

TIPSHEET: Qualifying interpreters and interpreting agencies

This is a dynamic and living document. Our intention is for it to reflect new issues and solutions as they develop. If you have any additional information on remote interpreting from a healing-centered approach, please email us at anoquez@api-gbv.org to incorporate that knowledge into these resources.

10 questions to ask a spoken language interpreter independent contractor before hiring

1. Are you fluent in both the departing and arriving language? How did you learn both languages?
2. What are your training/ credentials as an interpreter?
3. Do you have any formal accreditations as an interpreter?
4. What is your experience interpreting before?
5. Are you able to interpret simultaneously or consecutively?
6. In what settings have you previously interpreted (mental health, health, legal, victim services)?
7. Have you ever interpreted remotely via OPI/VRI)?

For OPI

- Do you have access to a telephone that is not shared with anyone else?
- Do you have a reliable phone connection?
- Are you able to join the call from a quiet and private space with reduced background noise?
- How are you able to ensure that the client's information remains confidential?

For VRI

- Do you have a solid internet connection? (strong bandwidth is required for optimal transmission)
- Are you familiar with the [include the platform you will be using (Zoom, Adobe Connect, GoToMeetings, Skype)] platform we will be using during the interview/meeting?
- What equipment do you have available to interpret the video call? (Ideally, they would have at least access to a working laptop/computer or tablet to access the online platform, telephone/cell phone to connect to the dedicated phone line, headphones with mics)
- Are you able to join the call from a quiet and private space with reduced background noise?
- How are you able to ensure that the client's information remains confidential?

8. What would you do if you are unable to understand or interpret accurately due to technical or specialized language or other barriers (e.g. environmental factors)?
9. Are you comfortable with interpreting body parts, acts of violence, vulgarity, and sexual language? why?
10. What is your understanding of the responsibilities and ethics of an interpreter? What is expected of an interpreter?

Questions to Ask Interpreting Agencies Before Hiring

1. Does the agency hire nationally certified/state-licensed interpreters?
2. Does the agency have a list of interpreters qualified/ with experience/ with specialist certification to work on?
 - a) Mental health settings?
 - b) Health
 - c) Legal settings?
 - d) Victim services settings.

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If yes, how many?

3. Does the agency recognize trauma-sensitive practices, and promotes the development of best practices regarding being healing-centered?
4. What is the interpreting agency's capacity to accommodate/meet requests?
5. Does the agency have video remote interpreting services?
6. What do the language assessment procedures look like for spoken language interpreters?
7. Does the agency have a list of Certified Deaf Interpreters?

Always remember to include in your list of question (before contracting!):

- What are the contractor/agency's rates and terms regarding:
 - General and specialty interpreting services?
 - Video remote interpreting services?
 - Travel?
 - What is the agency's cancellation policy?

Adapted from Alice Sykora, *Translating Justice Curriculum Module 5 – Office on Victim Crime, Department of Justice