

Motion for ASL Interpreter Pay Increase

Good afternoon; my name is Jeffery, alcoholic and the Accessibilities Chair.

The Accessibilities Committee would like to make a motion to increase the pay rate from \$50 an hour to \$65 an hour for ASL Interpretation.

Area 8 has been a Pioneer in providing ASL Interpreting for AA meetings. In addition, the Signs of Life (SOL) program offers comprehensive outpatient drug and alcohol treatment for Deaf, Deaf-Blind, late-deafened, and Hard-of-Hearing adults. SOL is the only community-based substance abuse program in the United States that is designed specifically for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. SOL provides individualized treatment and recovery plans that meet the individual's unique needs here in San Diego and presently have two recovery homes for Men.

In 2008, the Accessibilities Committee established the Sign Language Fund / The Gold Can. This fund collects contributions from groups and individuals to pay for Certified ASL Interpreting services for AA meetings and events. The Gold Can, can pay the cost in full or half with the meetings paying the other half. As a result, some AA meetings have decided to be self-supporting, allowing help for other AA meetings. Pre-COVID we had 11 ASL Interpreted AA meetings weekly; 4 were self-supporting, and 7 that the Gold Can helped pay for ASL Interpreting. During COVID we had 8 Interpreted meetings; 3 were self-supporting, and 5 that the Gold Can helped pay for. Presently, we have 6 interpreted meetings, 3 are self-supporting and the Gold Can helps with the other 3.

In 2015, we realized that there wasn't a standard pay rate for ASL interpreting services at AA meetings. Some meetings were paying a rate under our current rate, and 1 1/2 hour-long meetings were only paying \$50 which is strenuous work for 1 interpreter.

In 2016, a request to pay ASL Interpreters \$50 an hour and \$75 for 1 1/2 hour was motioned and approved through Accessibilities Committee.

Before 2016 Accessibilities Committee and Area schedule interpreters separately so there was no approval from the area or groups. In 2016, there was a request to our Accessibilities Committee to schedule an ASL Interpreter for an Area Assembly and so from that moment on our ASL Interpreter Coordinator has been scheduling Interpreters for all Area Events (Assembly, DCM Sharing, District Meeting, and Unity Day) as well as regular AA meetings.

(There is an additional layer of specialized knowledge of the AA terminology, idioms, phrases, ethics, and general life skills. Large urban areas tend to pay higher whereas smaller cities will pay less. In a remote setting, there are extenuating circumstances. For an hour meeting, with the fast reading of the frozen text of chapter 5, prayers, traditions, and literature plus the continuous dialogue of people speaking, there would generally be two interpreters for \$50-75 for each individual. Additionally, the interpreters receive a two-hour minimum each. In this sense, AA has been paying interpreters 1/4 their worth for years. They have been doing this service out

of their sense of humanity and their hearts. These interpreters also have full-time work and possibly develop body pain (carpal tunnel syndrome) because of the stress to do an accurate Interpretation for the deaf alcoholic.) We have done the research and have found that Deaf Community Services here in San Deigo, pay rates are as follow:

Weekdays Rates - M-F

Day \$75/ hr - 7-5 pm

Night \$85/hr - 5-8pm

Overnight \$95/hr -

Weekend Rates

Day \$85/hr - 7-5pm

Night \$95/hr - 5-10pm

Overnight \$105/hr

Special services for the Deaf-Blind, Legal, Trilingual, Last-mintue and Holiday add an extra \$20.00 per hour.

Tradition 8 states, " Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our services centers may employ special workers.

I want to share quotes from:

The AA Group,Where it all Begins, p. 30-31

“LET US NEVER FEAR NEEDED CHANGE. CERTAINLY, WE HAVE TO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN CHANGES FOR THE WORSE AND CHANGES FOR THE BETTER, BUT ONCE A NEED BECOMES CLEARLY APPARENT, IN AN INDIVIDUAL, A GROUP, OR AA AS A WHOLE, WE CANNOT STAND STILL AND LOOK THE OTHER WAY. THE ESSENCE OF GROWTH IS WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER AND THEN AN UNREMITTING WILLINGNESS TO SHOULDER THE RESPONSIBILITY.” (BILL W., 1965, GRAPEVINE)

Self support pamphlets. Where Money and Spirituality & Money Mix

While the Fellowship has always faced problems of money, property and prestige in one form or an- other, through the wisdom of the Seventh Tradition we have never been diverted from our primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers — wherever he or she may be. This is the fundamental work of Alcoholics Anonymous, and to ensure that the hand of AA will always remain outstretched, money and spirituality must continue to mix. And for that, we are all responsible.

Every AA group is a spiritual entity, and the AA fellowship is a spiritual fellowship-not an organization. Trusting God and praying have been a part of our journey every step of the way. We want to provide services to all we can and carry the AA message to Deaf and Hard of Hearing alcoholic.

The Accessibilities Committee would like to make a motion to increase the pay rate from \$50 an hour to \$65 an hour for ASL Interpretation.

Thank you,

Jeffery,

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