

What you should know about your right to information in your language in all Social Security Administration Offices

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If you do not speak English, all Social Security Administration offices must provide information in your language and an interpreter for all visits (interviews, hearings, assessments, etc.)

When you visit any Social Security Administration (SSA) office either to fill out an application, complete an assessment or interview, or for a hearing, you have the right to request that written materials and details of your case be explained to you in a language you understand.

It is the policy of SSA to ensure you can access programs and services even if you cannot communicate in English. SSA will provide an interpreter free of charge to you when you request one or when an interpreter is necessary to ensure you receive equal access to programs and services. **SSA cannot require you to provide your own interpreter.**



If there is no one at the SSA office that speaks your language or your dialect, a Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) will provide you interpreter services over the telephone. This service is free, you do not need to be afraid to ask for it.

Even if you brought a family member or a friend with you that speaks your language, you should still ask for an interpreter. A competent interpreter will be better able to explain to SSA your information and concerns as well as provide you with accurate interpretation and translation of important and sometimes complicated details and documents regarding your case.

A competent interpreter is someone who can speak your language and dialect and is familiar with SSA terms and vocabulary.

If you have a hearing, SSA must provide you with an interpreter to make sure you understand your case and that you are understood by the administrative law judge. Make sure the interpreter is helping you to understand the details of your case.

When you feel that the interpreter does not speak your dialect or is not interpreting in a manner you understand, you may postpone your hearing and request an adjournment until proper assistance in your language can be provided. It is important that you let the administrative law judge know that you are requesting this delay either because you do not understand English well enough or the interpreter that has been provided does not speak your specific language or dialect.

So remember:

- It's your right to get information and receive assistance from an interpreter that speaks your language and your dialect.
- Professional translation and interpretation is a free service and can help you understand **ALL** of the details of your case.
- Make sure that the interpreter you have is competent and speaks your language and dialect.
- Do not be afraid to request an adjournment during a hearing or interview if you need more assistance in your language.

SSA is committed to providing fair and equitable service, regardless of an individual's inability to communicate effectively in English. The SSA policy is available at <http://www.ssa.gov/multilanguage>.