

CHS

A Division of
Anixtercenter

Policy & Procedure Manual for Independent Contractors

Interpreter Services and Captioning Department

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, video remote services (VRI) and captioning services.

In the 1970s, Mary Mulcrone began what is now known as the CHS Interpreter Services and Captioning 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 and CART writers working 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
1444 W. Willow Street
Chicago, IL 60642

CHS Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday
Voice: 773.248.9121 Ext. 312
VP: 773.598.8927
Fax: 312.525.2057

After-Hours: Weekdays: 4:30 p.m. – 8:30 a.m., weekends and holidays
Voice/text: 224.623.7800 or 866.251.0220
E-mail: chsinterp@anixter.org

II. Interpreter Services Policies

A. Obtaining Assignments

Contractors are encouraged to contact the Interpreter Services and Captioning 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.

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

Upon beginning to work for CHS, Contractors will be provided with a username and password for the chs.ersp.biz website. Once an assignment is accepted, the job number and pertinent information about the assignment will be posted on Contractor's personal calendar at this site.

It is the Contractor's responsibility to check the information at least the day before the assignment to resolve any issues, receive answers to any questions, or discuss any last-minute concerns about the assignment with the ISD staff.

All communication with Customer is to be performed by CHS. Contractor is not to communicate with Customer outside of the requested assignment time.

B. Eligibility

Contractor 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; and
- ISD's ability to quickly contact the Contractor.

C. Requirements for Contractor

- Contact ISD to initiate on-boarding process for those Contractors not yet on our independent contractor list.
- Provide license from the State of Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission permitting Contractor to work in the State of Illinois if applicable.
- Current resume.
- Current driver's license or State identification.
- Copy of current certifications.
- Signed Independent Contractor Agreement.
- Completion of W-9 and other required forms. (Interpreters are responsible for their own taxes and government reporting.)
- If applicable, a video sample of your sign work.

D. Liability

As an independent contract interpreter, Interpreter is not covered by CHS's professional liability insurance. CHS does not assume legal responsibility for the actions of a Contractor for any injuries that may be suffered traveling to, from, or during assignments. Contractor shall always be responsible for all personal belongings. Contractor is encouraged to obtain professional liability (malpractice) insurance available through RID or other sources.

III. On-The-Job Policies

A. Punctuality/Preparation

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

unless dismissed by the contact person or person in charge. When dismissed, Contractor must report time dismissed, the reason for dismissal, and the name and position of person dismissing. The Deaf Consumer has no authority to dismiss Contractor. When in doubt, call the ISD office or, if after hours, the After Hours contact number should be called.

Interpreter is expected to be flexible whenever possible regarding work required of them when on an assignment (ie the eRSP information states the job is a staff meeting, but on-site the customer asks the interpreter to interpret 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 Contractor is going to be late for an assignment, Contractor must call the ISD office as soon as possible to report. ISD staff will then notify the appropriate customer/requestor and team. 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. ISD staff will adjust assignments when necessary to reflect late arrivals.

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

Again, it is Contractor'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 Contractor is about to miss an assignment, the Contractor must report this to the ISD immediately or as early as possible prior to the assignment.

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

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

Contractor who knowingly fails 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 the 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 priority for future assignments.

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

E. On-Site Cancellations

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

F. Overtime – Notification Required Within 24 Hours

Overtime on an assignment may be completed by Contractor according to Contractor'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 Contractor 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. Contractor 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. Contractor must notify the ISD, by text or email, of any **overtime within 24 hours** of completing the assignment in order to guarantee payment.

G. Travel Time – Notification Requirements

Contractor accepting those requests called into the ISD with less than one full business-days' notice will be paid an Emergency Fee (E-fee) and be eligible for travel time. Contractor must then notify the ISD of their total travel time, by text or email, **within twenty-four (24) hours** post-assignment 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, Contractor will be informed and may accept or reject the amount of travel time offered.

Maximum travel time is three (3) hours round trip unless specified. If Contractor expects travel time to exceed three (3) hours, Contractor must inform ISD staff at the time that the job is accepted. ISD staff will consider the circumstances and consult with the paying Customer and inform the Contractor if travel time is approved in excess of three (3) hours. If it is not, Contractor 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, Contractor will remain on site either until dismissed by an authorized person or until the end of the assigned time.

At public event platform assignments, Contractor may be required to remain for the entire contracted time at the request of the authorized person or their designee. This may be requested for public relations, visibility, and/or ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance purposes. Contact ISD staff if you have any questions or concerns regarding this practice.

Contractor is 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 Contractor accepts a last-minute assignment during the same time of the 'no-show' assignment, Contractor 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 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 nature 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.

Clothing worn by Interpreter 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 interpretation.

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

Fragrance worn by Contractor should be kept to a minimum. Many locations are scent/fragrance free zones.

Contractor's 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 or appropriately covered if possible.

K. Questions from Customers

All questions directed to Contractor, 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. Contractor is not to contact the Customer without permission from the ISD.

IV. VRI Protocols

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

- **Internet:** A high-speed internet connection. The recommended speed would be at least 25mpbs/download and 2/mbps upload. Connection must also be wired in via ethernet cable and not on a Wi-Fi connection. Phones and iPads are not acceptable devices for VRI use.
- **Webcam:** While some computers have very good webcams, either an HD (720p) or FHD (1080p) webcam is recommended (for example: Logitech C920 HD Pro). This will assure that the Deaf consumer can see Interpreter as clearly as possible. Consider a high-quality headset to make sure conversation and sounds can be heard as well as possible.
- **Office:** A dedicated office space with the ability to have four enclosed walls and a door that can be securely closed is required. In order for 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 Contractor 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 Contractor during the calls.
- **Backdrop:** A backdrop of a contrasting color (typically dark blue, purple, or black) behind Interpreter while interpreting is required. Backdrop needs to cover the entire area behind Interpreter 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 and professional pants or skirt and shoes are required. While it rarely happens, occasionally Interpreter will stand up to adjust something in the workspace and the customer/consumer will see the rest of the body.

- **Lighting:** A well-lit area for the customer and Deaf consumer is required in order to see signing, expressions, and mouth movements. Lights on either side of the computer screen ensure that the room and Interpreter's face and body are well lit.

V. Billing for Services Rendered

A. Invoiceless System

Contractor will not need to invoice CHS. We will automatically pay you based on the completed entered job in eRSP and you will receive payment on your regular paycheck date.

Here are some tips on how to best work with our invoiceless system:

- Before going on your assignment, check the job information in eRSP. Make sure that you agree with what is in eRSP. Let us know if you have questions or if you see an issue.
- After the job is complete, report any overtime or travel within 24 hours via text or email. We will not accept OT or TT updates over the phone. 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.
- If you wish, you can continue to keep track of your hours so that you know what payment amount to expect each pay period.
- Using our direct deposit option is the quickest way to get paid. If you are not enrolled in direct deposit, we would encourage you to do so. Otherwise, a check will be mailed to your address on file.

VI. Payment of Interpreters

A. Pay Periods

Contractor is paid on the 15th of the month or last day of the month. If the 15th or last day of the month falls on a weekend, payment will be received the previous day, or day after, the 15th and last day of the month. A pay schedule is available upon request.

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

B. Cancelled Assignments

Once the assignment is confirmed, if the ISD cancels Contractor's assignment with less than two full business days prior to the assignment, Contractor will be paid for the entire length of the assignment. An assignment is not considered confirmed until the team of interpreters are secured.

If an assignment is cancelled more than two full business days *prior* to that assignment, CHS will not pay Contractor (assignment is not billable). ISD will make every effort to contact Contractor in case of cancellations. Contractor 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 Contractor going to the assignment, there will be no travel time charged, since no travel occurred.

C. Time-and-a-Half

Time-and-a-half must be specifically approved by ISD staff and negotiated in advance.

In team interpreting situations where a second Interpreter is unavailable or cancels, 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 customers whenever possible.

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. Interpreter is 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 an assignment usually requiring two Interpreters, 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. Interpreter is advised to contact ISD for advice, assistance, or advocacy in specific circumstances when interacting with on-site personnel or consumers.

D. Evening and Sunday/Holiday Rates

Evening Rates: Contractor will be paid a premium for assignments occurring between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., on Monday through Saturdays.

Sunday/Holiday rate applies for the entire Sunday and on select holidays. Observed holidays include: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

E. 2-Business Days' Notice Assignments

A \$30.00 "E-fee" payment will be allocated for all interpreter requests that are worked with less than two (2) full business days' notice. A \$37.50 "E-fee" payment will be allocated for all CART requests that are worked with less than two (2) full business days' notice.

F. 1-Business Days' Notice Assignments

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

G. Premium Services

Premium services are services that go beyond the standard forms of interpreting. The services are prearranged with the customer. Premium services are not paid at time-and-a-half, but at a flat rate per hour, per assignment, and per service.

Premium Services work includes:

Tri-lingual Interpreting: When more than one language is required to complete the interpreting process. For example: Spanish, English, and 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 Contractors and interpreting work is being projected to a large audience through live media such as press conferences, live streaming, social media or recording of their work.

Recording Contractor is subject to Contractor’s consent. If the recording or live streaming was not known to ISD or Contractor in advance, Contractor may instruct the requestor or customer to contact the ISD to determine if a higher rate applies or to explain that the streaming/recording is subject to Contractor’s consent and charged at a higher rate. *Please note that this does not apply to situations when streaming/recording may occur, and the Contractor 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

Contractor who wishes to work in a medical setting is required, at a minimum, to have a current flu vaccine, COVID card and TB test result on file in order receive the additional medical clearance rate. Many facilities require outside vendors to have additional clearance, including, but not limited to: Hepatitis B vaccine, MMR records, Varicella vaccine, DTap, criminal background check and drug screening records on file.

J. Interpreter Pay Rates

Refer to CHS’s Interpreter and CART writer Pay Schedule.

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 a working Interpreter who is 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 and the Illinois Master Mentor Program. Please contact the ISD for more information.

All student interpreters, mentees, and interns are required to register, along with their mentor, with the ISD prior to attending a CHS assignment. ISD staff will confirm approval from the customer prior to an assignment for students, mentees, or interns to attend. Contractor is required to confirm this approval from ISD staff.

VIII. Professionalism

A. Request Protocol

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

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

While it is understood that Contractor works as an independent contractor 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 Contractor involved, a possible complaint filed with the Licensure Board, and may cause the termination of any working relationship between CHS and Contractor.

B. Personal Expenses

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

C. Professional Affiliations

Contractor is expected to keep all certifications and licensure with the State of Illinois current, when required. Failure to do so will affect their ability to work through CHS.

CHS strongly encourages Contractor to attend conventions, workshops, webinars, e-learning training programs, classes, and Deaf community events as a means of improving their skills, expanding knowledge, and providing 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)*. Membership in organizations such as these, as well as others, indicates a commitment toward professionalism and access to continued workshop opportunities, contributing to 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 services and may be used on a random basis or when there is cause for concern with Contractor.

All Contractor files and feedback information are confidential and may be reviewed only by the ISD

staff or the Contractor by appointment. Every effort will be made to share both positive and negative feedback with Contractor in the interest of improving professionalism and skills and ability to use appropriate discretion in accepting future assignments.

IX. Conclusion

It is CHS's sincere hope that these Policies and Procedures will assist in facilitating an already excellent working relationship between the ISD and Independent Contractors.

Please contact the Director of CHS should you have any questions related to this Handbook.