

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER INTERPRETERS

Thank you for volunteering with Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles as an interpreter! You help us break down barriers in communication in order to effectively serve individuals who otherwise would be excluded from receiving legal information and advice. This is a critically important service.

Please observe the following guidelines to ensure that our clients understand and are understood:

Introductions

- Allow the advocate to introduce you to the workshop participant as the interpreter. The advocate should explain to the participant that you are there to interpret everything all parties say, accurately and completely, and that both the advocate and participant must try to speak clearly and allow you time to interpret, and not talk over each other.

Interpreting

- Translate accurately and completely. It is tempting to summarize what a person is saying. However, it's important in this context to **accurately and completely** interpret what a person is saying, even if the spoken statement seems non-responsive, obscene, rambling, or incoherent.
- Interpret what each person is saying as if you are that person. For example, "I paid the rent" and not "he said he paid the rent."
- If either the advocate or the participant is speaking too fast or goes on too long, you can interrupt remind the advocate or the participant to pause to allow you to interpret.
- If you're having trouble understanding or interpreting, please bring it to the advocate's attention.
- You should be **impartial and nonjudgmental**, and avoid the appearance of bias.
- An interpreter serves to convey information, not to act as a counselor or advisor. Limit yourself to interpreting and do not give legal advice or express personal opinions. Try to avoid side conversations with the participant.

Confidentiality

- You must maintain the confidentiality of the individuals seeking legal information or legal advice. This means not disclosing the names or identities of people you meet, or what they tell you about their circumstances. This includes conversations with people not involved with the clinic or workshop or updates on social media. However, sharing general information is OK, such as (for example) letting people know you volunteered with Advancing Justice - LA and that you had a great time helping people with naturalization applications.