



Arkansas Advisory Board for Interpreters for the Deaf

ADVISORY BOARD FOR INTERPRETERS BETWEEN HEARING INDIVIDUALS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND, HARD OF HEARING, AND ORAL DEAF

Freeway Medical Building, Room 801 & Zoom Conference

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88520907377?pwd=gbbBlkdmiwJelVAblxiM0Fn6aa55tj.1>

5800 W. 10th Street

November 7, 2025

2:03 p.m. - 3:13 p.m.

- I. **Welcome and Roll Call:** Meeting called to order 2:03 p.m.
Board member: Sebrena Westcott, Stephanie Ott, Pamela Taylor, Arthur Babin
Zoom: Shana Turner, Renika Witherspoon, Taylor Johnson
Working Interpreter: Katelyn Wilson, Johnathan Smith, Karen Owens,
Community: Will Gorum, Meagan Becks, Cheryl Semore (Zoom), Carel Dunaway (SSP for Arthur Babin)
ADH Staff: Brian Nichols, Beverly Wade, Shannon Borchert (Zoom),
- II. **Approval of Minutes from August 1, 2025, meeting.**
Taylor Johnson moved to accept the minutes; Arthur Babin seconded motion; motion passed.
- III. **Subcommittee Updates**
 - a. **Licensure** (S. Ott, P. Taylor, T. Johnson):
 - Discussion regarding out-of-state licenses. Oregon licensure board is not functional.
 - Board members asked if they should obtain a separate email account specifically for board-related emails as contact information is provided on board website. Shannon will provide update at next meeting.
 - b. **Investigation** (A. Babin, S. Westcott): No updates currently.
 - c. **Budget/Fee** (A. Babin, T. Johnson): Pamela Taylor moved to accept the budget as presented, Arthur Babin seconded the motion. The motion passed. (included following minutes).
 - d. **Technology** (P. Taylor, S. Turner, R. Witherspoon): No updates currently.
- IV. **Old Business**
 - a. **Spenddown Update:**
(provided in budget presentation by S. Borchert)

b. Mileage reimbursement update:

The board will need to vote during the February meeting annually to address their mileage reimbursement needs in coming fiscal years.

V. New Business

a. Community Updates/Outreach: NA

b. Board Member's terms ending 2025: Stephanie Ott (ARID), Arthur Babin (AAD).

c. Budget concerns/needs FY 27:

Budget concerns and plans for Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026-June 30, 2027). Shannon Borchert will submit the previous plan submitted by the board for consideration as well as an updated fund balance.

VI. Public Comments

Arthur Babin moved to nominate Sebrena Wescott as chair; Taylor Johnson seconded motion; Sebrena accepted, and the motion passed.

Arthur Babin moved to nominate Taylor Johnson as Secretary, Renika Witherspoon seconded the motion. Taylor accepted the nomination, and the motion passed.

VII. Adjourn: 3:13 p.m.

FY '27 Deaf Interpreter Appropriation Request: (provided to ADH leadership for presentation to legislator for review of appropriation; amount of funds is given for appropriation is determined by legislator)

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) has been required to prioritize participant services; while they have been able to address some needed updates, such as transitioning the previous VHS content to DVDs, the technological and linguistic changes need to be addressed to ensure services meet the needs of participants.

My understanding is the quality of the DVDs is of concern due to the age of the VHS and the content. Due to the age of the VHS tapes, the video quality is subpar. Additionally, the technological and linguistic updates have not been made due to prioritizing the increase in participant services needed.

In addition to these challenges, availability of funding to purchase new materials for testing has not been available. Arkansas Rehabilitation Services' plan allows for properly updated materials to be developed in-house and provides updated technology so that future updates will not be as costly. The plan developed will ensure QAST testing can be administered for several years to come.

Live Panel Test Consists of:

Prior to an interpreter coming for testing, they must take a written test based on ethical interpreting scenarios.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) schedules Live Panels from 1-4 times a month depending on the need. Staff can evaluate 4 candidates in a day. Most Live Panels are done in the ARS Little Rock field office. However, staff also travels to NWA once a year with equipment due to a large interpreter population there.

The Live panel consists of 3 evaluators and a QAST administrator. Each candidate who arrives for testing begins with watching 2 warmup videos. One video is "transliterated" which has more of an English word order, and the other is "Interpreting" which is in American Sign Language (ASL).

After the warmup, candidates go through an interview process prior to the performance to show that they are knowledgeable in the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Professional Conduct.

When the interview is passed, they begin with the Transliterating video showing their skill in signing and voicing in English word order and their ability to mouth the words of their hearing consumer.

The second video is the Interpreting video. During this video, the candidate shows their ability to work with the more native Deaf sign language user who uses ASL. This video requires a more "Topic-Comment" type of sentence structure, the use of classifiers to represent objects and a variety of other ASL features. The candidate is also responsible for receiving this type of message from their Deaf consumer and then putting it into spoken English.

Currently, ARS has 2 small TV's and 2 DVD players that are used for testing. One set is in the warm-up room, and the other is in the testing room. These were purchased in about 2012. In 2025 ARS evaluated 48 interpreters from Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Mississippi, and Arizona with the live panel. ARS currently has 16 people on the waiting list to take the Live Panel.

Video QAST Testing Consists of:

It is the same process as above; however, it is without the candidate sitting in front of evaluators. These are done alone in a room in front of a digital camera. Their recordings are then sent out for evaluation. These also take place mostly in the ARS Little Rock field office, but staff does travel to locations such as Fayetteville, Jonesboro, and Mountain Home to provide video QAST testing to the area interpreters. In 2025 ARS evaluated 20 interpreters through Video QAST testing from Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois. ARS currently has 3 on the waiting list to take the Video QAST.

ARS currently has 3 sets of testing material that needs to be replaced with updated content. Each set includes a beginner set and an advanced set of videos.

Example:

Set A

1-3 Beginner

- Transliterating warmup
- Interpreting warmup
- Transliterating performance
- Interpreting performance

4-5 Advanced

- Transliterating warmup
- Interpreting warmup
- Transliterating performance
- Interpreting performance

On-going Requests:

\$10,000 Annually – Community Education

Sponsorship to different community organizations like Arkansas Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ARID), Arkansas Association of the Deaf (AAD), and others to educate the public at workshops and community events.

\$45,000 Annually – Maintenance and operation expenses

\$15,000 Board travel, staff supplies and equipment, conference supplies, postage, translation services for meetings.

\$30,000 Administrative assistance fee.

One-time Requests

\$100,000 – Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) for State Certification

The QAST is a state screening mechanism conducted to evaluate the skill level of interpreters. The current exam is out of date and the Board would like to provide funding to update the current exam.

Justification for request: This request will allow the Board to expand education regarding the important work interpreters provide to communities statewide, assist in updating the current testing, and allow the board to have staff to provide administrative assistance. Responsibilities of this staff will include duties such as processing necessary documents for licensure and licensure renewals, issuance of licensure cards, payment processing fees, Board meeting facilitation, and communication dissemination among the Board members and licenses.

The amount of funding requested annually is based on the funding available through the receipt of fees and the use of the fund balance.

General Information:

The Board currently has a balance of \$222,914.02.

The Board received an average of \$35,098 from FY ‘17 – ‘23.

Licensure fees were reduced by 95% since FY ‘24 – FY ‘26.

Reduced Interpreter Licensure Fees	
Initial Application and Licensure Fee	\$ 5.00
Annual Fee	\$ 4.00
Annual Late Fee	\$ 5.50
Reactivation Fee	\$ 7.00
Upgrade Fee	\$ 1.75
Replacement Card Fee	\$.50
Insufficient Funds Fee	\$ 35.00

The Board received an average of \$4,172 from FY ‘24 – ‘25.

Membership has increased from ~200 in FY ‘20 to more than ~650 in FY ‘26.

With the reduction in fund balance, fees can return to previous rates for FY ‘27.

Interpreter Licensure Fees FY '27	
Initial Application and Licensure Fee	\$ 90.00
Annual Fee	\$ 75.00
Annual Late Fee	\$ 25.00
Reactivation Fee	\$ 125.00
Upgrade Fee	\$ 35.00
Replacement Card Fee	\$ 10.00
Insufficient Funds Fee	\$ 35.00

X *Taylor M. Johnson*

Secretary