



WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS: A CHECKLIST TO EVALUATE QUALIFICATIONS

Language access is a key component of a victim-centered approach to combating human trafficking, as many victims find themselves in places where they do not speak the local language. Trained, qualified, and culturally adept interpreters can help. When victims of trafficking are identified, they should have access to such interpreters, as needed, throughout all stages of their case. It is important for law enforcement, prosecutors, service providers, and victim advocates to have an established plan for interpretation and develop a list of qualified interpreters trained and ready to assist.

CHECKLIST FOR WORKING WITH INTERPRETERS:

- ✓ **Evaluate the potential interpreter:** The following questions can assist with the process of evaluating the qualifications of interpreters:
 - » Does the interpreter speak the language needed, including any local dialects?
 - » Is the interpreter aware of the sensitivities related to human trafficking cases and comfortable discussing these issues?
 - » Does the interpreter have experience interpreting for trafficking victims or other vulnerable populations?
 - » Has the interpreter been trained to ensure their clear understanding of this complex crime and its indicators?
 - » Is there a conflict of interest with the victim? Does the interpreter know the victim, family or friends, community? Does the interpreter know the alleged trafficker or have information about the case?
 - » Are there any cultural or other dynamics to consider, such as religion, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status?

- » What is the interpreter's availability? In-person versus by phone? Short-term or longer-term assistance to the victim?
- » How much will interpretation services cost?

IMPORTANT REMINDERS WHEN WORKING WITH VICTIMS AND THEIR INTERPRETERS:

- » Use the first person and talk directly to the victim.
- » Introduce the interpreter and explain his or her role.
- » Inform the victim that the interpreter is bound by confidentiality.
- » Remember to pause frequently to allow for accurate interpretation.
- » Check for clarity and the comfort of the victim:
 - ✓ Does the victim understand the interpreter?
 - ✓ Is the victim comfortable with the interpreter?
- » Take breaks as needed.
- » After any interview, de-brief with the interpreter and address any vicarious trauma.

TIP: BE SURE TO DISCUSS THE ROLE OF AN INTERPRETER AND CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

- » The interpreter should always use the first person and provide interpretation using the same wording as the interviewer and the victim.
- » The interpreter should not modify or summarize any statements and should request clarification as needed.
- » Confirm the interpreter is willing to comply with confidentiality policies, including signing a confidentiality agreement.