POLICY PURPOSE:
It is the policy of the Cedar Rapids Police Department (CRPD) to ensure that a consistently high level of service is provided to all community members, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing or non-English speaking. This agency has specific legal obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act.

DEFINITIONS:
Auxiliary aids and services – Aids and services are used to communicate with people who are hearing impaired. These may include the use of:
- Gestures or visual aids to supplement oral communication
- An exchange of written communication such as a notepad and pen or pencil or cell phone texting
- An assistive listening system or device to amplify sound for persons who are hard of hearing
- A qualified oral or sign language interpreter, either remotely or in person

Effective Communication – Methods of communication that are individualized and culturally appropriate to a person who is hearing impaired so that they can easily understand all auditory information.

Hearing Impaired – A person is considered hearing impaired if they have a functional hearing loss of sufficient severity to prevent effective aural comprehension even with the assistance of hearing aids. This would include those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or who have Cochlear Implants.

Qualified Interpreter – A person who has a certificate of competency including but is not limited to oral interpreters and sign language interpreters. The interpreter must also be certified to provide legal or certified interpretation.

TTY – Also known as a telecommunications device for deaf people, or TDD. A system which allows individuals who are hearing impaired to receive word-for-word captions of their telephone conversations in a similar manner as closed captioned television.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) – VRI provides access to video interpreters for American Sign Language and various other foreign languages. VRI enables interpreters to see firsthand the critical, non-verbal gestures, body language or facial expressions during the encounter, which improves understanding and clarity of communication.
**POLICY TITLE:** Interpreter Services  
**STANDARD/REF #:** 55.1.3a

**APPROVED BY:** Wayne Jerman, Chief  
**REVIEWED DATE:** 11/21/2017

**REQUIRED REVIEWERS:** Community Outreach Commander/Liaison  
**REVISED DATE:** 11/21/2017

**PROCEDURE:**

**Hearing Impaired:**

People who identify themselves as hearing impaired are entitled to a level of service equivalent to that provided to others. The Cedar Rapids Police Department will make every effort to ensure that its officers and employees communicate effectively with people who have identified themselves as hearing impaired.

Effective communication with a person who is hearing impaired and has been involved in an incident – whether as a victim, witness, suspect, arrestee, or other persons connected to the situation – is essential in ascertaining what actually occurred, the urgency of the matter, and the specifics of the situation.

The type of aid that will be required for effective communication will depend on the individual’s usual method of communication and the nature, importance, and duration of the communication.

In many circumstances, oral communication supplemented by auxiliary aids may be effective. In other circumstances, qualified sign language or oral interpreter may be needed to communicate effectively with individuals who are hearing impaired. The more lengthy, complex and important the communication, the more likely it is that a qualified interpreter will be required for effective communication with a person whose primary means of communication is sign language or speech readings. For example:

- If there has been an incident where officers will be conducting interviews of an individual who is hearing impaired, a qualified sign language interpreter may be required to communicate effectively with that person if that individual’s primary means of communication is sign language.
- If a person is asking an officer for directions to a location, gestures and an exchange of written notes will likely be sufficient to communicate effectively and a sign language interpreter is often not required.

To serve each individual effectively, primary consideration should be given to the communication aid or service that works best for that person. Officers must ask individuals who are hearing impaired what type of auxiliary aid or service they require. Officers must defer to those expressed choices, unless there is another, equally effective way of communicating, given the circumstances, length, complexity, and importance of the communication, as well as the communication skills of the person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

- Auxiliary aids and/or services are provided free of charge.

The Cedar Rapids Police Department is not required to provide a particular auxiliary aid or service if doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the law enforcement activity in question or if it would cause an undue administrative or financial burden. Only the Chief of Police or designee may make this determination.
Input from individuals who are hearing impaired is equally important as the input of others. Officers must not draw conclusions about incidents unless they fully understand and are understood by all those involved, including individuals who are hearing impaired.

**Interpreter Services for the Hearing Impaired:**
Officers will contact Hands Up Communications at 319-213-9920 for interpreter services for individuals who are hearing impaired. Hands Up Communications maintains a list of sign language and oral interpreting services that are available, on-call - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - to provide qualified interpreters as needed. The Community Outreach Commander/Liaison will verify with Hands Up Communication that this list is updated annually.

- A qualified sign language or oral interpreter is one who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.
- Accordingly, an interpreter must be able to sign to the deaf individual (or interpret orally to the person who does not use sign language) what is being said by the hearing person and to voice to the hearing person what is being signed or said by the deaf individual.
- The interpreter must be able to interpret in the language the deaf person uses (e.g. American Sign Language or Signed English) and must be familiar with law enforcement terms and phrases.
- Because a qualified interpreter must be able to interpret impartially, a family member, child, or friend of the individual who is hard of hearing may not be qualified to render the necessary interpretation because of factors such as professional, emotional, or personal involvement, or considerations of professional, emotional, or personal involvement, or considerations of confidentiality.
- Additionally, although a “qualified” interpreter may be certified, a certified interpreter is not necessarily “qualified”. If an interpreter is unfamiliar with law enforcement vocabulary or the hearing impaired individual uses one type of sign language and the interpreter uses another, the interpreter may not be a good communications match.

**Deaf Iowans Against Abuse (DIAA):**
CRPD Officers will contact the Deaf Iowans Against Abuse (DIAA) by video/video phone at (319) 531-7719, email help@diaaiowa.org or text (515) 661-4015 when presented with a victim of a crime who is hearing impaired. DIAA will:

- Provide advocacy within one hour, if needed
- Assist with legal and medical procedures related to a crime
- Provide one on one peer counseling

Additional information for officers and the public may be obtained at www.diaaiowa.org.

**NOTE:** DIAA does not interpret for suspects
Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):
In situations when a person who is hearing impaired is at the CRPD or the officer has access to a departmental cell phone, Hands Up Communication will be utilized when needed.
- (319) 213-9920. Department code 6713.

TTY and Relay Services:
In situations when a nondisabled person would have access to a telephone, officers must provide individuals who are hearing impaired the opportunity to place calls using a text telephone (TTY) or a device utilizing a video remote interpreter. Officers must also accept telephone calls placed by persons who are deaf or hard of hearing through the Telecommunications Relay Service or Relay Iowa.

Communicating Effectively with Individuals who are Hearing Impaired:
Officers must review and have a working knowledge of Guide for Law Enforcement Officers When In Contact With People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing located in Police Shares → FORMS → Guides-Resources. This document reviews how officers should communicate effectively with individuals who are hearing impaired. These situations include:
- Issuing a non-criminal or motor vehicle citations
- Communicating with a person who initiates contact with an officer
- Interviewing a victim, critical witness or suspect of an incident
- Questioning a person who is a suspect in a crime
- Making an arrest or taking a person into custody
- Issuing Miranda Warnings to a person under arrest or in custody
- Interrogating a person under arrest or in custody

Exceptions for Communications of Deaf or Hard of Hearing:
This policy does not require that an officer wait for an interpreter prior to requesting or administering a PBT, or prior to administering a chemical test under 321J (Operating While Intoxicated) when a Deaf or Hard of Hearing person is suspected of violating Section 321J.2 (804.31).

Limited English Proficiency (Non-English Speaking):
People who present themselves as non-English speaking are entitled to a level of service equivalent to that provided to others. The Cedar Rapids Police Department will make every effort to ensure that its officers and employees communicate effectively with individuals who are non-English speaking.

Officers will utilize either of the following for assistance with individuals with limited English proficiency:
- Language Line at (800) 752-6096. Client code 149017. Or
- Hands Up Communications at (319) 213-9920. Client code 6713