



# Virtual Courtroom Information Sheet *for* Deaf Court Users

**New York State Unified Court System**  
Office of Language Access • Office of the ADA Coordinator

This information sheet will help you communicate with a remote sign language interpreter during your virtual courtroom proceeding.

To attend your virtual courtroom proceeding you will use Microsoft's Teams ("Teams"). Don't use Teams on a smart phone – it will be too hard to see the interpreter. Use a tablet, laptop or desktop computer instead.

Teams has certain features that you will need to use. You should become familiar with these features before your proceeding. The interpreter can also go over them with you at the beginning of the proceeding.

If you do not have access to a laptop, desktop or tablet please inform the court. Arrangements can be made for you to appear in court, where the proper equipment will be available for use.

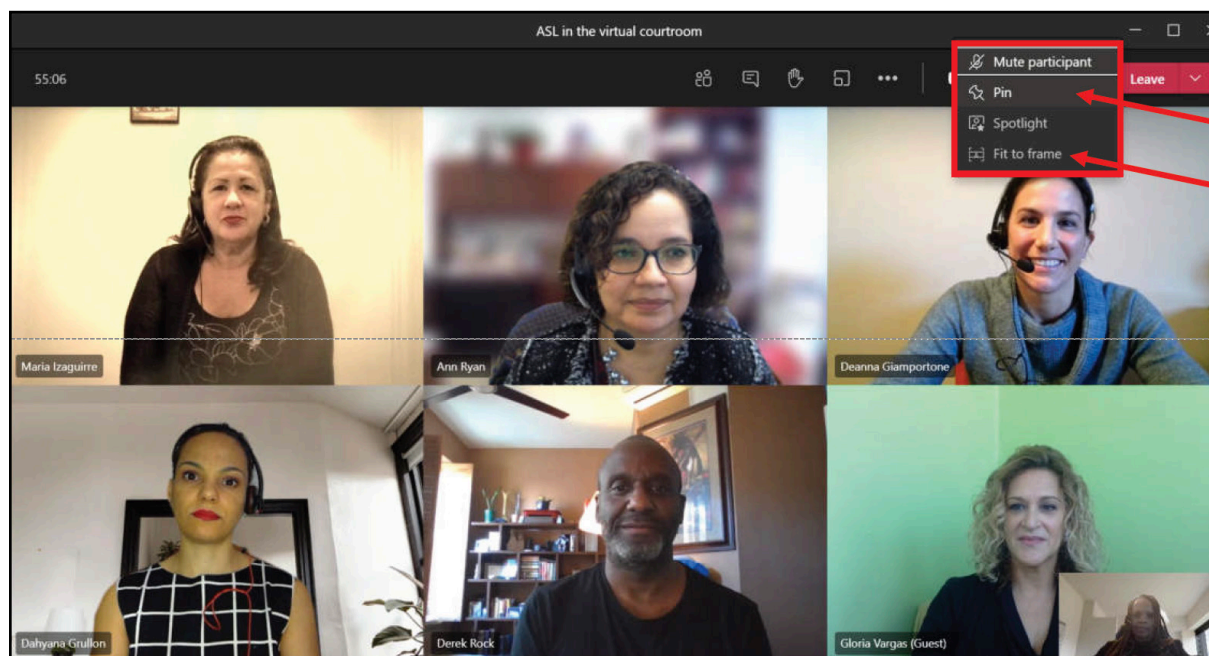
## **How do I make sure I will always be able to see the interpreter, and the interpreter will always be able to see me?**

When you click on your Teams meeting invitation link, you will go to the Lobby. When the Court admits you to the meeting, you will see your video image in a grid with the other participants. The main window grid can show up to 9 people at a time. (If there are more than 9, you will only see the last 9 people who have spoken – the others will appear in small panels in a ribbon at the bottom of the gallery.)

You need to make sure that the interpreter is always in a panel that is big enough that you can see him or her signing to you. To make sure you can always see the interpreter signing, you must **use the "pin" feature**. If you "pin" the interpreter, he or she will always remain in your main view.

Here's the easiest way to "pin" ✎ the interpreter:

- In the main window grid, find the panel that shows the interpreter
- Right click anywhere in that panel
- Select the 'Pin' ✎ option that pops up



Once you pin the interpreter, he or she will become the only person visible in the main window – everyone else will appear in small panels in the ribbon at the bottom of the screen.

**Always keep the interpreter pinned.** You can pin other people too, but each time you pin an additional person the interpreter's image will get smaller, so it's best to pin only the interpreter. If you do want to pin an additional participant, right click on their panel in the bottom ribbon and select the 'pin' option that pops up. If more than one person is pinned, you can widen the view you have of the interpreter by right clicking on their panel and selecting "fit to frame."

If you want to unpin a person, right click anywhere in their panel and select the 'Unpin' ✎ option that pops up.

The interpreter will "pin" ✎ your panel so that you won't disappear from the interpreter's screen.

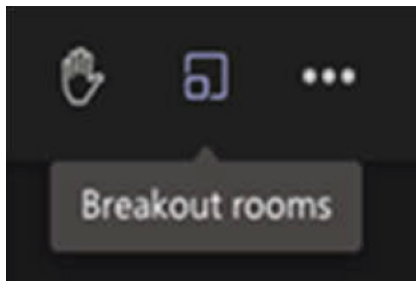
Also, before the proceeding starts: make sure the interpreter has a good view of you, and let the interpreter know if you are having any problem seeing him or her.

## How do I have a private conversation with my attorney?

DON'T use the "Chat" feature to send messages to your attorney. If you do that, all the other participants will be able to read the messages too.

If you and your attorney also have cell phones (or other devices) that let you text or e-mail each other, DO use those to have a separate private conversation while the Teams meeting is going on. Reminder: A witness is not permitted to communicate with his or her attorney while testifying.

If you can't use a cell phone or other device, you or your attorney must ask the judge for permission to take a break to have a private conversation. You'll need to have an up-to-date version of Teams that has the Breakout Room function (the 'over-lapping squares' icon on the Meetings Control Bar). The judge will set up a private breakout room and temporarily put you, your attorney, and the interpreter in it. You can have a private conversation while you are in that room, but don't send text messages or share documents while you are there (they may be accessible to the other people in the meeting)



For more detailed information about Teams in the virtual courtroom, please see Working with ASL Interpreters in the Virtual Courtroom ([www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/COURTINTERPRETER/ASL-Virt-Interpret-Guide.pdf](http://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/COURTINTERPRETER/ASL-Virt-Interpret-Guide.pdf))

If you would like to make sure you can use Teams on your computer, please visit: <https://portal.nycourts.gov/knowledgebase/article/KA-01070>

