



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*as of April 10, 2024*

### **WHY WAS THIS LAW CREATED AND WHO CREATED IT?**

Maryland was one of the very few states with non-existent requirements for being an interpreter. For many years there have been complaints regarding unqualified and fraudulent interpreters that have greatly affected consumers' access, livelihoods, and even lives. This law emerged from joint efforts of at least 15 different organizations over the past 12 years.

### **WON'T THIS LAW CAUSE INTERPRETER SHORTAGES?**

The nation has already faced an interpreter shortage for many years, which was exacerbated by the pandemic and VRS/VRI. Even so, as demonstrated in other states, the law may create a shortage initially but will eventually decrease. We are also working with programs and organizations to provide resources for certification.

### **WHEN CAN WE BEGIN SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS?**

Based on the current timeline, we anticipate that applications may be submitted beginning on Monday, September 16, 2024.

### **HOW CAN WE SUBMIT OUR APPLICATIONS?**

Applications may be submitted online via our new web portal (to be completed by September), by mail, or in person at the GODHH office.

### **WHAT WILL THE APPLICATION FEE BE?**

The initial application fee will be \$150.00. Renewal fees thereafter are anticipated to be lower.

### **HOW WILL OUR APPLICATION FEES BE USED?**

Fees are directly handled by the State Comptroller office and overseen by the Director. Expenses will go to staff, mentoring, and programs.

### **WHERE CAN I FIND THE DRAFT REGULATIONS?**

They will be posted on GODHH's website and printed in the *Maryland Register*. While there will be a one-month open comment period, people may submit feedback at any time from now until July 29, 2024.

### **ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN INTERPRETING FOR A LONG TIME, OR LET THEIR CERTIFICATIONS LAPSE?**

We are currently looking into this perhaps accepting letter of references and/or alternative pathways, current employment, and other approaches. However, for those who simply allowed their certifications to lapse, they will need to earn their certifications.

### **WHAT CERTIFICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED?**

RID, NAD, and BEI; educational interpreters must have an EIPA score of 4.0.

### **HOW ARE BOARD MEMBERS APPOINTED?**

Board members are appointed by the Maryland governor. All board members submitted applications via the Office of Appointments and were vetted via comprehensive background checks, location verification, and other steps. Based upon GODHH's recommendations, careful consideration also was given to diversity and broad representation among board members.

### **I LIVE IN VIRGINIA. DO I STILL HAVE TO BE LICENSED?**

Regardless of where you reside, or where your agency is located, any interpreting work performed in the state of Maryland requires licensure. All agencies — including VRI agencies — doing business in Maryland must commit to providing licensed interpreters.

### **WHAT ABOUT VRS?**

Video relay services are exempt from this law.

### **I VOLUNTEER AS AN INTERPRETER AT CHURCH AND DO NOT GET PAID. DO I HAVE TO BE LICENSED?**

No. Volunteers are exempt from this law. However, working interpreters — especially if paid in any form — are required to abide by the regulations.

### **WILL THERE BE A REGISTRY?**

Yes. GODHH will maintain a public registry like other licensed professions. The format will be similar to other registries, such as the one maintained by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.