

## Interpreter Code of Ethics

State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

### Language Interpreter and Translator Code of Professional Conduct

#### 1. **Accuracy**

Interpreters/translators shall always thoroughly and faithfully render the source language message, omitting or adding nothing, giving consideration to linguistic variations in both source and target languages, conserving the tone and spirit of the source language message.

#### 2. **Cultural Sensitivity - Courtesy**

Interpreters/translators shall be culturally competent, sensitive, and respectful of the individual(s) they serve.

#### 3. **Confidentiality**

Interpreters/translators shall not divulge any information obtained through their assignments, including but not limited to information gained through access to documents or other written material.

#### 4. **Disclosure**

Interpreters/translators shall not publicly discuss, report, or offer an opinion concerning matters in which they are or have been engaged, even when that information is not privileged by law to be confidential.

#### 5. **Proficiency**

Interpreters/translators shall meet the minimum proficiency standard set by DSHS by passing the required certification examination or screening evaluation.

#### 6. **Compensation**

The fee schedule agreed to between the contracted language service providers and the department shall be the maximum compensation accepted. Interpreters/translators shall not accept additional money, compensation, or favor for services reimbursed by the department. Interpreters/translators shall not use for private or others gain or advantage, the department's time, facilities, equipment, or supplies, nor shall they use or attempt to use their position to secure privileges or exemptions.

#### 7. **Nondiscrimination**

Interpreters/translators shall always be neutral, impartial, and unbiased. Interpreters/translators shall not discriminate on the basis of gender, disability, race, color, national origin, age, socioeconomic or educational status, or religious or political beliefs.

#### 8. **Self-evaluation**

Interpreters/translators shall accurately and completely represent their certifications, training, and experience.

**9. Impartiality - Conflict of Interest**

Interpreters/translators shall disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest which would affect their objectivity in the delivery of service. Providing interpreting or translation services for family members or friends may violate the individual's right to confidentiality, or constitute a conflict of interest.

**10. Professional Demeanor**

Interpreters and translators shall be punctual, prepared, and dressed in a manner appropriate and not distracting for the situation.

**11. Scope of Practice**

Interpreters/translators shall not counsel, refer, give advice, or express personal opinions to individuals for whom they are interpreting/translating, or engage in any other activities that may be construed to constitute a service other than interpreting/translating. Interpreters are prohibited from having unsupervised access to clients, including but not limited to phoning clients directly, other than at the request of a DSHS employee or DSHS-contracted service provider (e.g., medical provider). Interpreters are also prohibited from marketing their interpreter services to clients, including but not limited to, arranging services or appointments for clients in order to create business for themselves. Additionally, interpreters shall not transport DSHS clients for any DSHS business, including social service or medical appointments.

**12. Reporting Obstacles to Practice**

Interpreters/translators shall assess at all times their ability to interpret/translate. Should interpreters/translators have any reservations about their competency, they must immediately notify the parties and offer to withdraw without threat of retaliation. Interpreter/translator may remain until more appropriate interpreters/translators can be secured.

**13. Ethical Violations**

Interpreters/translators shall immediately withdraw from encounters they perceive as violations of this Code. Any violation of the Code of Professional Conduct may cause termination of the contract.

**14. Professional Development**

Interpreters/translators shall develop their skills and knowledge through professional training, continuing education, and interaction with colleagues and specialists in related fields.

THIS CODE APPLIES TO ALL PERSONS PROVIDING LANGUAGE INTERPRETING OR TRANSLATION SERVICES AND MUST BE COMPLIED WITH AT ALL TIMES.

Interpreter/Translator Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_