



ASL Services, Inc.
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Assistance For Hearing Communities Using an Interpreter

ASL Services Inc., in its continuing effort to provide information and support to the communities and interpreters, has listed standard practices in the Sign Language interpreting process in order to assist you in your communication needs. This information should prove helpful to both the hearing and Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) who may be using an interpreter for the first time. If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please feel free to call us at any time. *ASL Services Inc. 1-888-SIGN ASL*

The federal law, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all locations and events, both private and public have the obligation to adapt the environment to provide reasonable accommodations as well as provide resources (such as interpreters, note takers, additional time for tests, etc) so that the location and presentations are completely accessible.

**If you have any questions about your responsibilities under ADA, please contact
Federal information on ADA: 1-800-514-0301
In Puerto Rico: OPPI (787) 725 2333 or (787) 721-4299**

Because the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) community is varied in the methods of communication, it would be best to ask the Deaf/HH person their preferred mode and language of communication. This could be sign language, lip reading, or various combinations of communication options. The method of communication has nothing to do with the Deaf/HH person's intelligence.

Always speak, ask questions, and maintain eye contact with the D/HH person, not the interpreter. Speak at a normal pace. If there is any problem with the speed or in understanding some particular segment or terminology, the interpreter or the D/HH person will let you know

- A professional Sign Language interpreter is provided to you to facilitate communication between you and the D/HH person. This means the interpreter is not there to answer personal questions, but will interpret everything you say to the D/HH person and everything the Deaf/HH person says to you, the hearing person. Therefore, any communication you do not want interpreted should not be done in the presence of the interpreter. Everything that is interpreted is kept strictly confidential by the interpreter and will not be discussed with any unrelated parties.
- In order to assist the interpreter to do their work with the most efficiency and accuracy, any materials, speeches, lesson plans, textbooks, etc. should be supplied to interpreter prior to the assignment
- Because of the mental and physical demands of Sign language interpreting, the presenter should be cognizant that the interpreter may need rest periods. For assignments over two hours long, two interpreters will be assigned to spell each other. Each interpreter will still remain present to provide support to the other even when in the "off" position.
- While on assignment, interpreters will not participate, make comments, add or edit anything that is being presented by either party. If you wish to have further information about the interpreting process, profession and other related matters, the interpreter may agree to meet/present at convenient time when not on assignment.
- Questions about the D/HH community are best directed to primarily the D/HH person; the professional interpreter may be able to also assist with additional information.
- In order to maximize the communication process, the seating arrangement should be such that the Deaf/HH person can see both the instructor/presenter and interpreter in the same sight line. This is generally, but not always, at the front of the room, with the interpreter seated or standing by the instructor/presenter. Other arrangements, such as circle or semicircle may be appropriate in certain group settings. In all situations, the Deaf/HH person should be consulted.
- It is important for the benefit of all that one person speak at a time, and that, due to the natural momentary delay in the interpreting process, that a few seconds are given in order for the deaf person to "catch up" and participate in answering, asking questions, etc.
- Due to the visual nature of the language, lighting should be sufficient at all times, including partial lighting during video or other visual presentations where the lights are generally completely off,
- Please do not walk or stand in front of the interpreter and D/HH client. If it is the tendency of the presenter/instructor to move around the room and/or refer to posted/written material, the interpreter may stand and maintain a position by the presenter in order to preserve the line of vision for the client.