



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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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.

<i>Specialized Skill Settings</i>
Legal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <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 • <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
Deaf-Blind \$10 per hour for tactile, close-vision, pro-tactile assignments for deaf-blind persons
Trilingual \$10 per hour for requests requiring trilingual interpreting, if the interpreter has documented credentials/qualifications for the additional language requested.
<i>Special Time-based Circumstances</i> <i>Business Hours are defined as Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.</i>
Non-Business Hours \$5 per hour for assignments that are outside of regular business hours.
Short Notice (Expedited) Requests \$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 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.