

DSHS Annual Communication 2025

This communication is being distributed to all DSHS employees requesting spoken language interpreter services through Department of Social and Health Service (DSHS) contract with Universal Language Service. This information will guide you through when requesting interpreter services and how to best work with interpreters. Should you have any questions, please contact our Account Management team at accounts@ulsonline.net.

Requesting Interpreter Services

For clients or recipients that experience trouble speaking or understanding English, you are required to provide language access services for them according to [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). It is important to remember that DSHS staff must always request interpreters through DSHS contract with Universal Language **first**. If Universal Language cannot fulfil the request under the DSHS contract, then you may attempt to secure an interpreter through a different contract, such as DES Interpreter Services Contract #18222.

Working with Interpreters

Working with an interpreter may seem self-explanatory but there are a few ways you can help ensure a smooth encounter for the client, provider, and interpreter.

- **Pre-sessions:** Allow the interpreters to introduce themselves to the client and provider, explain that everything being said will be interpreted in full and that all information will be kept confidential. Pre-sessions also give the interpreter and client a chance to make sure they can understand each other well before the encounter begins.
- **Location:** Never leave an interpreter and recipient alone. Interpreters are there to interpret only. No other services are to be requested of the interpreter.
- **Speed:** Speak in short phrases, pausing to allow time for interpretation. Allow the interpreter to control the flow of the encounter so they do not struggle to keep up. When needed, the interpreter may ask the provider or client to slow down or clarify.
- **First Person:** Speak in first person directly to the client (e.g. instead of saying “Ask the client if they are experiencing any pain.”, say “Are you experiencing any

pain?” directly to the client). This allows for genuine dialogue between the client and provider to take place, leading to a more accurate interpretation.

- **Positioning:** Allow the interpreter to position themselves in a non-obtrusive place, generally next to the provider or next to the client (seating the interpreter between the two parties tends to cause the client and provider to speak directly to the interpreter instead of speaking directly to each other through the interpreter)
- **Slang:** Keep speech plain and avoid using slang terms. Slang may be difficult to interpret accurately, as the interpreter will need to convey the same meaning. That can be challenging, especially if the interpreter is not familiar with the slang/sayings being used.
- **Feedback:** Providing positive and negative feedback regarding an interpreter’s performance is an essential part of helping an interpreter develop their skill set. Interpreters are expected to abide by the professional standards established in the [DSHS Language Interpreter and Translator Code of Professional Conduct](#), which addresses interpreting accurately, being culturally sensitive, client confidentiality, proficiency standards, professional demeanor, scope of practice and more. For more information on providing feedback, please visit our [WeCare Program webpage](#).

Resources

- [Nation Standards on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services \(CLAS\)](#)
- [DSHS Language Testing and Certification](#)
- [HCA Universal](#)
- [Collection Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\) for Language Access Providers](#)

Thank you for taking the time to review this information. Please contact us at accounts@ulsonline.net with questions or if we can be of any assistance.

Best Regards,
Universal Language Service, Inc.

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