

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.
Affiliate Chapter Relations Committee

Affiliate Chapter Handbook
Third Edition
Section 1

RID History:
The Bridge to the Future

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RID History

It is always beneficial to review the history of an organization. Such a review helps members learn from the past and prepare for the future. George Santayana said it best when he said, “Those who are ignorant of their past are doomed to repeat it...” With that in mind, this brief history of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) is presented. In 1964 a group of people met in Muncie, Indiana, and established what is now known as RID. The composition of this group reflected the entities that were currently providing interpreting services – adults who had deaf parents, deaf consumers, educators of the deaf, and religious workers. During the next eight years a board was established, Interpreting for Deaf People was published, a code of ethics was developed, and issues related to the skills and/or quality of interpreting were discussed.

The 1970’s brought about more growth and change. Part of this growth was reflected in the establishment of a home office – first on the campus of Gallaudet University and later in the National Association of the Deaf’s (NAD) Halex House. Quality assurance continued to be the major concern; the “solution” was the establishment of a National Evaluation System often referred to as certification. Certification was a tiered system and ultimately 18 different certificates were in some stage of development during this period. Early attempts were made to address the need to establish certification maintenance programs as well as grievance procedures. However, none of the attempts were successful and the concept was ultimately put on hold.

The period from 1980 – 1989 can be thought of as a time of assertiveness among the membership and society in general. People pushed for what they wanted and our membership was no exception. Thus we saw a change in how we conducted business. We were no longer top-down; instead we were a membership driven organization. Revisions to the bylaws established a regional structure. The code of ethics was revised and was supported with guidelines; however, this led to confusion so the guidelines were later eliminated. Certification was changed into a National Testing System and the CI and CT were born. Dual membership also became the standard, stipulating that in order to vote, a person must be a member of both an affiliate chapter and the national organization.

From 1990 – 2003 the organization has experienced tremendous growth and development. A number of accomplishments are noted:

- A certification maintenance program (CMP) was established; in fact, passage of the CMP was the first unanimous vote in RID’s history
- The rule making process was initiated to strengthen the membership driven structure
- RID joined with the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) to establish a joint task force to address issues of common interest. This task force was subsequently changed to the National Council on Interpreting (NAD-RID NCI) and later expanded to

include the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT)

- Two generalist tests were completed in 1999 and one specialty test was revised in 2000 (Oral Transliteration Certificate, Certified Deaf Interpreter, and Special Certificate: Legal)
- An ethical practices system (EPS) was established which includes a mediation program component
- The RID Code of Ethics was translated into Spanish
- The NAD-RID NCI issued a comprehensive state cooperation plan designed to encourage NAD and RID state/affiliate chapters to work collaboratively
- The membership of RID increased from less than 3,000 to over 10,000
- A mentoring grant program was initiated to outreach to minorities and to rural populations
- RID purchased an office building in March 2001. Through this purchase, RID increased its assets and became owners instead of renters
- July 2002 RID hosted the very first World Symposium on Sign Language Interpreting
- January 2003 NAD interpreters merge with RID's CMP and EPS

These are exciting times for RID. We continue to look toward the work of the NAD-RID NCI. We also look forward to having one unified test, and one unified code of ethics; then our profession will no longer be divided. It has become clear we cannot work in a vacuum, but must network with numerous national and international organizations and agencies. Our organization must reflect the face of America as we grow new leaders and train behind. We must continue to build fiscal strength and stability as we strive to pay off the mortgage while still planning for the future and addressing the pressures of a changing economy. As the interpreting profession changes, so must RID.

References:

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