

QUESTIONS TO ASK/CONSIDER WHEN QUALIFYING AN INTERPRETER (OCTOBER 26, 2007)

National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project

(Some of these questions may not be necessary if the interpreter is court certified.)

1. Are you certified by the State of Washington as a court interpreter?
 - a. Any other state?
 - b. Any other credentials or certification?
 - c. What and When?
2. What is your native language?
3. How did you learn English and the target language?
4. Can you read in both languages?
5. Did you formally study either language in School?
 - a. Where and how long?
6. Describe your training in the _____ language.
7. Describe your experiences in the non-English language country.
8. Have you had an opportunity to speak with the litigant(s)?
 - a. Do you need a few minutes?
 - b. Were there any particular communication problems?
9. Are you familiar with the dialectical or idiomatic peculiarities of the witnesses/parties?
10. Have you ever interpreted in court before?
 - a. Where and how often?
 - b. How many times for this or similar hearings or trials?
 - c. Describe experiences in those hearings or trials.
11. Have you received any special training in court proceedings?
 - a. Describe your experience or training in legal matter in English/other language.
12. Describe simultaneous interpreting and your experience with it.
 - a. Can you interpret simultaneously without changing the meaning of anything that is said?
13. Describe consecutive interpreting and your experience with it.
14. Do you ever summarize statements while interpreting?
 - a. Do you understand the law requires you to interpret everything said by all parties?

National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project (NIWAP, pronounced *new-app*)

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15. Have you read the Code of Conduct for Court Interpreters?
 - a. Describe briefly the topic covered. (See GR 11.1)
 - b. Explain your understanding of your duties and of your role.
16. Do you know or have you ever met any of the parties/witnesses?
 - a. In what circumstances?
17. Are you a potential witness in this case?
18. Do you have any other potential conflicts of interest?
19. Have you ever worked for any of the parties/witnesses?
 - a. In what capacity?

The purpose of the last few questions is to see whether the interpreter truly does understand GR 11.1. If the interpreter is unable to relate the main points or purpose of the Code of Conduct, give the interpreter a few minutes to review the code. Unless the answers to the above questions are satisfactory, appointment of the proposed interpreters is not recommended.

Adapted from “Information That Should Be Secured to Establish the Qualifications of Interpreters When No Court Testing or Other Prior Screening Standards Exist,” in “Judges’ Guide to Standards for Interpreted Proceedings,” in *“Court Interpretation: Model Guides for Policy and Practice in the State Courts”* (1995), and *Voir Dire* developed by the Honorable Heather K. Van Nuys.