



New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing

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Filling K-12 Educational Interpreter Positions

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School Districts, particularly in rural areas, often struggle to find qualified signed language interpreters to fill vacancies. Please contact us if we can be of assistance.

Posting Positions

NMCDHH can share position postings on our social media pages, in our email newsletter, and with our interpreter distribution list. Email postings to Lisa Dignan at the email above. See the minimum qualifications at the end of this fact sheet to ensure qualified interpreters apply.

Staffing Agencies

Some rural school districts have had success using staffing agencies. The ones listed below have contacted NMCDHH for guidance and assistance regarding licensure qualifications for interpreters working in New Mexico and have been responsive to information provided.

Sunbelt Staffing

800.659.1522

www.sunbeltstaffing.com

Soliant Health

www.soliant.com

Gifted Health Care (acquired Therapia Staffing)

www.therapiastaffing.com

State Licensure

New Mexico requires signed language interpreters to be licensed by the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board (SLIPB) at the Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD). There are three licenses:

- Provisional – for individuals who have graduated from an ITP but are not yet certified, or who were employed as interpreters in July 2007. Can be held for a maximum of five years.
- Educational – requires the ED: K-12 credential from RID or meeting all Ed:K-12 criteria, and is only valid in K-12 settings.
- Community – requires national certification and is valid in K-12 and community settings.

Details and forms can be found at the SLIPB website: www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/signed-language-interpreting-practices/.

Practicing without a license is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 364 days in jail and/or up to a \$1000 fine.

Public Education Department License

Educational Interpreters in K-12 settings are required to also hold a license from the Public Education Department (PED). Holding one of the three licenses listed above qualifies and interpreter to hold the PED license. Details and forms can be found at the PED website: <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/licensure/how-to-apply/interpreter-for-the-deaf-pre-k-12>.

On-Site v. Remote Interpreters

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) can be an effective alternative in some settings when finding an on-site interpreter is impossible, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. VRI is generally not effective for elementary students, as the classrooms are highly interactive and the students are not well prepared to receive services via video. Please see the “educational settings” section of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Standard Practice Paper on VRI [here](#) for more information. All of RID’s Standard Practice Papers can be found on their website: <https://rid.org/about/resources/>. Additionally, New Mexico School for the Deaf’s Outreach Team has developed an infographic showing considerations for remote interpreting. See it on the third page of this Fact Sheet.

Minimum Qualifications to Be Included on Job Postings

Below are minimum qualifications which will assist in finding a qualified signed language interpreter for K-12 educational positions. Some Districts require interpreters to be nationally certified by RID and others are willing to consider pre-certified interpreters. Suggested language for each is included below.

Certified Only:

Minimum Qualifications

- New Mexico Public Education Department License
- New Mexico Signed Language Interpreter License – Community or Educational
- Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf or Board of Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI)
- Experience (as determined by the district)

Pre-Certified or Certified:

Minimum Qualifications

- New Mexico Public Education Department License
- New Mexico Signed Language Interpreter License – Community, Educational or Provisional
- AA degree or higher in Interpreting -or- Certification from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- Experience (as determined by the district)

For assistance customizing qualifications for your specific District, please feel free to contact us or the New Mexico School for the Deaf’s Outreach Team. Visit their website at www.nmsd.k12.nm.us/o/nmsd/page/support-for-schools. Scroll down to “Questions?” and send a request to be put in contact with your District’s NMSD Educational Consultant.

IN-PERSON VS. VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETER SERVICES

Implications for the K-12 Classroom

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) in New Mexico classrooms. The following are some critical considerations for educational teams and administrators when deciding if on-site, in-person interpreting or VRI would be appropriate for the Deaf and hard of hearing students they serve.

CLASSROOM INTERPRETING = RELATIONSHIPS

Carefully consider if an interpreter can effectively support the student grow relationships between teachers, fellow students, and staff. Can the interpreter successfully foster and enhance relationships between the teacher and Deaf student? The Deaf student and peers? Would a remote interpreter be able to accomplish the same goal with the same Deaf student?

INTERPRETING IS HEAVILY INFORMED BY CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

An in-person interpreter naturally accesses...

- the teacher
- environmental information
- visuals
- interpersonal relationships
- the Deaf student's eye gaze, body language, and reactions

All have profound implications for interpreters' work. Would any student understand the language of the classroom without context? Would the Deaf student?

MANY STUDENTS ARE STILL ACQUIRING ASL & ENGLISH VOCABULARY REQUIRED TO USE INTERPRETERS

It can be uncomfortable for students to admit they don't understand. This is especially true when their "communication person" isn't in the same room. VRI interpreters for elementary-age students should be used with an abundance of caution. Most students are still acquiring and strengthening their foundational language, and many are still learning to depend on their eyes for language access! They are still acclimating to a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Who will monitor the student's ability to progress in their learning via an interpreter... whether remote or in person?

INTERPRETERS MUST COMMUNICATE WITH THE EDUCATIONAL TEAM

As a related service provider, the K-12 Interpreter must be prepared to share information about the student's language use and their use of interpreting services. Likewise, the educational team must share lesson plans and IEP goals with the interpreter. There should be opportunities for professionals to work as a team, even if one of them is remote.