

# CHS



*INTERPRETER POLICY*  
&  
*PROCEDURE*  
*MANUAL*

## **I. Introduction**

Established in 1916, CHS (Chicago Hearing Society) is a not-for-profit agency providing communication access; hearing and assistive technologies; and support services for persons who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing. CHS provides, among other programs and services, interpreting and captioning services.

In the 1970s, Mary Mulcrone began what is now known as the CHS Interpreter Services Department. Mary was the first RID certified interpreter in Illinois and was a mentor to countless interpreters, teachers and providers. As her coordinating work transferred from her home to Catholic Office of the Deaf, it officially became a part of CHS in 1979, Illinois' first established sign language interpreter referral service.

This manual is designed to serve as a reference guide for those individuals who are private practice (freelance) sign language interpreters wishing to work as independent contractors for CHS. This is not intended as an employment handbook for CHS/Anixter Center. Any questions or comments regarding the following policies and procedures are welcome and may be provided to the Director of CHS.

Address: CHS Interpreter Services Department (ISD)  
1444 W. Willow Street  
Chicago, IL 60642

Telephone: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mondays-Fridays  
(Voice) 773-248-9121 Ext. 312  
(VP) 773-598-8927  
(Fax) 773-409-1544

After-Hours: Weekdays, 4:30 p.m. – 8:30 a.m., weekends and holidays

(Voice/text) 866-251-0220  
(E-mail) [chsinterp@anixter.org](mailto:chsinterp@anixter.org)

## **II. Interpreter Services Policies**

### **A. Obtaining Assignments**

Interpreters are encouraged to contact Interpreter Services Department (ISD) frequently to update their availability, check on available work and confirm assignments. ISD will also text, email or call Interpreters as needed to check availability and/or interest in assignments.

Interpreters will receive eRSP group broadcast messages regarding open work. Interpreters are assigned on a first come first serve basis, managed by the database.

Upon beginning to work for CHS, you will be given a username and password for the [chs.ersp.biz](http://chs.ersp.biz) website. Once you accept an assignment, the job number and pertinent information about the assignment will be posted onto your personal calendar at this site.

It is Interpreter's responsibility to check the information at least the day before the assignment to solve any issues, get answers to any questions, or resolve any concerns about the assignment with the ISD staff.

CHS has engaged with Interpreter as an Independent Contractor. All communication with Customer is to be performed by CHS. Interpreter is not to communicate with Customer outside of the requested assignment time.

## **B. Eligibility**

Interpreters will be considered by CHS and be given assignments based upon:

- Possession of a current State of Illinois Interpreter License level appropriate for the assignment
- Certification, qualification, skills, specialized training
- Consumer request
- Reliability/flexibility and professionalism as demonstrated to staff and known within the professional community
- Availability for days, times and locations
- Frequency of "returned assignments" (give-backs) experienced by CHS staff
- ISD's ability to quickly contact the Interpreter

## **C. Requirements for Interpreters**

- Contact the Manager of ISD to initiate process for those Interpreters not yet on our independent contractor interpreting list.
- Current license from the State of Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission permitting you to work in the State of Illinois
- Copy of current Certification.
- Compliance with the RID Code of Professional Conduct
- Signed Independent Contractor Agreement.
- Completion of W-9 and other required forms. (Interpreters are responsible for their own taxes and government reporting. 1099 forms are issued to all interpreters by the 31<sup>st</sup> of January).
- Signed HIPAA Compliance Form.

## **D. Liability**

As an independent contract interpreter, Interpreter is not covered by CHS's professional liability insurance (unless you are a staff interpreter). CHS does not assume legal responsibility for the actions of freelance Interpreters or for any injuries that an Interpreter may suffer traveling to, from, or during assignments. The Interpreter shall be responsible for all of her/his personal belongings at all times. Interpreters are encouraged to obtain professional liability (malpractice) insurance available through RID or other sources.

# **III. On-The-Job Policies**

## **A. Punctuality/Preparation**

Interpreters are expected to arrive *fifteen minutes* prior to assignments in order to locate the parties involved and/or access assignment logistics. Interpreters are to remain for the entire contracted time

unless dismissed by the contact person or person in charge. When in doubt, call the ISD office or, if after hours, the After Hours contact number should be called.

Interpreters are expected to be flexible whenever possible regarding work required of them when on an assignment (i.e. the ERSP information states the job is a team meeting, but on-site the customer asks the interpreter to do a one-on-one meeting with the manager), especially within the scheduled time. If the interpreter is unable to accommodate, the ISD office should be called, or if after hours, the After Hours contact number.

## **B. Late Arrivals**

If the Interpreter is going to be late for an assignment, the interpreter must call the ISD office as soon as possible to report. ISD staff will then notify the appropriate consumers/team Interpreters/contact personnel. If the report of tardiness cannot be called into the ISD office or After-Hours line prior to the assignment, the call must be made as soon as possible but not more than 24 hours after completion of the assignment.

The Interpreter shall consult with the ISD staff to determine if the Interpreter's invoice for that assignment should indicate a change in billable times due to their late arrival.

A pattern of tardiness will result in lowered eligibility or ineligibility of assignments through CHS.

Again, it is the Interpreter's professional responsibility to review and confirm all assignment related details prior to the actual assignment date to avoid confusion regarding date, time and/or location and thereby assist in arriving in a timely fashion.

## **C. Missing an Assignment**

If an Interpreter is about to miss an assignment, the Interpreter must report this to the ISD immediately or as early as possible prior to the assignment.

If the assignment is after business hours, the Interpreter must notify the After-Hours Coordinator immediately by calling the After-Hours number (866.251.0220).

If the Interpreter realizes that an assignment was missed, Interpreter must call as soon as possible to report the error.

Interpreters who knowingly fail to notify the ISD of a missed assignment or who miss two (2) assignments within a six (6) month period will become ineligible for future assignments on either a temporary or even a permanent basis. Such determination will be at the discretion of ISD Manager and Director of CHS.

## **D. Giving Back an Assignment**

Giving back assignments with short notice is especially frustrating for both the ISD Staff, Customers and consumers involved. Repeated 'give-backs' with short notice will result in decreased eligibility for future assignments.

If an Interpreter must give back an assignment, please do not attempt to find a replacement interpreter. Contact ISD staff who will work to find a replacement interpreter.

## **E. On-Site Cancellations**

When an assignment is cancelled after the Interpreter has arrived, the Interpreter must contact the ISD from the location. Please report to ISD the name of person who informed you the assignment was cancelled.

## **F. Overtime – Notification Required Within 24 Hours**

Overtime on an assignment may be completed by the Interpreter according to Interpreter's schedule but is not guaranteed. Please report to ISD the name of person who authorized the Overtime. Customers are encouraged upon booking the appointment to allow enough time for the entire assignment. If the Interpreter has another CHS assignment that would be affected by an overtime situation, that second assignment has priority over the first assignment.

It is generally not acceptable practice to arrive late to an assignment due to a prior assignment running into overtime. Exceptions may be made in emergency or extenuating circumstances. The Interpreter is to consult with ISD staff as soon as possible in these situations.

Assignments worked past the contracted time, referred to as 'overtime', will be billed in the following manner: 0-9 minutes is unbillable, 10-30 minutes will be billed for 30 minutes overtime, 31-60 minutes will be billed for one hour over time, 61-90 minutes will be billed for 1.5 hours overtime, etc. Interpreters must notify the ISD of any **overtime within 24 hours** of completing the assignment in order to guarantee payment. Please provide the ISD staff the name of the person who approved your overtime.

## **G. Travel Time – Notification Requirements**

Interpreters accepting those requests called into the ISD with less than one business-days' notice will be paid an Emergency Fee and be eligible for travel time. Interpreters must then notify the ISD of their total travel time **within twenty-four (24) hours** in order to be guaranteed payment.

If ISD is not notified within 24 hours of exact travel time, interpreters will only be paid for 30 minutes of travel time.

Travel time is computed by taking the time required to travel to and from the assignment (portal to portal), adding them together into half-hour (30 minute) increments and then adding that to the billable assignment time. Travel time is paid at the base Standard Rate, Standard Night Rate and Sunday/Holiday Rate, determined by the start of the assignment.

*Example: Fifteen (15) minutes each way would add a half-hour (30 minutes) of travel time; twenty (20) minutes each way would add one (1) hour travel time, etc.*

*Example: An assignment starts at 5:00 pm and ends at 7:00 pm. Travel time to the assignment is paid at the Interpreter's Standard base rate. The return travel time after completion of the assignment is also paid at the Interpreter's Standard base rate.*

For contractual and other reasons, there may be occasions when a pre-determined amount of travel time is negotiated with the Customer. In such cases, the Interpreter will be informed and may accept or reject the amount of travel time offered.

Maximum travel time is two (2) hours round trip unless specified. If an Interpreter expects travel time to exceed two (2) hours, the Interpreter must inform ISD staff at the time that the job is accepted. ISD staff will consider the circumstances and consult with the paying consumer and inform the Interpreter if travel time is approved in excess of two (2) hours. If it is not, the Interpreter may either accept the maximum offered or decline the assignment.

## **H. Consumers Who Fail to Appear ('No-shows')**

In the case of a consumer who fails to appear, and it is unknown if they are on their way to the appointment, the Interpreter will remain on site either until dismissed by an authorized person or until the end of the assigned time.

At public event platform interpreting assignments, the Interpreter(s) may be required to remain and possibly interpret for the entire contracted time at the request of the authorized person or their designee. This may be done for public relations, visibility and/or ADA compliance purposes. Contact ISD staff if you have any questions or concerns regarding this practice.

Interpreters are encouraged to contact the ISD after cancellations or 'no-shows', as there may be either additional information or a new last-minute assignment needing to be filled. If the Interpreter accepts a last-minute assignment during the same time of the 'no-show' assignment, the Interpreter will be paid for both the canceled and the new assignment.

## **I. Team Interpreting**

Team Interpreters will rotate from the 'active' to 'spell' positions approximately every 20-30 minutes according to a mutually agreed upon schedule or in a manner that is least disruptive to the assignment.

It is always important for the Interpreter in the 'spell' position to remain professionally engaged and be immediately available to back-up the 'active' Interpreter. They should be attentive to the message being conveyed to be able to assist the 'active' Interpreter when necessary and/or quickly substitute if needed.

The 'spell' Interpreter is expected to remain in the room and should refrain from leaving the room as much as possible, depending upon the assignment requirements. Personal activities (phone calls, text messages, checking emails, reading materials, etc.) should be limited to a professional measure while in either the 'active' or 'spell' position.

*Both Interpreters are being paid for the entire assignment and the paying Customers often don't understand why two (2) Interpreters are required for an assignment. It is thus very important that the Interpreting team present themselves in a professional manner and work as a 'team' and not merely 'relief' Interpreters.*

## **J. Attire**

Clothing should be appropriate for the setting and similar to that expected to be worn by the average participant at the assignment. A good guideline can be found in *Interpreting: An Introduction* by Nancy Frishberg, where she suggests that an Interpreter be more formally dressed than the least formally dressed person in the room and less formally dressed than the most formally dressed person in the room. Clothing should fit appropriately and cover the body appropriately.

Clothing worn by Interpreters should contrast with their skin color, so that their hands and face can be comfortably seen. Clothing and/or jewelry worn should not present a visual or aural distraction from their interpretation.

Interpreters will be issued a CHS ID badge and are strongly encouraged to wear it when working an assignment. Many medical facilities require worn identification.

Jewelry and fragrance worn by the Interpreter should be kept to a minimum. Many locations are scent/fragrance free zones.

The Interpreters' grooming and appearance is expected to always be professional in nature. This includes but is not limited to purses, bags and briefcases.

Tattoos and other body piercings are to be hidden.

## **K. Questions from Customers**

All questions directed to the Interpreter, by the Customer, should be directed to the ISD. This includes, but is not limited to billing, invoicing, assignment information, cancellations, change in schedule, etc. Interpreters are not to contact the Customer without permission from the ISD.

## **IV. VRI Protocols**

CHS offers video remote services (VRI) to our customer. Assignments are scheduled with a 2-hour minimum. Travel time is not paid for any VRI requests when providing service from home. Interpreters are required to complete a VRI readiness test call with CHS Management prior to accepting VRI work. Interpreters are required to have the following:

- **Internet:** You will need a high-speed internet connection. The recommended speed would be at least 25mpbs/download and 2/mpbs upload. You must also be wired in via ethernet cable and not on a Wi-Fi connection.
- **Webcam:** While some computers have very good webcams, we recommend you consider getting either an HD (720p) or FHD (1080p) webcam. The Logitech C920 HD Pro for example. This will assure that the Deaf customer can see you as clearly as possible. You might want to consider a high-quality headset to make sure you can hear the customer through the computer as well as possible.
- **Office:** You will need a dedicated office space with the ability to have four enclosed walls and a door that can be securely closed. In order for the VRI calls to be confidential the workspace must have the ability to be closed off to ensure that other people cannot hear or see the interpreter or the computer screen. There can be no distractions in the workspace during the VRI calls such as pets or children. There can be no one disturbing the VRI interpreter during the calls.
- **Backdrop:** You will be expected to create a backdrop of a contrasting color (typically dark blue, purple, or black) that will be behind you as you are interpreting. It needs to cover the entire area behind you as seen on the computer screen. There can be no corners showing the other elements of the room.
- **Appearance:** Same clothing protocol applies as when interpreting on site. Contrasting shirt, neat appearance. We suggest that you wear professional pants or skirt and shoes. While it rarely happens,

occasionally the interpreter will stand up to adjust something in the workspace and the customer will see the rest of your body.

- **Lighting:** You will need to be well lit for the Deaf customer to see your signing, expressions, and mouth movements. You will want to have lights on either side of your computer screen so that your room and your face and body are well lit. Additionally, some interpreters find it helpful to wear makeup and lip color to help highlight their expressions and lip movements.

## **V. Billing for Services Rendered**

### **A. Invoices**

Interpreters are required to submit their invoices bimonthly or monthly. CHS can provide an invoice template to Interpreters. All invoices must include:

- Interpreter name and licensure level
- address where payment should be sent/ACH transfer
- contact information
- date of the assignment
- job number as given by ISD
- hourly rate of pay per CHS
- any additional fees (Emergency fee, Travel, etc.)
- total amount due to the Interpreter

Invoices are submitted to the ISD at: **CHSinvoices@anixter.org**. You may confirm receipt of your email by Manager of ISD. CHSinvoices@anixter.org inbox is not monitored daily. If you have questions, email the Manager of ISD.

In the case of an invoice discrepancy, Interpreter will be contacted, and payment may be delayed while the discrepancy is being resolved.

Payment for changes to the assignment, such as overtime and travel time, which have not been reported to the ISD in a timely manner (24 hours) cannot be guaranteed.

### **B. End of Fiscal Year Invoice Submission (July 1<sup>st</sup>-June 30<sup>th</sup>)**

Invoices received more than fifteen (30) days after the end of the fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>) will not be paid. All invoices are to be in our offices by July 30<sup>th</sup> to guarantee payment.

## **VI. Payment of Interpreters**

### **A. Pay Periods**

Invoices emailed to [CHSinvoices@anixter.org](mailto:CHSinvoices@anixter.org) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month will be paid on the last day of the same month. Invoices received by the last day of the month will be paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

If the 15<sup>th</sup> or last day of the month fall on a weekend, invoices should be submitted on the following Monday.

Interpreters will be notified as soon as possible should the payment schedule change.

All interpreting jobs must be invoiced within 60 days of the date of service. Any invoice older than 60 days will be paid upon the discretion of CHS management.

## **B. Cancelled Assignments**

Once the assignment is confirmed, if the ISD cancels an Interpreter's assignment with less than two business days prior to the time of the assignment, the Interpreter will bill and be paid for the entire length of the assignment.

If an assignment is cancelled more than two business days *prior* to that assignment, CHS will not pay the Interpreter (assignment is not billable). ISD will make every effort to contact the Interpreter in case of cancellations. The Interpreter will be considered notified upon a message being left, email or text sent or live contact.

In case of an emergency assignment with travel being cancelled *prior* to the Interpreter going to the assignment, there will be no travel time charged, since no travel occurred.

## **C. Time-and-a-Half**

In team interpreting situations where a second Interpreter is unavailable or cancels, the Interpreter will be given the option of declining the assignment or accepting it for pay at a time-and-a-half. ISD will negotiate with the paying consumers whenever possible.

**Time-and-a-half must be specifically approved by ISD staff and negotiated in advance.** If a situation was assigned to one Interpreter and the assignment went overtime to the extent that it became a two Interpreter assignment, ISD will, at their discretion, attempt to negotiate for time-and-a-half when possible. However, time-and-a-half pay, after the fact, is not guaranteed in such cases. Interpreters are not expected to exceed safe working standards and should decline overtime that places them in danger of injury. ISD staff are always available to assist when on-site issues arise.

In situations where one Interpreter consents to do an assignment usually requiring two Interpreters, the Interpreter is advised to advocate for on-site modifications such as increased frequency of breaks or length in order to protect themselves from fatigue or injury and thereby maintain quality of service. Interpreters are advised to contact ISD for advice, assistance or advocacy in specific circumstances when dealing with on-site personnel or consumers.

## **D. Evening and Sunday/Holiday Rates**

Evening Rates: Interpreters will be paid a premium for assignments occurring between 6-p.m. and 6 a.m., on Mondays through Saturdays only. If a 2-hour assignment starts during the day and ends during the night, Interpreter will be paid the day rate. If a 2-hour assignment starts during the night and ends during the day, Interpreter will be paid the night rate.

Sunday/Holiday rate applies for the entire Sunday and on select holidays. Refer to the CHS ISD pay schedule.

## **E. 2-Business Days' Notice Assignments**

A \$25.00 "Efee" payment will be allocated for all interpreter requests that are worked with less than two (2) business days' notice.

## **F. 2-Business Days' Notice Assignments**

Both Travel Time and an Efee will be allocated for all interpreter requests that are worked with less than one (1) business days' notice.

## **G. Premium Services (New)**

Premium services are interpreting services that go beyond the standard forms of interpreting. The services are prearranged with the customer. Premium Services work includes:

**Tri-lingual Interpreting:** When more than one language is required to complete the interpreting process. Such as Spanish to English to ASL.

**Tactile Interpreting.** When working with a DeafBlind consumer, providing a form of hands-on interpreting such as signing in the consumer's hands or fingerspelling.

**Pro-Tactile:** When working with a DeafBlind consumer, providing environmental information on the hands and body of the consumer.

**Live Streaming/Recording:** This is applied when an interpreter and their work are being projected to a large audience through live media such as press conferences, live streaming, social media or recording of their work.

Recording an Interpreter is subject to the Interpreter's consent. If the recording or live streaming was not known to ISD or the Interpreter in advance, the Interpreter may instruct the requestor or Customer contact person to call the ISD to determine if the higher rate applies or to explain that the streaming/recording is subject to the Interpreter's consent and charged at a higher rate. *Please note that this does not apply to situations when streaming/recording may occur, and the Interpreter may be intermittently 'caught' in the frame (ex: wedding).*

## **H. Master VIP Interpreter**

A Master VIP Interpreter is an ally of CHS who has demonstrated a long-time commitment to the interpreting profession and has accepted all levels and types of work offered by CHS. VIP status is determined and approved by CHS Management.

## **I. Medical Clearance Status**

All interpreters who work in a medical setting are required at a minimum to have a current flu vaccine, or waiver, and TB test result on file in order to invoice at the medical clearance rate. Many facilities require outside vendors to have additional clearance, including, but not limited to: Hepatitis B vaccine, MMR records, Varicella vaccine and DTaP records on file.

## **J. Interpreter Pay Rates**

**Standard Pay Rate:** Any assignment (not medical or legal) completed between the hours of 6:00am and 6:00pm. Interpreter will be paid at the Standard Rate.

**Night Pay Rate:** Any assignment (not medical or legal) completed between the hours of 6:00pm and 6:00am. Interpreter will be paid at the Standard base rate + \$4 each hour.

**Premium Pay Rate:** Any assignment that requires unique skills (ex: tri-lingual, tactile, live streaming, etc.), Interpreter will be paid at the Standard rate + \$5 per hour per assignment per skill.

**Sunday/Holiday Pay Rate:** Any assignment, day or night, completed on a Sunday or a listed holiday. Interpreter will be paid at the Standard rate + \$7.50 each hour. Applicable holidays are: New Years Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

**Medical Clearance/Pay Rate:** Any assignment within a medical setting, approved medically cleared Interpreters will be paid at Standard rate + \$4.00 per hour.

**Legal I Pay Rate:** Any legal assignment that involves either an attorney or a law enforcement officer. See Interpreter Pay Schedule for rates.

**Legal II Pay Rate:** Any legal assignment that includes but is not limited to: a deposition, court trials, administrative hearings, arbitration, Miranda Rights, and immigration naturalization process. See Interpreter Pay Schedule for rates.

## **VII. Mentoring**

CHS firmly believes in the idea of Interpreter mentoring. If Interpreter would like to mentor students, or arrange for observation by a student, please contact the ISD before making any agreements. For those working Interpreters who are seeking Mentoring as they work towards national certification or seek more experience in a specialized setting, CHS proudly offers the CHS Mary Mulcrone Mentoring Program. Please contact the ISD for more information.

All student interpreters, mentees and interns need to register, along with their mentor, with the Manager of Interpreter Services prior to being brought onto a CHS assignment.

No mentee, student observers or interns can be brought to a CHS assignment without prior approval by ISD staff.

## **VIII. Professionalism**

### **A. Request Protocol**

All requests must be coordinated by the ISD. CHS cannot honor or pay for any Interpreter assignments that are privately arranged or accepted by the Interpreter without our prior knowledge. All requests for interpreting services must be made to ISD by the paying party or the eligible party. However, the assignment cannot be confirmed by the ISD until the request becomes official. The Interpreter who holds that time without confirmation does so at his/her own risk.

When on an assignment, attempts made by clients to request follow-up services directly through the Interpreter should instead be referred to ISD. Interpreters will be furnished CHS ISD business cards, on which they can write their own names and present to the client. Every effort will be made to ensure that the Interpreter requested will be assigned to the job. The Interpreter may inform the consumers of their available times and dates *at the consumers' request*. The Interpreter is not to initiate a request for the parties to change their desired times to accommodate the Interpreter's schedule. Interpreters may call the ISD and inform the coordinator that a follow-up date is 'in the works' and whether the Interpreter is available.

While it is understood that Interpreters work as independent contractors and not as employees of CHS, it is considered an unethical business practice to recruit contacts made from and/or during CHS assignments. Such practices will result in a written notice of warning of breach of policy to the Interpreter involved, a possible complaint filed with the Licensure Board, and may cause the termination of any working relationship between CHS and the Interpreter.

## **B. Personal Expenses**

All business-related expenses incurred by the Interpreter (*parking, gas, clothing, insurance, tolls, fares, etc.*) are the Interpreter's personal and financial responsibility unless otherwise approved.

## **C. Professional Affiliations**

Interpreters are expected to keep all certifications and licensure with the State of Illinois current. Failure to do so will affect their ability to work through CHS.

CHS strongly encourages all Interpreters to attend conventions, workshops, webinars, e-learning training programs, classes and Deaf community events as a means of improving their interpreting and cultural skills, expand knowledge and provide an opportunity for peer contact and professional networking.

CHS supports and encourages membership with the *Illinois Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (IRID)* and the *Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)* for those without national certification. Membership in these organizations such as these as well as others indicates a commitment toward professionalism and access to continued workshop opportunities, contributing to an Interpreter's eligibility to work in a variety of settings.

## **D. Feedback and Observation**

Feedback forms and follow-up by ISD to consumers and customers are designed to assist in monitoring and improving interpreter services and may be used on a random basis or when there is cause for concern with a particular Interpreter.

All Interpreter files and feedback information are confidential and may be reviewed only by the ISD staff or the Interpreter by appointment. Every effort will be made to share both positive and negative feedback with the Interpreter in the interest of improving the Interpreter's professionalism and skills and ability to use appropriate discretion in accepting future assignments.

## **IX. Conclusion**

It is the CHS Interpreting Service Department's sincere hope that these policies and procedures will help facilitate an already excellent working relationship between the Interpreter Services Department and Independent Contract Interpreters.

Please contact the Manager of the Interpreter Services Department should you have any questions related to this Handbook.