

# Customer Service for Limited English Proficient Court Users: Closing the Communication Gap



WASHINGTON  
COURTS  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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## HOW DO I USE THIS GUIDE?

The purpose of this booklet is to give some help to front-line staff for assisting non-English speaking court customers. For example, what do you do if someone approaches the front desk, speaking a language you don't understand, and no interpreter is available? Hopefully the tools in this guide will help you deal with those challenging situations.

- 3-6**      **Figuring out what language is being spoken.** Sometimes that's easy, and sometimes not. Turn to pages 3-6 and show these pages to the customers, and hopefully they can identify which language the person speaks.
  
- 7**        **Free online quick-phrase translations.** Do need to communicate a few, short words? ("Your name?" or "Please wait.") Try using one of the listed internet sites for quick, free translations.
  
- 8-10**     **Spanish/English court glossary.** Do you want to try communicating in Spanish? Try using this glossary developed by the North Carolina State Courts. If you don't know how to pronounce Spanish words, use the italics for some help.
  
- 11-13**    **Telephone interpreting.** Telephonic interpreting can be handy for face-to-face communication challenges, as well as over-the phone situations. Find details on which companies to contact under the state master contract, and tips on how to effectively utilize telephonic interpreting services.
  
- 14**        **Tips for serving deaf customers.** This info sheet gives suggestions to more effectively communicate with court customers who are deaf.
  
- 15-16**    **Sign language glossary.** Want to try some sign language yourself? Here's a glossary of terms that might be useful to you.
  
- 17**        **Finding court interpreters.** This page takes you step-by-step through the process of finding an interpreter from the Washington State Court Interpreter Program website.
  
- 18**        **Contacts.** If you have any questions or need assistance in serving non-English speaking customers, here is direct contact information for the Court Interpreter Program.

## Language Identification Guide

If a court customer is speaking a non-English language and you are not aware what language it is, try showing them the languages on these pages. Hopefully the customer will identify his/her language, and now you can work to find the appropriate interpreter.

انا احتاج مترجم عربي  
I need an Arabic interpreter

Kuv xav tau ib tug Hmoob  
pab txhais lus rau kuv.  
I need a Hmong interpreter

ខ្ញុំត្រូវការអ្នកបកប្រែភាសាខ្មែរ  
I need a Khmer interpreter.

ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ຕ້ອງການ ລ່ານແປພາສາລາວ  
I need a Lao interpreter

Turjumana afan Oromiffa enbarbana.  
I need an Oromiffa interpreter.

Мне нужен русский переводчик.  
I need a Russian interpreter.

Trebam prevodioca srpsko-hrvatskog jezika.  
I need a Serbo-Croatian interpreter.

Waxaan u baahnahay turjubaan  
Somali ah.  
I need a Somali interpreter.

Necesito servicios de intérprete  
en español.  
I need a Spanish interpreter.

Tôi cần thông dịch viên tiếng Việt.  
I need a Vietnamese interpreter.

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ضع علامة في هذا المربع إذا كنت تقرأ أو تتحدث العربية.                                | 1. Arabic              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Մարդու՞մ ենք նշում՝ կատարեք այս քանակությունը, եթե խոսում՝ կամ՝ կարդում՝ եք հայերեն: | 2. Armenian            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> যদি আপনি বাংলা পড়েন বা বলেন তা হলে এই বাক্সে দাগ দিন।                               | 3. Bengali             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ល្អមបញ្ជាក់ក្នុងប្រអប់នេះ បើអ្នកអាន ឬនិយាយភាសា ខ្មែរ ។                               | 4. Cambodian           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Motka i kahhon ya yangin ûntûngnu' manaitai pat ûntûngnu' kumentos Chamorro.         | 5. Chamorro            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 如果你能读中文或讲中文，请选择此框。   | 6. Simplified Chinese  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 如果你能讀中文或講中文，請選擇此框。   | 7. Traditional Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Označite ovaj kvadratić ako čitate ili govorite hrvatski jezik.                      | 8. Croatian            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zaškrtněte tuto kolonku, pokud čtete a hovoříte česky.                               | 9. Czech               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kruis dit vakje aan als u Nederlands kunt lezen of spreken.                          | 10. Dutch              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mark this box if you read or speak English.  | 11. English            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> اگر خواندن و نوشتن فارسی بلد هستید، این مربع را علامت بزنید.                         | 12. Farsi              |

- |                          |  |                    |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cocher ici si vous lisez ou parlez le français.                                      | 13. French         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Kreuzen Sie dieses Kästchen an, wenn Sie Deutsch lesen oder sprechen.                | 14. German         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Σημειώστε αυτό το πλαίσιο αν διαβάζετε ή μιλάτε Ελληνικά.                            | 15. Greek          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Make kazyè sa a si ou li oswa ou pale kreyòl ayisyen.                                | 16. Haitian Creole |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | अगर आप हिन्दी बोलते या पढ़ सकते हैं तो इस बक्स पर चिह्न लगाएँ।                       | 17. Hindi          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Kos lub voj no yog koj paub twm thiab hais lus Hmoob.                                | 18. Hmong          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Jelölje meg ezt a kockát, ha megérti vagy beszéli a magyar nyelvet.                  | 19. Hungarian      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Markaam daytoy nga kahon no makabasa wenno makasaoka iti Ilocano.                    | 20. Ilocano        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Marchi questa casella se legge o parla italiano.                                     | 21. Italian        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 日本語を読んだり、話せる場合はここに印を付けてください。   | 22. Japanese       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 한국어를 읽거나 말할 수 있으면 이 칸에 표시하십시오.   | 23. Korean         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ໃຫ້ໝາຍໃສ່ຊ່ອງນີ້ ຖ້າທ່ານອ່ານຫຼືປາກພາສາລາວ.   | 24. Laotian        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prosimy o zaznaczenie tego kwadratu, jeżeli posługuje się Pan/Pani językiem polskim. | 25. Polish         |

- |                          |  |                |
|--------------------------|--|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Assinale este quadrado se você lê ou fala português.                           | 26. Portuguese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Însemnați această căsuță dacă citiți sau vorbiți românește.                    | 27. Romanian   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Пометьте этот квадратик, если вы читаете или говорите по-русски.               | 28. Russian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Обележите овај квадратих уколико читате или говорите српски језик.             | 29. Serbian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Označte tento štvorček, ak viete čítať alebo hovoriť po slovensky.             | 30. Slovak     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Marque esta casilla si lee o habla español.                                    | 31. Spanish    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Markahan itong kuwadrado kung kayo ay marunong magbasa o magsalita ng Tagalog. | 32. Tagalog    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ให้กาเครื่องหมายลงในช่องถ้าท่านอ่านหรือพูดภาษาไทย.                             | 33. Thai       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Maaka 'i he puha ni kapau 'oku ke lau pe lea fakatonga.                        | 34. Tongan     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Відмітьте цю клітинку, якщо ви читаете або говорите українською мовою.         | 35. Ukrainian  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | اگر آپ اردو پڑھتے یا بولتے ہیں تو اس خانے میں نشان لگائیں۔                     | 36. Urdu       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Xin đánh dấu vào ô này nếu quý vị biết đọc và nói được Việt Ngữ.               | 37. Vietnamese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | באצייכנט דעם קעסטל אויב איר לייענט אדער רעדט אידיש.                            | 38. Yiddish    |

## Quick Web Translations

When live and telephonic interpreters are not available, it is sometimes helpful to bridge the communication gap by simply translating a few words. There are several free, online translation tools that might be helpful for this situation. However, this should only be limited to a few words or a short phrase such as:

- Your name?
- Go across the street.
- We will call an interpreter.
- Your papers?
- Come back tomorrow.



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

<http://translation2.paralink.com>

<http://world.altavista.com>

[http://www.worldlingo.com/en/products\\_services/worldlingo\\_translator.html](http://www.worldlingo.com/en/products_services/worldlingo_translator.html)

### **WARNING!!!**

While it may be tempting to use these quick, free tools to replace an interpreter or translator, you'll likely encounter many mistakes in translation even in seemingly simple sentences. For example, the following was translated online from English to the foreign language, and then back to English again. It should come back with the same words, but...

**Original Sentence:** *Your court hearing is scheduled for December 1. Please return that day at 9:00 a.m.*

**Same sentence translated into Korean, and back into English:** *Your hearing is planned for December 1.th. Give back the work in 9:00 a.m.*

**Chinese:** *Your court hearing predetermined in December 1. Please return that day in 9:00.*

**Spanish:** *Its judicial declaration program for the 1 of December. It please returns that day in the 9:00 tomorrow.*

**Portuguese:** *Its hearing is programmed for December 1. It please returns this day in the 9:00 the M.*

Using this scenario, a safer word choice may be "Return December 1. 9:00 a.m."

## English / Spanish Court Terminology Glossary

This glossary is not intended to replace the use of trained, professional interpreters. However, if you're interested in bridging the communication gap, these phrases may be useful:

### GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Name</b>	Nombre	<i>"gnome bray"</i>
<b>Date of Birth</b>	Fecha de nacimiento	<i>"fay cha day nasy miento"</i>
<b>Address</b>	Dirección	<i>"direxion"</i>
<b>Telephone Number</b>	Número de teléfono	<i>"nuumero day teléfono"</i>
<b>Social Security Number</b>	Número de seguro social	<i>"nuumero day say guro so see all"</i>
<b>Son / Daughter</b>	Hijo / Hija	<i>"E ho / E ha"</i>

### TYPES OF INQUIRIES

<b>Criminal Matter</b>	Asunto penal	<i>"asoonto pain all"</i>
<b>Traffic</b>	Multa de tráfico	<i>"muulta day tráfico"</i>
<b>Child Support</b>	Mantenimiento de hijos	<i>"manten E miento day E hos"</i>
<b>Civil Lawsuit</b>	Demanda civil	<i>"demanda civeel"</i>
<b>Divorce</b>	Divorcio	<i>"divorcio"</i>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	Violencia doméstica	<i>"violencia doméstica"</i>
<b>Name Change</b>	Cambio de nombre	<i>"cambio day nombre"</i>
<b>Payment of Money</b>	Pago de dinero	<i>"pago day dinero"</i>
<b>Involuntary Commitment</b>	Internación involuntaria	<i>"inter na see own involun tar E ah"</i>
<b>Jury Service</b>	Prestación de servicio como miembro de un jurado	<i>"presta see own day servicio como me embro de un who rah dow"</i>
<b>General Information</b>	Información general	<i>"in for ma see own hener all"</i>

### CONVERSATIONAL PHRASES

<b>Hello</b>	Hola	<i>"O la"</i>
<b>My name is ____.</b>	Me llamo ____.	<i>"may yah mow"</i>
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	Habla usted ingles?	<i>"Abla uu sted in glaze?"</i>
<b>I do not know Spanish.</b>	No sé hablar español.	<i>"No say abler espaniol."</i>
<b>I cannot help you any further without an interpreter.</b>	No le puedo ayudar más sin un intérprete.	<i>"no le puedo l you dar moss seen un in tear pretay"</i>
<b>I do not know Spanish, but I have a book of phrases that may help us communicate.</b>	No hablo español, pero tengo un libro de frases que nos puede ayudar con la comunicación.	<i>"no hablo espaniol, pero tengo un leebro day frases K nos puede l you dar con la comunica see own."</i>
<b>Thank you.</b>	Gracias.	<i>"gracias"</i>
<b>You are welcome.</b>	De nada.	<i>"day nah dah"</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	Sí	<i>"see"</i>

<b>No.</b>	No	"no"
<b>Please</b>	Por favor	"por fah vor"
<b>Wait one moment.</b>	Un momento.	"un momento"
<b>Have a seat. Someone will help you shortly.</b>	Tome asiento. Alguien vendrá pronto a ayudarle.	"toe may ah see ento. All ghee en vendra pronto ah I you dar le"
<b>Do you understand?</b>	Me entiende?	"may en tee ende?"
<b>I cannot understand what it is that you need.</b>	No entiendo lo que usted necesita.	"no en tee endo lo K usted nese see ta"
<b>Sign your name here.</b>	Firme su nombre aquí.	"fear may su nombre ah kee"
<b>Good-bye.</b>	Adiós.	"adios"
<b>Show me your identification.</b>	Muéstrame alguna identificación suya.	"mwestra may all goon ah E den ti fi ka see own sue ya"
<b>Do you have a driver's license?</b>	Tiene licencia de manejar?	"T N eh lisen see ah day maanay har?"

### CASE INFORMATION

<b>What is your case number?</b>	Cuál es el número de su causa?	"quall S L numero day sue cowa?"
<b>What is the names of the people involved?</b>	Cuáles son los nombres de las personas involucradas?	"quall ays son los nombres day las personas involucradas?"
<b>Do you have a copy of your ticket?</b>	Tiene copia de su tiquete?	"T N A co-pia day sue ti ket eh?"
<b>Do you have a copy of your papers?</b>	Tiene copias de sus documentos?	"T N A co-pias day Sue's dock umentos?"
<b>What is your court date?</b>	En que fecha tiene que presentarse en el tribunal?	"en K fecha T en eh K presentarse en el trib-u-nal?"
<b>You must appear in court on ____ at ____.</b>	Usted debe presentarse en el tribunal al día ____ a las ____ horas.	"usted day bay presentarse en el trib-u-nal al deeya ____ a las ____ oras"

### DIRECTIONAL INFORMATION

<b>You need to contact ____.</b>	Usted debe comunicarse con ____.	"usted day bay comuni car say con"
<b>The telephone number is ____.</b>	El número de teléfono es ____.	"el numero day teléfono es"
<b>Across the hall.</b>	Cruzando el pasillo.	"cruzando el paw see yo"
<b>Down the hall.</b>	Por el pasillo.	"por el paw see yo"
<b>Turn right.</b>	Doble a la derecha.	"doe blā a la derecha"
<b>Turn left.</b>	Doble a la izquierda.	"doe blā a la izkeyerda"
<b>Upstairs.</b>	Arriba.	"arriba"
<b>Downstairs.</b>	Abajo.	"ah bah ho"
<b>Across the street.</b>	Cruzando la calle.	"cruzando la ca-yay"
<b>____ floor.</b>	Piso ____.	"peeso"
<b>You must go to:</b>	Usted debe ir a:	"usted day bay ear ah"

## NUMBERS, TIMES OF DAY, MONTHS OF THE YEAR, DAYS OF THE WEEK

<b>1</b>	Uno	<i>"uno"</i>	<b>16</b>	Dieciséis	<i>"dee ehs E sehs"</i>
<b>2</b>	Dos	<i>"doze"</i>	<b>17</b>	Diecisiete	<i>"dee ehs E see eh te"</i>
<b>3</b>	Tres	<i>"trays"</i>	<b>18</b>	Diesiocho	<i>"dee ehs E ocho"</i>
<b>4</b>	Cuatro	<i>"quatro"</i>	<b>19</b>	Diesinueve	<i>"dee ehs E new eh ve"</i>
<b>5</b>	Cinco	<i>"sink O"</i>	<b>20</b>	Veinte	<i>"been te"</i>
<b>6</b>	Seis	<i>"sehs"</i>	<b>21</b>	Veinte y uno	<i>"been te E uno"</i>
<b>7</b>	Siete	<i>"see eh te"</i>	<b>22</b>	Veinte y dos	<i>"been te E dose"</i>
<b>8</b>	Ocho	<i>"ocho"</i>	<b>30</b>	Treinta	<i>"train ta"</i>
<b>9</b>	Nueve	<i>"new eh ve"</i>	<b>40</b>	Cuarenta	<i>"quarenta"</i>
<b>10</b>	Diez	<i>"dee ehs"</i>	<b>50</b>	Cincuenta	<i>"seen quenta"</i>
<b>11</b>	Once	<i>"own say"</i>	<b>60</b>	Sesenta	<i>"say senta"</i>
<b>12</b>	Doce	<i>"doe say"</i>	<b>70</b>	Setenta	<i>"say tenta"</i>
<b>13</b>	Trece	<i>"tre say"</i>	<b>80</b>	Ochenta	<i>"oh chenta"</i>
<b>14</b>	Catorce	<i>"ka tore say"</i>	<b>90</b>	Noventa	<i>"no venta"</i>
<b>15</b>	Quince	<i>"keen say"</i>	<b>100</b>	Cien	<i>"see N"</i>

<b>January</b>	Enero	<i>"eh nero"</i>	<b>July</b>	Julio	<i>"who leo"</i>
<b>February</b>	Febrero	<i>"febrero"</i>	<b>August</b>	Agosto	<i>"ah ghost oh"</i>
<b>March</b>	Marzo	<i>"marzo"</i>	<b>September</b>	Septiembre	<i>"sep T M bre"</i>
<b>April</b>	Abril	<i>"ah breeel"</i>	<b>October</b>	Octubre	<i>"octoo bre"</i>
<b>May</b>	Mayo	<i>"my oh"</i>	<b>November</b>	Noviembre	<i>"no V embre"</i>
<b>June</b>	Junio	<i>"hoon E O"</i>	<b>December</b>	Diciembre	<i>"D siembre"</i>

<b>Monday</b>	Lunes	<i>"loon ehs"</i>	<b>Friday</b>	Viernes	<i>"bee air nehs"</i>
<b>Tuesday</b>	Martes	<i>"martes"</i>	<b>Saturday</b>	Sábado	<i>"saab ah do"</i>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Miércoles	<i>"me air cole ays"</i>	<b>Sunday</b>	Domingo	<i>"domingo"</i>
<b>Thursday</b>	Jueves	<i>"who ay vays"</i>	<b>Holiday</b>	Día festivo	<i>"dee ah festeevo"</i>

### DIRECTIONS TO FILL OUT A FORM

Once you have completed this form, please return it to the staff person at the front desk. If you have a family member or friend with you who can interpret for you, please ask that person to introduce him or herself to the staff person at the front desk. If you do not have someone with you who can interpret for you, we may not be able to complete your transaction. We may have to ask you to wait while we locate an interpreter, or return at a later date.

Cuando haya completado este formulario, por favor, entrégueselo al empleado en el mostrador o escritorio de recepción. Si usted ha venido con un familiar o amigo que puede interpretar para usted, pídale a esa persona que se presente con el empleado en la recepción. Si no hay nadie que le puede interpretar, quizás no se pueda completar esta transacción. Le pedimos que espere mientras que localizamos a un intérprete, o volver en otra fecha.

## Telephonic Interpreting

Telephonic interpreting is an extremely useful tool for customer service and communicating by telephone. It is not recommended for court proceedings, and General Rule 11.3 specifically proscribes the limited situations in which telephonic interpreting is appropriate in the courtroom.

Many companies offer telephonic interpreting services. However, the State of Washington has **master contract 03508** with three companies: Language Line Services Inc., Corporate Translation Services, Inc., and Pacific Interpreters, Inc. Pacific Interpreters, Inc. only provides medical interpreting. Courts are welcome to use that master contract for obtaining their telephonic interpreting services. Contract details can be found at:  
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/apps/ContractSearch/ContractSummary.aspx?c=03508>

### **CTS Language Link**

Vancouver, WA  
\$0.82 per minute for all languages  
[www.ctslanguagelink.com](http://www.ctslanguagelink.com)

### **Language Line Services, Inc.**

Monterey, CA  
\$0.98/minute for all languages  
<http://languageline.com>

To hear samples of Language Line services, call 1-800-821-0301. Language Line states that it provides court-trained interpreters in the following languages:

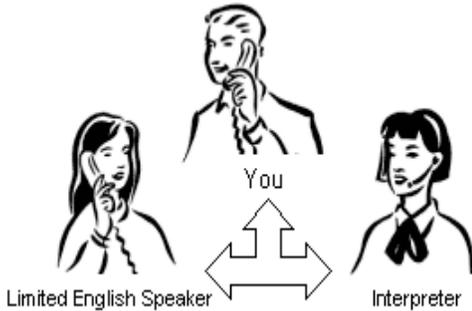
- |                   |             |                |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Arabic         | 6. Japanese | 11. Portuguese |
| 2. Cantonese      | 7. Khmer    | 12. Russian    |
| 3. French         | 8. Korean   | 13. Spanish    |
| 4. Haitian Creole | 9. Mandarin | 14. Tagalog    |
| 5. Hmong          | 10. Polish  | 15. Vietnamese |

Please note: Language Line “Court Certification” does not meet the same standards as Washington Court Certification.

- Language Line will try to connect courts with court interpreters. However, if none are available, it will automatically connect you with a non-court interpreter without first informing you. Ask the interpreter’s credentials so you’re aware of the interpreter’s ability to interpret legal terms.
- Some of Language Line’s interpreters reside outside the U.S. Don’t make presumptions about their knowledge level of Washington-specific legal terminology and procedure.

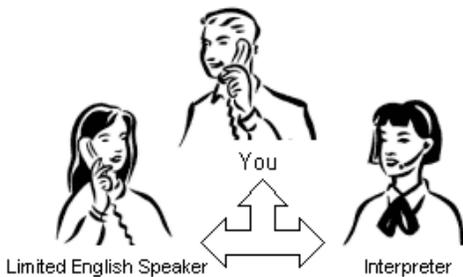
## Three Ways You To Use Language Line® Over-the-Phone Interpretation Service With Limited English Speakers

### You Receive a Call From a Limited English Speaker



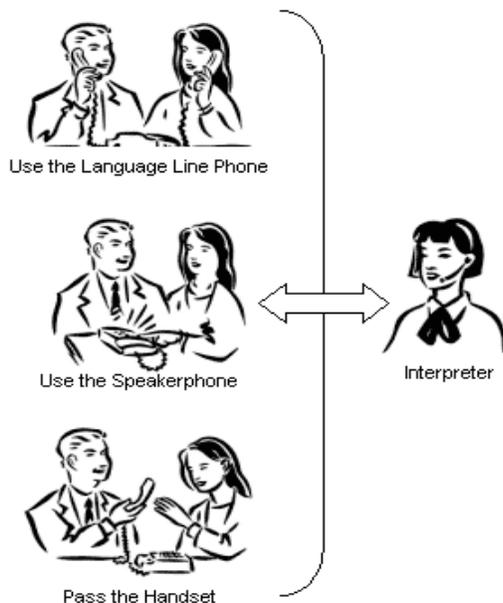
- Place the **Limited English Speaker** on conference hold.
- Dial the Language Line Services designated toll-free number you have been provided at sign-up.
- Request the language your caller speaks through our easy-to-use interactive voice response (IVR) system.
- When the interpreter is connected, explain the situation.
- Conference in your limited English-speaking caller.

### You Need to Make a Call to a Limited English Speaker



- Dial the Language Line Services designated toll-free number.
- Request the language your client speaks through our easy-to-use interactive voice response (IVR) system.
- When the interpreter is connected...
- Call your limited English-speaking client...
- Or the interpreter can place the call for you within the U.S. or Canada.

### You Are Face-to-Face With a Limited English Speaker



- Dial the Language Line Services designated toll-free number.
- Request the language your client speaks through our easy-When the interpreter is connected, use the Language Line® Phone, or your speakerphone, or pass your handset back and forth.

## Tips and Advice – From CTS Language Link:



### ***How to Work with a Telephone Interpreter***

Telephone interpreters may receive several calls a day—each one requiring special attention in a specific field. When working with an interpreter over-the-phone, there are a few things you should keep in mind to ensure your call is handled quickly and successfully.

#### ***Your role***

- Always speak in first person, just as you would in normal conversation. For example, say, “Do you have a fever?” rather than “Ask her if she has a fever, please.”
- Immediately introduce yourself to the limited-English proficient (LEP) client and explain your reason for calling.
- Telephone interpretation is “consecutive” interpretation. That means you will experience pauses when the interpreter repeats each statement in the respective language.
- After you speak one-two sentences or finish a thought, pause to give the interpreter enough time to interpret.
- Be prepared to explain some things in more detail for the telephone interpreter. Some terminology and concepts may not have an equivalent in the target language.
- Control the conversation. The telephone interpreter is only there to interpret. You are responsible for making sure the LEP client receives the same service as an English-speaking client.
- Ask the interpreter and the LEP client questions to ensure they understand what you want to communicate.
- Avoid asking the interpreter for his/her opinion about the situation being interpreted.

#### ***Your telephone interpreter’s role***

We expect our interpreters to meet high standards and want to know when they are meeting our expectations. To that end, your feedback is critical.

- Make sure your interpreter introduces himself/herself using a first name and ID number. They are not required to provide a last name.
- Your interpreter should not have a side conversation with you or the client. He or she must relay everything that is said back to you or your client. This includes any advice that the client may ask of the interpreter.
- Your interpreter should not discuss anything unrelated to the telephone interpretation assignment.

## Tips for Ensuring Communication for Deaf Court Customers

- ☞ **Don't assume that all people who are deaf can communicate well in written English.** This form of communication may work for some, but not everyone.

### **Guidelines for effective note writing:**

- Introduce one idea or fact at a time.
- Eliminate any unnecessary words – be short and to the point.
- Select words which are commonly used by most people. Avoid legalese!
- Avoid long, complex sentences.
- Use simple illustrations and label them clearly.
- Rephrase the information when necessary.
- Use natural facial expressions and gestures.

### **Examples:**

"How long have you waited here?" -v- "Wait here – how long?"  
"When is your court date?" -v- "Court date – when?"

- ☞ **While American Sign Language (ASL) is the preferred language of the deaf community, not all deaf individuals use ASL.**
- ☞ **ASL is not signs in English word order.** It is a visual gestural language with its own syntax and grammatical structure.

### **COMMUNICATION TIPS**

- ☞ **Eye contact is necessary for effective communication.** Make sure your face and mouth are clearly visible.
- ☞ **Not all people who are deaf can read lips.** Only 30-40% of spoken English is visible on the lips.
- ☞ **Use facial expressions and gestures to clarify your message.** Pointing to appropriate objects or using visual aids can also be helpful.
- ☞ **Only one person should talk at a time in a group situation.**
- ☞ **In order to get the attention of a person who is deaf, hand waving is the most common method.** Tapping the shoulder or arm is also acceptable.

### **REMEMBER**

- ☞ **Some deaf people may speak, and quite well.** You may have someone approach the desk or call by phone and ask in perfectly articulated English "I need a sign language interpreter for my court hearing," and he/she really does need an interpreter!
- ☞ **Deaf people have a variety of options to contact you via telecommunication devices.** Some may contact you through the Relay Service, Video Relay, Internet Relay or call you directly on their TTY.
- ☞ **Remember that the court always, always, hires and pays for sign language interpreters for deaf court customers or provides other requested auxiliary aids for people with any degree of hearing loss.** (Requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act.)

## English / American Sign Language Glossary

This glossary is not intended to replace the use of trained, professional interpreters. However, if you're interested in bridging the communication gap, these phrases that may be useful:

**DON'T KNOW** The right fingertips tap the forehead several times. The right hand is then flung over to the right, ending in the '5'  position, palm out.

**ELEVATOR** The right 'E'  hand, palm facing left and thumb facing up, rises straight up.

**EMERGENCY** The right 'E'  hand is positioned above the head. It rotates in imitation of a flashing emergency light.

**EXAMPLE** The right index finger points into the left palm, held facing out before the body. The left palm moves straight out.

**EXPLAIN** The 'F'  hands, palms facing and fingers pointing straight out, are held about an inch apart. They move alternately back and forth a few inches.

**FINE (\$\$)** The knuckle of the right 'X'  finger is nicked against the palm of the left hand, held in the '5'  position, palm facing right.

**GUILTY** The index finger edge of the right 'G'  hand taps the chest over the heart.

**HARD OF HEARING** The right 'H'  hand drops down an inch or so, rises, moves in a short arc to the right, and drops down an inch or so again.

**HELP** The left 'S'  hand, thumb up, rests in the open right palm. Both hands are then pushed up a slight distance.

**IMPORTANT** Both 'F'  hands, palms facing each other, move apart, up, and together in a smooth elliptical fashion, coming together at the tip of the thumbs and index fingers of both hands.

**IN THE FUTURE** The upright, open right hand, palm facing left, moves straight out and slightly up from a position beside the right temple.

**INNOCENT** Both open hands, palms facing out, are held in front of the mouth, with the ring fingers bent against the palm. Both hands move out and away from the mouth, describing arcs.

- INTERPRET**  The 'F' hands are held palms facing and thumbs and index fingers in contact with each other. The hands swing around each other, reversing their relative position.
- JUDGE** (noun & verb)  The two 'F' hands, palms facing each other, move alternately up and down.
- LATE**  The '5' hand and forearm, hanging loosely and straight down from the elbow, move back and forth under the arm pit.
- MONEY** The thumb rubs over the index and middle fingers of the upturned hand, as if fingering money.
- OBSERVE**  The tips of the right 'V' fingers point to the eyes. The right hand is then swung around and forward a bit.
- PARENTS** Using the right '5'  hand, the right thumbtip first touches the right side of the chin, then moves up to touch the right temple. (The 'P'  hand may also be used)
- ROOM** The open hands, palms facing and fingers pointing out, are dropped an inch or two simultaneously. They then shift their relative position so that both palms face the body, with one hand in front of the other. In this new position they again drop an inch or two simultaneously.
- SIGN LANGUAGE**  The 'D' hands, palms facing and index fingers pointing back toward the face, describe a series of continuous counterclockwise circles toward and away from the face, imitating the foot motion in bicycling. The downturned 'F'  hands are positioned with thumbs and index fingertips touching, and the hands move straight apart to either side in a wavy motion. (This second portion of the sign is often omitted.)
- THANK YOU** Touch the lips with the fingertips of one or both flat hands, then move the hands forward until the palms are facing up.
- TIME** The right curved index fingertip is made to tap the back of the left wrist a few times.
- BATHROOM**  Shake the right 'T' hand in front of the chest with the palm facing forward.
- UNDERSTAND** The right 'S'  hand is placed on the forehead, palm facing the body. The index finger suddenly flicks up into the 'D'  position.
- WRITE** The right index finger and thumb, grasping an imaginary pen, write across the open left palm.

## Finding Court Interpreters

The Washington Courts website lists all AOC Certified and Registered court interpreters' names and contact information. Go to [www.courts.wa.gov/interpreters](http://www.courts.wa.gov/interpreters)

On the right-hand side is a search box, which allows you to find interpreters using a variety of criteria.

The screenshot shows the Washington Courts website. The header includes 'WASHINGTON COURTS' and navigation links for 'Courts Home', 'Program and Orgs', and 'Court Interpreters'. A search bar is visible in the top right. The main content area is titled 'Washington State Court Interpreter Program' and features a section for 'Updates and Announcements' with a 'Notice: Vacancy on Court Interpreter Commission'. The notice text states that the Washington State Court Interpreter Commission develops policies governing the program and is currently soliciting applications for a vacancy. To the right of the main content is a 'Search for Interpreters' form with fields for 'Credentials', 'Language', 'Last Name', 'County', 'City', and 'Zip Code', and a 'Find' button.

## Other Sources For Finding Interpreters

- The Washington Court Interpreters and Translators Association (WITS) lists its members, their specialties and contact information at: [www.witsnet.org/directory/online.asp](http://www.witsnet.org/directory/online.asp)
- Join the Washington Court Interpreter Coordinator listserv. Court staff from around the state are on this listserv to share interpreter recommendations and contact information. Contact Katrin Johnson to join, 360-704-4062.
- **Sign Language Interpreters** are certified through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) and can be found by going to [www.rid.org](http://www.rid.org) and clicking on "Find an Interpreter/Member." When searching, use categories such as state or city to find interpreters nearest to you. Also refine your search by selecting "Certified" in the "Category" section. There are many types of sign language certification. **SC:L** indicates the interpreter is a specialist in legal interpreting. High caliber generalist certifications include **NIC, CI/CT, CSC, and NAD V.**

## Washington Court Interpreter Program Contacts

**Katrin Johnson** - Program Coordinator

(360) 704-4062

[katrin.johnson@courts.wa.gov](mailto:katrin.johnson@courts.wa.gov)

**Tina Williamson** – Program Assistant

(360) 705-5279

[tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov](mailto:tina.williamson@courts.wa.gov)

**[www.courts.wa.gov/interpreters](http://www.courts.wa.gov/interpreters)**

*Additional information on interpreters and working with immigrant court customers can be found on Inside Courts by following these steps:*

1. Log onto Inside Courts.
2. Click on Court Resources on the left-hand side.
3. Click on Court Interpreters.



The screenshot shows the Washington Courts website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Logout, Bookmarks, and Alliance Center, along with an Advanced Search button. The main content area is titled "Court Interpreter Program" and is organized into several sections:

- Court Interpreter Program**
  - Listing of Certified and Registered Interpreters
  - Language Assistance Plans
  - State Funding
  - Interpreter Commission
- Legal References**
  - RCW 2.42 – Sign language interpreting in court
  - RCW 2.43 – Foreign language interpreting in court
  - General Rule 1.1 – Interpreter Commission, Interpreter Code of Conduct, and Telephonic Interpretation
  - Executive Order 13166
  - U.S. Dept. of Justice Title VI Guidance
- AOC Resources**
  - Bench Card
  - Code of Conduct for Court Interpreters
  - Judicial Reference Guide
  - Language Assistance Resources
  - Pattern Civil Jury Instructions
  - Pattern Criminal Jury Instructions
- Additional Resources**

This section includes additional resources and information on language access topics such as trial considerations, telephonic interpreting, domestic violence cases, interpreters for the deaf, etc.

  - Resources on Court Interpreters and Language Access in the Court

On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar menu with various categories, including "Court Resources" which is currently selected.