



Sign Language Interpreting Services

What is Sign Language Interpreting?

According to the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), interpreting is the act of conveying meaning between people who use signed and/or spoken languages. They describe interpreters as follows:

Sign Language/spoken English interpreters are highly skilled professionals that facilitate communication between hearing individuals and the Deaf or hard-of-hearing. They are a crucial communication tool utilized by all people involved in a communication setting. Interpreters must be able to listen to another person's words, inflections and intent and simultaneously render them into the visual language of signs using the mode of communication preferred by the deaf consumer. The interpreter must also be able to comprehend the signs, inflections and intent of the deaf consumer and simultaneously speak to them in articulate, appropriate English. They must understand the cultures in which they work and apply that knowledge to promote effective cross-cultural communications.

There are different types of interpreting for Deaf consumers, usually packaged under the term "American Sign Language" (ASL). There are, however, different types of interpreters based on consumer need including, but not limited to:

- **American Sign Language (ASL)** is a visual language. With signing, the brain processes linguistic information through the eyes. The shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements, all play important parts in conveying information.
- **Oral interpreting** is used for those who do not sign or not proficient in ASL. An oral interpreter is someone trained in how to silently mouth speech and use gestures for non-signing deaf consumers. The use of facial expressions and gestures are added to enhance understanding for those who lip read.
- **Tactile Interpreting** is a common means of communication used by people with DeafBlindness. Tactile is based using ASL with the touch "hand over hand" using their hands loosely on top of the DeafBlind individual's hands to receive the information.
- **Protactile Interpreting** is a relatively new method of tactile communication that allows an individual who is DeafBlind to have more reliable information about the visual elements of their environment (people smiling/nodding). Protactile allows people to establish tactile communication channels in different ways.
- **Cued Speech** is a system used for non-signing deaf and hard of hearing individuals that adds information about the phonology of words that are not visible on the lips.

Additional interpreting technology available through Video Relay Services:

- **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)** is an option for connecting with an interpreter thru the internet instead of scheduling an on-site interpreter. The hearing and deaf person are in the same room with the interpreter who is present via a computer or tablet while working from a remote site. VRI costs are the responsibility of the requesting agency. VRI is normally billed on a per minute rate for the time used of service.
- **Video Relay Service (VRS)** Services regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is used for phone call access between deaf and hearing callers who are in two different locations. An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and uses sign language to communicate can use VRS technology, called a videophone to call a hearing party who uses a standard phone. An ASL Interpreter interprets the call between the deaf and hearing parties.

What are Connecticut's Registration Requirements?

All Sign Language interpreters need to be registered to work in Connecticut. The Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) manages the annual registration process. There is no fee associated with this registry.

- Registration is based on credentials defined in state statute [Sec. 46a-33a](#).
- Registrations are valid for up to one year.
- The registration period runs from October 1st through September 30th each year.
- ADS maintains the list of registered interpreters on their [Interpreter Registry](#).
- ADS issues registration cards annually, or upon the receipt of a submission at any time during the registration year.

How Do I find Sign Language (ASL) Interpreting Services?

Sign Language Interpreters generally work for interpreting agencies, though they can work independently or directly for companies and state agencies. There are a few ways to find and schedule a Sign Language Interpreter in Connecticut:

- **General:** Businesses or members of the community looking to secure an interpreter can go to 211 and search under ASL Interpreting Service for CT residents. [CT - 211 Interpreting Agencies](#).
 - You will notice that Aging and Disability Services (ADS) will be the first to pop up. Though the agency does not provide interpreting services, under Connecticut Statute [Sec. 46a-33a](#) any interpreter providing services in Connecticut needs to be registered with ADS.
- **State Agencies:** The state of Connecticut has a Master Agreement for ASL Interpreting and CART Services through the Department of Administrative Services. The current contract is valid from 2/21/2020 – 12/31/2024. The seven approved vendors can be found here: [State Contracting Portal - Interpreting Services for Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing Individuals](#)
- **Other Entities:** This Master Agreement is used primarily for state agencies but can also be used by other entities such as municipalities, and legislative partners.