

ASL/English Interpretation

ASL/English Interpreters use simultaneous interpretation most of the time because the silent nature of ASL production allows it to be used without disruption of English production. Further, simultaneous interpretation allows ASL interpreters to maintain eye-contact while communicating with Deaf participants, which is considered a courtesy in Deaf Culture. With the ASL/English Interpreter placed discreetly either directly in front of or behind the hearing speaker and in the sight line of the Deaf participant, both hearing and Deaf communicators can maintain eye contact throughout the interchange.

However, there are exceptions to this method. If a third mode of communication is involved, consecutive interpreting is necessary. For example, if Spanish is also being used in the same communication session, then a pause must be included after a meaningful “chunk” of information is delivered to allow for transmission into English and ASL.

Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpretation

LPRO offers two primary methods of interpretation: simultaneous interpretation and consecutive interpretation. When requesting interpretation services, analysts should specify the method needed. When possible, requests for simultaneous interpretation should include the number of headsets participants will require. Each method provides advantages in specific contexts.

Simultaneous Interpretation

With this method, the interpreter renders the speaker’s words in real-time into the target language, almost simultaneously as the speaker talks. This requires the interpreter to listen and speak at the same time.

A team of interpreters sit in the room with a clear line of sight to the speakers and presentation. Each interpreter listens to the speech in the source language through a headset and simultaneously interprets it into the target language using a microphone. Audience members use wire/wireless headsets tuned to their preferred language channel to hear the real-time interpretation. In the Capitol, we use the ListenWIFI App to facilitate this process.



Best Practices

Simultaneous interpreting is ideal when it is not feasible for the speaker to pause every few segments in order for the interpretation to occur, due to time constraints or a large audience. Examples include committee hearings, public hearings, taskforce hearings, workgroup hearings, town halls, trainings, and workshops.

Equipment Required:

1. **Microphone (Transmitter)** The interpreter speaks into a microphone that transmits their interpretation; at times a masked microphone may be used to diminish the sound coming from the interpreters.
2. **Headsets (Receivers)** The interpreters provide participants with wire headsets. These headsets are connected to receivers that can tune into specific channels. Each channel corresponds to a different language, allowing for interpretation in multiple languages if needed.

Consecutive Interpretation

With this method, the interpreter waits for the speaker to finish a segment of speech (one to three sentences at a time) before interpreting it into the target language. Then the speaker pauses for the interpreter's rendition. To provide testimony, the constituent speaks for a couple of sentences in their language, then pauses. The interpreter, who may take notes, interprets the message into the target language (typically English). This process repeats until the person is done testifying, ensuring clear and accurate communication.

Best Practices

Consecutive interpretation is ideal for situations where precise and accurate interpretation is more critical than speed. Examples include medical settings, public testimonies, and one-on-one or small group interactions.

