



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Operations Center Memo FY2023-22

To: DDS Qualified Providers

From: Sean Bannon, Operations Center Director

CC: Jordan Scheff, Commissioner, Elisa Velardo, Deputy Commissioner, Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff, Scott McWilliams, Chief of Fiscal/Administrative Services, Regional Directors, Private ARDs, Resource Administrators, The Alliance, The Arc CT

Date: April 28, 2023

RE: Communication Barrier Mitigation Services for Customized Employment Services

Customized Employment (CE) is an alternative method of finding competitive integrated employment that focuses on the strengths, skills and abilities of the individuals and the unmet needs of employers. It is a highly structured, person-centered process, carried out over time. Customized Employment Service is an employment service model offered by both the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Department of Aging & Disability Services (ADS).

Effective 5/1/2023, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will increase the Customized Employment rate to \$76 per hour and create a Communication Barrier Mitigation rate of \$103.50 per hour for Customized Employment Services. These new rates align with ADS rates that will also be effective 5/1/2023.

In order for the Customized Employment service model to be successful, CE Certified Staff members need to create connections, engage, and communicate effectively with the job seekers when providing CE Services. The new Communication Barrier Mitigation CE services allows for services to be provided by a CE Certified Staff member who meet our fluency and cultural qualifications in ASL or Spanish. This service eliminates the need for third party interpreters and will provide full access between an individual, their employer, and colleagues in the individual's native language of American Sign Language (ASL) or Spanish.

Provider Agency staff must qualify to provide Communication Barrier Mitigation Services. Staff members must have an active Customized Employment Certification from the Connecticut Certification Course or an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Accredited CE Certification Course.

Please note that qualifications follow the staff member, not the agency. DDS and ADS will jointly track provider staff qualifications for this service as a part of the CT Customized Employment Provider Staff Registry. Provider staff will indicate their ability to provide communication barrier mitigation services when applying to the state

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CE Provider Staff Registry. Provider staff will be required to submit their certifications/qualifications in conjunction with their CE Certification after applying to the registry in order to be qualified to provide communication barrier mitigation services for CE.

Qualifications to provide this service are identical across agencies and are outlined below:

Qualifications for Direct Service Staff in ASL

To be determined as qualified, the Direct Service Staff must:

- i. Pass the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) provided by Gallaudet University at a **minimum of Level 3+**;
- Reference link: <https://gallaudet.edu/american-sign-language-proficiency-interview-aslpi/>

OR

- ii. Pass the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) provided by Rochester Institute of Technology at a **minimum of Level Intermediate**;
- Reference link: <https://www.rit.edu/ntid/slpi/>

AND

- iii. Have experience and knowledge of Deaf Culture through intensive personal experience and/or completion of a Deaf Studies Program;

AND

- iv. Be able to read and write in the English language.

Qualifications for Direct Service Staff in Spanish

To be determined as qualified, the Direct Service Staff must:

- i. Pass the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Test in spoken Spanish at a **minimum of Intermediate mid**.
- Reference link: <https://www.actfl.org/educator-resources/actfl-proficiency-guidelines/spanish>
- Screening company reference link: <https://testyourlanguage.com/spanish-level-test>

AND

- ii. Have experience and knowledge of Latino/Latina culture through intensive personal experience;

AND

- iii. Be able to read and write in the English language

Staff will be required to submit their qualifications for communication barrier mitigation services when submitting to the CE Provider Staff Registry. An ADS-DDS staff member will follow up requesting a copy of the staff's CE Certificate and qualifications for communication barrier mitigation service.