

## **Sign language interpreter services**

### **Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) policy**

SRS staff and SRS grant-funded programs will schedule and authorize payment for certified or qualified sign language interpreters for appointments with people who are deaf or hard of hearing who use sign language for communication. They may require at least 24 hours notice to find a qualified interpreter. The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) may identify qualified interpreters and schedule them as a purchased service. Written communication with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing is acceptable only:

- If used to set up appointments;
- If used to inform the person that an interpreter will be present at the appointment;  
or
- If specifically requested by the person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

*Reference: Secretary's Letter 472*

### **Rehabilitation Services (RS) procedures**

Interpreters must be on the state registry at the KCDHH, as required by state law, H.B. 2257 effective 7-1-93.

In situations where an interpreter is not listed on the state registry, the interpreter must contact KCDHH at (785) 267-6100 or toll-free at 1-800-432-0698 to register. Registration may be made over the phone by providing name, address, telephone number, certifications, and the sign language or sign systems that the interpreter can use, or by completing and mailing a registration card. The most common sign language or sign systems are American Sign Language (ASL), Pidgin Sign English (PSE), Conceptually Accurate Signed English (CASE), Sign Exact English (SEE) II, and oral. KCDHH will encourage interpreters who register to become involved with the certification screening process within two years.

**Who can schedule interpreting services?** When RS is providing interpreting services, RS staff have the discretion to decide the best practice of scheduling such services. Staff may call interpreters directly, may use KCDHH or a local referral agency, independent living center or private vendor agency. However, RS does not pay for interpreter coordination in addition to the interpreter hourly rates and this information must be communicated to any referral agency when contacted.

When calling to schedule an interpreter, the following information is required:

1. Date, time and location of appointment or appointments.
2. Estimated length of appointment. **Note:** RS pays a two-hour minimum so you may want to schedule clients in clusters to conserve funds. When appointments are expected to last more than 3 hours, rest breaks for the interpreter will be required; or two interpreters rotating every 20 to 30 minutes may be scheduled.
3. Topic or type of setting.
4. Name of the individual(s), language preference or the need for special communications, specific interpreter selected by the individual(s), if known and appropriate. **Note:** Family members, roommates or individuals with other personal relationships may not be appropriate to use as interpreters. Staff should use discretion and consult with the client if possible. The Interpreter Code of Ethics requires the interpreter to decline the job if inappropriate.
5. Contact person's name and phone number.
6. Billing information such as the party responsible for payment, purchase order number or special billing instructions.

**KCDHH process:** Requests for interpreter services may be scheduled through KCDHH with 72 hours advance notice (3 working days). Emergency requests will be given priority regardless of advance notice. Significant lead time is needed for workshops and conferences. Here is how the process works:

1. RS Staff — Requests interpreter services from KCDHH office or other referral source.
2. KCDHH Referral Coordinator — Locates qualified interpreters with the necessary level for the type of assignment and confirms availability with RS staff.
3. Interpreter — Submits billing to RS staff following completion of appointment.
4. RS Staff — Processes payment.

**Fees:** Fees are based on certification level. Counselors may contact KCDHH to verify registration and/or certification levels for sign language interpreters. (KCDHH phone numbers are 785-267-6100 or 1-800-432-0698.) Counselors may also ask to see the interpreter's certification card in order to verify qualifications and the appropriate fee. After the two hour minimum, additional fees are charged at 30 minute increments. Full day assignments, conference rates, and long term assignments may be negotiated for a fee below hourly rates. Multiple clients may be served within the two-hour minimums.

- Hourly fee for registered but not certified in Kansas Quality Assurance Screening (KQAS) certification is \$15.
- Hourly fee for KQAS certification level I, II, or III is \$20.
- Hourly fee for KQAS certification level IV is \$25.
- Hourly fee for KQAS certification level V is \$30.

**Client “no shows”:** The interpreter will stay 20 minutes and may leave with counselor approval. The counselor may substitute other interpreting duties. Payment will be made for the two-hour minimum. For client “no shows” at conferences or workshops, payment will be made for the time scheduled.

**Interpreter is late:** Interpreters are expected to be on time but in the event that the interpreter is late, the two-hour minimum can be reduced by RS staff. Additionally, after 20 minutes, the counselor and client may reschedule and use a different interpreter if that is their preference with no payment to the interpreter who was late.

**Interpreter “no shows:”** No payment and the incident is reported to KCDHH or other referring agency.

**RS cancellations with notice 24 hours\* before appointment or start of the conference or workshop:** No charge.

**RS cancellations with less than 24 hours\* notice:** Payment for the two-hour minimum for appointments or for first day of conference or workshop.

- This refers to 24 clock hours and has no relationship to federal, state, or local government work days or work week.

**Travel:** Door-to-door round trip mileage may be paid within the city or between cities using the Department of Transportation mileage map. Mileage rates paid will be in accordance with the RS Cost Cap for vendor mileage. See Section 3 / Part 8.

**Reimbursement for travel time:**

- RS will not pay a fee for the first 30 miles (each way) of an interpreter’s travel to an assignment.
- After the first 30 miles (each way) RS will pay one-third of the interpreter’s hourly rate for actual travel time.

**Special communications:** RS staff may consult with interpreters in determining whether a client requires special communication. Assignments requiring special communications such as with individuals who are deaf-blind, multiply disabled or have minimal language skills, will pay an additional \$2.50 hour. (Minimal language skills refers to individuals who are functionally illiterate in English and possess only rudimentary skill in Sign Language.)

Critical considerations which counselors need to convey to KCDHH or designee for interpreting for individuals who are deaf-blind include:

- Interpreter dressing appropriately (contrasting clothing to skin and avoidance of stripes, plaids or patterns on clothing, appropriate make-up and jewelry).
- Familiarity with visual field limitations and care to sign within the client's visual field.
- Attention to appropriate lighting in regard to the client's needs.
- Ability to perform hand-to-hand or other tactile methods of interpreting when necessary.