Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries

Spoken Language Interpreter Scheduling System Roll-Out Frequently Asked Questions

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Following a new law ([RCW 39.26.300](#)) to improve meaningful access to spoken language interpreter services, the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) planned the launch of a new spoken language interpreter scheduling system. L&I selected [interpretingWorks](#) to implement and administer this new online platform.

Program Overview

In what settings do professional interpreters provide spoken language interpreting for L&I?
L&I pays for about 17,000 spoken language interpreter encounters per month. Interpreters serve in a range of settings, including medical and vocational appointments. It's part of L&I's mission to keep people safe and working by ensuring their access to services and care, whether or not they speak English.

How are interpretation appointments affected by the temporary telehealth policy?
The temporary telehealth policy allows in person interpreters to provide services remotely, as requested by the provider scheduling the appointment. To schedule specific phone interpretation services, please visit the L&I interpreter webpage, [here](#).

Program Roll-out Reassessment

What is happening with the project, now?
Several project challenges began with a protest to the contract award. Further issues included L&I project staff turnover and COVID-19 pandemic resource issues. Now that a new project management team is in place, L&I is reassessing the program's implementation timeline. This reassessment includes a careful evaluation of our progress, including:
• Review of current work done to build this system, so far.
• Incorporating feedback of end-users received during test-sessions.
• Clarifying registration requirements for both interpreters and providers.

Do you have a Go-Live date, yet?
Right now, we are currently not ready to assign a go-live date. We need to perform security reviews, test specific system elements, hold training sessions and prepare the community for this change.

What is included in the security reviews?
This includes time to perform standard cyber-security penetration reviews. While there are no major issues, we must do our due-diligence review of the testing results.

What other types of usability testing are you doing?

To ensure the scheduling system meets the needs of L&I providers and interpreters, we contracted with a user-experience research and design consultant to perform usability testing of the interpretingWorks system. We recruited system testers from our program, including statewide, multi-language interpreters and a sample of medical and vocational provider types.

What will happen when you determine a go-live date?

We will notify system users at least one-month before the system is officially launched.

What will happen to the current system that is in place?

The de-activation of our current process for scheduling spoken language interpretation appointments will not occur until after the new system is live. We will allow some overlap of the two systems to ensure a smooth transition.

Scheduling System Overview

Why is L&I making a change to the way interpreter services are scheduled?

The Washington State Legislature passed SSB 6245 during the 2018 session, which became RCW 39.26.300, and mandated this improvement to the state's use of interpreter services.

Do self-Insured employers use the new system, and if so, how?

Interpreter services may be ordered by self-insured employers. In these cases, the new system (InterpretingWorks) will need to bill the self-insured employer or their third party administrator (TPA) for the interpreter and administrative services, and not L&I. InterpretingWorks will need to work with the self-insured employer or their TPA to understand their billing process. Self-insured employers will be responsible for the interpreter services and the administrative fee.

What happens to interpreter agencies and related interpreter accounts?

To comply with the new law, all interpreter agency accounts, and interpreters doing business with L&I under those agency group accounts, will be de-activated sometime after the new system goes live. Agencies have one year to bill L&I for services provided prior to this cut-off date. Interpreters who want to continue providing services to L&I clients can enroll with interpretingWorks to receive referrals, and they can establish an independent interpreter account with L&I for on-demand appointments.

What are the features of the online scheduling system?

It modernizes L&I's Interpreter Services program with an internet platform optimized for use by any mobile browser and offering built-in quality assurance and reporting. Overall, this makes it easier to do business with L&I when requesting language interpreters.

- **For providers**, the new scheduling system is easy-to-use by allowing the user to request or accept appointments via smart phone or computer.

- **For interpreters**, it's a real-time listing of available interpreting jobs located close by, accessible on mobile devices or a home PC. Interpreters can track job assignments and do seamless, check-in/-out at appointment locations by scanning a QR-code. It also syncs job assignments with calendars and provides electronic invoicing for prompt payment.

Are Interpreter Services Appointment Records (ISARs) needed under the scheduling system?
ISARs will no longer be needed in the InterpretingWorks system. They will continue to be required for on-demand appointments arranged outside the scheduling system.

For Providers

If I'm a provider, do I need to sign up? If so, how?
Providers can enroll now by visiting the interpretingWorks website and following the steps for enrollment so their account is ready when the system is live.

Are we going to be able to book multiple appointments, several days in advance? Yes.

How will providers request interpretation for their L&I patients with this new system?
- For open and allowed L&I claims, interpreter services is a paid service and does not require prior authorization. Providers will decide with the patient if they need an interpreter.
- Providers will enter the interpretingWorks portal and submit a request for an interpreter. The system then posts the request to interpreters who meet their requirements.
- Interpreters choose to accept, confirm the appointment, and render services.
- At the end of the appointment, the interpreter and provider verify services, and interpreters submit verified encounters for payment through InterpretingWorks.

How is L&I going to expect providers to coordinate interpreters, if we have no guarantee that an interpreter will show up?
InterpretingWorks will notify the provider as soon as an interpreter accepts the appointment and if there are any cancellations or other changes. For a cancellation, providers have the option of using InterpretingWorks to find another interpreter, as well as working with L&I's other contracted phone/video vendors (Lionbridge and Language Link) or with independent interpreters to meet on-demand need, such as emergency, urgent care, and walk-ins.

For Providers – IME firms

Are Independent Medical Examiner (IME) firms required to use L&I's new interpreter service or can we use other interpreter agencies?
IME firms will be required to use L&I's new interpreter scheduling system, through InterpretingWorks, except for the rare instance of an on-demand appointment.

Are IME firms required to get a National Provider ID number (NPI) to sign up for the new scheduling system?
No. An NPI number is not required for providers to sign up for the scheduling system. The NPI is only required for interpreter registration.

Does the new scheduling system change the rule that prevents IME firms from using family members as interpreters?
No. The scheduling system maintains the rule preventing IME firms from using family members as interpreters.

Are the IME Panels expected to pay for the interpreter services? No.

For Interpreters

If I'm an interpreter, when and how do I enroll?
Enrollment is going on now – interpreters can sign up through the interpretingWorks website by completing an **online enrollment form.** Once submitted, the interpreter can finish their enrollment independently or can contact interpretingWorks by chat, by email or by phone and someone will help complete the enrollment process. The entire process only takes two to three business days to complete.

It's important to note a requirement that's NEW to the process; interpreters will need National Provider Identification (NPI) number. NPIs are unique, 10-digit numbers used for identifying specific providers. NPIs are widely used by medical providers nationwide.

If you do not have an NPI number, go to**:** The National Provider Identifier Standard section of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website. There is no cost to sign up.

Will there be a pay rate change? Will interpreters be paid hourly?
Interpreters will not see decreases in the per-minute pay rate as outlined in the L&I fee schedule, or changes to our policy of paying per minute.

How often will interpreters be paid in the new system?
The interpretingWorks' payment policy follows a bimonthly (once every two weeks) pay period.

How will this system ensure a fair and even distribution of assignments?
Interpreter booking opportunities are issued randomly to the nearest interpreters, and a different interpreter is given the chance for first refusal every time. The new system automatically publishes interpreter services requests to the closest interpreters and expands that "circle" if the closest interpreters do not accept the interpreter assignment.

What will happen to independent interpreters?
- In addition to the use of the interpretingWorks scheduling system, independent interpreters will help L&I meet the language access needs of providers in certain instances. Their services are only approved for use in on-demand appointments that do not have a pre-scheduled time, such as emergency, urgent care, and walk-in appointments.
- Providers have the option of using InterpretingWorks, as well as working with L&I's other contracted vendors, Lionbridge, Language Link, or with independent interpreters to meet on demand need, such as emergency, urgent care, and walk-ins.
- There will be limited opportunities for independent interpreters to provide services for L&I appointments after the InterpretingWorks roll-out. Interpreters are strongly encouraged to enroll in the InterpretingWorks scheduling system.

Nonpayment and Payment Rates

What happens if an injured worker does not show up for an appointment? Who has to pay for the service?
In the event of a worker no show, per WAC 296-20-010, the worker is responsible for payment to the provider. L&I does not pay for no shows, and interpreters may only bill for services rendered. Please see our payment policies for more information here.

What are the pay rates for different types of interpretation services, and where can I find payment policy information?
All payment policy information for interpreter services can be found on our website, here.

Appointment Duration

What if an appointment lasts longer than scheduled? How would interpreters get paid?
Typically there is enough time on an interpreter's schedule to be paid for an appointment that exceeds its scheduled duration. Interpreters have a daily limit of eight hours, or 480 minutes and most do not fill an entire workday with interpretation appointments.

What will happen if an interpreter exceeds the daily maximum of billable minutes?
If an interpreter exceeds 480 minutes of interpretation services in a day, please inform the provider who scheduled the appointment. In this event, it is up to you if you want to continue interpreting, however interpreters are limited to eight (8) hours of services rendered per day and will not receive reimbursement over this limit. Please inform the provider that you're over the 8-hour limit so they can arrange another interpreter.

Confirming appointments and No shows

How does a worker get notice of an appointment or conference call, if they can't speak English?
Just as occurs now providers are responsible for contacting clients to remind them of appointments.

What happens if a provider schedules an appointment and the patient doesn't show up? Are there any charges that apply?
No. Interpreters may only bill for services provided. This is considered a 'no show' fee and L&I doesn't reimburse for no shows.

If a provider is late and the interpreter leaves before they arrive, will they be paid?
No. Interpreters may only bill for services rendered when all parties are present during an appointment.

For More Information

How do I get help registering in the InterpretingWorks portal, and get answers to questions about the system?
Request a live InterpretingWorks assistant through the "chat with us" feature on the interpretingWorks website to request a live assistant, or email your questions to onboarding@interpreting.works.

Where can we find the interpreter code of conduct?
L&I's interpreter codes of conduct can be found on our website and
https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=388-03-050

If I have questions concerning the system and enrollment, how do I contact interpretingWorks?
For questions related to onboarding, please email onboarding@interpreting.works.

What if I have unique questions not answered, below?

For questions and comments, please contact Interpretation@Lni.wa.gov.

You can also sign up to receive updates via email. Just select "Interpreter Services at L&I" option within the "Claims & Insurance" section.

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