

Differences between having a Direct Service Professional who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) versus using an ASL Interpreter

ASL Fluent Staff	ASL Interpreter
Effectively <u>communicates directly</u> with another person in American Sign Language	Effectively <u>facilitates communication</u> between ASL and another language, usually spoken English
Fluency is about <u>conversational skills</u> using everyday vocabulary	Certification is about <u>professional skills</u> using broad, technical, and often specific vocabulary
Fluency levels can be tested using metrics like the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) or American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI)	Level of interpreting skill is tested through professional certification exams like those offered by the Center for Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI)
Not required to be certified or registered – fluency should match individual being supported	PA law requires ASL interpreters to be registered with the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)
Can offer assistance to another signing person with informal daily interactions like ordering food or checking out at a store	Hired for facilitating scheduled communication events such as staff meetings, classes, conferences, legal settings, and doctor appointments
Fluent conversation requires knowledge of shared vocabulary and willingness to interact through conversation with another person	Certification requires knowledge of <u>professional ethics</u> and offers a means for consumers to file a grievance against an interpreter
Fluency levels can range from survival (where’s the bathroom?) to intermediate (let’s talk about our day) to advanced (in-depth knowledge of specialized vocabulary)	Advanced fluency is a minimum requirement to interpret
Can be hearing or Deaf staff	Can be hearing or Deaf interpreters