

## **Chapter 90D.**

### **Interpreters and Transliterators.**

#### **§ 90D-1. Title.**

This Chapter may be cited as the "Interpreter and Transliterators Licensure Act". (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

#### **§ 90D-2. Declaration of purpose.**

The practice of manual or oral interpreting and transliterating services affects the public health, safety, and welfare, and therefore the licensure of these practices is necessary to ensure minimum standards of competency and to provide the public with safe and accurate manual or oral interpreting or transliterating services. It is the purpose of this Chapter to provide for the regulation of persons offering manual or oral interpreting or transliterating services to individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or dependent on the use of manual modes of communication in this State. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

#### **§ 90D-3. Definitions.**

The following definitions apply in this Chapter:

- (1) Board. – The North Carolina Interpreter and Transliterators Licensing Board.
- (2) Cued speech. – A tool that utilizes a phonetically based system to enable spoken language to appear visibly through the use of eight handshapes in four locations in combination with natural mouth movements to allow sounds of spoken language to appear differently.
- (3) Educational interpreter or transliterator. – A person who provides accessible communication, using the most understandable language model, to individuals in prekindergarten through grade 12 or in any institution of higher education.
- (4) Interpreter. – A person who practices the act of interpreting as defined in this section.
- (5) Interpreting. – The process of providing accessible communication, between and among persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and those who are hearing. This process includes, but is not limited to, communication between American Sign Language and English. It may also involve various other modalities that involve visual, gestural, and tactile methods.
- (6) License. – A certificate that evidences approval by the Board that a person has successfully completed the requirements set forth in G.S. 90D-7 entitling the person to perform the functions and duties of an interpreter or transliterator.
- (7) Provisional license. – A certificate issued by the Board under G.S. 90D-8 enabling a person to perform the functions and duties of an interpreter or transliterator until the person has successfully completed all of the requirements set forth in G.S. 90D-7.
- (8) Transliterating. – The process of providing accessible communication between one or more hearing persons and one or more deaf or hard-of-hearing persons using a form of manually coded English.
- (9) Transliterator. – A person who practices the act of transliterating as defined in this section. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

#### **§ 90D-4. License required; exemptions.**

(a) Except as provided in Chapter 8B of the General Statutes, no person shall practice or offer to practice as an interpreter or transliterator for a fee or other consideration, represent himself or herself as a licensed interpreter or transliterator, or use the title "Licensed Interpreter for the Deaf", "Licensed Transliterator for the Deaf", or any other title or abbreviation to indicate that the person is a licensed interpreter or transliterator unless that person is currently licensed under this Chapter.

(b) The provisions of this Chapter do not apply to:

- (1) Persons providing interpreting or transliterating services in religious proceedings.
- (2) Persons providing interpreting or transliterating services in mentoring or training programs approved by the Board.
- (3) An intern under the supervision of a person licensed under this Chapter to provide interpreting or transliterating services.
- (4) Persons providing interpreting or transliterating services in an emergency situation until a licensed interpreter or transliterator can be obtained. An emergency situation is one where the deaf or hard-of-hearing person is in substantial danger of death or irreparable harm if interpreting or transliterating services are not provided immediately.
- (5) Educational interpreters or transliterators.
- (6) Nonresident persons who are nationally certified providing interpreting or transliterating services in this State no more than 20 days per year in accordance with rules adopted by the Board. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3; 2005-299, s. 1.)

#### **§ 90D-5. Creation of the Board.**

(a) The North Carolina Interpreter and Transliterator Licensing Board is created.

(b) Composition and Terms. – The Board shall consist of nine members who shall serve staggered terms. The initial Board members shall be selected on or before July 1, 2003, as follows:

- (1) A member of the North Carolina Association of the Deaf (NCAD) who is deaf and familiar with the interpreting process. This member shall be appointed by the Governor and serve for a term of two years.
- (2) An interpreter who is a member of the North Carolina Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (NCRID) with five years experience in a community setting and who is licensed to practice as an interpreter or transliterator under this Chapter. This member shall be appointed by the Governor and serve for a term of three years.
- (3) An employee of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. This member shall be appointed by the Governor, upon recommendation of the Secretary of the Department, and serve a term of three years.
- (4) An interpreter or transliterator for deaf-blind individuals who is licensed to practice as an interpreter or transliterator under this Chapter or a deaf-blind individual who is a member of the North Carolina Deaf-Blind Association and who has knowledge of the interpreting process. This member shall be appointed by the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and serve for a term of three years.
- (5) A cued speech or oral transliterator licensed to practice as an interpreter or transliterator under this Chapter. This member shall be appointed by the

General Assembly, upon recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and serve for a term of two years.

- (6) A member of the Hearing Loss Association of America-North Carolina State Association (HLAA-NC) with knowledge of the interpreting process and deafness. This member shall be appointed by the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and serve for a term of three years.
- (7) An interpreter who is a member of the North Carolina Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (NCRID) with five years experience in an educational setting in grades K-12 and who is licensed to practice as an interpreter or transliterator under this Chapter. This member shall be appointed by the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and serve for a term of two years.
- (8) A faculty member of an Interpreter Training Program (ITP), an Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP), or a qualified or professional certified instructor of the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA). This member shall be appointed by the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and serve for a term of two years.
- (9) A public member. This member shall be appointed by the General Assembly, upon recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and serve a term of two years. For purposes of this section, a public member shall not be licensed under this Chapter or have an immediate family member who is deaf or hard-of-hearing.

Upon the expiration of the terms of the initial Board members, each member shall be appointed for a term of three years and shall serve until a successor is appointed and qualified. No member may serve more than two consecutive full terms.

(c) Qualifications. – All members of the Board who are required to be licensed under this Chapter shall reside or be employed in North Carolina and shall remain in active practice and in good standing with the Board as a licensee during their terms.

(d) Vacancies. – A vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. Appointees to fill vacancies shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term and until their successors have been duly appointed and qualified.

(e) Removal. – The Board may remove any of its members for neglect of duty, incompetence, or unprofessional conduct. A member subject to disciplinary proceedings as a licensee shall be disqualified from participating in the official business of the Board until the charges have been resolved.

(f) Compensation. – Each member of the Board shall receive per diem and reimbursement for travel and subsistence as provided in G.S. 93B-5.

(g) Officers. – The officers of the Board shall be a chair, a vice-chair, and other officers deemed necessary by the Board to carry out the purposes of this Chapter. All officers shall be elected by the Board for two-year terms and shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified.

(h) Meetings. – The Board shall hold at least two meetings each year to conduct business. The Board shall establish procedures governing the calling, holding, and conducting of regular and special meetings. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 1; 2014-115, s. 42(a).)

**§ 90D-6. Powers of the Board.**

The Board shall have the power and duty to:

- (1) Administer this Chapter.
- (2) Adopt, amend, or repeal rules necessary to carry out the provisions of this Chapter, subject to the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.
- (3) Employ and fix the compensation of personnel that the Board determines is necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Chapter and to incur other expenses necessary to effectuate this Chapter.
- (4) Examine and determine the qualifications and fitness of applicants for licensure, renewal of licensure, and reciprocal licensure.
- (5) Issue, renew, deny, suspend, or revoke licenses and carry out any disciplinary actions authorized by this Chapter.
- (6) Set fees as authorized in G.S. 90D-10.
- (7) Conduct investigations for the purpose of determining whether violations of this Chapter or grounds for disciplining licensees exist.
- (8) Maintain a record of all proceedings and make available to licensees and other concerned parties an annual report of all Board action.
- (9) Keep on file in its office at all times a complete record of the names, addresses, license numbers, and renewal license numbers of all persons entitled to practice under this Chapter.
- (10) Adopt a seal containing the name of the Board for use on all licenses and official reports issued by the Board.
- (11) Adopt rules for continuing education requirements.
- (12) Conduct administrative hearings in accordance with Article 3A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. (2002-182, s. 1; 2005-299, s. 3.)

**§ 90D-7. Requirements for licensure.**

(a) Upon application to the Board and the payment of the required fees, an applicant may be licensed as an interpreter or transliterator if the applicant meets all of the following qualifications:

- (1) Is 18 years of age or older.
- (2) Is of good moral character as determined by the Board.
- (3) Meets one of the following criteria:
  - a. Repealed by Session Laws 2023-137, s. 45(a), effective December 1, 2023, and applicable to licenses and provisional licenses issued or renewed by the North Carolina Interpreter and Transliterator Licensing Board after that date.
  - b. Is nationally certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (RID), or another nationally recognized body that issues certificates or assessments for interpreting approved by the Board by rule.
  - c. Holds a valid Testing, Evaluation and Certification Unit, Inc., (TECUnit) national certification in cued language transliteration.
  - d. Repealed by Session Laws 2023-137, s. 45(a), effective December 1, 2023, and applicable to licenses and provisional licenses issued or

renewed by the North Carolina Interpreter and Transliterators Licensing Board after that date.

e. Holds a current Cued Language Transliterators State Level Assessment (CLTSLA) level 3 or above classification.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 2014-115, s. 42(b), effective August 11, 2014.

(c) The Department of Public Safety may provide a criminal record check to the Board for a person who has applied for a new, provisional, or renewal license through the Board. The Board shall provide to the Department of Public Safety, along with the request, the fingerprints of the applicant, any additional information required by the Department of Public Safety, and a form signed by the applicant consenting to the check of the criminal record and to the use of the fingerprints and other identifying information required by the State or national repositories. The applicant's fingerprints shall be forwarded to the State Bureau of Investigation for a search of the State's criminal history record file, and the State Bureau of Investigation shall forward a set of the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a national criminal history check. The Board shall keep all information pursuant to this subdivision privileged, in accordance with applicable State law and federal guidelines, and the information shall be confidential and shall not be a public record under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.

The Department of Public Safety may charge each applicant a fee for conducting the checks of criminal history records authorized by this subsection. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3; 2014-100, s. 17.1(o); 2014-115, s. 42(b); 2023-137, s. 45(a).)

#### **§ 90D-8. Provisional license.**

(a) Upon application to the Board and the payment of the required fees, an applicant may be issued a one-time provisional license as an interpreter or transliterator if the applicant meets all of the following qualifications:

- (1) Is at least 18 years of age.
- (2) Is of good moral character as determined by the Board.
- (3) Completes two continuing education units approved by the Board. These units must be completed for each renewable year.
- (4) Holds at least a two-year associate degree in interpreting from an accredited institution and satisfies one of the following:
  - a. Holds a quality assurance North Carolina Interpreter Classification System (NCICS) level C classification.
  - b. Holds a valid National Association of the Deaf (NAD) level 2 or 3 certification.
  - c. Holds a current Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) level 3.5 or above classification.
  - d. Repealed by Session Laws 2005-299, s. 2, effective August 22, 2005.
  - e. Repealed by Session Laws 2023-137, s. 45(b), effective October 10, 2023.
  - f. Holds any other certificate or assessment issued by a nationally recognized body approved by the Board by rule.

(a1) Upon application to the Board, payment of the required fees, and meeting the requirements for a provisional license under subdivisions (1) and (2) of subsection (a) of this section, the Board may also issue a provisional license to any of the following categories of persons seeking a provisional license:

- (1) A deaf interpreter who completes 16 hours of training in interpreting coursework or workshops, including role and function or ethics, and 20 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application in the provision of interpreting services.
- (2) An oral interpreter who completes a total of 40 hours of training in interpreting coursework or workshops related to oral interpreting.
- (3) A cued language transliterator who holds a current TECUnit Cued Language Transliterator State Level Assessment (CLTSLA) level 2 or above classification.
- (4) A person providing interpreting or transliterating services who has a recognized credential from another state in the field of interpreting or transliterating.
- (5) An interpreter or transliterator who has accumulated 200 hours per year in the provision of interpreting or transliterating services, in this State or another state, totaling 400 hours for the two years immediately preceding the date of application. An applicant must provide documentation of hours when applying for a provisional license under this category, subject to verification by the Board.

(b) A provisional license issued under this section shall be valid for one year. Upon expiration, a provisional license may be renewed for an additional one-year period in the discretion of the Board. However, a provisional license shall not be renewed more than three times. The Board may, in its discretion, grant an extension after the third time the provisional license has been renewed under circumstances to be established in rules adopted by the Board.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2014-115, s. 42(b), effective August 11, 2014. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3; 2005-299, s. 2; 2014-115, s. 42(c); 2023-137, s. 45(b).)

**§ 90D-9. Reciprocity; licensure of nonresident.**

(a) The Board may issue a license to a qualified applicant who resides in this State and holds an interpreter or transliterator license in another state if that state has standards of competency that are substantially equivalent to those provided in this Chapter.

(b) The Board may issue a license to a nonresident if the person meets the requirements of this Chapter or the person resides in a state that recognizes licenses issued by the Board. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

**§ 90D-10. Expenses and fees.**

(a) All salaries, compensation, and expenses incurred or allowed for the purposes of this Chapter shall be paid by the Board exclusively out of the fees received by the Board as authorized by this Chapter or from funds received from other sources. In no case shall any salary, expense, or other obligations of the Board be charged against the General Fund.

(b) The Board may impose the following fees not to exceed the amounts listed below:

- |     |                             |          |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------|
| (1) | License                     | \$225.00 |
| (2) | Provisional license         | \$225.00 |
| (3) | License renewal             | \$150.00 |
| (4) | Provisional license renewal | \$150.00 |
| (5) | Duplicate license           | \$10.00. |

(2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

**§ 90D-11. License renewal.**

Each license issued under this Chapter shall be renewed on or before October 1 of each year. All applications for renewal shall be filed with the Board and shall be accompanied by the renewal fee as required by G.S. 90D-10 and written proof of satisfactory completion of continuing education requirements adopted by the Board. Licenses that are not renewed shall automatically lapse, and the licensee shall be required to reapply for licensure in accordance with rules adopted by the Board. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

**§ 90D-12. Disciplinary action.**

The Board may deny, suspend, revoke, or refuse to license an interpreter or transliterator or applicant for any of the following:

- (1) Giving false information to or withholding information from the Board in procuring or attempting to procure a license.
- (2) Having been convicted of or pled guilty or no contest to a crime that indicates the person is unfit or incompetent to perform interpreter or transliterator services or that indicates the person has deceived or defrauded the public.
- (3) Having been disciplined by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (RID).
- (4) Demonstrating gross negligence, incompetency, or misconduct in performing interpreter or transliterator services.
- (5) Failing to pay child support after having been ordered to do so by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (6) Willfully violating any provisions of this Chapter or rules adopted by the Board. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

**§ 90D-13. Injunctive relief.**

If the Board finds that a person who does not have a license issued under this Chapter claims to be a licensed interpreter or transliterator or is engaging in practice as an interpreter or transliterator in violation of this Chapter, the Board may apply in its own name to the superior court for a temporary restraining order or other injunctive relief to prevent the person from continuing illegal practices. The action may be brought in the county where the illegal or unlawful acts are alleged to have been committed, in the county where the defendant resides, or in the county where the Board maintains its offices and records. The court may grant injunctions regardless of whether criminal prosecution or other action has been or may be instituted as a result of a violation. (2002-182, s. 1; 2003-56, s. 3.)

**§ 90D-14. Civil penalties.**

(a) Authority to Assess Civil Penalties. – The Board may assess a civil penalty not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the violation of any section of this Chapter or any rules adopted by the Board. The clear proceeds of any civil penalty assessed under this section shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

(b) Consideration Factors. – Before imposing and assessing a civil penalty, the Board shall consider the following factors:

- (1) The nature, gravity, and persistence of the particular violation.
- (2) The appropriateness of the imposition of a civil penalty when considered alone or in combination with other punishment.

- (3) Whether the violation was willful and malicious.
  - (4) Any other factors that would tend to mitigate or aggravate the violations found to exist.
- (c) Schedule of Civil Penalties. – The Board shall establish a schedule of civil penalties for violations of this Chapter or rules adopted by the Board.
- (d) Costs. – The Board may assess the costs of disciplinary actions against a person found to be in violation of this Chapter or rules adopted by the Board. (2005-299, s. 4.)