Have feedback or concerns about interpreting services?

- **Find the Feedback Form online at mdcourts.gov/courts/courtlanguageservices**
- **Submit the Feedback Form to Court Interpreter Program 2001 E/F Commerce Park Dr. Annapolis, MD 21401**

For more information

- **Maryland Judiciary Language Portals: mdcourts.gov/languageportals/index.html**
- **Access to Justice Department/ Court Interpreter Program: 410-260-1291**

MARYLAND JUDICIARY

9/21/16

Court Interpreters

A Guide for Legal Professionals

THE MARYLAND JUDICIARY provides court interpreters for hearings and proceedings conducted in court, as well as certain court- related services and events. Interpreters are provided at no cost for individuals who are parties or witnesses in civil, criminal, and juvenile proceedings. Remember that an interpreter works with the spoken word; a translator works with the written word.

- Only court-appointed interpreters can serve as official interpreters in the courtroom.
- Attorneys or their clients' families or friends cannot serve as official court interpreters.
- Court interpreters cannot be used for any other services or activities other than interpreting and sight translating.

How do you request a court interpreter?

- A Limited English Proficient (LEP) person or their attorney should request an interpreter 30 days before the court date. See Maryland Rule 1-333.
- Fill out a Request for Spoken Language Interpreter (Form CC-DC-041).* If requesting a sign language interpreter, use the Request for Accommodation for Person with Disability (Form CC-DC-049).* Forms are available at the court's information desk or online at mdcourts.gov.
- The form should be submitted by mail or in-person to the clerk's office of the court where the hearing is scheduled.
- If you represent 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 your client is expected to appear. Other interested persons (victims and witnesses) must submit a new interpreter Request form for each proceeding.

* For requests at the Baltimore City Circuit Court, please go to **baltimorecitycourt.org/** for specific information on how to request an interpreter.

What can you expect?

- The court interpreter may ask for permission to speak with the LEP speaker before the hearing begins to make sure they understand each other.
- Interpreters may use special equipment in the courtroom. They will briefly explain to the LEP speaker how it works.
- The interpreter will repeat to the attorney, in English, all statements that have been made to the LEP speaker to avoid the appearance of side conversations.
- It is expected that court interpreters will interpret for attorney-client conversations immediately preceding and following courtroom hearings.
- The court interpreter will interpret simultaneously when the judge addresses the attorneys or jurors and when the attorneys address the court.

Does your client 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 Language Line Posters, Maryland Judiciary Language Cards, or I-Speak cards that help LEP individuals to identify their native language. The court employee will arrange for an interpreter to assist the LEP individual by phone.

How are court interpreters appointed?

The Maryland Judiciary maintains a Court Interpreter Registry. Court staff will make arrangements for a court interpreter selected from the Registry to be present during your hearing. Interpreters on the Registry have passed a series of examinations and have attended court interpreter training.

If you are an attorney representing an LEP individual in court, and you have a court interpreter assigned to your case, please:

Do

- Slow your normal rate of speech when addressing the court to allow the interpreter to interpret simultaneously for the LEP party.
- Speak directly in the first person to the LEP party. Don't say: "Ask him if he understands . . ."
- Speak in segments when addressing the LEP party and pause to allow the interpreter to interpret during the pause.
- Use simple legal language.
- Avoid asking compound questions.

Don't

- Ask the interpreter to explain the proceedings to the LEP party.
- Use acronyms or legal jargon that may present a challenge for the interpreter. Fully state the name for which the acronym stands.
- Ask the interpreter to participate in any other activities other than interpreter for the LEP individual.
- Use the courtroom interpreter for lengthy interviews and follow-up conversations with your client outside the courtroom unless it is authorized by the court.

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IMPORTANT

Parties or their attorneys must notify the clerk's office if the LEP individual no longer needs an interpreter. If they do not notify the court or do not come to court for a scheduled hearing, the judge may assess the interpreter costs to the parties or their lawyer.