



A Word About Sign Language Interpreters

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If it is necessary to hire a sign language interpreter you may find a qualified individual by contacting the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (www.rid.org). There are also many local agencies who will contract with you for the services of an interpreter. There is a shortage of sign language interpreters, so give yourself time to hire an interpreter. It can take as long as three months.

There are many different certifications for sign language interpreters,. What the certifications generally have in common is that they assure a level of proficiency. When you hire an interpreter it will be important that the person has not only the technical skill to sign for a Deaf or hearing impaired audience but also that the interpreter will have a sense of the culture she is operating in. For example, one interpreter might have special skills to translate scientific material whereas another interpreter may be particularly good with material that is emotionally tinged for example for a talk to cancer survivors.

Sign language is not the same all over the world. Just as there is no universal spoken language, there is no universal sign language. Generally, if you hire a sign language interpreter who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), then the average person who understands sign language will understand her.

Be aware that sign language interpretation is an intense activity for the interpreter who will tire after a period of time, so teams are hired when a long stretch of interpretation is needed so that the interpreters may rotate in and out for a rest.