



STATE OF OKLAHOMA
Department of Rehabilitation Services
Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
2401 NW 23rd St. Suite 65
Oklahoma City, OK 73107

**QUALITY ASSURANCE SCREENING TEST (QAST)
For
SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS**

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Each individual shall agree to abide by the Oklahoma Quality Assurances Code of Ethics presented in (1) through (8) of this Subsection as a condition of certification.

1. The Interpreter/Transliterater shall be dedicated to providing competent interpreting services in a manner befitting a professional.

DEMEANOR

The interpreter/transliterater will conduct him/herself in a manner which will reflect high standards of professionalism. This implies proper behavior suitable to the circumstances of the interpreting assignment

1.2 **PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The interpreter/transliterater will dress appropriately to the circumstances of the interpreting assignment. Dress will be as unobtrusive as possible, and care will be taken to avoid cloth patterns or accessories which would interfere with clear perception of the consumer(s) through distraction or poor foreground/background contrast.

1.3 **PHYSICAL SETTING**

The interpreter/transliterater will, to the maximum extent possible, choose positioning of themselves to avoid distracting backgrounds or inadequate lighting, and within comfortable visual/audible range of the consumer(s).

1.4 COMPENSATION FOR SERVICES RENDERED

The interpreter/transliterators shall request compensation for services in a professional and judicious manner. The interpreter/transliterators should be knowledgeable about fees commensurate with their level of skill, level of certification, length of experience and nature of the assignments, as well as the fees customary to their geographic region.

- 2 The Interpreter/transliterators uses discretion in accepting assignments based upon language competency with regard to the setting and/or consumers involved.

2.3 ACCEPTANCE BASED UPON THE LANGUAGE UTILIZED WITHIN THE SETTING.

The interpreter/transliterators will base acceptance of assignments based upon his/her qualifications to handle the English language characteristically utilized in any given setting. If an interpreter/transliterators cannot understand the English language used, nor express it in sign language or cannot maintain an acceptable pace, the interpreter/transliterators should not accept the assignment.

2.4 ACCEPTANCE BASED UPON THE LANGUAGE UTILIZED BY THE CONSUMERS INVOLVED.

The best practice for a professional interpreter/transliterators will be to make every reasonable effort to assess the language skills of the consumer(s) involved to determine his/her ability to understand and be understood in the given assignment by asking appropriate questions of the requestor of services, without asking the identity of the consumer. If this assessment prior to acceptance is not possible, the interpreter/transliterators should arrive at the assignment early to assess the language skills taking care that the communication exchange is not assignment related. At this time, the interpreter/transliterators may decide to proceed with the assignment, or decline the assignment. If the assignment is declined prior to the assignment, or later during the assignment, assistance may be required in securing a more qualified interpreter to take the assignment at that time, or at a later scheduled time.

2.5 ACCEPTANCE BASED UPON OTHER INTERPRETER/
TRANSLITERATOR AVAILABILITY

When the only available interpreter/transliterators does not possess the needed skill level for a given assignment, the consumer(s) should be informed of these limitations so that a reasonable decision about accepting or declining the assignment can be made by all involved

2.6 ACCEPTANCE BASED ON STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The interpreter/transliterators should be familiar with statutory requirements regarding interpreter qualifications in a state before accepting an assignment in that state which might require a higher level of certification

- 3 The interpreter/transliterators uses discretion in accepting assignments based upon the capacity to maintain impartiality with regard to the setting and/or consumers involved.

3.3 ACCEPTANCE BASED UPON ASSURANCE OF IMPARTIALITY

The interpreter/transliterators should accept assignments only when the interpreter/transliterators feels comfortable dealing with the content of the communication in an impartial manner. If the personal feelings or beliefs of the interpreter/transliterators would interfere with rendering the message accurately, the interpreter/transliterators should withdraw from the assignment.

3.4 ACCEPTANCE BASED UPON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Interpreters/transliterators should refrain from providing interpreter services in situations where family members, or close personal or professional relationships may affect impartiality. Emergency situations may compel an interpreter/transliterators to provide services for family, friends, or close associates.

3.5 ACCEPTANCE BASED ON NATURE OF CONTRACTED
RELATIONSHIP

Interpreters/transliterators should strive for complete neutrality between consumers in the interpreting assignment. This neutrality can be compromised for various reasons. Whenever neutrality is compromised, it is the obligation of the interpreter/transliterators to assure that all affected consumers are duly advised and given the option of declining the interpreter/transliterators assignment.

4. THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR SHALL JUDICIOUSLY SAFEGUARDS ASSIGNMENT-RELATED INFORMATION BECAUSE IT IS CONFIDENTIAL.

4.1 DISCLOSURE TO EMPLOYER OF A FULL-TIME INTERPRETER

A full-time interpreter/transliterater may provide information to his/her employer or other appropriate staff for purposes of record keeping, program management, or supervision without breaching confidentiality

4.2 DISCLOSURE TO OTHERS NOT INVOLVED IN THE INTERPRETING ASSIGNMENT

The right to privacy is inalienable for all citizens. The interpreter/transliterater has a fundamental obligation to safeguard any confidential information acquired from any source during an interpreter assignment. Injudicious disclosures of confidential information could adversely affect the consumer's reputation, and expose the interpreter/transliterater to liability.

4.3 DISCLOSURE IN A COURT OF LAW

The interpreter/transliterater should consult legal counsel when in doubt concerning disclosure in a court of law, and professional rights and responsibilities.

5. THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR SHALL PROVIDE INFORMATION WHEN NECESSARY, TO THE CONSUMERS INVOLVED AS TO THE ROLE AND APPROPRIATE USE OF THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR. ASSURING THE EDUCATION OF CONSUMERS AS TO THE PROPER USE OF AN INTERPRETER IS A BASIC RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR. THE EXPERIENCED CONSUMER MAY ALSO PROVIDE SUCH EDUCATION. CONSUMER EDUCATION SHOULD BE SUCCINCT, AND IS BEST PRESENTED PRIOR TO AN ASSIGNMENT TO ENSURE A SMOOTH COMMUNICATION EXCHANGE.

6. THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR CONVEYS THE CONTENT AND AFFECT OF THE COMMUNICATION TRANSMITTED USING THE LANGUAGE MOST EASILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNICATION/TRANSACTION.

6.1 ACCURACY OF CONTENT AND AFFECT

The interpreter/transliterater must transmit all communication in the exact way it is presented, conveying the speaker's intention. The interpreter/transliterater is not responsible for what is said or how it is said; only for conveying the message accurately and with the

intended affect. The interpreter/transliterater shall withdraw from an assignment when his/her personal feelings interfere with rendering the message accurately with the intended affect.

6.2 SELECTION OF LANGUAGE USED IN THE INTERPRETING ASSIGNMENT

The interpreter/transliterater shall communicate in the manner most easily understood or preferred by the consumer(s), such as American Sign Language, Manually Coded English, finger spelling, gesturing, drawing, or writing.

7. THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR SHOULD NOT COUNSEL NOR INTERJECT PERSONAL OPINION, BUT MAY EXERCISE PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT IN ASSESING WHETHER OR NOT COMMUNICATION IS BEING UNDERSTOOD AND MAY ALSO INFORM THE CONSUMERS INVOLVED OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES AS APPROPRIATE.

7.1 COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS

The interpreter/transliterater shall not step out of the role of communication facilitator by offering counsel or interjecting personal opinion. Exercising professional judgment and offering a professional opinion in assessing whether communication is being understood is not a breech of ethics.

7.2 INFORM OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Recommending known and available resources to the consumer is considered within the professional role of the interpreter/transliterater. The interpreter's responsibility in this regard is only to inform in a courteous and helpful manner. It is the consumer's decision whether they wish to follow through with any recommendation

8. THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR SHOULD PURSUE FURTHER KNOWLEDGE AND MAINTAIN COMPETENCY IN INTERPRETING OR TRANSLITERATING SKILLS. THE INTERPRETER/TRANSLITERATOR SHOULD STRIVE TO FURTHER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS THROUGH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS, PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS, INTERACTION WITH PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES, AND READING OF LITERATURE IN THE FIELD.

Definitions

(For the purpose of the Ethical Codes and Standards)

Consumer: In any given interpreter assignment, there are always at least two consumers, one hearing and one deaf. The interpreter serves both by providing the communication exchange between the two persons. In some situations, there can be more than one deaf consumer and/or more than one hearing consumer. Unless otherwise stipulated, the use of the word “consumer,” used herein, refers to both deaf and hearing consumers.

Continuum of Manual Communication: The repertoire of manually represented language to be considered herein depicts a range between American Sign Language and English, with special emphasis on American Sign Language, Pidgin Signed English and Manually Coded English.

Freelance Interpreter: An interpreter who is self-employed (as opposed to full-time employed for public or private agency) is considered to be a freelance interpreter. The freelance interpreter usually works for an hourly or per-diem rate in a variety of community settings.

Payee: A person who is a payee is one who contracts with a freelance interpreter on behalf of a public or private agency, organization or business for a particular assignment involving one or more deaf clients and one or more hearing consumers. The payee or designee of the payee is providing a service for the benefit of the deaf and/or hearing consumer. Such services may go beyond the scope of the particular interpreting assignment.

Setting: The context within which an interpreting assignment takes place is known as the setting. This can include depicting the environment as a legal, medical, mental health, vocational, educational, etc., setting or depicting the arrangement as a private, group, platform, laboratory, field trip, etc., setting.

NOTE: The words interpreter/transliterator are the preferred rendition; anytime the word interpreter stands alone it is inferred that the concept of transliterator is included.