

A Maryland Judiciary Production  
*My Laws, My Courts, My Maryland*  
**Need A Court Interpreter?**

**Steps:**

**Intro**

**Who Are Court Interpreters?**

**When Can an Interpreter Assist Me?**

**How to Work with an Interpreter**

**What an Interpreter Cannot Do**

**Technology the Interpreter May Use**

**Let's Review**

How to Work with Your American Sign Language Interpreter

**Intro:**

Welcome to the second video in our video series on American Sign Language services in the Maryland Courts. In the first video, we explained how to request an interpreter. In this video, you will learn what services court interpreters can provide. We will also discuss how to work with a court interpreter. Let's get started.

**Who Are Court Interpreters?**

The court chooses who can act as an approved court interpreter. Only the court approved interpreter can provide interpretation services at a court hearing. You may not use a friend or family member as your court interpreter.

**How to Work with the Interpreter**

The interpreter will meet you at your scheduled courtroom before the hearing begins. The interpreter will check in with you first to make sure you are able to understand each other. In the courtroom, do not address the interpreter. Direct your words to the judge and other people in the courtroom. The interpreter will interpret everything you say into English and is not permitted to have private conversations with you. The interpreter will interpret what others say in English into American Sign Language. The interpreter will refer to themselves only as, "the interpreter."

Sometimes, the interpreter may ask the judge's permission to speak to you. They may then ask you to repeat or clarify your statement. There may be times when you sign too fast or give long answers. The interpreter may ask you to slow down or pause to allow for interpretation. Court hearings may go fast. 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 which require them to remain neutral. This means that the interpreter cannot give you legal advice or explain court proceedings. Do not ask the interpreter questions about your case. Do not ask about what will happen in court. Court interpreters cannot answer these questions. In addition, Court interpreters are not permitted to have private conversations with you or your family. This ensures that they always follow the rules and remain neutral.

## **Technology the Interpreter May Use**

In some cases, the court may provide an interpreter using video remote interpreting. If this is the case, the courtroom will have video remote interpreting equipment. The court staff will call the interpreter when your hearing begins. You will then communicate with the interpreter through a video display. The speakers on the device will allow for the judge and others to hear the interpretations.

Interpreters can also assist you if you are participating in a hearing remotely through video conference. In these cases, it is very difficult to follow an interpreted hearing if you are only using a mobile phone. It is much better if you can join the hearing on a laptop computer or even a tablet.

## **Let's Review**

Let's review what you have learned. The Court will provide an interpreter for all court hearings and proceedings. The interpreter will assist you by interpreting what you say to the court into English. They will interpret what others say in the court into American Sign Language. Sign slowly and clearly so that the interpreter has time to interpret your words. The interpreter is there to provide interpretation services only. They cannot help you in any other way.

This has been part two of our two-part video series on interpreters in the courts. On behalf of the Maryland courts, thank you for watching.