

CHECKLIST FOR COURT INTERPRETERS

- Always be on time. Try to arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time.
- Dress appropriately for court. Avoid ethnic clothing.
- When you arrive at the courthouse, report directly to clerk of the assigned court. Always identify yourself and be seated in the courtroom until you are called. (A printed card with your name spelled out is helpful to the clerk and bailiff.)
- When your assigned case is called, go to the front of the courtroom to be sworn in by the court. After taking the interpreter's oath, state your name and spell it for the record.
- If you must leave the courtroom for **any** reason, let the clerk and bailiff know where you are at all times.
- Always have a pad and pen to write down important names, dates, addresses, figures, etc.
- Get as much information as possible about the case before the court date. This will allow you to learn any special vocabulary required. The court calendar contains the case name, number, code violation and description of counts or charges. Additionally, you may wish to ask the attorneys about the subject matter of the case.
- When interpreting for the defendant, you should sit or stand next to him or her, facing the judge. You should interpret simultaneously the testimony and verbal proceedings during the trials, arraignments, motions, probation reports and sentencings.
- When you are interpreting for a witness, you should sit or stand next to the witness stand and interpret consecutively all questions or answers.
- In juvenile court proceedings, you should sit or stand next to a parent or other interested party and simultaneously interpret everything that is said. Keep your voice low so as not to interfere with the proceedings.
- When interpreting from the witness stand, speak in a loud, clear voice so that the judge, members of the jury, counsel and all parties may hear you. Interpret in the first person ("I"), rather than saying "he says..."
- When interpreting at the defense table, speak only loud enough for the defendant to hear you.
- Do not leave the courtroom until you are officially excused by the judge or clerk, or until court has adjourned.