

# Say What?

*Health Literacy: Bridging Communication Gaps*



إن التدخين في هذه المنشآت  
مُخالف للقانون.

**Health Literacy** is the ability to obtain, understand and use basic health concepts, information and services in functional ways that enhance health.



A collage of health-related images and text. At the top right, a hand holds several pills. Below it, a stethoscope is visible. The central part of the collage features a dark red background with white text and graphics. On the left, a green card reads "FIGHT the BITE" and "Practice the 5D's of mosquito-borne disease prevention". In the center, a white card for "Roosevelt Sands Center" says "Resourcing • Serving • Caring" and "Put Your Health In Good Hands". To the right, a blue card says "Quit Smoking Today!". At the bottom, a white card lists services: "Offering: Extended Primary Care Services &amp; Chronic Disease Self-Management Classes". Below the cards, a white surface shows various pills and capsules, including orange, yellow, and white ones, next to a glass of water and a pill bottle.

## Level and definition

## Key abilities associated with level

*Below Basic* indicates no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills.

Score ranges for *Below Basic*:

Prose: 0–209  
Document: 0–204  
Quantitative: 0–234

Adults at the *Below Basic* level range from being nonliterate in English to having the abilities listed below:

- locating easily identifiable information in short, commonplace **prose** texts
- locating easily identifiable information and following written instructions in simple **documents** (e.g., charts or forms)
- locating numbers and using them to perform simple **quantitative** operations (primarily addition) when the mathematical information is very concrete and familiar

*Basic* indicates skills necessary to perform simple and everyday literacy activities.

Score ranges for *Basic*:

Prose: 210–264  
Document: 205–249  
Quantitative: 235–289

- reading and understanding information in short, commonplace **prose** texts
- reading and understanding information in simple **documents**
- locating easily identifiable **quantitative** information and using it to solve simple, one-step problems when the arithmetic operation is specified or easily inferred

*Intermediate* indicates skills necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities.

Score ranges for *Intermediate*:

Prose: 265–339  
Document: 250–334  
Quantitative: 290–349

- reading and understanding moderately dense, less commonplace **prose** texts as well as summarizing, making simple inferences, determining cause and effect, and recognizing the author's purpose
- locating information in dense, complex **documents** and making simple inferences about the information
- locating less familiar **quantitative** information and using it to solve problems when the arithmetic operation is not specified or easily inferred

*Proficient* indicates skills necessary to perform more complex and challenging literacy activities.

Score ranges for *Proficient*:

Prose: 340–500  
Document: 335–500  
Quantitative: 350–500

- reading lengthy, complex, abstract **prose** texts as well as synthesizing information and making complex inferences
- integrating, synthesizing, and analyzing multiple pieces of information located in complex **documents**
- locating more abstract **quantitative** information and using it to solve multi-step problems when the arithmetic operations are not easily inferred and the problems are more complex

# *The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy*

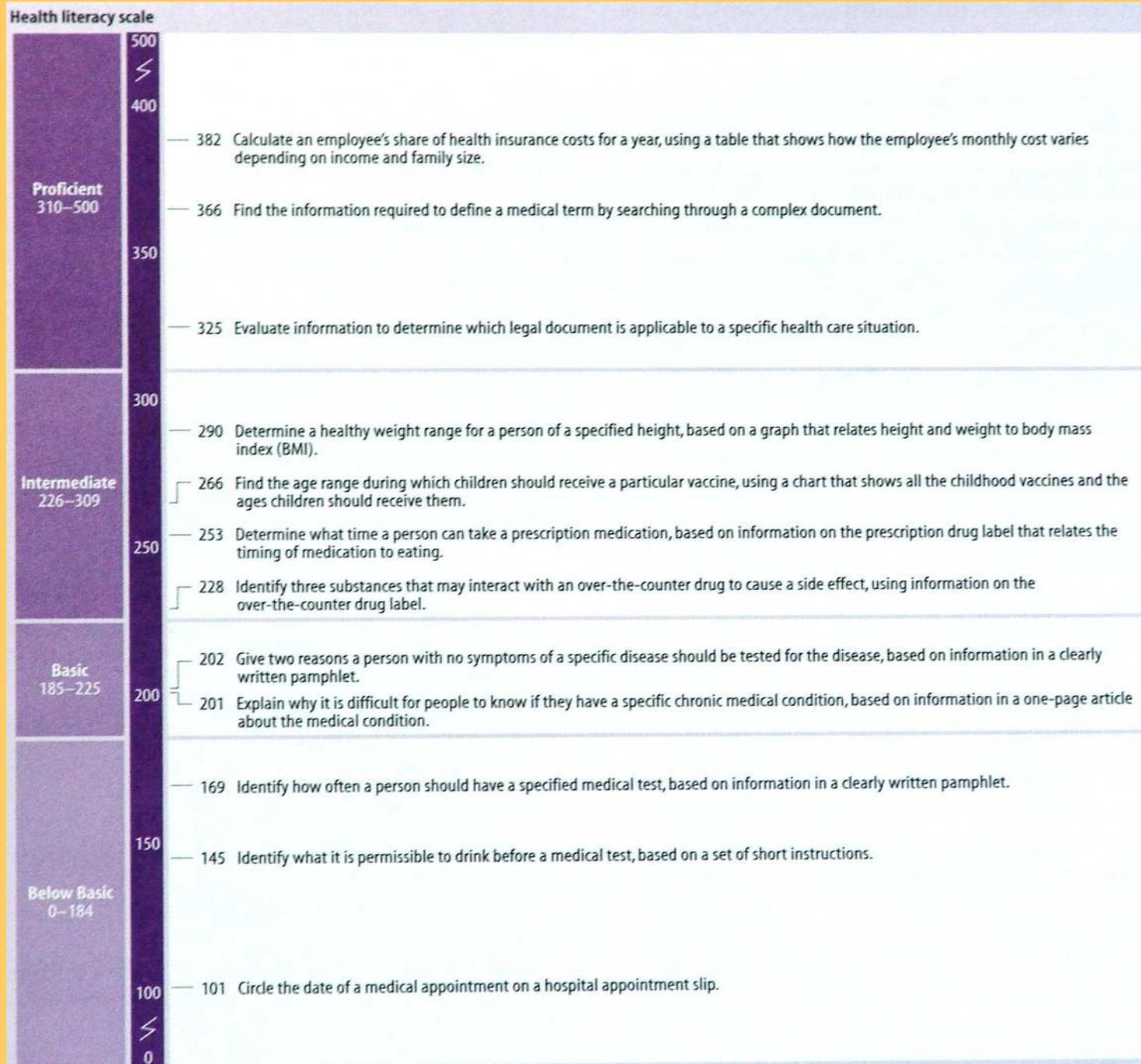
U.S.  
Department of  
Education

Institute of  
Educational  
Sciences

*The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy*

U.S. Department of Education

Institute of Educational Sciences



## How are health literacy levels determined?

*Proficient: skills necessary to perform more complex and challenging literacy activities.*

11%

- Evaluate information to determine which legal document is applicable to a specific health care situation.
- Find the information required to define a medical term by searching through a complex document.
- Calculate an employee's share of health insurance costs for a year, using a table that shows how the employee's monthly cost varies depending on income and family size.

*Intermediate: skills necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities.*

53%

- Identify three substances that may interact with an over-the-counter drug to cause a side effect, using information on the over-the-counter drug label.
- Determine what time a person can take a prescription medication, based on information on the prescription drug label that relates the timing of medication to eating.
- Find the age range during which children should receive a particular vaccine, using a chart that shows all the childhood vaccines and the ages children should receive them.
- Determine a healthy weight range for a person of a specified height, based on a graph that relates height and weight to body mass index (BMI).

## How are health literacy levels determined?

*Basic: skills necessary to perform simple and everyday literacy activities.*

22%

- Explain why it is difficult for people to know if they have a specific chronic medical condition, based on information in a one-page article about the medical condition.
- Give two reasons a person with no symptoms of a specific disease should be tested for the disease, based on information in a clearly written pamphlet.

*Below Basic: no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills.*

14%

- Circle the date of a medical appointment on a hospital appointment slip.
- Identify what's permissible to drink before a medical test, based on a set of shorter instructions.
- Identify how often a person should have a specified medical test, based on information in a clearly written pamphlet.

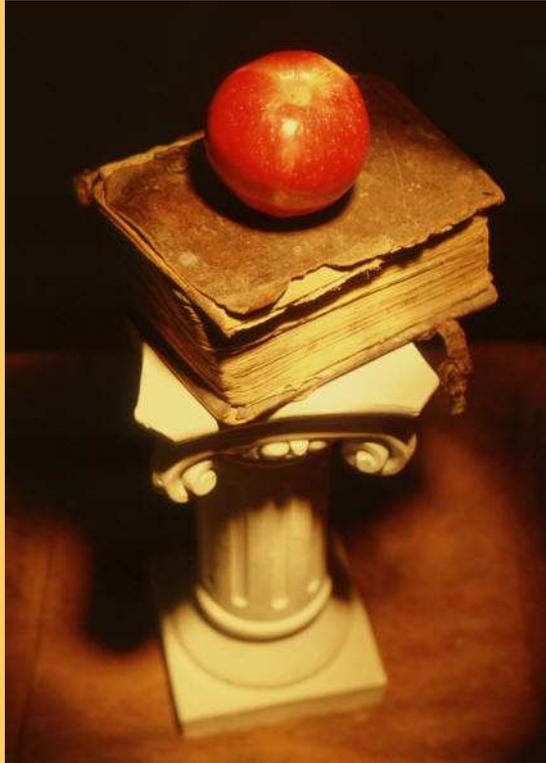
More than 75 million adults in the United States have “basic” or “below basic” health literacy.

– *The Health Literacy of America’s Adults:  
Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy*  
U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Educational Sciences

Understanding a doctor's orders, calculating how much medicine to take, reading disease-prevention pamphlets – all are ways adults can keep themselves and their families healthy. But millions of adults lack these essential “health literacy” skills, which adds an estimated \$230 billion a year to the cost of health care in the United States.

– ProLiteracy  
[www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org)





## **Barriers to Health Literacy**

Education

Language

Cultural and Linguistic  
Competency

Sensory Impairment  
(Hearing and Vision)



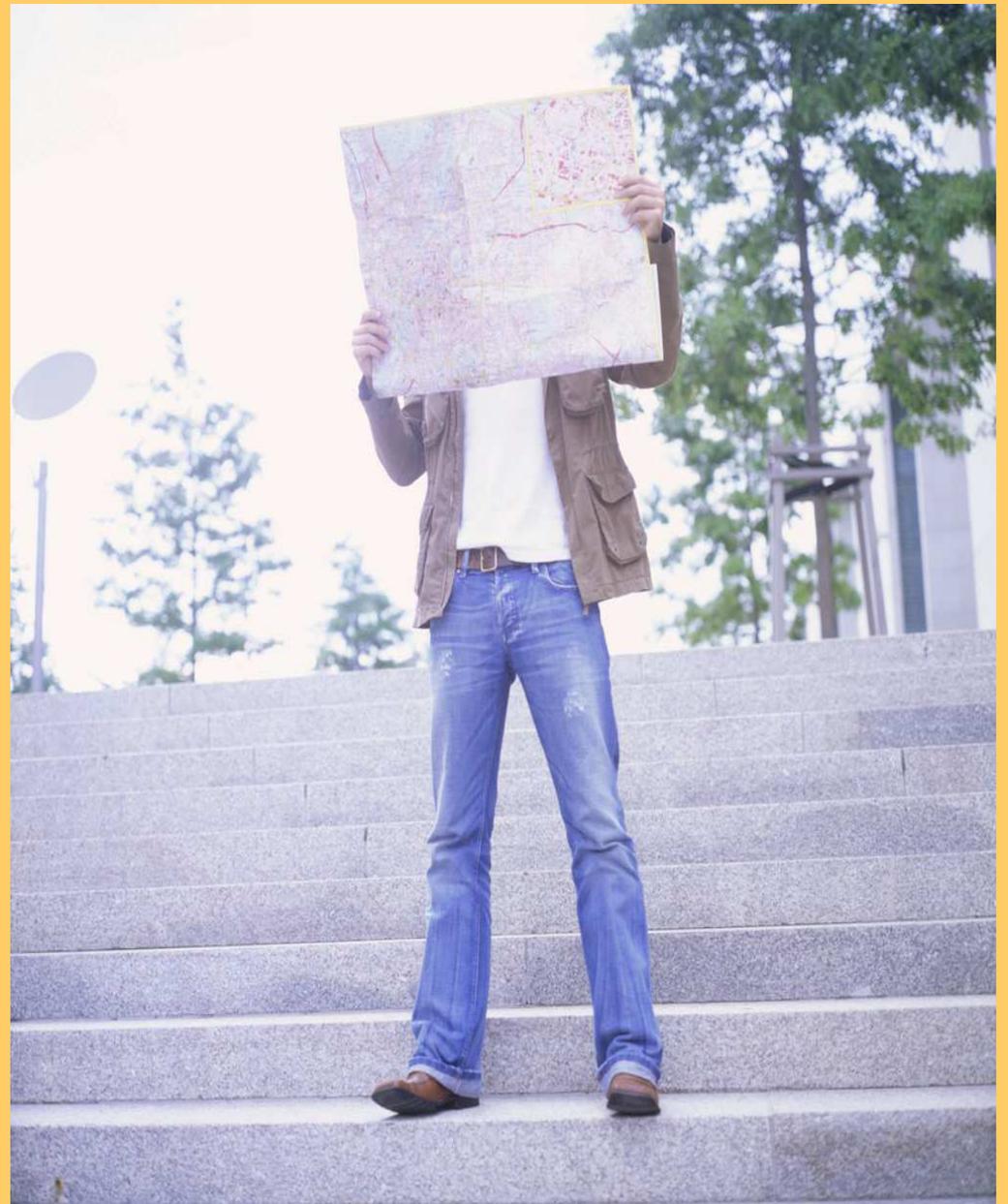
## **Education**

Low levels of education are tied to high health care costs for individuals and society. Studies found that the states that ranked the lowest one-third of educational attainment also ranked the lowest on general health care. Florida ranks 35 in education and 42 in health.

– U.S. Census Bureau and  
United Health Foundation

Most health education print materials are written at or above the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade level. However, the average reading level among all U.S. adults is no higher than an 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level and only a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade level for Medicaid enrollees. In the United States, an estimated 30 million people over the age of 16 read no better than the average elementary schoolchild.

– ProLiteracy  
[www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org)



## **Solutions**

- Reminders (phone calls, pill boxes, calendars, electronic messaging, etc.)
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Encourage questions
- Use “verbal callback”
- Communication training (clients and service providers)

Barrieres Linguistiques

อุปสรรคด้านภาษา

Las Barreras del Idioma

언어 장벽

## Language Barriers

لسانی رکاوٹوں کا

Taal Barriers

ভাষা বাধা

Wika Hadlang

موانع زبانی

Barriere Linguistiche

מחסומי שפה

Lugha ya Vikwazo

γλωσσικά εμπόδια

Spanish • Spanish Creole • Ladino • German • Yiddish • Dutch  
Swedish • Norwegian • French • Italian • Portuguese • Russian  
Polish • Serbo-Croatian • Hindi • Gujarati • Punjabi • Urdu • Celtic  
Greek • Baltic Languages • Iranian • Chinese Languages • Korean  
Japanese • Vietnamese • Hmong • Khmer • Lao • Thai • Tagalog  
Pilipino • Telugu • Tamil • Malayalam • Philippine • Polynesian  
Micronesian • Haitian Creole • Hungarian • Arabic • Hebrew  
African Languages • Indigenous American Languages



## United States

Population 5 years and older	280,950,438
Spoke a language other than English at home	55,444,485 (20%)
English-speaking ability	
Very well	55%
Well	20%
Not well	17%
Not at all	8%

– U.S. Census Bureau  
2007 American Community Survey

# Florida

Population 5 years and older	17,105,241
Spoke a language other than English at home	4,465,787 (26%)
English-speaking ability	
Very well	54.1%
Well	19.8%
Not well	16.5%
Not at all	9.5%

– U.S. Census Bureau  
2007 American Community Survey

## **Solutions**

- Language inventory (including sign language)
- Interpretation/translation services (face-to-face, telephone, online, etc.)
- Prepared materials
- Captioning/Dubbing/Multilingual
- Language training (campus, online, etc.)
- Community partners
- Media
- Use of friends/relatives (pros and cons)



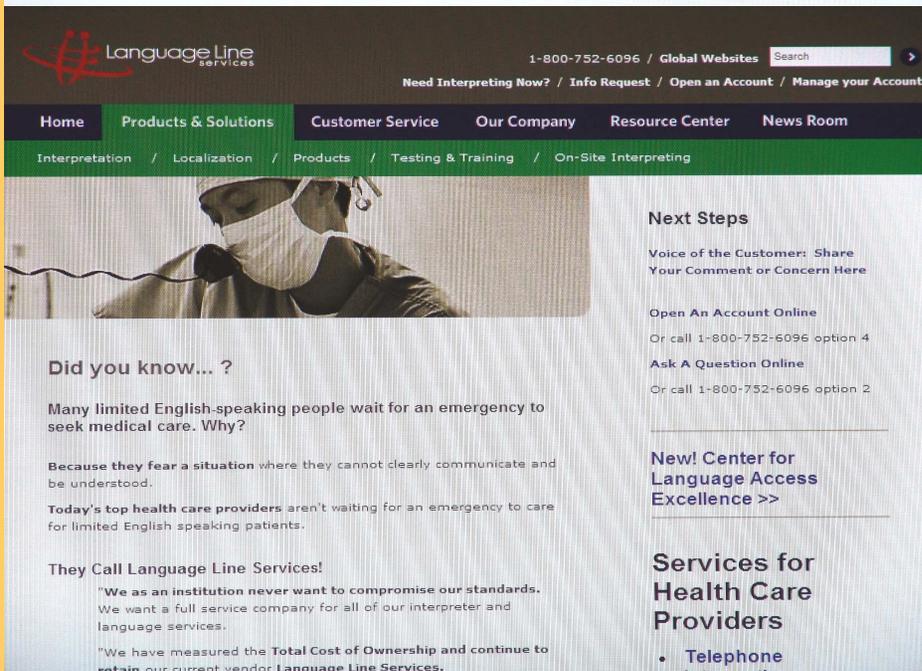
# Interpretation Service Available

## English Translation:

Point to your language. An interpreter will be called.

The interpreter is provided at no cost to you.

<b>Arabic</b> عربي  أشر إلى لغتك. وسوف يتم جلب مترجم فوري لك. سيتم تأمين المترجم الفوري مجاناً.	<b>Korean</b> 한국어  귀하께서 사용하는 언어를 지적하시면 해당 언어 통역 서비스를 무료로 제공해 드립니다.
<b>Armenian</b> Հայերէն  Տոյց տուէք ո՞ր մէկ լեզուն կը խօսիք՝ Թարգմանիչ մը կանչել կը տանք. Թարգմանիչը կը տրամադրուի անվճար.	<b>Laotian</b> ພາສາລາວ  ຊີ້ບອກພາສາທີ່ເຈົ້າເວົ້າໄດ້. ພວກເຮົາຈະຕິດຕໍ່ນາຍພາສາໃຫ້. ທ່ານບໍ່ຕ້ອງເສຍເງິນຄ່າແປໃຫ້ແກ່ນາຍແປພາສາ.
<b>Cantonese</b> 廣東話  請指認您的語言， 以便為您提供免費的傳譯服務。	<b>Mandarin</b> 國語  請指認您的語言， 以便為您提供免費的口譯服務。
<b>French</b> Français  Pointez vers votre langue et on appellera un interprète qui vous sera fourni gratuitement.	<div data-bbox="1260 1031 1879 1404" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>Language Line</b></p> <p><b>Customer Support</b></p> <p><b>1-800-752-6096</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.language.com">www.language.com</a></p> </div>
<b>German</b> Deutsch  Zeigen Sie auf Ihre Sprache. Ein Dolmetscher wird gerufen. Der Dolmetscher ist für Sie kostenlos.	
<b>Hindi</b> हिंदी  अपनी भाषा पर इंगित करें और एक दशायिगा तल्लया ज्जागा।	<b>Russian</b> Русский  Укажите язык на котором вы говорите. Вам не нужно



Language Line Services

Joe Matthews

Major Account Executive

1-800-316-5493

[jmatthews@languageline.com](mailto:jmatthews@languageline.com)

[www.languageline.com](http://www.languageline.com)

[www.languageline.com/video.php](http://www.languageline.com/video.php)

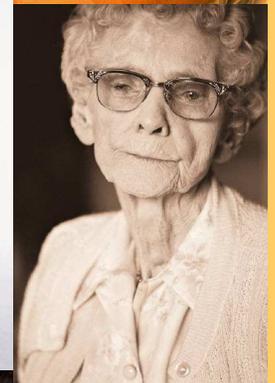
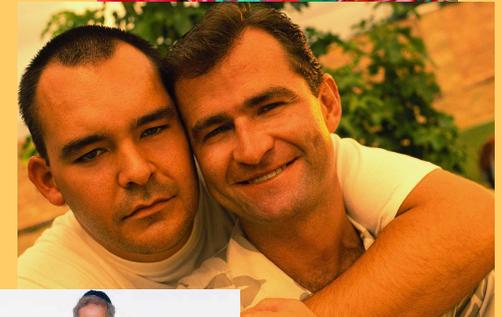
[www.languageline.com/training](http://www.languageline.com/training)

## Cultural and Linguistic Competency

*Cultural and linguistic competency is the ability to work effectively across cultures. For individuals, it is an approach to learning, communicating, and working respectfully with people different from themselves. Culture can refer to an individual's race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, immigration status and age, among other things.*

*For organizations, cultural & linguistic competency means creating the practices and policies that will make services more accessible to diverse populations and that provide for appropriate and effective services in cross-cultural situations.*

– Florida Department of Health  
Office of Minority Health



Course:

*Bridging the Cultural Divide in Health Care Settings*

Cultural brokering has been defined as “...bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds to effect change.”

National Center for Cultural Competence  
Georgetown University  
Center for Child and Human Development

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» NCCC Resources & Publications:

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» Projects & Initiatives

» Distance Learning

» Self-Assessments

» Información y Recursos:

- » Historias de Familias
- » NCCC Publicaciones
- » Recursos en Español

### Distance Learning

The NCCC has developed several online curricula to:

- » Assist in incorporating cultural and linguistic competence into users' work
- » Provide a set of defined areas of knowledge, skills, and awareness related to core content areas in cultural and linguistic competence
- » Offer relevant materials, articles, publications, and other multimedia resources
- » Provide users with instructional and self-discovery strategies

Curricula:

- » [Body/Mind/Spirit: Toward a Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model of Health](#)
- » [Bridging the Cultural Divide in Health Care Settings: The Essential Role of Cultural Broker Programs](#)
- » [Curricula Enhancement Module Series](#)
- » [Data Vignettes](#)

**DISTANCE LEARNING**

<http://nccc.georgetown.edu/distance.html>



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## **Americans With Disabilities Act**

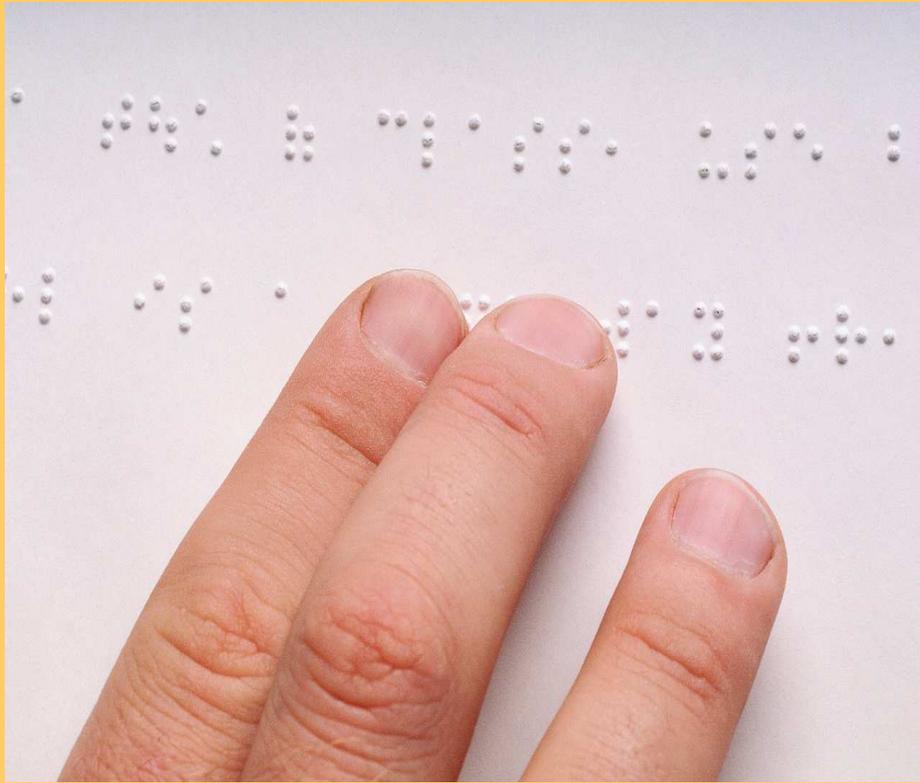
*The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.*

ADA Information Line

1-800-514-0301 (voice)

1-800-514-0383 (TTY)

[www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov)



## **Local Service Providers**

Some communities have partners whose primary missions are to advocate for and/or serve persons with disabilities.

## Hearing Impairment

*Between 2000 and 2004, estimates of the number of people in the United States with a self-described “hearing difficulty” ranged from 28.6 million to 31.5 million. The number of individuals with hearing difficulty is expected to rise as the baby-boomer generation reaches age 65. As compared to other age groups, the percentage of individuals with hearing difficulty is greatest among those individuals age 65 and above. A “hearing difficulty” can refer to the effects of many different hearing impairments of varying degrees.*

*The CDC refers to hearing impairments as conditions that affect the frequency and/or intensity of one’s hearing. Although the term “deaf” is often mistakenly used to refer to all individuals with hearing difficulties, it actually describes a more limited group. According to the CDC, “deaf” individuals do not hear well enough to rely on their hearing to process speech and language. **Individuals with mild to moderate hearing impairments may be “hard of hearing,” but are not “deaf.”** These individuals differ from deaf individuals in that they use their hearing to assist in communication with others.*

– U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

## **Solutions**

- Hearing test
- Hearing aid
- Writing
- Sign language (in person, video, etc.)
- Lip reading
- Captioning
- Telephone (TTY, operator-assisted, etc.)
- Electronic messaging
- Community partners



## Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

GO  
AAA | [Change Settings](#)

[LETTER FROM THE CHAIR](#) | [DOCUMENTS FOR DOWNLOAD](#) | [EVENTS CALENDAR](#) | [MEETINGS / AGENDAS](#) | [SERVICE LISTINGS](#)

- Home
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- General Information
- Hearing Loss Across Lifestages
- Education
- Employment
- Legal
- Medical
- Communication & Assistive Technology
- Agencies / Organizations
- Public Safety
- About Us



### Welcome to the Florida Coordinating Council For The Deaf And Hard Of Hearing

### Upcoming Events

The Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, hereafter referred to as the "Coordinating Council," is mandated by F.S. § 413.271 to serve as an advisory and coordinating body which recommends policies that address the needs of Florida's deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind (hereafter referred to collectively as "hearing loss") community. The Coordinating Council serves as a resource for deaf and hard-of-hearing Floridians who need some assistance with everyday needs including employment, education, and access to services.

Whether providing technical assistance to individuals, governmental agencies and other private or public organizations, or providing the resources to allow individuals to help themselves, the Coordinating Council is dedicated to assisting the nearly 3 million Floridians affected by hearing loss. The Coordinating Council's technical assistance



[www.fccdhh.org](http://www.fccdhh.org)

## Mission Statement

*To provide a forum for public input and outreach resulting in technical assistance, advocacy, education and improved communication access among public and private entities to meet the needs of deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind persons.*

## **Text Telephone (TTY)**

*Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.*

This distribution program provides specialized telecommunications devices at no charge to eligible deaf, hard of hearing, deaf and blind and speech-impaired citizens of Florida.

1-800-222-3448 (voice)

1-888-447-5620 (TTY)

[www.ftri.org](http://www.ftri.org)

*Florida Relay Center*

This service allows customers who use specialized telephone equipment to communicate with people who use standard telephones at no charge. Special Relay Operators can translate TTY messages into speech for non-TTY users and vice versa 24 hours a day. Translation services for English and American Sign Language-based text, Spanish and French Creole are also available.

1-800-676-3777 (English; TTY/Voice)

1-800-676-4290 (Spanish; TTY/Voice)



# VRI Video Remote Interpreting

**SIGN UP FOR  
VRI SERVICES**

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**About VRI**

**In-Depth**

**FAQs**

**About BIS**

**GSA Schedule**

**Contact**

Ready when YOU are...Even at the last minute.

A medical emergency

A walk-in client

A spur-of-the-moment phone conference

An unscheduled meeting

With Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) from Birnbaum Interpreting Services (BIS), you're always just a click/call away from a professional sign language interpreter!

- BIS VRI combines video conferencing technology with professional, accurate interpreters to enable Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing individuals to communicate interactively via a live, qualified (remotely located) interpreter.
- Minimum charges are based on just fifteen minutes instead of the standard two hour (or more) charge for conventional 'in person'

8555 16th Street  
Suite 400  
Silver Spring, MD  
20910

800.471.6441  
P: 301.587.8885  
F: 301.565.0366

*Birnbaum Interpreting  
Services (BIS) is a*

How do others use VRI?



Find out more by  
reading our case  
studies...  
[More...](#)

How can VRI help you?



Find out here.  
[More...](#)

Birnbaum Interpreting  
Services

1-877-247-8742

[vri@bisworld.com](mailto:vri@bisworld.com)

[www.bisvri.com](http://www.bisvri.com)

## Vision Impairment

*Estimates vary as to the number of Americans who are blind and visually impaired. According to one estimate, approximately 10 million people in the United States are blind or visually impaired. Other estimates indicate that one million adults older than the age of 40 are blind, and 2.4 million are visually impaired. Over the next 30 years, as the baby-boomer generation ages, the number of adults with vision impairments is expected to double.*

*The CDC defines “vision impairment” to mean that a person's eyesight cannot be corrected to a “normal level.” Vision impairment may result in a loss of visual acuity, where an individual does not see objects as clearly as the average person, and/or in a loss of visual field, meaning that an individual cannot see as wide an area as the average person without moving the eyes or turning the head. There are varying degrees of vision impairments, and the terms used to describe them are not always consistent. In the United States, the term “legally blind,” means a visual acuity of 20/200 or worse with the best possible correction, or a visual field of 20 degrees or less. Although there are varying degrees of vision impairments, the visual problems an individual faces cannot be described simply by the numbers; some people can see better than others with the same visual acuity.*

— U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission

[www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)

## **Solutions**

- Vision test
- Corrective eyewear
- Prepackaged meds
- Audible reminders (phone calls, electronic calendars, etc.)
- Big print literature
- Braille
- Optical character readers

Chris Tittel  
Minority Health Liaison  
Public Information Officer  
Marketing Director  
Monroe County Health Department  
(305) 809-5653  
[christopher\\_tittel@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:christopher_tittel@doh.state.fl.us)

