

Overview of HCA Interpreter Services Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Universal Language Service?

Universal Language Service (Universal) is the contractor that provides interpreter services to Washington State Medicaid eligible clients for Healthcare appointments and Social Service appointments for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Department of Children, Youth and Family (DCYF) offices.

How do I request interpreters?

In order to request an interpreter through the HCA contractor, you must [register](#) with Universal's online scheduling platform.

Once you are registered, Universal will email your login information and a link to their [Customer User Guide](#) that will help you navigate their site.

The HCA Interpreter Services program is available to healthcare providers serving limited English proficient (LEP), Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Blind Medicaid clients and individuals applying for or receiving Medicaid, DSHS or DCYF services. For more information, visit HCA's [Interpreter Services webpage](#).

Can I request an interpreter last minute?

Yes. However, it is best to request an interpreter in advance to allow interpreters the opportunity to review their schedule. Universal cannot guarantee a last minute request will be filled.

How do I know if the interpreter is qualified?

HCA requires Universal to provide [DSHS certified, authorized, or recognized](#) Language Access Providers (LAP)'s, and ASL interpreters certified through the [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf \(RID\)](#).

What is the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)?

In 2011, The CBA was established between spoken LAP's and the Governor of Washington to ensure equal access to pay, professional development, union management meetings and grievances.

For more information about the CBA, you can review the document on the [OFM webpage](#).

American Sign Language interpreters are not part of the union or covered by the CBA.

What if Universal cannot provide a spoken language interpreter?

Per the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which states: providers receiving federal funds, are required to assure language access and assistance to disabled individuals.

You are required to provide this assistance at your own cost.

What if Universal cannot provide an American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter?

If Universal is unable to fill your request, you may choose another agency to fill the job. Once you have paid that agency, follow instructions under "How do I get reimbursed for ASL services?"

Do I have to use Universal?

HCA will not reimburse you for interpreter services if you did not request the job through Universal first.

How do I find an interpreter on my own?

If you are unable to locate an agency or interpreter on your own, you can access multiple [Department of Enterprise Services \(DES\)](#) language contractors throughout Washington State.

However, you will be required to pay for these contractors directly. HCA will not reimburse you for spoken language services accessed through DES language contracts or private contractors/agencies.

How do I get reimbursed for ASL services?

Once you place a request for a sign language interpreter through Universal, you will have the option to be notified if your job cannot be filled. Once you receive notification that your job cannot be filled, you can either:

1. Cancel the request for a sign language interpreter and obtain one on your own.; or
2. Leave the request pending with Universal, who will continue to try to fill the request up to the time of service. You will be notified whenever the appointment status changes.
 - o You can cancel the request at any time and proceed in obtaining your own sign language interpreter with HCA reimbursement.

If you pay for a sign language interpreter outside of the Universal system because no sign language interpreters were available through Universal, you can obtain reimbursement by submitting the following documents to Universal:

1. Copy of paid invoice
2. Job number from Universal
3. Completed reimbursement voucher.

Once the claim is processed at HCA, Universal will reimburse the provider up to the approved [ODHH](#) rate. If a private contracted ASL or CDI Interpreter is

not established on the ODHH website, the maximum allowable payment is fifty-five dollars (\$55) per hour.

You are responsible for the remainder balance.

What is a National Provider Identification (NPI)?

A NPI is a unique 10-digit identifier issued to health care providers in the United States by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

It is required to file all insurance claims, including Medicaid reimbursement, and is a requirement for any provider for healthcare service encounters. For more information, visit [National Plan & Provider Enumeration System](#).

Health Home care coordinators who need an NPI to submit interpreter requests should ask their Care Coordination Organization (CCO), which NPI is appropriate to use

How do I submit a complaint about an interpreter?

Feedback regarding interpreter performance can be submitted on the Universal scheduling platform, directly from the interpreter request (job). Universal's WeCare Program can be reached at WeCare@ULSonline.net.

Non-Covered Services

HCA does not pay for interpreter services for:

1. Administrative work
 - a. Scheduling appointments
 - b. Appointment reminder phone calls
 - c. Paperwork
2. Inpatient hospital services
3. Nursing facility services

Providers are responsible for providing these services at their own cost.

Keep up to date with HCA's Interpreter Service Program. [Sign up for email alerts](#)