

# TIPS FOR WORKING WITH TELEPHONE INTERPRETERS

## BEFORE YOU START:

- Know the target language (and preferably the dialect) for interpretation ahead of time
- Listen to a demonstration:
- Explore the vendor's website:
- Know how to use your conference call or three-way calling features
- If your meeting is longer than **30 minutes**, try to schedule an in-person interpreter

*If you have line quality problems before reaching an interpreter, press  to be transferred. Ask the representative to stay on the line to check for sound quality.*

*If you have problems connecting to an interpreter, call Customer Service:*

## PLACING THE CALL:

**Call:** [  ]  
(Client ID/Access Code:  )  
The number and Client ID should not be shared with outside entities.

## AN INTERPRETATION MAY NOT BE GOING SMOOTHLY IF:

- The interpretation is too long or too short compared to the length of the material being interpreted;
- The interpreter repeatedly asks for clarification;
- It sounds like the interpreter is having a side conversation with the LEP individual;
- The LEP caller corrects or appears to disagree with the interpreter;
- The LEP caller begins to speak in halting and incorrect English;
- The interpreter or the LEP caller is becoming increasingly impatient;
- It sounds like the interpreter is using many English terms to convey the meaning of your conversation; or
- The interpreter does not conduct himself or herself in a professional manner.

## AT THE START OF THE CALL:

Record the interpreter's ID number, introduce yourself and the interpreter, and define the role of the interpreter in the conversation. Be sure to let all parties know that they may be asked to stop, rephrase, or clarify throughout the call.

- ✓ **Talk directly to the LEP individual**, not the interpreter. For example, "What is your name?" and not "Please ask the caller for their name."
- ✓ If the LEP individual is willing to share, **obtain the caller's phone number** in case of accidental disconnection.
- ✓ **Pause after one or two sentences** to allow for interpretation
- ✓ **Ask one question at a time.**
- ✓ **Speak clearly** at a normal pace and refrain from technical language.

If you think something is wrong with the interpretation, feel free to ask: "Interpreter does he or she understand what I am saying?"

**If you believe that your communication with the LEP individual has been compromised by the quality of interpretation, END THE CALL.**

Call the telephone interpretation service to obtain a new interpreter. Once you have successfully completed your call with a new interpreter, please provide feedback as noted.

**PROVIDING FEEDBACK:** If you encounter technical problems or have questions, contact your section's Language Access Point of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_.

Say **"END OF CALL"** to the interpreter when the call is completed.