NCIEC
Interpreting Practitioner
Needs Assessment

Final Report

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE
NATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INTERPRETER EDUCATION CENTERS (#H160A&B05)
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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 the first completed NCIEC national needs assessment. That assessment was specifically designed and carried out to assess the needs of interpreter practitioners. This Practitioner 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.

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National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers
Interpreting Practitioner Needs Assessment Report

I. Executive Summary

The National Interpreting Education Center (NIEC) is authorized and funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), U.S. Department of Education. In addition to the NIEC, grants were also awarded to five Regional Interpreter Education Centers (RIECs). Together, the six Centers have established the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (NCIEC). This collaborative approach to implementation of the RSA grants fosters Center-to-Center communication and coordination; better leveraging of available resources, and more effective stewardship of federal funds.

As a Consortium, the Centers have been working collaboratively over the past two years on a number of national initiatives. One of the primary focus areas has been on the design, development and implementation of needs assessment activities in key focus areas. The overall 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. Furthermore, the terms of the RSA grant require the National Interpreter Education Center to: "Conduct education needs assessments and, based on results, develop educational activities for delivery through the Regional Interpreter Education Centers." This report, the **Interpreting Practitioner Needs Assessment Report,** marks the first completed NCIEC needs assessment activity. A listing of other ongoing and planned NCIEC needs assessment activities is provided in Appendix 1.

The Interpreting Practitioner Needs Assessment was carried out through design, development and implementation of a survey instrument that was disseminated to interpreting practitioners nationwide. The survey instrument was developed by the NCIEC through a collaborative process that included extensive opportunities for input and feedback on the part of content experts and stakeholders in the field. The first draft instrument was piloted through the dissemination of hardcopy surveys at several regional meetings, and at the Conference of Interpreter Teachers (CIT) national conference in October of 2006. Through the pilot dissemination, 480 completed hardcopy surveys were collected. The survey instrument was then established in an electronic format and disseminated to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) membership list. Approximately 8,000 RID members received notification and invitation to complete the electronic survey. An additional 3,396 electronic surveys were completed through that effort. A hardcopy of the survey instrument is attached as Appendix 2 of this report.

The survey period concluded April 15, 2007, resulting in a total of 3,903 assessment responses. A report on the needs assessment process and preliminary results was presented by NCIEC at the RID Conference in August 2007. However, at that time only the 3,396 electronic submissions were available for analysis and reporting. This final report presents findings for the total 3,903 responses that were captured through the entire needs assessment process.

This report provides data and findings for the entire set of 3,903 survey responses. In addition, the report also relates findings to the percentage of time respondents actually spend interpreting. In one of the first questions in the survey instrument, respondents were asked to indicate the amount of time they are actively working as an interpreter. Of the 3,903 total responses, the percentage of time working as interpreters fell into the following distribution categories:

- 0% of time interpreting – 1%
- 1-10% of time interpreting – 6%
- 11-25% of time interpreting – 7%
- 26-50% of time interpreting – 7%
- 51-75% of time interpreting – 11%
- 76-100% of time interpreting – 68%

By far the largest subset of overall responses came from those individuals that spend the majority of their work week interpreting, or the 76-100% distribution category. Of the 3,903 total respondents completing the survey, 68% of respondents fall into this category. While it was paramount to understand the needs of this particular segment of respondents, the NCIEC also determined it was important to understand the needs of those individuals working more than half their time interpreting, which includes both the 51-75% and the 76-100% categories of respondents. For the purposes of this report, survey results were organized and analyzed based on these three composites of responses:

Composite 1	Reports on the entire set of 3,903 respondents that completed the survey
Composite 2	Reports on respondents that work more than 50% of their time interpreting, or 3,069 respondents, (includes Composite 3)
Composite 3	Reports on respondents that work more than 75% of their time interpreting, or 2,642 respondents

Throughout the report, data and findings specific to each of composite groups is presented, and where applicable, data is aggregated across the three composites.

This report is organized based on broad categories of respondent information and related findings as captured through the survey process. Section II of the report provides a detailed description of findings related to each of the questions posed by the survey instrument. The first category of findings provides basic information about the respondents, including how respondents classified themselves, if they currently or in the future plan to teach interpreting and/or ASL, and their membership in professional organizations. The next category of findings relates to interpreting languages and systems currently in use by respondents. Following that information, findings are provided related to the interpreting settings respondents are currently working in, and the kinds of settings they would seek to specialize in for the future. The survey also captured key information with regard to interpreter education. Findings in this section address specific aspects of interpreter education and delivery, both with regard to education respondents have had and value, and education they consider to prepare them for work in specific interpreter settings for the future. As well as capturing data related to interpreters, the survey also was designed to gather information about the characteristics of those consumers

respondents are interpreting for. Finally, the last section of findings presents data related to future needs and considerations identified through the survey process, including interpreter education and retirement plans.

Section III of the report provides a detailed set of conclusions related to each set of survey findings. A listing of broad conclusions is provided below.

- There are insignificant levels of variation across the three survey composite groups
- There appears to be disproportionate respondent membership in national organizations
- The interpreting language used most often by respondents is ASL/spoken English; the most often used interpreting system is Signed/Spoken English Transliteration
- There is a critical need for Spanish-speaking interpreters and interpreter education in third languages, especially Spanish
- Most respondents distribute their time interpreting across a variety of interpreter settings
- There are a significant number of interpreting settings in which few interpreters are currently providing services
- Post-secondary Education, medical, K-12 and legal settings were identified by respondents as preferred settings for future specialization
- Currently there are inadequate interpreter education opportunities available to respondents
- Interpreter education and training provided in the past perceived by respondents as having had the most impact on preparing interpreters to work in post-secondary, K-13, medical, signed transliteration and business settings
- Respondents identified legal, medical, mental health, VRS/VRI, post-secondary education, working with deaf-blind individuals and business as the priority education and training areas for the future
- Respondents would like to see a marked increase in mentoring related opportunities
- Respondents express willingness to participate in online educational activities
- Survey data provides evidence there will be more interpreters retiring from the field in the next ten years than entering it
- More than half of survey respondents plan to work toward a higher degree over the next ten years
- More interpreters will seek BA degrees than there are programs and educators available to offer those degrees
- A number of respondents have not attained national certification

A more detailed description of each conclusion is provided in Section III of the report, as well as linkages to the particular finding(s) in which it is rooted.

The final section of the report, Section IV, provides an overview of Next Steps for responding to needs assessment findings. To that end, completion of this report does not mark the end of the Interpreting Practitioner Needs Assessment process. Findings and results will now be utilized by NCIEC to develop interpreter education priorities, to identify, establish and implement effective practices, and to institute appropriate and relevant evaluation processes. In addition, the Consortium will also conduct follow-up needs assessment activities to identify future

practitioner needs, and determine the extent to which changed practices have improved outcomes in need areas identified by this process.

II. Needs Assessment Findings

As discussed in the Executive Summary, for the purposes of this report, survey results and findings have been organized and analyzed based on three composites of responses. A breakdown of each composite group is provided on Table 1 below.

Practitioner Survey Respondent Composites Table 1		
Composite	**Composite Characteristics**	**Number of Respondents**
Composite 1	All Respondents	3,903
Composite 2	Respondents working more than 50% of the time interpreting	3,069
Composite 3	Respondents working more than 75% of the time interpreting	2,642

Findings related to each composite group are organized the following categories:

- Basic information about respondents
- Interpreting languages and systems
- Interpreting settings
- Interpreter education
- Consumers served
- Future needs

Within each of these categories, actual survey data is provided as well as key information derived from assessing and analyzing that data.

a. Basic Information about Respondents

This section reports basic information about survey respondents. Specifically, findings related to how respondents classified themselves; if they currently or in the future plan to teach ASL or interpreting, and membership in professional organizations are provided in each of these areas for all three composite groups.

Respondent Classification

With regard to classification, respondents were asked to classify themselves according to four different criteria: professional (someone who is credentialed); pre-professional (more than one year working but is not yet credentialed); novice (less than one year following completion of an AA/AAS or BA/BS interpreter education program), and other (does not fit the above categories and is not a student).

Classification data for each of the three composite groups is provided on Table 2 below.

Respondent Classification Table 2			
Classification	**Composite 1**	**Composite 2**	**Composite 3**
Professional	79%	82%	83%
Pre-professional	15%	13%	13%
Novice	2%	2%	2%
Other	4%	0%	0%

Finding: The vast majority of respondents, (approximately 81% of respondents across all three composite groups), identified themselves as professional, defined by the instrument as someone who is credentialed. This finding, in addition to the earlier finding that 68% of respondents work more than 75% of their time interpreting, helps establish that by and large survey respondents are credentialed professionals working close to full time in interpreting.

ASL/Interpreting Teaching Status

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate whether they currently teach ASL or interpreting, and if they plan to teach ASL or interpreting in the future. Survey responses to those questions are provided below for each composite group.

Respondent Teaching Status in ASL and/or Interpreting Table 3			
Teaching Status	**Composite 1**	**Composite 2**	**Composite 3**
Currently teach ASL	15%	13%	12%
Plan to teach ASL in future	15%	15%	15%
Neither teach nor plan to teach ASL in future	68%	71%	72%
Currently teach interpreting	13%	11%	10%
Plan to teach interpreting in the future	20%	21%	22%
Neither teach nor plan to teach interpreting in future	65%	67%	67%
Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to system rounding and no responses.			

Finding: As Table 3 indicates, approximately 70% of respondents across the three composite groups neither teach nor plan to teach ASL in the future. In addition, about 66% of respondents in all three composite groups neither teach nor plan to teach interpreting in the future. This information is not particularly surprising given that 68% of survey respondents indicated they work more than 75% of their time interpreting, and therefore would have little time available to teach. This aside, if survey respondents are a true representation of the current pool of working interpreters, it is an important reminder that it will be critical to look outside that pool for tomorrow's interpreter educators.

Membership in Professional Organizations

Respondents were also asked to indicate membership in a professional organization related to deafness and/or interpreting. For all three composite groups, 97% of respondents indicated

they do belong to a professional organization related to deafness and/or interpreting, and 3% indicated they do not.

The survey also asked respondents if they were involved in a professional organization related to deafness and/or interpreting, to identify the particular organization(s). Because this question in the survey was open-ended, there was significant variation in how respondents responded. For example, many respondents identified only those national organizations they belonged to while others identified locally-based teams and committees they serve on. In addition, there were numerous errors related to spelling and entering information electronically that do not allow for accurate counting in the various categories. However, for the purposes of this report, queries were run on four prominent organizations: RID, National Association of the Deaf (NAD), CIT and American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA). That information is provided in Table 4 below.

Membership in Professional Organizations
Table 4

Respondent Membership	Composite 1	Composite 2	Composite 3
RID	3,143	2,523	2,198
NAD	771	596	513
CIT	153	87	65
ASLTA	123	75	57

Finding: Since the survey instrument was disseminated to the RID membership list, it should be assumed all respondents belong to RID. However, as Table 4 indicates, not all respondents indicated belonging to the organization. This is particularly evident in Composite 3. In fact, it is interesting to note differences with regard to membership in all four national organizations composite-to-composite. Comparisons between Composite 1, 2 and 3 appear to indicate that the more time an individual spends working in the field, the less likely they are to belong to the leading national organizations. However, it is important to remember that spelling and data entry errors occurring due to the open-ended format of this survey question contribute to some level of data inaccuracy.

It is also interesting to compare responses related to respondent teaching status (interpreting and ASL) to respondent membership in CIT and ASLTA.

Teaching Status vs. Membership in Professional Organizations
Table 5

Teaching Status/Membership	Composite 1	Composite 2	Composite 3
Teach Interpreting	13% (503)	11% (332)	10% (265)
CIT membership	31% (153)	26% (87)	25% (65)
Teach ASL	15% (599)	13% (390)	12% (307)
ASLTA membership	21% (123)	19% (75)	19% (57)

Finding: Across all three composite groups it is particularly interesting to note that there are significantly more interpreter and ASL teachers than there are identified CIT and ASLTA members. Looking just at Composite 1 as an example, while 503 respondents indicated they

currently teach interpreting, only 31% of respondents indicated they belong to CIT. Likewise, again looking only at Composite 1, while 599 respondents indicated they currently teach ASL, only 21% of respondents identified themselves as current members of ASLTA. These percentages drop further in Composites 2 and 3. For example, in Composite 3, while 265 individuals indicated they currently teach interpreting, only 25% of respondents indicated they belong to CIT, and while 307 respondents indicated they teach ASL, only 19% of respondents indicated membership in ASLTA. While it was noted earlier that it is easy to understand how respondents in Composite 3 would be less likely to teach either interpreting or ASL because of the amount of time they work as interpreters, it is surprising that membership in CIT and ASLTA also seem to fall off for this group. Again, it must be remembered that information regarding membership in these national organizations was gathered through an open-ended question which increases the possibility of data error and inaccuracy.

b. Interpreting Languages and Systems

The survey was specifically designed to capture detailed information regarding respondent use of the primary interpreting languages and systems. Table 6 below reports on the extent to which the primary interpreting languages are used by each of the three composites.

Breakdown of Primary Languages Used for Interpreting
Table 6

Composite 1						
Languages	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
ASL/spoken English	4%	4%	6%	15%	14%	56%
Other signed language/English	63%	6%	8%	11%	7%	5%
ASL/other spoken language	92%	4%	2%	1%	1%	0%
Other language combinations	93%	3%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Composite 2						
Languages	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
ASL/spoken English	3%	3%	6%	15%	15%	58%
Other signed language/English	63%	5%	8%	12%	7%	5%
ASL/other spoken language	92%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%
Other language combinations	93%	3%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Composite 3						
Languages	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
ASL/spoken English	3%	3%	5%	15%	15%	59%
Other signed language/English	64%	5%	8%	12%	7%	5%
ASL/other spoken language	92%	4%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Other language combinations	94%	3%	1%	1%	0%	1%

Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%.

Finding: As Table 6 indicates, there is little variation across the three composite groups in any of the language categories, with **ASL/spoken English** by far the most prevalent interpreting language in use. Looking at the three composites in aggregate, about 72% of respondents use ASL/spoken English more than 50% of the time, with 58% of those respondents using that language more than 75% of the time. The second most often used language identified was **Other signed language/English**. Again, looking at the percentages of the three composites in aggregate, approximately 47% of respondents identified they use Other signed language/English, although most of the language usage falls below the 50% of the time distribution category. By comparison, about 92% of respondents do not use **ASL/other spoken language**, and about 93% do not use **Other language combinations**.

The survey also queried respondents with regard to the systems they use for interpreting: Signed/Spoken English Transliteration, Oral Transliteration, Cued Transliteration and Other Language Transliteration. The extent to which each of these systems is currently in use by each of the three composite groups is reported in Table 7 below.

Breakdown of Systems Used for Interpreting
Table 7

Composite 1						
Systems	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Signed/Spoken English Transliteration	8%	5%	6%	9%	9%	63%
Oral Transliteration	82%	11%	3%	2%	1%	0%
Cued Transliteration	99%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Language Transliteration	94%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Composite 2						
Systems	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Signed/Spoken English Transliteration	6%	4%	6%	9%	9%	65%
Oral Transliteration	82%	12%	3%	2%	1%	0%
Cued Transliteration	98%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Language Transliteration	94%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Composite 3						
Systems	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Signed/Spoken English Transliteration	6%	4%	6%	9%	9%	66%
Oral Transliteration	82%	12%	3%	2%	1%	0%
Cued Transliteration	99%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other Language Transliteration	95%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%

Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%.

Finding: As Table 7 indicates, again there is little variation across the three composite groups. In all three groups Signed/Spoken English Transliteration is by far the interpreting system most used by respondents. Looking at the three composites in aggregate, nearly 74% of respondents

use Signed/spoken English transliteration more than 50% of the time; approximately 65% of respondents use the system more than 75% of the time. By comparison, 82% of respondents do not use Oral Transliteration; approximately 99% do not use Cued Transliteration, and about 94% do not use Other Language Transliteration.

The survey also asked respondents to identify the extent to which they interpret for individuals who are deaf-blind, deaf/hearing teams, or other consumer groups. Table 8 reports their responses.

Breakdown of Other Languages and Systems Used for Interpreting
Table 8

Composite 1						
Other Languages/Systems	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Individuals who are Deaf-blind	61%	33%	4%	1%	1%	1%
Deaf/hearing Teams	25%	17%	6%	4%	5%	43%
Other	76%	4%	2%	2%	3%	14%
Composite 2						
Other Languages/Systems	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Individuals who are Deaf-blind	59%	35%	4%	1%	0%	1%
Deaf/hearing Teams	23%	17%	6%	4%	5%	44%
Other	76%	4%	2%	2%	3%	14%
Composite 3						
Other Languages/Systems	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Individuals who are Deaf-blind	58%	35%	4%	1%	0%	1%
Deaf/hearing Teams	24%	18%	6%	4%	5%	44%
Other	76%	3%	2%	2%	3%	14%

Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%.

Finding: There is again little variation across the three composite groups. Viewing the three composite group percentages in aggregate, data indicates that few respondents are providing interpreting services for **Individuals who are Deaf-blind**, with about 59% of respondents providing no services to this population and about 34% spending only 1-10% of their time working with these consumers. This makes sense with regard to deaf-blind being a low incidence disability. With regard to work with **Deaf/hearing Teams**, approximately 44% of respondents work more than 75% of their time with Deaf/hearing Teams. Respondents were also provided an "Other" category. Interestingly, 14% of respondents in all three composite groups indicated they work more than 75% of their interpreting time with **Other** interpreting systems.

Later in the survey, respondents were asked to identify and rank the languages they use in order of most to least often. Because this question in the survey was open-ended, there was significant variation across responses. In addition, there were many errors related to spelling

and data entry that did not allow accurate counting across response sets. However, a few examples of responses related to languages identified follow:

ASL	SEE/SEE2	Signing Exact English	Pidgin/Pigeon
English	Arabic	Dysfluent	PSE/CASE
Contact	MCE	Manual English	Transliteration
Spanish	Tactile	BSL	Jewish
Signed English	Voice English	Spoken English	Gestural

Finding: The wide variation of responses to this question seems to indicate a lack of common terminology and definitions in the field, making it difficult to quantify responses across the various languages identified. In addition, the open-ended design of the survey question resulted in a large number of spelling and data entry errors further contributing to the difficulty with regard to quantifying and ranking responses in order to understand and track trends with regard to interpreting system and language usage.

c. Interpreting Settings

An important objective of the needs assessment process was to capture valid and reliable data related to the various settings in which interpreters are working. Respondents were asked to categorize their current interpreting work into the following interpreting settings: medical, K-12, post-secondary education, technical/vocational, business, social services, legal, mental health, religious, vocational rehabilitation and video relay services/video relay interpreting (VRS/VRI). Respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of time they currently work within each of these settings. Table 9 provides a breakdown of respondent time working in each setting for all three composite groups.

Current Distribution of Work in Interpreting Settings
Table 9

Composite 1						
Interpreting Settings	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Medical	43%	31%	15%	7%	4%	1%
K-12	56%	13%	4%	3%	8%	15%
Post-secondary Education	43%	20%	12%	9%	8%	8%
Technical/Vocational	67%	23%	6%	3%	1%	1%
Business	52%	28%	11%	5%	2%	2%
Social Services	58%	29%	9%	2%	1%	1%
Legal	76%	15%	5%	2%	1%	1%
Mental Health	66%	24%	7%	2%	1%	1%
Religious	67%	23%	6%	2%	1%	1%
Vocational Rehabilitation	72%	21%	4%	2%	1%	1%
VRS/VRI	68%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%

Current Distribution of Work in Interpreting Settings (continued)						
Composite 2						
Interpreting Settings	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Medical	40%	33%	16%	7%	4%	1%
K-12	54%	14%	4%	3%	9%	17%
Post-secondary Education	40%	22%	13%	9%	9%	8%
Technical/Vocational	65%	25%	6%	3%	1%	1%
Business	50%	29%	12%	5%	2%	1%
Social Services	56%	31%	9%	2%	1%	0%
Legal	75%	16%	5%	2%	1%	1%
Mental Health	63%	27%	7%	2%	1%	1%
Religious	67%	24%	6%	1%	1%	1%
Vocational Rehabilitation	70%	22%	5%	2%	1%	1%
VRS/VRI	64%	8%	8%	7%	6%	7%
Composite 3						
Interpreting Settings	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Medical	39%	34%	15%	7%	4%	1%
K-12	53%	14%	4%	3%	9%	17%
Post-secondary Education	40%	22%	14%	9%	9%	7%
Technical/Vocational	64%	26%	6%	2%	1%	1%
Business	50%	30%	12%	5%	2%	1%
Social Services	55%	32%	9%	2%	1%	0%
Legal	75%	16%	5%	2%	2%	1%
Mental Health	63%	27%	7%	2%	1%	0%
Religious	67%	25%	5%	1%	1%	0%
Vocational Rehabilitation	69%	23%	4%	2%	1%	1%
VRS/VRI	63%	8%	8%	7%	6%	8%
Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%.						

Finding: With regard to Table 9, it is actually interesting to begin the analysis by looking at the 0% column, indicating that the respondent spends no time interpreting in this particular setting. Viewing the three composite group percentages in aggregate, about 75% of respondents indicated they do not interpret in legal settings and about 70% of respondents indicated they do not interpret in vocational rehabilitation settings. Further, more than 65% of respondents indicated they do not interpret in religious, mental health, technical/vocational and VRS/VRI settings.

While analysis of the 0% column assists in understanding where interpreters are not working, it is also important to understand distribution across the various settings in which they are currently interpreting. The two settings with the highest number of respondents indicating they currently work in that setting are medical and post-secondary education. Again, viewing percentages of the three composite groups in aggregate, approximately 60% of respondents indicate they work in medical settings, with approximately 48% spending from 1-25% of their time interpreting in that setting, and only 5% spending more than 50% of their time interpreting in the setting. Likewise, approximately 60% of respondents indicated they work in post-secondary settings, with about 34% spending from 1-25% of their time interpreting in that setting, and about 16% working more than 50% of their time in the setting. In fact, with the exception of K-12 in which approximately 25% of respondents in each composite group work more than 50% of their time, data on Table 9 seems to indicate that most respondents spend their time working across a number of interpreting settings.

To further demonstrate respondent work time distribution by setting, Table 10 below was developed. In Table 10, the total percentage of respondents indicating they work in a particular setting is compared with the percentage of respondents that indicated they spend more than 50% of their time interpreting in that setting.

Comparison of Distribution of Work in Interpreting Settings
Table 10

	Composite 1		Composite 2		Composite 3	
Interpreting Setting	**Respondents working in setting**	**Respondents working >50% in setting**	**Respondents working in setting**	**Respondents working >50% in setting**	**Respondents working in setting**	**Respondents working >50% in setting**
Medical	57%	5%	60%	5%	61%	5%
K-12	44%	23%	46%	26%	47%	26%
Post-secondary Education	57%	16%	60%	17%	60%	16%
Technical/Vocational	33%	2%	35%	2%	36%	2%
Business	48%	4%	50%	3%	50%	3%
Social Services	42%	2%	44%	1%	45%	1%
Legal	24%	2%	25%	2%	25%	3%
Mental Health	34%	2%	37%	2%	37%	1%
Religious	33%	2%	33%	2%	33%	1%
Vocational Rehabilitation	28%	2%	30%	2%	31%	2%
VRS/VRI	32%	12%	36%	13%	37%	14%

Finding: There are only a few percentage point variations across the three composite groups. Looking at all three groups in aggregate, it is interesting to note that the three settings with the highest percentage of respondents indicating they work in that setting are medical, postsecondary education and business. Conversely, looking at only those respondents that indicated they spend more than 50% of their time working in a particular setting, the three highest ranked settings by far are K-12, post-secondary education and VRS/VRI. It is an

interesting note that both medical and business settings were ranked among the three highest with regard to overall coverage, but fell drastically with regard to the percentage of respondents working more than 50% of their time in those settings. In addition, looking just at VRS/VRI, the aggregate number of all respondents working in that setting is about 35%. However, the percentage of respondents working more than 50% of their time in VRS/VRI settings is approximately 13%, or more than a third of the total number of respondents working in the setting. The only setting that remained constant across both distributions was post-secondary education.

This table helps illustrate how work in one setting can contribute to shortages in other areas. It is also an interesting discussion point to consider why K-12, post-secondary education and VRS/VRI settings have the highest percentages with regard to respondents working more than 50% of their time in the setting, and the extent to which factors such as convenience, flexibility, working conditions, work stability, benefits, etc. influence those numbers.

Areas of Specialization

As well as asking respondents to indicate the interpreting settings they currently work in, the survey also asked respondents to select **one interpreting setting** in which they would choose to specialize in the future. Table 11 below reports on future areas of specialization for each of the three composite groups.

Preferred Areas of Future Specialization
Table 11

Interpreting Settings	Composite 1	Composite 2	Composite 3
Medical	18%	18%	19%
K-12	16%	17%	17%
Post-secondary Education	20%	20%	20%
Technical/Vocational	1%	1%	1%
Business	7%	6%	6%
Social Services	3%	2%	2%
Legal	12%	12%	13%
Mental Health	6%	6%	6%
Religious	4%	3%	3%
Vocational Rehabilitation	1%	1%	1%
VRS/VRI	8%	9%	9%
Deaf-blind Interpreting	2%	1%	1%

Finding: There is little variation across the three composite groups. With regard to preferred areas of future specialization, the four highest ranked settings in all three composites are: post-secondary education, medical, K-12 and legal. Specifically, 20% of respondents selected post-

secondary education, about 18% selected medical, approximately 17% selected K-12, and about 12% selected legal settings as their preferred area of future specialization.

Again, the survey specifically asked respondents to select one area of specialization versus indicate a preferred distribution of their time across multiple settings. However, it is interesting to compare the settings in which respondents are currently spending their time with their preferred areas of future specialization. To that end, Table 12 provides a comparison between the current setting coverage, including respondents that work more than 50% of their time in a particular setting (Table 10) with the identified areas of future specialization (Table 11).

Current Distribution of Work in Interpreter Settings vs. Preferred Areas of Future Specialization
Table 12

Interpreting Settings	Current Setting Coverage Composite Aggregate	Working >50% in Setting Composite Aggregate	Future Specialization Composite Aggregate
Medical	59%	5%	18%
K-12	46%	25%	17%
Post-secondary Education	59%	16%	20%
Technical/Vocational	35%	2%	1%
Business	49%	3%	6%
Social Services	44%	1%	2%
Legal	25%	2%	12%
Mental Health	36%	2%	6%
Religious	33%	2%	3%
Vocational Rehabilitation	30%	2%	1%
VRS/VRI	35%	13%	9%

Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%.

Finding: Table 12 does not provide a perfect point of comparison as respondents were asked to identify one preferred area of future specialization and were not provided the option of distributing their time across multiple settings. However, it is interesting to compare current coverage in each setting to those settings identified by respondents as preferable areas of specialization in the future. With regard to overall current coverage, the three settings with the highest percentage of respondents indicating they work in that setting are medical, postsecondary education and business. Looking at only those respondents that indicated they spend more than 50% of their time working in a particular setting, the three highest ranked settings by far are K-12, post-secondary education and VRS/VRI. In terms of respondent selected areas for future specialization, the three highest ranked settings are post-secondary education, medical and K-12. While it is important not to place too much emphasis on this table as it doesn't compare 'apples to apples', it does provide a starting point for understanding areas of potential service shortages.

d. Interpreter Education

The survey asked respondents a number of questions related to interpreter education availability, effectiveness and delivery mechanisms. The table below provides aggregated responses for all three composite groups.

Interpreter Education Table 13		
Composite Aggregate		
Survey Questions	**Yes**	**No**
Are there adequate interpreter education opportunities in your geographic region?	57%	42%
Have you taken a course or workshop that is completely online?	35%	65%
Have you participated in online coursework or online activities in conjunction with a course or workshop?	39%	61%
Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%.		

Finding: While nearly 60% of respondents indicate there are currently adequate interpreter education opportunities in their region, it is noteworthy that a little more than 40% indicated there are not. At the same time, it is important to remember that 'interpreter education' is a somewhat ambiguous term – respondents may not have defined the range of activities and opportunities that are currently available as interpreter education. Future surveys should be designed to capture more specific information about the types of education available, for example, it might assess the availability and effectiveness of workshops, continuing education, immersion courses, etc. It was also recognized that the survey should have been designed to capture the geographic region from which the respondent was reporting in order to better target education priorities in each NCIEC region.

Respondents were also asked about participation in online educational opportunities. Nearly 35% of respondents indicated they have participated in a completely online course or workshop, and about 39% indicate they participated in online activities in conjunction with a course or workshop. While there is insufficient historical data by which to measure whether these numbers mark increased participation in on-line educational activities, they do seem to indicate a willingness to pursue educational opportunities through these non-traditional avenues. In the future, survey elements should be included to capture the extent to which respondents valued these experiences.

The survey asked respondents to identify the education and training they received in the past that prepared them to work in a particular interpreting setting. There was extremely little variation across the three composite groups. Therefore data in Table 14 is reported in aggregate.

Ranking of Interpreter Education and Training that Prepared Interpreters by Setting Table 14					
Composite Aggregate					
Interpreter Settings	**Language/Vocab – ASL/English**	**Context/Content Knowledge**	**Interpreting Knowledge**	**Interpreting Practice**	**Mentoring**
Medical	58%	58%	45%	45%	16%
K-12	49%	48%	45%	43%	21%
Post-secondary education	61%	62%	54%	50%	27%
Technical/Vocational	42%	43%	34%	32%	12%
Business	47%	49%	41%	36%	14%
Social Services	41%	45%	37%	34%	12%
Legal	31%	31%	27%	26%	21%
Mental Health	41%	44%	38%	34%	19%
Religious	40%	41%	30%	30%	17%
Vocational Rehabilitation	33%	34%	29%	26%	8%
VRS/VRI	31%	29%	31%	32%	21%
Working with deaf-blind	25%	25%	31%	35%	20%
Signed Transliteration	57%	51%	52%	54%	23%
Oral Transliteration	14%	15%	17%	19%	8%
Cued Speech	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%

Finding: Analysis of this table is best conducted by looking at each type of education and training, and the three composite group percentages in aggregate. With regard to the extent to which **Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English** education and training helped prepare respondents, five settings received the highest percentage of responses: post-secondary education (61%), medical (58%), signed transliteration (57%), K-12 (49%), and business (47%). Survey findings were very similar in the category of Context/Content Knowledge education and training. Responses indicated that **Context/Content Knowledge** education and training was perceived as most effective in preparing respondents to work in the same five settings: post-secondary education (62%), medical (58%), signed transliteration (51%), business (49%) and K-12 (48%) settings. While the percentages of respondents fell to some degree in the categories of Interpreting Knowledge and Interpreting Practice, it is interesting to note that the five settings receiving the highest percentages of responses remain the same – though in slightly different order. Specifically, with regard to **Interpreting Knowledge**, the five settings receiving the highest percentage of responses were: post-secondary education (54%), signed transliteration (52%), medical (45%), K-12 (45%) and business (41%) settings. For **Interpreting Practice**, the five settings receiving the highest percentage of responses were: signed transliteration (54%), post-secondary education (50%), medical (45%), K-12 (43%) and business (36%) settings. Again, the survey data seems to indicate that the primary categories of interpreter education and training provided (Language/Vocabulary – ASL English; Context/Content Knowledge; Interpreting Knowledge and Interpreting Practice) in the past have been **most effective** in preparing interpreters to work in the following five settings: post-secondary education, K-12, medical, signed transliteration and business.

Respondent percentages selecting **Mentoring** education and training were significantly lower than the other types of education and training. However, it must be remembered that this type of training and education has not been readily and widely available in the past. The settings receiving the most survey responses in the category of Mentoring were: post-secondary education (27%) and signed transliteration (23%) settings.

Respondents were also asked to indicate what type of education and training they would like to have in the future to prepare them for work in the various interpreter settings. Table 15 presents their responses. Again, there were very few percentage point variations across the three composite groups, so data is presented in aggregate.

Identified Future Interpreter Education and Training Needs by Setting
Table 15

Composite Aggregate					
Interpreter Settings	**Language/Vocab – ASL/English**	**Context/Content Knowledge**	**Interpreting Knowledge**	**Interpreting Practice**	**Mentoring**
Medical	51%	48%	18%	25%	32%
K-12	23%	22%	14%	17%	20%
Post-secondary	37%	38%	17%	22%	25%
Technical/Vocational	32%	33%	12%	17%	18%
Business	33%	35%	13%	19%	20%
Social Services	29%	33%	14%	19%	20%
Legal	43%	44%	29%	35%	41%
Mental Health	37%	39%	21%	27%	32%
Religious	25%	24%	10%	16%	16%
Vocational Rehabilitation	22%	25%	10%	15%	15%
VRS/VRI	25%	25%	20%	28%	28%
Working with deaf-blind	15%	18%	19%	29%	24%
Signed Transliteration	21%	20%	14%	22%	19%
Oral Transliteration	11%	12%	12%	18%	15%
Cued Speech	8%	8%	8%	10%	10%

Finding: It is important to remember when looking at this table respondents may have felt they currently possess sufficient knowledge and skills (from prior education and training experiences) and therefore did not indicate a need for more of that type of education and training in the future. With regard to **Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English**, the five settings that the most respondents indicated they need future education and training of this type are medical (51%), legal (43%), mental health (37%), post-secondary education (37%), and business (33%) settings. This finding is not surprising considering the complexities regarding definitions and terminology in these settings. The need for **Context/Content Knowledge** education and training was highest in the same five settings, though in slightly different order: medical (48%), legal (44%), mental health (39%) and post-secondary education (38%), and business (35%) settings. The five settings in which respondents indicated the most need for **Interpreting Knowledge** education and training were: legal (29%), mental health (21%), VRS/VRI (20%), working with deaf-blind individuals (19%), and medical (18%) settings. With regard to survey responses in the category of **Interpreting Practice** education and training, the settings ranked the highest with regard to future needs were: legal (35%), working with deaf-blind individuals

(29%), VRS/VRI (28%), mental health (27%), and medical (25%) settings. Finally, the five settings for which respondents identified the greatest need for **Mentoring** education and training were: legal (41%), medical (32%), mental health (32%), VRS/VRI (28%), and post-secondary education (25%) settings.

It is also interesting to assess these findings from a different perspective - by interpreting setting. Looking at the data on Table 15 and focusing on those higher percentages of interpreter responses as identified above, Table 16 below provides a snapshot of priority education and training needs of respondents for the future.

Highest Percentage Response Settings by Future Education and Training Category
Table 16

Composite Aggregate

Interpreter Settings	Language/Vocab – ASL/English	Context/Content Knowledge	Interpreting Knowledge	Interpreting Practice	Mentoring
Legal	43%	44%	29%	35%	41%
Medical	51%	48%	18%	25%	32%
Mental Health	37%	39%	21%	27%	32%
VRS/VRI			20%	28%	28%
Post-secondary	37%	38%			25%
Deaf-blind individuals			19%	29%	
Business	33%	35%			

Finding: Again, Table 16 is intended to provide a snapshot of the education and training categories in which the highest percentages of responses were captured. **Legal, medical** and **mental health** settings were identified by high percentages of respondents for all five education and training categories. **VRS/VRI** settings were identified by high percentages of respondents with regard to future need for Interpreting Knowledge, Interpreting Practice and Mentoring education and training. **Post-secondary education** settings were likewise identified by high percentages of respondents in the areas of Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English, Context/Content Knowledge, and Mentoring education and training. **Working with Deaf-blind Individuals** was a setting in which high percentages of respondents identified the need for future education in the areas of Interpreting Knowledge and Interpreting Practice. And, finally, **business** was a setting identified as needing future education and training in the categories of Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English and Context/Content Knowledge.

To assist in easier comparison between the education and training selected by respondents as having prepared them in the past to the education and training they want for the future, Table 17 was developed. Again, the caution is to remember that respondents may consider they are already skilled and knowledgeable as a result of past education and training experiences, and therefore did not express a need for education training in the area for the future.

Past Education Compared to Future Education Needs by Setting Table 17										
Composite Aggregate										
Interpreter Settings	**Language/Vocab – ASL/English**		**Context/Content Knowledge**		**Interpreting Knowledge**		**Interpreting Practice**		**Mentoring**	
	Past	**Future**	**Past**	**Future**	**Past**	**Future**	**Past**	**Future**	**Past**	**Future**
Medical	58%	51%	58%	48%	45%	18%	45%	25%	16%	32%
K-12	49%	23%	48%	22%	45%	14%	43%	17%	21%	20%
Post-secondary	61%	37%	62%	38%	54%	17%	50%	22%	27%	25%
Technical/Vocational	42%	32%	43%	33%	34%	12%	32%	17%	12%	18%
Business	47%	33%	49%	35%	41%	13%	36%	19%	14%	20%
Social Services	41%	29%	45%	33%	37%	14%	34%	19%	12%	20%
Legal	31%	43%	31%	44%	27%	29%	26%	35%	21%	41%
Mental Health	41%	37%	44%	39%	38%	21%	34%	27%	19%	32%
Religious	40%	25%	41%	24%	30%	10%	30%	16%	17%	16%
Vocational rehabilitation	33%	22%	34%	25%	29%	10%	26%	15%	8%	15%
VRS/VRI	31%	25%	29%	25%	31%	20%	32%	28%	21%	28%
Working with deaf-blind	25%	15%	25%	18%	31%	19%	35%	29%	20%	24%
Signed Transliteration	57%	21%	51%	20%	52%	14%	54%	22%	23%	19%
Oral Transliteration	14%	11%	15%	12%	17%	12%	19%	18%	8%	15%
Cued Speech	3%	8%	3%	8%	3%	8%	4%	10%	3%	10%

Finding: Again, when reviewing this table, it must be remembered that the data is reflective of the pool of survey respondents, who have likely acquired significant skills and knowledge, and therefore may not have expressed a need for education and training in some areas for the future. That aside, it is interesting to examine the differences between the responses related to education and training received in the past, and education and training needs for the future. With regard to **Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English**, respondent percentages fell in every category, sometimes quite significantly, except legal (where percentages rose from 31% to 43%), and cued speech (where percentages rose from 3% to 8%). The data reported for **Context/Content Knowledge** is very similar to that captured in the previous category: Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English. Respondent percentages once again fell in every category except legal and cued speech. In legal settings, percentages rose from 31% to 44% and in cued speech, percentages rose from 3% to 8%. Legal and cued speech settings are again the only two settings in which respondent percentages actually rose with regard to respondent expressed needs for future education and training in the areas of **Interpreting Knowledge** and **Interpreting Practice.**

Mentoring was the single category of education and training in which respondent percentages increased across most settings. However, there are four settings in which responses actually decreased: K-12 (from 21% to 20%), post-secondary education (27% to 25%), religious (from 17% to 16%), and finally, for signed transliteration (from 23% to 19%).

Professional Development

The survey also asked respondents who classified themselves as non-professional or novice what they would have liked to have seen in their program to better prepare them for the world of work. Because the question was open-ended, there was a great deal of variation across responses, as well as spelling and data entry errors which did not allow for responses to be accurately quantified. However, the responses overall indicated that the majority of respondents needed more preparation to transition into the working world.

Some specific examples of responses are:

- Mentoring
- Practicum/Hands On experiences
- Test Preparation
- Assistance with Job Placement
- More Deaf Instructors
- Ethics
- Business Practices (Billing/Contracts/Creating Invoices)

Again, this question only reflects non-professional and novice input.

Furthering the Focus on Mentoring

The survey asked respondents additional questions to better sharpen the focus on mentoring training and education opportunities. Specifically, respondents were asked if they thought they could benefit from a mentor or tutor and if they would want to have a mentor if one was available. Table 17 reports responses.

Mentoring
Table 18

Composite Aggregate

Survey Questions	Yes	No
Do you think you could benefit from a tutor or mentor?	81%	18%
Would you want to have a mentor if one was available?	76%	22%

Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%.

Finding: It is clear that the majority of respondents think they would benefit from the services provided by a mentor or tutors, and would have a mentor if one was available. This finding further bears out the high percentage of respondents that expressed the need for mentoring training and education in all settings (Table 16). In addition, respondents were asked in an open-ended question what they would have liked to have seen more of in their interpreting program. The most prevalent responses were mentoring, tutoring and interpreting practice.

e. Consumer Characteristics

In order to understand more about the characteristics of consumers respondents work with, the survey asked respondents to indicate whether they work with clients from different cultural backgrounds. Table 18 reports on survey responses to these queries.

Cultural Aspects of Consumers Served by Respondents Table 19			
Survey Questions	**Composite 1**	**Composite 2**	**Composite 3**
Percentage of respondents that work with clients from different cultural backgrounds	83%	85%	86%
Percentage of respondents that see a need for a third language fluency	68%	68%	68%
Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to system rounding and no responses.			

Finding: It is evident that the majority of respondents work with consumers from different cultural backgrounds, and that they believe there is a need for third language fluency in order to best serve these consumers. As follow-up, there was also an open-ended question in the survey asking respondents to identify the different consumer populations they currently work with. The open-ended design of the survey question resulted in a large number of spelling and data entry errors affecting the overall quality of responses and the ability to accurately quantify responses. However, the system was able to generate some numbers that assist in understanding more about the different consumer populations respondents currently work with.

The most prevalent consumer population identified was **Spanish-speaking**. Responses compiled under the heading Spanish-speaking include: Hispanic (996 responses), Mexican (274), Latino (307), Spanish (510) and Puerto Rican (50), for a total of 2,137 responses. The second most prevalent consumer population identified was **Asian**. Responses compiled under the heading Asian include Asian (532), Korean (59), Chinese (101), Hmong (128), Oriental (17), Japenese (56), Vietnamese (77), Pacific Islander (21), and Mandarin (1), for a total of 992 responses. The third most prevalent consumer group identified was **African American**. Responses compiled under that heading include: African American (691), Black (202), and Afro American (15) for a total of 908 responses. **Russian** was also identified as a discrete consumer population by 195 respondents, and **Deaf Culture** by 505 respondents.

In another open-ended question, respondents were asked what additional language was needed in their geographical area. Nearly 3,000 respondents completed this question. Again, spelling, terminology and data entry errors impact on the overall quality and accuracy of this data. The top three languages identified by respondents are Spanish-speaking (2,747 responses), Asian (252), and Russian (95).

Finding: It will continue to be important to recruit Spanish-speaking interpreters into the field, and to ensure interpreter education and training is available and accessible in third languages, especially Spanish.

f. Future Considerations

In order to understand even more about the current respondent pool and the possible status of that pool over the next ten years, the survey asked respondents to complete a number of questions about their plans for the future. Specifically, respondents were asked about their plans to retire from the field of interpreting.

Respondent Retirement Plans Table 20			
Retirement plans	**Composite 1**	**Composite 2**	**Composite 3**
Respondents planning on retiring in the next 1-5 years	6% (216)	5% (148)	5% (125)
Respondents planning on retiring in the next 6-10 years	16% (637)	16% (498)	16% (425)
Respondents with no plan to retire	77% (3,015)	78% (2,407)	79% (2,081)
Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to system rounding and no responses.			

Finding: In recent years there has been increasing concern with regard to the supply of interpreters and growing demand for their services. Data on Table 19 validates this concern. Looking specifically at Composite 1 as and example, 6% (216) of working interpreters plan to retire in 1-5 years and an additional 16% (637) plan to retire in 6-10 years, for a total of 22% (853) working interpreters. In addition, it is important to remember that the survey respondent pool only represents a subset of the RID population – approximately 50%. If the trend were assumed for the entire RID membership, the number would be closer to 1,700 working interpreters retiring in the next 10 years.

In the NCIEC Interpreter Education Program Needs Assessment Survey currently under analysis, 20 four-year Interpreting Education programs projected that they would graduate approximately eight interpreters per year, for an annual total of 160 interpreters across the 20 programs. This scenario would produce approximately 800 new interpreters over the next five years - or 1,600 new interpreters in ten years. Based on these assumptions, the already existing gap between available interpreters and deaf consumers will not effectively be reduced. Instead, the gap could increase substantially in 6-10 years when the greatest numbers of interpreters plan to retire. It is difficult to accurately identify the gap because currently the number of newly certified RID members entering the field of interpreters is not available.

Future Degree Plans

The survey asked respondents whether they planned to work toward a higher degree in the next ten years.

Respondent Plans to Achieve A Higher Degree Table 21			
Respondents	**Composite 1**	**Composite 2**	**Composite 3**
Respondents that plan to work toward a higher degree in the next 1-5 years	43% (1,685)	45% (1,383)	45% (1,196)
Respondents that plan to work toward a higher degree in the next 6-10 years	12% (484)	13% (387)	13% (337)
Respondents that have no plan to work toward a higher degree	43% (1,687)	42% (1,275)	41% (1,089)
Note: Due to system rounding, percentages may not equal 100%			

Finding: It is interesting to note that almost half of survey respondents (approximately 44% across the three composite groups) indicate a plan to work toward a higher degree in the next 1-5 years. Another 13% of respondents plan to work toward higher degree in the next 6-10 years. This represents a high number of individuals that plan to seek out enrollment and participation in existing interpreter education programs and training. Looking just at Composite 1, this number could be as high as 1,685 individuals over the next five years, with an additional 484 individuals seeking out education and training in the next 6-10 years – approximately 2,165 individuals in all.

The percentages of respondents planning on working toward a higher degree in Composite 3 are consistent with these numbers. This is even more important to recognize when it is taken into account that Composite 3 represents those interpreters that are working more than 75% of their time interpreting. While it is critical that this pool of working interpreters continue to seek and attain additional education and higher degrees, participation in those educational activities may further exasperate already existing shortages in many of today's interpreting settings.

The survey also asked those respondents that indicated they plan to work toward a higher degree in the next ten years what degree they would seek to achieve. Because responses represent a subset of respondents (those that have plans to work toward a higher degree), actual numbers of individuals are reported versus respondent percentages on Table 22 below.

Higher Degrees Sought by Respondents in the Next Ten Years Table 22			
Higher Degree	**Composite 1**	**Composite 2**	**Composite 3**
Respondents planning to work toward AA/AS degree	142	116	105
Respondents planning to work toward BA/BS degree	830	731	645
Respondents planning to work toward MA/MS degree	776	632	541
Respondents planning to work toward PhD/EdD degree	232	146	113

Finding: A somewhat small number of respondents in all three composite groups indicate plans to work toward an AA/AS degree. However, it is important to remember that 81% of respondents in all three composite groups identified themselves as professionals, or having credentials, (Table 2) and likely most survey respondents already have AA/AS degrees which would account for low percentages in this category.

It is interesting to note that a significantly higher number of individuals in all three composite groups plan to work toward a BA/BS degree. This finding is not surprising considering the pending RID requirement for a BA degree as a prerequisite for certification by 2012. What is concerning however is the fact that currently the majority of existing IEPs offer AAS degrees; there is an already recognized national shortage of IEPs offering a BA degree. Compounding this issue is the fact that interpreting educator positions remain unfilled nationwide. In addition, many educators currently teaching at two-year IEPs will need graduate credentials, including a Masters degree, to teach in four-year programs.

On another note, a significant number of respondents also indicate plans to work toward a MA/MS degree (776 respondents in Composite 1), and another 232 respondents indicate they plan to work toward a PhD/EdD degree. This data raises the issue whether once those individuals attain those degrees they will continue to work as interpreters or will progress to other careers.

Future Certification Plans

In the survey, respondents who **did not** classify themselves as a Professional were asked when they anticipate applying for their initial recognized credentials. Therefore, Table 23 only represents the subset of respondents that identified themselves as pre-professional, novice or other. Because this group is a subset of the overall respondent pool, actual numbers of respondents are provided versus percentages.

Respondent Plans to Apply for Certification
Table 23

Respondents	Composite 1	Composite 2	Composite 3
Respondents that plan to apply within the next 3 months	280	218	186
Respondents that plan to apply within the next 4-6 months	154	118	103
Respondents that plan to apply within the next 7-9 months	72	57	47
Respondents that plan to apply within the next 10-12 months	113	75	60
Respondents that plan to apply within the next 13-18 months	62	37	29
Respondents that plan to apply within the next 19-24 months	160	93	75

Finding: Theoretically, since the survey closed in April 2007, those respondents that stated they plan to apply within the next three months or the next four to six months for credentials are likely to have completed or be in that process now.

The survey also asked those respondents that indicated they plan to apply for credentials, what level of certification they will seek. Table 23 reports on those responses. Once again, because this question applied only to a subset of survey respondents (those that identified themselves as pre-professional, novice or other), the data is reported based on actual numbers versus percentages of overall responses.

Breakdown of Certification Sought by Respondents Table 24			
Credentials	**Composite 1**	**Composite 2**	**Composite 3**
Respondents planning on applying for state certification	81	47	34
Respondents planning on applying for national certification	603	421	357
Respondents planning on applying for both state and national certification	208	113	93

Finding: It is a positive finding that the majority of respondents that are planning to apply for certification will seek to attain that certification at the national level, however it is concerning that more than 350 respondents in Composite 3 (working more than 75% of their time interpreting) have yet to attain national certification.

This concludes the Findings section of the report. The next section, Conclusions, provides broadly stated conclusions as derived from a thorough assessment and analysis of the overall findings.

III. Conclusions

Based on the results of the Interpreting Practitioner Needs Assessment, the NCIEC has drawn the following conclusions.

Conclusion 1 There are insignificant levels of variation among the three survey composite groups

In this report, three composites of respondents were reported on: all respondents; respondents that work more than 50% of their time interpreting and respondents that work more than 75% of their time interpreting. In no area were there significant levels of variation from one composite group to another; a few percentage points at most. Since the overall respondent pool represents about one half of RID's membership, the data in this report can be construed as representative of all working interpreters – whether they work full time or only a portion of their time interpreting.

Conclusion 2 There appears to be disproportionate respondent membership in national organizations

Survey findings demonstrate that many working interpreters are not members of the primary national organizations: RID, NAD, CIT and ASLTA. In fact, the data seems to indicate that the more time an individual spends working in the field, the less likely they are to belong to these leading national organizations (Table 4). In addition, based on survey data, there are significantly more interpreter and ASL teachers than there are identified CIT and ASLTA members. However, it must be remembered that information regarding membership in national organizations was gathered through an open-ended question which increased the possibility of data error and made it difficult to accurately quantify data across the range of responses.

Conclusion 3 The interpreting language used most often by respondents is ASL/spoken English; the most often used interpreting system is Signed/Spoken English Transliteration

With regard to interpreting languages, ASL/spoken English was identified as the interpreting language most often used by survey respondents (Table 6). About 72% of respondents use ASL/spoken English more than 50% of the time. Approximately 47% of respondents identified they use Other signed language/English, although most of the language usage falls below the 50% of the time distribution category. By comparison, more than 90% of respondents do not use either ASL/other spoken language or Other language combinations.

With regard to interpreting systems, Signed/Spoken English Transliteration is the interpreting system most used by respondents (Table 7). Nearly 74% of respondents use Signed/spoken English transliteration more than 50% of the time. By comparison, 82% of respondents do not use Oral Transliteration; approximately 99% do not use Cued Transliteration, and about 94% do not use Other Language Transliteration.

Survey data also indicates that few respondents are providing interpreting services for Individuals who are Deaf-blind, with about 59% of respondents providing no services to this population and about 34% spending only 1-10% of their time working with these consumers. This makes sense with regard to deaf-blind being a low incidence disability. By comparison,

approximately 44% of respondents work more than 75% of their time with Deaf/hearing Teams. Respondents were also provided an "Other" category. Interestingly, 14% of respondents in all three composite groups indicated they work more than 75% of their interpreting time with Other interpreting systems.

Conclusion 4 The need for Spanish-speaking interpreters and interpreter education that is available and accessible in third languages, especially Spanish, is critical

Most respondents work with consumers from different cultural backgrounds (approximately 85%), and believe there is a need for third language fluency to best serve these consumers (68%). Respondents were asked in an open-ended question to indicate the most prevalent consumer population from a different cultural background they currently serve. The most prevalent population identified was Spanish-speaking (2,137 responses); the second Asian (992 responses); the third African American (908 responses), and the fourth Russian (195 responses).

Conclusion 5 Most respondents distribute their time interpreting across a variety of interpreter settings

The three settings with the highest percentage of respondents indicating they work in that setting are medical, postsecondary education and business (Table 9). However, looking at only those respondents that indicated they spend more than 50% of their time working in a particular setting, the three highest ranked settings by far are K-12, post-secondary education and VRS/VRI (Table 10). It is an interesting note that both medical and business settings were ranked among the three highest with regard to overall interpreter coverage, but fell drastically with regard to the percentage of respondents working more than 50% of their time in those settings. With the exception of K-12, in which approximately 25% of respondents in each composite group work more than 50% of their time, survey data indicates that most respondents spend their time working across a number of interpreting settings.

Conclusion 6 There are a significant number of interpreting settings in which few interpreters are currently providing services

Approximately 75% of respondents indicated they do not interpret in legal settings, and about 70% indicated they do not currently interpret in vocational rehabilitation settings. Further, more than 65% of respondents indicated they do not interpret in religious, mental health, technical/vocational and VRS/VRI settings (Table 9). In other survey findings, respondents indicated a significant need for interpreter education and training in legal and mental health settings specifically (Table 15). It is possible that current deficits with regard to knowledge, skills and confidence level of respondents may be precluding them from accepting assignments in those two settings.

Conclusion 7 Post-secondary Education, medical, K-12 and legal settings were identified by respondents as preferred settings for future specialization

Respondents were asked to select one interpreter setting for future specialization. The four settings ranked highest by respondents were: post-secondary education, medical, K-12 and legal (Table 11). Specifically, 20% of survey respondents' selected post-secondary education, about 18% selected medical, approximately 17% selected K-12, and about 12% selected legal settings as their preferred area of future specialization. It will be important to assess how

interpreter goals to specialize in these areas will impact coverage in the other interpreter settings in the future.

Conclusion 8 Currently there are inadequate interpreter education opportunities available to respondents

Nearly 60% of respondents indicate there are adequate interpreter education opportunities in their region – however, a little more than 40% indicated there are not. It is important to remember that the survey respondent pool is largely professional (81%), and therefore would be seeking professional development and continuing education opportunities within their region. In addition, it should be considered that 'interpreter education' is a somewhat ambiguous term and respondents may not have defined the range of activities and opportunities that are currently available as interpreter education. However, those issues aside, survey data does indicate that there continues to be insufficient interpreter education and training to meet the needs of today's interpreter workforce.

Conclusion 9 Interpreter education and training provided in the past perceived by respondents as having had the most impact on preparing interpreters to work in post-secondary, K-13, medical, signed transliteration and business settings

Survey data indicates that the primary categories of interpreter education and training provided (Language/Vocabulary – ASL English; Context/Content Knowledge; Interpreting Knowledge and Interpreting Practice) in the past are perceived by respondents as having been most effective in preparing interpreters to work in the following five settings: post-secondary education, K-12, medical, signed transliteration and business (Table 14).

Conclusion 10 Respondents identified legal, medical, mental health, VRS/VRI, post-secondary education, working with deaf-blind individuals and business as the priority education and training areas for the future

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the type of education and training they would like to have in the future to prepare them for work within the various interpreting settings (Table 15). Presenting the survey results by interpreter setting assists in understanding perceived needs and prioritizing future interpreter training and education activities (Table 16). Looking only at the distribution of the highest percentages of responses within each of the five education and training categories, the greatest needs for future interpreter education and training were identified in the following settings:

- Legal (all five categories of interpreter education and training)
- Medical (all five categories of interpreter education and training)
- Mental health (all five categories of interpreter education and training)
- VRS/VRI (Interpreting Knowledge, Interpreting Practice, Mentoring)
- Post-secondary education (Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English, Context/Content Knowledge, Mentoring)
- Working with deaf-blind individuals (Interpreting Knowledge, Interpreting Practice)
- Business (Language/Vocabulary – ASL/English, Context/Content Knowledge)

Conclusion 11 Respondents would like to see a marked increase in mentoring related opportunities

A number of questions were asked of respondents to assess the need for education and training in the area of mentoring. Responses to those questions strongly indicate mentoring is an area needing ongoing focus and attention. However, the survey did not articulate any parameters or provide a specific description of mentoring, and responses to an open-ended question in the survey indicate a range of viewpoints on the part of respondents regarding their perceived 'definition' of mentoring. Future activities should be carried out by the NCIEC to further define and describe the range of mentoring activities, the purpose of those activities, and their intended audience and outcome.

Conclusion 12 Respondents express willingness to participate in online educational activities

Considering the somewhat recent emergence of online interpreter education and training opportunities, the survey captured some good indications that respondents are open to and willing to participate in online educational activities. Nearly 35% of respondents indicate they have already participated in a completely online course or workshop, and about 39% indicate they participated in online activities in conjunction with a course or workshop. While there is insufficient historical data by which to measure whether these numbers mark increased participation in on-line educational activities, survey data does indicate respondents are not resistant to this mode of delivery.

Conclusion 13 Survey data provides evidence there will be more interpreters retiring from the field in the next ten years than entering it

In recent years there has been increasing concern with regard to the supply of interpreters and growing demand for their services. Data on Table 20 validates this concern. Approximately 853 of overall survey respondents indicated a plan to retire over the next ten years. However, it is important to remember that the survey respondent pool only represents a subset of the RID population – approximately 50%. Therefore, if the survey respondents are truly representative of the RID membership, then it can be extrapolated that approximately 1,700 interpreters will retire in the next ten years. By comparison, in an ongoing NCIEC survey of four-year IEPs, 20 programs reported they would graduate approximately eight interpreters per year, for an annual total of 160 interpreters across the 20 programs. This scenario would produce approximately 800 new interpreters over the next five years - or about 1,600 new interpreters in ten years.

Based on these assumptions, the already existing gap between available interpreters and deaf consumers will not effectively be reduced. Instead, the gap could actually increase substantially in 6-10 years when the greatest numbers of interpreters retire. It is difficult to accurately identify the gap because currently the number of newly certified RID members entering the field of interpreters is not available.

Conclusion 14 More than half of survey respondents plan to work toward a higher degree over the next ten years

Almost half of survey respondents (approximately 44% across the three composite groups) indicate a plan to work toward a higher degree in the next 1-5 years (Table 21). Another 13% of respondents plan to work toward higher degree in the next 6-10 years – or approximately 57%

of respondents across the ten years. This represents a high number of individuals that plan to seek out enrollment and participation in already stretched existing interpreter education and training programs.

Looking just at Composite 1, this number could be as high as 1,685 individuals over the next five years, with an additional 484 individuals seeking out education and training in the next 6-10 years – approximately 2,165 individuals in all. The percentages of respondents planning on working toward a higher degree in Composite 3 are consistent with these numbers. This is critical to consider when taking into account that Composite 3 represents those interpreters that are working more than 75% of their time interpreting. And, once again, it must be remembered that the survey respondent pool only represents half of RID membership, so in affect, these numbers could double. While it is critical that the pool of working interpreters continue to seek and attain additional education and higher degrees, participation in those educational activities may further exasperate already existing shortages in many of today's interpreting settings.

Conclusion 15 More interpreters will seek BA degrees than there are programs and educators available to offer those degrees

Of those survey respondents that indicated they plan on working toward a higher degree, overall approximately 39% of respondents to this question plan on working toward a BA degree, or 830 individuals in Composite 1 (Table 22). Again, these projections only represent the pool of survey respondents and the numbers could in fact be doubled to account for the entire RID membership. In addition, the RID requirement for a BA degree as a prerequisite for certification by 2012 likely increases the percentage of individuals that will seek out a BA degree in the next five years. This rush toward a BA degree will further strain existing IEPs. Today the majority of IEPs offer AAS degrees and there is an already recognized national shortage of BA programs for interpreting education. Compounding this issue is the fact that interpreting educator positions remain unfilled nationwide. In addition, many educators that currently teach at two-year IEPs will need graduate credentials, including a Masters degree, to teach in four-year programs.

Conclusion 16 A number of respondents do not have national certification

It is a positive finding that the majority of respondents identifying themselves as pre-professionals or novice interpreters plan to apply for certification at the national level (Table 24). However it is concerning that more than 350 respondents in Composite 3 (working more than 75% of their time interpreting) have yet to attain national certification.

IV. NEXT STEPS

The Interpreting Practitioner Needs Assessment findings will be disseminated through the NCIEC website and other appropriate forums for distribution to Consortium partners, key stakeholders and interested parties in the field. In addition, the information learned through the needs assessment will be used to establish national priorities in interpreter education as well as inform the work of the NCIEC, the six Centers comprising the Consortium, and the cross-cutting workteams carrying out the primary work of the grant.

The Consortium will also continue to carry out the data compilation and analysis of ongoing and planned needs assessment activities, identified in Appendix 1. The NCIEC will draw upon any lessons learned and findings derived from this survey to inform those efforts, for example limiting open-ended questions by providing respondents a menu of options that better supports quantifying results.

APPENDIX 1

Ongoing and Planned NCIEC Needs Assessment Activities

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Other needs assessment activities also initiated by the NCIEC are in the following areas:

- Interpreter students
- Interpreter mentors and mentees
- Interpreter education programs
- Interpreter educators
- Interpreter referral agencies
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Educational interpreting
- Deaf interpreters
- Deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind consumers

In the future, the needs assessment activities are planned for:

- Vocational education
- Social services
- Healthcare
- Mental health
- Legal
- Business
- Religious
- Arts and entertainment

These lists will grow and change as needs assessment findings and results are used to inform future priorities and activities.

APPENDIX 2

Interpreting Practitioner Needs Assessment Survey Instrument