WAC 388-03-050 DSHS Code of Professional Conduct

The code of conduct is the professional standard established by the department for all interpreters, translators, and LAPL who provide language services to department programs and clients. Any violation of this code may disqualify a provider from providing those services. Specifically, the code addresses:

(1) **Accuracy.** Interpreters/translators must always express the source language message in a thorough and faithful manner. They must:

(a) Omit or add nothing;
(b) Give consideration to linguistic variations in both the source and target languages; and
(c) Conserve the tone and spirit of the source language.

(2) **Cultural sensitivity-courtesy.** Interpreters/translators must be culturally sensitive, and respectful of the individual(s) they serve.

(3) **Confidentiality.** Interpreters/translators must not divulge any information publicly or privately obtained through their assignments, including, but not limited to, information gained through access to documents or other written materials.

(4) **Proficiency.** Interpreters/translators must meet the minimum proficiency standard set by DSHS.

(5) **Compensation.** Interpreters/translators must:

(a) Not accept additional money, consideration, or favors for services reimbursed by the department. The fee schedule agreed to between the contracted language services providers and the department shall be the maximum compensation accepted.
(b) Not use the department's time, facilities, equipment or supplies for private gain or other advantage; and
(c) Not use or attempt to use their position to secure privileges or exemptions.

(6) **Nondiscrimination.** Interpreters/translators must:

(a) Always be impartial and unbiased;
(b) Not discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, national origin, age, socio-economic or educational or marital status, religious or political beliefs, or sexual orientation; and
(c) Refuse or withdraw from an assignment, without threat or retaliation, if they are unable to perform the required service in an ethical manner.

(7) **Self-representation.** Interpreters/translators must accurately and completely represent their certifications, training, and experience.

(8) **Impartiality-conflict of interest.** Interpreters/translators must disclose to the department any real or perceived conflicts of interest that would affect their professional objectivity. Note: Providing interpreting or translating services to family members or friends may violate the family member or friend's right to confidentiality, constitute a conflict of interest, or violate a DSHS contract or subcontract.

(9) **Professional demeanor.** Interpreters/translators must be punctual, prepared, and dressed in a manner appropriate, and not distracting for the situation.

(10) **Scope of practice.** Interpreters/translators must not:

(a) Counsel, refer, give advice, or express personal opinions to the individuals for whom they are interpreting/translating;

(b) Engage in activities with clients that are not directly related to providing interpreting and/or translating services to DSHS;

(c) Have unsupervised access to DSHS clients, including but not limited to phoning clients directly, other than at the request of a DSHS employee;

(d) Market their services to DSHS clients, including but not limited to, arranging services or appointments for DSHS clients in order to create business for themselves; or

(e) Transport DSHS clients for any business, including social service or medical appointments.

(11) **Reporting obstacles to practice.** Interpreters/translators must assess at all times their ability to interpret/translate.

(a) Interpreters/translators must immediately notify the parties if they have any reservations about their competency or ability to remain impartial and offer to withdraw without threat or retaliation;

(b) Interpreters/translators must immediately withdraw from encounters they perceive as a violation of this code.

(12) **Professional development.** As specified in WAC **388-03-160**, interpreters/translators are expected to continually develop their skills and knowledge through:

(a) Professional interpreter/translator training;

(b) Continuing education; and

(c) Regular interaction with colleagues and specialists in related fields.