



Date: December 14, 2023

To: Interested Parties

From: Samie Patnode, Policy Analyst

Subject: Licensing Begins December 13 for Sign Language Interpreters

BOARD OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS - HB 2696 (2023)

During the 2023 Legislature Session, [House Bill 2696 \(2023\)](#) was enacted, establishing the Board of Sign Language Interpreters (Board) under the Health Licensing Office (HLO). The bill requires all individuals who perform “sign language interpretation services” to be licensed on January 1, 2024, and requires the Board to determine the minimum qualifications for each license. According to the bill, the Board is unable to begin meeting until after January 1, 2024, and therefore is unable to set those requirements and adopt rules. To bridge the gap between January 1, 2024, and when the Board establishes minimum licensure requirements, the HLO will issue temporary licenses.

HLO TEMPORARY RULES

On December 13, 2023, HLO filed [temporary rules](#) with the Secretary of State which specify the qualifications for each temporary license. Temporary rule filing information can be located on the Board website.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Temporary licenses may not be renewed. The plan is to have the Board licenses available prior to the end date of the temporary licenses.
- Temporary licenses become invalid on June 7, 2024, or when HLO grants or denies the temporary license holder a Board license, whichever comes first.
- Holding a temporary license issued under the HLO rules does not guarantee that a temporary license holder will be granted a license under the Board’s rules.
- Temporary licenses will be issued at no cost.
- Temporary license holders will need to apply, qualify, and pay application and license fees for each Board license sought. Temporary license holders should do so once Board rules are in place, and before June 7, 2024. Application requirements for the Board’s licenses may be different including providing proof of certain credentialing or examination scores.

- The issuance or the licensee's holding of a temporary license does not supersede, replace, or negate the need for the licensee to comply with other laws requiring licensure or registration, or competent sign language interpreter services.

To obtain a temporary license, individuals must complete an application, submit two-forms of identification, and attest to having met the qualifications for the applicable temporary license:

- [Supervisory sign language interpreter](#)
- [Generalist sign language interpreter](#)
- [Provisional sign language interpreter](#)
- [Educational sign language interpreter](#)
- [Medical sign language interpreter](#)
- [Legal sign language interpreter](#)

LIMITED WAIVER ON ENFORCEMENT

Since the Board is not permitted to meet until January 1, 2024, the same-day HB 2696 (2023) requires sign language interpreters to be licensed to practice in Oregon, HLO is exercising its discretion and will not impose discipline for practicing without a license on any sign language interpreters who obtain a license by January 31, 2024.

The limited waiver on enforcement begins on January 1, 2024, and ends on January 31, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. The limited waiver of enforcement is narrow; the waiver only applies to the singular issue of providing sign language interpretation services in Oregon without a license. The Office may impose discipline for any other violation of the HLO or Board rules or statutes.

BOARD MEETING

The first Board meeting is scheduled for January 3 and 4, 2024, with Board members attending in person. The first day will focus on orienting Board members on being part of the Executive Branch of government and HLO, as well as how to be an effective Board member. The Board will concentrate on administrative rules on the second day. The meeting notice and agenda will be published later in December 2023. Please visit the Board meeting [webpage](#) for current meeting information.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Please contact Carrie Edwards (see below for contact information) as soon as possible if you plan to attend a meeting and need any accommodations. HLO intends on having at least two sign language interpreters available and CART captioning.

HOW TO GET THE LATEST INFORMATION REGARDING THE BOARD

To receive emails related to the Sign Language Interpreter Board, including Board meeting notices and agendas, rulemaking, and other policy decisions, visit:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORHA/signup/38181>, and follow these

steps:

- Enter your contact information.
- Consent to the data privacy policy and click on “Next.”
- Select “Board of Sign Language Interpreters,” click on “Next,” and you are finished.

HOW TO CONTACT US

Board meeting questions:

Carrie Edwards: carrie.edwards@oha.oregon.gov or (503) 373-1902

Board member recruitment questions:

Derek Fultz: derek.j.fultz@oha.oregon.gov or (503) 373-1915

Licensing and qualification questions:

Michael Brennen: Michael.A.Brennan@oha.oregon.gov or (503) 373-1986

Regulatory or complaint questions:

Trampus Schuck: trampus.schuck@oha.oregon.gov or (503) 373-1950

Administrative rule questions:

Samie Patnode: samie.patnode@oha.oregon.gov or (503) 373-1917