

DATE: June 13, 2011
TO: All Interpreters taking DSHS and Medicaid enrollee appointments
FROM: Interpreters United, WFSE/AFSCME Bargaining Team
SUBJECT: RATIFICATION OF THE 2011-2013 INTERPRETERS UNITED / WFSE UNION CONTRACT

We are proud to announce that on June 12, 2011 we reached a tentative agreement with the State of WA on behalf of DSHS and Medicaid Interpreters! **Our Interpreters United / WFSE Bargaining Team recommends that you vote to accept this Agreement.** Since March, we've been meeting with the State to negotiate improvements for our profession. We explained in detail the problems of the current system, our low pay and unfair treatment. We did our best to detail the daily struggles of interpreters: dealing with foreign language agencies and brokers, no-shows and cancellations, all while waiting months to be paid. With great excitement we present for your review the proposed contract – a first in the nation for independent contractor interpreters!

Despite the current economic climate and mandated budget cuts to interpreter services, we have won significant raises in pay for DSHS interpreters and improved rights at work in many areas. If this proposed contract is accepted, the minimum pay for interpreters will be \$30 per hour for all DSHS and Medicaid appointments as of July 1, 2011. This is a huge victory – especially given the 24% cut in our program's budget. Our contract includes an agreement to discuss economic compensation again once the broker system ends in January 2012.

Included here for your review is a summary of the highlights from our contract, a copy of the tentative agreement, a ballot with instructions for voting and two envelopes (a secret ballot envelope and a self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope). **Your ballot must be received at WFSE Headquarters no later than 5 PM on June 27, 2011.** The proposed union contract and improvements herein will begin July 1, 2011 only if a majority of ballots received from interpreters accept the proposed contract. Please review these materials and contact us if you have any questions.

Please see our website, <http://interpretersunited.wfse.org>, for a list of meetings around the state in the next few weeks. Members of our Interpreters Bargaining Team will attend with union staff to discuss the proposed union contract and the planned reform of the broker system. Through our union and this union contract we have made a strong investment in the future of the interpreting profession. We recommend you accept this contract as a solid foundation for continued improvements in fair pay and professional respect for interpreters.

Sincerely,

Your dedicated Interpreters United, WFSE/AFSCME Bargaining Team:

Edmundo Cavazos, Spanish Interpreter
Jessica Cofler Suarez, Spanish Interpreter
Leroy Mould, Spanish Interpreter
Lili Shang, Mandarin Chinese Interpreter
Louise Morehead, French Interpreter
Luba Pekisheva, Russian Interpreter
Oleg Gouts, Russian Interpreter

Paul Natkin, Russian Interpreter
Quan Tran, Vietnamese Interpreter
Victor Hidalgo, Spanish Interpreter
Walter Rivas, Spanish Interpreter

WFSE Staff Negotiators:

Greg Devereux, Liz Larsen, Sarah Cliffthorne

