

APPENDIX A: Definitions

Note: Any related definitions that may be issued under Section 1557 will complement or supersede the broad working definitions set forth below.

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Agency	Agency refers to HHS Operating Divisions (such as CDC, FDA or NIH) and Staff Divisions (such as the Office for Civil Rights or the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs). Operating Divisions focus on specific programs and activities as authorized by Congress. Staff Divisions are part of the Office of the Secretary and serve in a coordinating role for the Department.
Auxiliary Aids and Services	Tools or assistance provided to communicate with people who have communication disabilities.
Beneficiary	Anyone who has applied for and is receiving Medicare, Medicaid, or other health benefit.
Contractor	Any entity that performs work or provides services on behalf of an agency or division under a contractual agreement with reimbursement.
Customer	Individuals, businesses, and organizations that interact with an HHS agency or program. The term customer is inclusive of beneficiaries and health care and human services partners.
Digital Information	Information, as defined in OMB Circular A-130, which the government produces and provides digitally to help individuals access HHS conducted programs and activities for which they are individually eligible to participate. OMB Circular A-130 defines digital information as any communication or representation of knowledge such as facts, data, or opinions in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual forms.
Effective Communication	For communication disabilities, it refers to aids and services to ensure that communication with people with disabilities, such as people who are deaf or hard of hearing, is as effective as communication as for people without disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services must be provided when needed to achieve effective communication.
Health Care and Human Services Partner	Beneficiaries, including recipients of federal financial assistance, contractors, vendors, advocacy groups, religious institutions, non-governmental organizations, hospital administrators, health insurers, translators, interpreters, community health clinics, and representatives from a broad cross-section of the language access community, individuals with disabilities, etc.

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Interpretation	The act of listening, understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken communication in one language (source language) and then faithfully orally rendering it into another spoken language (target language) while retaining the same meaning. For individuals with certain disabilities that affect communication, this can include understanding, analyzing, and processing a spoken or signed communication in the source language and faithfully conveying that information into a spoken or signed target language while retaining the same meaning.
Language Access	The ability of individuals with LEP to communicate with HHS employees and contractors, and meaningfully learn about, apply for, or participate in HHS programs, activities, and services.
Language Assistance Services	All oral, written, and signed language services needed to assist individuals with LEP and people with disabilities to communicate effectively with HHS staff and contractors and gain meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in the services, activities, programs, or other benefits administered by HHS.
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	An individual who does not speak English as his or her preferred language and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English in a manner that permits him or her to communicate effectively with HHS and have meaningful access to and participate in the services, activities, programs, or other benefits administered by HHS. Individuals with LEP may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but have limited proficiency in English in other areas (e.g., reading or writing). LEP designations are also context-specific; an individual may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting (e.g., conversing in English with coworkers), but these skills may be insufficient in other settings (e.g., addressing court proceedings). An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing may also have limited proficiency in spoken or written English.

Document Terminology	Terminology Defined
Meaningful Access	Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and effective communication at no cost to the individual with LEP needing assistance. Meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English-proficient individuals.
Participant	Any person who has applied for and is receiving public assistance benefits or services under any HHS program or service.
Plain Language	Plain language as defined in the Plain Writing Act of 2010 is writing that is “clear, concise and well organized.”
Preferred/Primary Language	The language that LEP individuals identify as the preferred language that they use to communicate effectively. The language that LEP individuals identify as the preferred language that they use to communicate effectively.
Qualified Interpreter or Translator	A bilingual/multilingual person who has the appropriate training and experience or demonstrated ability to fully understand, analyze, and process and then faithfully render a spoken, written, or signed message in one language into a second language and who abides by a code of professional practice and ethics. In the context of disabilities, a qualified interpreter is one who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. A child shall not be considered a qualified translator or interpreter, nor shall a family member or employee who does not meet the minimum qualifications specified above.
Sight Translation	The oral or signed rendering of written text into spoken or signed language by an interpreter without change in meaning based on a visual review of the original text or document.
Sign Languages	Languages that people who are deaf or hard of hearing use in which hand movements, gestures, and facial expressions convey grammatical structure and meaning. There is no universal sign language. Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) is a different language from ASL, and Americans who know ASL may not understand BSL.
Translation	The process of converting written text from a source language into an equivalent written text in a target language as fully and accurately as possible while maintaining the style, tone, and intent of the text, while considering differences of culture and dialect.