

**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**Department of Social and Health Services**  
**(DSHS)**

**Professional Language Certification**

**Examination Manual**

**Updated: November 2007**

**Division of Administrative Services**  
**Language Testing and Certification**  
**(LTC)**

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# OVERVIEW

The language certification examination administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is considered both a proficiency-based and a criterion-referenced evaluation process. In other words, language proficiency in English and a second language as well as interpreting/translation skills are measured according to minimum competency standards determined by the nature of work involved, and by experienced practicing court interpreters/translators, social services interpreters/translators, bilingual professionals in their respective fields of practice, and language specialists.

This Manual, then, is prepared to provide comprehensive information on the evaluation and certification process. More specifically, the main purpose of this Manual is to familiarize test candidates with the general testing and certification process, test information and exam procedures, the format and content of different tests, and the evaluation criteria employed in evaluating bilingual proficiency.

Readers should be advised that this Manual is not intended to serve as training materials for enhancing test performance, nor does the Manual purport to substitute for techniques of improving interpreting/translation skills, acquisition of specialized terminology, academic preparation, or practical experience as a language interpreter and/or translator.

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## Examination Policy Statements

### **No-comment, no-return policy**

This agency adopts a no-comment, no-return policy for all the tests it offers. Once an examination is administered, it becomes the property of this agency. The agency will not release the examination to anyone, including the test candidate, nor will the agency discuss specific contents of the examination with the test candidate or any other party. Submitting the Examination Application Form attached to this Manual signifies a test candidate's acceptance of this policy.

### **Test critique policy**

Consistent with our no-comment policy, specific test items or erroneous answers will not be discussed with the test candidate. However, critique in broad areas of test performance is available if a request for such critique is submitted in writing.

### **Appeal policy**

Request for appeal of test results should be submitted to this office, in writing, within two months from the date of the score report letter. No appeals will be honored if the requests are made thereafter.

## Eligibility for Testing

Anyone 18 years of age or older who is currently employed by DSHS in a bilingual capacity, or applying for DSHS positions with bilingual requirements, or currently working under contract to serve DSHS clients, or wishing to work under contract to serve DSHS clients is eligible to take any of the certification or screening examinations. There are no minimum qualification requirements in formal educational background, years of interpreting/translation experience, or other language-related experience. However, all the tests administered by this agency, both written and oral, assess language proficiency in each of the tested language pairs at a level that is comparable to their respective professions.

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## Languages Tested and Types of Test

DSHS language testing includes test of certificated languages and screening languages. Broadly speaking, there are five types of tests that are intended to evaluate the bilingual proficiency and interpreting/translation skills of five categories of people, i.e., DSHS employees and new recruits with bilingual assignments, contracted interpreters providing oral interpretation services to DSHS social service programs, contracted translators providing written translation services to DSHS social service programs, medical interpreters providing oral interpretation services to DSHS clients in medical settings, and licensed agency personnel whose agency is providing services to DSHS under contract.

**Certificated Languages** (Social Service interpreters, Medical interpreters, Translators, and DSHS employees and new recruits with bilingual requirements):

Cambodian	Chinese-Mandarin	Laotian	Spanish
Chinese-Cantonese	Korean	Russian	Vietnamese

**Screening Languages** (Social Service interpreters and Medical interpreters --- **Translator testing not available** for screening languages):

Albanian	American Indian	Amharic
Arabic	Armenian	Bengali
Bikol	Braille (English)	Bulgarian
Burmese	Cebuano	Cham
Chamorro	Chiu Chow	Czech
Danish	Dari	Dutch
Estonian	Farsi	Fijian
Finnish	French	Georgian
German	Greek	Haitian
Hakka	Hebrew	Hindi
Hmong	Hungarian	Ibo
Ilocano	Ilongo	Indonesian
Italian	Japanese	Kikuyu
Kmhmu	Latvian	Lithuanian
Macedonian	Malayalam	Malaysian
Marathi	Marshallese	Mien
Norwegian	Oromo	Pashto

Persian	Polish	Portuguese
Punjabi	Puyallup	Quechua
Romanian	Salish	Samoan
Serbo-Croatian	Shona	Slovak
Somali	Sudanese	Swahili
Swedish	Tagalog	Tamil
Thai	Tibetan	Tigrigna
Toishanese	Tongan	Trukese
Turkish	Ukrainian	Urdu
Visayan	Yakama	Yoruba
Yugoslav	Zulu	

**Plus** any other language(s) and dialect(s) of any language not listed.

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## Test Schedule

Normally, testing is conducted from January to December (monthly) in Olympia. However, due to potential hazardous winter driving conditions in Eastern Washington, no testing is offered in the months of December and January in Yakima.

Due to limited sitting capacity for the written test and limited time slots for the oral test per test session, test appointments are scheduled on a first-come-first-served basis. Therefore, it is not practical to publish and distribute the testing schedule for any meaningful purpose.

Test candidates can pick and choose their test sites when they register for testing. They will not be able to, however, pick and choose their test dates due to the unavailability of information about open time slots on a given test day. Once an application is processed by Language Testing and Certification (LTC), a test date and time will be assigned to the candidate. If the assigned date or time in the test confirmation letter does not work for the candidate, he/she needs to contact LTC to reschedule the test within ten (10) calendar days from the date the confirmation letter is sent. Otherwise, the assigned test date and time will be made secured and the "test re-scheduling policy" will apply. In other words, if a candidate cannot keep a test appointment and does not contact LTC to reschedule the test within ten calendar days from the date the confirmation letter is sent, the candidate needs to pay another test fee should he/she decides to re-schedule for the same test.

For more information about test fee and test re-schedule policies, please consult appropriate articles under Registration Policies.

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## Test Sites

DSHS testing is currently offered at two locations, one in Eastern Washington, and one in Western Washington. Since test sites are subject to change based on facility availability, the volume of test applications, and other factors, candidates should pay special attention to their test confirmation letter, which contains specific information on test date, test time, and test location.

**Test site in Eastern Washington:**

Yakima --- Yakima Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Building  
1002 North 16th Avenue, Yakima, 98902

### Test site in Western Washington:

Olympia --- Office Building 2 (OB-2)/Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)  
1115 Washington Street SE, Olympia, 98501

For driving directions to test sites, please visit the LTC website: [www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc)

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## Test Registration

Test registration for DSHS assignment pay **employees and applicants** for DSHS bilingual positions (except Yakima area) is normally done over the telephone. Whenever possible, a candidate may take both the written and oral tests on the same day, if the position requires written and oral skills.

Test registration for all other candidates, however, follows a different format. It involves the following steps:

1. A candidate downloads, **completes, and prints** the [Examination Application \(05-218\)](#) form from the LTC internet website: [www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc) (Candidates who do not have internet access at home can go to their local public library and use a computer there to access the LTC website).
2. The candidate **mails** the completed Examination Application form together with the appropriate payment to LTC.
3. LTC, based on time slot availability, sends the candidate a registration confirmation letter. [Driving directions](#) to test sites can be found on the LTC website homepage. Candidates can access [pre-test study guides](#) on the LTC website at any time and as often as they want. The study guides include Sample Written Test Questions, Sample Oral Exercises and audio practice recordings, List of Terminology, and Code of Professional Conduct.
4. When registering for the oral test, or retaking a test, there is no need to call LTC. The candidate simply **completes** the application form and **mails** it with the appropriate payment to LTC. Another confirmation letter will be sent when the candidate is scheduled for testing.

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## Registration Policies

The following registration policies apply to all test candidates with certain exceptions indicated by “\*”:

- RP1 No walk-in registration at the test sites will be allowed.
- RP2 No telephone registration will be allowed.\*
- RP3 Completed examination application form without the required payment will not be processed.\*
- RP4 Money orders, bank checks, and personal checks are the only acceptable forms of test fee payment. No cash or any other forms of payment will be accepted. LTC will not be liable for any loss if payment is not made by the required methods.\*
- RP5 Payment remitted for the wrong amount will be returned with the application.\*

- RP6 Score report letters will not be sent to candidates whose personal checks have been returned for insufficient funds.\*
- RP7 If the candidate has a disability and needs a reasonable accommodation, please request the accommodation in the application form or during the initial telephone contact with LTC. Supporting documents such as a physician's statement about the accommodation must be attached to the application.
- RP8 Candidates must attend the test session as indicated in the registration confirmation letter. No free rescheduling will be granted if candidates fail to attend the confirmed test session.
- RP9 If candidates arrive late for the written test but still decide to go ahead and take it, they will be taking the test at the loss of their own time. Late arrival for the oral test may result in loss of the assigned time slot. No free rescheduling will be granted for late arrivals, whether candidates decide to take or not to take the test.
- RP10 If upon receiving your confirmation letter you realize that you will **not** be able to keep your appointment, please call our office immediately. **If we do not hear from you within ten (10) calendar days from the date the confirmation letter was sent, your appointment date will be made secured and all registration policies will take effect.**
- RP11 Test fees are non-refundable. If candidates fail to attend the confirmed test session in the event of an emergency, instead of refunding the test fee, the test session may be re-scheduled **only once** with supporting documentation such as police reports or physician statements about the emergency.\*
- RP12 Candidates will receive their registration confirmation letter within eight (8) weeks after their application form and payment are received. It is the candidates' responsibility to contact LTC if they have not received the confirmation letter within this time frame.
- RP13 There is no attempt limit in trying to pass any of the tests. However, if candidates fail to pass a test after three (3) attempts, they have to wait for six (6) months between each attempt thereafter before they can reschedule for the same test. A completed examination application form and payment are required for each and every test attempt.
- RP14 While a test is pending appeal, no reschedule application of the same test will be accepted.
- RP15 It is the candidates' responsibility to inform LTC of any change of name, mailing address, telephone numbers, and e-mail address. A name change request has to be made in writing with a photo copy of a court document such as a marriage or divorce certificate.

\* Except DSHS bilingual staff, applicants for openings of DSHS bilingual positions, and licensed agency personnel.

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## Test Fee Schedule

The following test fees apply to all languages being tested by LTC and are subject to change over time.

**Testing for Certificated Languages** (Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, Russian, Korean):

Social Services Interpreter Test:

- Written Test: \$30.00 per attempt
- Oral Test: \$45.00 per attempt
- Simultaneous Test (retake only): \$25.00 per attempt

Medical Interpreter Test:

Written Test: \$30.00 per attempt

Oral Test: \$45.00 per attempt

Translator Test:

Written Test: \$50.00 per attempt

**Screening for Non-Certificated Languages** (Languages other than certificated languages listed above):

Written Screening (social service **OR** medical): \$30.00 per attempt

Oral Screening (social service **OR** medical): \$45.00 per attempt, per language

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## Test Evaluation

Both objective scoring and holistic scoring are employed in the test evaluation process, depending on the nature of the test or subtests. Wherever possible, a computerized scanner is used for objective scoring. Otherwise, highly skilled certified interpreters/translators are used for test evaluation. To maximize scoring objectivity and consistency, evaluators are trained and monitored in following detailed rubrics for objective and holistic evaluation.

Following are the indicators being evaluated for various types of test or subtests:

**Employee Writing Subtest** --- objective evaluation:

Syntax --- structure (word order, agreement, length, phrasal and clausal embeddings), grammar, mechanics

Completeness --- ideas, facts, key words and expressions

Organization --- cohesion (transition, conjunction, continuity), coherence (pronominal reference, consistency)

Readability --- register (social/cultural), clarity, fluency

**Employee Translation Subtest** --- objective evaluation:

Faithfulness --- inaccuracy, omission, embellishment

Syntax --- structure (word order, agreement, length, phrasal and clausal embeddings), grammar, mechanics

Readability --- register (social/cultural), reading level, fluency

**Oral Test --- Sight Translation:**

Objective evaluation (80%):

Pronunciation --- phoneme, tone, stress, intonation

Fluency --- hesitation, fragmentation, incomplete sentence

Vocabulary --- inaccuracy, omission, embellishment, repetition

Grammar --- parts of speech, word order, agreement, verb tense, clause

Holistic evaluation (20%):

Register, idiomaticness, delivery time, coherency



## Oral Test --- Consecutive Interpretation:

Objective evaluation (80%):

Pronunciation --- phoneme, tone, stress, intonation

Fluency --- hesitation, fragmentation, incomplete sentence

Listening comprehension --- rate of speech, length of sentence, length of speech

Vocabulary --- inaccuracy, omission, embellishment, repetition

Grammar --- parts of speech, word order, agreement, verb tense, clause

Holistic evaluation (20%):

Register, retention, response time, coherency

## Oral Test --- Simultaneous Interpretation:

Objective evaluation (80%):

Pronunciation --- phoneme, tone, stress, intonation

Fluency --- hesitation, fragmentation, incomplete sentence

Listening comprehension --- rate of speech, length of sentence, length of speech

Vocabulary --- inaccuracy, omission, embellishment, repetition

Grammar --- parts of speech, word order, agreement, verb tense, clause

Holistic evaluation (20%):

Accuracy, enunciation, pace/speed, coherency

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## Test Score Reporting

Test scores will normally be available within four (4) weeks for the written test, and six (6) weeks for the oral test from the test date. Test scores are considered confidential information and will not be released over the telephone. Once the scores are available, a score report letter will be mailed to the mailing address provided by the candidate. If the candidate wishes to have test scores sent to a specific organization or individual, the request must be made by the candidate personally. LTC will verify the candidate by checking identification information, and the candidate needs to provide the name and mailing address of the organization or individual to whom the score report letter will be sent.

Once candidates pass the required testing, they are considered certified (for certificated languages) or authorized (for screening languages). The effective date of the certification/authorization is the date shown on their score report letter. The score report letter can be used as verification of certification or authorization status.

Any candidate who has not received a score report letter within the time frame quoted above, he/she should contact LTC at 800-605-5126.

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# Certification

## I. Types of Certificate

**For certificated languages**, certified status will be granted to DSHS bilingual employees, interpreters, and translators once they pass the required examinations. Certificates will be mailed to candidates within a month from the date they pass all examination requirements. It is the responsibility of the candidate to inform LTC of any change of name and address, to check the accuracy of information presented on the certificate, and to contact LTC if a certificate is not received within the normal time frame. For information on what examinations are required for which type of certification, consult the following:

DSHS Employees and New Recruits: **Employee Test**

**Cluster One** --- Oral Test

(Office Assistant, Office Assistant Senior, Office Assistant Lead, Office Support Supervisor, Secretary, Secretary Senior, Secretary Lead, Secretary Administrative, Secretary Supervisor, Executive Secretary, Customer Service Specialist, Forms and Records Analyst, Homemaker, Human Resource Assistant, Human Resource Development Specialist, Support Enforcement Technician)

**Cluster Two** --- Written and Oral Tests

(Financial Services Specialist, Fiscal Technician-Accounting, Store Clerk, Supplies Technician, Quality Control Specialist, Work First Program Specialist, Medical Assistant Specialist)

**Cluster Three** --- Written and Oral Tests

(Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Trainee, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Intern, Rehabilitation Aide, Rehab Tech.)

**Cluster Four** --- Written and Oral Tests

(Community Worker, Service Delivery Coordinator, Community Services Program Manager, Community Resource Program Manager, Assistant to CSO Administrator)

**Cluster Five** --- Written and Oral Tests

(Social Worker, Mental Health Program Administrator, Mental Health Administrative Services Chief, Mental Health Program Specialist, Mental Health Counselor, Juvenile Rehabilitation Counselor, Institutional Counselor, Psychiatrist Aide)

**Cluster Six** --- Written and Oral Tests

(Support Enforcement Officer, Financial Recovery Enforcement Officer)

**Cluster Seven** --- Written and Oral Tests

(Developmental Disability Case/Resource Manager, Developmental Disability Outstation Manager, Attendant Counselor--DD)

**(Note:** Positions not listed will be categorized on a case by case basis)

Licensed Agency Personnel: **LAP Test**

--- Written and Oral Tests (Except clerical positions\*)

Social Service Interpreters: **Social Service Interpreter Test**

Level One (Basic) --- Written Test, Sight Translation and Consecutive Interpretation Test (**must take and pass written test first**)

Level Two --- Written Test, Sight Translation, Consecutive Interpretation and Simultaneous Interpretation Test (**must take and pass written test first**)

Medical Interpreters: **Medical Interpreter Test**

--- Written and Oral Tests (**must take and pass written test first**)

Translators: **Translator Test**

--- Written Translation Test

\* Clerical positions of Licensed Agency Personnel only need to take the same test as DSHS employee Cluster One.

## II. What Certification Means

Per RCW 74.04.025, Chapter 388-03 WAC (Washington Administrative Code), DSHS policies, and the consent decree between DSHS and Legal Services, all DSHS staff serving in a bilingual capacity and interpreters/ translators providing bilingual services to DSHS clients under contract, are required to obtain certification status by successfully passing a bilingual fluency test. No bilingual duties will be assigned to any staff and no interpreter service will be assigned to any contractor without proper certification or authorization.

For DSHS positions requiring bilingual skills, once candidates become certified, they are eligible to receive assignment pay; For job applicants (new recruits) applying for DSHS bilingual positions, passing the required test enables them to be qualified for these positions if they also pass the test administered by Department of Personnel; For individuals who wish to interpret and/or translate for DSHS clients, being certified/authorized makes it possible to work under contract for the Department.

If so desired, it is the responsibility of certified/authorized interpreters and translators to contact and negotiate contracts with local DSHS contracted agencies, or directly with local DSHS offices where there is no DSHS contracted agency. LTC does NOT provide contract services. For general questions regarding testing and certification or other related issues, please see the hot links at the LTC website: [www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc)

## III. Lists of Certified/Authorized Interpreters and Translators

A certified interpreter/translator is defined as one who has met the testing requirements for any certificated language, and an authorized interpreter is defined as one who has met the testing requirements for any screening language (see Languages Tested and Types of Test listed previously). Lists of certified interpreters, certified translators, and authorized interpreters are published and distributed to agencies serving DSHS under contract and DSHS LEP advisors. The lists are updated regularly to include newly certified and authorized interpreters/translators. The purpose of distributing the lists is to enable contracted agencies and DSHS service programs to locate and contact certified or authorized interpreters when needed. Some information contained in the lists, such as mailing address and phone numbers, may be considered confidential. Therefore, any interpreter/translator who does not want to have such information included on the lists should contact LTC at 800-605-5126 to have it removed.

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## Test Development

Since DSHS is testing various categories of personnel with different nature of employment, different approaches were utilized in test development. Nevertheless, the general process of test development, regardless of which test type, would more or less involve the following procedures:

- Consultation with Department of Personnel
- Consultation with interpreter program managers or LEP advisors
- Consultation with specialists in related fields of practice
- Analysis of Class Specifications and Specification Questionnaires
- Survey of bilingual positions
- Development of test guidelines
- Development of proficiency guidelines
- Development of test specifications
- Review of related written materials circulated in DSHS and medical settings
- Research of other related written materials
- Item development
- Item review by related specialists
- Test review by stakeholders and other interest groups
- Test revision
- Pilot testing
- Test Validation

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## Test Validation

Content validity was the approach adopted for DSHS test validation. Several groups of professionals were involved in this process.

Psychometricians from academic institutions and Department of Personnel were consulted on the technicalities of item development and test construction. Every test item was reviewed by these psychometricians, and their input was taken into account in test revision.

Language teachers and language specialists were involved in the content validation aspect of the process by checking the technicalities of language employed in the tests, and checking test items against proficiency guidelines and test specifications.

Subject matter experts (SME) constituted the largest group of professionals in the test validation process. SMEs participating in the process ranged from line workers, supervisors, managers, to bilingual physicians of various specialties. Feedback from the SMEs included quantitative ratings on specific indicators and qualitative open-ended critiques/comments/suggestions.

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## Pilot Testing

Pilot testing was conducted to clarify test instructions and test items, to provide reference for benchmark setting, and to iron out the routine of test administration as well as timing.

Cautions were taken in identifying pilot test participants. Efforts were made to make sure that only those who would not need to take the same test when it is officially administered on full scale were eligible to take part in pilot testing.

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## Item Reliability

Following is item reliability information for the tests that had reasonable sample size for statistical analysis when the statistics were performed (one test cycle/grading session):

Statistical program:

QuickSCORE II

Data collection criteria:

By test type;

Computer scannable dichotomous scale items;

All-inclusive, by test period.

Statistics:

Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (KR20) for internal consistency

### Medical Certificated Written Test

Reliability coefficient: 0.91

### Social Service Certificated Written Test

Reliability coefficient: 0.89

### Medical Screening Written Test

Reliability coefficient: 0.91

### Social Service Screening Written Test

Not available due to inadequate sample size.

### Employee Written Test

Not available due to inadequate sample size.

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## Test Reliability

Statistical program:

SPSS 13.0

Data collection criteria:

All languages;

Test-retest/parallel forms;

Time lapsed between attempts – within one year;

Data as recent as needed to generate reasonable sample size (some tests).

Statistics:

Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency;

Pearson product moment correlation for test-retest/parallel forms correlation;

*t* test for significance of correlation coefficient.

## Medical Certificated Test

Written test:

N = 56

Cronbach's Alpha = .87

Pearson correlation:  $r = .78$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .000$ )

df = 54; critical value = .35

Oral test:

N = 72

Cronbach's Alpha = .76

Pearson correlation:  $r = .62$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .000$ )

df = 70; critical value = .30

## Social Service Certificated Test

Written test:

N = 76

Cronbach's Alpha = .92

Pearson correlation:  $r = .86$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .000$ )

df = 74; critical value = .30

Oral test:

N = 72

Cronbach's Alpha = .82

Pearson correlation:  $r = .71$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .000$ )

df = 70; critical value = .30

## Medical Screening Test

Written test:

N = 20

Cronbach's Alpha = .87

Pearson correlation:  $r = .80$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .000$ )

df = 18; critical value = .56

Oral test:

N = 20

Cronbach's Alpha = .71

Pearson correlation:  $r = .58$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .007$ )

df = 18; critical value = .56

## Social Service Screening Test

Written test:

N = 13

Cronbach's Alpha = .75

Pearson correlation:  $r = .63$

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed,  $p < .022$ )

df = 11; critical value = .68

Oral test:

N = 21

Cronbach's Alpha = -.111

Pearson correlation:  $r = -.068$

Correlation is not significant (2-tailed,  $p < .770$ )

df = 19; critical value = .55

## Employee Test

Written test:

N = 40

Cronbach's Alpha = .81

Pearson correlation:  $r = .71$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .000$ )

df = 38; critical value = .39

Oral test:

N = 72

Cronbach's Alpha = .85

Pearson correlation:  $r = .78$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed,  $p < .000$ )

df = 70; critical value = .30

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## Correlation between Sight Translation and Consecutive Interpretation

Statistical program:

SPSS 13.0

Data collection criteria:

All-inclusive, by test period;

Variable test periods to generate reasonable sample size (some languages).

Statistics:

Pearson product moment correlation;

$t$  test for significance of correlation coefficient.

## Medical Certificated Oral Test

**All Languages:**

N = 164

Pearson correlation:  $r = .75$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Cambodian:**

N = 7

Pearson correlation:  $r = .78$

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Chinese:**

N = 14

Pearson correlation:  $r = .64$

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Korean:**

N = 16

Pearson correlation:  $r = .84$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Laotian:**

N = 2

Pearson correlation:  $r = 1.00$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Russian:**

N = 56

Pearson correlation:  $r = .77$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Spanish:**

N = 51

Pearson correlation:  $r = .71$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Vietnamese:**

N = 18

Pearson correlation:  $r = .79$

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Other Tests**

Not available.

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## Test Information and Exam Procedures

### I. Test for **DSHS Employees and New Recruits**

#### **The Written Test** (90 minutes)

The written test for DSHS employees with bilingual duties is composed of five sections. Section one is a vocabulary test. This section consists of two parts. Part one is a synonym test of general vocabulary commonly encountered in the Department (Department specific). Part two is a test of words-in-context. Words or phrases included are among those typically used in a particular position cluster or in a particular service area (position cluster specific). For example:

(Department specific):



**eligible**

- A. attainable      B. enable      C. qualified      D. specified

(Position cluster specific):

Assistance is provided for the purpose of promoting **self-sufficiency**.

- A. self-abnegation      C. self-development  
B. self-adequacy      D. self-sponsoring

Candidates will need to choose from A, B, C, and D the word or phrase that most closely means the same as the underlined word or phrase.

Section two is a Cloze test of reading comprehension. Two short texts are included. The content of one text is Department specific, and the content of the other text is relevant to a particular position cluster or field of service. Key words or phrases are left out throughout each text. Candidates will need to “fill in” the blanks to “recover” the text by choosing a word or phrase from four options provided. For example:

While you are on assistance, the support   1   by OSE repays the State. When your grant stops, this assignment stops and current support belongs to you. Support owed before you go off assistance   2   to the State.

1. A. collected      B. enforced      C. given      D. paid  
2. A. awards      B. confers      C. returns      D. issues

Section three is a brief test of writing skills. Candidates will need to summarize, in their own words and in the same language as the original text, a passage of certain length with no more than a given number of sentences.

Sections four and five are translation tests — from English into another language and vice versa. The content of the source text is relevant to services provided by a particular program.

**The Oral Test** (20 minutes)

The oral portion of the employees’ test consists of two parts. Part one is a sight translation. The candidate will have a total of 3 minutes to orally translate a short English paragraph into a target language. Candidates may review the text silently before interpreting, but the review time will count towards the overall 3 minutes.

Part two is a situational interpretation exercise. A pre-recorded conversation between an English and a non-English speaking persons will be played with a pause after each speaker. The pause allows adequate time for the candidate to interpret from one language into another. Candidates will be permitted to take notes during this exercise. Note pads and pencils will be provided. A total of 2 repeats (2 segments between pauses) will be allowed during the entire exercise, if they are so requested by the candidate.

The entire oral test will be audio-recorded for scoring accuracy and documentation. The recorded test will be scored by independent raters retained by LTC, who are highly skilled professionals and/or certified interpreters.

## II. Test for **DSHS Social Service Interpreters**

### **The Written Test** (90 minutes)

The written test for social service interpreters is a screening test. It consists of four sections, all in multiple choice formats. Section one: standard English grammar; Section two: terms or usages commonly encountered in various DSHS service programs; Section three: professional code of ethics; Section four: brief writing test. All items in Sections one, two and three are in English, while items in Section four are in the language a candidate is testing for.

For each item in sections one, two, and four, the candidate will need to make the best choice from four options provided; while for section three, the candidate will need to identify whether each given statement is true or false.

### **The Oral Test** (30 minutes)

Oral test for social service interpreters will **ONLY** be administered to those candidates who have successfully passed the written screening test. For this portion of the test, each candidate will orally interpret in three exercises (three sections):

Section one — sight translation: The candidate will be given three minutes to orally render an English text into a target language, and another three minutes to orally render a non-English language text into English. The candidate may silently review each text before interpreting, but the review time will be part of the three minutes allowed for each text.

Section two — consecutive interpretation: A pre-recorded conversation between an English and a non-English speaking persons will be played. The candidate will assume the role of the interpreter. The recorded conversation has built-in pauses. The pauses allow adequate time for the candidate to render the interpretation. The candidate will be permitted to take notes during this exercise. Note pads and pencils will be provided. If so requested by the candidate, a total of 2 repeats (2 segments between pauses) will be allowed during the entire exercise.

Section three — simultaneous interpretation: Two short recordings will be played at a slower-than-normal speaking speed. The candidate will need to listen to the recordings through headphones and simultaneously interpret the statements from English into a target language.

The entire oral exam will be audio-recorded for scoring accuracy and documentation. The recorded test will be scored by independent raters retained by LTC, who are highly skilled professionals and/or certified interpreters.

As stated previously, interpreters taking the oral test for the first time will be given all three sections of the oral test, although they only need to pass the first two sections (sight translation and consecutive interpretation) to acquire basic (level one) certification status. If level-one certified interpreters wish to obtain level two status, they may register to only retake the simultaneous section. The fee for retaking the simultaneous section of the oral test is \$25.00. Level two certification status will be automatically granted to those who pass all three sections of the oral test.

### III. Test for **DSHS Translators**

#### **Written Translation Test** (120 minutes per direction)

DSHS translators are referred to those who provide written document translation services to the Department under contract. The translator test is available in the Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Chinese, Russian, and Korean languages. At this point, only one direction of translation test, i.e., English to target language, is offered to contracted translators. Certificates issued to those who have passed the test(s) will specifically reflect the test requirement(s) they have met.

The translator test covers such subject matter areas as social services, legal services, and medical services. Categories of texts included in the test range from general to semi-technical.

To test for a translator certificate, the candidate must choose and translate three texts out of four. Failure to follow test instructions (requirements) will result in an invalid test. Only one test will be given to an individual candidate at a time.

Reference materials, including dictionaries, will be allowed during the translator's test. Pencils, answer sheets, and erasers will be provided.

The translation test will be graded by professional translators on a pass/fail basis. Specific grading guidelines will be followed in determining the pass or fail of a test.

### IV. Test for **Medical Interpreters**

#### **The Written Test** (90 minutes)

The written test for medical interpreters has five sections, all in multiple choice formats. Section one — code of ethics: In this section, statements regarding professional code of conduct are written in the English language, and the candidate will need to determine whether each statement is true or false.

Section two — medical terminologies: This section covers such areas as parts of the body, symptoms, disease/illness/injury/physical disorder, treatment, prescription, medical personnel, and miscellaneous health related expressions. All stems in section two are in the English language while all options are in a non-English language. For each question, the candidate will need to identify the target language equivalent of the English word/term in the stem.

Section three — clinical/medical procedures: Both stems and options in this section are in the English language. The candidate will need to choose from those given options the one that best describes each procedure.

Section four — brief writing test in the English language: The candidate will need to choose an option to best complete each unfinished sentence.

Section five — brief writing test in a non-English language: The format of this section is exactly the same as that of Section four, except that all items are written in a language other than English.

#### **The Oral Test** (30 minutes)

The oral test for medical interpreters is composed of two parts — sight translation and consecutive interpretation.

Part one — sight translation: The candidate will be allowed six minutes to orally render an English text into a target language, and another six minutes to orally render a non-English language text into English. The candidate may silently review each text before interpreting, but the review time will be part of the six minutes permitted for each text.

Part two — consecutive interpretation: Some pre-recorded audio materials will be played in this exercise. The candidate will assume the role of an interpreter. The recorded materials have built-in pauses. The pauses allow adequate time for the candidate to render the interpretation. The candidate will be given the freedom to take notes during the exercise. Note pads and pencils will be provided. A total of 2 repeats (2 segments between pauses) will be allowed during the entire exercise upon the candidate's request.

The entire oral exam will be audio-recorded for scoring accuracy and documentation. The recorded test will be scored by independent raters retained by LTC, who are highly skilled professionals and/or certified interpreters.

#### V. Test for **Licensed Agency Personnel** (LAP)

Licensed Agency personnel is referred to individuals in a licensed non-DSHS agency providing services to DSHS clients under contract with certain DSHS programs such as Mental Health and Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

##### **The Written Test** (90 minutes)

The written test for Licensed Agency Personnel follows the same format as DSHS Employee Cluster Five written test. However, because of the different recruitment testing procedures employed by the state and licensed agencies, the weight placed on assessing LAP language skills differs from that of DSHS employees to a certain extent (refer to Test for DSHS Employees).

##### **The Oral Test** (20 minutes)

The oral test for Licensed Agency Personnel is the same as the oral test for DSHS employees (see Test for DSHS Employees).

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## **Screening Test for Non-Certificated Language Interpreters**

Non-certificated language interpreters are referred to those who speak a language other than the regular DSHS certificated languages, namely, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, Russian, and Korean.

The scope of screening testing for non-certificated language interpreters is relatively narrower than that of certificated languages testing. While consideration is given to assess an interpreter's English and the target language skills, a desirable comprehensive approach of testing is not possible due to limited resources.

Screening tests are available for social service interpreters and medical interpreters. Anyone 18 years of age or older who speaks English and a second language other than the above-listed certificated languages and is currently working under contract, or wishing to work under contract is eligible to take either the social service interpreter screening test or the medical interpreter screening test, or both. The screening tests are not available in any certificated language.

A score report letter will be mailed to the candidate once he/she finishes a portion (written or oral) of a test. Candidates who pass both the written and oral screening tests will be issued an authorization letter stating his/her eligibility to provide language services to DSHS programs.

The process of test registration for screening languages is the same as that for certificated languages (see [Test Registration](#)).

All registration policies stated in this Manual that are applicable to certificated language interpreters also apply to screening language interpreters.

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## Screening Test Information and Exam Procedures

### I. Screening Test for **DSHS Social Service Interpreters**

#### **The Written Screening Test** (90 minutes)

The written screening test for DSHS social service interpreters consists of three sections, all in multiple choice formats. Section one: standard English grammar; Section two: terms or usages commonly encountered in various DSHS service programs; Section three: professional code of conduct. All items in the written screening test are in the English language.

For each item in sections one and two, candidates will need to make the best choice from four options provided; while for section three, candidates will need to identify whether each given statement is true or false.

Candidates will use a standard computer scannable answer sheet to record their answers. All items in the written screening test are designed for objective computer scoring.

#### **The Oral Screening Test** (45 minutes)

Candidates **must take and pass the written screening test first** before they can take the oral screening test. The oral screening test for DSHS social service interpreters has three parts. Part one is a sight translation exercise of ten unrelated sentences from English into a target language; Part two is a memory retention test; Part three is a consecutive interpretation exercise from a target language into English.

The oral screening test will be audio recorded for the purpose of scoring and record keeping. Objective scoring will be the only method employed in evaluating the oral screening test.

## II. Screening Test for **Medical Interpreters**

### **The Written Screening Test** (90 minutes)

The written screening test for medical interpreters is composed of four sections, all in multiple choice formats. Section one: professional code of conduct; Section two: medical terminologies; Section three: clinical/medical procedures; Section four: indirect writing test in the English language. All items in the written screening test are in English.

For each item in section one, candidates will need to identify whether each given statement is true or false. For each item in sections two, three, and four, candidates will need to make the best choice from four options provided.

Candidates will use a standard computer scannable answer sheet to record their answers. All items in the written screening test are designed for objective computer scoring.

### **The Oral Screening Test** (45 minutes)

Candidates **must take and pass the written screening test first** before they can take the oral screening test. The oral screening test for medical interpreters has three parts. Part one is a sight translation exercise of ten unrelated sentences from English into a target language; Part two is a memory retention test; Part three is a consecutive interpretation exercise from a target language into English.

The oral screening test will be audio recorded for the purpose of scoring and record keeping. Objective scoring will be the only method employed in evaluating the oral screening test.

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## Test Day Reminders

- \* Candidates should bring a picture I.D. to present to the test proctors at the sign-in desk.
- \* Candidates should arrive early for sign-in. This will insure that the test will begin and end on time.
- \* The written test will begin and end as scheduled. Therefore, if candidates arrive late for the written test but still decide to go ahead and take it, they will be taking the test at the loss of their own time. Late arrival for the oral test may result in loss of the assigned time slot.
- \* No reference materials, including dictionaries, will be allowed for Employee's Test and Interpreter's Test. Answer sheets, pencils, and erasers will be provided. However, reference materials, including dictionaries, will be allowed for the Translator's Test.
- \* Any scratch paper used during the oral test by the candidate for note taking or otherwise must be submitted to the Test Proctors before the candidate leaves the test room.
- \* Any cheating behavior, if discovered by Test Proctors, may result in the cancellation of a candidate's eligibility for taking the test.

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**Candidates:  
Please save this Manual for future reference!**

\* If you have further questions, please call our office at 800-605-5126.

## NOTES

[Examination Application form \(DSHS 05-218\)](#) – In Microsoft Word for use on the computer, **Recommended.**

[Examination Application form \(DSHS 05-218\)](#) -- In PDF format, requires [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#). **Not recommended.**