

RCW 7.105.245 Interpreters. (1) Pursuant to chapter 2.42 RCW, in order to ensure that parties have meaningful access to the court, an interpreter shall be appointed for any party who is deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or has a speech impairment and cannot readily understand or communicate in spoken language. Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 2.42 RCW, the court shall not:

(a) Appoint an interpreter who is not credentialed or duly qualified by the court to provide interpretation services; or

(b) Appoint a person to provide interpretation services if that person is serving as an advocate for the party.

(2) Pursuant to chapter 2.43 RCW, in order to ensure that parties have meaningful access to the court, an interpreter shall be appointed for any party who has limited English proficiency. Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 2.43 RCW, the court shall not:

(a) Appoint an interpreter who is not credentialed or duly qualified by the court to provide interpretation services; or

(b) Appoint a person to provide interpretation services if that person is serving as an advocate for the party.

(3) Once an interpreter has been appointed for a party, the party shall no longer be required to make further requests for the appointment of an interpreter for subsequent hearings or proceedings. The clerk shall identify the party as a person who needs interpreter services and the clerk or the court administrator shall be responsible for ensuring that an interpreter is available for every subsequent hearing.

(4) The interpreter shall interpret for the party meeting with either counsel or court staff, or both, for the purpose of preparing forms and participating in the hearing and court-ordered assessments, and the interpreter shall sight translate any orders.

(5) The same interpreter shall not serve parties on both sides of the proceeding when not on the record, nor shall the interpreter appointed by the court for the proceeding be the same interpreter appointed for any court-ordered assessments, unless the court finds good cause on the record to do so because it is not possible to obtain more than one interpreter for the proceeding, or the safety of the litigants is not compromised, or any other reasons identified by the court.

(6) Courts shall make a private space available for parties, counsel, and/or court staff and interpreters to sight translate any written documents or to meet and confer.

(7) When a hearing is conducted through telephone, video, or other electronic means, the court must make appropriate arrangements to permit interpreters to serve the parties and the court as needed. [2025 c 55 s 12; 2021 c 215 s 33.]

Effective date—2022 c 268; 2021 c 215: See note following RCW 7.105.900.