

## Working Effectively with Telephone Interpreters<sup>1</sup> (March 10, 2015)

By the National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project and the Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

### Tips for working effectively with telephone interpreters:

1. Pace your speech- try speaking at a normal pace, but with pauses to ensure accurate interpretation.
2. Ask only one question at a time- if you ask more than one question at once, the interpreter may end up being interrupted by the caller, who may be trying to answer the first question. Pace your questions accordingly.
3. Ensure that your caller understands- when you are working with an interpreter, you may be less likely to pick up on verbal hesitations or pauses that might indicate a lack of understanding. It is helpful to verify important information, like phone numbers, with your caller.
4. Enunciate your words and speak audibly. Pronounce your words clearly and audibly.
5. Relieve or replace your interpreter as needed- if a call goes beyond 30 minutes, it is appropriate to check in with the interpreter to see if they need to rest for a minute or two, or to see if you should call back and get a fresh interpreter.

### Signs there could be an issue with an interpreter:

- Length of time the interpreter is talking does not reflect length of time the advocate or caller is talking.
- Interpreter is rude or abrupt with the caller.
- Interpreter's tone does not reflect advocate's tone.
- Interpreter and caller having a side conversation.

### Suggestions for what to do if an issue arises:

- Address any concerns or irregularities immediately.
- Interrupt if needed. For example:  
"Excuse me, interpreter. Please tell me what he/she is saying" OR "I'd like to remind you that I need you to interpret everything being said."
- Inform the interpreter you will be disconnecting the interpreter, getting a new interpreter and to tell the caller not to hang up.

### Complaint Procedure for Police Officers Working with Interpreters

- Report ID number to Pacific Interpretation Customer Service and
- Inform other officers and/or supervising officer not to use the same telephonic interpreter so as to prevent inaccurate or poor interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Telephone Interpreting: A Comprehensive Guide to the Profession

[http://www.pacificinterpreters.com/docs/resources/telephone\\_interpreting\\_nataly\\_kelly.pdf](http://www.pacificinterpreters.com/docs/resources/telephone_interpreting_nataly_kelly.pdf); Developed for The Albuquerque Police Department in collaboration with the Albuquerque Mayor's Sexual and Domestic Violence Taskforce and was supported by Grant No. 2014-TA-AX-K030 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women. This project was also supported by Award No. 2009-TA-AX-K022 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice.