



Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER REFERRAL SERVICE

Policies and Procedures

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RICDHH Interpreter/CART Referral Service
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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/transliterating 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/transliterating services.

1.2 Definitions:

ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES/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 /Transliterators 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: National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

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): an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and has been certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as a highly qualified and trained interpreter.

- B) **Licensed Interpreter/Transliterater:** person who possesses valid license(s) to practice interpreting/transliterating 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: 401-222-2827.
- C) **NAD Certified Interpreter:** person who possesses a valid certification level III, IV, or V currently as administered by the RID. (No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- D) **RID Certified Interpreter/Transliterater:** person who possesses valid National Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.

Common RID certifications:

- CI – Certificate of Interpretation
- CT – Certificate of Transliteration
- CSC – Comprehensive Skills Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- SC:L – Specialist Certificate: Legal
- IC – Interpretation Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- TC – Transliteration Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- CDI – Certified Deaf Interpreter
- OTC – Oral Transliteration Certificate
- OIC – Oral Interpreting Certificate
(No longer offered but it is still recognized.)
- NIC – National Interpreter Certification
(Master, Advanced, and Certified)

- E) **Screened Interpreter/Transliterater:** person who has passed a recognized state screening or quality assurance. 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. This is an entry-level in the interpreting profession.
- F) **Screened Deaf Interpreter (SDI):** an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and has met the satisfactory level of another state’s screening and/or quality assurance program. 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.

- G) **Transliterators**: an individual who renders a message between spoken English and Signed English form that utilizes visual language, but more closely follows the grammar and syntax of spoken English (i.e. PSE or Contact Sign).

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, hard of hearing or other individual with disabilities who use special communication techniques in order to communicate, and individuals whose primary language is sign language (e.g., American Sign Language, manually coded sign systems).

- C) **Private Entity**: A non-governmental organization, company, non-profit organization, or individual. Private entities may use RICDHH's Interpreter/CART Referral Service to place job requests, but interpreters must negotiate their own contract terms and conditions, including rates, with private entities prior to accepting the assignments.

- D) **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.

- E) **State Entity**: A state entity/agency uses RICDHH's Interpreter/CART Referral Service to place job requests.

2) Procedures:

- 2.1 The Interpreter/CART Referral Service may be utilized to secure the services of the interpreter/transliterater or the interpreter/transliterater may be contacted directly. Because of the recognized shortage of qualified interpreters/transliteraters, it is recommended that requests be made at least 2 weeks in advance. Requests made with less than 2 weeks notice shall still be honored. Regardless of the notice provided, a qualified interpreter/transliterater can not be assured. If an interpreter/transliterater is not available, the requester should be notified at least 2 business days prior to the assignment date. Consumers should request interpreting/transliterating 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/transliterater.
- 2.2 The requester should provide the following information to a referral specialist or the interpreter/transliterater.
- 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/transliterater if any
 - H) Billing information (address, contact name, phone number)
- 2.3 Follow-up assignments may be arranged at the discretion of the interpreter/transliterater, 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: If the interpreter/transliterater cannot fulfill the requirements of an assignment that he/she has accepted, then the interpreter/transliterater may find his/her own qualified replacement. Replacement interpreters must meet the needs and preferences of the consumer. If the interpreter/transliterater is unsure, s/he may contact the referral specialist for assistance. The interpreter/CART referral service may assist in securing a replacement interpreter/transliterater.

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/transliterators must hold RID Specialist Certificate in Legal (SC:L) for all legal/court assignments. In the event a SC:L is not available, the interpreter/transliterators must have passed the RID legal written exam, or dual certifications (both CI and CT) or NAD level V with legal training from an RID approval sponsor. Please see the NRID SC:L application eligibility instructions at www.RID.org.
- 3.2 Emergency settings: Please see Emergency Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service Policies and Procedures.
- 3.3 Other settings: Interpreter/Transliterators 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 below.

4) Eligibility of Interpreter/Transliterators:

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

All interpreters/transliterators 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: 401-222-2827.

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 or a transliterator in court. Please review Section 3.1 in this 'RICDHH Interpreter Procedures and Policies' manual for further guidance.
2. Interpreters or transliterators performing as volunteers without compensation.
3. Interpreters or transliterators 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 biennially.

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 at least 14 business days in advance.

The new state rates will be in effect starting on July 1st.

- 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 others 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 license 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 for total hours reserved.
- If the assignment requires less time than reserved, payment must be made 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.
- If the interpreter is more than 15 minutes late or does not show up for the assignment, s/he may not bill for the entire time unless s/he re-negotiates the start/completion time with the requestors.

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/transliterators' discretion and arranged directly with the paying party prior to accepting the assignment.

IF PAYMENT DISPUTES OCCUR:

- If a requestor/payer fails to reimburse an interpreter for an assignment referred by RICDHH and the interpreter has attempted to resolve this matter, the RICDHH Interpreter/CART Referral Service will provide advocacy to the interpreter to assist in the reimbursement 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.

LEGAL ASSIGNMENT:

- RI Court: Qualified Interpreters only

Legal Approved * with Specialist Certificate in Legal

Add \$10.00/Hour

Legal Approved* without Specialist Certificate in Legal

Add \$5.00/Hour

Travel Time for legal/court assignment only – If an interpreter is required to drive more than 50 miles one way, the interpreter is eligible to include travel time in their fees.

Add interpreter's rate per hour

- Mileage – the mileage rate is determined by the state.

5.2 PRIVATE ENTITIES OR ANY NON-STATE ENTITIES:

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

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

5.2.2 Mileage/travel time: Interpreter/transliterators 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/transliterators 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/transliterators' discretion.

6.2 Multiple Interpreters/transliterators at Same Assignment: For assignments that are expected to exceed 2 hours, the paying parties are strongly encouraged to secure more than one interpreter/transliterators.

6.3 Special Circumstances: Some assignments that are less than 2 hours in length may require multiple interpreters/transliterators (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/transliterators. (Refer to RID Standard Practice Papers at www.RID.org)

6.4 Cancellation of Assignment:

Standard cancellation policy is 2 business days prior to date of assignment and is applied at the discretion of the interpreter/transliterators.

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/transliterators shall be given two weeks severance pay. However, the interpreter/transliterator 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/transliterators and consumers. It is expected that every working interpreter/transliterator 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.

8) Feedback and Disciplinary Actions:

- 8.1 The Code of Ethics Provoked or any “Harm Done” incidents caused by a RI licensed interpreter/transliterater:

The Board of Examiners for the Deaf under the Department of Health is the appropriate point of contact regarding complaints about an interpreter/transliterater’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 interpreter/CART referral specialist of RI CDHH for a particular assignment.

- 8.2 Unsatisfactory or complaints on the Interpreter/CART Referral Service:

Grievance Resolution Guideline:

Please send a written letter to the Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist and cc to Executive Director at the following address:

Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist
Rhode Island Commission on theDeaf and Hard of Hearing
One Capitol Hill, Ground Level
Providence, RI 02908

The letter should include the nature of the problem or the reason for complaint, date, name and the contact information, in case the Referral Specialist needs to reach them for further inquiry.

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

8.3 Comments on the Quality of Interpreter/CART Referral Services:

Send either a written letter or an e-mail to the Executive Director and Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist of your acknowledgement.

Mail to: Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, One Capitol Hill, Ground Level, Providence, RI 02908.

E-mail to: CDHH@CDHH.RI.GOV.

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