

I. INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION

The VLS Clinical Program is a non-profit agency, and, like most such agencies, does not have sufficient resources to hire professional interpreters (verbal) and translators (text) for all client work. Over the last year, the Clinical Program has seen a surge in "ESL" or non-English-fluent clients. While some clinics use interpreters more than others, each clinic at the law school finds that it needs interpreters at some point. Spanish is the language in greatest demand.

Make Effective Use of Interpreters. Should you have an ESL client, you will be working with your supervisor to determine the most effective method to work with interpreters. However, as a general matter it is important to realize that all but the most specialized professional interpreters will be more effective if they are prepared in advance for your particular vocabulary demands. You will get the smoothest interpretation if your interpreter has advance copies of the questions or information you plan to impart to your client. Also, the Interpreter Binder in the clinic library contains a selection of vocabulary-rich material on most of the clinic's practice areas, and your interpreter should be encouraged to review the material relevant to your case before your sessions.

The Clinical Program has developed several resources for you to use in representing an ESL client:

1. VU Interns/Independent Study Students

Each semester, several bi-lingual VU undergraduate students receive credit for working on our cases and outreach work. Most students are expected to devote 7 hours per week to assist students with their casework. They can be used for nearly every aspect of your cases, but they are not professional interpreters and should not be used in depositions or hearings.

These students keep office hours and are otherwise available by appointment. They start with us the second week of classes, and shortly thereafter their contact information and office hour schedules will be distributed to you and posted in the clinic. Judy Moyer is the administrator for the undergraduate interns and if you have any questions you should see her (or Beth Lyon, if she is not available). Any email communication regarding interpretation and/or translation should always have a copy going to Judy Moyer. As your casework progresses, please give us and your supervisor feedback on this program. Your suggestions about preferable interpreter office hour times and any comments or concerns relating to the interns' work will be very helpful to us in ensuring that you can get interpretation and translation as needed.

2. Not-for-Credit Volunteer Interpreters

Should you have need for a language other than Spanish, please work with your supervisor and Judy Moyer to identify a VLS or VU volunteer interpreter.

3. Paid Interpreters

In fora where interpreters are not provided, you should work with your supervisor to identify and obtain or hire a professional interpreter for depositions, court hearings and the final pre-hearing moot session with your client. The Immigration Court provides free interpreters for all hearings before the Court.

4. Language Line

The Clinic has a contract with Language Line, a service that allows for interpretation over the telephone. This is a very expensive service, and can only be used in case emergencies approved by your supervisor. See Pat Brown for instructions, password, etc.

5. Documenting Interpretation in the Case File

It is important to document the use of interpreters in your cases should issues later arise about privilege, confidentiality or any miscommunications. You should be sure that you document the name of your interpreter in the memoranda to file about any activity in your case. If a translator translated correspondence or some other document for you, be sure that you include a note about who handled the translation with the copy to the file. In the documents section of your case file, include copies of the confidentiality agreements of all the interpreters who worked on your case over the semester, including those who translated documents. Additionally, when seeking a written translation from an interpreter, be sure that the translation was approved by that interpreter's supervisor before sending it out to a client or anyone else.