

# Fundamentals of Language Access Planning for Deaf People

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# Vision & Mission

## VISION

Safety and freedom – not harm and punishment – for people with disabilities and Deaf people. People with disabilities and Deaf people are free from violence, thriving, and affirmed by communities and systems.

## MISSION



01

### Ending Widespread Victimization

People with disabilities and Deaf people are more than 3X more likely to be victimized than people without disabilities. Only 1 in 10 receive victim services.

02

### Ending Mass Incarceration

People with disabilities make up 40–60% of our jails and prisons. We cannot end mass incarceration without ending disability disparities in the criminal legal system.

# Webinar Goals

- Learn how and why language access planning for Deaf individuals is unique
- Understand the barriers Deaf individuals face when accessing services
- Learn the steps necessary to effectively create your own language access plan for Deaf people
- Become aware of the resources available to help you in your planning
- Ensure language access is woven into your entire organization

# Language Access Planning Toolkit

Guidebook

Template

Resources





**Language Access Planning for Deaf  
People: *Why It Matters***

**1 in 4**

Adults in the  
United States  
have a disability

People with disabilities and Deaf people  
experience **violence** at alarming rates

# Deaf- Specific Language Access

- Language access for Deaf people as a distinct, unique plan
- Deaf-centered language access
- Spoken language access principles aren't interchangeable with Deaf language access principles

# Common Barriers to Language Access for Deaf People




- When Deaf survivors reach out for services and support: what usually happens?
- Communication and cultural barriers exist within the system because it was not specifically designed to meet Deaf survivors' needs
  - Invisibility
  - Lack of specialized outreach by victim service providers
  - Phone-based emergency hotlines
  - Lack of language access
  - Lack of cultural competency in victim services and advocacy



# Common Barriers to Language Access for Deaf People



## Invisibility

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- Lack of staff exposure to the Deaf Community
  - Lack of understanding the lived experience of Deaf people
  - Leads to lack of specialized training

# Common Barriers to Language Access for Deaf People

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Lack of specialized  
outreach by victim service  
providers

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- Outreach and education efforts
  - Deaf community's unique experience of abuse
  - Educational materials

# Common Barriers to Language Access for Deaf People


Phone-based emergency hotlines

- Lack of awareness and training surrounding relay phone calls
- Many reports of being hung up on, or phone calls going unanswered

# Common Barriers to Language Access for Deaf People



## Language access

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- Lack of experience and exposure
  - Lack of qualified interpreters, trauma-informed interpreters
  - Financial concerns
  - Ad-hoc communication methods

# Common Barriers to Language Access for Deaf People

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Lack of cultural competency in victim services and advocacy

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- The Deaf community as a linguistic and cultural minority
  - Cultural context of domestic violence and sexual violence within Deaf community

# Purpose of Language Access Planning



What is **language access** for Deaf people?

→ *The process of ensuring that people who are Deaf are able to access information, programs, and services at a level equal to hearing individuals.*

# Language Access Plan for Deaf People

- A document that maps out how an organization will provide information and services to, and engage with, people who are Deaf.
- A proactive step to reduce the chances that a person will be denied critical information and services because of language barriers
- A plan to help your organization recognize and meet the holistic experiences of Deaf people, both culturally and linguistically

# Language Access Planning: *The Process*

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# Working Through the Language Access Planning Process

- Before drafting your language access plan, take these action steps:
  - Designate a staff person and/or committee to lead the language access planning process
  - Identify all of the circumstances that require language access services
  - Determine what types of language access your organization offers and/or will offer
  - Determine the necessary budget for providing various language access services
  - Assess your needs

# Step 1: Assign a Language Access Coordinator

→ Assessing, plan drafting, monitoring, training... Who is responsible for executing language access planning for Deaf people?



**Language Access Coordinator**

# Step 2: Identify Local Deaf Communities

- Is there a large Deaf community near your organization?
  - A local Deaf school could bring in many Deaf families, working professionals, minors.
  - What do the demographics of this community look like?
  - Intersectionality
  - How does this affect your organization?

# Step 3: Consider Your Services

- What services does your organization offer?
- Any and all services you offer to hearing survivors must be made accessible to Deaf survivors
- What does this mean for your organization?

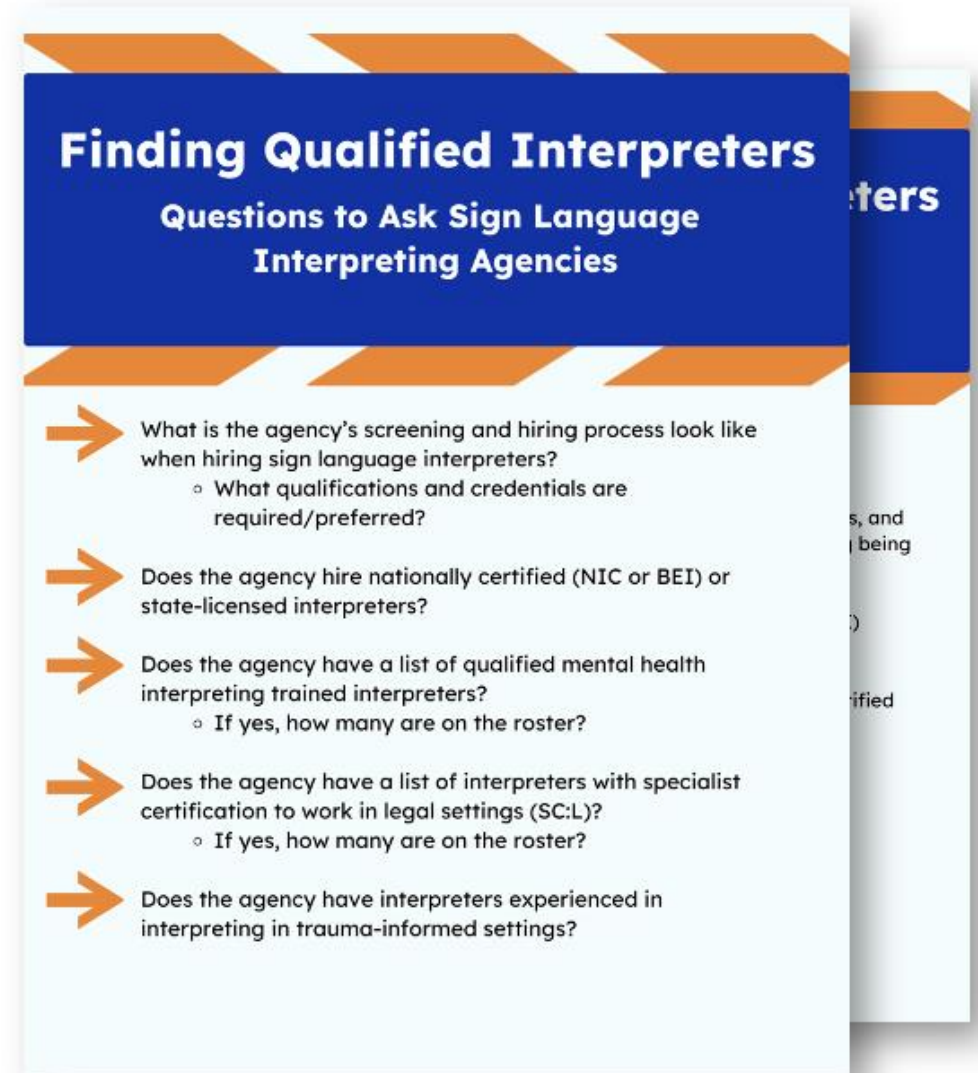


# Step 4: Evaluate and Expand Your Deaf Language Access Capacity

- What do you currently have set in place for communicating with Deaf survivors?
  - ASL Interpreting
    - Interpreting agencies
    - Contracts with individual interpreters (hearing and Deaf)
    - Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)
  - Captioning educational videos, website announcements

# Finding Interpreters

- What is the agency's screening and hiring process look like when hiring sign language interpreters?
- Does the agency have a list of Deaf Interpreters/Certified Deaf Interpreters?
- Does the agency hire nationally certified (NIC or BEI) or state-licensed interpreters?



**Finding Qualified Interpreters**  
Questions to Ask Sign Language Interpreting Agencies

- What is the agency's screening and hiring process look like when hiring sign language interpreters?
  - What qualifications and credentials are required/preferred?
- Does the agency hire nationally certified (NIC or BEI) or state-licensed interpreters?
- Does the agency have a list of qualified mental health interpreting trained interpreters?
  - If yes, how many are on the roster?
- Does the agency have a list of interpreters with specialist certification to work in legal settings (SC:L)?
  - If yes, how many are on the roster?
- Does the agency have interpreters experienced in interpreting in trauma-informed settings?

# Step 5: Evaluate Your Budget

- What is your current budget?
  - Are there unmet needs?
  - If you don't currently have money in your budget allocated for language access for Deaf people, start with planning for 50 hours of interpreting services\*
- A qualified interpreter is often between \$50-\$125/hour

**Activating Change**

## HOW TO: Budget For Sign Language Interpreters

**Key Considerations**

- Always incorporate the cost of sign language interpreters into your organization's budget for victim services
- Ensure that **adequate funds** are allocated for this essential service.
- Prevent any financial stress or delays that may affect your organization's ability to provide the necessary support and services for Deaf and hard of hearing victims.
- For remote interpreting assignments, many sign language interpreters have a **1-hour minimum**.
- For in-person interpreting assignments, many sign language interpreters have a **2-hour minimum** and may require payment for travel time and travel-related expenses.
- If your meeting is more than an hour, the topics are complex or nuanced, or the Deaf survivor has unique communication needs, you may need a team of two interpreters to ensure full language access.
- The average approximate range for sign language interpreters across the country is **\$50-\$125/hour**.
- You may also need a Certified Deaf Interpreters to team with a hearing Interpreter team if the Deaf survivor has unique communication needs.

Participate more Deaf... increase annual interpreters 7-20%

If you don't have a history of serving Deaf survivors, start by including 50 hours of interpreting services for the year.

Including services to survivors and adding use to better late expenses in 2018 years.

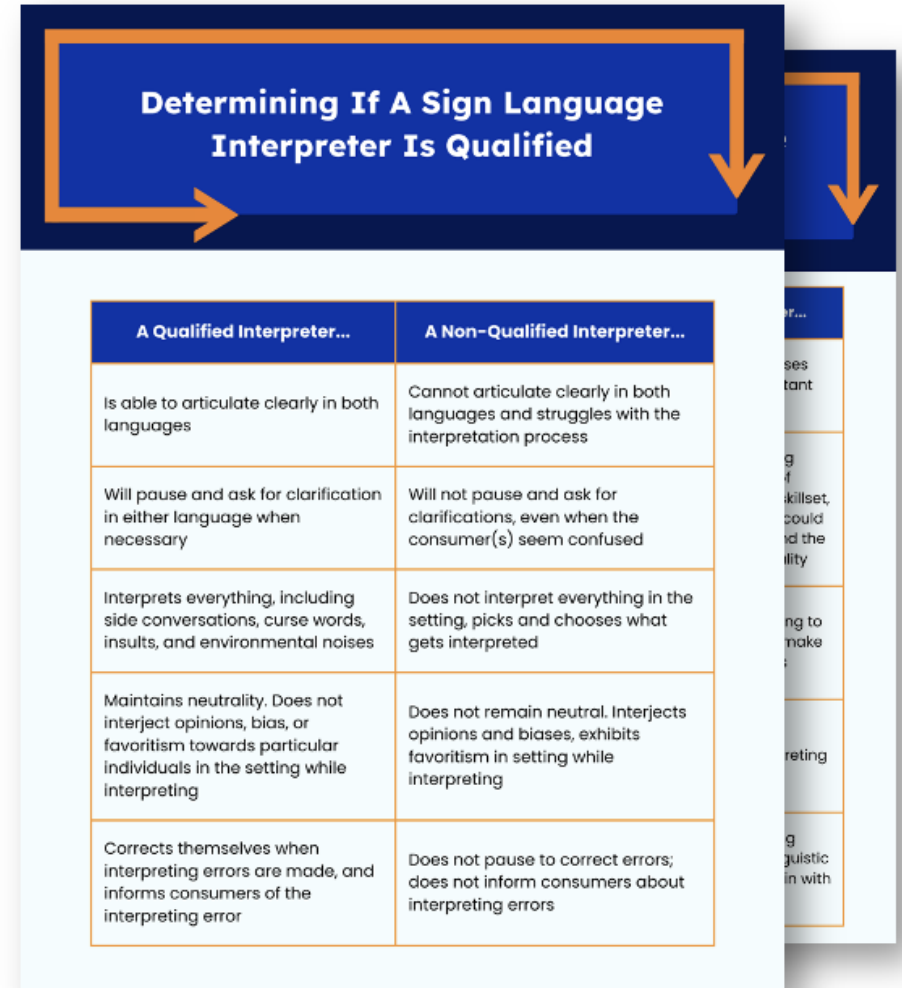
Local interpreters.

t for interpreters.

Department of Justice (DOJ)  
statements expressed in this  
the views of the Department

# Step 6: Assess Needs

- Review accessibility within your environment to identify barriers for Deaf people; create plans to avoid them
- Establish agreements with interpreter agencies to ensure qualified, trauma-informed interpreters are available
  - Connect with your local Deaf community & Activating Change to help find quality local interpreting agencies



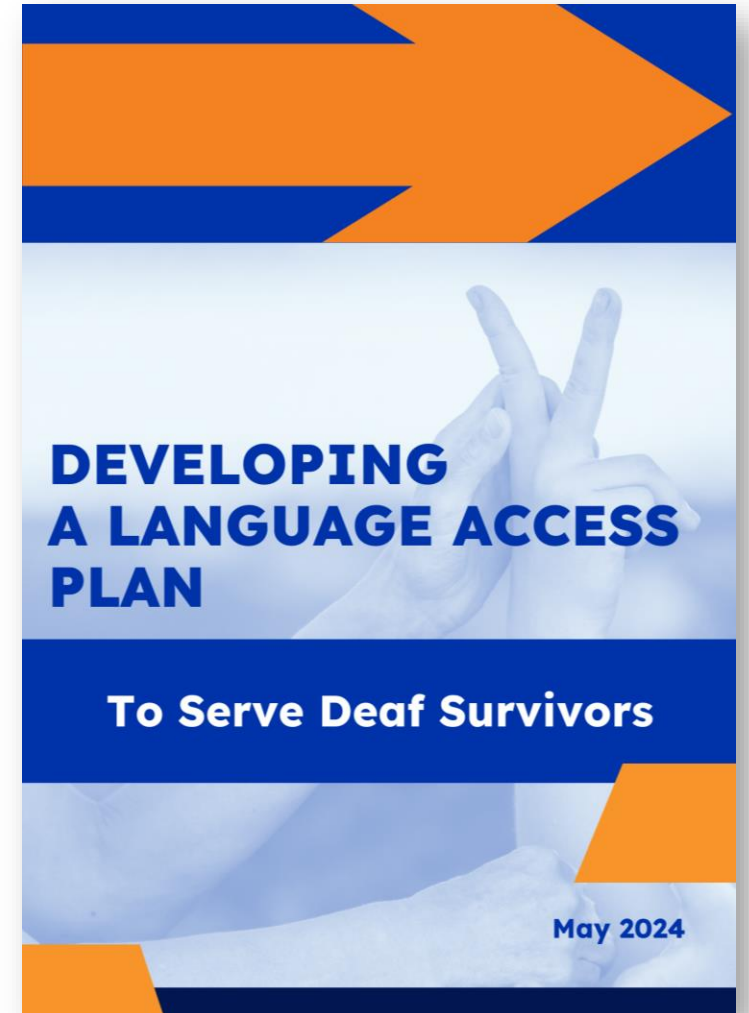
**Determining If A Sign Language Interpreter Is Qualified**

A Qualified Interpreter...	A Non-Qualified Interpreter...
Is able to articulate clearly in both languages	Cannot articulate clearly in both languages and struggles with the interpretation process
Will pause and ask for clarification in either language when necessary	Will not pause and ask for clarifications, even when the consumer(s) seem confused
Interprets everything, including side conversations, curse words, insults, and environmental noises	Does not interpret everything in the setting, picks and chooses what gets interpreted
Maintains neutrality. Does not interject opinions, bias, or favoritism towards particular individuals in the setting while interpreting	Does not remain neutral. Interjects opinions and biases, exhibits favoritism in setting while interpreting
Corrects themselves when interpreting errors are made, and informs consumers of the interpreting error	Does not pause to correct errors; does not inform consumers about interpreting errors



# Step 7: Prepare to Support Staff

- What level of training is required for different types of employees? Consider their role and the level of contact they will have with Deaf survivors
- What tools and resources can your organization make available to make it easier to provide ongoing language access?

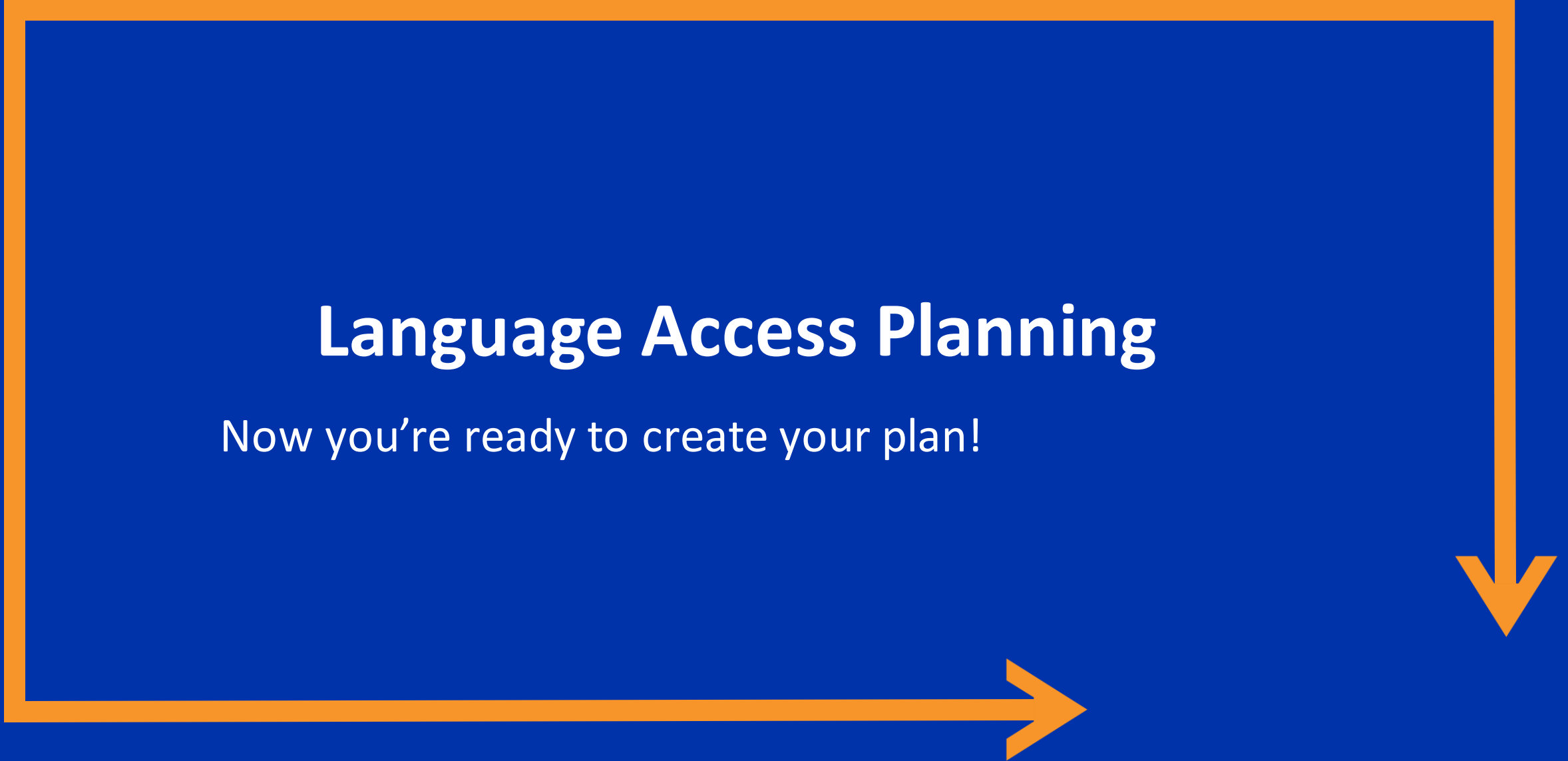


# Step 8: Plan to Monitor and Adapt

- All plans for language access must be monitored regularly for quality control
- Organizations should develop a plan for how to monitor their services; how well they are meeting the language access needs for the Deaf individuals served

# Language Access Planning

Now you're ready to create your plan!



# Language Access Plan Template

- Budgeting
- Services and Protocol
- Staff and Training
- Next Steps



# Adopting and Implementing Your Plan

- Now that you have your language access plan for Deaf people:
  - Adopt and implement your plan
  - Train your organization
  - Share with your service provider community
  - Conduct outreach within your local Deaf community

***Best Practices For Enhancing Your  
Capacity, Eliminating Barriers, and  
Reducing Harm***



# Collaboration

- Build relationships with Deaf organizations and the Deaf community in your service area, including planned outreach and engagement events
  - Attend local Deaf community events
  - Invite the local Deaf community to your events
  - Reach out to local Deaf organizations for potential partnerships
- Work with members of the Deaf community to educate staff on the local Deaf community and culture, and domestic and sexual violence against Deaf people
  - Invite Deaf community members and educators to your organization to provide trainings

# Understanding Audism

- Explore the role of **audism** in the barriers Deaf survivors face, and engage in a process of becoming hearing allies to the Deaf community
- This will build from your new relationships with the Deaf organizations in your community
  - Receive their guidance, remain open to learning about how audism creates harm in our society

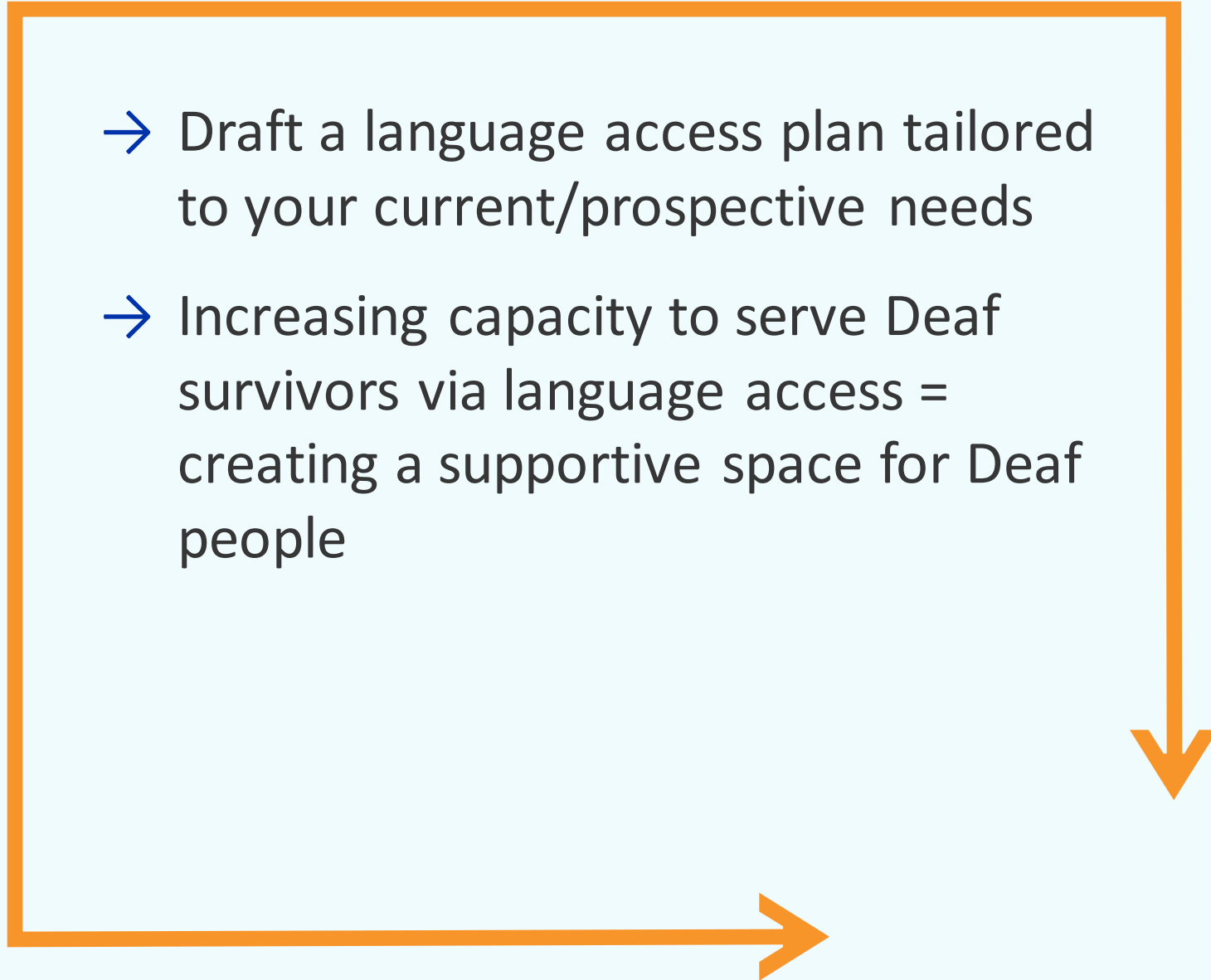


**Key Takeaways**

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# Capacity Building

- Draft a language access plan tailored to your current/prospective needs
- Increasing capacity to serve Deaf survivors via language access = creating a supportive space for Deaf people



Questions?



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