

WISCONSIN COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERPRETING FOR MULTIPLE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT INDIVIDUALS (SPOKEN LANGUAGES ONLY)

IMPARTIALITY

- The court interpreter is an officer of the court sworn to impartiality. Therefore, the court interpreter may interpret for multiple parties within the same case because the interpreter is viewed as an extension of the court who **does not align** with any of the parties.
- The interpreter must refrain from engaging in any conduct that could be construed as displaying favoritism towards any of the parties. The interpreter must maintain **and** display a professional and unbiased relationship with defendants, victims, witnesses, and attorneys.
- Interpreters need to be mindful that their demeanor in the courtroom may be subject to observation by others. As a result, it is crucial for interpreters to consistently convey their impartiality. Any non-verbal expressions, such as eye rolling or head shaking, could be perceived as biased and should be consciously avoided.
- In maintaining their impartiality, court interpreters should discourage a party's personal dependence on their services. This means that interpreters should strive to maintain a professional distance and avoid forming any alliances or affiliations with individuals involved in the legal proceedings.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Having access to confidential attorney-client communications does not hinder the provision of interpretation services for multiple Limited English Proficiency (LEP) parties in the same case, unless an objection is raised.
- In the event of an objection, it is within the court's purview to determine whether each Limited English Proficiency (LEP) party requires an individual interpreter. When making this determination, the court should take into account the presumption of impartiality in favor of, rather than against, the interpreter.

TEAM INTERPRETING

- Typically, the number of interpreters in a hearing is determined by the duration of the hearing rather than the number of Limited English Proficient individuals involved. The Court Interpreter Program suggests assigning a team of interpreters for any proceedings anticipated to extend beyond one hour. If scheduling a team of interpreters proves challenging after exploring all available options for proceedings lasting over one hour

but not exceeding two hours, the interpreter should request breaks to prevent mental fatigue.

- The Court Interpreter Program does **not** advocate for assigning an independent team of interpreters for each Limited English Proficient (LEP) party. Instead, the program suggests a rotation of team members who can collaborate to provide interpretation for all LEP individuals involved in the proceedings.
- In highly contested cases with several Limited English Proficient parties, the court may appoint an interpreter to each party when the parties need to consult with counsel continuously throughout the proceedings.
- If the interpreters are familiar with the case, they may provide their input regarding the number of interpreters needed.
- The Court Interpreter Program suggests employing a team of interpreters to interpret witness testimony. This approach is recommended because it ensures a second language expert who can oversee and guarantee accuracy, particularly when interpreting in the consecutive mode.
- Employing high-quality interpretation equipment is advised to facilitate the interpretation process for multiple Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals involved in the same case.