



Ministry for  
**Ethnic  
Communities**  
Te Tari Mātāwaka



# Language support when calling government services

If you are calling a government agency and you need language assistance, ask for an interpreter.

It is the government agency's responsibility to make sure its services are accessible.

This includes providing professional interpreters to the public for **free**.

## How to get an interpreter

1. Call the government agency.
2. Ask for an interpreter and tell the person on the phone the language you speak. You will need to ask in English, so practise saying the words 'interpreter' and the English name for your language before you call.
3. You will be asked to wait. Stay on the phone - **do not** hang up.
4. If available, a professional interpreter will join to help you. Government agencies may need to book interpreters in advance for some languages.

If you require an interpreter for a face-to-face or video conference meeting, email the agency beforehand to ensure an interpreter is available.

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Many government agencies and councils can assist you with interpreting support. Find the full list at: [www.mbie.govt.nz/language-assistance-services/participating-agencies](http://www.mbie.govt.nz/language-assistance-services/participating-agencies)

If you have questions or concerns about accessing government interpreting services, email us at [info@ethniccommunities.govt.nz](mailto:info@ethniccommunities.govt.nz)