

Language Access Team Tips



LPRO
LEGISLATIVE POLICY
AND RESEARCH OFFICE

Working with a Spoken Language Interpreter

1. Brief the interpreter prior to a meeting. Providing the interpreter any remarks two days prior to the meeting is key.
2. Permit only one person at a time to speak.
3. Speak directly to the non-English speaker. The interpreter may look down when speaking to help avoid diverting attention from the witness.
4. Speak clearly and in a normal tone.
5. Allow more time for interpreted communication. As a courtesy, add two additional minutes for witnesses to testify.
6. Be aware of cultural factors, e.g., avoiding eye contact is viewed as a sign of respect in some cultures.
7. Refrain from using metaphors, acronyms, idioms, or slang.

Working with an ASL Interpreter

1. Look and speak directly to the person who is deaf.
2. Speak in the first person.
3. Be aware of interpreter positioning.
4. Speak in your normal volume and speed.
5. If you are using written notes, offer a copy to the person who is Deaf and to the interpreter.
6. Give the interpreter a copy of presentation and any other material ahead of time to aid in preparation.
7. If you lower the lights during part of a presentation, maintain enough light so the interpreter can still be seen.

