



INTERPRETER PANEL POLICY AND PROTOCOL MANUAL

Information for Interpreters Working With VLP

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Thank you for your interest in serving as an interpreter for the Volunteer Lawyers Project. Please read the entire policy and protocol manual. Once you have read the manual, please sign both the Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Code of Conduct and Acknowledgment of Billing Policy and return them to:

Emelia Andres, Pro Bono Manager
Volunteer Lawyers Project
7 Winthrop Square, Floor 2
Boston, MA 02110

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Emelia Andres at (857)320-6446, or eandres@vlpnet.org.



VLP INTERPRETER INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the following information for billing purposes. If your contact information changes, please provide the updated information to Emelia Andres at (857)320-6446, or eandres@vlpnet.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel.: (_____) _____ (work)
(_____) _____ (cell)
(_____) _____ (home)

Email: _____

Languages Spoken: _____

Availability: _____

Comments: _____



TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Interpreters are required to do the following:

- read this manual completely
- view the training video on WISP
- complete a W-9 form
- Sign the Acknowledgments in this manual
- complete the Interpreter Information form
- view the online interpreter training
- complete a Language Proficiency Test

Interpreters are required to attend a yearly training held by the Volunteer Lawyers Project regarding Language Access, the Interpreter's role, and working with LEP clients and volunteer attorneys. You will be notified by email of this training.

Interpreters are required to take an online Language Proficiency Testing. Once this testing is completed, the results will be sent directly to VLP, and we will share them with you.

If you have any questions regarding any information in this manual, please contact Emelia Andres at 857-320-6446 or email her at eandres@vlpnet.org.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Introduction:

Volunteer Lawyers Project relies upon interpreters to ensure accurate and clear communication between clients and VLP staff members, and VLP pro bono panel attorneys.

This Code of Professional Conduct outlines the complexities of the task to be performed and the fundamental ethical principles and standards to be followed by interpreters.

These standards seek to assure meaningful access to legal services for non-English speakers and to increase efficiency, quality, and uniformity in interpreter-client-staff interaction.

These standards define and govern the practice of interpretation as used by VLP in the office space of VLP as well as that of other locations where VLP pro bono panel attorneys may meet with their clients, including the virtual clinics currently scheduled as well as any virtual meetings that may be scheduled with the clients.



1. Accuracy

Each VLP interpreter shall faithfully and accurately interpret what is said without embellishment or omission while preserving the language level of the speaker to the best of said Interpreter's skill and ability. Each Interpreter shall provide the most accurate form of a word in spite of a possible vulgar meaning. An interpreter should not tone down, improve, or edit any statements. An interpreter shall speak in a clear, firm, and well-modulated voice that conveys the inflections, tone, and emotions of the speaker.

An interpreter shall not simplify statements for a non-English speaker even when the Interpreter believes the non-English speaker cannot understand the speaker's language level. The non-English speaker may request an explanation or simplification, if necessary, through the Interpreter.

2. Impartiality

Each Interpreter shall always maintain an impartial attitude.

3. Confidentiality

Each Interpreter shall guard confidential information and not betray the confidences, which may have been entrusted to him or her by any parties concerned.

4. Modes of Interpreting

VLP prefers either of the following two modes of interpreting:

- the simultaneous mode of interpretation requires the Interpreter to speak contemporaneously with the speaker whose statements are being heard.
- the consecutive mode of interpretation requires the Interpreter to allow the speaker to complete his/her thought or statement before attempting its interpretation.

Whenever possible, the Interpreter shall not summarize statements by a VLP staff member or panel attorney unless requested to do so.

5. Modes of Address

Each Interpreter shall utilize the first person singular when interpreting for a non-English speaker.



6. Language Difficulties

If there is a word, phrase, or concept, which the Interpreter does not understand, the Interpreter should inform the VLP staff member or panel attorney to ensure an explanation, rephrasing, or repetition of the statement.

If the VLP staff member or pro bono panel attorney uses a word, phrase, or concept which the Interpreter finds may confuse the non-English speaker, particularly when a concept has no cultural equivalent in the non-English speaker's language or when it may prove ambiguous in translation, the Interpreter should inform the VLP staff member or panel attorney.

7. Conflicts of Interest

An interpreter shall not serve as an interpreter in any matter where he/she is an associate, friend, or relative or party, of counsel for a client; or when he/she, his/her spouse, or child are a party to any court action involving the client or have a financial interest or any other interest that would be affected by the outcome of the case, or any other interest which would prevent that Interpreter from being impartial. VLP reserves the right to decline the services of any individual interpreter if the client feels uncomfortable with a particular interpreter for any reason.

8. Legal Advice

An interpreter shall not give any legal advice of any kind to anyone, whether solicited or not.

INTERPRETER BILLING POLICY

- **Rate:** Interpreters on the VLP Panel will be paid \$45 per hour with a minimum of two hours for **in-person or by video call services**. Phone, text, and email interpretation services will be paid on a prorated hourly rate with no minimum payment. Interpreters will enter an estimate of the time spent remotely interpreting on the interpreter timesheet. Parking fees paid by the Interpreter for parking during meetings with the client(s) and attorney(s) will be reimbursed; the Interpreter must provide a receipt to be reimbursed for parking. **Written document translation will be paid at \$0.17 per word translated.**



- **Late Cancellation:** If an appointment with a VLP assigned interpreter is canceled less than 24 hours before a scheduled appointment by either the client or attorney, VLP will pay the Interpreter for one hour of interpretation time. VLP will not pay the two-hour minimum for a late cancellation. A late cancellation payment will not be processed if the Interpreter cancels the appointment. The late cancellation will be verified with either the attorney or client by the Pro Bono Manager via phone, text, email, fax, etc. The late cancellation will be noted on an Interpreter Time Sheet and Payment Request Form when submitting a late cancellation payment.

- **VLP Referral:** VLP refers cases to panel attorneys who agree to represent clients on a *pro bono* basis. VLP assigns an interpreter to a client before or at the time when a case is referred. The Interpreter agrees to meet with the client and panel attorney after the case is referred.

- **Assigning an interpreter:** When assigning an interpreter, a VLP case handler will send the Interpreter's contact information to the panel attorney. Then, the panel attorney will contact the Interpreter directly to schedule all client meetings. Please be aware that meetings may be held at the VLP office at 7 Winthrop Square, Floor 2, or another location of the panel attorney's choosing. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, all meetings and clinics are being conducted virtually. Therefore, the Interpreter should always ask the panel attorney where the meeting will be held before contacting the client. The panel attorney should arrange to have the interpreter accompany the client to hearings and/or court proceedings to ensure adequate communications with the client outside of the actual court proceedings. The panel attorney will also make arrangements to have a court assigned interpreter at the hearing for official on the record interpretation.

- **Billing:** Interpreters are responsible for keeping track of their time (whether the interpreting services are provided for remote communication or scheduled meetings) and submitting bills to VLP directly. Please note that the proper procedure for invoice approval is as follows:
 - Send invoice to VLP Staff or Panel Attorney for approval of services rendered. VLP interns are not eligible to approve timesheets. If you are in contact with a VLP intern for a case, you may seek approval from the paralegal assigned to the case.
 - Once approval from VLP Staff or Panel Attorney is received, the Interpreter is responsible for sending the invoice and supporting documents directly to Emelia Andres via email or mail.

- **Maximum Time:** Interpreters are authorized by VLP to work with a panel attorney up to five (5) hours for a single meeting or event without prior approval from a VLP staff member. If the panel attorney plans to exceed the time limit, please contact Emelia Andres at (857) 320-6446 for approval before exceeding the authorized maximum time.

Interpreters should submit timesheets every month. Invoices received more than 30 days after the date of interpretation service may not be paid out. Send the VLP



timesheet to Emelia Andres via email: eandres@vlpnet.org or mail: 7 Winthrop Sq, Floor 2, Boston, MA 02110.

- **Questions:** Should you have any questions about this policy, please contact Emelia Andres at (857)320-6446 or eandres@vlpnet.org.

INTERPRETER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE OF INTERPRETER CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT:

I _____ (print your name) accept the above code of conduct and agree to abide by it.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

INTERPRETER ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF BILLING POLICY:

I _____ (print your name) have read the VLP Interpreter Billing Policy, and I agree to abide by this policy to the best of my ability.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



INTERPRETER TIMESHEET (Rev. 05/07/21)

Interpreter Name: _____

Interpreter Signature: _____

Total Hours: _____

Date	Start and End Times	Client Name	Language	Length of appointment	Attorney/VLP Case Handler	Attorney Initials	Location (please circle one)
							VLP Office Court Attorney's office Phone Zoom
							VLP Office Court Attorney's office Phone Zoom
							VLP Office Court Attorney's office Phone Zoom
							VLP Office Court Attorney's office Phone Zoom
							VLP Office Court Attorney's office Phone Zoom
							VLP Office Court Attorney's office Phone Zoom
							VLP Office Court Attorney's office Phone Zoom

Date: _____

PLEASE NOTE THAT A VLP STAFF MEMBER OR PANEL ATTORNEY MUST INITIAL THE TIME SHEET IN THE SPACE ALLOTTED.
 All timesheets must be submitted on a monthly basis. Timesheets submitted 30 days after the date of first entry may not be paid out. If you have any questions, please contact Emelia Andres: (857) 320-6446 or email at: eandres@vlpnet.org