

TIPS FOR PARTICIPATING IN MEETINGS WHICH ARE BEING INTERPRETED AND USING A SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

General information

- Be aware that the interpreter will interpret all communication.
- Interpreters will keep information confidential.
- Be mindful not to engage the interpreter in conversation while they are interpreting.
- Conversations should be directed to the board member and not to the interpreter. Make sure your mouth can be seen.
- Allow appropriate rest breaks during long sessions for the interpreter. Interpreting is a physically demanding task.
- Solicit the interpreter's input as to the best location for the interpreter in relation to the other parties.
- Be aware that Sign Language is not a word-for-word rendition of English. Sign Language often does not have signs for specialized or technical words. Often the interpreter will need to fingerspell these words. It can be helpful to define these terms and list any new vocabulary on the board or on handouts.
- There is typically some lag between a speaker and the interpretation. As a result, responses and questions from Deaf participants may be delayed.

Before the interaction

- Inform the interpreter of any special audiovisual equipment to be used. Again, sufficient light should be on the interpreter so the language can be visible.
- If the room is to be darkened, it is important to leave enough light on the interpreter so the language can be visible.
- Supply the interpreter with copies of any materials to be used, in advance if possible.

During the interaction

- Avoid walking between the interpreter and the deaf person(s).
- Speak distinctly, and at a comfortable volume and pace.
- Speak one at a time in group situations. When people are “talking over” each other it is not possible to provide interpretation.

- In group situations, time is needed for the Deaf participant(s) to look to see who is talking before the comments are interpreted.
- Avoid words such as "this" or "that" when referring to something being demonstrated. Since the deaf person's eyes are focused on the interpreter by the time they look at what you are referring to they will have missed it. Instead, identify objects by name.
- If you are referring to written material or using visual aids, allow each member adequate time to review the written material before beginning the discussion. This allows time for a shift of attention from the visual aid to the interpreter.
- When voting, please raise your hand to signify your vote so that all members of the committee can see the position each member of the committee is taking. Adequate time should be allowed between, "aye", "no" and "abstentions" so that each member of the committee has time to vote and to participate in the discussion.