
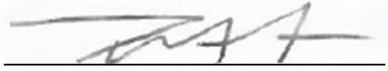


POLICY TITLE: STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED		PAGE 1 OF 4
POLICY NUMBER: 1.12 CHAPTER 1: ADMINISTRATION, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT		
	STATE of MAINE DEPARTMENT of CORRECTIONS	PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS: See Section VIII
	Approved by Commissioner: 	
EFFECTIVE DATE: May 24, 2013	LATEST REVISION: March 30, 2021	CHECK ONLY IF APA []

I. AUTHORITY

The Commissioner of Corrections adopts this policy pursuant to the authority contained in 34-A M.R.S.A. Section 1403.

II. APPLICABILITY

Entire Maine Department of Corrections

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to provide equal access to programs and services for persons who are blind or visually impaired.

IV. DEFINITIONS

1. Blind or visually impaired - a person who is blind or visually impaired is a person who has a functional vision deficit and, in the case of a person who is blind, has a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye or a field of view of 20 degrees or less in the better eye.

V. CONTENTS

Procedure A: Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired, General
 Procedure B: Services
 Procedure C: Translation of Documents

VI. ATTACHMENTS

None

VII. PROCEDURES

Procedure A: Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired, General

1. The Deputy Commissioner, facility Chief Administrative Officers, community corrections Regional Correctional Administrators, or their designees, shall ensure that, within the areas of their respective responsibilities, persons who are blind or visually impaired are provided Braille documents, large print documents, and/or other communication services for the blind and visually impaired, as necessary.
2. Each facility Chief Administrative Officer and each community corrections Regional Correctional Administrator, as well as the Associate Commissioners, shall designate staff who are responsible to ensure the provision of communication services for the blind or visually impaired.
3. Designated staff shall be trained in the following:
 - a. this policy; and
 - b. accessing communication services for the blind or visually impaired.
4. Communication services for the blind or visually impaired may include providing documents translated into Braille, large print documents, or audio versions of documents, whether pre-recorded or read out loud at the time.
5. When a member of the public requests or otherwise indicates to staff the need for communication services for the blind or visually impaired, staff shall make the arrangements, with a preference for staff reading pertinent documents out loud at the time of the request.
6. Complaints of discrimination against persons who are blind or visually impaired, including complaints of failure to comply with this policy and procedures, shall be handled in accordance with Department Policy 1.6, Prohibition on Discrimination. If the complaint is by a person who is blind or visually impaired, the staff attempting to resolve the complaint shall provide communication services for the blind or visually impaired as needed during the complaint process.

Procedure B: Services

1. At initial contact with staff, if a facility resident, community corrections client, parent, legal guardian, family member, or other person involved with the Department appears to have a guide dog, a white cane, or especially thick eye glasses or appears to be having trouble avoiding physical obstacles, staff shall consider the possibility that the person may be blind or visually impaired.
2. In addition, a Juvenile Community Corrections Officer who has received a referral from a law enforcement officer for preliminary investigation of a juvenile shall, if there is any indication that the juvenile is blind or visually impaired, take

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appropriate steps to determine if this is true, if possible prior to the initial contact with the juvenile.

3. Once it has been determined that a person is blind or visually impaired, staff shall verbally inform the person and, if the person has not attained the age of 18 years or is an adult with a guardian, the person's parent or guardian, that the person has the right to have communication services for the blind or visually impaired, at no cost to the person.
4. In addition, at this time, if the person who is blind or visually impaired is a facility resident or community corrections client, a notation shall be made by staff in CORIS to reflect the fact of the person's status and, if applicable, the person's communication service needs.
5. When a facility resident or community correction client or parent, legal guardian, family member, or other person involved with the Department who has been identified as blind or visually impaired accepts an offer of communication services or requests or otherwise indicates to staff the need for communications services, staff shall make arrangements for the services, with a preference for staff reading pertinent documents out loud at the time of the request.
6. The staff shall document in CORIS the type of communications services provided (e.g., Braille documents, large print documents, or audio versions of documents), the name of any staff reading documents out loud, if applicable, and the situation that required the provision of the communications services.
7. The staff shall document in CORIS if a facility resident or community corrections client or person involved with a resident or client declines an offer of communication services provided by the Department or if no service was provided for another reason and why.
8. Staff shall inform a person who has declined communication services provided by the Department that he or she has the right to request communication services provided by the Department at any subsequent time.

Procedure C: Translation of Documents

1. The Commissioner shall designate staff to determine which documents used by the Department must be translated into Braille or be available in a large print version. Translation is the process of conveying a document in Braille accurately and without changing its meaning by a neutral, trained and qualified translator.
2. The determination whether to have a document translated into Braille or made available in a large print version shall depend on the number of relevant residents or community corrections clients who are blind or visually impaired, the ability of those persons to read and understand the original document, and whether the document is considered essential. Pre-recorded audio versions of documents may be used in lieu of Braille or large print documents.

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VIII. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

None

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