

00:24:56:06 - 00:25:05:17

Jeff Flesner

We we work as a team to try to provide all services for all individuals in the language that they are most comfortable with.

00:25:08:10 - 00:26:00:04

Jeff Flesner

All of our meetings and availabilities can be have translation and interpreters available, but it needs to be done a little bit ahead of time so that we can provide for that the individuals if the case managers excuse me, if the case managers are not aware they should contact their regional operations manager or headquarters where we can make sure that those services can be available and applied should you have any questions, please let me know and I will turn it back over to Wise.

00:26:02:12 - 00:26:28:01

Shaun Wood

[Shaun] Thank you so much, Jeff. And thank you so much, Cassie. I don't know about you all, but I feel like in a room like this and a meeting like this, we get to be with people that are really trying to to solve some of these these challenging issues, questions and Cassie, Jeff, you all have really cool jobs, so thank you for sharing your expertize with us.

00:26:29:05 - 00:26:46:02

Shaun Wood

Same with you, Trish. We want to open this up. If anybody has any questions for you all around, accessing language services within your system or anything that maybe you want to question and more of a comment they want to share, this is a space where you can do that.

00:26:51:04 - 00:27:23:21

Shaun Wood

And other stakeholders have also asked for our for the Padlet. So we'll make sure that information gets out. You're welcome to use the reaction and raise your hands. There's a lot of us here that us now a model for you what that looks like looks like that's I, I believe as people are thinking about their questions, if you have any, I believe that people in Tricia's community know how to get a hold of us.

00:27:24:07 - 00:27:35:07

Shaun Wood

Of you, Trish but just in case you mentioned, if people have questions for you, would you take questions offline outside of this meeting? How could people get a hold of you if they wanted to chat?

00:27:36:21 - 00:27:41:10

Cassie Viegas

[Cassie] This is Cassie. I can put my email and phone number in the chat for everybody.

00:27:41:24 - 00:27:42:19

Shaun Wood

[Shaun] Wonderful. Thank you.

00:27:43:17 - 00:27:46:06

Jeff Flesner

[Jeff] And I will do the same absolutely. Thank you.

00:27:49:22 - 00:27:53:16

Shaun Wood

[Shaun] Trish, will you share your information to in case anybody has questions?

00:27:54:03 - 00:27:54:15

Trish Buescher

[Trish] I will.

00:27:56:09 - 00:28:20:13

Shaun Wood

[Shaun] We are obviously recording this, and so this will be available to folks in the future. And I think what I heard from the panel, you know, from Trish, you talked about the beginnings of what's what is possible in a county. And so even if you don't live in Tricia's community, you can take some of the words and the concepts that Trish shared and ask about implementing that where you live.

00:28:22:08 - 00:28:52:12

Shaun Wood

Cassie, you shared that DVR is a bit of a niche service, but I think actually in this group, the vast majority of us do interact with DDR quite often. So I think you're in the right place to talk to these folks. And Jeff, of course, where many of us are connected with today, so for we wrap up, so we've got the we have contact information in the chat and what we're going to do is make sure that we send that out with the materials.

00:28:53:00 - 00:28:56:16

Shaun Wood

So Morgan's copy that I can see she's got a copy face on right now.

00:28:59:06 - 00:29:02:00

Shaun Wood

Any questions before we close things up for this panel?

00:29:07:09 - 00:29:10:22

Shaun Wood

I see that Linda has has their hand up. Linda, what's going on?

00:29:11:18 - 00:29:26:06

Linda

Yeah, I just I was wondering if I could just kind of get us a summary or clarification on the DDA side. As a service provider yeah.

00:29:27:05 - 00:29:27:13

Shaun Wood

I'm sorry.

00:29:27:13 - 00:30:07:22

Linda

What should we be doing to request more interpretation services as people have said on the fly? Is there any talk of having extra funding for clients who have identified interpretation needs that we can use for, you know, that we can build somebody for in the vocational services area? Like an ETR or something like that, that clients who require those services have it set aside for their use because DDA knows that they're going to be needing it.

00:30:09:12 - 00:30:27:16

Linda

And just kind of as an add on to that for context, we're a fairly small agency, we're rural, we have enough trouble getting staffed, period, much less staff who speak a bunch of different languages. We just don't have anyone on staff who can provide the service.

00:30:29:22 - 00:30:34:07

Shaun Wood

[Shaun] Thank you so much for that question, Linda, on who who wants to start.

00:30:38:02 - 00:31:18:11

Jeff Flesner

[Jeff] Since she was referring to DDA. I can certainly try to address that, although I'm not quite sure the full extent of your questions. Linda, I'm so sorry. However, if you have a DDA case manager that you work with, they should be able to access interpreter or ASL services without regard to funding if if they have problems with that, please have them contact myself or their regional operations manager

00:31:18:11 - 00:31:49:05

Linda

OK. Just as a follow up. So is there a limit to the services we can request is it like every time we need an interpreter, would we have to call the case manager or is there some sort of arrangement whereby we can have a little more predictability in getting that kind of help with a particular client who's clearly been identified as needing interpreters services?

00:31:49:05 - 00:32:29:22

Jeff Flesner

Sure. Once the case manager is aware that some type of interpretation or interpretive services are needed, that should be a regular ongoing issue with that case manager to be able to access that service when needed, and if he's not, he or she is not providing that, we need to make sure that that is provided. So please have them or you contact either myself or headquarters of DDA headquarters to be able to access that type of service.

00:32:30:22 - 00:32:59:21

Linda

OK, and just a final question. Is there any kind of evidence or proof or documentation that we need to submit as providers that the client requires the service I mean, I would think that the case manager would already know the situation as far as language with the client or in the home. But is there another sort of documentation that we would need to do to get things started?

00:33:02:22 - 00:33:38:13

Jeff Flesner

There are numbers and languages available on the website. I believe that will show and gives you contact names and numbers for incoming individuals for DDA certainly they need to be a DDA client for us to provide that service and those services are available at the very beginning as necessary. I'm sorry, I may not be answering your question, but...

00:33:40:00 - 00:34:07:11

Linda

I think you did. I think probably the case manager would be able to tell us if we needed to document a need or an amount of need but it's good to know that that the case managers are aware of the process for doing that. I think like I said, those in our area, the clients that require that are easy to identify because there's not many of them.

00:34:08:03 - 00:34:15:21

Trish Buescher

So that might make it a little easier to to get things started for the ones who do. Thank you for answering my question.

00:34:17:10 - 00:34:36:09

Shaun Wood

Jeff, can I can I follow up there? Can I just clarify, would interpretation services be provided by DDA for DDA contracted services? If Linda is providing community based services, would her case manager be able to help set her up with interpretation services that she can use in the field?

00:34:38:04 - 00:34:47:13

Jeff Flesner

Provided that the individuals are covered? The individual or individual clients are DDA clients? Yes, she should be able to.

00:34:48:00 - 00:35:06:20

Shaun Wood

Great, thank you so much. And I think this is a great example of why contact information and showing up at a meeting like this is so helpful. So what I heard you say, Jeff, as we contact the CRM and then we've got your your information too, if we need some, if you have additional questions, I want to I'm sorry, I used an acronym.

00:35:06:20 - 00:35:29:10

Shaun Wood

I said CRM and CRM means case resource manager. I'm about to turn things back over to Katherine Titus, our emcee for the day this was an incredible learning opportunity for me, and I appreciate the chance to be here with you all. Katherine?

00:35:29:10 - 00:36:02:16

Katherine Titus

Thanks, Shaun. And thank you, everyone, who thanks again to the panel, of course. And thanks to those of you that had questions and sought some clarity. And you might find after the session that you think of more questions and so we would welcome you to email with those and to join us for our fifth time together, which will be on Wednesday, May 18th.

00:36:04:10 - 00:36:43:20

Katherine Titus

Are our topics moving forward. We'll be building our interpreter network and then technology access. So we're really grateful for those of you that are here. If there's someone else that you think should be here or could be here, that would be a great addition. Please let us know because we're all learning as well. And it's helpful to get references and invite people and bring in all of whom we can to get this get this right.

00:36:43:20 - 00:36:46:23

Katherine Titus

So thanks again, everyone. For being here.