



## TIPS TRAINING

### Educational Interpreter Program

The Utah State Office of Education as part of the TASK 12 Consortium for educational interpreters, is announcing this opportunity to improve key interpreter skills by becoming a participant in the TIPS Training. The TIPS Training is an outgrowth of the inservice needs of interpreters identified by comparison of deficit skill areas from the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) around the states.

In Utah we have an expectation of 4.0 on the EIPA for our educational interpreters. Interpreters in the **3.0-3.4 range** may apply for the grant. The Utah State Office of Education will sponsor **two interpreters** to be part of the Cohort in late August or early September 2011 in Arizona. Additional interpreters may apply at their own cost. There are two days of face-to-face instruction in Arizona, with the rest of the program on-line with follow-ups throughout the coming year. The grant would also include a provision for taking the EIPA. The cost to the individual is \$375.00, which includes materials for the class, and the fee for taking the EIPA at the end. (The cost for the training is \$1,800.00, including hotel and air fare.)

The TIPS Training has shown a 60% pass rate (EIPA Level 3.5 or better) from TIPS completers. This, compared to a 40% pass rate from interpreters not participating in TIPS. This means that TIPS increases the numbers of qualified interpreters working with deaf and hard of hearing students in your public schools.

Interested individuals should contact:

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Utah State Office of Education



# IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY

## SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENT

### TRAINING OF SCHOOL-BASED SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (TIPS)

The purpose for this message is to provide information to school districts on how to be involved in Training of Sign Language Interpreters in Public Schools (TIPS). The Training and Assessment Systems for K-12 Educational Interpreters (TASK12) is a multi-State research-based training and assessment program for interpreters working in educational settings. TASK12 is a partnership of 14 States and the Center for Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE) at Utah State University, which provides educational interpreters the opportunity for training and evaluation of skills. TASK12 has been providing assessments for your education interpreters for over seven years.

The TASK12 Project has seen the need to develop and offer skill training for those sign language interpreters who need specific intervention to become qualified in the K-12 educational setting. A minimum skill qualification for interpreters in most States is a score of Level 3.5 on the EIPA. If any of your school district sign language interpreters scored in a range of 3.0-3.4 on EIPA, they would be eligible to attend the training to enhance their skills. When the commitments are made and the training is completed, the EIPA test instrument is administered as an exit exam to measure success.

1. **Question:** Can interpreters in my school district be involved in this important training?

**Response:** Yes, if they have taken the EIPA test and scored in the range of 3.0-3.4.

2. **Question:** What is the purpose for the training?

**Response:** To enhance the interpreter's skills that will ultimately improve services for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

3. **Questions:** What is the training format?

**Response:** The training begins with a two-day face-to-face training with the national trainers, Patty Gordon and Doug Bowen-Bailey. The remainder of the training is accomplished by each interpreter through a six month series of on-line training modules.

4. **Question:** Who pays the expense and how much?

**Response:** The total cost for each interpreter is around \$1,500.00, but it varies in each State. In addition, travel expenses would need to be paid to the two-day face-to-face meeting. The costs would be the responsibility of the school district and interpreter. Some States offer assistance – check with your State special education contact. Some school districts have used some of their stimulus money to pay the costs.

5. **Question:** Why should our school district participate?

**Response:** To improve interpreting skills for your school based interpreters – reducing liability, improving services for students with disabilities, and providing professional development opportunities for your interpreters.

For more information regarding the project, please go to [www.task12.org](http://www.task12.org) or contact Cheryl Sheffield at 435-752-0238 ext. 13 or Cheryl.Sheffield@usu.edu.

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## Training program helps sign language interpreters succeed

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*Hannah Cheloha not only certified, but gained more confidence in her signing.*

Arizona. Her state requires a 3.5 proficiency score in the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment—and though she was close to achieving it, she wasn't quite there. (The EIPA is a national certification test that evaluates an interpreter's performance in a number of signing skills.)

In 2009, her state began signing up interpreters for training through the Arizona Training of Interpreters in Public Schools program. ATIPS is run by [Training and Assessment Systems for K-12 Educational Interpreters \(TASK12\)](#). That's a project of the CPD's Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education division—and it operates in a growing number of states throughout the nation.

In Arizona, Quinlan fit well within the target group. She had taken the test and just missed meeting the requirements. She was invited to participate in her state's training, where her experience included a two-day, face-to-face workshop and a lot of work online. "We had to record ourselves and post it for everyone to see," she said. While that might have been intimidating, the teachers made everyone feel comfortable as they gave feedback. "They did it in such a nice way that it didn't feel like criticism."

What's more, the instruction and feedback were specific, said Hannah Cheloha, another Arizona interpreter. "I really feel like they targeted the skills that I struggled with myself. I got a lot of one to one attention that you can't really get in a workshop."

The training's targeted material didn't happen by accident. For years, the TASK12 project has assessed interpreters and collected data on the areas where they needed the most help. The goal: to help trainees not only pass the test, but also enhance their classroom work.

"The success of students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in mainstream classrooms depends on many factors," wrote Arizona teachers Doug Bowen-Bailey and Patty Gordon in a joint statement for this story. "For those whose education includes the presence of a sign language interpreter, it is critical that the interpreter be qualified. ... In many respects, this standard is similar to having measurements for the width of a doorway to ensure physical access. Having certified interpreters in the classroom is a measurable commitment to providing access for students who are deaf and hard of hearing."

A CPD program is whittling away at a nationwide shortage of qualified sign language interpreters by providing specific, targeted training.

It helped Tracy Quinlan, a sign language interpreter in

As for Quinlan and Cheloha, both women finished the training and re-took the certification test, which they passed. While they credit their training for boosting their test performance, they agree it did more than that. They feel more proficient in their signing.

“A lot of it was the practice,” said Quinlan. One exercise in particular sticks in her memory: she learned to portray a concept visually instead of translating word for word.

“I feel like my skills improved dramatically,” Cheloha said. “My confidence is so much greater.”

They are not alone. “The national average for passing the EIPA is about 40%, while the passing rate for people who went through this program is over 60%,” wrote Brown-Bailey and Gordon. “Perhaps even more importantly, people have expressed a commitment to change the way they work in the classroom--acting with a better understanding of how the educational environment functions and what role they can play in supporting the success of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. “

TASK-12 provides testing services to evaluate the skills of interpreters in 14 states. Training has been offered to interpreters in five of them--Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Kansas and Georgia.

For more information on the TASK-12 program, visit the [TAESE website](#). You can also contact [Dr. Bernhardt Jones](#), the project director, or [Cheryl Sheffield](#), the program coordinator.

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