

INFORMATION ON INTERPRETERS FOR IMMIGRANT CUSTOMERS

- If you and an authority do not share a language, the authority must arrange for an interpreter to be present to ensure the legal protection and linguistic rights in accordance with the law. Interpretation centres deal with all the arrangements related to interpretation and ensure that your interpreter is qualified for the task.
- **Interpretations are always agreed upon well in advance. Short-notice interpretations are arranged only in emergencies.**
- Interpreters cannot always come to interpret in person. Interpretations are arranged through phone when necessary. An interpreter may sometimes call you and forward a short message from the authorities.
- You cannot call directly to interpreters. If you need to talk about something, contact the authorities first. The authorities will arrange an interpreter for you.
- The profession of interpreters requires them to not be in close contact with the customers they interpret for. That is why interpreters act distant and are reluctant to help you outside of interpretation situations.
- Interpreters usually have a heavy workload, which means that you may not always get the interpreter you want. The handling of your affairs may be unnecessarily delayed if you have too strict demands when choosing an interpreter. You can rely on the fact that another interpreter will interpret just as well. You may ask for man or woman interpreter if the subject is sensitive.
- The interpreter may be of different nationality, ethnic group or religion than you. All of them are professionals in the field. You can trust the interpreters.
- Interpreters cannot affect the affairs of their customers with their own opinions. Interpreters' only task is to interpret what is spoken. The interpreter cannot add or remove anything from what is spoken. They are there to perform their work.
- Even though a customer does not think that interpretation is necessary, the authorities have a right to order an interpreter.
- If you cannot attend an interpreted meeting, notify about it well in advance.

Interpreters do not have a special status in the Finnish society. They are regular workers and language professionals who help immigrants to communicate with the authorities. Interpreters do not make decisions, and they cannot affect the way processes work.

IN AN INTERPRETATION SITUATION

The interpreter is bound by confidentiality – they will not talk about your affairs to anyone.

The interpreter interprets in the first person.

The interpreter will interpret everything you say, so do not say anything that you do not want the authorities to hear.

Look at the representative of the authorities you are meeting, not at the interpreter.

Do not address the interpreter during the interpretation or ask for their opinion.

Avoid sayings, jokes or slang words, as translating them to Finnish may be too difficult / impossible.

Divide your speech into segments and take breaks to ensure that the interpreter will have time to interpret everything correctly.

To make interpreting easier, the interpreter may take notes, which they will destroy after the interpretation.

The interpreter may ask you to stop speaking for a moment during the interpretation and to repeat, slow down or clarify what you just said.

The interpreter may sometimes confirm what you said many times – by asking you again – to ensure that they understood you correctly. If the interpreter asks you again, it does not mean that they do not understand your speech.

Be active and ask if you do not understand something!