

WAC 10-08-150 Adjudicative proceedings—Interpreters. (1) When an impaired person as defined in chapter 2.42 RCW or a non-English-speaking person as defined in chapter 2.43 RCW is a party or witness in an adjudicative proceeding, the appointing authority shall appoint an interpreter to assist the party or witness throughout the proceeding. Appointment, qualifications, waiver, compensation, visual recording, and ethical standards of interpreters in adjudicative proceedings are governed by the provisions of chapters 2.42 and 2.43 RCW.

(2) An adjudicative proceeding under chapter 34.05 RCW includes a legal proceeding which occurs on the record, and also includes oral and written communications of a party to an agency proceeding, and the filing, issuance and entry of notices, motions, orders, decisions, petitions, and other documents. When a party or witness appears in a legal proceeding on the record, the appointing authority is the presiding officer, and otherwise the appointing authority is the agency head or designee.

(3) (a) The agency head or designee may make a predetermination that an interpreter is qualified to provide parties with a:

(i) Visual translation or sight translation of forms, notices, proposed exhibits, briefs and orders, either before or following the hearing; or

(ii) Visual or spoken-language interpretation of oral communication with the agency that is not on the record.

(b) The agency head or designee may maintain a list of interpreters who have been determined to be qualified to interpret before the agency.

(4) Relatives of any participant in a proceeding and employees of the agency involved in a proceeding shall not be appointed as interpreters in the proceeding. This subsection shall not prohibit the office of administrative hearings from hiring an employee whose function is to interpret at adjudicative proceedings on the record and as otherwise needed by impaired and non-English-speaking persons.

(5) The appointing authority shall appoint a qualified spoken language interpreter who is on the list of certified interpreters maintained by the administrative office of the courts (AOC), except as provided in this subsection. The appointing authority may find there is good cause to appoint a qualified spoken language interpreter who is not on the list of certified interpreters maintained by the AOC. "Good cause" includes, but is not limited to, consideration of the totality of circumstances and a determination by the appointing authority that:

(a) The current list of certified interpreters maintained by the AOC does not include an interpreter certified in the language spoken by the non-English-speaking person;

(b) The parties agree to the issue or motion;

(c) The motion or hearing is expedited or emergent;

(d) The matter involves general or procedural information;

(e) The matter involves sight translation of case-related documents including forms, notices, proposed exhibits, briefs, and orders, either before or following the hearing;

(f) The rescheduling of a hearing to appoint a certified interpreter would cause prejudicial delay;

(g) The certified interpreter qualified by the appointing authority becomes unavailable unexpectedly before completion of the adjudicative proceeding; or

(h) An interpreter who is certified to interpret in the courts of another state or the federal courts is available.

(6) The appointing authority shall make a preliminary determination that an interpreter is able in the particular proceeding to interpret accurately all communication to and from the impaired or non-English-speaking person. This determination shall be based upon the testimony or stated needs of the impaired or non-English-speaking person, the interpreter's education, certifications, and experience in interpreting for contested cases or adjudicative proceedings, the interpreter's understanding of the basic vocabulary and procedure involved in the proceeding, and the interpreter's impartiality. The parties or their representatives may question the interpreter as to their qualifications and impartiality.

(7) If in the opinion of the impaired or non-English-speaking person, the appointing authority or a qualified observer, the interpreter does not provide accurate and effective communication with the impaired or non-English-speaking person, the appointing authority shall appoint another interpreter.

(8) Mode of interpretation.

(a) The AOC recognizes three spoken language interpreting modes: Consecutive, simultaneous, and sight translation. Sight translation means the act of reading a written text out loud.

(b) Interpreters for non-English-speaking persons shall use the simultaneous mode of interpretation where the presiding officer and interpreter agree that simultaneous interpretation will advance fairness and efficiency; otherwise, the consecutive mode of foreign language interpretation shall be used.

(c) Interpreters for hearing impaired persons shall use the simultaneous mode of interpretation unless an intermediary interpreter is needed. If an intermediary interpreter is needed, interpreters shall use the mode that the interpreter considers to provide the most accurate and effective communication with the hearing impaired person.

(d) When an impaired or non-English-speaking person is a party to a proceeding, the interpreter shall interpret all statements made by other hearing participants. The presiding officer shall ensure that sufficient extra time is provided to permit interpretation and the presiding officer shall ensure that the interpreter interprets the entire proceeding to the party to the extent that the party has the same opportunity to understand all statements made during the proceeding as a nonimpaired or English-speaking party listening to uninterpreted statements would have.

(9) An interpreter shall not, without the written consent of the parties to the communication, be examined as to any communication the interpreter interprets under circumstances where the communication is privileged by law. An interpreter shall not, without the written consent of the parties to the communication, be examined as to any information the interpreter obtains while interpreting pertaining to any proceeding then pending.

(10) The presiding officer shall explain to the impaired or non-English-speaking party that a written decision or order will be issued in English, and that a visual translation or sight translation of the decision is available at no cost to the party.

The presiding officer shall attach to or include in the decision or order a telephone number to request a visual translation or sight translation.

(11) If the party has a right to review of the order or decision, the presiding officer shall orally inform the party during the hearing of the right and of the time limits to request review.

(12) The agency involved in the hearing shall pay interpreter fees and expenses.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 34.12.030. WSR 24-14-111, § 10-08-150, filed 7/2/24, effective 8/2/24. Statutory Authority: RCW 34.05.020, 34.05.250, 34.12.030, 34.12.080, 2.42.010, and 2.43.010. WSR 16-19-083, § 10-08-150, filed 9/20/16, effective 10/21/16. Statutory Authority: RCW 34.05.020, 34.05.250, 34.12.030 and 34.12.080. WSR 99-20-115, § 10-08-150, filed 10/6/99, effective 11/6/99. Statutory Authority: RCW 34.05.250. WSR 93-10-097, § 10-08-150, filed 5/5/93, effective 6/5/93; WSR 89-13-036 (Order 6), § 10-08-150, filed 6/15/89. Statutory Authority: RCW 34.04.022 and chapter 2.42 RCW. WSR 85-22-032 (Order 4), § 10-08-150, filed 10/31/85.]