



Northern Arizona Sign Language Interpreting Agency

Tips for Considering Remote Interpreting Appointments

This document aims to provide some common helpful hints for offices that may be unfamiliar with working with professional interpreters over Zoom or other remote platforms. Sharing this document with the whole office staff can help to ensure everyone has similar expectations of any interpreted appointments, understands how to set up the tech, and can help everything go smoothly. Please take a moment or two to read this over and share it.

VRI vs On Site

- **When VRI is Appropriate:** VRI can be effective and appropriate but should not be the exclusive solution. Here are some things to consider when deciding when it is appropriate:
 - Last minute appointments - it can be harder to find available interpreters on short notice
 - VRI provides access to more resources
 - Simple, ongoing, or routine sessions
 - When and where internet and audio connectivity is strong
 - When no local interpreters are available
 - When sufficient technology is available to provide direct access to the interpretation effectively
 - *When your staff is sufficiently trained on how to set up and manage the technology and troubleshoot any issues that arise*
- **When on site interpreting is best:**
 - For more complex or unique appointments that are scheduled in advance
 - If the session is conducted in an area where internet connectivity is not strong
 - If the Deaf person has limited vision and has trouble seeing a screen
 - If the Deaf person is undergoing medical procedure(s)
 - If the Deaf person has unique language needs, is a child, is an adult with limited cognitive function, etc
 - When a situation changes or escalates and video interpreting is no longer effective
 - If the appointment is for a large group meeting or training where everyone participating is on site
 - If the event is outdoors, or will involve moving around

Setting Up the Equipment

- **Devices:** Ensure that each of the Deaf persons have direct access to the interpretation through an individual device with a big enough screen such as a laptop or tablet. This device also needs to have a webcam and should be provided by the office. Do not expect the Deaf person to provide their own equipment. **This is required for the Deaf person to have access to the interpretation and vice versa. Even if the room has a larger shared screen and camera, the individual device is necessary.*
- **Internet:** Ensure the device is connected to high speed internet and there is a strong signal.
- **Meeting Information:** Ensure your staff has access to the Zoom or other platform link that was established for this unique session.



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- **Video quality:** Ensure the video connection is clear, not freezing or blurry, and that audio is clear. People in the room who speak will need to be close enough to the device's microphone in order for them to be audible. Using a headset is recommended. Ensure the volume on the device's speakers is turned up loud enough that you can hear the interpreter in the room or through the headset.
- **Lighting:** Adjust lighting in the room to allow the Deaf person to be clearly visible through the webcam.
- **Placement:** Set the device in a place that allows the Deaf person to be hands free, see the screen, and allows the webcam (interpreter) to see the Deaf person's head and torso clearly and completely.
- **Seeing the interpreter:** Pin the interpreter's video in the platform so that the Deaf person can see the interpreter in full screen and they stay on the screen for the duration of the session.
- **Changing locations:** Please note that each time a device is moved, the above process will need to be repeated.
- **Establishing Communication:** Once all of the above is done, allow the interpreter and Deaf person a moment to establish communication. If the interpreter doesn't tell you when they are ready to proceed, please ask them.

Beginning the Session

- **Have the meeting link accessible:** Be sure to provide the link in advance to your staff members who need to connect.
- Please log in within 5 minutes of the scheduled appointment time. Even if you're not ready to see your patient or client, it is important to keep the interpreter updated on what's happening. Keep in mind that if you don't log in within 30 minutes, the no show policy goes into effect.