

Interpretation Protocol

(spoken language, e.g. phone calls, Zoom calls, in-person visits)

Phone calls

If you need Spanish interpretation for a client phone call, please ask an administrative staff member who is not covering the phones at that time. Marisol and Edna are our Spanish-speaking administrative staff. Leah also speaks Spanish, and can help in a pinch.

If a client requires interpretation in a language other Spanish, we currently have the following capacity in-house:

- Danielle: Portuguese (fluent)

Otherwise, staff should use Lionbridge for phone interpretation. Instructions for doing so can be found [here](#).

If you have trouble due to a jail or prison's prohibition on third-party calls, your best bet would be to set up a Zoom with your client (see below).

Some county jails do not offer free legal Zoom calls. In this case, you may need to arrange to call the interpreter on speaker over a separate line. This can be done by answering WebEx on your computer and calling the interpreter on your phone, or by answering WebEx on your phone and having the interpreter call into a Zoom open on your computer. Be prepared for poor sound quality and a lot of repetition.

Zoom calls

The email addresses you can contact to set up a legal Zoom call with a client can be found [here](#).

If you are an attorney and it is your first time setting up a Zoom call at a given prison or jail, you should provide your bar number. If you are a paralegal or intern and it is your first time, you should attach a copy of your government-issued ID and a signed clearance letter from a supervising attorney to your request.

When pre-arranging interpretation for a legal Zoom with a client, you shouldn't need to identify or pre-clear them. Just give the prison/jail Zoom coordinator a heads up in your email that a Lionbridge interpreter will be joining. If the Zoom coordinator gives you a hard time, feel free to reach out to Leah. At the time of the meeting, the Lionbridge interpreter should be able to connect by calling the phone number corresponding to the Zoom meeting ID. You can also try calling into the Zoom by phone and merging this call with your Lionbridge interpreter call.

If your client speaks a language that is not supported by Lionbridge, you can alternatively schedule interpretation through Respond Crisis Translation (information and link to protocols below). Bear in mind, however, that RCT typically requests at least 48 hours' notice to schedule interpretation. RCT will typically put you in touch with the interpreter directly via email prior to the Zoom call, so you can just email that person the Zoom link directly.

In-person visits

For in-person visits, please refer to the lists of local interpreters located [here](#). When you reach out to request services, be sure to confirm their hourly rate and ask how they typically calculate compensation for travel time/distance. Any interpreter accompanying an in-person visit must be cleared through the Superintendent's office in advance, usually with a letter from PLS and government-issued ID. You should allow at least 48 hours for this process to be completed for an initial visit.

Invoice and payment

- Lionbridge bills PLS directly, so there is no need to request an invoice or fill out a request for payment (RFP) for interpretation through them.
- For interpretation through RCT, Mari receives invoices directly and will reach out to the advocates who requested services for RFPs.
- For in-person interpretation, you should request an invoice from the interpreter, fill out a request for payment form, and email both of these documents to Mari and Linda.

Translation Protocol

(written language, e.g. letters, CorrLinks, self-help materials)

Generally speaking

- **Client communications and other documents containing confidential client information** should go to [Respond Crisis Translation](#).
 - There is a helpful onboarding resource available [here](#) with instructions for submitting documents, and a Google folder system set up for PLS [here](#) that you can request to be added to as a contributor.
 - As of July 2025, RCT has been piloting a portal for partner organizations to submit new project requests, view the status of each project, and view past projects completed. [Here](#) is the link to PLS's RCT portal. That said, it is still possible to submit new project requests via RCT's website per the original instructions above.
- **Non-confidential materials (policy explainers, templates, self-help materials)** should go to [JR Language](#) for translation.
 - You can send a PDF of the material for which you are requesting translation to Robert Kells (Robert.Kells@jrlanguage.com), and he will respond with a quote for the total cost. If the quote is <\$200, proceed with translation. If the quote is >\$200, please clear with the Executive Director before proceeding.

Specific protocols by language and document type

- **Intake letters in Spanish**
 - **Less than 2 pages:** Reach out to Edna (for attorneys) or Mari (for paralegals) to request translation to or from Spanish.
 - **2-5 pages:** Reach out to Mari to request that she skim the letter to determine whether it fits with PLS's intake priorities.

- If it is a priority issue, Mari will confirm with the advocate, who should then send the letter to RCT for translation.
 - If not, Mari will send the advocate a 1-2 sentence summary on why. The advocate should then send the client a Spanish language “can’t help” letter.
- **More than 5 pages:** Request a quote from RCT. If the quote is <\$200, proceed with translation. If the quote is >\$200, please clear with the Executive Director before proceeding.
- Letters in Spanish that are addressed to Leah Hastings or the Immigrant Detention Conditions Project need not be translated, and can be forwarded directly to Leah.
- **Intake letters in languages other than Spanish**
 - **Less than 5 pages:** Send to RCT for translation (no pre-approval required)
 - **More than 5 pages:** Send to RCT for a quote. If the quote is <\$200, proceed with translation. If the quote is >\$200, please clear with the Executive Director before proceeding.

Invoice and payment

- For RCT translations, Mari receives invoices directly and will reach out to the advocates who requested services for RFPs and documentation of the quoted price (as well as ED pre-approval, if the quote was over \$200).
- JR Translations typically emails the invoice directly to the advocate who requested services. From there, you should fill out an RFP and send it to Mari and Linda, attaching the quoted price, invoice, and documentation of ED pre-approval (if the quote was over \$200).