Outline of Procedures for Australian Government Agencies:

# Procuring Interpreting Services

## Face to Face or Telephone

### Preparing for an Interpreter

* Identify when to engage an interpreter (e.g. ask if the client has an ’I need an interpreter’ card).Check agency legislative requirements.
* Identify the language and dialect required. If the client cannot provide the information, you may wish to contact a language service provider or use a country and language list, such as: Certified Languages International - languages by country or Ethnologue Languages of the world
* Identify the type of interpreting service required (telephone, on-site, video conferencing).
* Identify the appropriate resource to provide interpreting services (e.g. interpreters credentialed by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), or bilingual/bicultural staff).
* Determine real/potential/perceived risks/conflict of interest with the proposed interpreting method.
* Avoid a real/potential/perceived risk (i.e. NAATI-credentialed interpreters abide by the AUSIT Code of Ethics).
* Refer to your agency’s information on interpreting service providers (i.e. preferred or contracted provider).
* Record interpreting assignment details on your agency’s register.

### Booking an Interview

Most interpreting service agencies require:

* the client’s name
* the language/dialect
* preferred gender of the interpreter
* date and time the interpreter is required (include some time prior to the interview to brief the interpreter)
* type of interview (e.g. medical, legal)
* address of the agency requiring the interpreter
* name and telephone contact details of person to whom the interpreter reports
* nature of the matter to be discussed (e.g. aged-care health assessment)
* duration (approximately) of the interview
* notification if you or the client wish to have a specific interpreter for continuity of care reasons
* information on the telephone system (if applicable) that will be used (e.g. speaker phone)
* the agency cost code/ contact for the invoice to be sent to.

### Before the Interview

* Brief the interpreter about the interview topic and provide contextual information.
* If the client and/or the interpreter are on site, arrange the seating to optimise communication
* (e.g. in a circle or triangle formation) with the client, and/or arrange for a hands-free telephone function.
* Check to see that the client and interpreter understand and are comfortable with each other.
* Obtain suitable information products in the client’s preferred language, if relevant.
* Allow for extra time over the usual duration of an interview.

### At the Beginning of the Interview

* Sit opposite the client and look at the client, not at the interpreter, while talking.
* Speak directly to the client, as you would with an English speaker (not to the interpreter or into the hands-free phone).
* Speak in a normal tone of voice but at a slower speed than a native speaker.
* Communicate using short sentences whenever possible.
* Introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client.
* Explain to the client the purpose of the interview and how it will proceed.
* Speak in the first person to the client (e.g. ‘How are you feeling?’), not to the interpreter
* (e.g. ‘Ask her how she is feeling’).
* Explain that the interpreter’s role is only to interpret what is being said and that the interpreter is completely impartial.
* Explain to the client that questions or concerns can be raised at any time during the interview.
* Explain to the client that all information provided by the client is confidential, personal information is protected by privacy law, and the interpreter is bound by a code of ethics.

### During the Interview

* Speak clearly and concisely. Never use jargon or slang.
* Keep control of the interview.
* Remember to pause after about two or three short sentences to give the interpreter a chance to interpret.
* Don’t try to save time by asking the interpreter to summarise.
* Be aware that it may take more words than you have spoken to convey the message
* (each language is different).
* Stop speaking when the interpreter signals by raising a hand, or when starting to interpret.
* Use pen and paper, particularly for key information, dates and numbers.
* Avoid lengthy discussions with the interpreter, because it will exclude the client. If you must discuss something with the interpreter, always tell the client what you are discussing and why.
* Should you believe at any point that the non-English speaker does not understand, it is your responsibility (not the interpreter’s) to explain more simply.

# Outline of Procedures for Australian Government Agencies:

## During Public Forums and Consultations

### Before the consultation

* Brief the interpreter about the forum or consultation topic and any questions which are likely to arise from participants.
* Ascertain whether an interpreter will be required by asking invitees before the consultation.
* Consider whether avenues for feedback/complaint should be included in translated written material.
* Consider having both male and female interpreters as gender may a sensitive issue in some cultures (i.e. males speaking directly to females and vice versa).

### During the consultations

* If the majority of the audience are speakers of a particular language, engage an interpreter during the consultation. Follow the principles for using interpreters.
* Consider whether written material relating to the consultation should be available in relevant community languages.
* Depending on the composition of the audience and the content of the consultation, consider holding separate consultation sessions in relevant community languages.
* The presenter should never use any jargon or slang and should use a shortened form (an abbreviation or acronym) only when this is clearly understood by the client or repeated in full until clearly understood.
* Advise the audience of avenues for feedback on the consultation session.

### Following the consultation

* Record the outcomes of the consultation on file, including any issues/complaints regarding interpreting or information in community languages.