

## **10 TOP REQUESTS FROM INTERPRETERS TO ATTORNEYS AND JUDGES THAT WILL FACILITATE INTERPRETED COMMUNICATION:**

**(Created by Massachusetts' Court Interpreter Program)**

### **PLEASE:**

1. Address the Limited English-Speaking party (LEP) directly. Don't say to me, "tell him/her."
2. Don't ask me to explain the contents of a document, a change of plea, etc, because it is against my code of conduct to engage in such explanations. I'll be happy to interpret for you while you explain it.
3. Let me be the interpreter, even if you speak the LEP's language. I am trained to sort out language-related issues and to preserve the register (level) of the speaker.
4. Give me a chance to prepare beforehand, especially before hearings and trials. I am neither a computer nor a dictionary! I need to read through police reports, summaries of the case or any document that describes the details of the case to be able to clarify language-related doubts and to get context.
5. Help me do my job by speaking so I can hear you and not impossibly fast in the courtroom.
6. Whenever possible, find a quiet spot in the court to communicate with your LEP client through me. It's very difficult to bridge the language gap in the middle of a noisy hallway.
7. Be sensitive to my need for rotating with a colleague during long proceedings, for taking quick breaks, and for sitting in a place where I can see and hear all speakers in the courtroom.
8. What I do is very difficult and demands knowledge and skills. Please, treat me with the same professional respect that you would use in treating or addressing any other colleague.
9. Give me a chance to introduce myself as an impartial interpreter to the non English-speaker, who will keep every word said confidential. This is a good moment for you to reinforce that the interpreter is there to say in English everything she/he says in the other language, but not to give legal advice.
10. (Last but not least) **USE MY SERVICES!**  
It is my duty to ensure linguistic access by providing professional interpreting. Using family members, court officers or even fellow inmates as interpreters can result in gross misinterpretation problems.