

## Best Practices: Virtual Meetings

### Section I: Pre-Meeting Preparation

1. Always open the meeting at least 20 minutes before the actual start time so participants can join in, check in and get their screen set up. If this is not possible, let the attendees know prior to the meeting so they can prepare and work out any technical difficulties on their own.
2. Make sure you are familiar with the platform and that your technology works correctly. Do this before your meeting: check your speakers, microphone, webcam and internet connection. Download the application/software and test it at least one day before.
3. Frame the camera correctly and look into the camera when using video.
4. Have adequate light. Do not sit in front of a bright window or turn on any lights behind you – this causes a shadow on your face, and makes it hard for people to see your facial expressions or lipread you.
5. If captioning is requested or provided, make sure this is tested at least 1 day BEFORE the meeting is scheduled. Keep in mind that each videoconferencing platform is different, so you will need to test access features ahead of time to make sure they are working. Please see Access Considerations #3 for more information on requesting or providing captioning services for your meetings.
6. Request and confirm interpreters as soon as possible, preferably two weeks ahead of time. Allow interpreters the opportunity to test the videoconferencing platform ahead of time. Please see Access Considerations #2 for more information on requesting or providing interpreters for your meetings.
7. Check in with the Deaf and HOH participants and interpreters to make sure that they are all set for access before you start your meeting.

### Section 2: Access Considerations

1. If Interpreters are present, be mindful that the Interpreters will rotate every 15 to 20 minutes. The Interpreter should pause their window and not close it. Open and closing windows causes the other windows to rotate which is visually distracting.
2. Interpreters from the ODHH Interpreting Contract list (DES Contract #03919) are available to join these meetings virtually, upon request. You will need to fill out the interpreter request form (DSHS Form No. 17-123A). On this form, the location of the meeting will be the link for the videoconferencing platform, also include the meeting room ID and password. Requests

should be made at least a week in advance. For more information, please contact Sign Language Interpreting Contract Resources (SLICR) Program Manager Berle Ross.

3. If Communication Access Real-Time (CART) captions are requested, the captioning will appear on the screen. CART contract information is available through the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) master contracts list (DES Contract #03116). In your request, you will need to share a link to the videoconferencing platform, the meeting room ID and password so the captioner can access the meeting.
4. Participants should wear appropriate clothing. (Solid colors are better than patterns, and shirt colors should contrast with your skin color) for better visibility.

### **Section 3: Meeting Etiquette**

1. Do not start the meeting earlier than the scheduled start time.
2. When you are ready to start the meeting, start with a roll call so you can confirm who is present and identify anyone who may be struggling to connect due to technical difficulties.
3. Remind people to mute the microphone and to unmute when they are speaking.
4. Ensure that there is only one person speaking and one microphone on at a time.
5. Remind each person to start the conversation by stating their name first (every time). This allows Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to follow the conversations and know who is speaking at all times. *For example: "This is Bob speaking, Good Morning. We will now move over to Julia to review fiscal information... This is Julia speaking..."*
6. Review the agenda and allocate time to each item. Email the agenda beforehand to avoid using the share screen feature. You can also send the agenda again through the chat feature.
7. After each agenda item is covered, summarize and check in for any clarification needed before moving on to the next agenda item.
8. If you need to share your screen to show PowerPoint, Word or other documents, by doing so, you could unintentionally block the Interpreter. When you share your screen, please check in with participants before proceeding. Participants will need time to adjust their screen for better viewing.
9. Actively participate. When you have a question or comment, raise your hand and state your name first.
10. Pause when turn taking to allow time for visual communicators to find the next speaker on the screen. When the meeting host calls on someone, that person, the next person speaking, should pause to allow time for participants to look at them.

## Best Practices: Non-Video Conference Calls

### Access Considerations and Meeting Etiquette

1. Always open the meeting at least 20 minutes before the actual start time so participants can join in, check in and get settled. If this is not possible, let the attendees know prior to the meeting so they can prepare and work out any technical difficulties on their own.
2. Do not start the meeting earlier than the scheduled start time.
3. Check in with the Deaf and HOH participants and interpreters to make sure that they are all set for access before you start your meeting.
4. When you are ready to start the meeting, start with a roll call so you can confirm who is present and identify anyone who may be struggling to connect due to technical difficulties.
5. Remind people to mute the microphone and to unmute when they are speaking.
6. Ensure that there is only one person speaking and one microphone on at a time.
7. Remind each person to start the conversation by stating their name first (every time). This allows Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to follow the conversations and know who is speaking at all times. *For example: "This is Bob speaking, Good Morning. We will now move over to Julia to review fiscal information... This is Julia speaking..."*
8. Review the agenda and allocate time to each item. Email the agenda beforehand so Deaf participants can better follow the topics and so that interpreters can prep.
9. After each agenda item is covered, summarize and check in for any clarification needed before moving on to the next agenda item.
10. Actively participate. When you have a question or comment, state your name first.
11. Pause while turn taking or switching speakers to allow a moment for the interpreter to inform Deaf participants of the change in speaker.