



Overview

This document provides answers to the questions that were posed during the January 9th informational session on Activating Change's new **Sign Language Interpreting Service** for Deaf victims and their families. We have organized the questions into 6 main categories:

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The Application

1. Is there a link where we can send our rape crisis centers to find out more, in addition to the application?

You can find information about the project, including the application to apply to participate and the recording from the informational session, on Activating Change's End Abuse of People with Disabilities website at:
<https://www.endabusepwd.org/tools-and-training/interpreting/>.

2. Do we have to submit a letter of intent before applying?

We strongly encourage organizations interested in applying to submit a letter of intent, but it is not required. You can submit a letter of intent via this [form](#).

3. Once you apply how long is the application good for?

Activating Change will enter into a service agreement with each organization that is accepted into the service. The service agreement will be active for a specific period of time based on need and anticipated use. We anticipate that the period of time will vary from organization to organization but will be 6 months.

4. What is your capacity going to be like (i.e. how many organizations' applications do you plan to accept?)



We do not have a fixed number of organizations that we will accept to participate in this service. The number of organizations depends on several factors, including anticipated need for services and the timing of that need.

- 5. You mentioned about working with organizations regarding their capacity for interpreters. Can you elaborate on that a bit more? Will you be giving trainings to those orgs who can manage to pay for interpreting services? Etc.**

When organizations are accepted in this service, they will receive a brief orientation on how to use the service, including how to make an interpreting request, how to connect with the interpreter coordinator, and how to connect remotely with interpreters. In addition, each organization is required to watch two webinars – one on serving Deaf victims and the other on working with sign language interpreters – and to complete a basic language access plan for Deaf victims. We will be available to provide support and guidance and will also provide additional resources such as tip sheets and other pre-recorded trainings.

At this time, we are unable to provide interpretation services for a fee; however, we are considering this for the future. We can provide training and support to improve services for survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors to victim service organization who are not accepted into this service. If you are interested, please reach out at hello@activatingchange.org.

- 6. If an organization does not qualify for your interpretation services, are they still able to access your webinars and other resources?**

Yes, our trainings, webinars, and other resources on how to serve survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors are available to anyone. These resources can be found on Activating Change's End Abuse of People with Disabilities website at: www.endabusepwd.org. We also provide customized training and other support directly to victim service providers. If you are interested in learning more, please email us at hello@activatingchange.org. We are happy to explore how we can support your organization.

Eligibility

- 7. What are the qualifying criteria for a victim to receive these services? Is it based on self-report or does the client/recipient of service need to be the documented victim of an officially reported crime?**

We do not require any documentation to demonstrate an individual is a victim.



- 8. Do we need to have someone currently needing interpretation services to apply or can we apply in advance in case someone comes in during the time in between application times?**

You can apply in advance to ensure your organization is equipped to serve Deaf survivors.

- 9. I serve a county that has only about 7500 people. We do not have a robust deaf community, and at the same time, we're a victim need victim support, I would want to be able to provide them the best advocacy, do you plan on having an element of your program that serves communities on a case-by-case basis? I work for the District Attorney as a Crime victims' advocate in Wallowa county, Oregon.**

Eligible victim service providers can apply. This includes organizations that are currently serving Deaf survivors and organizations that are not serving any Deaf survivors but want to be prepared with interpreting services if a Deaf survivor requests assistance. Activating Change's service provides qualified, tailored sign language interpretation services, but we do not provide advocacy services.

- 10. Can you please repeat in what situation you can provide interpretation services in a law enforcement setting?**

At this time, we cannot provide interpretation services for law enforcement on scene response, interview, or investigation. We also cannot provide interpretation services for prosecution and courts, including interviews, investigations, or court proceedings.

- 11. My main question is we work as court advocates but are not employed by the courts or law enforcement. We work for a non-profit that works closely with the courts system. Would we be able to qualify for this free service? We are Crime Victims Services in St. Louis MO.**

Yes, court advocates are eligible for this service. At this time, however, we cannot provide interpretation for investigation activities, interviews, or court proceedings.

- 12. Is this service available to organizations that provide civil legal assistance such as eviction defense, immigration, and family court?**

This service is only available to providers who are providing victim services to Deaf victims of crime and their families. To answer your specific question, we need more information. Please feel free to reach out to us at hello@activatingchange.org.

- 13. Can government agencies apply (e.g., Commissions for Deaf)?**

Any entity that provides victim services is eligible to apply.



14. Do services for caregivers of victims qualify, if the main victim is a child?

This service is intended to serve Deaf victims and their family members. This includes non-offending parents, legal guardians, and caregivers of the child.

15. I work for a County Sheriff and was wondering if our Victim Services Unit would qualify for this interpreting service - we provide information to victims on offender status while in custody, including information on court hearings and offender releases.

Yes, the Victim Services Unit would qualify for this service. At this time, however, we cannot provide interpretation for investigation activities, interviews, or court proceedings.

16. We offer legal services as well as court advocacy and immigration services for DV and SA. At what capacity can your services benefit and be used for legal attorney services supporting domestic violence and SA survivors?

We will assess eligibility for legal services on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out to us if you are interested in applying so we can explore in more depth. You can reach us at DeafAccess@activatingchange.org

17. Does prosecutor/court mean all type of legal help? For example, lawyer consultation meeting or protection order, etc.?

We also cannot provide interpretation services for prosecution and courts, including interviews, investigations, or court proceedings. We will assess eligibility for legal services on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out to us if you are interested in applying so we can explore in more depth. You can reach us at DeafAccess@activatingchange.org

18. You would not provide service for our victim that is needed to testify in court?

We cannot provide interpretation for court proceedings. Court proceedings require in-person interpreters.

19. I work with the disabled community who receives waivers. Could this be used for families that have barriers and/or clients? This could help with who agencies can accept and support?

If you are providing victim services to Deaf victims and/or their families, your organization is eligible to apply.



20. In addition to survivors, we often serve court-ordered perpetrators of crime with some exclusions. Could you see yourselves expanding someday to serve this population?

Our goal is to close the communication gaps that exist for Deaf people impacted by crime, including people who cause harm. At this time, however, we can only provide interpreting services to victims of crime. We will consider people who cause harm as an area for future expansion.

21. It is rare that my program has a deaf survivor or victim, however, in the event we do, we are not easily able to accommodate them. So, say we did not use the service for a long period of time, or very often, would this be an issue?

No, this would not be an issue. Our service is designed to help victim services meet an immediate need for interpretation and to help organizations be prepared if a Deaf victim reaches out for help.

22. Our organization receives rare requests (maybe once a year) for interpretation services, however we want to ensure we can accommodate everyone, but we don't have adequate interpretation services in our service areas, so what is the likelihood we would be accepted? We have looked into paid services, but they were outside our small agencies budget when needed only on occasion.

Victim services organizations that are currently serving Deaf survivors and those organizations, such as your organization, that are not serving any Deaf survivors but want to be prepared with interpreting services if a Deaf survivor requests assistance are eligible to apply.

23. If an organization were to be approved, but one of our partners (such as a hearing shelter) is the one who needed the interpreting, could they use the services under our "umbrella/" For example, if we provided services to a survivor and then referred them to a long term shelter, could that shelter use the services under our umbrella since the survivor is still receiving services from our organization as well?

The organization who is providing services must apply and be accepted to receive interpretation services. In the example you provided, we suggest that your organization and your partner organizations apply.

24. Would you be able to provide interpretation services for an APS Caseworker to conduct their investigation/ask questions to the alleged victim, etc.?

No, we are unable to provide interpreting services for investigations or interviews. Feel free to reach DeafAccess@activatingchange.org for resources of how to find a qualified local interpreter for this setting.



25. Would college campuses be eligible to use the services for confidential advocates providing services for students? To clarify, my clients receive waivers through Medicaid and we hold meetings, so will this help with guardians and staff that have barriers?

Programs on college campuses that provide victim services to Deaf victims and/or their families are eligible to apply.

Interpretation Services

26. Is it standard practice to get a release of information signed by the survivor before getting an interpreter, or is that not necessary?

Sign language interpreters are required to adhere to a code of professional conduct. It requires that interpreters keep information disclosed during an assignment confidential. Activating Change also requires our interpreters to sign an additional confidentiality agreement for an added layer of protection. We do not require a release of information to be signed by the survivor. You should follow the confidentiality and release of information policies and practices required by your organization.

27. If we use your interpreting services, will we get billed for them?

No, organizations who receive interpreting services will not get billed for them. Activating Change is offering interpretation services free of charge for eligible organizations that are accepted into the service.

28. Is there a cut off limit to each service appt (i.e., no more than an hour)?

No, there is no limit to the length of each service appointment.

29. Is there a max number of hours for a victim (e.g., a survivor who is living in a DV shelter - could that person receive services over a period of months)?

How services and support is provided to victims varies greatly from organization to organization and victim to victim. If your organization is accepted into the service, we will work together to understand your interpreting needs and to develop a plan that best meets the survivor's communication needs and our limited interpreting services.

30. Which online platform would be used for pre-scheduling an interpreter, or would scheduling take place primarily through email?



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Organizations will request interpreters through a private, online platform that has been customized to receive request and confirm assignments specifically for this service. Organizations accepted into this service will receive an orientation on how to make a request and use the platform.

31. Does the victim and the advocate have to be together/in the same room to use the services?

No, the victim and advocate can be in a different location to use this service.

32. What kind of services do you provide? What are basic service terms? As for application, what are reasons that application would not be accepted?

We provide free, remote sign language interpretation services for Deaf victims of crime and their families who are receiving victim services. We provide hearing and Deaf American Sign Language interpreters, as well as interpreters who are trilingual, upon request by staff of organizations who have been accepted into this service.

The basic service terms outline the timeframe for making requests, how to make requests, technology requirements you must meet to support remote interpretation, what information you must provide us for grant reporting purposes, and basic training and other capacity-building activities you must complete in exchange for our interpretation services.

Applications will be reviewed for basic eligibility. Due to limited resources, we may not be able to accept all applications. Applications that meet our priority consideration will be prioritized.

33. What type of services are available? Can you give examples? If an advocate is with the survivor talking to them and then needs a forensic exam but it is not a service now. How would that work? Also, would the interpreter be able to testify in court if the service is used?

We will provide sign language interpreting services for meetings between victim service providers and Deaf victims and/or their families for a wide range of victim services activities, including crisis intervention, intake, case management, advocacy, counseling, and victims compensation.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide interpreting services for forensic exams since in-person interpreters are required for those exams. Organizations would need to arrange for in-person interpreters for forensic exams or other health care appointments.

Our interpreters will not be available to testify in court.



34. What is the wait time between submitting a request for an interpreter and getting an appointment with one? Also, my organization has co-located services with law enforcement and prosecution. Would that be excluded from eligibility/not be met if a Deaf survivor needs to speak with a prosecutor on their case or a detective for example?

The wait time for confirmation varies by request and time of the year. We will be in regular communication with requestors on the status of requests. If for any reason, we do not anticipate being able to confirm interpreters for an assignment, we will notify the requestor as early as possible.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide interpretation for interviews or investigations. We would need more information about the nature of the communications to know if the example you provide is eligible for services or not.

35. Can interpretation services be provided for therapy sessions?

Yes, interpretation can be provided for therapy sessions.

36. How will this be accessible for DeafBlind survivors?

At this time, we can only provide remote interpreters. We recognize the limitations this causes for DeafBlind survivors who often require in-person interpretation. Our remote, hearing interpreters can collaborate with in-person Deaf Interpreters that are onsite. The organization will be responsible for paying for and contracting with any in-person interpreters.

37. Will there be a four way zoom call between a deaf service provider, hearing service provider, interpreter, and victim?

Once interpreters have been confirmed for an assignment, we will send a confirmation to the individual who made the request. The confirmation email will include the link to the virtual room. The link can be used by anyone who is participating in the engagement. The person who requested the interpreters can forward the link to the participants.

38. Do any of your services include classes or training for advocates that have some sign language knowledge, but are missing vocabulary that is special to sexual assault advocacy?

No, at this time, we are not providing classes or training in American Sign Language for advocates.



Hours of Operation

39. If it's an emergency, would we still have to wait 48 hours to get an interpreter?

You can make a request, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to fill a last-minute request.

40. For victim advocates that work for certified rape crisis centers, do you see the use of this service to be accessible if the interpretation is needed immediately? I understand that it might not be able to be accessible ASAP but is it always worth trying to submit a request if services are needed within an hour?

You can make a request, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to fill a last-minute request.

41. My organization works with people on a walk-in basis, and therefore we would not typically have time to plan and request an interpreter. Is there any situation where you have interpreters on call for last-minute help?

We recognize there is a need for on-call interpretation services. At this time, we are not equipped to provide on-call services and can only provide services by request. We will consider on-call services as an area for future expansion.

42. We meet victims in the hospital at all hours of the night. Is there a way to get an interpreter at, say, 2am?

The hours for our interpreting service are 9am-11pm ET from Monday to Friday. Unfortunately, we cannot provide interpreters after these hours at this time. We recognize that there is a need for after-hours interpreters and hope to be able to expand our service to meet this need in the future.

43. Would interpreting services be available for walk-ins? What about interpreting services for organization trainings?

At this time, we are not equipped to provide on-call services and can only provide services by request. If your organization is accepted into the service and you have a walk-in who requires sign language interpretation, you will be able to reach out to our staff to see if we have an interpreter available; however, cannot guarantee that we will be able to fill a last-minute request.



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We are prioritizing interpreting services for Deaf victims and their families. We cannot provide interpreters for staff or volunteers. We will consider this as an area for future expansion.

44. Will it be possible to have an interpreter remote during the weekend in the future, instead of weekday?

The hours for our interpreting service are 9am-11pm ET from Monday to Friday. Unfortunately, we cannot provide interpreters after these hours at this time. We recognize that there is a need for after-hours interpreters and hope to be able to expand our service to meet this need in the future.

45. What if we have a Deaf victim come in for help with services after July 7th?

You can apply to be a part of this service even if you are not currently serving a Deaf victim. If you are accepted into the service, you could request services for a specific meeting between someone from your organization and a Deaf victim once a Deaf victim reaches out to you for assistance.

Our Interpreters

46. Are interpreters bilingual?

Our pool of interpreters include interpreters who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and English, as well as some interpreters who are trilingual and fluent in ASL, English and other spoken and sign languages. If languages are needed that interpreters in our pool are not fluent in, we will do our best to identify and secure interpreters who are fluent.

47. Do the interpreters have knowledge of legal terms definitions and legalese?

Our interpreters have diverse backgrounds, including experience, specialized skills, and knowledge. This includes interpreters who have experience with legal settings, knowledge of the criminal legal system and the law, and specialized certification to interpret in legal settings. On the sign language interpretation request form, requestors can note this specialization is needed and our interpreter coordinators will work to assign the request to the interpreters in our pool who have this expertise.

48. I know you mentioned that the interpreters are qualified. I need to find out if the interpreters are certified, and if you have interpreters that are specifically trained with legal terms and language. (We provide civil legal advocacy and services for survivors).



Yes, we have interpreters who are certified. We also have interpreters who have specialized training in legal settings.

49. If it is on ongoing service (like a weekly therapy session with the same client), would it be possible to request the same interpreter each time for continuity and trust?

Yes, you will be able to request the same interpreters for on-going engagements. We will do our best to secure the same interpreter(s) to ensure continuity.

50. Is there any issue with state licensure of interpreting and use of your services?

We will be drawing from a large pool of sign language interpreters to fill requests received through this service. Our interpreters have a diverse array of certifications and licenses to interpret in various states. Using such a diverse pool of interpreters who live in various states themselves allows us to assign the most qualified interpreters for each assignment, including using interpreters who are licensed in a given state, if required.

51. Is there a plan/framework for understanding/identifying when a CDI is needed in collaboration with the interpreter? This would then not only anticipate and match their identity but also meet them at their skill level (ASL, SEE, PSE, Home Signs) since some interpreters might not be comfortable just using an interpreter.

A Deaf interpreter is present during the first assignment with a new victim. The Deaf interpreter helps to assess language needs of the Deaf victim and makes recommendations regarding language and interpreting to ensure the interpreters we assign to that victim for future assignments is the best match given their language use and needs.

Additionally, if only hearing interpreters are assigned to subsequent sessions, they watch for a different linguistic need that requires a CDI. If they cannot proceed without a CDI, they will pause the meeting and check with one of our interpreter coordinators to see if our CDI is available. If the CDI is available, the CDI will join the session and team with the hearing interpreter. If the CDI is unavailable, the session will have to be rescheduled to a different date. If they can proceed without a CDI, they will let our interpreter coordinator know a CDI is recommended for future sessions after the session is over.

52. How can we determine the quality of interpretation services that we might currently be using?



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Our interpreters are qualified, trauma-informed, knowledgeable in victim services, and experienced. We will do our best to assign the most qualified interpreters given your specific request. Organizations accepted into our service will have numerous avenues to provide on the interpreting services received. You will be given direct contact information of project staff, including someone to contact to provide feedback or any changes that are needed for future assignments. In addition, we will send feedback surveys on a regular basis for victim service providers to provide us with feedback.

53. Can you clarify, for non-English speaking victims, if the agency using your service has to bring in an interpreter who is a native user and set up the appointment with Activating Change for the ASL provider or if Activating Change can provide both sign language providers?

When making a request for interpretation services, organizations can indicate that they need trilingual interpreters.

Referrals for In-Person Interpreters

54. Do you have a recommendation for where to get appropriate interpretation services for a forensic nursing exam?

The best practice for interpreting during a forensic exam is to have in-person interpreters. We have a national network of qualified interpreters so it is possible but not guaranteed that we could refer you to someone in our network. Email us at DeafAccess@activatingchange.org if you want a specific recommendation.

55. For crisis situations, if you all aren't able to accommodate those requests, can you share a resource that we may be able to use in real-time?

You can search the Registry for Interpreters for the Deaf database: <https://myaccount.rid.org/Public/Search/Member.aspx>. You can search for interpreters who are certified in your local zip code to find interpreters locally.