Outline of Procedures for Australian Government Agencies:

Procuring Interpreting Services

Face to Face or Telephone

Preparing for an Interpreter
- Identify when to engage an interpreter (e.g. ask if the client has an 'I need an interpreter' card).Check agency legislative requirements.
- Identify the language and dialect required. If the client cannot provide the information, you may wish to contact a language service provider or use a country and language list, such as: Certified Languages International - languages by country or Ethnologue Languages of the world
- Identify the type of interpreting service required (telephone, on-site, video conferencing).
- Identify the appropriate resource to provide interpreting services (e.g. interpreters credentialed by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), or bilingual/bicultural staff).
- Determine real/potential/perceived risks/conflict of interest with the proposed interpreting method.
- Avoid a real/potential/perceived risk (i.e. NAATI-credentialed interpreters abide by the AUSIT Code of Ethics).
- Refer to your agency's information on interpreting service providers (i.e. preferred or contracted provider).
- Record interpreting assignment details on your agency's register.

Booking an Interview
Most interpreting service agencies require:

- the client's name
- the language/dialect
- preferred gender of the interpreter
- date and time the interpreter is required (include some time prior to the interview to brief the interpreter)
- type of interview (e.g. medical, legal)
- address of the agency requiring the interpreter
- name and telephone contact details of person to whom the interpreter reports
- nature of the matter to be discussed (e.g. aged-care health assessment)
- duration (approximately) of the interview
- notification if you or the client wish to have a specific interpreter for continuity of care reasons
- information on the telephone system (if applicable) that will be used (e.g. speaker phone)
- the agency cost code/ contact for the invoice to be sent to.

Before the Interview

- Brief the interpreter about the interview topic and provide contextual information.
- If the client and/or the interpreter are on site, arrange the seating to optimise communication
- (e.g. in a circle or triangle formation) with the client, and/or arrange for a hands-free telephone function.
- Check to see that the client and interpreter understand and are comfortable with each other.
- Obtain suitable information products in the client's preferred language, if relevant.
- Allow for extra time over the usual duration of an interview.

At the Beginning of the Interview

- Sit opposite the client and look at the client, not at the interpreter, while talking.
- Speak directly to the client, as you would with an English speaker (not to the interpreter or into the hands-free phone).
- Speak in a normal tone of voice but at a slower speed than a native speaker.
- Communicate using short sentences whenever possible.
- Introduce yourself and the interpreter to the client.
- Explain to the client the purpose of the interview and how it will proceed.
- Speak in the first person to the client (e.g. 'How are you feeling?'), not to the interpreter
- (e.g. 'Ask her how she is feeling').
- Explain that the interpreter's role is only to interpret what is being said and that the interpreter is completely impartial.
- Explain to the client that questions or concerns can be raised at any time during the interview.
- Explain to the client that all information provided by the client is confidential, personal information is protected by privacy law, and the interpreter is bound by a code of ethics.

During the Interview

- Speak clearly and concisely. Never use jargon or slang.
- Keep control of the interview.
- Remember to pause after about two or three short sentences to give the interpreter a chance to interpret.
- Don't try to save time by asking the interpreter to summarise.
- Be aware that it may take more words than you have spoken to convey the message
- (each language is different).
- Stop speaking when the interpreter signals by raising a hand, or when starting to interpret.
- Use pen and paper, particularly for key information, dates and numbers.
- Avoid lengthy discussions with the interpreter, because it will exclude the client. If you must discuss something with the interpreter, always tell the client what you are discussing and why.
- Should you believe at any point that the non-English speaker does not understand, it is your responsibility (not the interpreter's) to explain more simply.

Outline of Procedures for Australian Government Agencies:

During Public Forums and Consultations

Before the consultation
- Brief the interpreter about the forum or consultation topic and any questions which are likely to arise from participants.
- Ascertain whether an interpreter will be required by asking invitees before the consultation.
- Consider whether avenues for feedback/complaint should be included in translated written material.
- Consider having both male and female interpreters as gender may a sensitive issue in some cultures (i.e. males speaking directly to females and vice versa).

During the consultations
- If the majority of the audience are speakers of a particular language, engage an interpreter during the consultation. Follow the principles for using interpreters.
- Consider whether written material relating to the consultation should be available in relevant community languages.
- Depending on the composition of the audience and the content of the consultation, consider holding separate consultation sessions in relevant community languages.
- The presenter should never use any jargon or slang and should use a shortened form (an abbreviation or acronym) only when this is clearly understood by the client or repeated in full until clearly understood.
- Advise the audience of avenues for feedback on the consultation session.

Following the consultation
- Record the outcomes of the consultation on file, including any issues/complaints regarding interpreting or information in community languages.