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Increasing Language Access In Oregon: Learning Modules



OREGON
HEALTH
AUTHORITY

Chapter 2: Defining Credentialed Interpreters

Chapter 2

- Discusses requirements to be a credentialed health care interpreter and why you should work with one

Chapter 2. Defining Credentialed Interpreters

In this chapter, we will explore what it means to be a credentialed health care interpreter in Oregon. We use the term “credentialed interpreter” to refer to health care interpreters who are certified or qualified through Oregon’s health care interpreter program. Credentialed interpreters help ensure patients who have language needs receive clear, accurate and high-quality interpretation.

We will discuss the basic requirements to become a credentialed health care interpreter in Oregon. While Chapter 1 focused on interpreter types broadly, this chapter focuses on Oregon-specific requirements. More information, including lists of requirements to become credentialed is available on Oregon’s [health care interpreter program website](#).

What does it mean to be a credentialed interpreter?

A credentialed interpreter is someone who has met specific eligibility, training, testing, qualification and/or certification standards with their language and interpretation knowledge and skills. These standards help ensure a base level of quality across all credentialed interpreters.

Below, we discuss the different types of credentialed health care interpreters in Oregon. As you think about the different ways you can meet patient language needs, you can use this information as a quick reference and explore the [health care interpreter program website](#) for more information.

Qualified health care interpreter

To become a qualified health care interpreter in Oregon, an individual must meet basic eligibility, proficiency and training requirements set by the OHA. These include:

- Being at least 18 years old with at least a high school diploma or GED
- Not being in the [Medicaid Exclusion Database](#)
- Demonstrating a certain level of language proficiency, either through education in the language or testing
- Completing at least 60 hours of OHA-approved training opportunities.

Chapter 2 Details

- Discusses what it means to be a credentialed interpreter
 - Outlines requirements to become a qualified health care interpreter vs. certified health care interpreter
 - Describes requirements for sign language interpreters
- Highlights importance of working with credentialed interpreters
 - Ensures compliance with Oregon law
 - Promotes equitable, safe, and culturally responsive care for patients with language or communication needs

What is a Credentialed Interpreter?

A credentialed interpreter is someone who has met specific eligibility, training, testing, qualification and/or certification standards with their language and interpretation knowledge and skills.

These standards help ensure a base level of quality across all credentialed interpreters.

Why this matters:

- Ensure accurate and effective communication between providers and patients.
- Protect patient safety by reducing misunderstandings that can affect care.
- Comply with Oregon law and OHA requirements.
- Build trust with patients by showing respect for their language preferences.

Interpreter Requirements: Qualified Health Care Interpreter (HCI)

To become a qualified HCI in Oregon, individuals must meet these requirements:

- Be at least 18 years old and have a high school diploma/GED or higher
- Not be listed in the [Medicaid Exclusion Database](#)
- Demonstrate language proficiency in both English and the target language, either through education or an approved test
- Complete at least 60 hours of OHA-approved training
 - Interpreters who already hold another certification may only need an additional 20 hours of OHA-approved training.
 - For more information about eligible certifications, view the [Oregon HCI Program Guidance](#).

Interpreter Requirements: Certified HCI

To become a certified health care interpreter in Oregon, individuals must:

- Meet the basic eligibility, training, and language proficiency requirements as qualified HCI
- Pass a certification exam from an approved organization
 - Full list of approved organizations is available on the [health care interpreter program website](#)

Interpreter Requirements: Sign Language Interpreter

To work as a credentialed sign language interpreter in Oregon, individuals must meet OHA's certification and proficiency standards.

- Hold current certification from one of the following:
 - Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
 - National Interpreter Certification
 - Certified Deaf Interpreter
- Pass a sign language proficiency exam, such as:
 - American Sign Language Proficiency Interview — minimum level 4
 - Sign Language Proficiency Interview — minimum Advanced level
- Meet OHA credentialing requirements for health care interpreters

Oregon Health Care Interpreter Website

- More information, including specific requirements to become credentialed as either a qualified or certified health care interpreter, is available on Oregon's [health care interpreter program website](#).

Thank You!

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer free of charge. Contact Questions.LanguageAccess@oha.oregon.gov or 503-979-6980. We accept all relay calls.

Health Policy and Analytics
Transformation Center
421 SW Oak Street, Suite 775
Portland, OR 97205
503-979-6980

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hpa/dsi-tc/Pages/index.aspx>

