

***Administrative Office of the Courts
Access to Justice Department/
Court Interpreter Program
2001 E-F Commerce Park Drive
Annapolis, MD 21401***



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Do You Need a Court Interpreter?



DO YOU NEED A COURT INTERPRETER?

The Maryland Judiciary provides court interpreters for hearings and proceedings conducted in court, as well as certain court-related services and events, at no cost, for individuals who are parties or witnesses in civil, criminal, and juvenile proceedings.

- **Only court-appointed interpreters can serve as official interpreters** in the courtroom.
- Your family or friends **cannot** serve as official court interpreters.
- You **can** have your family members or friends help you to communicate with the court staff **outside** the courtroom.

HOW TO REQUEST A COURT INTERPRETER

- You should request an interpreter for your hearing 30 days before the court date, if possible.
- Fill out a Request for Spoken Language Interpreter (Form CC-DC-041).¹ (If requesting a sign language interpreter, use the Request for Accommodation for Person with Disability (Form CC-DC-049)).¹ Forms are available at the court's information desk or online at: www.mdcourts.gov. You can also ask your attorney to fill out the form for you.
- Submit the form to the Clerk's Office of the courthouse where your hearing is scheduled by mail or in person.
- If you are a party in the case, you only need to submit a single Interpreter Request Form. Once the court receives your first timely request, the court will assign an interpreter for all proceedings at which you are expected to appear. Other interested persons (victims and witnesses) must submit a new Interpreter Request Form for each proceeding.

¹For requests at the Baltimore City Circuit Court, please go to <http://www.baltocts.state.md.us/> for specific information on how to request an interpreter

WHAT TO EXPECT

- The interpreter may speak with you before the hearing begins to make sure that you understand each other.
- Interpreters sometimes use special equipment in the courtroom. They will briefly explain to you how it works.
- If there is anything that you do not understand during the 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.

WHAT THE COURT INTERPRETER CANNOT DO

The court interpreter cannot:

- Give you legal advice.
- Explain court proceedings.
- Advise you how to answer questions.
- Talk to you about your case in the courtroom or outside the courtroom.
- Answer questions about what will happen in court.
- Have private conversations with you or your family.

DO YOU NEED AN INTERPRETER TO COMMUNICATE WITH COURT STAFF OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM?

The Maryland Judiciary offers telephone interpretation services at the court Clerk's Office. The Clerk's Office has I-Speak cards to help you. When you ask for the assistance of an interpreter, say the name of the language you speak or point to your language on the Language Line Poster, Maryland Judiciary Language Card, or I-SPEAK Card. The court employee will arrange for an interpreter to assist you by phone. These services are paid for by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

HOW ARE COURT INTERPRETERS APPOINTED?

The Maryland Judiciary maintains a Court Interpreter Registry. Once you submit the completed Court Interpreter Request Form to the Clerk's office, the court staff will make arrangements for a court interpreter selected from the Registry to be present during your hearing. The interpreters listed on the Registry have passed a series of examinations and have attended court interpreter training.

IMPORTANT:

It is your responsibility to notify the Clerk's Office if you no longer need an interpreter. If you do not notify the court, or if you do not come to court for a scheduled hearing, the judge may assess the interpreter costs to you.