The National Consortium
of Interpreter Education Centers

Phase I Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment

Final Report

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE
NATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INTERPRETER EDUCATION CENTERS (#H160A&B)
BY DENNIS COKELY & ELIZABETH WINSTON, NIEC
SEPTEMBER 2008

Foreword

The National Consortium of Interpreting Education Centers (NCIEC) is authorized and funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), U.S. Department of Education. Through grants awarded by the Department, the National Interpreter Education Center (NIEC) and five Regional Interpreter Education Centers (RIECs) that comprise the Consortium are working collaboratively to increase the number of qualified interpreters nationwide and ensure that quality interpreter education opportunities and products are available across the country.

A primary requirement of the NCIEC grants is to conduct ongoing activities to identify needs in the field of interpreter education. This report has been prepared based on the findings and conclusions of a national needs assessment specifically designed and carried out to assess the needs of deaf consumers across the country. This Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment Final Report is submitted by the NCIEC on behalf of the NIEC and the five RIECs. The report provides an overview of the needs assessment process, discussion of primary assessment findings, and presentation of conclusions and next steps for responding to those findings.

Acknowledgements

This report is submitted by by Dr. Dennis Cokely, Associate Director and Dr. Betsy Winston, Director, National Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University (NIEC), with extensive help and input from:

- Sarah Snow, Lillian Garcia, NIEC
- Karen Dahms, Scott Musich, External Consultants: NIEC

We also wish to extend special thanks to the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Center Directors and staff of the:

- National Interpreter Education Center at Northeastern University
- Northeastern University Regional Interpreter Education Center
- Gallaudet University Regional Interpreter Education Center
- CATIE Center at the College of St. Catherine
- Mid-America Regional Interpreter Education Center
- Western Region Interpreter Education Center

We gratefully acknowledge the help and support of NAD, and most importantly, of all the consumers who responded to the survey. Without their active participation, this Needs Assessment would not have been possible.

Table of Contents

National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers
Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment
Phase I Report

Executive Summary

The National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC) is authorized and funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), U.S. Department of Education. The Consortium is comprised of the National Interpreter Education Center and five Regional Interpreter Education Centers. Since its inception, the NCIEC has been working on a number of national initiatives, one of which has been the design, development and implementation of needs assessment activities. The objectives of the needs assessment activities are to identify current and future needs of interpreter education programs, interpreter educators, interpreters and consumers of interpreter services. This report, the **Phase I Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment Report,** serves as a starting point for understanding the current and projected needs of deaf consumers as they relate to the availability, quality and overall use of interpreter services.

The Phase I Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment effort was designed as only the first in a series of on-going activities planned by NCIEC to collect input from deaf consumers. Upon recommendation by its external evaluators, it was agreed that the Phase I effort would target just those deaf consumers that could be easily reached through an electronic survey, a data collection tool used successfully in the previous needs assessment efforts. Therefore, the Phase I effort centered on design and dissemination of a survey instrument, developed by the NCIEC through a collaborative process that included opportunities for input and feedback on the part of content experts and stakeholders in the field of interpreter services. The survey was disseminated electronically to deaf consumers through the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) eZine membership list. That survey effort was completed in March 2008. The survey instrument was also distributed to and collected on-site from participants of the ASL Festival at Northeastern University in April of 2008. Through those efforts, 1,250 completed surveys were collected from deaf consumers. Again, the Phase I effort was intended by its design to reach only a small segment of the nation’s deaf population.

The Phase II needs assessment activities will be carried out through the conduct of interview and focus group sessions with additional targeted segments of the nation’s deaf consumer population. The NCIEC will work closely with agencies and programs serving deaf populations (e.g. independent living centers and other groups), in each of its five regions to identify deaf individuals who were unlikely to have been reached by the electronic survey to participate in those planned sessions. The consumer selection process will be carefully carried out to ensure that the input gathered through Phase II is appropriately representative of the nation’s deaf population with respect to gender, race and ethnic background, prevalence of other disabilities, academic and work status, and geographic location. Two to three focus group sessions will be conducted in each of the

Consortium's five regions, and will include up to ten consumers in each session. Follow-up interviews with additional consumers will be conducted as needed to further understand issues and information uncovered during Phase I effort and the Phase II focus group sessions.

The information collected and analyzed through the Phase I effort is being used in two primary ways. First, information collected through the initial project phase is assisting NCIEC in identifying and involving those additional segments of the deaf population not effectively addressed by the Phase I survey in the subsequent Phase II activities, and is informing the design and delivery of those activities. In addition, identifying and assessing the needs of the segment of deaf population participating in the Phase I effort provides a basic foundation for understanding the needs of the more 'grassroots' segments of the deaf population. Simply stated, if the consumers participating in the Phase I effort identify problems and issues related to the availability, quality and use of interpreter services, it can be extrapolated that the overall population would likely experience the same problems, but to a much greater degree.

The remainder of this report is organized into two primary sections. Section I presents broad and detailed findings identified through a comprehensive analysis of the 1,250 Phase I survey instruments. Section II presents recommendations to the NCIEC for responding to those findings, as well as recommendations designed to instruct Phase II Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment activities.

I. Phase I Needs Assessment Findings

This section of the report provides a detailed description of findings related to each question posed by the Phase I deaf consumer survey instrument. Findings are organized into a number of sub-categories based on the type and range of data collected through the survey and the results of the analysis process.

The first category of findings reports basic information about the 1,250 survey respondents, including respondent characteristics and demographics, as well as data related to respondent academic and work status. The next category of findings reports information related to respondents' preferred or primary means of communication. Following that information, findings are related to the respondent use of interpreter services, specifically, prevalence of use, and extent to which interpreter services are available to meet needs. The survey also captured a number of important information regarding the various settings in which consumers use interpreter services. Findings in this area include settings identified by respondents as most important for services, and information related to the availability of interpreter services within specific settings.

The findings section also reports on respondent perceptions of interpreter characteristics and qualifications. Specifically, this category of findings reports on respondent perceptions regarding interpreter certification, interpreter ethnicity, and interpreter knowledge to perform the job, including whether interpreters possess specialized knowledge to work in specific settings. In addition, the survey also collected a range of information regarding respondent satisfaction with interpreter services. Findings in this regard include overall satisfaction, respondent comfort level in working with interpreters, and perceptions about interpreter attitude and respect for respondent privacy. Finally, the last section of findings present data related to respondent use of Video Relay Services (VRS), and general respondent opinions regarding the extent to which interpreter education programs are currently available nationwide.

A. Information about Respondents

This first category of findings presents specific demographic and other descriptive information about the Phase I survey respondent pool. As discussed in the Executive Summary, this initial needs assessment effort only sought to obtain feedback from a discrete segment of the deaf consumer population. Therefore, as a reminder, the respondents to this survey effort are viewed by NCIEC as representative of only a small segment of the overall deaf population. Findings related to the demographics and characteristics of the Phase I survey respondent pool will be used to: 1) understand the needs of this particular segment of the overall population, 2) establish at least one parameter for understanding national issues and challenges, and 3) to identify other segments of the nation's deaf consumer population not adequately covered by the Phase I effort to ensure their inclusion in the Phase II activities.

Respondent Identification

In the survey, respondents were asked to identify themselves as either: deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind. They were also provided an "Other" selection option. Responses to that question in the survey are presented on Table 1 below.

Respondent Self-Identification Table 1		
Self Identification	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Deaf	1036	83%
Hard of Hearing	121	10%
Deaf-blind	20	2%
Cochlear Implant	2	0%
Other	3	0%
No response	68	5%
Total	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The majority of respondents, or 83%, identified themselves as "Deaf". Only 10% of respondents identified themselves as "Hard of hearing" and 2% as "Deaf-blind". As discussed earlier in the report, this data as well as the other demographic information learned through the Phase I effort will be used to inform the Phase II effort and will serve as a basis for targeting specific segments of the population not adequately represented in this first effort – for example the hard of hearing and deaf-blind consumer groups.

Respondent Gender

The survey also collected information regarding respondent gender. Responses are presented on Table 2.

Respondent Gender Table 2		
Gender	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Female	767	61%
Male	483	39%

Finding: The majority of survey respondents, or 61%, are female. Once again, this information will be instructive not only with regard to understanding the pool of Phase I respondents, but for targeting deaf consumers to participate in the Phase II activities.

Respondent Age

The survey also queried respondents with regard to their age. Six age ranges were provided as possible selection options. Responses are presented on Table 3.

Respondent Age Table 3		
Average Age	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
21 - 30 years old	170	14%
31 - 40 years old	267	21%
41 - 50 years old	321	26%
51 - 60 years old	272	22%
61 - 70 years old	133	11%
70+	82	7%
No response	5	0%
Total	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Of the total 1,250 respondents, 83% fall between the ages of 21 and 60 and thus comprise a subset of the deaf population most likely to be employed, and perhaps equally likely to have work-related interpreting needs. Looking at the reported percentages more closely, 66% of respondents reported they are over the age of 40. This information, as with the other respondent characteristic and demographic data, is being be used by NCIEC as a foundation for selecting consumers to participate in the Phase II activities, for example, increasing participation of those consumers under the age of 40, and targeting some collection activities to consumers that may be enrolled as students (17-21 age range).

Respondent Race and Ethnicity

The survey also sought to determine the race or ethnic background of survey respondents by using the U.S. Census demographic categories. Responses are presented on Table 4.

Ethnic or Racial Background Table 4		
Race/Ethnicity	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
European American/White/Caucasian	1035	83%
Latina/o/Hispanic	56	4%
Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native	33	3%
African-American/Black	30	2%
Asian American	18	2%
Pacific Islander	3	0%
Prefer not to answer	51	4%
Other, please specify	13	1%
No response	11	1%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Most of the survey respondents, or 83% of the total respondents, identified themselves as “European American/White/Caucasian”. This finding further contributes to the notion that the Phase I effort only targeted a specific subset of the deaf population, and that Phase II activities must seek to increase participation of deaf consumers from culturally diverse ethnic or racial backgrounds. In addition, accompanying comments made in response to this question in the survey indicated that a number of respondents disagreed with the way the selection options were phrased, or felt the question was “offensive” and should not have been asked.

Respondent Academic Status

The survey asked respondents to indicate their highest level of completed education. Information reported by respondents is presented on Table 5.

Highest Level of Completed Education Table 5		
Education Level	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
1st - 5th grade	2	0%
6th - 8th grade	10	1%
High school	262	21%
AA/AS	225	18%
BA/BS	359	29%
MA/PhD	391	31%
No response	1	0%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The Phase I pool of survey respondents is highly educated, with 78% of the respondents having achieved an undergraduate or graduate degree. Of those, 29% reported they possessed a BA/BS degree and 31% reported they possessed a graduate degree.

This high level of academic achievement further points to the need to expand the Phase II data collection activities to include deaf consumers that have not achieved this level of academic accomplishment. However, the information collected from the Phase I segment is extremely useful. It might be assumed that those who are more educated are not only better able to advocate for their right to an interpreter, but are also more knowledgeable about how to secure the services of an interpreter. Thus, if this subset of highly educated consumers identifies problems and/or needs related to the availability, quality and use of interpreters, it can be reasonably expected that those needs and problems will also be experienced by the larger population, likely to a far greater extent.

Respondent Work Status

An open-ended question in the survey asked respondents to list their current job/career. Because of the open-ended nature of the question, responses varied widely. In order to best analyze and compare responses, five primary categories of job/career were established:

- Academic professional (includes professor, teacher, school administrator or employee of an academic institution
- Business professional (includes lawyer, doctor, consultant, business owner)
- Hourly workforce
- Student
- Not currently working

Table 6 organizes and presents survey responses in those broad categories.

Respondent Job/Career Table 6		
Type of Job/Career	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Academic professional	337	27%
Business professional	267	21%
Hourly workforce	160	13%
Not working	152	12%
Student	62	5%
No response	272	22%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Based on responses collected through the survey, 61% of respondents reported they are currently working, with the largest percentage, or 27%, holding academic-related jobs. Another 21% of respondents were counted in the business professional category, and 13% as hourly employees. Only 5% are currently enrolled as students, and 12% reported they are not currently working.

It must also be noted that 22% of respondents did not answer this question.

B. Respondent Means of Communication

The survey asked respondents to identify their preferred or primary means of communication. Table 7 presents responses to that question.

Respondent Preferred/Primary Means of Communication Table 7		
Communication Method	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
ASL	883	71%
Signed English	84	7%
Cued Speech	80	7%
Oral	42	3%
Contact signing (PSE/Pidgin)	27	2%
Total Communications	9	0%
Tactile ASL	2	0%
Tactile Signed English	3	0%
Finger spelling	3	0%
Writing	2	0%
Other, please specify	102	8%
No response	13	1%
Total	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The majority of respondents, or 71%, reported they preferred ASL, or used ASL as their primary means of communication. The next highest response options were “Signed English” and “Cued Speech”, each selected by 7% of respondents. The level of response related to “Cued Speech” is interesting as it indicates a higher level of use than has been reported in other related surveys, and should be examined further in future efforts.

In addition, there were 102 responses in the ‘Other’ category. Looking at comments made in that category, it was discovered that most respondents selecting that option identified more than one means of communication as primary or preferred, in some cases listing three to four different means of communication in no priority order. As the question asked respondents to list the single, preferred or primary means of communication, these responses could not be assigned a single communication category.

C. Use of Interpreters and Interpreter Services

This section of findings presents an array of information related to obtaining interpreter services, frequency with which respondents request interpreter services or have difficulty obtaining those services, and respondent perceptions regarding the use of Deaf Interpreters (DI) and Video Relay Services (VRS).

Obtaining Interpreter Services

In the survey respondents were asked to indicate if they know how to get an interpreter when they need one. Responses to that question are presented on Table 8.

Respondent Ability to Obtain Interpreter Services Table 8		
Type of Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Yes	1112	89%
No	108	9%
No response	30	2%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Most respondents reported they know how to get interpreter services when they need them. Of the 1,250 survey respondents, 89% reported that they know how to obtain interpreter services and only 9% of respondents reported they did not.

Frequency of Interpreter Use

Respondents were asked how many times during an average month they typically used interpreter services. Responses to that question are presented on Table 9.

Frequency Interpreter Services Used Table 9		
Frequency per month	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
0 times	114	9%
1 - 3 times	405	32%
4 - 6 times	233	19%
7 - 9 times	111	9%
10 - 12 times	94	8%
13 - 15 times	37	3%
15+ times	246	20%
No response	10	1%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The highest number of respondents reported they used interpreter services between "1-3 times" per month, or 32% of the total survey respondents. It is interesting that the second highest reported level of use was 20% of respondents reporting they used interpreter services more than 15 times per month. The next was 19% of respondents, who reported they used interpreter services "4-6 times" per month.

Respondents were also asked to report how many times during an average month they want interpreter services but can't get them. That information is reported on Table 10.

Frequency Interpreter Services Wanted but Unavailable Table 10		
Frequency per month	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
0 times	340	27%
1 - 3 times	556	44%
4 - 6 times	188	15%
7 - 9 times	67	5%
10 - 12 times	28	2%
13 - 15 times	10	1%
15+ times	39	3%
No response	22	2%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: It is concerning that such a high number of respondents reported they wanted interpreter services "1-3 times" per month, but were unable to obtain those services. In that frequency category, 556 respondents reported they were unable to secure services. The next highest category in which respondents reported that interpreter services were unavailable was "4-6 times" per month, in which 188 respondents reported services were wanted but unavailable.

Use of Deaf Interpreters

Respondents were asked whether or not they would like to use deaf interpreters. Table 11 presents responses to that question.

Respondents Feelings about use of Deaf Interpreters Table 11		
Type of Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Yes	218	17%
No	574	46%
Doesn't Matter	397	32%
No Response	61	5%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Of total respondents, 46% reported they prefer not to utilize deaf interpreter services. In addition, 32% reported it didn't matter to them whether they used deaf interpreter services. Only 17% of respondents reported they would like to utilize deaf interpreter services.

Respondents were also asked to report on those settings in which they have or have not used deaf interpreters over the past year. Respondents had the option of selecting more than one setting. Table 12 presents responses to that question organized in order of setting in which most respondents **have** used deaf interpreter services over the past year.

Settings Deaf Interpreters Used Table 12				
Interpreting Setting	**Yes**		**No**	
My work/job	385	31%	673	54%
Conferences	353	31%	656	52%
Health	300	24%	727	58%
School	274	22%	730	58%
Entertainment	247	20%	712	57%
Religious services	245	20%	731	59%
Daily Business	186	15%	779	62%
Legal needs	184	15%	774	62%
Social Services	160	13%	800	64%
Voc rehab	123	10%	826	66%
Mental health	113	10%	823	66%

Finding: Across the board, more respondents have not used deaf interpreter services than have in any of the settings identified by the survey. For those respondents that report they have used deaf interpreters, the two settings with the most responses are both work-related. Specifically, 385 respondents reported they have used deaf interpreters at work/job, and 353 respondents reported they have used deaf interpreter services at conferences. Looking at the reported data more broadly, it can be stated that no more than 31% of respondents have used deaf interpreters in any of the settings identified by the survey. By comparison, more than 50% of all respondents reported they have not used deaf interpreter services in any of the settings identified by the survey instrument.

Future data collection and needs assessment activities should include questions regarding the use of Deaf Interpreters to understand why so many respondents reported they do not want to use Deaf Interpreter services, and to learn whether the perceptions are the same among other subsets of the deaf population.

Use of Video Relay Services

The survey included several questions related to respondent use of Video Relay Services (VRS). The first question asked respondents to indicate whether or not they use VRS. Responses are presented on Table 13.

Respondent Use of Video Relay Service Table 13		
Type of Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Yes	1001	80%
No	210	17%
No Response	39	3%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The majority of Phase I survey respondents use VRS, with 80% of respondents reporting they use VRS, and only 17% reporting they do not.

The survey also asked respondents to indicate whether they believe VRS has made it more difficult for them to obtain 'live' interpreter services to fill their community interpreting needs. Table 14 presents responses to that question.

VRS Has Made it Difficult to Obtain 'Live' Interpreters Table 14		
Type of Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Yes	557	45%
No	222	18%
Don't know	436	35%
No Response	35	2%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The highest response category was "Yes" with 45% of respondents reporting they believe that VRS has made it more difficult for them to obtain 'live' interpreters to fulfill their interpreting needs. Only 18% of responses fell into the "No" selection options, and 35% of respondents reported they "Don't know."

D. Interpreting Settings

Phase I survey respondents were asked to identify the single setting in which it was most important for them to have interpreter services. Table 15 captures that reported information, organized in order of the settings respondents reported as most important.

Settings Identified as Most Important for Interpreter Services Table 15		
Interpreting Setting	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
My work/job	438	35%
Health	256	20%
School	141	11%
Conferences	76	6%
Daily business	55	4%
Religious services	48	4%
Legal	34	3%
Social services	20	2%
Mental health	15	1%
Entertainment	7	1%
Vocational rehabilitation	6	0%
Other, please describe	117	9%
No response	37	3%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The setting identified by the highest number of respondents as most important was "My work/job", with 35% of respondents selecting that option on the survey. The next two highest response categories were "Health" (20% of respondents) and "School" (11% of respondents). That "School" ranked third in order of importance is somewhat surprising considering only 5% of survey respondents reported they were a student (see Table 6). However, in other open-ended questions in the survey, a number of respondents expressed the need to have interpreter services available at their child's school-related meetings and/or activities. These needs likely contribute to the 11% of responses in the "School" option.

In looking more closely at the 117 respondents that selected the "Other" option, it was determined that 66 of those respondents indicated through their comments that more than one setting was important to them, and therefore it was impossible for them to select only one. Most of those respondents listed 3-4 settings as important in no priority order. In addition, in the "Other" category, 15 respondents reported that community events/meetings were the most important settings for interpreter services. The remaining 36 comments in the "Other" category could not be effectively aggregated or compared.

It is expected that information collected from other more diverse segments of the deaf population in Phase II will point to other settings as most important. One area of particular note is Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), with only 6 respondents selecting this setting as most important. It may be that the demographics of the current respondents are such that they have little or no contact with vocational rehabilitation agencies or services, and thus no need for interpreting services in that setting.

The survey also asked respondents to identify the settings in which they found it most difficult to obtain interpreter services over the past year. That information is presented on Table 16. Respondents were not limited to selecting one setting. Therefore, the number of responses to the question exceeds the number of survey respondents as many respondents identified more than one setting.

Settings Identified as Difficult for Securing Interpreter Services
Table 16

Interpreting Setting	# of Responses	% of Respondents
Health	594	48%
My work/job	527	42%
Conferences	349	28%
Entertainment	309	25%
Religious services	262	21%
Legal	248	20%
School	244	20%
Daily business	220	18%
Social services	216	17%
Mental health	113	9%
Voc rehab	73	6%
Other	135	11%

Finding: The two settings respondents identified as the most difficult to obtain interpreter services in are “Health”, identified by 48% of respondents, and “Work/job”, identified by 42% of respondents. Although these are the two settings with the highest response rates, it is troublesome to note the high number of responses in most of the setting categories. The concern is that if the segment of the deaf population represented by the Phase I respondent pool, (discovered in the analysis to be highly educated and working), report such difficulty obtaining interpreter services across so many settings, other segments of the deaf population are likely to experience difficulties to a much more significant degree. This information provides direct evidence to support issues and concerns related to the current national shortage of qualified interpreters.

Further assessing data reported in this portion of the survey, the 135 responses in the “Other” category were examined more closely. In assessing those responses, there were a few similarities. Of the 135 responses in that category, 19 respondents reported they have no difficulty obtaining interpreter services. Other settings identified by respondents as difficult for obtaining interpreter services were: community events (17 respondents); workshops and training classes (14 respondents); child’s school activities (9 respondents); family events (8 respondents); funerals (7 respondents), and recreational activities and events (3 respondents). The remaining comments could not be aggregated or compared.

The survey analysis included a comparison of the settings identified by respondents as 'most important' for interpreting services with those settings identified by respondents as 'most difficult' to obtain interpreter services. A one-to-one comparison is impossible as respondents were limited to selecting one setting as the 'most important', but could select more than one setting as 'most difficult.' However, it is interesting to note the differences in the ranking of settings. Table 17 provides the rank order of settings by 'most important' and 'most difficult' for obtaining services.

Settings Services Most Needed Compared to Those Most Difficult for Securing Services Table 17			
Setting	**Services Most Needed**	**Setting**	**Settings Most Difficult**
My work/job	438	Health	594
Health	256	My work/job	527
School	141	Conferences	349
Conferences	76	Entertainment	309
Daily business	55	Religious services	262
Religious services	48	Legal	248
Legal	34	School	244
Social services	20	Daily business	220
Mental health	15	Social services	216
Entertainment	7	Mental health	113
Voc Rehab	6	Voc rehab	73

Finding: It is interesting that the top two settings identified by the highest number of respondents as 'most important' ("My work/job" and "Health") were also the two settings respondents identified as 'most difficult' ("Health" and "My work/job") for obtaining interpreter services.

E. Interpreter Characteristics and Qualifications

Respondents were asked a number of questions regarding their perceptions of interpreter characteristics and qualifications. Specifically, this category of findings reports on respondent perceptions regarding interpreter certification and ethnicity, interpreter knowledge to perform the job, including whether interpreters possess specialized knowledge to work in specific settings.

Interpreter Certification

Respondents were asked to indicate whether it was important to them that the interpreter providing services was certified. Table 18 presents information collected from the respondents in this regard.

Importance of Interpreter Certification Table 18		
Frequency	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Always	640	51%
Often	360	29%
Sometimes	149	12%
Seldom	16	1%
Doesn't Matter	59	5%
No response	26	2%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: The majority of Phase I respondents place value on interpreter certification. For more than 50% of the survey respondents, interpreter certification was reported as "Always" important; another 29% of respondents reported that it is "Often" important.

Interpreter Ethnicity

Respondents were asked how important it is to them that the interpreter providing services is from their own ethnic group. Responses are presented on Table 19.

Importance of Interpreter Ethnicity Table 19		
Importance	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Always	116	9%
Often	110	9%
Sometimes	154	12%
Seldom	92	7%
Doesn't Matter	746	60%
No response	32	3%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Interpreter race or ethnicity is not important to most of the Phase I survey respondents. For 60% of those respondents, the ethnicity of the interpreter providing services "Doesn't matter." Only 9% of respondents reported that ethnicity is "Always" important, and another 9% that it is "Often" important. It will be interesting to compare this data, as reported by a respondent pool that is 83% "European American/White/Caucasian" (Table 4), with data collected from the more diverse consumer groups to be included in the Phase II needs assessment activities.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which the interpreters providing service "Know what they are doing." Responses are presented on Table 20.

Interpreters Know What They Are Doing Table 20		
Satisfaction level	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Always	426	36%
Often	494	41%
Sometimes	240	20%
Seldom	34	3%
Doesn't matter	6	1%

Finding: The highest number of survey responses fell into the "Often" category with 41% of respondents reporting that interpreters 'Often know what they are doing.' The second highest category "Always" with 36% of responses, followed by "Sometimes" with 20% of responses reported.

Respondents were also asked to report whether they believed that interpreters providing services had the specialized knowledge required to work in specific settings, or whether it mattered whether the interpreter had specialized knowledge of a particular setting. Table 21 presents both the number of responses for each option, as well as the percentage of respondents that selected that option. The settings are organized in order of those that received the most responses in the "Yes" category.

Believe that Interpreters Have Specialized Knowledge for the Setting Table 21						
Interpreting Setting	**Yes**		**No**		**Doesn't Matter**	
Health	878	70%	114	9%	115	9%
My work/job	843	67%	110	9%	170	14%
Legal	842	67%	106	9%	75	6%
School	786	63%	105	8%	121	10%
Conferences	736	59%	131	10%	183	15%
Mental Health	683	55%	115	9%	151	12%
Social services	616	49%	136	11%	249	20%
Daily Business	565	45%	153	12%	274	22%
Religious Services	558	45%	146	12%	291	23%
Voc rehab	523	42%	124	10%	295	24%
Entertainment	513	41%	166	13%	300	24%

Finding: Responses to this question clearly indicated that the majority of respondents felt that interpreters had specialized knowledge of the specific setting needed to do their jobs. More than 50% of all survey respondents reported that interpreters had the specialized knowledge to perform their job effectively in the following settings: health settings (70%); work/job (67%); legal settings (67%); school (63%); at conferences (59%), and in mental health settings (55%). Likewise, it is positive to note the relatively low numbers of respondents that reported that interpreters do not have the specialized knowledge to perform effectively in specific settings, with no more than 13% selecting that option for any one setting. It is also interesting to note the low response rates in the "Doesn't Matter" category, which can be in fact interpreted to mean that it **does in fact matter** to most respondents that interpreters have specialized knowledge of a specific setting. Based on this interpretation of the data, the settings in which it most matters that interpreters have specialized knowledge are (in order): legal, health, school and mental health settings.

F. Respondent Satisfaction with Interpreter Services

The survey included a number of questions designed to assess respondent satisfaction with the interpreter services they receive. These questions related to overall satisfaction; respondent comfort level with the interpreters providing services; extent to which interpreters serving them ensure and protect privacy, and perceptions regarding interpreter attitudes and understanding of deafness and deaf culture.

Overall Satisfaction

The survey included a broad question that asked respondents to rank their level of overall satisfaction with the interpreter services they receive. Responses are presented on Table 22.

Respondent Overall Satisfaction with Interpreter Services
Table 22

Satisfaction level	# of Responses	% of Respondents
Always	143	11%
Often	627	50%
Sometimes	365	29%
Seldom	65	5%
Doesn't Matter	15	1%
No response	35	3%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Only 11% of respondents reported they are "Always" satisfied with the interpreter services they receive. Another 50% report they are "Often" satisfied, and 29% only "Sometimes" satisfied with services. Looking at the data another way, 34% of respondents reported they are "Sometimes" or "Seldom" satisfied with the services they receive. Future data collection activities should include questions designed to further understand specific issues and root causes contributing to consumer dissatisfaction with interpreter services. This information could be particularly useful to instruct and guide Interpreter Education Programs in the training and education they provide students to prepare them for work with consumers.

Respondent/Interpreter Comfort Level

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they establish a comfort level with the assigned interpreter and can understand and communicate fully. Responses to that survey question are presented on Table 23.

Respondent Comfort Level with Interpreter Table 23		
Frequency	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Always	568	45%
Often	475	38%
Sometimes	159	13%
Seldom	11	1%
Doesn't Matter	4	0%
No response	33	3%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Most respondents reported they were able to establish a comfort level with the assigned interpreter and were able to understand and communicate fully, with 45% of respondents selecting the "Always" option, and another 38% the "Often" option. In addition, 14% of respondents reported they "Sometimes" or "Seldom" establish a comfort level with the interpreter providing service. Future data collection activities should include questions designed to further understand issues and causes contributing to consumer responses to this question. This information could be particularly useful to instruct and guide Interpreter Education Programs in the training and education they provide students to prepare them for work with consumers.

Respondent Privacy

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they felt the interpreter providing services respected and ensured their privacy. Responses are presented on Table 24.

Interpreter respects and ensures Respondent Privacy Table 24		
Type of Response	**# of Responses**	**% of Respondents**
Always	513	41%
Often	431	34%
Sometimes	205	16%
Seldom	44	4%
Doesn't matter	9	1%
No response	48	4%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: Once again, the findings are overall positive. Of the total respondents, 41% reported they “Always” feel that the interpreters providing them services protect and ensure their privacy, and another 34% reported they ‘Often” do. Of the total respondents, 54% reported they are “Often”, “Sometimes” or “Seldom” satisfied with the level of confidentiality exhibited by the interpreter. Again, future data collection activities should include questions designed to further understand issues contributing to consumer perceptions in this regard. This information could be particularly useful to instruct and guide Interpreter Education Programs in the training and education they provide students to prepare them for work with consumers.

Interpreter Attitude and Understanding of Deafness

Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether the interpreters they work with have good attitudes toward deaf people. Responses are presented on Table 25.

Interpreter Attitudes Toward Deaf People
Table 25

Type of Response	# of Responses	% of Respondents
Always	449	36%
Often	525	42%
Sometimes	202	16%
Seldom	22	2%
Doesn’t matter	9	1%
No response	43	3%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: In response to this question, the highest percentage of responses fell into the “Often” category, with 42% of respondents reporting that interpreters they work with “Often have good attitudes toward deaf people”. Another 36% of respondents selected the “Always” option. Of the total respondents, 60% reported they are “Often”, “Sometimes” or “Seldom” satisfied with the attitude of the interpreter. Future data collection activities should include questions designed to further understand issues contributing to consumer perceptions in this area. This information could be particularly useful to instruct and guide Interpreter Education Programs in the training and education they provide students to prepare them for work with consumers

Respondents were also asked to report their perceptions regarding interpreter understanding of deaf and deaf-blind people and culture. Table 26 presents both the number of responses to that question and the percentage of overall respondents.

Interpreter Understanding of Deaf/Deaf-blind People and Culture Table 26				
Frequency	**Deaf People and Culture**		**Deaf-blind People and Culture**	
Always	335	27%	122	10%
Often	514	41%	172	14%
Sometimes	274	22%	238	19%
Seldom	46	4%	165	13%
Doesn't Matter	16	1%	33	1%
Doesn't apply	22	2%	405	32%
No response	43	3%	115	9%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: With regard to respondent perceptions of interpreter understanding of deaf people and culture, the highest response category was "Often" with 41% of respondents reporting that interpreters they work with "Often understand deaf people and deaf culture." The second highest response category was "Always" with 27% of respondents, followed by "Sometimes" with 22% of responses. Nearly half of the total respondents, or 47%, reported they are "Often", "Sometimes" or "Seldom" satisfied with interpreters' understanding of Deaf/Deaf-Blind people and Culture. Future data collection activities should include questions designed to further understand consumer perceptions in this regard. This information could be particularly useful to instruct and guide Interpreter Education Programs in the training and education they provide students to prepare them for work with consumers.

For the question regarding interpreter understanding of deaf-blind people and culture, the highest number of responses were in the "Doesn't apply" category, with 32% of respondents selecting that survey option. That response option aside, it is interesting to note the number of responses captured in the other selection options. As reported on Table 1, only 20 respondents as "Deaf-blind", so it is not clear how the perceptions of the other survey respondents (identified as either "Deaf" or "Hard of hearing") may have been formed with regard to interpreter understanding of deaf-blind people and culture. In future surveys and focus group sessions it is clear that questions regarding the deaf-blind population should be separated from those regarding the general deaf population.

Adequate Number of Interpreter Education Programs

One final question in the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they believe there are enough interpreter education programs available today. Responses are presented on Table 27.

Adequacy of Interpreter Education Programs Table 27		
Type of Response	**# of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Yes	282	23%
No	631	50%
No opinion	299	24%
No Response	38	3%
Total responses	**1250**	**100%**

Finding: This segment of deaf consumers appears to understand issues related to the shortage of Interpreter Education Programs. In the survey, 50% reported they do not believe there are enough Interpreter Education Programs available today, with only 23% reporting they believe there are enough of these programs in place.

This concludes the Findings section of the report. The next section provides broad recommendations for responding to the challenges and issues discovered in the analysis process, and specific recommendations for the Phase II Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment effort.

II. Recommendations - Phase II Needs Assessment

The recommendations provided below relate specifically to the conduct of the Phase II Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment effort. While the Phase I effort was intended to elicit the input of a particular segment of the nation's deaf population, careful design of the Phase II effort is critical to ensure input from a broader, more diverse range of consumer segments in order to be accurately representative of the nation's overall deaf population.

Recommendation 1: NCIEC should work closely with NAD to expand dissemination of the Phase I survey instrument to more of its members
The Phase I effort only reached a small portion of the NAD membership. NCIEC should work closely with NAD to expand future dissemination efforts. This should include a request that NAD send a separate, targeted email request to its members to participate in the electronic survey rather than merely listing the request in its monthly email listing.

Recommendation 2: Expand opportunities for participation of hard of hearing, deaf-blind and low-functioning deaf consumers
The Phase II Deaf Consumer Needs Assessment activities should be designed to include more participation on the part of hard of hearing and deaf-blind consumers. In the Phase I effort, only 10% of respondents identified themselves as hard of hearing and 1% as deaf-blind. Additional participation from these as well as other segments of the deaf population, such as the low-functioning deaf, is needed to make input truly representative of the nation's deaf population.

Recommendation 3: Involve equal numbers of male and female consumers
The majority of Phase I survey respondents, or 61%, were female. Phase II activities should seek to increase participation on the part of male consumers.

Recommendation 4: Expand the data collection process to target 'younger' consumers
In the Phase I survey, 66% of respondents reported they were over the age of 40. The Phase II effort should seek to increase involvement of consumers under the age of 40, and include activities to target consumers that may be recent high school graduates or enrolled as postsecondary students (the 17-21 age range).

Recommendation 5: Increase participation of consumers from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds
In the Phase I survey, 83% of respondents identified themselves as European American/White/Caucasian. Phase II activities should include significant opportunities for deaf consumers from culturally diverse ethnic or racial backgrounds to participate and provide input.

Recommendation 6: Identify strategies to involve consumers that have not achieved high levels of academic accomplishment

Of the Phase I pool of survey respondents, 78% reported they had a degree higher than high school; 29% reported they possessed a BA/BS degree and 31% reported they possessed a Masters or doctorates degree. Phase II data collection activities should be designed to obtain input from deaf consumers that have not achieved this level of academic accomplishment.

Recommendation 7: Obtain input from deaf consumers who are not currently employed

In the Phase I survey, 61% of respondents reported they had a job. The Phase II effort should seek to obtain input from consumers who are not working, and solicit input that will help in identifying barriers and challenges with regard to attaining and maintaining employment.

Recommendation 8: Solicit input from consumers who do not use ASL as their primary means of communication

The majority of Phase I survey respondents reported they used ASL as their primary means of communication. Phase II activities should seek input from consumers who prefer or use communication modes other than ASL.

Recommendation 9: Assess the extent to which other 'grassroots' segments of the population know how to obtain interpreter services when they need them

Most Phase I respondents, or 89%, reported they know how to get interpreter services when they need them. This statistic may not apply to other more 'grassroots' segments of the population. Phase II activities should seek to obtain specific input related to this issue and identify barriers and challenges related to attainment of interpreter services for the more diverse segments of the population.

Recommendation 10: Data collected regarding the use of Deaf Interpreters should be analyzed in conjunction with data collected through the Deaf Interpreter Survey

The Phase I deaf consumer survey included questions related to the use of deaf interpreters. This information should be further assessed and included in the analysis of the Deaf Interpreter Needs Assessment Survey. In addition, future data collection and needs assessment activities should include questions regarding the use of Deaf Interpreters to understand why such a high percentage of Phase I respondents reported they do not want to use Deaf Interpreter services, and to learn whether the perceptions are the same among those other subsets of the deaf population with less formal education.

Recommendation 11: Ensure the VR Needs Assessment allows for participation of deaf consumers as well as VR professionals

In the Phase I effort, only 6 out of 1,250 total respondents reported VR as the setting 'most important' for interpreting services. This indicates that only a very limited number of the Phase I respondent pool actively participate in the VR system. When conducting the VR needs assessment effort, plans should be made to obtain the input of deaf consumers as well as VR professionals.