

## Language Testing and Certification (LTC) Program Review

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is currently conducting a comprehensive review of its Language Testing and Certification (LTC) program. The LTC program was implemented in 1991 for the purposes of testing the language skills of its bilingual employees and contracted interpreters and translators. The program, including its policies and procedures, has not been updated in a number of years. The following provides a summary of LTC Program Review Project:

### Core Workgroups

#### Testing Tool-Contractor Testing

##### *Action Items -*

- Review and revise pretest materials.
- Review distribution policy for pretest materials.
- Review test development criteria for existing tests.
- Selection of test reviewers.
- Review test exercises.
- Review existing test content.
  - Purpose:
    - Update outdated terminology
    - Grammar review
    - Assess whether the content measures the “skills” needed.
  - Review tests in English. Tests to be reviewed:
    - Certificated Language Tests
      - Social Services Written (3 versions)
      - Social Services Oral (3 versions)
      - Medical Written (3 versions)
      - Medical Oral (3 versions)
    - Screening Language Tests
      - Social Services Written (3 versions)
      - Social Services Oral (3 versions)
      - Medical Written (3 versions)
      - Medical Oral (3 versions)
    - Translator Tests (3 versions)
  - Review Target Languages sections of tests (Cambodian, Chinese {Mandarin and Cantonese}, Korean, Lao, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese). Tests to be reviewed:
    - Certificated Language Social Services Written (3 versions)
    - Certificated Language Social Services Oral (3 versions)
    - Certificated Language Medical Written (3 versions)
    - Certificated Language Medical Oral (3 versions)

- Survey test evaluators.
- Survey users of service (by interview and/or written survey).
  - Do interpreters appear to be qualified/ethical in performing their duties (e.g., do staff/client comment, positive or negative, about services provided?).
  - Are translated documents accurate/understandable (e.g., do clients have a lot of questions about documents provided to them?).
- Survey test candidates after test (immediately after test or by written survey).
- Review of test passing percentages (i.e., what percentage of candidates are passing each type of test).
- Revise/update tests.
- External test validation.

## **Test Administration**

### *Action Items -*

- Review policies associated with test scheduling.
  - Assess testing locations.
  - Assess frequency of test availability.
  - Assess Automation of scheduling process.
- Evaluate testing timeframes.
  - First contact with LTC until distribution of Examination Manual/test application.
  - Receipt of application and payment until distribution of test appointment letter and pre-test materials.
  - Date of test until distribution of results.
  - Date of certification/qualification until receipt of certificate/letter of authorization.
- Test proctoring.
  - Review need for additional proctors.
  - Semi-annual or annual proctor meetings to discuss procedures/get proctor feedback.
  - Test version control. There are currently 3 versions of each type of test.
- Review time allotted for taking tests.
- Consider pre/post testing requirements.
- Review policy associated with test grading.
  - Evaluation criteria (grading forms)/weighting of points. Consider subjective vs. objective evaluation.
  - Evaluation guidelines (for each test type).
  - Policy on provisional qualification. How many are currently being used?
  - Grader qualification standards.
  - Determine the feasibility of multiple graders for each language.
  - Semi-annual or annual grader meetings to discuss grading procedures/get feedback regarding test content and quality of test candidates.
  - Is the current grading process and timeframe working?

- Examination Manual.
  - Update Examination Manual with changes made per this review.
- Alternative testing programs.
  - Formalize policy/criteria for acceptance of alternative testing programs.

### **Bilingual Employees**

#### *Action Items -*

- Draft new Bilingual Employee Policy.
  - Policy will establish requirements for the use and compensation of bilingual employees.
- Same Testing Tool and Test Administration actions outlined above for contractor testing.

### **Language Needs and Resources**

#### *Action Items -*

- Review of reports available through new LTC database.
- Consider coordination with Human Resources Division (HRD); have HRD database sync with LTC database (e.g., match available positions with certified bilingual employees (if possible with available resources)).
- Identification of interpreter/translation needs by location (and administration/division/office).
- Identification of interpreter/translator resources by location (and skills?).
- Interpreter/translator/bilingual employee recruitment.

### **LTC WAC Revision**

#### *Action Items -*

- Consider changes to program resulting from this review and update the WAC as appropriate.