



NEED AN ASL INTERPRETER?

How to Work with Your ASL Interpreter

Working with an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter in a courtroom setting is a little different than working with an interpreter in other settings. There are rules and ethical guidelines that impact what a court interpreter can and cannot do.

Who Are Court ASL Interpreters?

- The court chooses who can serve as an approved court ASL interpreter.
- You may not use a friend or family member as your court interpreter.

How to Work with the ASL Interpreter

- The interpreter will meet you at the courtroom before your hearing begins.
- The interpreter will check in with you to make sure you can understand one another.
- In the courtroom, do not address the interpreter directly. Direct your words to the judge and other people in the courtroom. The interpreter will render your communication into English. When speaking to the court, the interpreter will refer to themselves as “the interpreter.”
- Sometimes, the interpreter may ask the judge’s permission to speak with you. They may ask you to repeat or clarify your statement.
- If you sign or communicate too quickly or give long answers, the interpreter may ask you to slow down and pause to allow for interpretation.
- If you do not understand what is being said, tell the judge. The interpreter can help you let the judge know that you need clarification.

What the Interpreter Cannot Do

- Interpreters must follow court rules that require them to remain neutral. The interpreter cannot give you legal advice or explain court proceedings.
- Do not ask the interpreter about your case or what will happen in court. Interpreters cannot answer these questions.
- The ASL interpreter is not permitted to have private conversations with you.

Technology the Interpreter May Use

- In some cases, the court may provide an interpreter using video remote interpreting. The courtroom will have the equipment needed to ensure you can communicate with the interpreter. Court staff will call the interpreter using the equipment when the hearing begins. You will communicate with the interpreter through a video display. Speakers on the device will allow the judges and others to hear when the interpreter speaks.



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- If you are participating remotely, an interpreter can also be provided. This will work best if you participate using a desktop or laptop computer rather than a mobile device.



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