



New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing

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Signed Language Interpreter Licensure

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State Licensure

New Mexico requires all signed language interpreters to be licensed to protect Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers. Practicing without a license is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 364 days in jail and/or up to a \$1000 fine. Interpreting is defined as any form of facilitating communication in a visual form, regardless of the individual's job title or position description.

Issuing Agency

Licenses are issued by the Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board (SLIPB) under the Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD). RLD is responsible for licensure of more than 200 professions in the state of New Mexico. The statute, rules, and other information can be found at the SLIPB website: www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/signed-language-interpreting-practices. A searchable database of licensed interpreters can be found in the Verify a License section of the RLD website: <https://nmrldlpi.my.site.com/bcd/s/rld-public-search>.

Licenses

There are three types of licenses issued by the SLIPB:

- Community – for certified interpreters holding most certifications currently recognized by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) or some certifications issued by the Board of Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI). These interpreters may work in both community and educational settings.
- Educational – for interpreters who hold the Ed: K-12 credential from RID or who meet the requirements for the Ed: K-12. This license is valid only for K-12 interpreting, not for community or post-secondary settings.
- Provisional – for interpreters who have completed an interpreter training program and are working toward certification. This license may be held for up to five years and qualifies the interpreter to work in appropriate educational and community settings.

Specialized Settings

Not all interpreters are qualified to work in all settings. Specialized training in specific skills and vocabulary are required for many types of interpreting, such as work in medical, mental health, legal, and post-secondary environments. It is the responsibility of the interpreter to only accept work for which they are qualified. This requirement is established in the Code of Professional Conduct developed by RID and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), which is included below. *Interpreters with a provisional license are almost never permitted to interpret in court and should generally not work in mental health or legal settings.*

Code of Professional Conduct

All licensed interpreters are required to adhere to the RID-NAD Code of Professional Conduct.

Tenets

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
7. Interpreters engage in professional development.

Further details and the full version of the CPC can be found at the RID website:

rid.org/programs/ethics/code-of-professional-conduct

Complaints

Individuals who wish to file a complaint against an individual for interpreting without a license or for a violation of the Code of Professional Conduct may do so in the Boards and Commissions section here: www.rld.nm.gov/help-center/file-a-complaint/. Anyone may file a complaint, which will then be investigated and the individual against whom the complaint is filed will have the opportunity to respond. Complaints go before the Board at their regular meetings, but all names are removed before the complaint is presented to the Board to assure neutrality. The Board has several options, ranging from dismissing the complaint, to imposing a fine, to referring the complaint to the Attorney General for prosecution.

Exemptions

The following are statutory exemptions from the licensure requirement, but nonresident interpreters and interns are required to register by contacting the SLIPB administrator at signlanguage.board@rld.nm.gov to request the applicable form:

- nonresident interpreters working in New Mexico fewer than thirty calendar days per year;
- interpreting in religious or spiritual settings;
- interpreting in informal settings for friends, families, or guests;
- interpreting in emergency situations where the deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deaf-blind person or that person's legal representative decides that the delay necessary to obtain a licensed interpreter is likely to cause injury or loss to the consumer;
- the activities of a supervised interpreter intern or student who is enrolled in an interpreter education program; or
- multilingual interpreting in order to accommodate the personal choice of the consumer.

Statutory Authority

The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act is §61-34-1 NMSA 1978 and can be accessed via the SLIPB website. Penalty and sentencing authority citations are as follows. 61-34-15. Penalties.

A person who violates a provision of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be sentenced pursuant to Section 31-19-1 NMSA 1978.

31-19-1. Sentencing authority[;] misdemeanors; imprisonment and fines; probation.

A. Where the defendant has been convicted of a crime constituting a misdemeanor, the judge shall sentence the person to be imprisoned in the county jail for a definite term less than one year or to the payment of a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or to both such imprisonment and fine in the discretion of the judge.