



**BRIDGES**  
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

## INTERPRETING/CART POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### **Office Hours and Location**

Regular hours of operation are 8:30am-5:00pm CST, Monday through Friday. A qualified interpreter will be scheduled after hours for medical, legal, and mental health emergencies 365 days per year. If at any time the office is closed, simply leave a message and a staff member will return your call as quickly as possible.

### **Contact Information**

BridgesDHH has two offices in Tennessee.

BridgesTN is located in Nashville, Tennessee to provide services throughout Middle Tennessee. BridgesTN's address is 935 Edgehill Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203. The main office telephone number is (615) 228-8848.

BridgesWEST is located in Memphis, Tennessee, to provide services to Shelby County and surrounding counties in the Mid-South area. BridgesWEST's address is 2655 Union Avenue Extended, Memphis, TN 38112. The main office telephone number is (901) 701-6800.

BridgesDHH's website may be found at [www.bridgesfordeafandhh.org](http://www.bridgesfordeafandhh.org) We offer services in surrounding states and throughout the country.

### **Requesting an Interpreter/Service Provider**

The Requester (customer) shall be responsible for providing BridgesDHH with the details of the job in order to ensure top-quality service. These details include but are not limited to: date, time, approximate duration, job address (suite, building, etc.), Deaf or hard of hearing consumer's name, communication needs (if known), on-site contact person and phone number, nature of the job and any other documentation or information necessary to complete the job.

### **Team Interpreting**

The number of Interpreters/CART providers needed for a job will be determined by considering such factors as length, nature of the job, subject matter, the number of Deaf and/or hard of hearing consumers in attendance, their particular communication needs, and any other consideration that would affect Bridges in providing excellent service. Typically, any interpreting job lasting longer than the standard two (2) hour minimum will require a team (two) interpreters. BridgesDHH reserves the right to make the final decision regarding how many Interpreters will be necessary for a particular job.

### **Deaf Interpreters**

In some instances, specific consumers require a native language user (Deaf Interpreters) to assist in ensuring clear communication and understanding occur. BridgesDHH reserves the right to determine when a Deaf Interpreter should be placed on a request to meet the needs of everyone involved in the communication. If a Deaf Interpreter is required, the customer will be informed prior to the scheduled appointment. Deaf Interpreters are billed as a separate interpreter with a two-hour minimum.

### **Priorities for Scheduling**

BridgesDHH ensures that all Interpreters are qualified and adhere to a Code of Ethics. Interpreters are then assigned according to the following priorities:

- 1) Appropriate certification/skill level required for the job
- 2) Preferences of consumers

### **Payment**

Payment terms are net forty-five (45) days. BridgesDHH will invoice the person named on your service request. Name, title, email, and phone number are required. Payments may be made through our online portal at [bridgesfordeafandhh.org](http://bridgesfordeafandhh.org) (Interpreting), by phone, by ACH (arrangements made with our Finance Director), or check. Late fees are assessed after forty-five (45) days, and any customer more than ninety (90) days may be unable to make further requests until payments are current. A 2.3% will be imposed on payments made using a credit or debit card.

BridgesDHH is a nonprofit corporation. Your payments are not just fees to turn a profit. Your payments are invested in offering a continuum of FREE programs and services for the D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, and hard of hearing communities from birth through senior years.

### **Parking**

Parking charges will be invoiced if applicable.

### **Travel Charges**

Portal to portal charges will apply to any county outside of the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA includes the following three (3) counties: Shelby, Tipton, and Fayette. Portal charges are billed at the hourly rate and goes toward the two-hour (2) minimum. Mileage is not charged.

### **Minimum**

All interpreting jobs are billed at a two (2) hour minimum. Jobs scheduled for the minimum are billed in quarter hour increments if the minimum is exceeded.

### **After-Hours Jobs**

Jobs taking place outside BridgesDHH's regular service hours (8:00am-5:00pm central time, Monday through Friday) as well as on national holidays will be charged an additional \$5.00 per hour/per Interpreter/Service Provider.

### **Interpreter/Service Provider Availability/Cancellations**

The availability of Interpreters/Service Providers to remain on-site beyond the original contracted time is subject to their personal schedules and is **not** guaranteed.

Based on your request, BridgesDHH is reserving and guaranteeing payment for a service provider's time. For that reason, we have adopted a cancellation/rescheduling policy.

#### **Cancellation/Rescheduling Policy**

**BridgesDHH has established a graduated cancellation policy system. This policy applies regardless of whether the Consumer or Requester cancels the job. The policy is as follows:**

**Job Cancelled:**

**Requester Will Be Billed:**

**More than 48 business hours**

**Requester will not be billed.**

<b>Less than 48 <u>business</u> hours</b>	<b>100% of original contracted time [includes anticipated portal time (if applicable) and requested interpreting time]</b>
<b>Onsite Cancellations/ Consumer No Show)</b>	<b>100% of the requested time, and actual portal (if applicable)</b>
<b>BridgesDHH strongly recommends that the Requester make contact with your D/deaf or hard of hearing Consumers at least three (3) days prior to the appointment date to confirm their attendance in order to avoid being billed for cancellations or no-shows. BridgesDHH will confirm your scheduled appointment with you forty-eight (48) to seventy-two (72) hours in advance, but we are not responsible for contacting the consumer.</b>	

### **Emergency Requests After Business Hours**

BridgesDHH has an on-call interpreter 24/7 and will make every effort to provide an Interpreter/CART provider promptly in the case of a true emergency. In the event an Interpreter is needed for a **medical, legal, or mental health emergency** please call 901-701-8911 and an Interpreter will return your call as soon as possible. In addition to the above billing schedule, emergency requests are billed to include round trip travel time.

### **Last-Minute Requests**

Last-minute requests that are called in during BridgesDHH's regular hours of operation are not always considered "emergencies." Requesters should not call the emergency phone line to request standard services that are not true emergencies. Simply call the office at 901-701-6800 and leave a message in the general voicemail box (select 'interpreting department') if no one answers. A staff member will return your call no later than the following business day. When possible, we will fill last-minute requests, including possibly offering Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) or Access on Demand (if you have previously contracted for this service), but there is no guarantee a last-minute request can be filled.

### **Dismissing Service Providers**

Should the Requester dismiss the Service Provider(s) earlier than the original time contracted for any reason, the Requester will still be billed the amount of time originally contracted. If no end time was established, the Requester will be billed at the standard two (2) hour minimum.

### **Service Provider Arrangement**

In addition to staff interpreters, BridgesDHH utilizes a roster of screened independent contractors. We make every effort to fill all requests. When possible, we recommend making requests at least two weeks in advance, but we work, typically successfully, to fill all requests. However, BridgesDHH is dependent upon the availability of Service Providers. If a request cannot be filled, you will be notified in a timely manner, and we will work with you on other solutions.

### **Your Responsibility in Providing Accessibility**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, federal civil rights legislation, equal access and effective communication are rights of D/deaf and hard of hearing people. Federal Regulation 56 states "The Department of Justice does not permit a public entity to charge a person with a disability for the cost of the auxiliary aid provided." The U.S. Department of Justice, as stated in Title III of the A.D.A., 56 Fed. Reg. 35544-35691, explains in detail the requirements. Public entities are required to provide auxiliary aids as accommodations when they are necessary to enable a person with disabilities to benefit from or participate fully in their services. Tennessee law also prohibits the use of family members as interpreters.

BridgesDHH is happy to provide FREE trainings for you and your staff and FREE policy reviews to help you comply with applicable federal and state laws.

### **Tax Credit Available to Those Providing Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities**

For information on how you may receive a tax credit, please visit <http://www.ada.gov/taxpack.htm>

### **Acknowledgement**

When you request services from BridgesDHH, you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and accepted the policies listed above and agree to pay for services rendered or scheduled in the event of a cancellation.

For any questions regarding BridgesDHH's Policies and Procedures please call our main office at 901-701-6800.

We look forward to serving you and your D/deaf and hard of hearing patrons!

### **Why BridgesDHH**

When you hire BridgesDHH, you are hiring the oldest, largest, and most comprehensive nonprofit corporation serving the D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, and hard of hearing communities in Tennessee. Since 1927, we have been rooted in these communities, and our mission today is to build access, equity, and inclusion in partnership with the D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing communities through advocacy, education, empowerment, and effective communication. We are led by our community, and your choosing BridgesDHH ensures two, important, and unmatched criteria:

- You are hiring the highest quality interpreters and service providers who have been screened by qualified leadership and who will adhere to a professional code of ethics.
- The fees you invest in us will not be invested in profit but in a continuum of FREE programs and services for the D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, and hard of hearing communities from birth through senior years.

Thank you for all you make possible by choosing Bridges for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing!

### **ADVOCACY**

After more than 95 years of advocacy for individuals, in 2017, Bridges for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing turned its attention to systems change advocacy, powerful, community-led work that seeks to create change for our entire community by removing systemic barriers and creating the opportunity to build new systems that are more just and inclusive. The vibrant Deaf and hard of hearing community identifies the systemic barriers, and we invite stakeholders from all perspectives and levels of involvement to Town Hall meetings where our role, as an agency, is to facilitate open, respectful, and meaningful dialogue that enriches us, informs, and moves us forward. From these Town Halls, we identify potential solutions or strategies, from educational efforts to policy work to legislation, and then create the groundwork to achieve the vision we desire. To date, we have hosted Town Halls on Law Enforcement, Public Transportation, and Deaf Education. We are currently planning Town Halls on Mental Health Access and Prisons/Criminal Justice.

### **ADULT EDUCATION & ADVOCACY**

In 2021-22, AEO served over 3,100 unduplicated clients, including students in ASL I, II, and III classes that were onsite, online, or community based; more than 60 virtual and in-person workshops on Deaf culture and ASL in businesses, universities, law enforcement, first responders, congregations, and agencies; training over 2,000 law enforcement officers in Tennessee; more than 30 social events, including Drive-In BINGO, Trunk or Treat, Tax Days, Community Health & Vaccine Clinics, Signing Santa, Tech Expo, and bowling events; and statewide GED and driver's education classes.

## **EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment is our case management program. Empowerment served over 500 individual clients, primarily in the areas of jobs, housing, individual access, education, and assisting clients with written English.. Other priorities were food security, training opportunities, educational advocacy, and advocacy for access to health care, mental health care, and other services. Empowerment made over 200 referrals to other agencies, including the Civil Rights Enforcement & Education Center, Disability Rights TN, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Financial Empowerment Center, attorneys, doctors, churches, and more. Empowerment collaborated with the Financial Empowerment Center to provide bi-weekly financial counseling, providing interpreters and a social worker to work with the counselor. If there were identified barriers to program participation, we were able to provide some direct financial assistance to remove those barriers. Over 90% of clients in the financial program had increased credit scores, paid off debt, or built savings. Empowerment offered five vaccine and community health clinics.

## **INTERPRETING**

Interpreting Services provided almost 27,000 hours of interpreting services in addition Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and CART. VRI allows us to provide services quickly and cost-effectively to remote areas but never replaces the value and quality of having an interpreter in person. CART (Communication Access Real Time) provides live captions in English and creates equal access for our hard of hearing community.

Interpreting Services continues to work with courts and law enforcement to ensure best practices and legal compliance when working with the Deaf and hard of hearing community and improving access to mental health services for Deaf and hard of hearing consumers. Interpreting offered a robust program of high-quality professional development for interpreters with topics ranging from legal interpreting, language deprivation, and mental health interpreting to best practices in team interpreting, medical interpreting, and narcotics terms.

Interpreting Services provided a robust program of virtual professional development, using qualified interpreters with specific areas of expertise to offer professional development on topics such as legal, medical, performance, mental health, and more. Interpreting Services continues to lead the push for improved access to and quality of mental health services for the D/deaf and hard of hearing, leading a statewide Mental Health Task Force.

**BIG NEWS:** Interpreting Services launched Access on Demand, a new on-demand, video remote interpreting service. Access on Demand creates access where it did not previously exist--in those impromptu, walk into the store/pharmacy/professor's office/traffic stop interactions that seem small but that have a huge impact. Customers of this service simply click on a link or app on any smartphone, tablet, or computer, and a qualified interpreter appears in less than one minute, no scheduling required. Access on Demand also offers over 200 spoken languages, meaning our service has broad appeal, allowing us to work with a number of important customers and to make quality ASL, equal access, and effective communication a priority. We provided 2,901 minutes of Access on Demand services in our first few months.

## **YOUTH EDUCATION & SERVICES**

In 2021-22, Little ACEs welcomed new Deaf Mentors who meet with families with D/deaf and hard of hearing children ages 0 to 5 each week. Those families also have access to a free Parent ASL class and a monthly group meeting with our Director. Our Cooking club continued to be popular. Each week, we emailed out a new grocery list, and then we met virtually to cook together. We had a small after-school program in Nashville and continued working with the Mayor's program in Memphis.

With Interpreting Services, we hosted the Deaf Education Institute virtually. Deaf educators, and parents all across the country. In January, our students filmed ASL versions of Martin Luther King, Jr. quotations to honor his life and work. We took a trip to Beech Bend Park! We hosted Signing Santa where children could meet

virtually with a Deaf Santa and his interpreter, Rudolph. We filmed and distributed Santa signing "The Night Before Christmas."

We sponsored transportation for Nashville's Deaf Ed program to visit the Nashville Sounds for Fantasy Baseball Camp, and we donated 'Signs of Survival,' the story of two sisters, one Deaf, in a concentration camp during WWII to the Deaf education program in high school in Memphis. We hosted Camp Sign Me Up for hearing students who want to learn ASL and Deaf culture, and we were thrilled to welcome deaf and hard of hearing students who were embracing their identities and communities for the first time.

The big story for the youth program was Camp Rise & Sign. After missing the last two years, we were back in person this summer in a new location in Memphis, and we welcomed students from Middle and West Tennessee for the first time together! CRS was an amazing experience--fully and equally accessible to every D/deaf, hard of hearing, sibling, and CODA student who attended. The campers were amazing--kind, generous, enthusiastic. We did a Ropes course, an obstacle course, and a high-velocity swing. We canoed and daily swam and did arts and crafts. We learned about ASL storytelling and had a talent show with skits on our final night. We played wiffle ball and kickball and capture the flag. We made lifelong friends and memories, and we are grateful for every volunteer and donor and particularly for For the Kingdom Camp and Sertoma Club of Nashville for their sponsorships.