



## Providing Interpreters to Deaf Survivors

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that Deaf individuals have equal access to services. Service providers, courts, police departments and hospitals are required to provide reasonable accommodations to Deaf clients. A major part of reasonable accommodations is qualified sign language interpreters. Service providers must always ask the Deaf client what accommodations they will need.

Interpreters usually work in teams of two for any meeting that lasts more than one hour. This is to prevent injury and to maximize quality of service that would be lost due to interpreter fatigue. In court proceedings, separate teams of interpreters would have to be used for all Deaf parties, including plaintiff, defendant and witnesses. This protects client confidentiality and prevents information from inadvertently being passed by the interpreter between parties. It also makes sure that interpreters are available for private conferences with attorneys. Interpreters used in court settings must also be specially certified for legal interpreting. The cost of qualified interpreters can be high – but the cost of missed information, misunderstandings, and limited access is almost always higher.

### **American Sign Language Interpreters:**

ASL interpreters are certified through a national professional organization called the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. It is crucial to utilize the services of a qualified, certified interpreter to ensure that the interpreter is complying with the Code of Ethics and strict confidentiality.

### **Certified Deaf Interpreters:**

Many Deaf clients did not grow up learning American Sign Language. Often they did not grow up with any solid language education. Other Deaf clients have emigrated from other countries, where ASL is not the primary language. As a result, regular ASL interpreters are not adequate accommodations for these clients. We have seen that even with a regular ASL interpreter, these Deaf clients are not adequately able to give and receive information. A new field is developing to meet the need of Deaf clients like this, called Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI). Interpreters that are Deaf, who have a high level of skill with gestural and visual languages are being used as intermediaries with Deaf clients who do not use ASL. In this scenario, an ASL interpreter would be hired to communicate between the hearing parties and the CDI in American Sign Language. The CDI would then interpret the information into whatever visual language the Deaf client uses.

Interpreters can be hired through:

- Linguabee: [www.linguabee.com](http://www.linguabee.com)
- Partners in Communication [www.partnersincommunicationllc.com](http://www.partnersincommunicationllc.com)