



Department of Interpreter and CART Services

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

MCDHH is the primary state agency offering services to Deaf, Late Deafened, and Hard of Hearing Citizens in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Department of Interpreter and CART Services is one of MCDHH's three legally mandated service departments.

What is the difference between a signer and an Interpreter/Transliterater?

A signer is someone who has the ability to communicate with a Deaf person through sign language on an informal level. Signers vary considerably from one another in the level and accuracy of their signing.

An Interpreter/Transliterater/Oral Transliterater is a person who has learned American Sign Language through a formal course of study. This not only emphasizes proficiency in ASL but also provides the individual with the bilingual and bicultural skills needed to mediate across cultures. Individuals who graduate from these programs most often go on to achieve National Certification and/or elect to be certified at the state level.

What is the difference between Interpreting and Transliterating?

Interpreting is the cultural and linguistic transmission of a message from American Sign Language to spoken English and vice versa. *Transliterating* is the transmission of a message from spoken English to a visual, manually coded version of English and vice versa. *Oral transliterating* is the inaudible repetition of everything being said in a given environment by a professional trained to "mouth" the speaker's words. It is of benefit to persons who are good lip-readers and prefer this mode of communication access.

What is a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)?

A CDI is an individual who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. In addition to proficient communication skills and general interpreting training, a CDI has specialized training and/or experience in the use of gesture, mime, props, drawings, and other tools to enhance communication. A CDI has knowledge and understanding of the Deaf community and Deaf culture, and possesses native or near-native fluency in American Sign Language.

A CDI will work with a qualified hearing interpreter as a team to provide communication access for Deaf persons that may use a dialect of American Sign Language or have a unique signing style not easily interpreted by a hearing ASL interpreter.

When and where are Interpreters/Transliterators and CDI's used?

Any situation in which hearing and Deaf persons are interacting and the participants are not able to understand the others' preferred mode of communication.

Settings may include: medical and mental health appointments, church and support group meetings, funerals, legal proceedings, vocational and educational situations, theatrical performances and more.

What is the role of the Interpreter/Transliterater?

It is virtually impossible to be both an active participant and a neutral communication facilitator between a Deaf and hearing person. For this reason it is not within the interpreting professional's role to advise, edit, advocate or counsel participants while in the interpreting situation. He or she must faithfully transmit the spirit and the content of the speakers' message. Deaf and hearing persons that are using interpreting services have control of the communication interaction and make their own decisions.

Why is there sometimes a need for two Interpreters or Transliteraters in the same situation?

The decision to use more than one individual Interpreter, Transliterater or Oral Transliterater is generally based on the length and/or nature of the assignment, the unique needs of the persons being served and the potential need for a team consisting of both CDI and hearing ASL interpreter.

When the team is composed of two interpreting professionals, they will rotate at regular intervals to avoid mental and physical fatigue. The team approach allows the recipient of the team's efforts to obtain optimal service by keeping team members "fresh".

How do I use an Interpreter/Transliterater?

Do not speak to the Interpreters/Transliteraters/Oral Transliteraters directly; instead direct your communication to the person with whom you are having the conversation. Be sure to have all participants in a meeting speak one at a time; it is impossible to interpret several people speaking at once.

Speak clearly and normally. If for some reason the interpreting professional cannot understand you, or requires clarification, he or she will ask you.

The interpreting professional should be located near the speaker so the Deaf or Hard of Hearing person will have clear visual access to both.

How do I request an Interpreter/Transliterater?

You will need to give the intake specialist specific information when you contact MCDHH: Your name, telephone number, and organization; the date and time that you will need the Interpreter/Transliterater/Oral Transliterater; the address of the assignment, including specifics; the nature and format of the meeting (i.e. doctors appointment, staff meeting); the number of participants; the names of the Deaf participants and their preferred mode of communication; and if any special equipment will be used (i.e. overhead projector, videos). You must also provide confirmed billing information (contact person, phone numbers(s) and address) so that interpreter knows where and to whom they should send their invoice. **Please make your request for Interpreters/Transliteraters/Oral Transliteraters as far in advance as possible to maximize our ability to fill your request.**

MCDHH Interpreter/CART Referral Services
150 Mount Vernon Street, Fifth Floor
Dorchester, MA 02125
1-800-882-1155 Voice
1-800-530-7570 TTY

****For Medical, Mental Health, and Legal emergencies only, call 1-800-249-9949 V/TTY everyday, 24 hours a day.**

Our website: www.mass.gov/mcdhh

Online interpreter/CART requests can be made at:
<http://www.mass.gov/mcdhh/download/Downloadcenter.htm>