



## How to get an Interpreter to Help with Legal Matters

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It is very important that if you must go to court, that you understand what is being said AND that the court understands what you have to say too. An interpreter is an excellent way to make sure this happens.

### **If I have to go to court, can I get an interpreter?**

If the case has already been filed and you are a criminal defendant, or a party to a lawsuit, or a witness who has been ordered to testify in a court case (subpoenaed), you should let the judge know that you need an interpreter.

### **Will I have to pay for an interpreter?**

If you are a criminal defendant and cannot afford to pay, or you are a witness who has been ordered to testify in a court case, then you will not have to pay for the interpreter. If you are a party to a civil lawsuit, then the court may require you to pay for the services of an interpreter as an additional cost of the lawsuit. Some courts may provide an interpreter in a civil case at no cost to you. It will depend on the policies of the court in your area.

### **Do I have to use an interpreter or can I use a family member or friend to help me?**

It is very important the you understand what people in a court are saying. It is also very important that the court understand what you are saying. Indiana courts are strongly discouraged from allowing family or friends to interpret for you. Friends and family may not clearly understand the legal terms that are being used. You may be able to use a friend or family member outside of the courtroom to explain the process and procedures, it is best to have a professional interpreter for all matters heard before the judge or court.

### **How do I find an interpreter?**

The Indiana Supreme Court Interpreter Certification Program keeps a list of certified interpreters in the state. You can get to that list by clicking [here](#) .

There are also professional interpreter/translator organizations that keep lists of interpreters. Below are some of these organizations and how to find an interpreter to help you in Indiana. If

you want to go their page just click on the name.

To find an interpreter on [National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators](#) website, click on the "Directory" on the side menu. You do NOT have to sign in, just pull down the "directory" menu (on the top of the page) and select "simple search". To find interpreters in Indiana, type Indiana in the search box.

To find an interpreter on the [Midwest Association of Translators and Interpreters](#) website, click on the "Member Directory" on the side menu then type in what language you need.

If you want to use the [American Translators Association](#) website, you can find an interpreter by selecting either the "Directory of Translation and Interpreting Services" or the "Directory of Language Service Companies."

### **What does it mean that an interpreter is "certified"?**

Interpreters who have been certified in Indiana have passed all the requirements of the Indiana Supreme Court Interpreter Certification Program. This is a very special designation and interpreters who have obtained this certification are very qualified.

### **What are the requirements for an interpreter to become certified?**

To become certified through the Indiana Supreme Court Interpreter Certification Program, an interpreter candidate will have gone through a two-day orientation, passed a written test by 80% or better, attended a two-day skills building workshop, passed an oral test by 70% or better, and undergone a criminal background check. To learn more about the program, click [here](#).

### **If I use an interpreter, will he or she keep what I say confidential?**

Usually the interpreter must keep the conversation confidential (secret). If you use the interpreter while speaking with your attorney, then the interpreter will have to keep what you say confidential, meaning the interpreter cannot repeat what was said.

However, if you use the interpreter to talk to someone other than your attorney about your case (for example, the bailiff), then the interpreter could be ordered by the judge to repeat what was said. Also, if you talk with a family member or someone who is not your attorney about your case in front of the interpreter, then the interpreter could be ordered by the judge to repeat what was said. When in doubt about whether an interpreter will have to keep the conversation confidential (secret), talk with your attorney first before talking to someone else about your case while using the interpreter.

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