

# Platform, Hardware, Settings, & Logistical Requirements for ASL Interpreted Video Conferencing

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Welcome to the Age of Virtual Interactions! Now that people are becoming more comfortable with online meetings and trainings, we need to be sure communication is as accessible as it is when we are face-to-face. Below are some of the requirements for a successful virtual interaction when ASL interpreting services are provided during the session.

The list of settings and logistical needs given here are not mere preferences. They have a direct and significant impact on an ASL interpreter's ability to render the top-quality interpretation that you have hired them to provide. If you cannot meet these requirements, please inform your interpreter(s) immediately. They may be able to help you resolve the issue or find another solution. Waiting until the virtual session begins may result in the need to reschedule your interaction!

I also recommend reviewing the information on the National Association of the Deaf website. The following link will take you to a comparison of the features available in various platforms (current as of May 1, 2020) to assist you in selecting the best platform for your needs.

<https://www.nad.org/videoconferencing-platforms-feature-matrix/>

## Requirements

### **PLATFORM: Zoom**

- While there are many platforms available for virtual interactions, Zoom is the only platform, to date, that includes all of the settings and features that ASL interpreters rely on while interpreting. Some of these are only available to the Host or Co-Host of a meeting, so the interpreters will need you to be familiar with accessing and enabling them.
- There are specific settings and features in Zoom designed for use with "Interpreters;" however, these tools are geared towards the needs of spoken language interpreting services and do not take the visual requirements of ASL into account. Please do not use the "Interpreter" setting for ASL interpreters.
- Install Zoom on your device before you attend your first meeting. This is a great time to check out the settings and features so you will be familiar with them before it's time to meet.

### **HARDWARE: PC or Laptop, Only**

- Many necessary features are not available when you use a smart phone to access virtual meeting platforms. Some examples are Gallery View and Multi-Pin. Additionally, a smart phone's screen size is too small to view ASL clearly for an extended period of time.
- Avoid using an iPad. Apple devices do not work well with Zoom. They often require a separate audio connection and reduce or completely remove essential features within the platform.
- Whenever possible, use a hardwire connection to the internet. Wi-Fi is a wonderful thing but is usually not able to handle the demands of transmitting and receiving ASL communications without problems.
- If Wi-Fi is your only option, move to a location that gets the best possible signal and disconnect other Wi-Fi enabled devices in the building.

*This information sheet was created in February 2021 by Betsy Tucker, CI and CT. For questions or more information, please email [BJTucker24.7@gmail.com](mailto:BJTucker24.7@gmail.com) or call/text 302-521-7151.*

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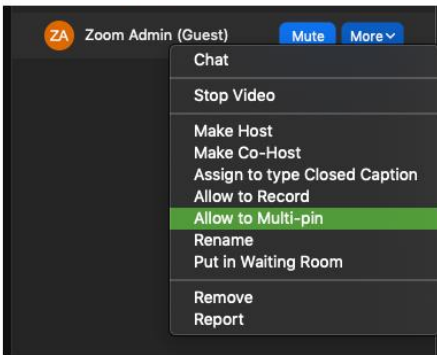
## ENABLED FEATURE: Multi-Pin

- Only the Host or Co-Host of a Zoom session can grant permission to participants who need to use the Multi-Pin feature. Prior to the start of your session, admit all interpreters and Deaf participants. Follow the steps below to grant access to the Multi-Pin feature to each of the interpreters and Deaf participants, then admit the remaining participants. Without this feature enabled, the interpreters and the Deaf participants will not be able to maintain clear and appropriately sized visual contact during your session if you have more than 4 total participants.
  - ❖ If you are assisting a Deaf person in their Zoom meeting, make sure you pin all interpreters and other Deaf participants. Otherwise, Zoom will default to the Speaker View which moves the video of the person who is speaking to the front of the rows of videos. It is impossible to maintain a good view of anyone when they keep jumping all over the screen!

**Allow Participants to Multi-Pin**

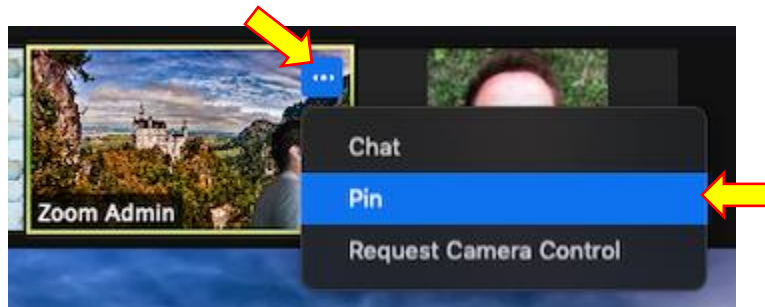
By default, only the host or co-host can utilize the multi-pin feature, but either can allow individual participants to multi-pin on their video layout.

1. Click **Participants** along the meeting toolbar.
2. Hover over the participant, click **More**, then **Allow to Multi-pin**.



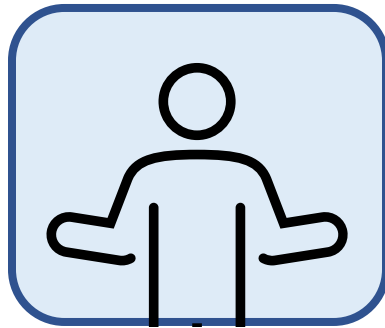
3. (Optional) Repeat as needed for other participants.

Once Multi-Pin has been permitted, participants can Pin the videos they want to maintain visual contact with.



## **LOGISTICS: Framing**

- Ensure that the Deaf person is visible on the screen from the waist to about a foot above their head and with about one foot of open space on each side of them. ASL is a visual language that makes use of space surrounding the signer's body to impart meaning to their statements and questions. They should have sufficient space around them to ensure they remain visible while moving from side to side and leaning forward or backward.
- When setting up your camera, the ideal is to have the camera slightly above the person and angled downward. If you still need additional framing space, zooming out a little at a time should do the trick. If you have an office chair that has an adjustable tilt, you can recline the back of the chair by a few degrees to improve your framing on the screen.



## **LOGISTICS: Lighting**

- Make sure the Deaf person is not seated in front of a window or other light source. When a person is backlit on video, they appear as a shadowy outline. ASL uses facial grammar – specific movements and positioning of a signer's mouth, eyes, and brow – to impart meaning to signs. The interpreter must have a clear view of the signer's face in order to accurately interpret their message.
- Make sure that the lighting is positioned in front of and above or to one side of the Deaf person, so they are able to see the interpreter without staring into the light source.
- Make sure to test the lighting, camera angle, and zoom setting before your session. Often, the lighting seems perfect until the camera makes its adjustments. You may need to change the default settings for White Balance, Contrast, and or Brightness, but the defaults on a good quality camera are often the best option. Before adjusting your camera settings, try moving or altering your light source.

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# Quick Reminders

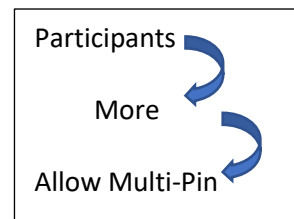
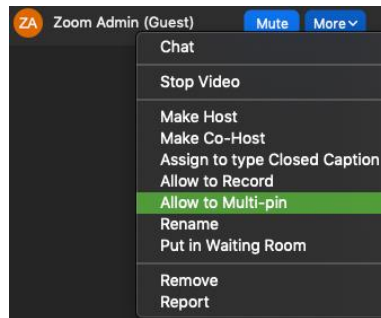
Platform



Hardware



Feature



Logistics



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