

Oregon Health Care Interpreters Qualification and Certification for Signed Language Interpreters

Notice: Sign Language Health Care Interpreters

Beginning January 1, 2024, most individuals providing signed language interpretation services are required to be licensed by the Health Licensing Office within the Oregon Health Authority. Licensure is a new requirement under [House Bill 2696](#), passed by the Legislature in 2023.

In addition, ***a person may not employ or contract with an individual who is not a licensed signed language interpreter***, on and after January 1, 2024, except under some circumstances.

The individuals who are credentialed by the Oregon Health Authority's Health Care Interpreter (HCI) Program and who are on the HCI Registry as a signed language interpreter, ***may not be licensed***. **Licensure is different from being on the HCI Registry**. If you are searching the HCI registry in order to find a signed language health care interpreter, you should inquire about whether the individual is also licensed.

For more information about signed language interpretation licensure please visit the Health Licensing Office's [website](#).

Background

After Oregon House Bill 2419 (HB2419) was passed, Signed Language Interpreters from Oregon came together with other stakeholders to decide their specific path to health care interpreter qualification and certification. New rules went into effect July 1, 2022, with HB2359, further solidifying the path to qualification and certification for HCI Signed Language Interpreters.

The result can be found in [Oregon Administrative Rules 950-050-0000](#), (**updated April 2023** from OAR 333-002-0000), which details the rules and requirements for becoming an Oregon Qualified and Oregon Certified Health Care Interpreter, including those for Signed Language Health Care Interpreters (HCI).

Newly amended language for sign language interpreters went into effect August 1, 2023:

SUMMARY: The rule change clarifies it is mandatory to have RID certification and language proficiency test, rather than making either of those qualifications optional.

Added language allows for a phased-in approach to provide time for applicants to comply with the updated requirements.

A Public Hearing was held June 20, 2023, with comment period closing June 23, 2023. The rule modification was approved July 28, 2023, with the following phase-in stages.

950-050-0040

Eligibility Standards for Central Registry Enrollment, Qualification and Certification

(7) The following qualified and certified Signed Language health care interpreter application dates apply:

(a) All signed language health care interpreter renewing applicants with expiration dates between August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024, will have until July 31, 2024, to comply with OAR chapter 950, division 50 upon renewal.

(b) All first-time signed language health care interpreter applicants will have until July 31, 2024, to comply with OAR chapter 950, division 50.

(c) All first-time and renewing signed language applicants must comply with OAR chapter 950, division 50 at the time of application or renewal beginning August 1, 2024.

How are the requirements different between Qualified and Certified Signed Language HCIs?

The specific path for Signed Language HCIs is not the same as it is for spoken language HCIs. This is because not all spoken languages have certification exams, whereas Signed Language has the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification exam.

Please see the requirements listed on the next page detailing what is needed to apply to become an Oregon Qualified Signed Language HCI and an Oregon Certified Signed Language HCI.

- Both credentials require RID certification and language proficiency exam;
- The Oregon Certified Signed Language HCI credential requires 60-hours of OHA approved HCI training.

*(**PLEASE NOTE: All renewing qualified Signed Language HCI interpreters must take an [OHA approved 60-hours training course](#) before renewing. Upon renewal, the interpreter will be listed in the registry as a Certified HCI.)*

Both credentials require 24-hours of CEUs upon renewal. Credential periods are 4-years.

REQUIREMENTS

Oregon Qualified Signed Language Health Care Interpreter

First Time applicants (see [application](#))

- 18+yrs old
- High school diploma, GED, or equivalent, or higher education
- Valid Government ID
- Not on Medicaid Exclusion list
- Abide by a nationally recognized code of ethics and standards of practice, such as the National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care, the National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care, and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct
- Current (not expired) RID Certification
- Provide proof of passing of proficiency exam approved by the Authority such as the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) or the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI; ASL) with a minimum proficiency level of 4 (ASLPI) or advanced (SLPI:ASL). Test must not be older than 4-years.
- Submit required [application forms](#)
****PLEASE NOTE:** *Renewing qualified Signed Language interpreters must complete a 60-hour [OHA approved HCI training program](#).*

Oregon Certified Signed Language Health Care Interpreter

- 18+yrs old
- High school diploma, GED, or equivalent, or higher education
- Valid Government ID
- Not on Medicaid Exclusion list
- Abide by a nationally recognized code of ethics and standards of practice, such as the National Code of Ethics for Interpreters in Health Care, the National Standards of Practice for Interpreters in Health Care, and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct
- Current (not expired) RID Certification
- Provide proof of passing of proficiency exam approved by the Authority such as the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) or the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI; ASL) with a minimum proficiency level of 4 (ASLPI) or advanced (SLPI:ASL). Test must not be older than 4-years.
- **60-hours of [OHA approved training](#) (a requirement for renewing qualified Signed Language HCIs)**
- Submit required [application forms](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: I completed my 60-hours of OHA approved training and I have a BA/AA/Masters/PhD in American Sign Language. Do I meet the requirements to be an Oregon Certified Signed Language Interpreter?

Answer: Both Qualified and Certified Signed Language HCI interpreters must have RID certification **and** provide proof of passing of proficiency exam approved by the Authority such as the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) or the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI; ASL), with a minimum proficiency level of 4 (ASLPI) or advanced (SLPI:ASL). Test must not be older than 4-years.

Question: Who must take the 60-hour OHA approved training?

Answer: First time applicants wishing to be Certified Signed Language HCIs must take an OHA approved 60-hour training. In addition, Oregon Qualified Signed Language HCIs who are renewing their credential must complete the 60-hours of OHA [approved health care interpreting training](#) before renewing.

Question: Why do I need Oregon certification or qualification when I already have my RID?

Answer: Signed Language interpreters wanted a path to recognize their expertise in working in the healthcare field, the same as spoken language interpreters in Oregon. During the public hearing on HB2419, the Oregon Association for the Deaf and ASL interpreters provided testimony in favor of this bill.

Question: How long does my Oregon Qualified Signed Language HCI designation last?

Answer: The credential period for Qualified and Certified HCI is four-years. During this time, it is expected the Qualified Signed Language HCI will obtain 60-hours of [OHA approved training](#) and complete 24-hours of continuing education to become an Oregon Certified Signed Language HCI. Each renewal period requires an additional 24-hours of CEUs.

Question: How do I apply?

Answer: All applications (first time [applicants](#) and [renewal](#)) can be found on the Equity and Inclusion Division HCI program [website](#).

950-050-0040

Eligibility Standards for Central Registry Enrollment, Qualification and Certification

(6) Applicants seeking to become Signed language interpreters and enrolled in the central registry must:

- (a) Have a Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) certification; and
- (b) Provide verification of passing an approved language proficiency exam, such as the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI); or the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI; ASL) with a minimum proficiency level of 4 or advanced.

(7) The following qualified and certified Signed Language health care interpreter application dates apply:

- (a) All Signed Language health care interpreter renewing applicants with expiration dates between August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024, will have until July 31, 2024, to comply with OAR chapter 950, division 50 upon renewal.
- (b) All first-time Signed Language health care interpreter applicants will have until July 31, 2024, to comply with OAR chapter 950, division 50.
- (c) All first-time and renewing Signed Language applicants must comply with OAR chapter 950, division 50 at the time of application or renewal beginning August 1, 2024.

950-050-0070

Approval of Testing Centers, Skill Evaluation and Assessment

(5) The Authority will accept testing of American Sign Language proficiency when an applicant provides documentation of:

- (a) Passing a skill evaluation offered by the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview (ASLPI) at rating of 4 or above; or
- (b) A Signed Language Proficiency Interview conducted in American Sign Language (SLPI:ASL) at a rating of advanced or above;

950-050-0120

Certification and Qualification Renewal

(c) For applicants seeking renewal as a qualified health care interpreter for American Sign Language, written verification of at least 60 hours of formal training from an Authority-approved training center as defined in OAR 950-050-0060. These training hours are in addition to the continuing education required by OAR 950-050-0090.