

Tips for Working with a LEP or Sign Language Interpreter

- Interpreters like to come to the situation prepared; give them generic information such as the type and duration of meeting, how many people are involved, jargon and abbreviations that may be used, and the names of people/programs/services.
- If you are working with a Deaf person, position yourself next to the interpreter. If you are working with an LEP person, position yourself opposite the interpreter and LEP person.
- Look at the LEP or Deaf person, not the interpreter.
- Direct your questions and statements to the LEP or Deaf person; do not use phrases such as “ask her” or “tell her.”
- Speak in first person rather than third person.
- Speak naturally at a reasonable pace. For LEP, there may be a hand signal to indicate a pause or to slow down.
- Because the interpreting may be consecutive, wait until the interpreter is finished interpreting a chunk of information, before you proceed, or wait for the interpreter to finish interpreting what the person has said.
- Check in occasionally to see if the person has questions or a response. The interpreter should be seen as a cultural mediator (ONLY for Deaf/deaf communities, not LEP).
- Do not place yourself or the interpreter against a background that is visually distracting or could block the Deaf person’s view of you (e.g., window, door that leads to the hallway, etc.). Do not shy away from asking the Deaf person where she wants you and the interpreter to be seated.
- Do not talk while the Deaf person is reading a document. Wait until she is finished.
- If possible, use the same interpreter for an ongoing service. Ask the person if she prefers a different interpreter for ongoing services.

- Do not have side conversations with the interpreter, especially if the person is in the room.
- When and where appropriate, have ground rules or common agreements regarding communication in settings involving multiple participants, such as turn-taking, raising hands, checking in with the pace of interpreters, and so forth.

Why Consider Team Interpreting Services

- Team interpreting is the utilization of two or more interpreters who support each other to meet the needs of a particular communication situation.
- The interpreter team is actively engaged in the process. It may be providing direct interpretation services, actively working between the two languages or functioning in supporting role. This support is necessary to enhance the team's performance and assure accurate communication takes place and may include:
 - monitoring the overall setting
 - assuring appropriate and timely transitions
 - supporting/cueing other team members as needed

What Is a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)?

- A CDI is a specialist who provides cultural and linguistic expertise. As a native signer with a lifetime experience as a Deaf individual, the CDI is also trained to ensure that communication is effective.
- A CDI is a valuable asset to any situation that requires complicated and sometimes emotional communication situations.
- A CDI often works as a unit with an ASL interpreter.
- Without a CDI, a Deaf client may worry that the hearing interpreter will not understand her/his ASL usage, and may try to make her/his communication English-like, which adds to the stress of communication. With a CDI, the Deaf client is more relaxed and is able to express her/himself more freely.
- A Deaf immigrant needs interpreting services but she does not use ASL. A CDI will use various methods—gesturing, acting, using objects, and learning a few signs from her—to make communication effective.
- When the hearing interpreter hears a question or statement, she/he interprets the information to the CDI, who in turn processes and presents it in a way that the Deaf client can understand.
- The hearing interpreter relies on the CDI for English-equivalent interpretation of the information that the Deaf client gives in her/his given mode of communication

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