

# SECTION 1

## Summary of Ethical Standards for Interpreters

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*This summary outlines the basic ethical standards for professional interpretation. It is a summary of the role of an interpreter that is designed to provide a standard for individuals contracting for one-time or temporary service.*

INTERPRETERS SHALL KEEP ALL ASSIGNMENT-RELATED INFORMATION STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Guidelines: Interpreters shall not reveal any information about any assignment. Even seemingly unimportant information could be damaging in the wrong hands. Therefore, to avoid this possibility, interpreters must not say anything about any assignment.

INTERPRETERS SHALL RENDER THE MESSAGE FAITHFULLY, ALWAYS CONTAINING THE CONTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE SPEAKER.

Guidelines: Interpreters are not editors and must transmit everything that is said in exactly the same way it was intended. This is especially difficult when the interpreter disagrees with what is being said or feels uncomfortable when profanity is being used. Interpreters must remember that they are not at all responsible for what is said, only for conveying it accurately.

INTERPRETERS SHALL NOT COUNSEL, ADVISE, OR INTERJECT PERSONAL OPINIONS.

Guidelines: Just as interpreters may not omit anything which is said, they may not add anything to the situation, even when they are asked to do so by other parties involved. An interpreter is only present in a given situation because two or more people have difficulty communicating, and thus the interpreter's only function is to facilitate communication. He/she shall not become personally involved because in doing so he/she accepts some responsibility for the outcome, which does not rightfully belong to the interpreter.

Unpublished handout: Interpreter Services, University of Rochester -  
\*Guide for one-time interpreters.

A publication of New York State Migrant Education. *Language Interpretation Guidelines* by Betty Garcia Mathewson