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# PILOT SURVEY OF OHA QUALIFIED AND CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE INTERPRETERS

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# Today

- 1** Survey objectives & fielding
- 2** Survey findings
- 3** Next steps & Feedback

# Survey objectives & fielding

# Background

## Overview

- As of February 2021, there were ~700 certified and/or qualified Health Care Interpreters (HCIs) in Oregon.
- Little was known about their practice patterns (e.g., payment models, workload, etc.).

## Survey objective

- To obtain a more complete picture of HCI demographics and practice patterns in Oregon and to complement existing data sources.

# Important considerations

Data collection occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic may have affected responses including reported practice patterns.

HcIs received 2 CEUs for completion of the survey.

HcIs who are actively practicing and utilizing their registration may have been more likely to complete the survey than those who are not practicing.

Only HcIs certified or qualified with OHA were invited to complete the survey.

HcIs who may be practicing in Oregon but are not registered with the State were not surveyed.

# Survey fielding

➤ Survey period: 2/24/21 – 3/31/21

➤ Respondents:

**719** Online survey was distributed via targeted emails to 719 HCIs in Oregon

**684** Survey recipients (due to 35 bounced emails)

**149**  
Completed



Response rate  
**21.8%**

# What languages are respondents qualified or certified in?

Of 149 respondents, 60% are qualified or certified as Spanish HCIs.

Language	Qualified	Certified	Total
Spanish	36.9% (n = 55)	23.5% (n = 35)	60.4% (n = 90)
ASL	2.7% (n = 4)	7.4% (n = 11)	10.1% (n = 15)
Vietnamese	4.7% (n = 7)	0.0% (n = 0)	4.7% (n = 7)
Arabic	1.3% (n = 2)	2.0% (n = 3)	3.4% (n = 5)
Japanese	2.0% (n = 3)	0.0% (n = 0)	2.0% (n = 3)
Mandarin	1.3% (n = 2)	0.7% (n = 1)	2.0% (n = 3)
Russian	1.3% (n = 2)	0.7% (n = 1)	2.0% (n = 3)
Thai	2.0% (n = 3)	0.0% (n = 0)	2.0% (n = 3)

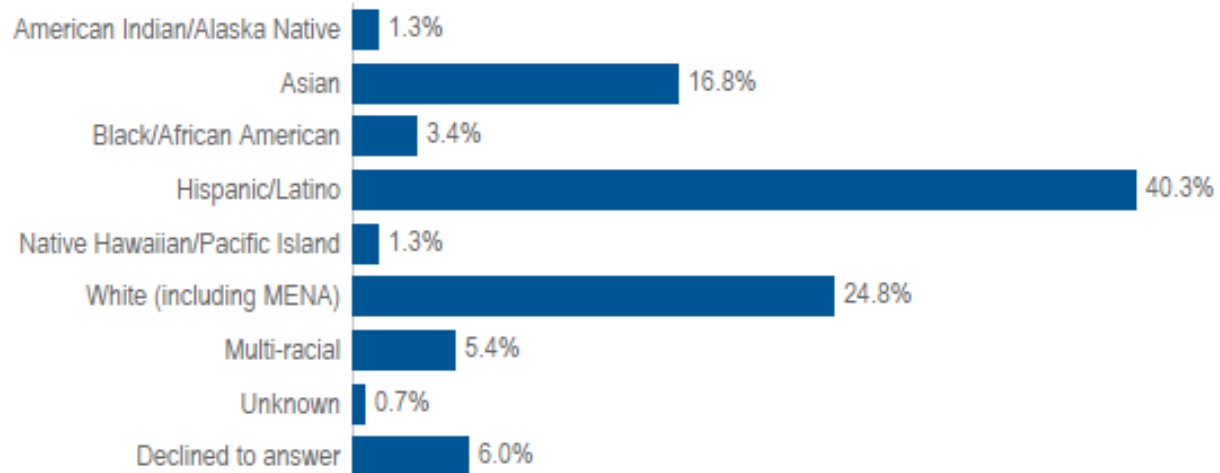
Note: Languages with fewer than 2 respondents not shown.

# Survey findings

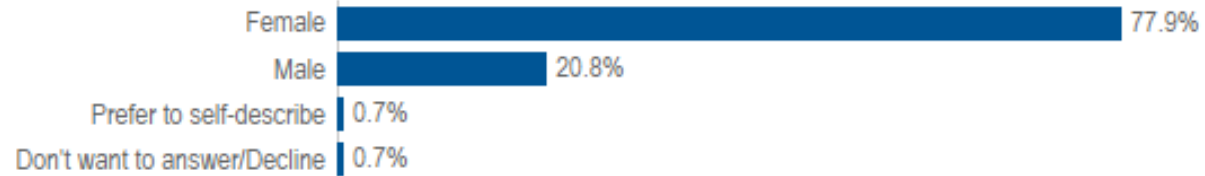


# Race, ethnicity and gender

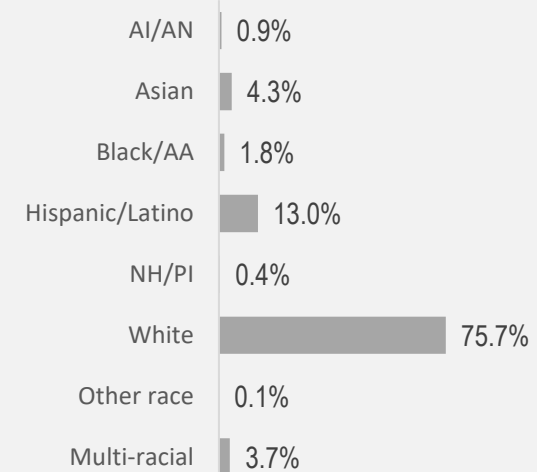
## Race & ethnicity



## Gender



## Oregon population\*

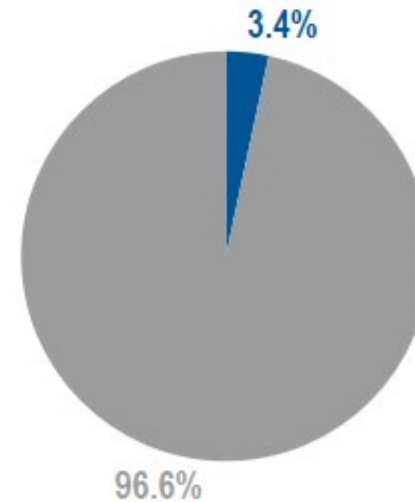
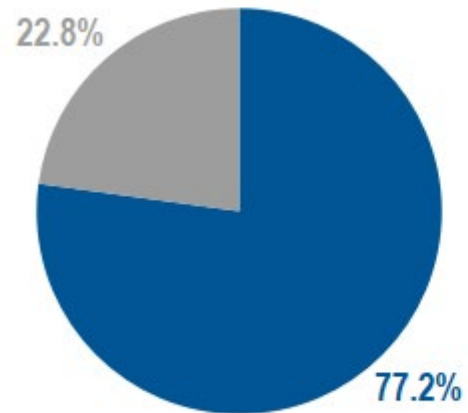


\* 2019 5-year ACS estimates. Not directly comparable, because they are not collected with REALD standards.

# Language use and disability

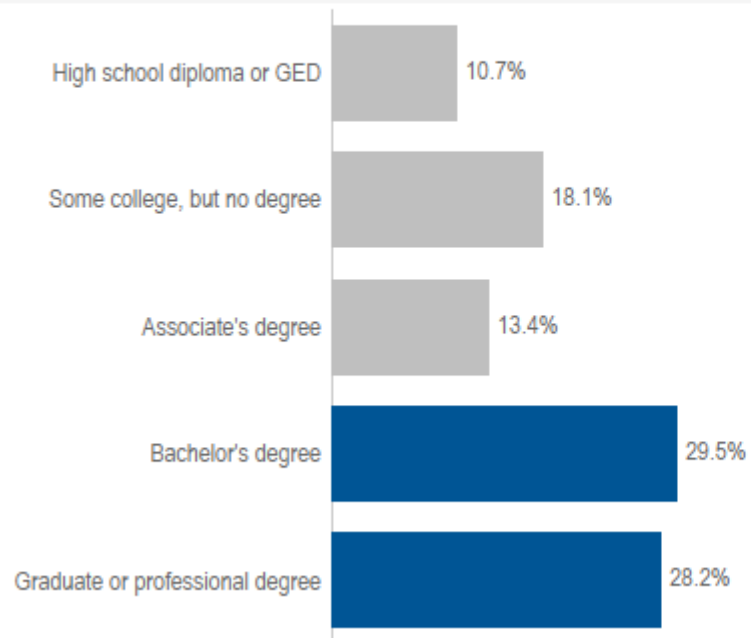
77.2% report having **using a language other than English at home**

3.4% report having **any disability**

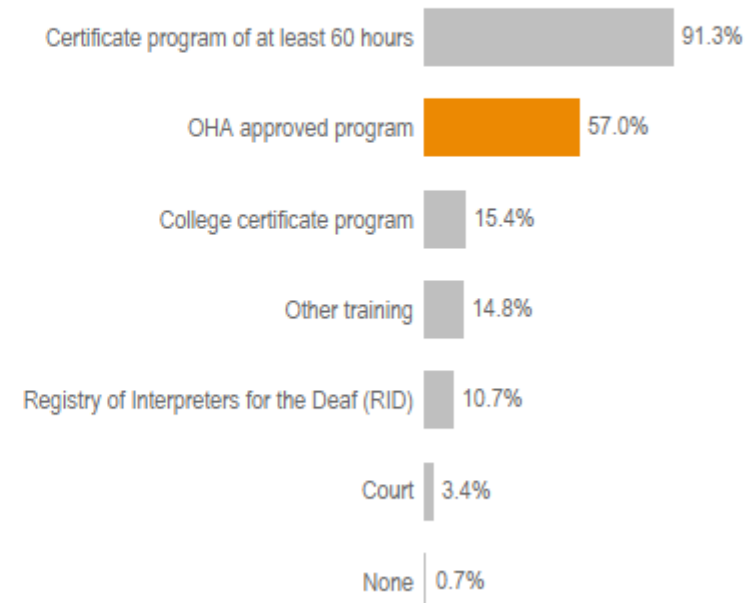


# Education, training, and age

Over half have completed a **Bachelor's degree or higher**



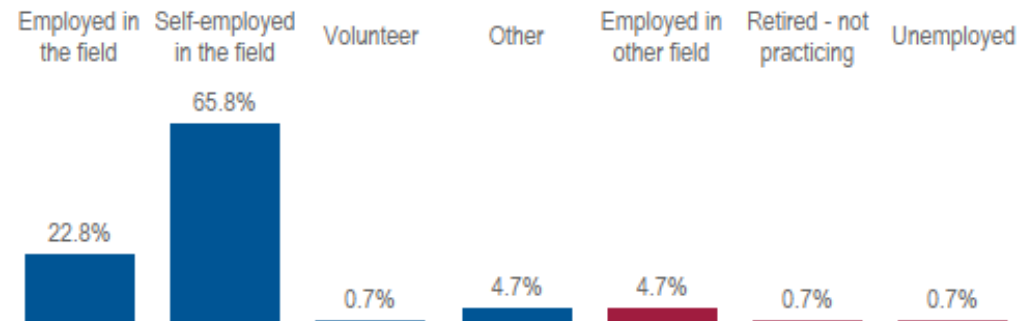
57% have completed an **OHA Approved training program**



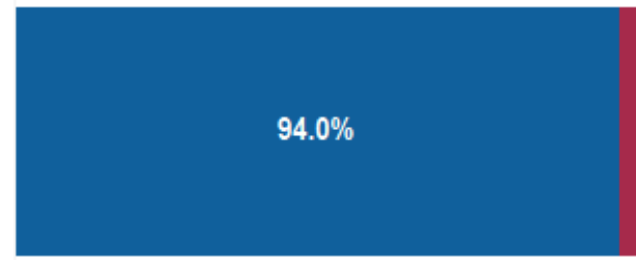
- **Average age: 46.3 years**

# 94% of respondents report working in the field.

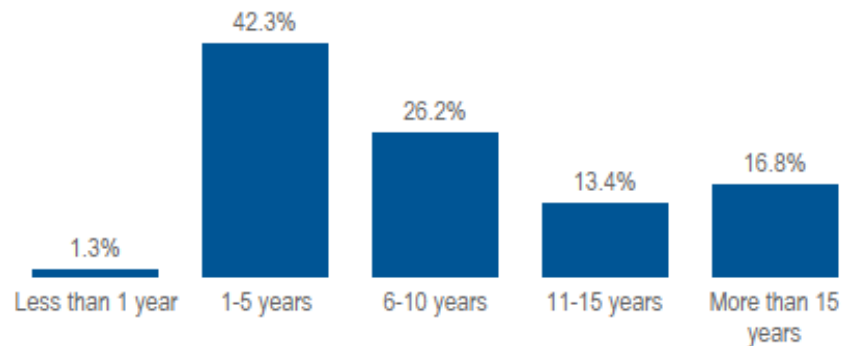
## Employment status



## Total % Active



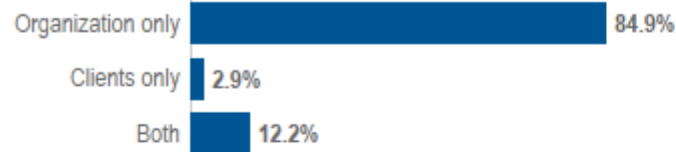
Over half of responding HCIs have been practicing for more than 5 years.



# Who employs HCIs

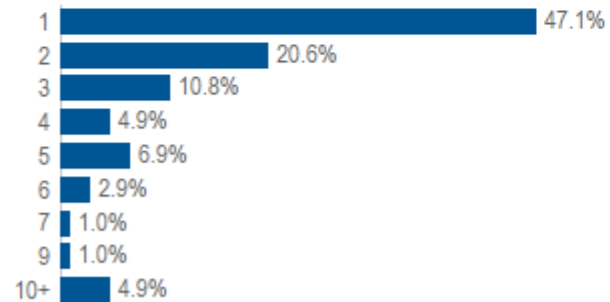
- Most HCIs are employed by organizations and many report more than 2 employing organizations.
- HCIs are most frequently employed by language service companies.

## Among those working as an HCI:



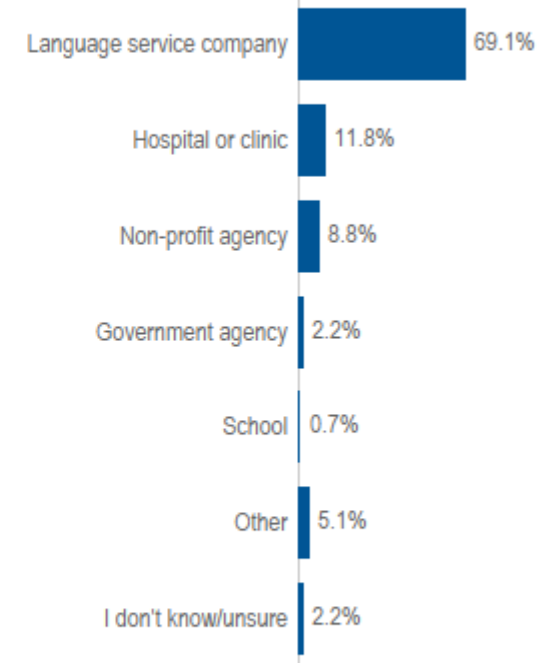
## Most respondents reported working for one or two organizations

Number of employers among those working for organizations\*



\* This question was added after survey was launched, so not all respondents saw this question.(n=102)

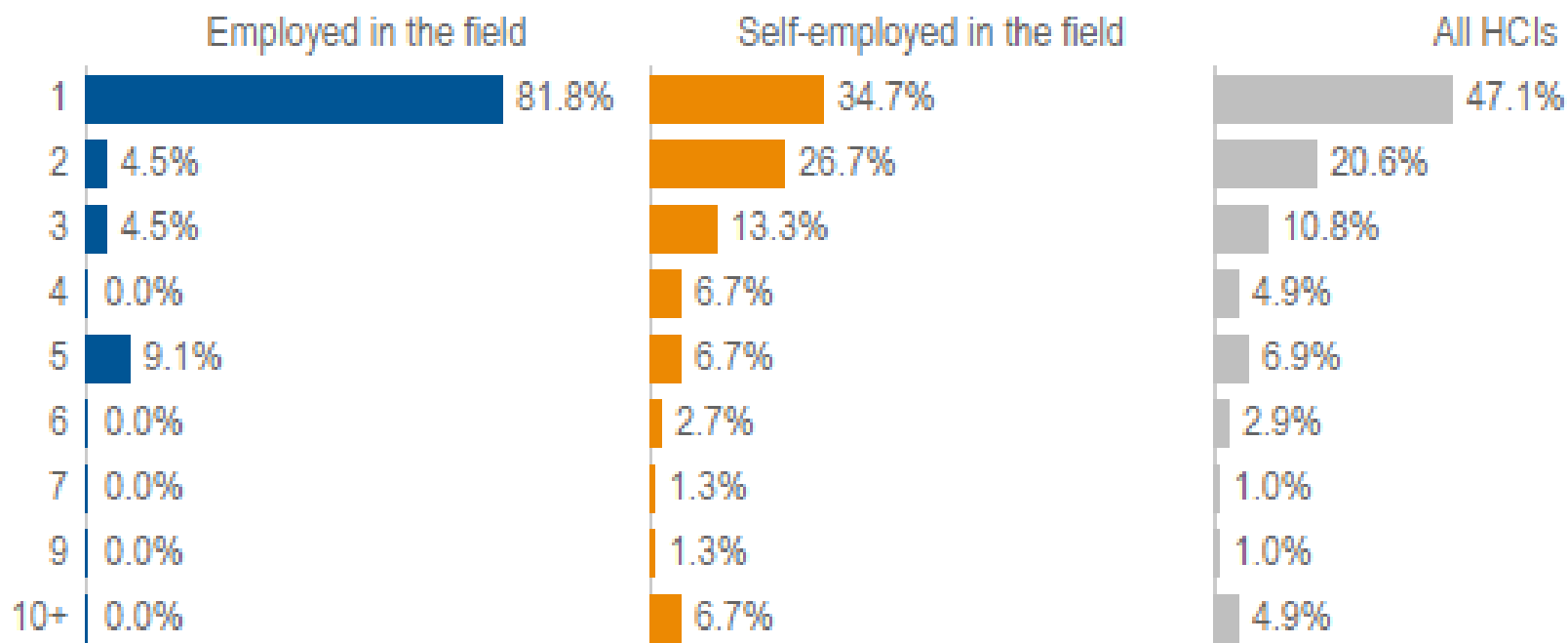
## Organization type



**Note:** Non-profit agency includes Community Based Organizations and social service agencies. Government agency includes county health departments and state government.

# Number of employing organizations by employment status

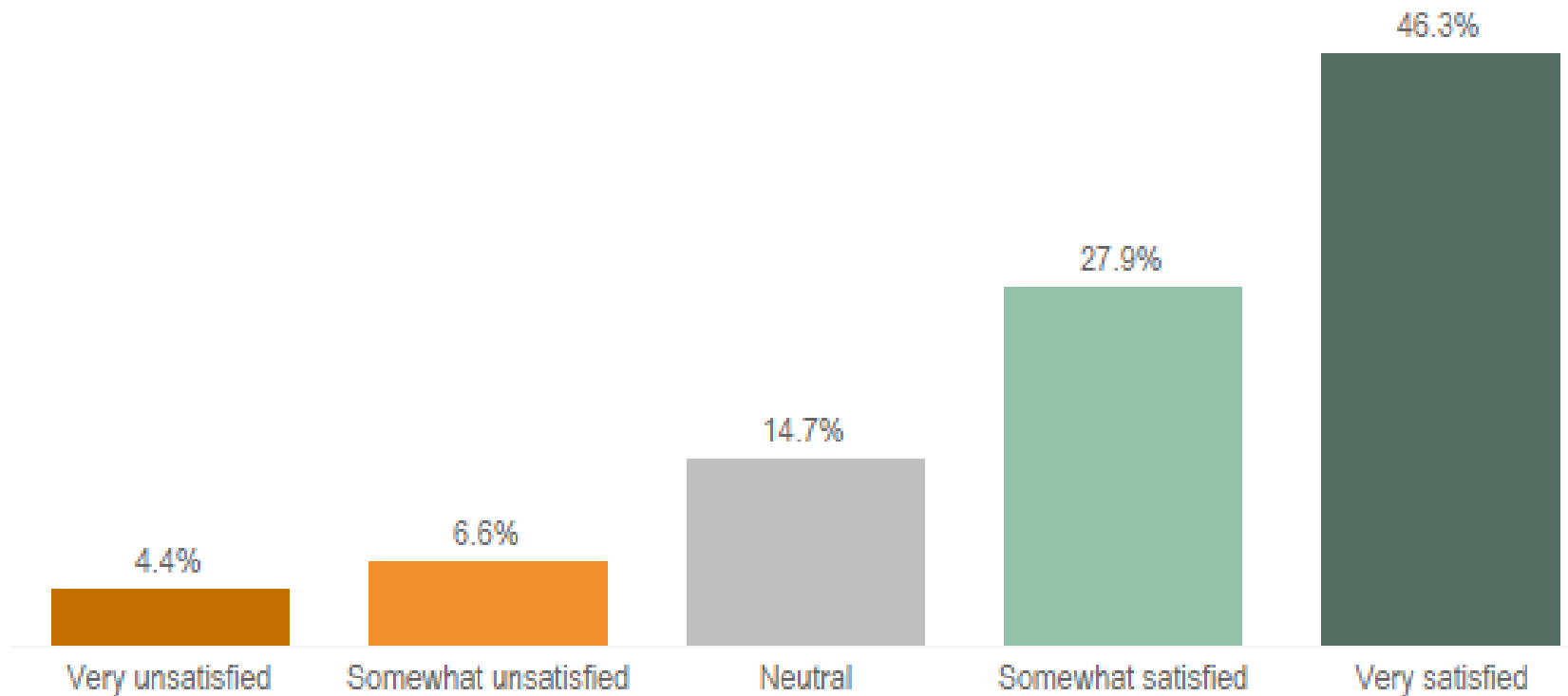
Number of organizations by employment status  
 Number of employers among those working for organizations\*



\* This question was added after survey was launched, so not all respondents saw this question. (n=102)

# Satisfaction with employers

74% of HCIs are **somewhat** or **very satisfied** with their primary employer

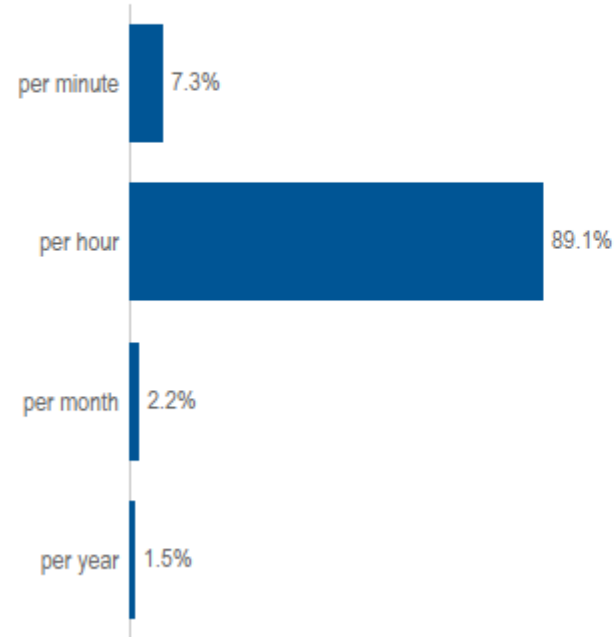




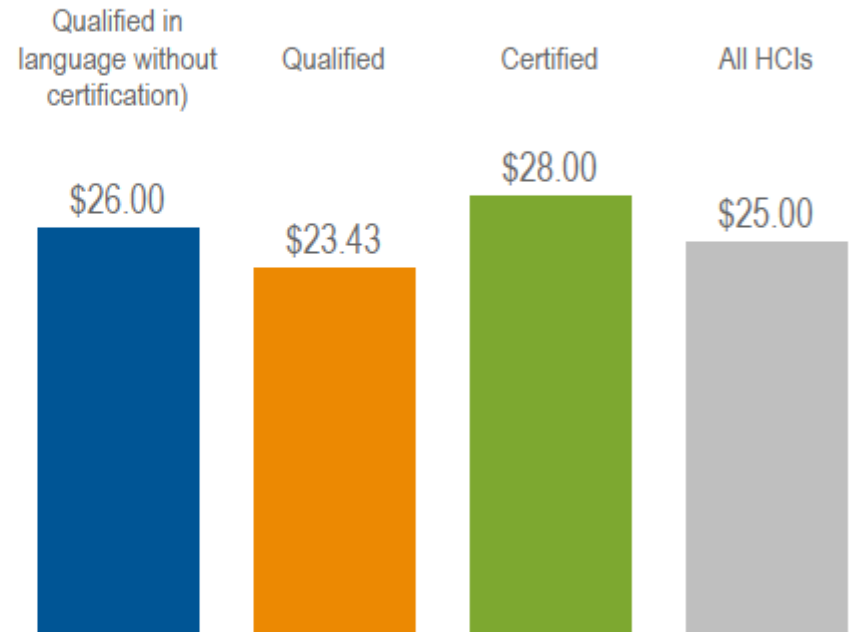


# Payment models

HICs are primarily paid an hourly wage.



Current rate  
Median per hour rate for HICs paid hourly



# Payment models

## Current rate vs "Best" rate

Per hour rate for HCIs paid hourly

Median Payment Amt  
\$25.00

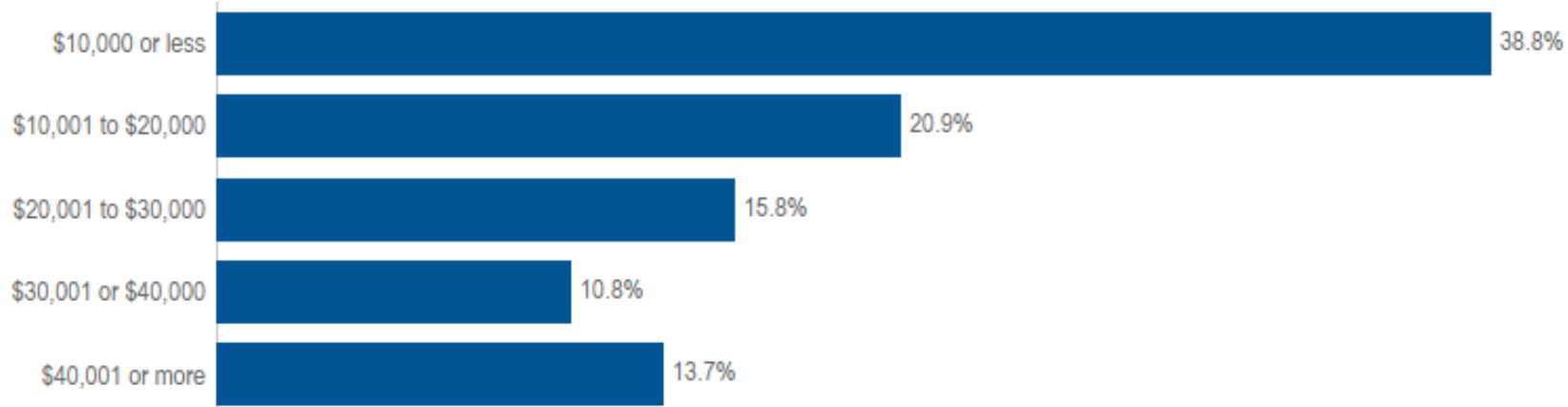
Median Best Payment  
\$36.57

### What did we mean by 'best'?

What would be the **best minimum payment model** from your perspective as an HCI?

("We are interested in knowing what the minimum is that you would need to earn to make an adequate living as an HCI. How much would you need to be paid and in what increments would you like to be paid (e.g. per minute, per hour).")

## Annual income from all work as an HCI



# Practice patterns

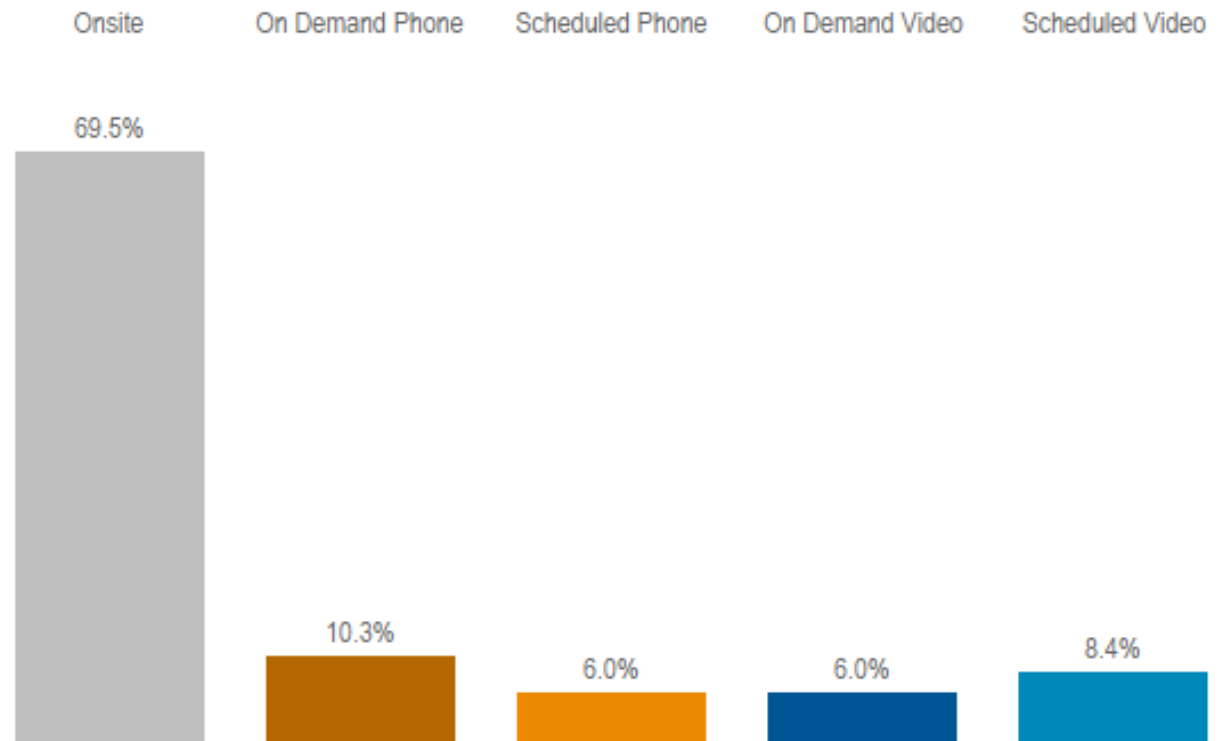
Average hours per week

20.38

Average number of clients per month

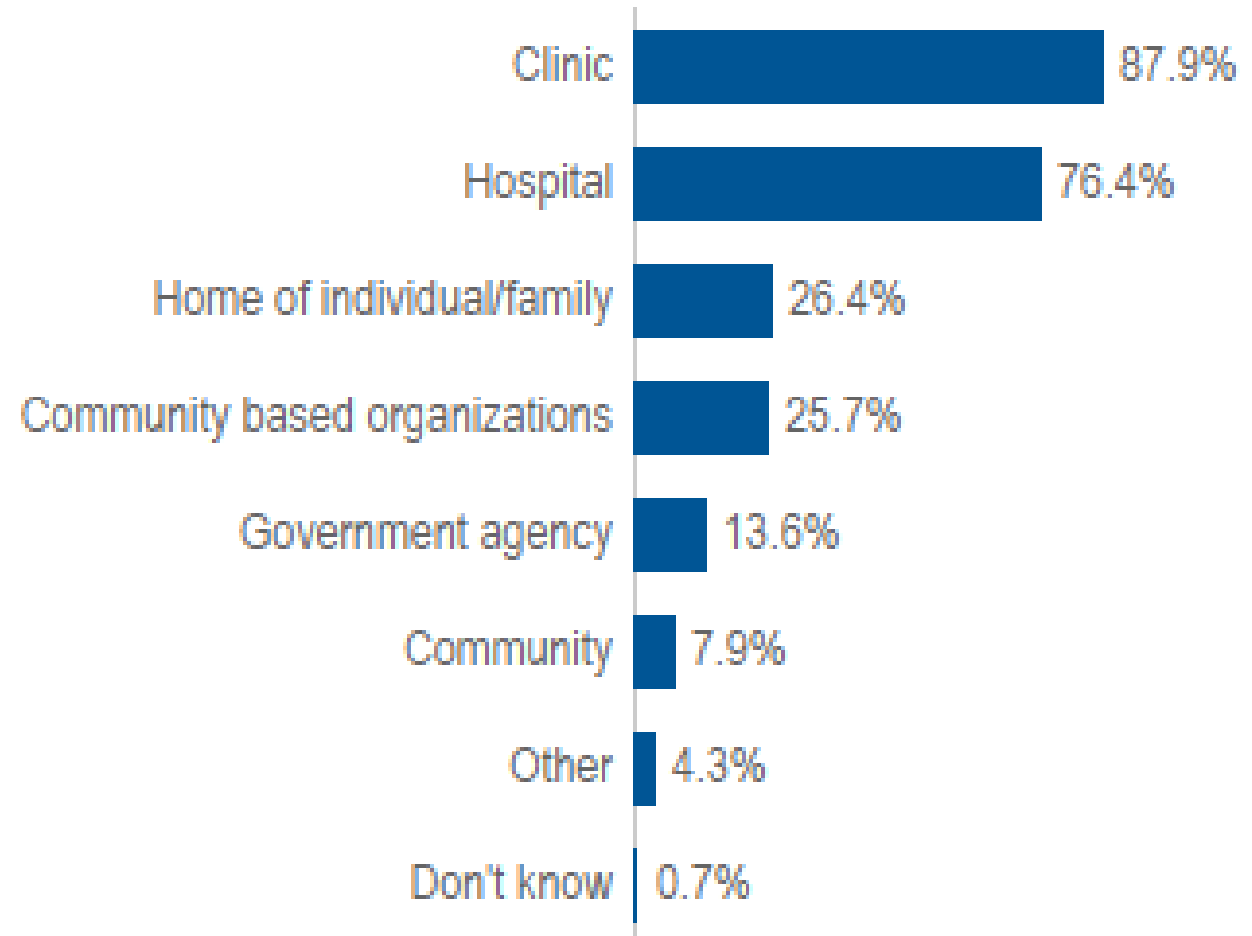
48.83

Modality breakdown



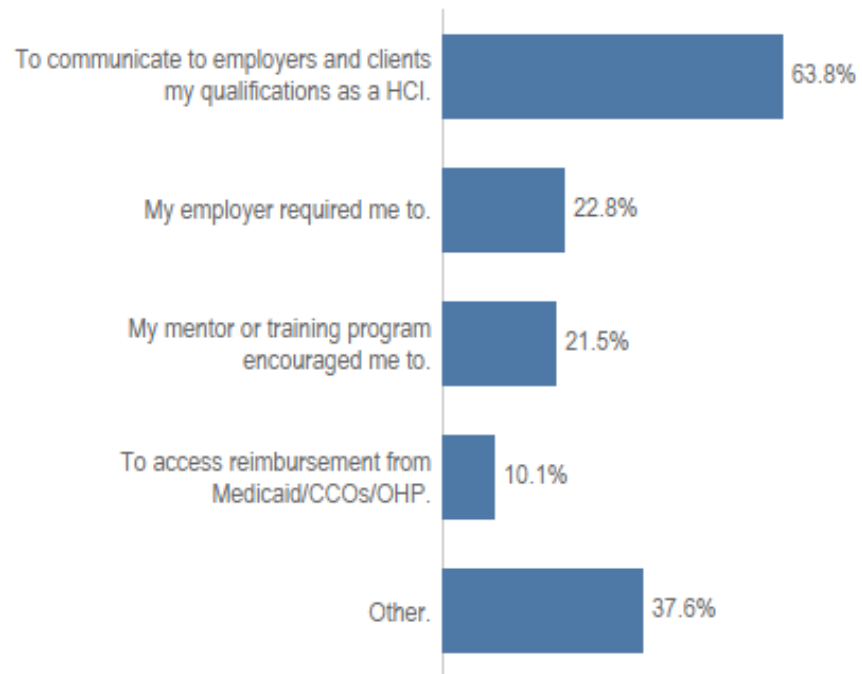
# Work settings

- Most frequently reported work settings are clinics and hospitals.
- Because respondent can choose up to three settings, does not sum to 100%.



# Reasons for registration

## Registration Reasons



### Additional themes:

#### Expand skills/certifications:

*"Professional development & new to Oregon"*

*"I always want to keep my skills up to date as much as I can. I felt it important to have the HCI. There may also be a time, soon, where this certification is required, which I support. Also the training being offered virtually, during COVID, was a plus for me."*

*"Grow professionally and provide quality service"*

#### Increased pay:

*"to access a higher hourly pay from interpreting agencies.."*

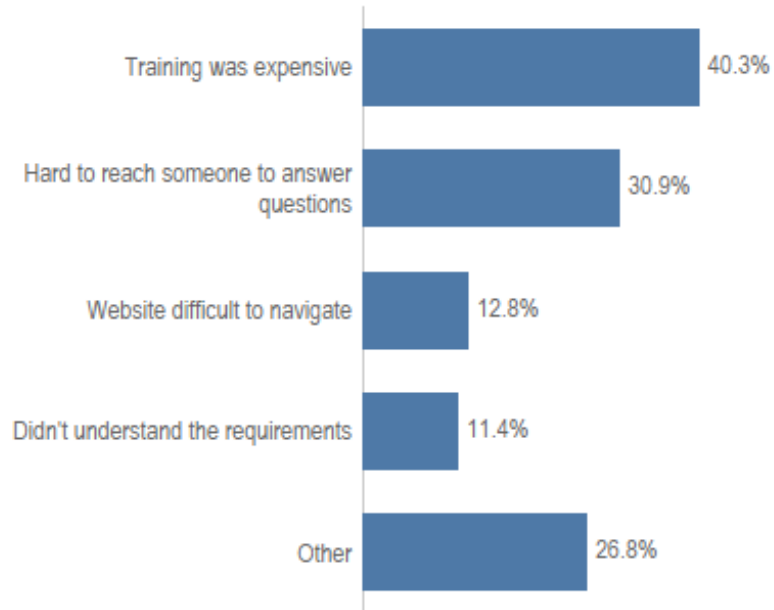
*"To earn more money. With my nbcmi certification, I would not be compensated the same as a cchi interpreter unless I also had the Oregon certification."*

#### Serving the community:

*"I wanted to be help my community."*

# Registration process

## Registration Challenges



### Additional themes:

#### Training access:

*"Training was far away and difficult to fit in my schedule."*

*"Training was 50 miles away."*

*"Ethics and skills continuing education courses rarely offered/not easily identified based on course description."*

#### Process was slow/burdensome:

*"Long application processing time, certification exam was expensive."*

*"The process took several months."*

*"There is not clear communication. I had to submit materials several times. Individuals were very slow to respond."*

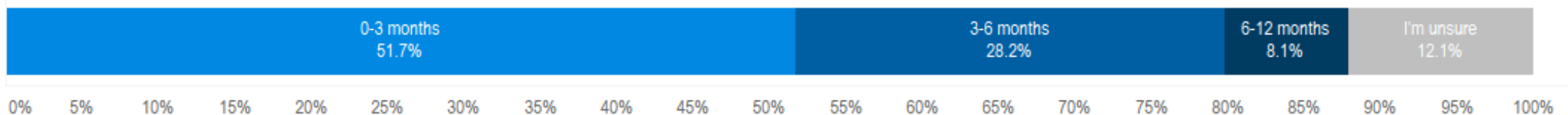
#### Difficult training/exams:

*"Training was a little more intense than I imagine"*

*"Language Cert exam was difficult(technically the webcam didn't pick up my voice well) and expensive"*

80% of respondents were approved within 6 months.

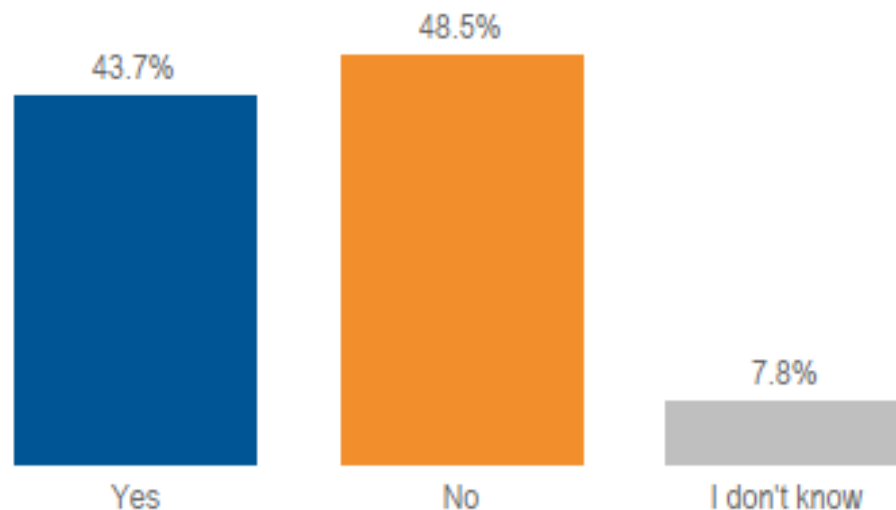
Time to approval



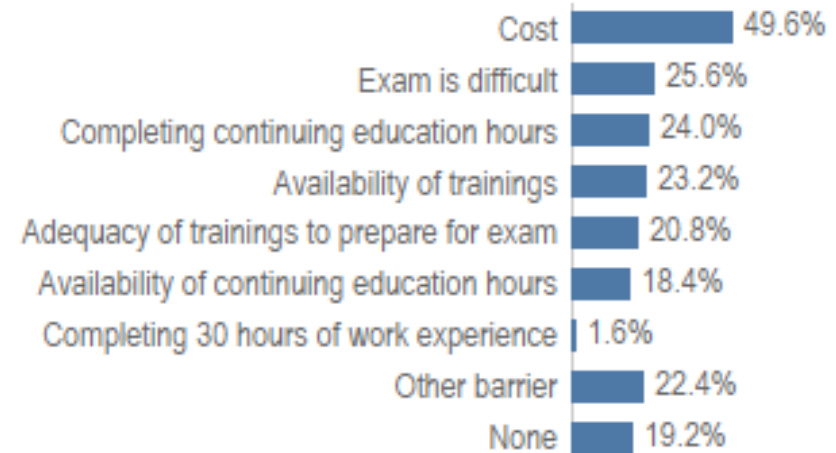
# Certification requirements

- After four years of working as a qualified interpreter in Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish languages, Oregon Rule (OAR 333-002-0140 and 333-002-0150) requires qualified interpreters to become certified.

Given the option **44% would prefer to remain qualified** for more than 4 years and not be required to be certified.



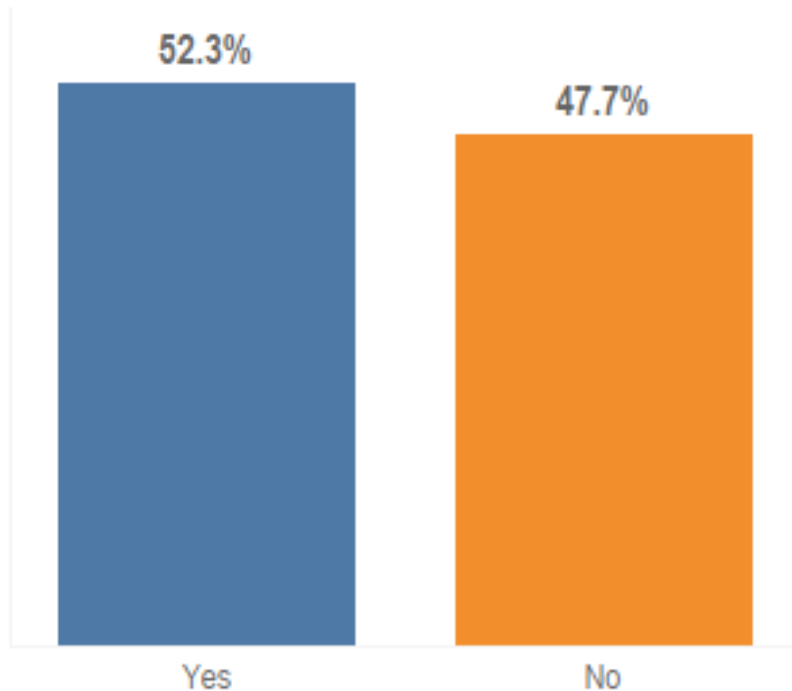
The largest reported barrier to certification is cost.



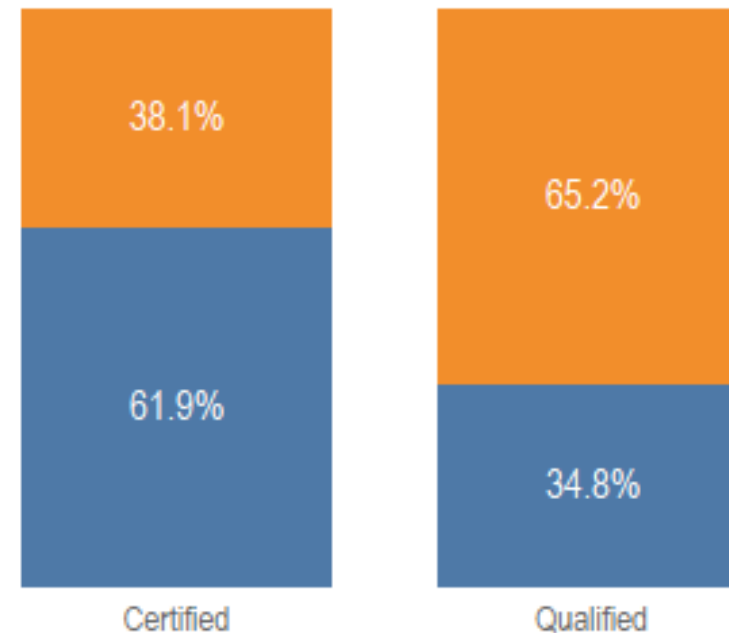
# Certification testing

**Just over 50% feel the exam reflects what they actually experience in the interpreting setting.**

(Of those who have taken the exam)



However, the percent is higher among those who are certified.





**Next steps**

# Next steps

- **Reporting**
- **Future surveys informed by current surveys**

Q & A



# Contact info

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503-580-6787

**Source:** *Pilot survey of OHA registered Health Care Interpreters.*  
(2021). Oregon Health Authority.