



State of Hawai'i  
Disability and Communication Access Board

# State Agency Manual for the Provision of Sign Language Interpreters

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# Introduction

## Purpose of this Manual

This manual was developed to provide guidance to Hawai'i state agencies for providing sign language interpreters in instances involving deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind individuals.

This manual includes the necessary information to assist state agencies through each step in the process of securing sign language interpreting services. Further, this manual provides additional resources to support state agencies in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other legal requirements to provide effective communication through the provision of communication access services.

## The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB)

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is the Hawai'i State Agency responsible for:

- advocating in the public process for rights for persons with disabilities,
- establishing state and county facility guidelines as well as approving structural designs,
- issuing administrative rules regarding communication access provision and quality and,
- administering the parking placard program.

Further, DCAB issues administrative rules for the utilization of communication access services (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, computer assisted notetakers) including recommended fee schedules. The Board also tests and credentials sign language interpreters via a state screening process.

## State Agency Legal Responsibilities

Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), state agencies are responsible for providing effective communication to deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind individuals to access state programs and services. According to the US Department of Justice [Effective Communication](#) ADA rules expansion:

*The key to communicating effectively is to consider the nature, length, complexity, and context of the communication and the person's normal method(s) of communication.*

*The goal is to ensure that communication with people with these disabilities is equally effective as communication with people without disabilities.*

*For people who are deaf, have hearing loss, or are deaf-blind, this includes providing a qualified notetaker; a qualified sign language interpreter, oral interpreter, cued-speech interpreter, or tactile interpreter; real-time captioning; written materials; or a printed script of a stock speech (such as given on a museum or historic house tour). A “qualified” interpreter means someone who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively (i.e., understanding what the person with the disability is saying) and expressively (i.e., having the skill needed to convey information back to that person) using any necessary specialized vocabulary.*

Individuals who use sign language to communicate will most likely request sign language interpreters as their primary accommodation to receive effective communication. According to the ADA, Title II entities are required to give primary consideration to the choice of aid or service requested by the person who has a communication disability. Title II entities must honor the person’s choice, unless it can demonstrate that another equally effective means of communication is available, or that the use of the means chosen would result in a fundamental alteration of the program or service.

Below is a sample list of additional pertinent legal references regarding sign language interpreters.

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- State law (Chapter 368-1.5, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes)
- Governor’s Administrative Directive No. 12 - 06

## **How to Get Help**

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is here to help state agencies ensure effective communication through the provision of communication access services in compliance with regulations and laws.

Please contact us anytime for assistance.

Phone: (808) 586-8121  
TTY: (808) 586-8162  
Website: [health.hawaii.gov/dcab/](http://health.hawaii.gov/dcab/)  
Email: [dcab@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:dcab@doh.hawaii.gov)

# 5 Steps for the Provision of Interpreters - Quick Guide

## 1. [Talk to the Deaf Consumer](#)

In instances where there is no request for interpreting services, but such services are appropriate and necessary, see [Determine Number of Interpreters for Assignment](#) for more information and examples then move on to steps 2 and 3.

When a request for interpreting services is received:

- [Confirm details of the request](#)
- [Confirm type\(s\) of interpreting service needed](#)
- [Confirm preferred interpreters, if any](#)
- [Determine number of interpreters needed](#)

*Deaf consumers are reliable partners in ensuring communication access. Interpreters and referral companies, as skilled professionals, can advise you on how to best use their services.*

## 2. [Determine Direct Hire or Referral Company](#)

A benefit of working with a referral company is that they can eliminate some of the complexities of ensuring effective communication, especially for more complex events or situations. A benefit of working directly with an independent contract interpreter is reduced cost.

If the deaf consumer does not have a preference for specific interpreters, and your department does not have existing relationships with independent interpreters or referral companies, we recommend contacting providers on the [DCAB list of service providers](#). (See “Communication Access Providers” and “Sign Language Interpreters”.)

***DCAB recommends that only qualified, professional, and credentialed interpreters are used to ensure effective communication.***

## 3. [Confirm Assignment Details, Rate & Payment Arrangements](#)

Professional interpreters and referral companies want to be successful in delivering effective communication access services. You can rely on them to ask for what they need to ensure a successful assignment.

## 4. [Confirm Assignment with Deaf Consumer](#)

After you have made arrangements, confirm all details with the deaf consumer to ensure they do not have any concerns and that they are comfortable with the arrangements.

## 5. [Follow Up](#)

After the event, complete payment for services and check in with the deaf consumer to see if they have any feedback on the performance of the interpreter(s) and how well your department did in ensuring effective communication.

# 5 Steps for the Provision of Interpreters - Expanded

## 1) Talk to the Deaf Consumer

For in-person meetings, trainings, conferences, or similar events when most individuals would use spoken language to communicate, persons with hearing loss who use sign language to communicate will typically prefer a sign language interpreter as the most effective means of communication. Whether the interpreter is requested to provide services on-site or via video technology, the method in which the services are provided should be determined by the requesting deaf individual. Majority of requests through Hawai'i state agencies will be for live, in-person interpreting services.

While this is best practice, it is also in the law. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), state agencies should consult directly with the requesting deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind consumer regarding their needed accommodation to ensure communication access. See ["State Agency Legal Responsibilities"](#) above.

### How Do I Contact the Deaf Person?

Most deaf people can be contacted by email, text or telephone. Ask the deaf person if they have a preference for written or signed communication. If it is not clear how to best contact the deaf person, contact DCAB for assistance.

To communicate with a deaf person whose primary language is sign language by telephone, ask if they have a videophone number. This phone number directly connects the caller to the deaf person via a Video Relay Service (VRS) interpreter. This is a federally regulated service for telephonic interpreting only and is not a substitute for in-person interpreting or for Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). As VRS is an FCC regulated service, please see [Public Notice DA 05-2417 on the limitations of use of VRS](#).

Other methods of telephone communication include a voice line (for hard-of-hearing persons that may use amplification on telephones) or a combination of voice and text telephones. The deaf person will typically let you know their preferred method(s) of "telephone" communication.

When a request for interpreting services is received, confirm details of the event.

- Date, start and end time of the event
- Location of the event
- Name(s) of deaf consumer(s)
- Name(s) of hearing consumer(s)
- Purpose of the event
- Type of event
- Content of the event
- Name and phone number of the onsite contact person at the event

## Confirm Type of Communication Access Services Needed

While this manual focuses on the provision of sign language interpreters, according to the ADA, one should always ask the deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing consumer what accommodation(s) they need for each instance. Each situation is unique, and the deaf consumer is the expert in their communication access needs.

A few examples of accommodations or auxiliary aids include: ASL/English interpreters, tactile interpreters, cued speech interpreters, deaf interpreters, computer-assisted real-time captioning, notetaking services, and/or c-print. For further information on any of these services, please contact DCAB.

The rest of this manual addresses the details for the provision of sign language interpreters.

*Deaf consumers are often the experts about their own communication access needs. Asking the deaf person for the names of their preferred interpreters is the most likely route for ensuring the interpreter is qualified to work with this individual and therefore ensuring communication access will be effective.*

## Confirm Interpreter Preferences

*Do you have preferred interpreters?*

- Ask the requesting consumer for 2-4 names of preferred interpreters if possible.

If there are no preferred interpreters and your agency does not have existing relationships with professional interpreters, we recommend contacting professional interpreters or a referral company on the [DCAB provider list](#). (See “Communication Access Providers” and “Sign Language Interpreters”.)

*There is no situation in which DCAB recommends hiring non-professionals as interpreters for state agencies. Using a person who knows some sign language or asking a deaf person to bring a friend or family member are not acceptable practices.*

## Determine Number of Interpreters for Assignment

Determining the interpreting service needs requires information on several variables. A professional interpreter or a referral company will be able to provide further guidance depending on your particular situation. For more complex situations or events, such as multi-day events, large conferences, or multilingual events, your needs will vary.

Be prepared to collaborate with all parties to determine the number of interpreters. While this takes a little more time and effort up front, the quality of service, safety and health of providers, and costs incurred will be optimized. Interpreting can be challenging and demanding work, especially when the stakes for the deaf consumer are

high. Professional interpreters are trained to know their limits and to ensure the effectiveness of communication for deaf consumers.

Some events require continuous interpreting, and no interpreter can continuously interpret for an extended duration. Two or more interpreters often work as a team to ensure effective communication. When one interpreter is actively interpreting, the other(s) are following along, working together to provide seamless delivery of your content. Often an interpreter team will rotate who is “actively interpreting” every 15-20 minutes.

As a general guideline, most interpreting assignments require two interpreters. The most common exception is for small group meetings with only one deaf consumer, when the meeting is less than 90 minutes, and the meeting is not legal in nature.

**When talking with the provider about the number of interpreters needed, be prepared to share the following information:**

*How many deaf consumers?*

*What are their roles in the event?*

*If the deaf consumer indicated their primary language is anything other than ASL, share this with the provider.*

*What is the context they will be in?*

*Examples include: legal, corporate, social event, presentation*

*How much continuous interpreting is expected?*

### **Common Examples of Interpreting Assignments and Number of Interpreters**

Here are some common examples of events and the number of interpreters needed to provide effective communication.

- One-on-one meeting with state agencies providing services to the public. For such meetings between a representative of a state agency -- i.e. the Social Security Administration; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Office of Vital Records; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, etc. -- and a deaf consumer, you will most likely require one interpreter. However, you may also need to provide a [Certified Deaf Interpreter or Deaf Interpreter](#) if requested.
- Small group meeting. For a small group meeting of a work group lasting a couple hours, you most likely will require 2 interpreters, depending on the needs of the deaf consumer and the content of the meeting.
- Conference. Depending on the number of deaf consumers at a conference, their roles, and the format of the conference, you can anticipate needing a team of two or more interpreters.
- Committee meeting, legislative session, or board meeting. If you anticipate a large deaf audience or significant public testimony from deaf participants, you may need 2-3 interpreters. More might be necessary if the physical set up is visually challenging or if there are multiple kinds of interpreting needs.

- Home visit. Generally for a small group visit of a caseworker and one other professional with 1-3 deaf adults and/or deaf children, you will need 1-2 interpreters depending on whether there are multiple kinds of interpreting needs. Such as when there are additional participants, you may need additional interpreters.
- Day long training. If a deaf participant needs continuous interpreting for an 8-hour training, you can expect to need a qualified team of 2-3 interpreters.
- Short meeting with an elected official. If an elected official hosts deaf constituents in short informal meetings, you can anticipate needing 1-2 interpreters. It is more likely 2 interpreters are necessary if the meeting includes several individuals and a significant amount of rapid dialogue.
- Staff meeting. For one deaf staff member at a staff meeting lasting 90 minutes or longer that is mostly a presentation, you can anticipate needing two interpreters.
- Press Conference. Whether a press conference or briefing is live or pre-recorded, an emergency or a simple public announcement, provision of sign language interpretation allows state and local entities to meet the ADA's effective communication requirements for these events. To ensure equal access, these announcements should be provided at the same time as to the rest of the public. Because these are public service communications, it is the state and local agencies' responsibility to make these messages equally accessible; the agency does not need to receive an accommodations request for this public access message. Best practice is to provide a team of 2 qualified interpreters regardless of the length of such events. Note that the interpreter must be visible at all times in the broadcasted message.

Regardless of whether you will be hiring independent contract interpreter(s) directly or hiring interpreter(s) through an interpreter referral company, be prepared to discuss the number of interpreters needed.

\*Also see [Team Interpreting](#), a Standard Practice Paper published by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.\*

### **Only Hire Qualified and Professional Interpreters**

Only hire qualified interpreters as defined by the ADA, which means an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively. For this reason, state agencies should only hire qualified interpreters and refrain from hiring family or friends to interpret as this can open your agency up to significant risk.

Additionally, DCAB strongly encourages state agencies to only hire qualified, professional, and credentialed interpreters unless a non-credentialed interpreter is qualified and specifically requested by a deaf consumer.

Note that the state of Hawai'i has a Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) that mirrors the national [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's CPC](#) that professional interpreters are expected to adhere to.

While a license is not required to work as an interpreter in Hawai'i, in some states, it is illegal to use unlicensed interpreters. For more information, visit: <https://rid.org/about-rid/about-interpreting/setting-standards/standard-practice-papers/>

## 2) Determine Direct Hire or Referral Company

Benefits of directly hiring independent contract interpreters may include reduced cost and the ability to hire specific preferred interpreters and directly communicate with the service provider.

Some benefits of hiring interpreters through an interpreter referral company include a single payee (many interpreting assignments require two or more interpreters) and an immediate substitute interpreter if the original interpreter gets sick or is otherwise not able to fulfill the commitment. When working with an interpreter referral company, a preferred interpreter can still be requested. Interpreter referral companies are not able to guarantee that the requested interpreter is available.

Whether hiring interpreters directly or hiring through an interpreter referral company, ask for full details on rates, additional expenses, and payment terms. A recommended fee schedule can be found at the end of this manual; refer to these recommendations to determine if the estimate and terms you receive are comparable with the state recommended fee schedule.

Note: While this text uses the term “interpreter referral company,” common terminology for such entities in the interpreting and deaf communities is “interpreting referral agency.” While these terms are interchangeable, this text uses “company” to reduce potential confusion as “state agencies” are referred to frequently.

### Direct Hire of Independent Contractors

You may contact and negotiate with service providers directly. DCAB maintains a list of Communication Access Providers. View the list on our website at <http://health.hawaii.gov/dcab/communication-access/>.

When the deaf consumer has requested specific interpreters and you contact these interpreters, first inform them, “You are requested by a deaf consumer for [date] and [times] of event. Are you available for this request?”

*To respect the requesting person’s right to privacy, do not share the name of the deaf person until the interpreter indicates they are available for this specific date and time.*

If the interpreter indicates they are available and interested, be prepared to share all the information gathered to date regarding this request.

Ask potential independent contractors:

- Their availability for the assignment
- Their billing rates and terms
- Confirm they are qualified and credentialed
- Confirm they feel comfortable with the assignment
- Additional considerations or recommendations for the assignment

### **Working through an Interpreter Referral Company**

If you prefer to hire an interpreter through a referral company, there are currently two local sign language referral companies operating in Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Interpreting Services  
Phone: (808) 394-7706  
Website: <http://interpretinghawaii.com/>

Isle Interpret\*  
Phone: (808) 445-9125  
Website: <http://www.isleinterpret.com>

Many independent contract interpreters accept assignments from both companies.

Ask potential companies:

- If preferred interpreters are available for the assignment
- The billing rates and terms
- Additional considerations or recommendations for the assignment

Please also see the RID Standard Practice Paper on [Professional Sign Language Interpreting Agencies](#).

*\*The State Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), has a contract with Isle Interpret through June 30, 2020. All public procurement units in Hawai'i with a signed cooperative purchasing agreement (CPA) in place with VR may obtain referral services from the contracted company without being charged an administrative fee. However, public entities are free to utilize any referral service they choose or to directly hire an independent contractor.*

### **Special Circumstances**

#### ***Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI)/Deaf Interpreters (DI)***

An interpreter who is deaf provides interpreting services in sign language and other visual and tactile communication. A CDI or DI may be needed in settings in which the sole provision of a hearing interpreter will not ensure effective interpretation. In these situations, a CDI/DI/hearing interpreter team can communicate more effectively. Consult with the deaf consumer to determine if a CDI/DI is needed.

As with the hiring of any interpreter, only hire qualified deaf interpreters as defined by the ADA, which means an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively. For this reason, state agencies should only hire qualified deaf interpreters and refrain from hiring or allowing family or friends to interpret as this can open your agency up to significant risk.

DCAB recognizes that there is a limited number of CDIs in the state of Hawai'i. Therefore, DCAB strongly encourages state agencies to only hire qualified, professional, and credentialed and/or certified deaf interpreters whenever possible, unless a non-credentialed interpreter is qualified and specifically requested by a deaf consumer. In cases where it is not possible to hire a credentialed or certified deaf interpreter, DCAB encourages state agencies to hire deaf interpreters who have documented specialized training and/or experience.

Note that the state of Hawai'i has a Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) that mirrors the national [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's CPC](#) that professional interpreters are expected to adhere to.

\*See also the RID Standard Practice Paper on the [Use of a Certified Deaf Interpreter](#).\*

### ***Legal, Deaf-Blind, and Trilingual Interpreting***

Different contexts require sensitivity to the deaf consumer's situation and needs regarding communication access. In these situations where greater skill, credential, or sensitivity may be needed, engage in an interactive process with the deaf consumer and follow their lead. If the deaf consumer has preferred qualified interpreters, those interpreters can be valuable in ensuring effective communication.

For more information about working with deaf-blind persons, reference RID's Standard Practice Paper on [Interpreting for Individuals Who are Deaf-Blind](#).

### ***Video Remote Interpreting***

Video remote interpreting (VRI) is interpreting services provided through a video-based platform. In some cases, all the participants join remotely and in other cases only the interpreter participates remotely. Unlike video relay service (VRS), VRI is not funded or regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and can be used by people in the same room. Note that VRS cannot be used in lieu of VRI. To obtain VRI services, state agencies can contract with an interpreter directly or with a referral company. It is important to note that VRI has limitations, will not be effective in all circumstances, and the use of this service should be consented to by the deaf consumer.

If VRI is chosen, ***all*** of the following specific performance standards set forth by the ADA must be met:

- real-time, full-motion video and audio over a dedicated high-speed, wide-bandwidth video connection or wireless connection that delivers high-quality

video images that do not produce lags, choppy, blurry, or grainy images, or irregular pauses in communication;

- a sharply delineated image that is large enough to display the interpreter's face, arms, hands, and fingers, and the face, arms, hands, and fingers of the person using sign language, regardless of his or her body position;
- a clear, audible transmission of voices; and
- adequate staff training to ensure quick set-up and proper operation.

If you are considering utilizing VRI, please see the National Association of the Deaf (NAD)'s guideline and RID's Standard Practice Paper on Video Remote Interpreting. Note that although NAD's guideline is entitled, "[Video Remote Interpreting \(VRI\) Guidelines for HealthCare](#)," this guide is applicable to settings outside of healthcare. Both documents provide valuable guidance on the provision of VRI services.

As with the provision of in-person interpreting services, only hire qualified and professional interpreters for VRI services. Because VRI is not effective in all situations, consult with the deaf consumer to determine whether VRI services would be appropriate.

### ***Additional Considerations***

As in all other professions, there are many factors that contribute to an effective professional. In addition to interpreter training and credentials, knowledge in specific content areas and other skill sets contribute to an interpreter's effectiveness in their work. While there may be other factors that contribute to an interpreter being a good fit for an event for which they are being sought, the recommended fee schedule at the end of this manual outlines typical parameters for determining compensation.

## **3) Confirm Assignment Details, Rate & Payment Arrangements**

After you have selected your service provider, either independent contractor(s) or a referral company, formalize the details of the assignment in a written agreement and arrange for payment.

DCAB issues a recommended fee schedule for sign language interpreters as part of its administrative rules (HRS 348-F and HAR 11-218). The recommended fee schedule is non-binding and is meant to provide guidance to state agencies on appropriate fees, including mileage and related costs. The recommended fee schedule can be [found here in this document](#) and on the DCAB website.

Include the following in the agreement:

- Description of event
- Description of interpretation services to be provided
- Total costs and terms
- Details on payments

Your state agency likely has a preferred contract for professional services. Contact your purchasing department for details.

Note:

- If the assignment is related to vocational training or assistance referred by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), ask the deaf individual if they are a VR client. If yes, contact the person's counselor to assist with the provision of communication access services. Note: This does not apply when the VR client is taking courses offered by the University of Hawai'i system.
- If the assignment is related to a medical evaluation or appointment, ask what type of insurance the person has. Some medical insurance providers pay for communication access services. Ultimately, entities providing the medical service are responsible for fees regardless of whether the insurance company in question pays for communication access services.

## **4) Confirm Assignment with Deaf Consumer**

After you have put the arrangements in place, confirm details with the deaf consumer to ensure they are comfortable with the arrangements.

Confirm with the deaf consumer:

- Name(s) of assigned interpreter(s)
- Details about the event, especially if anything has changed
- That the deaf consumer still plans to attend the event

## **5) Follow Up**

After the event, contact the deaf consumer to determine satisfaction with services. The interpreter will submit their invoice for services to your agency.

### **State Agency Payment Arrangements**

After the services have been rendered and the interpreter was verified in attendance for the scheduled time, begin to process the payment for services.

If you directly contracted an interpreter, the interpreter may accept payment via P-Card or you can pay with a check request.

If you contracted services through an interpreter referral company, you can process payment via P-Card or purchase order.

Regardless if the interpreter(s) is contracted directly or through a referral company, such services are not subject to procurement for multiple quotes. For more information, check with your department's fiscal office.

For more specific details on the process and forms to pay interpreter referral companies, please contact DCAB directly or see the [State Agencies Programs and Services Manual](#) (appendix L-1). Note that the hourly rate indicated on the invoice is for illustrative purposes only and not intended to reflect a recommended billing rate.

### **Follow Up with Deaf Consumer**

When following up with the deaf consumer, consider asking them the following questions:

- What went well?
- What didn't work well?
- What could we have done better?
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you received?

*Like any customer satisfaction survey, this provides the opportunity for positive and constructive feedback. Professional interpreters and referral companies value feedback.*

### **Performance Concerns**

If you, your agency or the deaf consumer have any significant concerns about the performance of the interpreting services, please share this information back with the provider. If you hired a referral company, contact the company and they will help you resolve the issue. Likewise, professional independent interpreters welcome feedback and will also want to make certain they resolve any issues to all parties' satisfaction.

If you suspect a significant ethical breach or your issue remains unresolved after talking with a referral company or the contracted sign language interpreter, contact DCAB to discuss further recourse.

After sharing any relevant feedback with the interpreter and processing the payment for the interpreting services, the transaction is complete.

# APPENDICES

# Glossary

**American Sign Language (ASL)**: a complex visual-spatial language that is predominantly used by individuals who are deaf and hard-of-hearing in the United States and English-speaking parts of Canada. It is a linguistically complete and natural language.

**Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)**: an individual who is deaf or hard-of-hearing and has been certified as an interpreter by a certifying body recognized by DCAB. The CDI provides interpreting, translation, and transliteration services in sign language and other visual and tactual communication forms used by individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind.

**Communication Access**: effective communication made possible through auxiliary aids and services such as oral or sign language interpreters or real-time captioning services, so that persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-impaired can equally benefit from and participate in programs and services.

**Deaf Interpreter**: a non-certified deaf or hard-of-hearing individual who provides interpreting, translation, and transliteration services in sign language and other visual and tactual communication forms used by individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind.

**Deaf-blind**: individuals with varying types and degrees of dual hearing and vision loss.

**Effective communication**: the standard set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act which dictates that covered entities must ensure communication with people with communication disabilities must be as effective as communication with people without communication disabilities.

**Hard-of-hearing**: people with hearing loss ranging from mild to severe.

**Hearing Consumer**: any hearing individual that requires communication access services to communicate with one or more persons who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind.

**Low-vision Interpreting**: a type of interpretation utilized by deaf consumers who also have vision loss that require varying types of spatial considerations in order ensure the deaf consumer is able to see the interpreter as clearly and easily as possible.

**Oral Interpreting/Oral Transliteration**: a method of interpretation that involves an oral transliterator/interpreter using inaudible lip movements to repeat spoken words and natural gestures to convey messages to the deaf or hard-of-hearing consumer. In some instances, oral transliterators/interpreters may also “voice” for deaf or hard-of-hearing consumers. This method is primarily utilized by those who use speech and

speechreading as their primary mode of communication and may or may not use sign language.

**Professional Interpreter:** someone who has demonstrated fluency in the source and target languages, as well as knowledge and experience in the process and ethics of interpreting. Professional interpreters have typically demonstrated their skills and ethics by gaining a recognized credential in interpreting. Also see RID's Standard Practice Pater on "[Professional Sign Language Interpreting.](#)"

**Qualified interpreter:** someone who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively (i.e., understanding what the person with the disability is saying) and expressively (i.e., having the skill needed to convey information back to that person) using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

**Sight Translation:** the method of translating a written text into sign language which involves the reading of a written document and translating it in a manner that provides the deaf consumer easily understood access to the content.

**Sign Language Interpretation (ASL/English):** the process in which an interpreter interprets between two distinct languages -- a sign language and a spoken language -- by conveying equivalent and conceptually correct messages from one language to another and vice versa.

**Tactile Interpretation:** a form of interpretation utilized by individuals who are deaf and blind in which they receive linguistic information by feeling the interpreter's hands while the interpreter signs. The interpreter also adds visual descriptions along with the interpreted message. In this type of interpretation, the interpreter is typically in close proximity to the deaf-blind consumer while interpreting. This method is primarily utilized by those who use speech and speechreading as their primary mode of communication and may or may not use sign language.

**Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act:** of the five titles of the ADA, Title II pertains to State and Local Government (public entities). These rules cover access to all services, programs, or activities offered by the public entity. Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all services, programs, and activities provided to the public by covered entities.

**Transliteration (ASL/English):** a method of interpretation in which interpreters sign and speak word-for-word rather than interpreting messages produced in one language into another language. Transliteration generally follows an English word order, incorporates mouthing, and is nearly simultaneous with and in the exact word order of the message being conveyed.

**Trilingual Interpreting:** a method of interpretation that involves an interpreter facilitating communication among three different languages, most often ASL, English, and an additional signed or spoken language.

**Video Relay Service(VRS)**:is a free video based telecommunications relay service for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and use sign language to connect with standard voice telephone users. To use VRS, the deaf person must have video conferencing equipment such as a mobile device, computer, or videophone, and a broadband Internet connection. The VRS interpreter interprets the conversation between the deaf person and the person who uses a standard voice telephone. VRS is a federally funded service and regulated by the Federal Communications Commission; callers are not charged for this service. VRS cannot be used in lieu of in-person interpreting or Video Remote Interpreting services.

**Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)**: a fee-based service that uses video conferencing technology to access an off-site interpreter to provide real-time sign language interpreting services for conversations between hearing and deaf people.

# Interpreting Credentials and Certifications

There are several credentials that a sign language interpreter may put on their resume. Not all credentials have been validated and/or are recognized by DCAB. The two most recognized credentialing systems in Hawai'i are the HSSLIC and RID.

**Hawai'i State Sign Language Interpreter Credential (HSSLIC)**: a credential that is issued by the Disability and Communication Access Board to interpreters who pass the Hawai'i Quality Assurance System (HQAS) test or who possess a valid credential issued by an entity recognized by the Board under the [Hawai'i Administrative Rules section 11-218-14](#).

Functional descriptions for the HSSLIC can be found in HAR 11-218, Appendix A.

**HSSLIC Provisional Credential**: A Provisional Credential is issued to a provider of interpreter services who possesses (1) a credential issued by a jurisdiction or entity other than the credentials recognized by the state, provided that the credential is valid and was issued within two (2) years preceding the application; or (2) an Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment certification at a level 4.0 or higher and who provides evidence of consistent work as a sign language interpreter within one (1) year preceding the application. The provisional credential shall be equivalent to the lowest level credential issued by the state screening agency and shall expire on December 31 of the year following the date of application.

In addition to Hawai'i's credentialing system, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) is a national professional organization for sign language interpreters that oversees a professional certification system. There are multiple RID credentials that have been developed since its inception in 1964. In addition, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) previously had a credentialing system. Although, the NAD system is now retired, RID continues to recognize the older NAD system.

Find more information on RID credentials at <https://rid.org/rid-certification-overview/>.

## **Board for Evaluation of Interpreting (BEI) Certificate**

The BEI is a state assessment system from Texas that is sometimes accepted by other entities as an indicator of an interpreter's skill sets in general settings. At this time, DCAB recognizes the BEI as an acceptable credential for an interpreter to work in Hawai'i.

## **Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)**

The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) is a K-12 education-based assessment. While the state's Department of Education recognizes a score of 3.5 or better as a credential for working as an educational interpreter, the EIPA is not a credential indicating an interpreter's skill sets for work outside of the K-12 educational

setting. However, having a valid EIPA score of 4.0 or above will qualify an interpreter for a 1-year provisional HSSLIC credential.

## **DCAB List of Service Providers**

For a current list of providers with verified credentials:

- Visit the DCAB Website at <https://health.hawaii.gov/dcab/communication-access/>
- Scroll to “Communication Access Providers” section
- Select “Sign Language Interpreters” to see the current list of Independent Contractors and Interpreter Referral Companies.

## Additional DCAB Resources

ADA Manual: Programs and Services Manual for Persons with Disabilities

<http://health.hawaii.gov/dcab/community-resources/publications/ada-manuals/>

- Good Customer Service Practices to Keep in Mind as You Encounter Members of the Public who have Disabilities
- Governor's Administrative Directive No. 12-06
- Communications Tips with Individuals who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, or Deaf-Blind
- Guidelines for Utilizing Sign Language/English Interpreters
- Video Remote Interpreting Services

# Hawai'i State Agency Recommended Fee Schedule for Hiring Sign Language Interpreters

## PURPOSE

Per Hawai'i Revised Statutes 348-F (HRS 348-F) and Hawai'i Administrative Rules 11-218 (HAR 11-218), this recommended fee schedule is promulgated by the Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB). This document is intended to inform state agencies of reasonably expected fees payable to sign language interpreters for services to state agencies.

Sign language interpreters are typically independent contractors, not employees, and this document is intended to provide information for state agencies to understand fees and billing practices associated with hiring interpreters.

## INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

When hiring a sign language interpreter, the hiring agency should consider the deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind individual's preference. Additionally, according to HAR 11-218-8 (b), "If no preference is stated, providers with the highest level of credentials shall be hired first, followed by providers with lesser levels of credentials."

### ***Direct Hire vs. Hiring through an Interpreter Referral Company***

Any state agency may direct hire an interpreter as an independent contractor. Alternatively, the state agency may hire an interpreter through an interpreter referral company.

Whether hiring an interpreter directly or hiring through an interpreter referral company, credentials, rates and billing terms for the assigned interpreter are to be disclosed to the hiring state agency.

***Please note that while this is a recommended fee schedule, independent contractor interpreters and interpreter referrals companies are able to set their own rates and billing practices.***

## NUMBER OF INTERPRETERS

Many interpreted events require two (2) interpreters to provide services. Standard practice is hiring two (2) or more interpreters for any assignment that is legal in nature, lasts for more than 90 minutes, includes multiple consumers of the services, and/or is complex in nature.

## VERIFYING CREDENTIALS

DCAB oversees the state credentialing system and maintains a list of credentialed interpreters, as well as the Continuing Education Program (CEP) for interpreters to remain current with their Hawai'i interpreting credentials.

Any interpreter wishing to be included on DCAB's list must submit documentation to DCAB to demonstrate their credentials, year of credentialing, years of residence in Hawai'i, and educational level. DCAB will verify credentials of any interpreter's submission for inclusion on DCAB's list.

## **CREDENTIAL TIERS**

For further reference and direct links for the credentials included below, see DCAB's State Agency Manual for the Provision of Sign Language Interpreters.

- Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credential (HSSIC) Tier V
  - Hawaii Quality Assurance System (HQAS) V
  - National Association of the Deaf (NAD) V
  - Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf (RID)
    - National Interpreter Certification (NIC, all levels)
    - Certificate of Interpretation (CI) and Certificate of Transliteration (CT)
    - Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) and/or Reverse Skills Certificate (RSC)
    - Master Comprehensive Skills Certificate (MCSC) or Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC)
- Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credential Tier IV
  - HQAS IV
  - NAD IV
  - RID
    - CI or CT
    - Interpretation Certificate (IC) and Transliteration Certificate (TC)
    - Oral Interpreting Certificate and/or Oral Transliteration Certificate
- Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credential Tier III
  - HQAS III
  - NAD III
  - RID: IC or TC
  - Provisional Credential for One (1) Year
    - provisional Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credential
    - Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment 4.0 or above
    - other credentialing systems as determined by DCAB

### ***Additional Credentials***

The above credentials are the most common generalized credentials at this time. Some interpreters may negotiate rates other than those listed below; additional credentials may factor into the rates negotiated.

Qualified Mental Health Interpreter (QHMI), a college degree in medical sign language interpreting, and a certificate in medical sign language interpreting are examples of additional credentials. Also, interpreters holding multiple credentials indicate a dedication to staying current in the field.

### ***Special Requested Interpreters***

The deaf, hard-of-hearing or deaf-blind consumer may "special request" an individual who is not credentialed, and thus not typically able to provide professional services as an interpreter, for a single specific instance. Using family members to interpret is not

advised. According to HAR 11-218-3.5, “The state agency shall document instances when a person requests a provider that does not have a credential or certification.”

**Deaf Interpreters**

As described in HAR 11-218-8 (f), “If a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind cannot benefit from conventional communication access services, then additional providers, including a provider who is deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, shall be used to relay information between the consumer and the hearing provider to achieve effective communication.” The services of these professionals can be critical for ensuring access when working with deaf, hard-of-hearing or deaf-blind individuals who are involved in legal proceedings, recent immigrants, diagnosed with multiple disabilities, or demonstrating atypical language.

While Deaf Interpreters may be nationally certified under the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, significant historic and ongoing barriers exist for credentialing Deaf Interpreters. There is no state credential offered for Deaf Interpreters. As with other service providers, Deaf Interpreters set their own rates and billing practices. Despite not holding a credential, Deaf Interpreters may have extensive experience, specialized skill sets, training and/or previously held national certification. These factors are typical considerations when a Deaf Interpreter determines their billing rates and terms.

**CALCULATING AN INTERPRETER’S HOURLY RATE**

Tier	Base Rate	Years of Credentialed Experience* Differentials				Hawai'i Years of Credentialed Service Differentials				Education Level Differentials		
		5-9	10-14	15-19	+ 5 years**	5-9	10-14	15-19	+ 5 years	AA/AS	BA/BS	MA/MS
Tier V	\$55	\$2	\$4	\$6	+ \$2	\$2	\$4	\$6	+ \$2	\$2	\$4	\$6
Tier IV	\$45	\$1	\$2	\$3	+ \$1	\$1	\$2	\$3	+ \$1			
Tier III	\$35	\$1	\$0	\$0	+ \$0	\$1	\$0	\$0	+ \$0			
Special Request	\$30	<i>as no credentials held, no differentials applied</i>				<i>as no credentials held, no differentials applied</i>						

\* Years of credentialed experience are counted from the time of the interpreter’s first credential. For example, an interpreter first receiving their RID CI in 1992 and later receiving their RID NIC in 2019, their years of credentialed experience would be counted from 1992.

\*\* For the years of service differentials, every additional five (5) years of experience are added on to the total. For example, a Tier IV credentialed interpreter with 33 years of post-credentialed service would receive \$6 added to each hour for this category.

## ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Special circumstance add-ons are non-cumulative. Even if multiple special circumstances could apply, only one add-on per assignment is allowable.

<b><i>Specialized Skill Settings</i></b>
<b>Legal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>RID Specialist Certificate: Legal</i> – \$10 per hour in addition to the base hourly rate for sign language interpreters holding the RID SC:L in legal settings only</li><li>• <i>RID Conditional Legal Interpreting Permit-Relay: Legal</i> – \$10 per hour in addition to the base hourly rate for deaf sign language interpreters holding the CLIP: R in addition to the RSC and/or the CDI</li></ul>
<b>Deaf-Blind</b> \$10 per hour for tactile, close-vision, pro-tactile assignments for deaf-blind persons
<b>Trilingual</b> \$10 per hour for requests requiring trilingual interpreting, if the interpreter has documented credentials/qualifications for the additional language requested.
<b><i>Special Time-based Circumstances</i></b>
<i>Business Hours are defined as Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.</i>
<b>Non-Business Hours</b> \$5 per hour for assignments that are outside of regular business hours.
<b>Short Notice (Expedited) Requests</b> \$10 per hour for requests that are initiated with less than 9 business hours' notice.

## STANDARD BILLING PRACTICES

The following practices are typical in the sign language interpreting industry; a hiring agency can expect practices similar to these listed. While these are customary practices described below, an interpreter or interpreter referral company may negotiate additional expenses or waive some of these customary expenses.

### Billing Increments

Any request for interpreters includes a minimum initial show up fee. A typical industry standard is for the initial show up fee to cover any services rendered for up to two hours. Any scheduled or additional interpreted time after that covered by the initial show up fee is billed in 15- or 30-minute increments thereafter.

### Additional Expenses

Practices regarding expenses for traveling to and from assignments vary. Some interpreters may bill for assignments that require a longer travel time, a farther distance, and high parking rates. In the case of inter-island travel, typical expenses include: airfare, ground transportation, accommodations (if relevant), and travel time. Travel time may be charged at a lower rate than the interpreter's regular hourly rate.

Rationale for paying travel time is that the interpreter may be giving up other work opportunities to cover the farther assignment; paying travel time offsets the lost work for an interpreter.

Hawai'i General Excise Tax may also be included in a final invoice to a state agency.

The hiring state agency should ensure that the independent contract interpreter or interpreter referral company has made all rates, expenses, and billing terms explicit prior to confirming the interpreter.

### **Cancellations**

All assignments have a 24-hour cancellation policy that also includes any previously negotiated and agreed upon travel expenses incurred that cannot be recovered. Cancellations after 24 hours are fully billable, minus estimated expenses unless they were already incurred and cannot be recovered. It is customary for longer assignments (more than 4 hours and multiple day events) to have a more stringent cancellation practice. The interpreter or referral company is responsible to inform state agencies of their cancellation policies.

### **Direct Hire Payment**

Please see DCAB's State Agency Manual for Hiring Sign Language Interpreters for the full information to process direct payments to independent contractors.

### **Manual**

Please also see DCAB's State Agency Manual for the Provision of Sign Language Interpreters. Contact DCAB by email at [DCAB@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:DCAB@doh.hawaii.gov) or phone at (808) 586-8121 for further information.

*This Hawai'i State Agency Recommended Fee Schedule for Hiring Sign Language Interpreters was last revised on August 13, 2020. This recommended fee schedule is effective as of August 14, 2020. While this recommended fee schedule can be revised as needed, DCAB will consult primary stakeholders and determine if any revisions to this recommended fee schedule are necessary no later than four (4) years from the last revised date.*