

Ordering Instructions

Identifying LEP Individuals

An LEP person is someone who does not speak English as his or her primary language and has a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. At the first point of contact, determine whether that person is LEP and, if so, his/her primary language.

Do not assume an understanding of the primary language from the country of origin; some may speak an indigenous language or another altogether.

- Has the person self-identified as LEP;
- Has the person requested an interpreter or translator;
- Do you believe the person does not speak or understand English well enough to participate fully or understand questions and answer them without difficulty?

Arrange appropriate language assistance if necessary.



Washington State
**DEPARTMENT OF
ENTERPRISE SERVICES**

Language Access Program

As an employee of Washington State, you may encounter a broad range of persons in the course of your work, including individuals who have **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**. DES is both committed and legally obligated to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access for these individuals. This ordering instructions will help you provide that access when using an interpreter and/or translator, but be sure to always refer to (A) the statewide contract, (B) purchasing policy, and (C) your agencies language access plan for specifics, if any.

Placing a order against a statewide contract

1. Review the Awarded Contractor Information section to find pricing, services, location, and contact information for each Contractor.
2. Contractors may not provide services outside of the scope of their respective category modalities.
3. When setting up an account with the contractor, placing an order or doing other business under this contract, reference the DES contract number.
4. Contact the contractor sales representatives directly to consult about their services, and place orders.
5. Provide as much details as possible so the interpreter/translator is prepared.

NOTE: Payment for services are paid for by the Purchaser's fiscal department.

Setting up the order

1. Ensure that the location is private, both visually and audibly, especially if using a speaker phone for telephonic interpretation.
2. If the interpreter is physically present, position the interpreter next to, and slightly behind, the interviewee. This will facilitate a conversation between you and the interviewee rather than between you and the interpreter.
3. Ensure that any documents that will be provided to the interviewee during the interview have been translated.

Preparing the Interpreter

1. Brief the interpreter in advance. Provide general background and the context of the interview; provide specific instructions of what information needs to be obtained. Importantly, provide background on the LEP individual, if known, including: country and region/city of origin, education and literacy level, and any relevant additional information.
2. Verify that the interpreter is familiar with specialized terminology (e.g., law enforcement, immigration, medical, disaster).
3. Request that the interpreter identify and clarify any cultural issues that may be pertinent. Ask that you be told to rephrase a question if needed. Direct the interpreter to let you know if you need to repeat or slow down.
4. Be sure to screen interpreters to eliminate a potential conflict of interest. Asking whether the interviewee feels comfortable with the interpreter resolves this conflict.

During the Interpretation Session

1. Prepare the LEP individual for the interpretation. (A) Introduce and explain the interpreter's role. (B) Use the interpreter to explain to the LEP individual what is happening. (C) Mention that the interpreter will not have influence over any decisions or action that will be taken. S/he is only interpreting. Ask for answers in segments so the interpreter can interpret accurately.
2. Ensure that the parties understand each other. Consider asking a question that requires more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Try a simple question like "what happened?" or "how can I assist you today?"
3. Be brief, explicit, and basic. If your sentences are too long or you speak at length it may compromise the effectiveness of the interpretation. (A) Speak in segments of one or two sentences at a time. Ask questions one at a time. (B) Avoid statements disguised as questions. (C) Do not use double negatives (e.g., "you didn't say you wouldn't go there, did you?") (D) Pause to alert the interpreter that it is time to interpret and allow time to deliver your message. (Does not apply to simultaneous interpretation.)
4. Speak clearly and naturally at your normal volume and moderate pace. Speak more slowly if needed.
5. Speak directly to and maintain eye contact with the LEP individual using the first person whether the interpreter is in-person or on the phone. You and the LEP individual should speak to one another as if the interpreter is not there.
6. Be patient and avoid interrupting during the interpretation. Allow the interpreter the time necessary to relay your messages and questions.
7. Do not have side conversations with the interpreter and avoid long conversations with other English speaking individuals in the absence of an interpreter. Interrupt if the interpreter and interviewee appear to be having a side conversation or appear confused. (A) Do not expect the interpreter to fill in the blanks. (B) Ask that everything be interpreted for you. (C) Ask for clarification on what is being discussed to help resolve any interpretation problems. Rephrase questions, if needed. You may need to ask the same question several ways before eliciting a response. (D) Remind the interpreter of his/her neutral role.
8. If you need to read prepared text (e.g. on a form the person is being asked to sign), be careful not to read too fast. Consider providing any significant written text to the interpreter in advance.
9. Avoid jargon or technical terms without explaining them. Choose your words carefully. Avoid or explain slang, idioms, acronyms, or technical terms. Provide examples if they are needed to explain a term. Clarify specialized vocabulary. For example, start by saying, "The interpreter and I will first be discussing some special language so that s/he can better interpret for you."
10. Never ask for the interpreter's opinion. The interpreter should never be allowed to express a personal opinion as it might bias or influence the interpretation.

Finally, attempt to verify that the LEP individual understands. Do not assume that a LEP individual understands you through the interpreter. Verifying interviewee understanding is especially important when discussing actions to be taken. For example, you can test understanding by asking the interviewee to repeat back what you have explained.

Telephone Interpretation Tips

Telephonic interpretation can be quick, cost-effective, and high quality. If it is available make sure you have a working portable phone or other communication device with a speakerphone.

- Know how to work the speakerphone and test call the interpretation service
- Check the volume before starting a call
- Ensure the number is on speed dial
- Know the access code, if required
- Note the interpreter's ID number

Phone #: _____

Access Code: _____

CUA #: _____

Definitions and Different Modes of Interpretation

An **interpreter** listens to a communication in one language and orally converts to another language while retaining the same meaning. Professional interpreters are required to adhere to a code of ethics emphasizing confidentiality; impartiality; accuracy; avoidance of a conflict of interest; abstinence from communication with the LEP person beyond that which is necessary to carry out professional duties; and not adding to, editing, summarizing, or embellishing the LEP person's statements.

A **translator** replaces written text from one language into an equivalent written text in another language.

Consecutive Interpretation – The speaker (interviewer, official, etc.) makes a statement or asks a question, pauses, and then the interpreter renders what was said in the LEP person's first language.

Simultaneous Interpretation – The individual (interviewer, official, etc.) speaks in one language, while an interpreter simultaneously interprets what is being said into the LEP person's first language. Due to the high level of concentration needed, these interpreters often work in pairs and relieve one another every 20-30 minutes.

Watch our language access training videos

Review our videos to learn more about how statewide language access contracts and sign language interpreter services work:

- [View language access statewide contracts training](#)
- [View sign language interpreter services statewide contracts training](#)

Review our language access program guide

We created a guide to help our purchasers access language services needed to support their missions. Additionally, it guides purchasers when a person with limited English proficiency needs help.

Link: <https://des.wa.gov/purchase/how-use-statewide-contracts/language-access-contracts>

Using Bilingual Personnel

If bilingual personnel are used as interpreters they should be qualified to do so. Consider whether personnel have:

Demonstrated proficiency in accurately communicating in English and the other language;

Ongoing training and assessment of the skills and ethics associated with interpretation;

Knowledge of the ethical issues of interpretation such that interpretation is done accurately, impartially, confidentially, and without embellishment; and

No conflicts of interest between their role as an interpreter and as an employee.

Competency to interpret does not necessarily mean formal certification, but it is helpful.