

HOW DO YOU REQUEST A COURT INTERPRETER?

- ▶ Request an interpreter as soon as possible or as soon as you know you will be in court.
- ▶ Each court has a local Language Access Coordinator, and that person is responsible for assigning you a court interpreter or providing you with translated documents or language access services. The Language Access Coordinator may ask you for additional information, including your language and court date.
- ▶ The Language Access Coordinator for this court is:

Courthouse: _____
Contact: _____
Address: _____
Phone #: _____

- ▶ The local Language Access Coordinator will ensure that your request form will be submitted, and an interpreter will be appointed to assist you with your communication with the court.
- ▶ The Language Access Coordinator is responsible for providing you with language assistance with court operations including but not limited to programs and services offered by the court.
- ▶ Please note that as a court employee, the Language Access Coordinator is not responsible for providing language assistance between you and your lawyer or with public offices or departments, including the District Attorney, Public Defender, or with law enforcement.

This public document was not published and is available online at:
www.lasc.org/language_access

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ONLINE RESOURCES

**Louisiana Supreme Court
Office of Language Access**
www.lasc.org/Language_Access

DO YOU NEED A COURT INTERPRETER?

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LOUISIANA COURTS are committed to providing persons of Limited English Proficiency ("LEP") with meaningful access to court programs and activities.

The Louisiana Judiciary is required to provide interpreters for hearings and proceedings conducted in all Louisiana courts, as well as certain court-related services. Interpreters are provided at no cost for individuals who are parties or witnesses in court proceedings.

- ▶ Only court-appointed interpreters can serve as official interpreters in the courtroom.
- ▶ Family or friends cannot serve as official court interpreters.
- ▶ Your attorney cannot serve as an official court interpreter.
- ▶ You will not be charged for a court interpreter or language access services.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

- ▶ The interpreter may speak with you before the hearing begins to make sure that you understand each other.
- ▶ The interpreter may view the court file prior to the proceeding to become familiar with the case terminology, names, and dates.
- ▶ Interpreters sometimes use special equipment in the courtroom. The interpreter may briefly explain to you how it works.
- ▶ If there is anything that you do not understand during the court proceedings, inform the judge immediately through the interpreter.
- ▶ When the judge or attorneys ask you questions, the interpreter will interpret everything you say into English.
- ▶ The interpreter will use the first-person during interpretation. He or she will say “I” when interpreting what you are saying and will refer to him/herself as “the Interpreter.”
- ▶ After asking the judge’s permission, the interpreter may ask you to repeat or clarify your statements.
- ▶ If you speak fast or give long answers, the interpreter may ask you to pause to allow for interpretation.
- ▶ You will not be charged the costs for any interpreting services.
- ▶ A court may appoint an interpreter when the court or participants have difficulty speaking or understanding each other, even when an interpreter was not requested. In that case, the court may ask a few questions to help determine whether to require a court interpreter.

WERE YOU DENIED LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES OR A COURT INTERPRETER?

You have the right to file a complaint with the Office of Language Access (Louisiana Supreme Court, Judicial Administrator’s Office) if you had a problems getting court services when you do not speak English or if you are not proficient in English.

If you are not provided an interpreter or if you had a problem with the court services provided, you have a right to file a complaint. No action will be taken against you for making a complaint.

You may also file a complaint if you feel your court interpreter did not provide you with adequate services or if you feel that the interpreter was unethical.

To file a complaint, go to
www.lasc.org/languagecomplaints

**No action will be taken against you for making a complaint.*

IMPORTANT

- ▶ **Federal and State Law requires that the court provide you language assistance services including a court interpreter.**
- ▶ **You will not be charged for a court interpreter or for language access services.**
- ▶ **You should identify yourself to the court’s Language Access Coordinator as soon as possible.**

WHAT ARE COURT INTERPRETERS NOT ALLOWED TO DO?

- ⊘ **Cannot** give legal advice.
- ⊘ **Cannot** explain court proceedings.
- ⊘ **Cannot** advise you how to answer questions.
- ⊘ **Cannot** talk to you about your case in the courtroom or outside the courtroom.
- ⊘ **Cannot** answer questions about what will happen in court.
- ⊘ **Cannot** have private conversations with you or your family.
- ⊘ **Cannot** have private conversations with you or your lawyer.

WHO TO CONTACT?

Contact your local Language Access Coordinator listed in this brochure.

If you are unable to contact your court’s Language Access Coordinator, please contact the Louisiana Supreme Court’s Office of Language Access at ola@lasc.org or by phone at (504) 310-2348.
Website:
www.lasc.org/Language_Access