



# **Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

## **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER REFERRAL SERVICE**

### **Policies and Procedures**

Last Approved by RI CDHH  
on June 15, 2016

RICDHH Interpreter/CART Referral Service  
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## History of Revision on Policies and Procedures

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## 1) Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose:

This document is intended to summarize standard, best practice guidelines for the referral and provision of sign language interpreting services in Rhode Island. This manual may serve as a reference regarding procedures and ethical standards for both those administering and/or receiving sign language interpreting services.

### 1.2 Definitions:

#### **ORGANIZATIONS/AGENICES/SERVICES:**

- A) Interpreter/CART Referral Service:** The statewide work unit of the RICDHH Interpreter/CART Services, established under RI G.L., 23-1.8 which receives requests for Interpreters and CART Providers, and maintains a roster of qualified providers to whom interpreting and CART jobs can be referred.
- B) RICDHH:** Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- C) RID:** Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, a national organization.
- D) RIRID:** Rhode Island Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, a state chapter of RID.
- E) State Board of Examiners for Interpreters for the Deaf:** This entity is responsible for overseeing the licensure program for interpreters in Rhode Island, in accordance with Rhode Island General Law, 5-71. This body under the Rhode Island Department of Health has the authority to issue a license to an interpreter that meets criteria and credentials according to rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Examiners for Interpreters for the Deaf.

#### **TYPE OF INTERPRETERS:**

- A) Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) or Deaf interpreter or Deaf intermediary Interpreter:** any individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and who is a certified member of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) or its successor agency.

- B) **Licensed Interpreter:** person who possesses valid license(s) to practice interpreting as defined in B1, B2, B3, and B4 below in this section in Rhode Island. Questions about specific categories of licensure and the limitations therein should be directed to the RI Dept. of Health – Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, phone: 401-222-7883.
1. **Interpreting:** conveying spoken English into American Sign Language (ASL) or conveying American Sign Language into English, or interpreting English to and/or from a visual gestural system.
  2. **Intermediary Interpreting:** interpreting services rendered by a deaf person to facilitate communication between another deaf person and a licensed interpreter.
  3. **Transliterating:** conveying spoken English into Manually coded English, or conveying manually coded English into spoken English, or conveying English on the lips so that it is accessible to speech reading (e.g. oral transliterating, or any auditory communication as a visual form in English such as cued speech).
  4. **Deaf-Blind Interpreting:** linguistic information through sign language acquired by individuals who are deaf-blind through their preferred methods depending on the causes of their combined vision and hearing loss, their background, and their education, such as close-vision interpreting and tactile interpreting, while spoken language is conveyed into sign language (e.g. ASL), and sign language (ASL) is conveyed into spoken language.
- C) **NAD Certified Interpreter:** person who possesses a valid certification level III, IV, or V currently as administered by the RID or its successor agency. (No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- D) **RID Certified Interpreter:** person who possesses valid National Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. or its successor agency.

### **Common RID certifications:**

CDI – Certified Deaf Interpreter  
NIC – National Interpreter Certification

These certifications are no longer offered by the RID but they are still recognized.

CI – Certificate of Interpretation

CT – Certificate of Transliteration

CSC – Comprehensive Skills Certificate

SC:L – Specialist Certificate: Legal

IC – Interpretation Certificate

TC – Transliteration Certificate

OTC – Oral Transliteration Certificate

OIC – Oral Interpreting Certificate

- E) **Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI):** person who possesses valid BEI that is administered by the Texas DARS Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. BEI is another certification program available in the United States of America. There are three levels of certifications under BEI: Basic, Advanced, and Master.
- F) **Screened Interpreter:** any person who presents proof of an active state screening or its equivalent and presents proof of successful completion of an examination. Rhode Island does not have a state screening or quality assurance program for interpreters. However, the State Board Examiners for Interpreters for the Deaf does recognize state screening programs for interpreters offered by the other states. This is an entry-level credential in the interpreting profession.
- G) **Screened Deaf Interpreter (DI):** any person who is deaf or hard of hearing and who presents proof of an active state screening or its equivalent and presents proof of successful completion of an examination. In some cases, an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing call themselves Deaf Interpreter (DI) instead. Rhode Island does not have a state screening or quality assurance

program for interpreters. However, the State Board Examiners for Interpreters for the Deaf does recognize state screening program for interpreters offered by the other states.

- H) **Educational Interpreter for the Deaf:** an individual who has specialized licensure certification (elementary and secondary education for grades kindergarten (K) through twelve (12)) and is a certified member of RID or its successor agency approved by the department in consultation with the board in the provision of sign language interpreting to students who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or deaf-blind in grades preschool through twelve (12).

#### **BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS:**

- A) **Base Rate:** The basic hourly rate an individual or business interpreter is eligible for. The base rate depends on years of interpreting and certification level.
- B) **Consumer:** an individual who is deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, hearing or an individual with a disability who does not share a common means of communication. This may include, without limitation, American Sign Language (ASL), visual, gestural, auditory and tactile mode of communication.
- C) **Interpreter working for the RICDHH:** an interpreter that accepts assignments through the RI CDHH Interpreter/CART Referral Services shall represent her/himself as an independent contractor.
- D) **Interpreting Company or Agency working for the State through the RICDHH:** a company or an agency that accepts assignments through the RI CDHH Interpreter/CART Referral Services shall not send an interpreter that is already on the Master Pricing Agreement list for any assignments.
- E) **Private Entity:** A non-governmental organization, company, non-profit organization, or individual. Private entities may use RICDHH's Interpreter/CART Referral Service to place requests for interpreting services that are taking place in the State of Rhode Island only. The interpreters shall negotiate their own contract terms and conditions, including rates, with private entities prior to accepting the assignments.

Any interpreting company (spoken or signed languages) can not use the RICDHH Interpreter Referral Service to request for interpreting services.

**F) Requester:** any person, agency, or entity that secures the services of an interpreter. The requester is financially responsible for the provision of said services and is also referred to as the paying party.

**G) State Entity:** A state entity/agency uses RICDHH's Interpreter/CART Referral Service to place requests for interpreting services that are taking place in the State of Rhode Island only.

## **2) Procedures:**

2.1 The Interpreter/CART Referral Service may be utilized to secure the services of the interpreter or the interpreter may be contacted directly. Because of the recognized shortage of qualified interpreters, it is recommended that requests be made at least 2 weeks in advance. Requests made with less than a 2-week notice shall still be accepted. Regardless of the notice provided, a qualified interpreter can not be assured. If an interpreter is not available, the requester should be notified at least 3 business days prior to the assignment date. Consumers should request interpreting services directly from the person, agency, or place in which the services will be used. Said person, agency, or place shall be the requester of services or paying party. Questions about particular referral service policies should be directed to that referral agency or the interpreter.

2.2 The requester should provide the following information to a referral specialist or the interpreter.

- A) Name and phone number of requesting party (paying party)
- B) Name of consumer(s)
- C) Day, time, and precise location of assignment (address, bldg., floor, dept, suite, and room)
- D) Length of assignment
- E) Nature/type of assignment
- F) Consumer's language preference if known
- G) Request for preferred interpreter if any
- H) Billing information (address, contact name, phone number)
- I) Any special instructions (e.g. Insurance member ID#, etc.)

2.3 Follow-up assignments may be arranged at the discretion of the interpreter, paying party, and consumers. Follow-up assignments should be routed through an interpreter referral service.

**Please note:** Interpreter should defer to paying party's procedures for hiring interpreters before accepting follow up assignments.

- 2.4 Replacement interpreters:** In case of death in family or emergency, the interpreter/CART referral service shall find a replacement interpreter. Otherwise, if the interpreter realize that s/he cannot fulfill the requirements of an assignment that s/he has accepted, then the interpreter shall first try to find his/her own qualified replacement. And s/he needs to contact requestor/paying party if s/he can not do the assignment. Replacement interpreters must meet the needs and preferences of the consumer. If the interpreter is unsure, s/he may contact the referral specialist for assistance. The interpreter/CART referral service may assist in securing a replacement interpreter.

**3) Assignment categories:**

- 3.1 Legal/Court settings: Section 8-5-8 of Rhode Island General Laws mandates that the court must provide an interpreter for a deaf or hard of hearing witness and/or party in a court proceeding, including a juror. Because of the serious nature and potential consequences to parties involved in legal proceedings, it is best practice that interpreter must hold RID Specialist Certificate in Legal (SC:L), or Conditional Legal Interpreting Permit-Relay (CLIP-R), for all legal/court assignments. In the event a SC:L or CLIP-R is not available, the interpreter must have passed the RID legal written exam, or Board for Evaluation of Interpreter (BEI): Master, or National Interpreter Certification (NIC), dual certifications (both CI and CT) or NAD level V with at least 80 hours of legal training from an RID approval sponsor. Please see RICDHH's Legal or Court Interpreting Manual for best practices and standards in legal and court settings. Also, please see the RID SC:L and CLIP-R application eligibility instructions at [www.RID.org](http://www.RID.org). Information on BEI: Master can be found at <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dhhs/BEICertification.shtml>.
- 3.2 Emergency settings: Please see Emergency Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service Policies and Procedures.
- 3.3 Other settings: Interpreter shall accept assignments based on qualifications, experience, licensure category, and skills in a particular setting according to number 7.2 of NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct Tenets in the section 7 below.



#### **4) Eligibility of Interpreter:**

All interpreters working in Rhode Island are required to be licensed in accordance with RI General Law § 5-71-Interpreter for the Deaf.

All interpreters shall adhere to the Rules and Regulations for Licensing Interpreters for the Deaf (RI General Law § 5-71-Interpreter for the Deaf). Said rules and regulations are available from the RI Dept. of Health – Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908-5097, phone: 401-222-7883.

There are the only 4 exceptions according to RI General Law § 5-71-Interpreter for the Deaf that the provisions do not apply to:

1. Any person working as an interpreter in court. Please review Section 3.1 in this 'RICDHH Interpreter Procedures and Policies' manual for further guidance.
2. Interpreters performing as volunteers without compensation.
3. Interpreters performing in an emergency as defined in RI General Laws, subsection 5-71-3(6) and as set forth in regulations promulgated by the department.
4. Nonlicensed individuals who are certified members of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (RID) its successor agency or other agency as approved by the department in consultation with the board, who may provide services for a maximum of twenty-five (25) hours per calendar year.

#### **5) Fee Schedule and Fee Policies:**

##### **5.1 Fees:**

##### **5.1.1 - STATE AGENCIES:**

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RI CDHH) with the assistance of the RI Division of Purchases establishes state rates as freelance independent contractors for State's Master Pricing Agreement (MPA) or known as state contract, that will be based on certain levels of certifications and years of interpreting with current certification. The state rates are reviewed every 3 years.

The RICDHH is responsible to notify the licensed interpreters and state agencies as requesters of the public hearing on the proposed state rates as freelance independent contractor which should be held between April and May with at least 14 business days in advance. If the state rates of the 3<sup>rd</sup> final fiscal year is expired on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the hearing will be held in April/May prior to June 30<sup>th</sup>. The notification shall be sent by the Executive Director or its staff member other than the Interpreter Referral Service Specialist through e-mail.

The new state rates will be in effect starting on July 1<sup>st</sup> of each fiscal year.

5.1.2 RI CDHH handles the appropriate paperwork such as a proof of license in RI, the W-9, updates on interpreting certifications, and other documentations from the interpreters in order for them to comply the master pricing agreement (MPA) requirements. Once the MPA number is given to an interpreter, the interpreter is able to work with the State of RI as long as their status is in a good standing and for the duration of MPA.

5.1.3 MPA shall include the standard policies listed below:

GENERAL:

- Two hour minimum to be paid.
- If the assignment is cancelled less than 48 hours (2 business days), payment must be made by the paying party/requester for total hours reserved.
- If the assignment requires less time than reserved, payment must be made by the paying party/requestor for total hours reserved.
- An assignment, 2 hours or more (sometimes less than two hours), will require more than one interpreter (extenuating circumstances at the professional judgment and discretion of the interpreter according to RID's Code of Professional Conduct). Please refer to Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf's Standard Practice paper and list of situations as the guidelines that might warrant 2 interpreters for an assignment that is less than 2 hours long.

### **APPEARANCE:**

- In the case a client has not arrived for the assignment, the interpreter is to wait no less than 30 minutes.
- In the case a client has not arrived for an ½ day assignment, the interpreter is to wait no less than 60 minutes.
- In the case a client has not arrived for a full day assignment, the interpreter is to wait no less than 90 minutes and before making determination to leave, call the RICDHH Interpreter and CART Referral Service to check if a client plans to show up some point of the day.
- The interpreter can charge for their service using half-hour (0.5 hour) increments after a minimum of two hours.

For example: The reserved length of an assignment was 2.5 hours but the assignment lasted for 2 hours and 45 minutes. The interpreter may add a fee of 1/2 hour to the bill to make it 3 hours of service.)

- The interpreter shall not be late for the assignment subject to the RID's Code of Professional Conduct in Section 7. If it occurred, the interpreter shall not bill for the entire time.

### **STATE COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES:**

- For Post Secondary State Colleges and Universities, if an ongoing class is reserved and eventually cancelled within two weeks prior to start of the semester/quarter and anytime during the semester/quarter, interpreter shall be paid a two week severance. Billing, cancellation, and payment arrangements if different than the policy above shall be at the interpreter's discretion and arranged directly with the paying party prior to accepting the assignment.

### **IF PAYMENT DISPUTES OCCUR:**

- If a requestor/payer fails to pay an interpreter for the service rendered that was referred by RICDHH and the interpreter has attempted to resolve this matter, the RICDHH Interpreter/CART Referral Service will provide advocacy on behalf of the interpreter for services only when the interpreter had also

confirmed the fees and fee-related policies directly with the requestor prior to the assignment. It is the responsibility of the interpreter and the requestor to confirm fees and policies prior to accepting the assignment.

## 5.2 **PRIVATE ENTITIES OR ANY NON-STATE ENTITIES:**

Interpreter will set their own fees for services. It is standard practice that interpreter charge a minimum/appearance fee that is equal to 2 hours at the interpreter's standard rate. Billing beyond said "appearance fee/2 hour minimum" is at the interpreter's discretion. Billing, cancellation, and payment arrangements shall be at the interpreter's discretion and arranged directly with the paying party prior to accepting the assignment.

5.2.1 **Pay Differential:** Interpreter may charge a pay differential for adverse circumstances (i.e. emergency assignments or last minute requests). Pay differential shall be at the interpreter's discretion and arranged directly with the paying party.

5.2.2 **Mileage/travel time:** Interpreter may charge for mileage and/or travel time for assignments. These fees shall be arranged directly with the paying party.

## 6) **Assignment Protocol**

6.1 **Two-hours or less:** Generally, one interpreter may accept an assignment that is expected to require 2 hours or less of time. However, the two-hour guideline shall be at the interpreter's discretion.

6.2 **Multiple Interpreters at same assignment:** For assignments that are expected to exceed 2 hours, the paying parties are strongly encouraged to secure more than one interpreter.

6.3 **Special Circumstances:** some assignments that are less than 2 hours in length may require multiple interpreters (i.e. lectures, presentations, and meetings containing a heavy information load and providing few or no breaks). Also, situations that present complex communication needs (i.e. Deaf-Blind, CDI, concurrent sessions, multiple consumers and/or a request for multiple modes of communication) may require more than one interpreter. (Refer to RID Standard Practice Papers at [www.RID.org](http://www.RID.org))

#### 6.4 Cancellation of Assignment:

Standard cancellation policy is 2 business days prior to date of assignment. Unless, cancellation and payment arrangements if different than the policy above is already arranged directly with the paying party by the interpreter prior to accepting the assignment.

##### 6.4.1 For private post-secondary colleges/universities:

**General Practice:** When a post secondary assignment is cancelled at any time during the semester/quarter, interpreters shall be given two weeks severance pay. However, the interpreter or may negotiate with the paying party at his/her discretion prior to accepting the assignment.

#### 7) Professional and Ethical Standards:

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) puts forth the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct which exists to protect and guide both interpreters and consumers. It is expected that every working interpreter know, understand, and adhere to the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct. NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct Tenets as defined by the RID are listed below.

- 7.1 Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
- 7.2 Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
- 7.3 Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
- 7.4 Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
- 7.5 Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
- 7.6 Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
- 7.7 Interpreters engage in professional development.

For more details, refer to NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct at [www.RID.org](http://www.RID.org).

## **8) Feedback and Disciplinary Actions:**

### **8.1 The Code of Professional Conduct Provoked or any “Harm Done” Incidents caused by a RI licensed interpreter:**

Before sending a complaint to the Board of Examiners for the Deaf under the Department of Health, it is strongly encouraged to resolve an issue between the consumer or the requester and the interpreter first. If the consumer or the requester still insists, s/he may do the followings.

The Board of Examiners for the Deaf under the Department of Health is the appropriate point of contact regarding complaints about an Interpreter's service. Concerns about the service received by a paying party or a consumer can be directed to the Board of Examiners for the Deaf at the Department of Health, Department of Licensure and Regulation, 3 Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, phone: 401-222-2827. Paying parties and consumers are also encouraged to make any concerns known to the Executive Director of RI CDHH at [Steven.Florio@cdhh.ri.gov](mailto:Steven.Florio@cdhh.ri.gov).

### **8.2 Unsatisfactory or complaints on the interpreter/CART Referral Service:**

#### **Grievance Resolution Guideline:**

Before sending a complaint to the Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Commission, it is strongly encouraged to resolve an issue between the consumer, the requester, or the interpreter and the referral specialist first. If the consumer, the requester, or the interpreter still insists, s/he may do the followings.

There are three (3) formats you may use to express your concerns. They are as follows:

1. **WRITE A LETTER** - Please send a written letter to the Executive Director and cc: to Chairperson of the Commission and/or Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist at the following address:

Executive Director  
Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
One Capitol Hill, Ground Level  
Providence, RI 02908

2. **SEND AN E-MAIL** - Please send an e-mail explaining your concerns to the Executive Director at Steven.Florio@cdhh.ri.gov and cc: to Chairperson of the Commission at cdhh.main@cdhh.ri.gov and/or Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist at cdhh.interpreter@cdhh.ri.gov.
3. **SEND AN ASL VIDEO CLIP** - Please send an e-mail with a link of your video clip in American Sign Language (ASL) to the Executive Director at Steven.Florio@cdhh.ri.gov and cc: to Chairperson of the Commission at cdhh.main@cdhh.ri.gov and/or Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist at cdhh.interpreter@cdhh.ri.gov.

**NOTE:** The link of the ASL videos needs to be provided so the Executive Director, Chairperson of the Commission, and/or Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist can gain access to your video clip at YouTube, google drive, dropbox, or any storage sources. The RICDHH e-mail box only accepts the attachment that is less than 25MB. Otherwise, your e-mail, that exceeds maximum size limit of 25 MB, will be bounced back. The link of the ASL videos provided is most effective.

If you wish to use YouTube particularly, please be sure that the video clip is set as UNLISTED to protect confidentiality. This way, the certain individuals you sent a link to are the only individuals that can gain access to your video clip.

Next, please be sure to include all information below in one of any formats (Letter, E-mail, and ASL Video Clip):

- a. The nature of the problem or the reason for complaint
- b. The date of incident
- c. Your name and the contact information, in case the Executive Director needs to follow up with you for further inquiry.

You should receive a response from RI CDHH within 10 business days concerning your complaint outlining what steps RI CDHH should take toward the resolution on your behalf.

### **8.3 Compliments on the Quality of Interpreter/CART Referral Services:**

Please use any format indicated under 8.2 (1), (2), or (3) and send it to the Executive Director of your acknowledgement and cc: to Chairperson of the Commission and/or Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist.

***Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will respond to any written letter, e-mail, or ASL of complaint in a timely manner. RI CDHH is committed to ensuring the highest quality Interpreter/CART Referral Service for its consumers.***