



## Limited English Proficiency Plan

Youth Heartline is committed to providing access to its services to all persons regardless of their ability to speak English. "Limited English Proficiency" (LEP) is defined as the inability to speak, read, write, or understand the English language at a level that permits the patient to fully understand the nature of the services they are receiving from Youth Heartline, ask for clarification of services, or fully understand the types of services the client is consenting to receive.

To ensure fully competent access to Youth Heartline services, all staff are instructed to abide by the following procedures:

- Each staff person will ensure that they understand the special needs of their clients and accommodate those needs when possible.
- Notice shall be provided to persons with LEP of the right to access services and the right to use a trained interpreter.
- Competent interpreters shall be provided for LEP persons.
- All paperwork which requires the patient's signature regarding expectations, rights, responsibilities, and consent shall require an interpreter to explain the paperwork in detail or be available in a translated version.
- Callers should be assisted by the staff member that is best able to serve their needs. Callers should not receive services that are more limited or lower in scope than those available to callers who speak English.

### **Components of Youth Heartline's Limited English Proficiency Plan**

#### *Notice*

It will be the practice of the Youth Heartline to provide language interpretation by Globo Language Solutions, LLC to any clients who are considered to be limited English proficient. The only other interpreters allowed to interpret for clients must be certified interpreters. In no instances should children, family members, friends, or partners be allowed to interpret for Youth Heartline clients. Notices advising patients of options for using interpreters will be clearly visible in each Youth Heartline office.

#### *Training*

All staff will be trained annually in the use of interpreters for providing services to individuals considered LEP. In addition, staff will be trained annually in how to access and use the Globo Language Solutions telephone interpretation service.

#### *Interpreters and Translators*

Interpretation will be provided over the phone via Globo Language Solutions. Procedures for contacting an interpreter through this service are included within this document. Translation of all documents requiring client signatures will be completed by competent translators.

### *Printed Materials*

Youth Heartline has very few documents that are available in language other than English. The primary language spoken by clients of Youth Heartline, other than English, is Spanish. Informational documents, that do not require client signatures, will be translated into Spanish on an as needed basis. Clients with LEP who speak a language other than Spanish will be provided the information through a Globo Language Services interpreter until such a time when at least 10% of Youth Heartline clients with LEP speak a similar language, such as Tiwa, the appropriate documents will also be translated into that language.

### *Policy and Procedure*

Youth Heartline's Limited English Proficiency Plan will remain active and updated on a yearly basis. Copies of the plan are available all existing staff and provided to new hires at the start of employment.

All Youth Heartline staff should be knowledgeable about the need to provide services to clients in a manner that is competent and meaningful. To this end, each staff member should consistently use an interpreter in the following situations:

- When a client speaks (or seems to speak) more English than the caller seems to understand.
- When a client seems to understand more English than the caller seems to speak.
- When a client requests an interpreter.
- When a client is in crisis as language proficiency decreases in a crisis situation.

Staff will be trained to inform the client that Youth Heartline has interpreter services available at no cost to the client. Even if a client refuses the interpreter at first, if during the interaction an interpreter is deemed appropriate by the staff member, the staff member will call in a Globo Language Services interpreter.

### *Globo Language Services*

Youth Heartline has an as-needed contract with Globo Language Services resulting in a dedicated number for our agency for telephone interpreting. To access an interpreter, staff should call 844-259-2762 from any telephone. The service will prompt the staff member to choose the desired language. Globo Language Services provides the following tips:

- Allow time for intake: If you're asked intake questions, please be patient and answer all questions to the best of your ability
- Request Dial Out if Needed: If you need to add a third party to the call, please let your agent know at the beginning of the call.
- Speak to Your Client, Not the Interpreter: Speak naturally and directly to your client. Pause after completing a thought or phrase to give you interpreter time to interpret.

### *Implementation*

The Executive Director of Youth Heartline will be primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with the LEP Plan. Any questions regarding the LEP Plan should be directed to the Executive Director. Any person or agency may also request a copy of the plan via telephone, fax, mail, or in person, and shall be provided a copy of the plan at no cost. LEP individuals may request copies of the plan in translation that Youth Heartline will provide free of charge. The LEP Plan is also listed on our website: [www.youthheartline.org](http://www.youthheartline.org)

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## Agency Accessibility Plan

This Accessibility Plan has been prepared to address Youth Heartline’s responsibilities as a recipient of federal financial assistance relating to individuals with disabilities. This plan is prepared in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), including changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325), which states: “physical or mental disabilities in no way diminish a person's right to fully participate in all aspects of society, yet many people with physical or mental disabilities have been precluded from doing so because of discrimination; others who have a record of a disability or are regarded as having a disability also have been subjected to discrimination.”

### PLAN SUMMARY

This plan identifies Youth Heartline’s ongoing measures to ensure compliance with ADA, while also identifying actionable steps needed to ensure full compliance with ADA’s requirement that organizations make reasonable accommodation for individuals with disabilities. A disability is defined under ADA as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

Youth Heartline’s analysis was undertaken considering the following categories and the factors contained within each:

1. Planning and Policies: Management
2. Planning and Policies: Staff
3. Facilities: Existing Buildings and Facilities
4. Communication
5. Meeting and Events
6. Board and Volunteers
7. Transportation

### Analysis

#### **1. Planning and Policies: Management**

Youth Heartline (YHL) staff have been informed that it is illegal to deny individuals with disabilities access to our services and that all reasonable accommodations must be made to ensure that such individuals can access our services.

Our analysis shows that while YHL has made improvements over the past year in emphasizing accessibility in its advertisements, outreach materials, notices, newsletters, and on its website, ongoing improvements are required. While our communications highlight our commitment to diversity, continued efforts need to be made to emphasize accessibility for individuals with disabilities. YHL has received no requests during the past year for accommodations for individuals with disabilities; however, it is essential that we continue to monitor for potential weaknesses and avoid complacency in relation to ADA.

YHL’s leadership has made a commitment to compliance with ADA and has communicated this with the board and staff.

YHL has a process for responding to requests for communication assistance. As of the time of this update, no such requests have been received.

YHL has a process for responding to requests to modify our Policies and Procedures to accommodate individuals with disabilities. As of the time of this update, no such requests have been received.

We make sure all contractors hired by YHL are aware of and maintain compliance with the reasonable accommodation requirements of ADA.

No charges will ever be imposed for the provision of services and accommodations to individuals with disabilities by YHL.

Program services provided by YHL are completely integrated and inclusive. Accordingly, individuals with disabilities will be included in regular programming and accommodations for those individuals will be included as part of our regular programming.

YHL makes every effort to stay current with new ADA regulations and has reviewed the Department of Justice's 2010 regulations.

## **2. Planning and Policies: Staff**

YHL staff will treat individuals with disabilities with the care and respect they deserve. Staff have been made aware of how to interact with individuals with physical, mental health, and emotional disabilities. YHL provides trauma informed training for staff. This training includes material relevant to serving individuals with disabilities.

Staff are made fully aware of YHL's accessibility policies.

YHL continues to work on establishing improved procedures to support staff in accessing interpreter services and accessible materials for clients with physical disabilities. YHL has a vigorous set of procedures in place to support individuals with mental health and emotional disabilities.

Staff have been made aware, in relation to service animals, that only two questions are permitted: a) is the animal required because of a disability, and b) what work or task has the dog been trained to perform.

YHL makes every reasonable effort to accommodate individuals who visit our office including, but not limited to: help filling out forms, visual or oral cues to inform clients when the meeting is due to commence, communication boards for clients with speech disabilities, and appropriate seating. YHL will make every effort to provide a caring and welcoming environment for individuals with disabilities.

YHL's Policies and Procedures generally preclude the transportation of clients. Therefore, staff have not been informed of processes for providing transport for individuals with disabilities. However, if such a circumstance were to occur, we would collaborate with partner agencies to ensure that the required transportation was obtained in a timely and dignified manner.

YHL is fully committed to diversity in both principal and practice. Accordingly, YHL Policies and Procedures expressly prohibits any discriminatory actions, behaviors, or language towards staff, including staff with disabilities. Therefore, we are fully committed to providing every accommodation to members of staff or those applying for positions with YHL who are individuals with disabilities.

## **3. Facilities**

YHL has evaluated our facilities during the last year to determine compliance with ADA. YHL's recently relocated our office in Raton and an evaluation was carried out to determine accessibility prior to entering into a lease agreement. The new premises were found to be accessible, but improvements need to make to improve accessibility for individuals with visual impairment. The process of carrying out those upgrades is

ongoing. Likewise, our facility in Taos was found to need improvements for the same group. Improvements in Taos are ongoing. YHL will continue to evaluate ADA compliance on an annual basis.

YHL is committed to ensuring that any facility in which we deliver services is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. If a facility is found to be non-compliant with ADA requirements services will be relocated.

YHL's facilities include a route to an accessible entrance from parking, drop-off points, public transportation and public sidewalks. This route is kept clear of obstructions, including snow and ice during winter months.

At least one entrance to each YHL facilities is wheelchair accessible.

YHL previously determined that our signage did not comply with ADA in relation to persons who are visually impaired or blind. We have since installed signage to comply with ADA requirements. This process is ongoing.

Accessible bathrooms are provided with accessible stalls and sinks that meet the height requirements of ADA. We have upgraded handrails to comply with ADA.

Main entrance at YHL facilities have at least a 32-inch clearance and usable hardware. All other doors are kept open during hours of operation, apart from times when doors are closed to all individuals to ensure confidentiality of service.

Provided drinking water facilities are wheelchair accessible (drinking water facilities were removed in response to the COVID-19 health emergency, they will be reinstalled once public health officials deem it appropriate to do so).

Interior routes and spaces are kept free of obstructions at all times.

Premises are regularly maintained to ensure that accessibility facilities are operational.

#### **4. Communication**

YHL is currently reviewing materials that we distribute to ensure they are welcoming to people with disabilities.

YHL is currently reviewing ways in which we can improve the delivery of materials to individuals with visual impairment. To ensure reasonable accommodation we are presently researching the process of providing Braille materials to those who require them.

We are prepared to make oral communications accessible upon request. YHL has access to a sign-language interpreter if needed.

We are prepared to assist individuals with speech disabilities through the use of communication boards and by taking extra time to communicate or understand.

In response to the COVID-19 health emergency YHL compiled a suite of recorded material to complement our delivery of services. Presently, we have had no requests for accessibility for clients with disabilities; however, we are actively pursuing approaches, including closed captioning, to make these services accessible to all.

#### **5. Meetings and Events**

YHL rarely conducts meeting or events; however, if such events occur in the future, YHL commits to ensure accessible entrances are clearly marked, accessible toilets are provided, accessible seating is provided, where possible assistive listening and interpretive assistance is available, individuals are made aware in outreach materials of how to contact YHL to arrange accommodations, and alternative materials such as Braille will be made available.

YHL commits to only conduct meetings and events in facilities that are ADA compliant. If a proposed venue was found to be non-compliant, YHL would seek an alternative ADA compliant venue or cancel the event until such a venue became available.

YHL has updated its website to make it screen reader software compatible.

### **6. Board and Volunteers**

YHL's Policies and Procedures explicitly forbid discrimination based on numerous factors including disability. Therefore, we are committed to providing all possible accommodations for individuals with disabilities who wish to join our board or volunteer with our organization.

YHL actively seeks, as part of its diversity plan, individuals with disabilities to serve on our board or volunteer with our organization.

YHL will provide every reasonable accommodation to ensure that those wishing to intern with the organization are able to do so in a way that allows them to fully benefit from the experience.

### **7. Transportation**

As of the date of this update, YHL does not provide transportation services. However, if a circumstance were to occur where an individual with disabilities required assistance in procuring transportation, we would collaborate with partner agencies to ensure that the required transportation was obtained in an appropriate, timely, and dignified manner

## **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### **Identified Weaknesses**

As a result of the foregoing analysis, YHL has noted the following areas where improvements need to be made to ensure ongoing compliance with ADA requirements:

- Continuing and increased efforts to ensure agency materials continue to be updated to include accessible materials in formats such as Braille.
- Signage in our Raton office needs to be further updated to comply with ADA.
- Ongoing efforts need to be made to increase our outreach efforts to be more inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

### **Action Plan**

Although YHL has received no requests for accommodations for individuals with disabilities over the course of the past year, we will continue to ensure that the following measures are in place:

- All the identified weaknesses outlined above will be addressed and rectified.
- Required interpretive services will be provided to clients free of charge.
- Required accommodations will be provided free of charge.
- All assistance shall be given to individual with disabilities to ensure that their rights under ADA are not infringed in any way.
- Clients with disabilities will be fully apprised of their rights under ADA before commencing services with YHL.
- YHL's policies and responsibilities under ADA will be prominently posted on our website [www.youthheartline.org](http://www.youthheartline.org)
- YHL's updated website will be fully screen reader software compatible.
- YHL will continue to ensure access to interpretive services is in place prior to any request for such services being made.

- Outreach materials will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure continued compliance with ADA regulations.
- YHL leadership will review ADA guidelines on an annual basis to ensure familiarity and compliance with any changes to the act.

### ***Training***

The following training will be provided to YHL staff on a biannual basis:

- Existing staff will be trained in relation to YHL’s obligations under ADA. New staff will receive the same training as part of the onboarding process.
- Documentation of accommodation requests from individuals with disabilities or their representatives.
- Use of communication boards for those speech disabilities or hearing disabilities.
- Ongoing sensitivity and trauma informed training to teach staff about the structural obstacles faced by individuals with disabilities.
- In-service trainings to address the physical requirements of individuals with disabilities and the ethics of providing such assistance.
- How to handle ADA related complaints.

### ***Monitoring and Updating Accessibility Plan***

YHL will review and update the plan (if necessary) on an annual basis or as required by the Department of Justice and/or CVRC. Updates will be based upon and include the following:

- Any changes or updates to the Americans with Disabilities Act
- To address any circumstances involving individuals with disabilities not foreseen in this plan.
- Analysis of whether any aspects of this plan have been found to be inadequate.
- Analysis of YHL’s financial ability to fund any necessary improvements required by ADA.
- Review and analysis of YHL’s compliance with ADA and this plan, in particular addressing areas where shortcoming are identified.
- In response to any complaints lodged against YHL for failure to meet ADA standards.

### ***Dissemination of Accessibility Plan***

A link to YHL’s Accessibility will be included on our website [www.youthheartline.org](http://www.youthheartline.org). Any person or agency may request a copy of this plan to be provided. Every effort will be made to make the plan available in formats that meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Questions or comments regarding this plan may be submitted to the YHL Executive Director as follows:

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