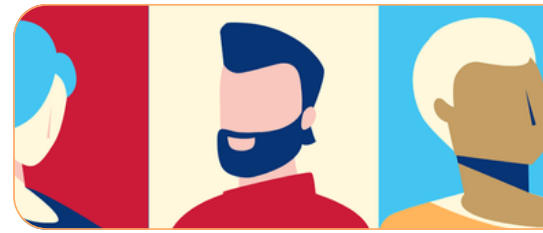




# Language Access Toolkit **for Families**



# Understanding Your Right to Language Access Services



## Language Services and Health Care

### What the law requires



Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires recipients of Federal financial assistance to take reasonable steps to make their programs, services, and activities accessible by eligible persons with limited English proficiency.

### Your right to language access



You have a right to language access services in the health care setting, no matter what your citizenship status is.

Language access is part of making sure everyone has the health care they need.

## Getting Health Care Services in Your Preferred Language

### Know Your Rights!

- Is your preferred language a language other than English?
- Do you want to receive medical information in your preferred language?
- Do you want to communicate with your medical provider in your preferred language?

As a patient or caregiver, you have the right to:

1. Communicate with your provider in your preferred language using a certified interpreter
2. Receive all informative documents and forms translated into your preferred language.

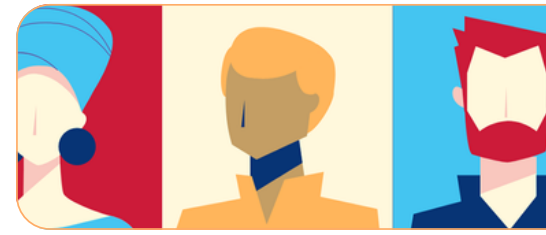
It is important to have health information in your preferred language so you can make good decisions about your health or your child's health.



**By law, language access services never cost you money.**



# Understanding Your Right to Language Access Services



## Know Your Rights as a Patient or Caregiver



**By law, language access services never cost you money.**



**You have the right to communicate with your health care provider in your preferred language.**

This includes all communications, such as:

- text messages
- phone calls
- conversations with staff and providers
- appointment reminder notifications
- patient portals
- surveys



**You have the right to receive information from your health care provider in your preferred language.**

This includes any patient forms, medical records, any forms you need to sign, and any forms that explain health care services and what they cost. For example:

- prescription medication instructions
- follow-up visit summaries
- test and lab work results
- signs and brochures available to the public or in the waiting room
- medical diagnoses, procedures, or surgical information

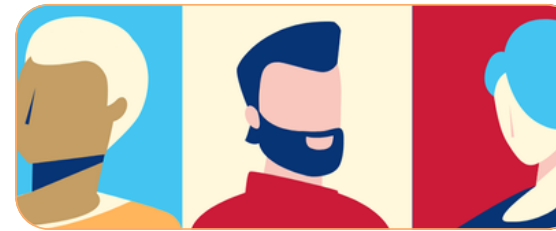


**You have the right to feel welcomed and understood, and to be well-informed about your child's care.**

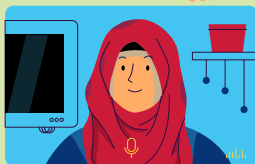
Receiving the care your family needs in your preferred language is a right all people have in the United States regardless of nationality, citizenship status, or years spent in the country.



# Understanding Your Right to Language Access Services



## Asking for Interpreter Services



Communicating with a healthcare provider in your preferred language can help you:

- Communicate your needs, questions, and concerns clearly with medical professionals
- Understand important health information
- Be prepared to make the best decisions about your family and children's health



## It's okay to ask. In fact, it's your right.

At first, it might not feel comfortable requesting interpretation services. You might be concerned about stigma, or you might not know what language supports are available.

- Call before your appointment to ask your provider, staff, or receptionist about interpreter services.
- Hospitals and emergency rooms usually have interpretation services available, but it is always a good practice to check in advance.

### How to Ask Your Health Care Provider for Interpreter Services

Do you offer interpretation services in-person, by phone, or by video?

How will the interpreter join during the visit?

- You can tell your provider if you prefer to have the interpreter join by video and help them explore options.

### How Interpreter Services Might Be Provided

- **In person**, where the interpreter is with the you at an appointment
- **By phone**, where the interpreter is on the phone during your appointment
- **Virtually**, where the interpreter is on video during your appointment



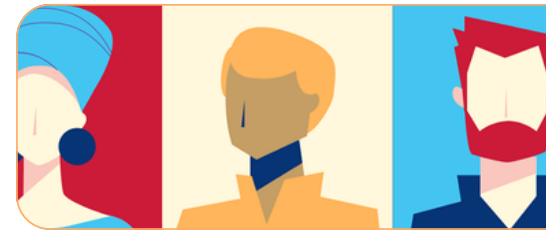
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# Understanding Your Right to Language Access Services



## Working with Your Health Care Provider to Plan Interpretation Services

If English is not your preferred language, you have a right to use interpreter services in the health care setting. You will need to work with your health care provider to set up the services you need.

1

You have a right to a qualified medical interpreter. A qualified medical interpreter understands health care and can make sure that the communication between you and your health care provider is accurate and clear.

The interpreter can help you and your health care provider understand each other so you have the information you need to fully participate in your child's care.

2

Unless they are qualified as medical interpreters, family members, office staff, and other patients should not be used as interpreters during a health care visit.

3

Interpretation apps and software (like Google Translate) should not be used in your healthcare visits because they may not be accurate and may not include medical terms.

4

Make sure your healthcare provider and staff know your preferred language and which language access services you want to use.



**By law, language access services never cost you money.**

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# Understanding Your Right to Language Access Services



## Asking for Interpreter Services

### Before Your Health Care Visit

**Ask how your health care provider or health care system arranges interpretation services.**

- When do I need to ask for interpretation services?
- Should I ask for interpretation services during the visit, or do I need to ask these services before a visit?
- What information will I need to give when I ask for interpretation services?

**Tell your health care provider how you prefer to work with the interpreter during the health care visit.**

- Do you want the interpreter to communicate between you (the parent/guardian) and the health care provider?
- Do you want the interpreter to talk to another family member? Do you want the interpreter to also talk directly to your child (the patient)?
- **Do you have other needs or preferences like the gender of the interpreter?**

### During a Health Care Visit

You have the right to ask for interpretation services to help you during a healthcare visit. An interpreter can help you understand health information, share what you know, and complete tasks that help you participate in your child's care.

### How a medical interpreter can help during a health care visit

**An interpreter can help you communicate about:**

- Your health, your questions, and your concerns
- Your medications or prescriptions
- Services you or your child needs (like therapies, testing, and follow-up appointments)

**An interpreter can help understand written materials like:**

- Visit forms
- Printed materials
- Visit follow-up summaries
- The patient portal
- Reports and lab work



**By law, language access services never cost you money.**



# Understanding Your Right to Language Access Services



## Working with a Medical Interpreter

### Facts about Medical Interpreters

Medical interpreters go through a training process and have to take an exam to receive their certificate to work in health care.

- The health care field needs more medical interpreters. The job is flexible and offers a way to help others in the community.

Medical interpreters are trained to protect your privacy. **It's the law.**

- Even if the medical interpreter is someone you know from your community, they are not allowed to share any of your personal medical information outside of your health care visit. [Learn more about the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act.](#)

**By law, language access services never cost you money.**

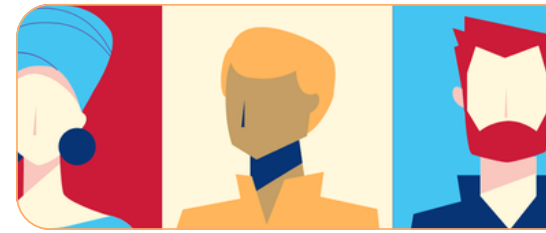


### Is your child or another family member interpreting for you during health care visits?

If so, you might not be getting the best information to help you make health care decisions. **A certified medical interpreter:**

- Understands the words and terms used in the health care setting.
- Can help you ask questions and get clear information from your health care provider.
- Respects the privacy of your medical information.
- Will not share their personal opinions.
- Will keep the interaction professional in every way, even if you have met the interpreter before.





## How can I become a certified medical interpreter?

*The requirements to become a medical interpreter can be different depending on where you live and where you get your certification. Here is a list of what is usually required.*

### Age

- 18 years of age or older

### Education

- High school education or GED, or any degree from an institution of higher education
- Proof of medical interpretation training
  - College or university coursework
  - Approved medical interpretation training (40 hours minimum)



### Language and Experience Required

- Oral and written proficiency in English
- Oral and written proficiency in the language for which you want to be an interpreter
- Prior experience as an interpreter is not required.
- Prior experience in the medical field is not required.



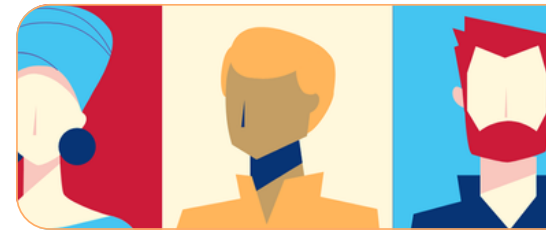
### Typical costs to become a medical interpreter

- You can receive training to become a medical interpreter. The training is offered by professional associations and educational institutions.
- Training can be in person or virtual. and the average cost is between \$300 and \$1,000.
- Once you complete the training, you can take an exam to become certified. The certification examination process usually costs between \$200 and \$400. Certification has to be renewed every three to five years, and it usually costs \$300 to \$500, depending on the certifying organization.





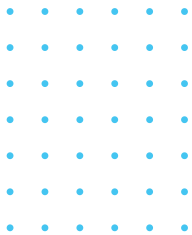
# Becoming a Medical Interpreter



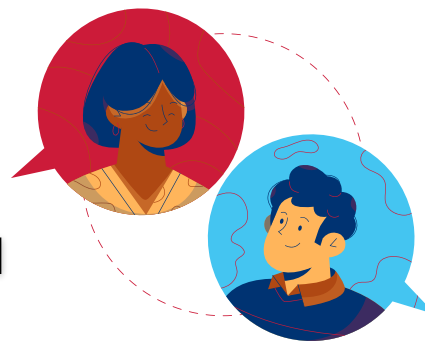
## How long does it take to become a medical interpreter?



- Medical interpreter training and certification can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months (depending on program schedules, your individual pace, and other factors).
- Certification renewal can occur every three to five years (depending on the certification language).



## Benefits of Becoming a Certified Medical Interpreter



- Medical interpreters have a direct impact on patient safety and people's experiences in the health care setting.
- Medical interpreters help to eliminate health disparities by supporting families and making sure they have the ability to participate in their health care decisions. This is especially important for families of children and youth with special health care needs, who often need more medical care than other children.
- Medical interpreters are a fast-growing part of health care and they are in demand in the medical field. They earn an average salary of \$53,000 – \$87,000 per year.
- Medical interpreters enjoy flexible work schedules and workplace settings (e.g., in-person, virtual, or via phone).

