



DAFN Workgroup meeting

September 16, 2024

| |
|--|
| Welcome and Introductions |
| Moving forward on priority topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access Standards for ADA and 504 compliance |
| Workgroup Infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA Portal Page |
| Agenda for next meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for group input |

Access Standards for ADA and 504 compliance

Javier Ruiz, the new civil rights and ADA program manager at the Department of Health shared his vision for the civil rights and ADA program. Javier discussed a new program to investigate complaints about equitable access to services for protected groups. The program does not handle employment issues but focuses on ensuring meaningful access for all customers (including those served by paid providers) through consultations, audits, and technical assistance. Javier emphasized the importance of civil rights compliance and outlined the complaint process. He mentioned plans to develop resources like an investigation process map and outreach materials.

Questions and Next Steps

- Javier was asked about complaints that touched on the work of multiple agencies. He said that in these cases they work collaboratively with their agency partners to reach a resolution. He also recommended that consumers with concerns reach out to all agencies connected to the issue.

Civil Rights and ADA Program

Mission: *To improve access and equitable participation in DOH's services*

Program's scope: Customer complaints v. DOH employees or paid providers

Consultations & technical assistance (grant applications)

Audit support (federal civil rights audit)

Protected class groups: race, creed, color, age, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, sex, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability...

- David shared his personal experiences of facing discrimination and the challenges of reporting incidents, emphasizing the need for deaf people to feel safe in reporting. He also highlighted the importance of accessibility in emergency preparedness, suggesting the need for clear and expanded information, including videos, pictures, and diagrams.
- The group emphasized the importance of face-to-face communication for visual languages like American Sign Language (ASL). It was proposed that ASL videos be part of outreach tools for complaint and investigations processes.
- David also mentioned his attempts to provide feedback to the Department of Health, which he felt was ignored. Javier suggested filing a formal complaint or reaching out to him. Javier also advised directing concerns to a general mailbox for assessment and appropriate action.
- The group discussed the need for additional capacity around ASL interpretation including:
 - The need for more male interpreters.
 - More bilingual interpreters.
 - The potential of community grants or educational grants to expand the interpreter base.

Ways to File a Complaint

Phone: 833-428-3703

Email: civil.rights@doh.wa.gov

In writing to:

Washington State Department of
Health

The Center for Facilities, Risk and
Adjudication

Attn: Civil Rights Program

PO Box 47890

Olympia, WA 98504-47890

Discrimination complaint form
(pending)

Discussion of the WA Portal's DAFN Page

In August Nilofer shared a draft landing page for the workgroup on the WA Portal <https://waportal.org/disabilities-and-access-functional-needs-workgroup>. In response to concerns expressed by the workgroup about the page's accessibility, the page was tested and a number of accessibility concerns were noted and shared with DOH staff responsible for WA portal. It was noted that these accessibility concerns related not just to the DAFN page, but to all the Community Collaborative pages.

The DOH team over WA Portal joined the workgroup to share the work that was being done to update WA Portal to address the accessibility concerns raised. They shared that while the work was underway, they could not provide a definitive timeline for the update as it involves the work of a subcontractor.

Questions and Next Steps

- Whether screen readers were available for forms was raised. Nilofer said she would look into this for Smart Sheet
- Questions were raised about the accessibility of some of the other DOH website pages. Victor noted that these are managed separately from WA Portal.



- Victor said he would reach back out to Nilofer when a more definitive timeline for the updates was available.
- The updated page will be shared with the group for additional feedback.
- Workgroup members stated that they don't want the page to be shared until the accessibility issues were resolved. Nilofer said she would convey this to Melissa.

Rulemaking video

Liz shared information about a new 3-minute animated video designed to introduce DOH's rulemaking process in a way that is accessible and welcoming to community members who aren't already familiar with it. She stated that they were looking for 10 deaf community member to review and provide feedback on the ASL interpreted version. She said she would reach out through the Gaggle group to share more information on this.

Items for the Next Meeting

Nilofer asked for input on the next meeting's agenda but there was not time for sustained discussion of this topic.