

## 1. Am I required to hire an interpreter? What is ADA and how can I become compliant?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation. With regards to communication, one must assess the needs of the Deaf/hard of hearing person with whom they are working and provide reasonable accommodations to ensure there is effective communication. Reasonable accommodations will vary depending on the person and nature of your meeting; what works for one individual does not work for all.

The ADA applies to many interactions that happen in daily life such as going to a doctor, attending a job interview and subsequent job training, education and recreational activities, and meetings and appointments for minor children such as teacher and doctor visits. Interpreters are used to ensure that communication is effective between the Deaf/hard of hearing individual and the hearing individual, removing communication barriers that would otherwise exist.

It is inappropriate to ask family members or other companions to interpret for Deaf and hard of hearing people, as they may not be able to convey the message accurately, remain impartial, and participate in the discussion.

If you have questions regarding your appointment or event, we would be happy to review the logistics and work with you to ensure access. We offer American Sign Language interpreters, Real-time captioning services (CART), Video remote interpreting (VRI), and open captioning as options to help you provide accommodations compliant with the ADA.

## 2. Can I just write back and forth with the Deaf or hard of hearing client?

Exchanging written notes may be effective for some people to navigate a brief interaction. Complicated and lengthy interactions that involve details, symptoms, diagnosis, and/or therapeutic sessions should involve a qualified interpreter.

## 3. If I sign an agreement with Deaf Access Services/People Inc. for interpreting services am I obligated to use your service?

No. By signing an agreement with our Agency, you will have an account with our agency and an established rate. Once you need to engage our services, you will already be established, thus making securing services easier.

## 4. How will I know when an interpreter is assigned for my request?

Once an interpreter has been secured, you will be notified via automated email from the interpreting services platform. Last minute requests will be confirmed via phone.

## 5. Is there a minimum lead time required for submitting a request?

We accept requests at any time. Advanced notice is always best and we recommend at least 2 weeks, though we can book a year in advance. Interpreters are often booked months in advance and their schedules are subject change daily due to the itinerant nature of our work. This impacts availability and while we understand that last minute requests happen, we cannot guarantee the availability of interpreters. Our scheduling team will work diligently from the moment the request is made to secure an interpreter, no matter how much or little advanced notice we have.

Should we not be able to secure an interpreter to arrive on-site, we offer additional remote service options such as VRI and interpreting via third party platform as alternatives.

## 6. Can I make the same request to multiple agencies?

This is not recommended, because it can cause conflicting problems such as double-booking interpreters and additional fees. The pool of interpreters in a region is consistent and working with multiple agencies for the same request does not expand your pool or reach. We have both staff and independently contracted interpreters who work exclusively for us, increasing our availability to fill requests.

## 7. What is the difference between your private interpreter agency and direct hired interpreters?

We offer comprehensive services. Our 'Business Agreement' outlines our expectations, costs, and policies and is established prior to engagement for services. If needed/requested, we can provide a quote for services, allowing you to budget and understand your complete costs. We use legal and technical experts to ensure that our services are responsible and dependable. We screen all interpreters to ensure that we are only using qualified, experienced interpreters. We coordinate business arrangements with all contracted interpreters, your assignment logistics (information/materials), and payment to the interpreter. This is done behind the scenes and you simply receive a comprehensive invoice detailing services.

When you hire an interpreter directly, the business arrangements, logistics, assignment information (agenda/schedule, access to materials for discussion, etc.) must be handled between you and the interpreter directly. The interpreter may not be available at the times that you request, making scheduling appointments difficult. Your business is responsible for ensuring compliance and for assessing the competency of the interpreter you hire and it is likely that you will face instances when a contractor may not be a linguistic match to the Deaf or hard of hearing client for whom you need to communicate.

## 8. Who pays for the interpreter?

Businesses, agencies and other public facilities are required to provide access according to the ADA, including communication access for individuals who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing. The cost falls upon those who are providing the service(s). A surcharge cannot legally be imposed on an individual with a disability directly or indirectly to offset the cost of the interpreter. The cost of the interpreter should be treated as part of overhead expenses for accounting and tax purposes, much like other accommodations such as handrails and parking spaces.

## 9. What determines the cost for services and why are interpreters paid 'high' hourly rates?

Interpreters are not volunteers, but working professionals with a code of ethics and training in cultural and linguistic fluency. They are specialists in high demand who go through years of rigorous training and required, ongoing professional development. Rates are comprehensive and cover schedule coordination, customer support, and contractor rates. The time, duration, nature and lead time of a request are factors that impact hourly rates.

## 10. Why are two interpreters needed?

Industry standards protect the occupational health of our interpreters and assure the highest quality communication. Interpreting is a very taxing process, both physically and mentally. An interpreter's ability to effectively process the message and interpret it accurately diminishes significantly after approximately twenty minutes of interpreting. Determining if two interpreters are needed is based on varying factors, such as the type of assignment, the number of participants and their roles, and the type of interaction. Typically, assignments lasting more than ninety minutes will require an additional interpreter. Additionally, for people with minimal language competency or dependence on foreign sign language we send a Hearing Interpreter and a Deaf Interpreter as a team to ensure full communication access.

A Deaf Interpreter is a qualified native ASL language user, able to take ASL and break it down further to a common gesturing communication with the Deaf individual.