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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON
COLLEGE of LAW

Law Enforcement and Prosecution Virtual Roundtable

Advancing Justice through Meaningful Use of Effective Interpreters

April 7, 2026

Faculty

- **Jane Anderson,** Senior Attorney Advisor, AEquitas
- **Investigator, Michael LaRiviere,** Salem Police Department
- **Megan Bruneau,** Detective, Seattle Police Department

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The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Who has joined us for today's Roundtable, and from what city?

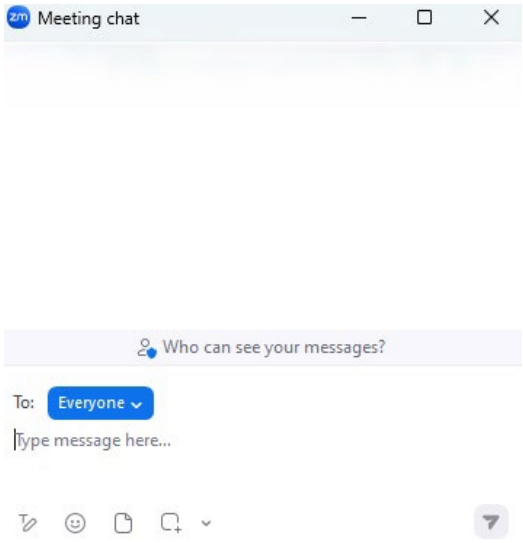
A. Prosecutor

B. Law Enforcement

C. Victim Witness Staff - Law enforcement

D. Victim Witness Staff - Prosecutor

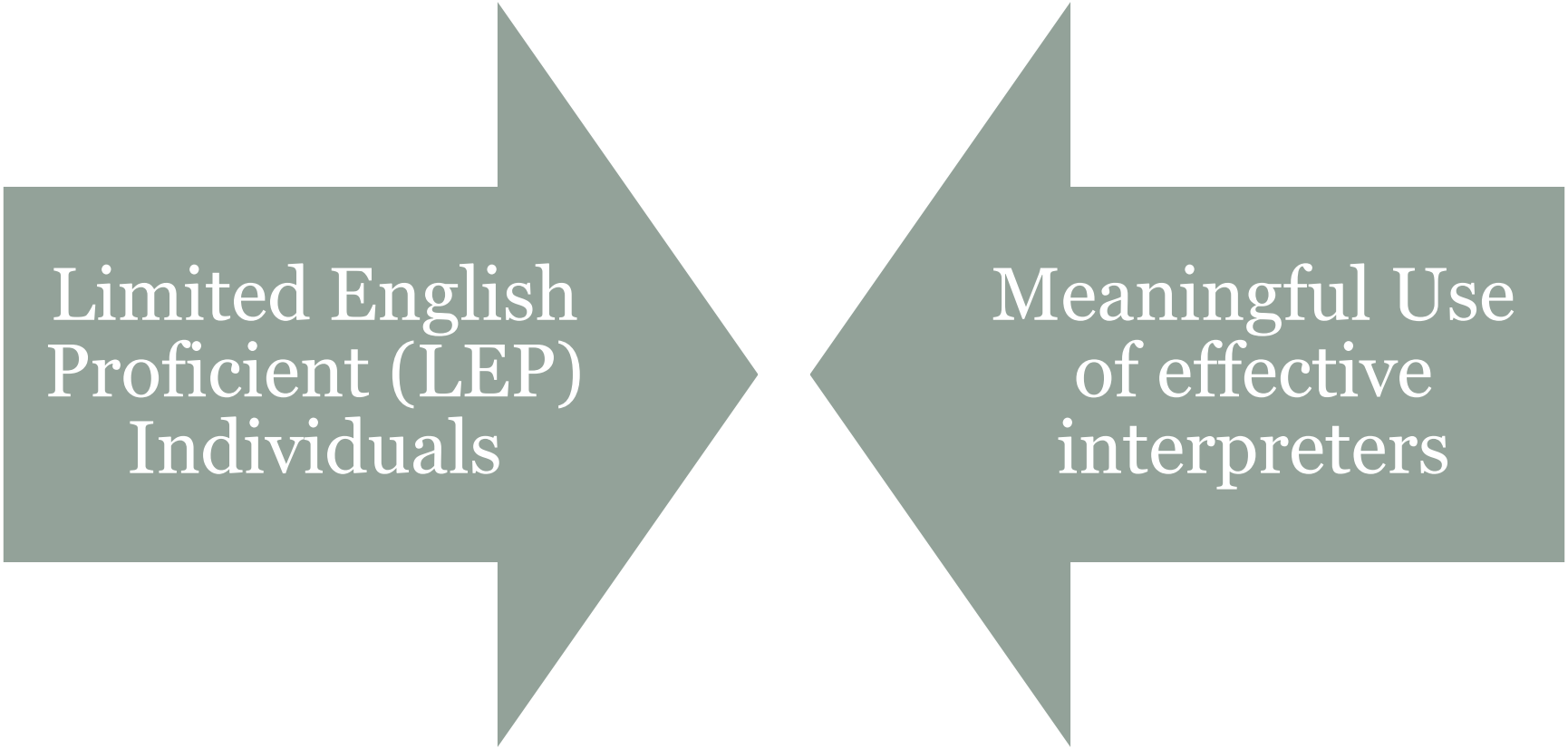
E. Other – type in the chat



The following slides are intended to be a guide to lead our discussion on this topic and to provide substantive material for your future reference.

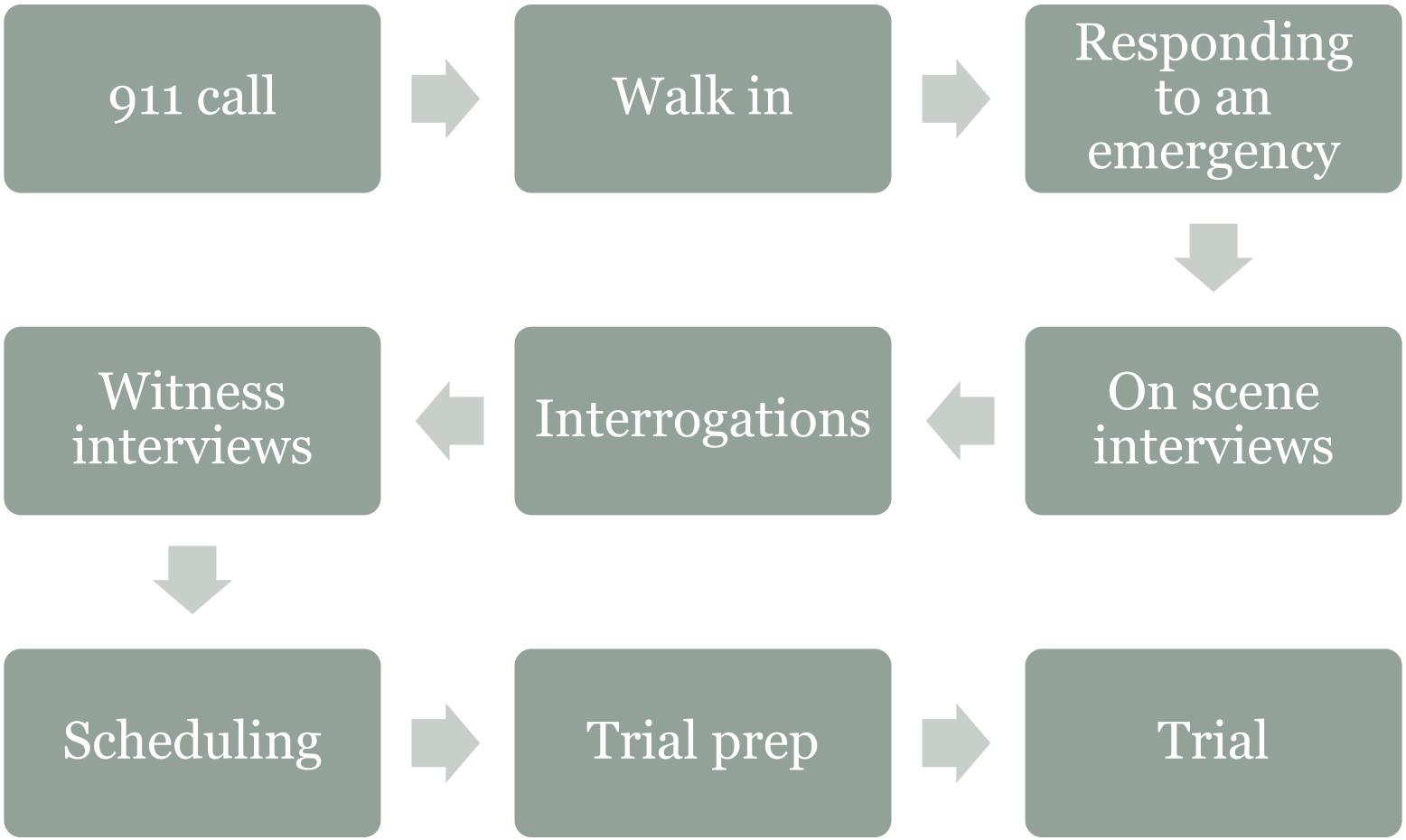


Responsibility



How do you respond when interacting with LEP individuals?

Access to Interpreters



Best Practices For Investigations and Interrogations

- A qualified interpreter shall be used for any interrogation or taking of a formal statement where the suspect or witness' legal rights could be adversely impacted
  - Criminal interrogations
  - Crime witness interviews
  - How failing to use qualified interpreters undermines successful criminal investigations and prosecutions

What about written materials?

Written Materials Best Practices

- Vital written materials translated into primary language
  - Miranda warnings

What about Civil Protection Orders?

Type of Interpreter

First responders	• Most reliable temporary interpreter available to address exigent circumstances
Investigators and prosecutors	• A qualified interpreter • Bilingual officer or prosecutor
Court and with deaf individuals	• Certified interpreters

Qualified Interpreter

- When considering whether an interpreter is qualified …
- LEP plan best practices discourage discourages use of police officers as interpreters in interrogations except when
  - The LEP individual is informed of the officer's dual role; and
  - The reliability of the interpretation is verified
    - Example: where the officer has been trained and tested in interpreting and tape recordings are made of the entire interview.

What are the advantages of using a certified interpreter?

Certification

Are there different certifications?

What does certification entail?

What are the benefits of working with a certified interpreter?

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What do you do when you cannot identify a qualified or certified interpreter?

What languages are spoken in your jurisdiction?

Resource: Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Appendix A-Top 15 Non-English Languages by State

Available at: https://www.cms.gov/cciio/resources/regulations-and-guidance/downloads/appendix-a-top-15.pdf



Language Resources

- Language Identification Flashcard
  - https://www.lep.gov/sites/lep/files/resources/ISpeakCards2004.pdf
- Language Line™
- AI-powered tools
- Community-based organizations
- Non-profits serving immigrant and refugee communities
- Health care providers
- Local universities
  - Language departments
  - Student groups

After the initial vetting, what additional conversations do you have with an interpreter before working with them?

What other considerations do you have before starting the interview?

How do you start an interview using an interpreter?

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What are your tips and tricks for working with an interpreter?

Technical Assistance

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- Email: info@niwap.org
- Law Enforcement and Prosecutor Roundtables Materials Repository: https://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/law-enforcement-and-prosecutor-roundtables-materials-repository/

Contact NIWAP for training for your department or agency

AEquitas Resources

www.aequitasresource.org

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- Prosecution Resources
- Statutory compilations
- Case consultations

Jane Anderson

janderson@aequitasresource.org

Thank you!