Introducing Yourself to the Limited English Proficiency Person

"Hello! Do you need an interpreter?" Introduce yourself briefly and say, *"I just want to make sure that we are able to understand each other. What is your native language? Where are you from? "*

If the person says they speak another language, ask: *"How long have you been speaking **xxx**?"* and then, *"Which language do you speak at home?"*

Depending on the answers, you may need to inquire further, asking, for example, if they attended school in their native language or another language. If you find out that the language they use the most is another language other than the one you interpret, ask if they would like you to interpret for them or if they would like us to get an interpreter in another language. If they are comfortable with letting you interpret, say, *"I will let the judge know that you speak **xxx** but that you'd like to proceed in (language you interpret). The judge may ask you some additional questions."*

If the person tells you that they'd like an interpreter in any language other than what you interpret, tell them that you will let the judge know.

Clarifying Your Role as the Court Interpreter:

After verifying that you can communicate, to clarify/emphasize your role as the interpreter, say:

"When your name is called, I will go up and I will interpret everything that is said. That means that I will also interpret <u>everything</u> that you tell me. If there is anything that you don't hear or understand, tell me and I will interpret your question."

It's also important to emphasize that you can only interpret and to let them know this:

"As your interpreter today, I cannot have any side conversations with you- I can only interpret."

After you say that, walk away and sit or stand somewhere else until the case is called. Depending on the courtroom, try to sit in the front while waiting, near the attorneys or the deputies.

If you know that the judge will be addressing everybody before he starts calling cases (ie, in traffic court or for restraining order applications), direct the person to where <u>you</u> need them to sit so you can interpret without distracting others too much and tell them that when the judge comes out you will return to sit next to them so that you can interpret the judge's opening remarks. Try to look busy while waiting, consulting the dictionary or notes.

If they come up to talk or to ask you something say:

"One moment, I am only allowed to interpret; therefore, let me find somebody so I can interpret for you."

If the person has to stand in line to talk to a clerk at a window or counter, let them stand in line and stand off at a distance. You don't need to stand in the line with them.

The key is to keep your distance. Remaining close to the non-English speakers creates an opportunity for them to talk to you.