



**The World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB)**

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EN:  | ES:  |  | 

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## **WFDB's Statement on Interpreter-guides/Deafblind Interpreters and Associated Expenses**

The World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB), a global non-governmental advocacy organization by and for persons with deafblindness. Our aim is to enhance the overall quality of life and safeguard the rights of this unique and distinct disability group.

Deafblindness is a unique and distinct disability with its own requirements, communication systems and accessibility needs. Deafblindness is a combined vision and hearing impairment, so severe that it is hard for the impaired senses to compensate for each other and thus limits activities and full participation in all aspects of society. As you might know, persons with deafblindness are one of the most underrepresented, marginalised and invisibilised groups of persons with disabilities often being left behind due to the specific and unique nature of their disability.

Persons with deafblindness often request to be assisted by interpreter-guides/Deafblind interpreters as an essential support to work, go to school or advance their education, attend medical appointments, access other services, exercise, socialise with family and friends, run errands, shop, respond to correspondence, enjoy cultural events and recreation etc. This practice aligns with the UN Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), emphasizing the right to access live assistance to support independence, autonomy, and inclusion in the community, as well as to prevent isolation or segregation<sup>1</sup>.

Interpreter-guides/Deafblind interpreters are uniquely trained and qualified professionals that are responsive to the compounded support requirements of persons with deafblindness, including communication, interpretation, access to information, description, orientation, guiding, and mobility support adapted to the person. Crucially, they are trained on the appropriate communication methods that are used by persons with deafblindness. Interpreter-guides/Deafblind interpreters are an essential support that enable persons with deafblindness to work and participate in society fully.

**We wish to emphasize the importance of having two interpreters available, especially for activities lasting longer than two hours or international meetings.**

In addition to the interpreters, a Deafblind person may also require a personal assistant.

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, A/RES/61/106, 13 December 2006, Articles 4.h, 9.2.e, 9.2.f, 19.b, 20, 23.2, 28.2.a, and 29.a.iii.



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This aligns with our standard policy during events, **ensuring that each participant with deafblindness is supported by two interpreters for accuracy and the well-being of the interpreters.** This practice allows for role-switching, breaks, and maintains a high quality of interpretation. **It is common practice for the expenses, including service fees, of both interpreters to be covered by the organizing party.**

Through this statement, we advocate for the fundamental right of individuals with deafblindness to receive reasonable accommodation in the form of interpreter-guides/Deafblind interpreters. We call upon organizing parties or responsible entities to demonstrate their commitment by covering the associated expenses for the interpreters and their service fee, wherever feasible.