

VR-SFP Chapter 24: Communication Access Services

New Content

Contract Type: Communication Access

The contractor and contractor staff members who provide the services described in this chapter also must comply with Chapters 1–3 of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Standards for Providers (SFP) manual.

24.1 Overview of Communication Access Services

“Communication access services” is a global term that describes the provision of sign language interpretation, transliteration, and/or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services to those with hearing and/or speech disabilities.

Sign language interpreting and CART services are provided by qualified individual service providers that facilitate communication between hearing individuals and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. To meet the needs of VR customers who are deaf or hard of hearing, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)–VR contracts with providers that possess the depth, breadth, and quality of resources necessary to provide communication access services.

Providers are responsible for coordinating and providing VR Communication Access Services according to the needs of the customer as specified on the service authorization. Services must be provided in accordance with the applicable professional and ethical standards of the individual service provider and will consist of facilitating communication for customers from a variety of cultures and backgrounds in a variety of settings.

TWC-VR contracts qualified providers with expertise in the following areas:

- Sign language interpreting services for American Sign Language (ASL) and other forms of sign language, depending on a customer’s preferred mode of communication. Also included in this area are Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) services, Trilingual Interpreting services, and Tactile Interpreting services, which uses sign language and touch fingerspelling with one or two hands.
- CART services, which occur when verbal information is converted into text and displayed on a computer, television, or projection screen for an individual to read and follow. Providers must be able to provide services on-site or remotely.

Communication Access Services may be provided to a single customer or multiple customers in various settings. Due to the physical demands of providing these services, with some assignments lasting more than one hour, two or more individual providers may be required. Additionally, circumstances may arise when services must be provided by a noncertified interpreter, which requires TWC-VR approval.

24.2 Staff Qualifications

24.2.1 Certified Interpreter

A certified interpreter must hold a current certificate issued by the Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI), or a certificate of interpreter competency issued by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). Certified interpreters are governed by the Code of Professional Conduct of the National Association of the Deaf and by RID, as adopted by HHSC.

24.2.2 Certified Deaf Interpreter

Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDIs) must hold a CDI certificate issued by RID.

24.2.3 Trilingual Interpreter

A trilingual interpreter must hold an advanced or master trilingual certification issued by the HHSC Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI).

24.2.4 Noncertified Interpreter

A noncertified interpreter lacks interpreter certification but can interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. A noncertified interpreter may be a hearing interpreter or a deaf interpreter.

24.2.5 Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) Provider

A CART provider must hold one of the following:

- A current CART Certification Level I through Level V certificate of competency issued by the Texas Court Reporters Association
- A current Certified Realtime Reporter (CRR),
- A certified CART Provider (CCP), or
- A Certified Broadcast Captioner (CBC) certificate of competency issued by the National Court Reporter Association

24.3 Service Descriptions

24.3.1 Interpreting Services

An interpreter conveys messages between individuals without contributing to the dialogue. TWC–Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) uses interpreter services to facilitate communication with customers during the rehabilitation process.

Interpreter services are provided by qualified interpreters and include:

- sign language and oral interpretation for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing; and
- tactile interpretation for customers who are deafblind.

Interpreting services include the provision of voice to sign, sign to voice, gestural to sign, sign to gestural, voice to visual, or visual to voice communication access. Qualified individual service providers must receptively and expressively interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. Interpreting services may be provided in an individual or group setting.

Interpreting services can vary based on a customer’s individual needs. Types of specialized interpreters include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Tactile Interpreter:** Interpreting services provided to a deafblind individual who receives information by sense of touch with one or two hands;
- **Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI):** Interpreting services provided by a certified interpreter who is deaf or hard of hearing and works in tandem with a hearing interpreter. A CDI possesses native signing ability and lifelong experiences as a Deaf or hard of hearing individual and has undergone specialized training to become an interpreter;
- **Trilingual Interpreter:** A certified interpreter who is able to meaningfully and accurately understand, produce, and transform conversations between a signed language, the English language, and a language other than English.

A certified interpreter is always preferred; however, a service authorization for the use of a noncertified interpreter may be issued when the following criteria are met:

- Use of a noncertified interpreter is authorized in writing by the customer and
- Use of a noncertified interpreter requires consultation with the VR program specialist for the deaf and hard of hearing. A case note indicating that consultation has been completed must be entered in RHW prior to services being provided.

24.3.2 Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services

CART service displays complete translation of all spoken words and environmental sounds to communicate a message between two or more parties. It entails provision of a word-for-word speech-to-text translation displayed on a screen.

24.4 Process and Procedure

Field staff contacts a provider to arrange communication access services. The provider schedules the services for the time and location that meets the customer's needs.

When a noncertified interpreter is used, the following must be received along with the service authorization:

- Written authorization from the customer to use a noncertified interpreter; and
- Use of a noncertified CART provider requires consultation with the VR program specialist for the deaf and hard of hearing. A case note indicating that consultation has been completed must be entered in RHW prior to services being provided.
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When the customer receives communication access services, the communication access service provider must obtain the customer's signature on a document verifying the time, length, and location of service provision. The communication access service provider also signs the document and then submits it with an invoice for payment.

The only exception to this procedure applies to CART services provided remotely. In the absence of a customer signature on a verification document, the unedited transcript of the CART services must accompany the invoice for payment.

24.5 Outcomes Required for Payment

For interpreting services, the provider must submit the following for payment:

- Verification document containing the following details:
 - Customer name
 - Customer signature
 - Location where service was provided
 - Assignment date and time
 - Assignment duration
 - Service provider name
 - Service provider signature
 - Service provider certification level; and
- Complete and accurate invoice

For remote CART services, the provider must submit the following for payment:

- Unedited transcript in Word format; and
- Complete and accurate invoice

24.6 Communication Access Fee Schedules

Rates for Interpreters and CART services are based on several factors. Below are the definitions to determine what rates apply:

- Day: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., weekdays (Monday through Friday)
- Evening: 5 p.m. – 8 a.m., weekdays (Monday through Friday)
- Weekend: 5 p. m. Friday – 8 a.m. Monday
- Holiday: Days in which state agencies are closed:
 - Labor Day
 - Veteran’s Day
 - Thanksgiving Day
 - Day after Thanksgiving
 - Christmas Eve Day
 - Christmas Day
 - Day after Christmas
 - New Year’s Day
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 - President’s Day
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day (July 4th)
- Last Minute: service requests made with less than 48 business hours in advance (2 business days) notice

24.6.1 Interpreter Rates - —Day, Evening, Weekend, Holiday

Level	First Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Day Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Holiday Rate
Non-Certified	\$130.00	\$65.00	\$97.50	\$130.00	\$16.25	\$24.38	\$32.50
Level A	\$162.00	\$81.00	\$121.50	\$162.00	\$20.25	\$30.38	\$40.50
Level B	\$182.00	\$91.00	\$136.50	\$182.00	\$22.75	\$34.13	\$45.50
Level C	\$206.00	\$103.00	\$154.50	\$206.00	\$25.75	\$38.63	\$51.50

Level	First Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Day Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Holiday Rate
Trilingual: Non-Certified	\$134.00	\$67.00	\$100.50	\$134.00	\$16.75	\$25.13	\$33.50
Trilingual: Certified Level A	\$228.00	\$114.00	\$171.00	\$228.00	\$28.50	\$42.75	\$57.00
Trilingual: Certified Level B	\$256.00	\$128.00	\$192.00	\$256.00	\$32.00	\$48.00	\$64.00
Trilingual: Certified Level C	\$292.00	\$146.00	\$219.00	\$292.00	\$36.50	\$54.75	\$73.00
Tactile	\$226.00	\$113.00	\$169.50	\$226.00	\$28.25	\$42.38	\$56.50
Court Reporter: Certified Level A	\$228.00	\$114.00	\$171.00	\$228.00	\$28.50	\$42.75	\$57.00
Court Reporter: Certified Level B	\$256.00	\$128.00	\$192.00	\$256.00	\$32.00	\$48.00	\$64.00
Court Reporter: Certified Level C	\$292.00	\$146.00	\$219.00	\$292.00	\$36.50	\$54.75	\$73.00

When a session exceeds the original approved time, last minute rates must be billed at the Additional Hour or Additional Quarter Hour rates under Interpreter Rates—Day, Evening, Weekend, Holiday and must be approved by the VRC.

24.6.2 Interpreter Rates—Last Minute—Day, Evening, Weekend, Holiday

Level	First Hour:	Additional Hour: Last Minute Day Rate	Additional Hour: Last Minute Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Hour: Last Minute Holiday Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Day Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Holiday Rate
Non-Certified	\$195.00	\$ 97.50	\$195.00	\$260.00	\$24.38	\$48.75	\$65.00
Level A	\$243.00	\$121.50	\$243.00	\$324.00	\$30.38	\$60.75	\$81.00
Level B	\$273.00	\$136.50	\$273.00	\$364.00	\$34.13	\$68.25	\$91.00
Level C	\$309.00	\$154.50	\$309.00	\$412.00	\$38.63	\$77.25	\$103.00
Trilingual: Non-Certified	\$231.00	\$100.50	\$201.00	\$268.00	\$25.13	\$50.25	\$67.00
Trilingual: Certified Level A	\$375.00	\$171.00	\$342.00	\$456.00	\$42.75	\$85.50	\$114.00
Trilingual: Certified Level B	\$384.00	\$192.00	\$384.00	\$512.00	\$48.00	\$96.00	\$128.00
Trilingual: Certified Level C	\$408.00	\$219.00	\$438.00	\$584.00	\$54.75	\$109.50	\$146.00
Tactile	\$369.00	\$169.50	\$339.00	\$452.00	\$42.38	\$84.75	\$113.00
Court Reporter: Certified Level A	\$375.00	\$171.00	\$342.00	\$456.00	\$42.75	\$85.50	\$114.00
Court Reporter: Certified Level B	\$408.00	\$192.00	\$384.00	\$512.00	\$48.00	\$96.00	\$128.00

Level	First Hour:	Additional Hour: Last Minute Day Rate	Additional Hour: Last Minute Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Hour: Last Minute Holiday Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Day Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Holiday Rate
Court Reporter: Certified Level C	\$462.00	\$219.00	\$438.00	\$584.00	\$54.75	\$109.50	\$146.00

24.6.3 CART Rates - Day, Night, & Weekend

Level	First Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Hour:	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Day Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: (15 min) Holiday Rate
On-site: 1 provider	376.00	\$188.00	\$282.00	\$376.00	\$ 47.00	\$ 70.50	\$ 94.00
On-site: 2 providers	\$508.00	\$254.00	\$381.00	\$508.00	\$ 63.50	\$ 95.25	\$127.00
Remote	\$290.00	\$145.00	\$217.50	\$290.00	\$ 36.25	\$ 54.38	\$ 72.50
Projector Fee (if used) on-site only	\$ 46.00	\$ 23.00	\$23.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 5.75	\$ 5.75	\$ 5.75
Unedited Transcript (if requested)	\$ 22.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 2.75	\$ 2.75	\$ 2.75

When a session exceeds the original approved time, last minute rates must be billed at the Additional Hour or Additional Quarter Hour rates under CART Rates - Day, Night, & Weekend and must be approved by the VRC.

24.6.4 CART Rates - Last Minute Day, Night Weekend

Level	First Hour:	Additional Hour: Last Minute Day Rate	Additional Hour: Last Minute Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Hour: Last Minute Holiday Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Day Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Evening & Weekend Rate	Additional Quarter (QTR) Hour: QTR Last Minute (15 min) Holiday Rate
On-site: 1 provider	\$564.00	\$282.00	\$376.00	\$376.00	\$ 70.50	\$ 94.00	\$ 94.00
On-site: 2 providers	\$762.00	\$381.00	\$508.00	\$508.00	\$ 95.25	\$127.00	\$127.00
Remote	\$435.00	\$217.50	\$290.00	\$290.00	\$ 54.38	\$ 72.50	\$ 72.50
Projector Fee (if used) on-site only	\$ 46.00	\$ 34.50	\$ 46.00	\$ 46.00	\$ 8.63	\$ 11.50	\$ 11.50
Unedited Transcript (if requested)	\$ 22.00	\$ 16.50	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 4.13	\$ 5.50	\$ 5.50