



Hancock Resource Center Self-Evaluation

Hancock Resource Center has reviewed its current policies and practices and determined that its policies and practices meet the requirements of Title 6 and 7 CFR Part 15b. The Executive Director, Rhonda Rhodes, is responsible for Self-Evaluation and Plan. This Self Evaluation has been discussed with The areas that have been evaluated include:

Physical Access

Limited English Proficiency

Outreach

Physical Access:

Hancock Resource Center is located in a large commercial building on the main business route in Waveland, Mississippi. It is centrally located within Hancock County and near other services including grocery stores, restaurants, and city or county government. The building is accessible with eight parking places designated for those with a disability, a ramp to enter the sidewalk outside of the entrance, and a level entrance through two double glass doors that create a wide, accessible entrance to the foyer. The Hancock Resource Center office is accessible through double glass doors. Both the exterior doors and the doors from the foyer into the office have minimal thresholds. There is a raised service counter, but a chair height table has been placed in front of the service counter for accessibility. Meeting rooms are accessible through wide hallways and tables in meeting rooms are chair height. There are restrooms in the foyer and inside the office that are accessible and include grab bars on the walls, elevated toilets, and easy access door handles.

There were no problems with physical access to the building.

Limited English Proficiency:

Hancock Resource Center will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs, and other benefits. The policy of Hancock Resource Center is to ensure meaningful communication with LEP clients and their authorized representatives. The policy also provides for communication of information contained in vital documents, including but not limited to disclosures, consents, and applications for assistance. Interpreters and translators needed to comply with the policy shall be provided without cost to the person being served, and clients and their families will be informed of the availability of such assistance free of charge. Language assistance will be provided through the use of competent interpreters, arrangements with local organizations providing interpretation or translation services, or technology and telephonic interpretation services. Staff are trained on the procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with LEP individuals are trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter. Hancock Resource Center collects LEP data through the Intake process and enters into the client management system. The data is aggregated quarterly on the HUD 9902 report and reviewed by the executive Director to determine the demographics and frequency of contact with LEP individuals. During the 2023 fiscal year, HRC collected demographic data from 303 clients. There were four clients that self-identified as Limited English Proficiency; two whose primary language was Spanish and two that identified Vietnamese as their primary language. The racial makeup was three American Indian/Native Alaskan, two Asian, 89 Black or African American, three multiracial, and

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206 white people. While the frequency of contact is 1.3% of client encounters, the ability to communicate with applicants and clients in a language in which they are fluent is of utmost importance to serving LEP individuals equitably. In addition to LEP, deaf individuals require assistance with sign language. HRC is very fortunate to have the de L’Epee Center located in Biloxi that provides ASL interpreters. The only problem identified during the evaluation was staff awareness and ability to access resources. Because it is infrequent, remembering the procedure is often a challenge. Notices with the Language Line, numbers for the De L’Epee Deaf Center, and local interpreters are posted at the desk where clients are first encountered, and staff are trained at least annually on the procedure.

Outreach

Hancock Resource Center reviews its outreach plans annually to ensure the activities encompass and reach protected groups in visual, print, electronic, and audio public information materials. The Nondiscrimination Statement is included on Hancock Resource Center’s website and printed materials. Nondiscrimination Posters are displayed in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese in the lobby area.

This Self Evaluation has been made available on Hancock Resource Center’s website with an opportunity to provide feedback. It has also been provided to the University of Southern Mississippi’s Institute for Disability Studies for review and feedback.

Hancock Resource Center has identified an opportunity to provide a language line that is easier for staff to access and the need for training on the use of such a line.

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