



To:	Texas Judges Who Hear CPS Cases
From:	The Honorable John Specia, (ret.) Jurist in Residence, Office of Court Administration
Date:	June 11, 2012
RE:	Free Spanish-language interpretation available by telephone for some courts

Free Spanish-language interpretation by a Texas Licensed Court Interpreter is now available by phone during child protection hearings in counties with fewer than 500 children in DFPS legal responsibility. This service is funded by a Court Improvement Grant and is administered by the Office of Court Administration. This service is NOT available in the following counties: Bexar, Dallas, Denton, El Paso, Harris, Nueces, Tarrant, Tom Green, Travis, and Williamson

Q:	What equipment does my court need?
A:	Each court needs at least a speakerphone with sound quality high enough for the interpreter to hear all parties speaking. A second phone line with a handset for the Spanish-speaker(s) works even better.
Q:	Who do I contact?
A:	Scheduling is available in advance by phone, e-mail or online calendar. To request more information or to enroll, please e-mail interpreter@txcourts.gov , or call 512-936-7559.
Q:	How far in advance do I need to schedule and what is the maximum time per hearing I may schedule?
A:	Sometimes interpretation is available on demand, with no advance notice, but only on a first-come, first-serve basis. Two hours is the maximum time that may be reserved, however, the hearing does not have to begin immediately when scheduled, if there are delays or other cases to be heard earlier on the docket.
Q:	How does it work?
A:	<p>Using a speakerphone only, which takes more time because of pauses required.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dial (512) 936-7559. 2. Give the interpreter a brief explanation of the parties present and the type of hearing, such as Adversary, Status, Permanency, Placement Review, or Prove-up. 3. Place the call on speakerphone and ask the interpreter to check that the Spanish-speaker(s) can hear and understand him. 4. Instruct all parties to speak clearly and to pause regularly for interpretation. After the interpreter is sworn in, proceed with the hearing as normal. <p>Using a speakerphone and a handset, which allows interpretation heard only by the Spanish-speaker holding the handset</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dial (512) 936-7559 on the main speakerphone and (512) 463-5160 on the second handset, which is given to the Spanish-speaker(s). 2. Give the interpreter a brief explanation of the parties present and the type of hearing. 3. Ask the interpreter to explain, in English and Spanish, how interpretation will proceed. 4. Only when the Spanish-speaker(s) are being examined, all interpretation will pass through the speakerphone in the consecutive mode, during pauses following each statement. During all other phases of the hearing, when English-speakers are talking to each other, the interpreter will be interpreting simultaneously into Spanish through the handset held by the Spanish-speaker(s). 5. After the interpreter is sworn in, proceed with the hearing as normal.