

INTERPRETERS



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UNITED

LOCAL 1671

for professional pay, benefits and respect



For Immediate Release

Contact: Leroy Mould, 360.790.2780, local1671@gmail.com

Private-Public Partnership Creates New Opportunities for Professionalizing State Interpreter Services

Olympia, Wa – Washington’s medical and social service interpreters will have streamlined opportunities to pursue basic training and professional development skills thanks to a joint partnership between Interpreters United, Local 1671 of WFSE/AFSCME Council 28 and the Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) Language Testing & Certification. LTC is the state’s medical and social services interpreter certifying body. Prior to these joint efforts, once medical and social service interpreters were state-certified, the state provided no guidance to interpreters on how to maintain and further skill sets. Most professional certifications are granted for a limited period of time and require continuing education activities for re-certification. The state’s new criteria and application form for approval of continuing education activities can be found on the DSHS LTC website under the “DSHS Interpreter Continuing Education” caption: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ltc/>.

Our public-private partnership was created as the result of a joint 6-month union-management effort created in the first interpreter union contract that went into effect July 1, 2011. Late last year, the committee adopted a final recommendation that included the creation of an on-going public-private partnership in the form of a Professional Development and Training Committee for Social Service and Medical Interpreters. This Professional Development Committee is composed of three representatives: one from Washington State’s DSHS LTC, one from the union (WFSE/AFSCME Council 28), and one from the interpreters’ professional organizations operating in Washington State.

Since January 2012, the Professional Development Committee has met monthly to produce the State’s newly-minted criteria and application form. Now the Committee will begin evaluating and approving basic training and professional development activities for all medical and social service interpreters.

Interpreters United, Local 1671 of WFSE/AFSCME Council 28 represents almost 2,000 social service and Medicaid medical interpreters working in the State of Washington. WFSE/AFSCME Council 28 represents 40,000 state employees and other public service workers.