

Requesting an Interpreter

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[Will the Court provide a sign language or spoken language interpreter in my bankruptcy case?](#)

Answer:

In a bankruptcy case, the parties are responsible for providing interpreter services for court proceedings as well as communications between counsel and the parties, but the Court will provide interpreter services in two very limited instances:

- 1)** When a court proceeding is **instituted** by the United States, the Court will provide a *spoken language interpreter* for a party or witness who the judge determines speaks only or primarily a language other than English so as to inhibit that person's understanding or communication in the proceeding.
- 2)** In **any** court proceeding the Court will provide a sign language interpreter or other auxiliary aides and services to a participant in the proceeding who is deaf, hearing-impaired or has a communication disability that inhibits that person's understanding or communication in the proceeding.

[What is a court proceeding?](#)

Answer:

Court proceedings include trials, hearings, court sponsored alternative dispute resolution programs, ceremonies and other public programs or activities conducted by the Court. In the case of a court-sponsored alternative dispute resolution program, interpreter services are provided for hearing impaired individuals but not for parties who speak languages other than English unless the United States instituted the proceeding.

In the Northern District of California, a meeting of creditors held pursuant to Section 341 of the Bankruptcy Code is not a court proceeding instituted by the United States. Hearing impaired participants should contact the [United States Trustee](#) to learn if interpreter services are available for a meeting of creditors.

[What is an auxiliary aid or service, and will I receive the auxiliary aid or service I chose?](#)

Answer:

Auxiliary aids and services include qualified interpreters, assistive listening devices or systems, or other effective methods of making aurally (sound) delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments. The Court will honor a participant's choice of auxiliary aid or service unless another equally effective means of communication is available, or if the means chosen would fundamentally alter the nature of the Court proceeding or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

[How do I obtain a spoken language or sign language interpreter or other auxiliary aides and services?](#)

Answer:

Participants in court proceedings may request a spoken or sign language interpreter or other appropriate auxiliary aids and services by submitting a completed [Application for Services to Persons with Communication Disabilities](#) to the Access Coordinator stated on the *Application* at least **two weeks** prior to the date set for the proceeding.

Participants in court proceedings include parties, attorneys, and witnesses, but not spectators, although a court may provide interpreter services to a spectator when it is deemed appropriate. For example, a court may provide an interpreter to the deaf spouse of a defendant so that the spouse may follow the course of the trial.

[How do I reserve use of the courtroom infrared assisted listening device?](#)

Answer:

To request use of the infrared assisted listening device, contact the Courtroom Deputy for the judge presiding at your court proceeding at least 24 hours before the scheduled proceeding start time (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays). Contact information for each Courtroom Deputy is provided in the Court's [Policy for Providing Interpreters and Services to Hearing-Impaired and Other Persons with Communication Disabilities](#).

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