

10 TIPS

for Working with a Court Interpreter



In the New Hampshire courts, you may be entitled to a court interpreter. Court interpreters help people communicate in court in the language they are most comfortable speaking. Below are some tips on working with a court interpreter.

1 Ask for a court interpreter as soon as possible.

If you know you will need a court interpreter for your hearing, tell court staff as soon as possible. To ask for an interpreter, call the information center at 1-855-212-1234 or go to the Clerk's Office at the court where your hearing will be held.



2 Speak directly to the person speaking to you.

The interpreter will interpret for you as you talk. Speak directly to the lawyer, judge, or court staff person speaking to you, just as you would speak to someone in your own language.

3 Speak slowly and pause to let the interpreter speak.

Speak at a normal rate of speech or even a little slower to help the interpreter keep up with you. Pause every so often to allow the interpreter to interpret what you say into English.



4 Speak loudly and clearly, and only in your language.

Speak loudly and clearly so that the interpreter can hear you. Also, be sure to only speak in your language even if you know some English. This will help avoid confusion.

5 Listen only to the interpreter.

Even if you understand some English, listen only to the interpreter. If you try to listen to the English and the interpreter at the same time, you could miss important information.



6 Do not ask the interpreter for their advice or opinion.

Interpreters are there to interpret. They cannot offer advice or opinions. If you need help with your case, you may need to hire a lawyer if you don't have one.

7 Do not ask the interpreter about your case or what is happening in court.

Interpreters are not explainers. If you have a question, ask the lawyer, judge, or court staff person. The interpreter can interpret your question to them, and their answer to you.



8 Do not ask the interpreter to help you fill out your forms.

The Clerk's Office can provide basic assistance with forms. They can also get an interpreter on the phone to help.

9 Remember that everything you say will be interpreted.

Interpreters must interpret everything you say into English, and everything said in court into your primary language. Don't say anything out loud that you do not want the court to hear.



10 Tell someone if you don't understand.

If you don't understand the interpreter, tell the attorney, judge, or court staff person. They can help secure another interpreter.



For more information on interpreter services, go to <https://www.courts.nh.gov/your-visit/interpreter-services>.

