

QUICK GUIDE TO INTERPRETER SERVICES FOR DHHS

DHHS is committed to ensuring equal access to benefits and services for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals and persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The procedures outlined below will ensure that information about services, programs, benefits, consent forms, and rights are communicated in languages that are understood by and are at no cost to the person who is limited in English Proficiency. There will be no significant delay in services to these individuals. The Department is committed to the principle that no person is excluded from or denied equal access to benefits, programs and/or services due to linguistic barriers.

It is important to remember that clear and accurate communication is the goal so if you feel that the client doesn't understand the interpreter or you feel that the interpreter is not conducting him or herself in a manner conducive to quality communication you are permitted to end the session and seek out a different interpreter.

When you interact with a client, whether in person or over the phone and you determine they are not proficient in English or they are Deaf or hard of hearing, here are the steps for you to follow:

Determine the client's language

This can be done by showing the client the language identification poster and have them point to the language they speak. If the language they speak is not listed you may request assistance of the associate from any of the telephonic interpreting services with whom the state contracts.

Once you have determined the language needs of the person, you must document this in their case file with the following information:

- a. The client's need of interpretative services.
- b. Your offer of a free, qualified interpreter in the person's preferred language.
- c. The name and contact information about the interpreter for each interpreted encounter.
- d. Signed Confidentiality Agreement and Code of Ethics (for in-person interpreting only).

The following are links to these documents:

[INTERPRETER'S SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT](#)

[CLIENT RECORD OF INTERPRETER SERVICES](#)

[CONFIDENTIALITY RULES AND STATEMENT FOR IN-PERSON INTERPRETER SERVICES](#)

[EMPLOYEE GUIDELINES FOR UTILIZATION OF INTERPRETER SERVICES](#)

[COMPLAINT PROCEDURES/FORM](#)

Where to find interpreter services

The State contracts with a number of providers for the following services:

- a. [American Sign Language Interpretation Services](#)
- b. [In Person Spoken Language Interpreting](#)
- c. [Telephonic Interpreting Services](#)

Information about the contract for each of these can be found at:

<http://www.maine.gov/purchases/contracts/service.shtml>

Etiquette for the interpreting session:

- a. Conduct the conversation in a distraction free, private environment.
- b. Address the client (LEP Person) directly; look at them instead of the interpreter. Help them feel comfortable in the environment.
- c. Avoid side conversations with others. It creates isolation, tension and suspicion for the client and makes it difficult for the interpreter to know what to interpret.
- d. Explain to the client that all information is confidential and encourage them to ask questions.
- e. Speak clearly. If multiple people are in the room, each should speak one at a time.
- f. Short sentences are easiest to interpret.
- g. Speak freely, all interpreters are sworn to confidentiality and the interpreting Code of Ethics.
- h. Use straightforward language; avoid the use of abbreviations and acronyms.

Keep in mind that interpretation is "consecutive". This means there are pauses while the interpreter repeats each statement in the respective language.