



## Request for Information from NWI Advisors....

*How is the cost for language interpreters addressed in wraparound? What have other projects done?*

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- Either as a cost in providing Medicaid reimbursable services or through flexible funding – or by using a trusted natural support person (who is not a child).
- I'm a FSP and Native Spanish speaking working for the Federation Of families, it has been a blessing working with the population here who are mostly Hispanics with wraparound, it has taking me a long time to really explain wraparound well enough to understand in Spanish for my families. Wraparound it has been hard for English speakers to understand, you have to know the culture for each family and learned to translate in that particular Culture. I work with families from El Salvador and in general from Central America. Of course you also need to learned to be a FSP and translate at the same time. I have many, many years experience working with Spanish Speaking families, Sitting at IEP's, Child and Family teams meetings, Child Welfare, and Department of Juvenile Service and many more organizations. The Federation also has someone just to translate flyers, or documents for the organization who gets pay. It is helpful to hired workers at least have 2 or more who speaks the language. Speaking for the family what has work for them and Organizations as well.
- As a county mental health agency, we are required to offer and pay for language interpreters via our regular budget.
- In AZ interpreter services are a covered service, in addition to any other behavioral health covered services. This includes the other billable services that would be available to support reimbursement for child and family team work (wrap-around). This is billed "in addition to". See the guide for further reference:  
[http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/FNLguide\\_v6.7.pdf](http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/FNLguide_v6.7.pdf)
- I have not had this problem but if need one, we have contracted interpreters through the Dept of Human Services. This could be paid for through usual means associated with providing child welfare services.
- In Maine I believe it is State law that the State provides interpreters in regards to MH. In other situations, while we have not come across it, I would suggest to our facilitators that the team decide how to handle funding such as flex fund spending...or how else has the family had needs met? Perhaps pay for a class for a support person to learn language, ASL etc. depending on need.

- I'll connect you to the state of Arizona's approach: See pages 102-103 of Arizona's Covered Behavioral Health Services Guide at [http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/bhs\\_guide.pdf](http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/bhs_guide.pdf); and the very last line on the very last page of the Arizona Covered Services Billing Codes matrix (pg 41 of 41 at [http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/app\\_b2.pdf](http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/app_b2.pdf); and Section 3.23 of the Arizona Provider Manual at [http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/provider/sec3\\_23.pdf](http://www.azdhs.gov/bhs/provider/sec3_23.pdf); and then finally the billing code matrix Arizona developed to support its wraparound ("child and family team") practice on the attached technical assistance document, on Pages 14-17.
- We have paid them out of the set aside funds for each family's budget. If it looks like a large continuous amount that needs to be used each month a request is brought by the facilitator to the Community Fiscal Team for approval. Eventually it all comes from the same source which is out of our set aside flexible funds.
- It depends on what is needed. For our Spanish speaking teams that need to have plans facilitated in Spanish, we contract with a trained facilitator (just one person at this time). If there are people in the meeting who speak English, the translator also translates which she says in Spanish to English for those in the meeting. When the plan needs to be typed up, our agency sends it to another person who works with us to translate the plan from English to Spanish.
- When needed we utilize flexible funding to pay for interpreters. We are in a more rural county in Florida and do not have access to many resources or collaborative relationships to provide free interpretive services. We also predominantly work in child welfare.
- These costs are included in our Medicaid billable services. When an interpreter accompanies one of our staff who is providing peer parent delivered support, or we are hosting a family education series, we are able to submit a Medicaid billing claim for support service (Peer Support, or Behavioral Health Prevention and Promotion Training) and also an attached billing claim for the interpreter services. When it is a group, say 10 participants, the interpreter's total invoice for his service is divided and billed on the claim record for each participant.
- In LA, the provider is expected to cover the cost of an interpreter out of their monthly rate.
- The agencies that I work with in Wrap deal with the interpretation cost by ideally hiring staff for the team who speak Spanish. When this is not possible administrative and support staff are hired who speak Spanish and interpretation is an added duty/responsibility. I am not aware of any agency who hires certified translators because they come at a very high price (40-60 an hour) without any method of reimbursement. I hope this helps. This is a tough issue.
- We have done a number of things to address this need. First, if the family has an informal support that they are comfortable inviting on the Child/Family Team for this purpose, we would use them. If they needed to be compensated for their time,

we have a pot of flex funds that can be used creatively to meet families' needs. We have also reached out to Churches who have members who speak a needed language (recently Mandarin Chinese). We have broached the subject of developing an Affiliation Agreement with these semi-informal community supports to spell out the mutual expectations. Again, if compensation is required, flex funds are used if the Child/Family Team approves the expenditure to meet the need. Lastly, if community supports cannot be found, we could hire a professional interpreter to facilitate communication (we have used Language Line and others). Again, with CFT approval, flex funds would be used.

- We charge the cost of translators by child by plan for each time they are used. In other words if they are used for a meeting it is placed in the minutes and then an invoice from the translator is attached to our request form for flex funds. We used to do it as an administrative cost but the auditor controller had us change it and approve costs needed by the team directly at the team level.
- The cost of language interpretation- we hire staff as interpreters and they are assigned to teams when interpretation is needed, that is their only role.