

# Quick Guide: What Type of Interpretation Do I Need ?

There are over 120,000 residents of Waterloo Region whose first language is not English or French and this is increasing each year. Language interpretation is critical for organizations to provide services equally to all clients – including immigrants, refugees and citizens who may not be confident understanding or communicating in either of Canada’s official languages.

This quick guide provides information to help you understand what type of interpretation you need and what your options are.

It is the **responsibility of the organization** providing a service to ensure that **appropriate interpretation** is provided and that the client understands what is being shared, discussed or agreed to. It is important to ask your client if they would like interpretation. Service providers have a duty of care to ensure that there is clear communication in a language that is understood by the client and that there is informed consent with respect to both the provision and acceptance of services. It is also important that you fully understand what your client is communicating.

**Trained interpreters should be used for all medical, legal and other situations that require informed consent, confidentiality, specialized terminology or impartiality.** Trained interpreters are covered by Errors and Omission insurance and adhere to a strict code of conduct and industry approved Standards of Practice.

**Informal interpreters may be used for less critical assignments** such as orientation to bus services, shopping, building neighbourhood friendships, etc. Accuracy of the message is not guaranteed with informal interpretation using untrained interpreters or machine translation. It is not appropriate to use a child to provide interpretation for critical conversations.

**There are many benefits** of using trained interpreters, including: Reducing unnecessary medical testing or incorrect treatment, ensuring there is informed consent for services, increasing client understanding and service usage, ensuring validity of contractual agreements and decreasing service providers’ exposure to risk and liability.

## What type of interpretation do I need?

If you answer **yes** to any of these three questions then Trained Interpretation is likely needed.

1. Is it related to a **critical or sensitive issue** (i.e. health/medical, legal, etc.) where it is important for the client and the service provider to fully understand what is being shared or agreed to, with misunderstanding resulting in negative outcomes, higher risks or costs? Is accuracy important?
2. Is there a high need or requirement for **informed consent or confidentiality**?
3. Does my organization have the **mandate/requirement to provide trained interpretation** or does my organization’s interpretation policy indicate I should use a trained interpreter for this conversation?

# Yes, trained interpretation is needed.

Trained interpretation includes phone and in-person options.

## How common is the language?

- RIO **phone** interpretation supports 180 languages and Language Line **phone** interpretation supports 240 languages.
- Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Centre (KWMC) is the primary provider of trained **in-person** interpreters in Waterloo Region and can provide interpreters for 50 languages.

## How quickly do I need it arranged?

- Phone** interpretation is available within minutes, 24/7/365 and can also be pre-scheduled for longer appointments.
- Scheduling time for **in-person** trained interpretation varies and can take anywhere from a few hours to a day or two in advance, depending on interpreter availability.

## How long will the conversation be?

- Phone** interpretation is ideal for short or some medium-length conversations.
- In-person** trained interpretation works better for medium or longer conversations.

## What cost is acceptable?

- RIO **phone** interpretation costs approximately \$1.65/minute for unscheduled requests and \$0.60/min for prebooked appointments (30 minute minimum). Language Line **phone** interpretation costs approximately \$4 USD/minute.
- In-person** trained interpretation costs vary, often between \$30-35/hour.

## How important is anonymity/confidentiality?

- RIO and Language Line **phone** interpreters are the only person added to the conversation and are often located in another city/country which provides anonymity. Trained interpreters are required to maintain confidentiality.
- Individual **in-person** interpreters are the only person added to the conversation, however, they may live in the same city or community. Confidentiality can be guaranteed, but not always anonymity.

## No, trained interpretation is not needed.

Informal interpretation can be used for casual conversations and service interactions. This includes machine translation/interpretation or informal interpreters such as family, friends or other volunteers. Quality of interpretation and confidentiality are not guaranteed.

### How common is the language?

- **Google Translate machine interpretation** supports more than 100 languages via text, can translate 37 languages via photo, 32 languages in audio, and 27 languages via real-time video.
- **Tarjimly** provides informal interpretation and translation by connecting with real people through a texting app. You are matched with the highest rated interpreter available at the time of your request. Tarjimly supports Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Bengali, Turkish, Somali, Spanish, French, Italian, and Greek.
- **Volunteers/friends/family** may be able to speak the language needed.

### How quickly do I need it arranged?

- **Google Translate** is available instantly, 24/7/365.
- With **Tarjimly**, it takes approximately 2 minutes to be matched with an interpreter.
- With **volunteers/friends/family** the speed of availability varies depending on schedules and availability.

### How long will the conversation be?

- **Google Translate** is often more appropriate for shorter casual conversations.
- **Tarjimly** may be ideal for short or medium-length casual conversations.
- **Volunteers/friends/family** may be appropriate for short or longer casual conversations.

### What cost is acceptable?

- **Google Translate, Tarjimly** and **Volunteers/friends/family** are typically free of charge.

### How important is anonymity/confidentiality?

- With **Google Translate**, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. All data, uploaded images, video are available to Google. Sensitive personal information should not be translated using Google Translate.
- With **Tarjimly** anonymity and confidentiality are not guaranteed. Usually, the interpreter is in another country so anonymity may be more likely. Interpreters are typically untrained and do not sign confidentiality agreements so confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- **Volunteers/friends/family** do not provide anonymity and are not obliged to keep information confidential.

## How do I access interpretation?

Ask within your organization to find out about your **organization's interpretation policy** and if you have arrangements for specific interpretation options.

### Trained Interpretation

- **Trained interpreters, in-person**

Must be booked in advance. Fees apply. Free interpretation is available for working with clients that have been victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse and human trafficking. There may be grants that cover other assignments.

- Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre  
519-745-2593  
interpreters@kwmc-on.com  
<https://www.kwmc.on.ca/interpreter-request-form>



- **Trained interpreters, over-the-phone**

Typically within seconds or minutes for hundreds of different languages. Fees apply.

- RIO Phone Network   
1-888-278-8007  
languages@accessalliance.ca  
<http://accessalliance.ca/programs-services/language-services/r-i-o-network-remote-interpretation-ontario>
- Language Line   
1-800-752-6096  
<https://www.languageline.com>

### Informal Interpretation

**The following options are not appropriate for sensitive or high-risk issues** (e.g. medical or legal) and should only be used for informal interpretation needs. Accuracy is not guaranteed.

- **Google Translate** 
  - Download the app from  for Android or  for iPhone.
  - Access online at <https://translate.google.ca>
- **Tarjimly** 
  - Access online through Messenger  or Facebook  by searching for Tarjimly and clicking 'Get Started'
  - To find out more about Tarjimly go to <https://www.tarjim.ly>

For more information:

Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership  
519-575-4757x3171  
ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca  
[www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca)

