

## Considerations for court sign language interpreter compensation rates

### Overview

The Department of Social and Health Services manages contracts for sign language interpreters, pursuant to RCW 39.26.100. Washington State Courts have the option to use the Department's contract or independently contract with sign language interpreters.

Currently, there are no required compensation rates for court sign language interpreters. The following information may be considered for compensation rates.

### Compensation

Court sign language interpretation is a specialized field and higher rates may apply over general sign language interpretation. A limited number of qualified sign language interpreters and a high service demand can also influence cost, as well as, availability.

Sign language interpreters generally charge an hourly rate, based on the interpreter's certification level, years of experience, subject matter knowledge, education, and training. Usually, a commitment of minimum service time (two to four hours) is required. A higher rate may be applied for the first hour of service. Compensation for expenses related to travel, lodging, and per diem is a standard reimbursement, as well as, cancellations or any changes to scheduled service appointments.

### Use of Multiple Interpreters

Two sign language interpreters, are recommended for court proceedings that are complex or of longer duration, such as trials. When more than one individual in a court proceeding is deaf, multiple interpreters are necessary to provide a clear line of sight and facilitate optimal communication.

RCW 2.42.140 indicates, an intermediary interpreter also known as a deaf interpreter, is necessary in addition to a sign language interpreter when the communication mode or language of an individual who is deaf is not readily interpretable.

