

Interpreters Rising Endorses Interpreters United (WFSE)



“With Interpreters United (WFSE), we’ll have an elected bargaining team of L&I interpreters who will negotiate our own first contract with L&I. If we are going to win anything as interpreters, we need to unite now.”

Interpreters Rising has withdrawn from the union election for Labor and Industries (L&I) interpreters. We would like to thank all the members who supported us faithfully.

To all L&I interpreters, now is the opportunity to have your voices heard with a union that has a democratic process. With Interpreters United (WFSE), we’ll have an elected bargaining team of L&I interpreters who will negotiate our own first contract with L&I.

If we are going to win anything as interpreters, we need to unite now.

We have an October 1st deadline to submit a funding proposal to the State of Washington. This proposal is our opportunity to secure money for whatever we negotiate in our first contract, such as reimbursements for no-shows and late cancellations and pay for a minimum of 1 hour regardless of how long an appointment lasts, etc.

Interpreters Rising understands that to accomplish and meet the needs of all L&I interpreters, we need a strong union to support us through this process. We need a union that has the resources, democratic bylaws, and infrastructure to make sure we receive the benefits that L&I interpreters have been lacking for many years.

Interpreters Rising’s board stands by Interpreters United (WFSE) and gives them our full support.

Interpreters Rising Board

Consuelo Ortega
President



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My name is Leanne Kunze, and since 2020 I have served as the executive director of AFSCME Council 28, the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE).

As a longtime AFSCME member who worked in public service for over 16 years back in my home state of Minnesota, I experienced firsthand the vital role that interpreters play in families accessing needed services in their communities. Interpreters matter. Your profession matters. And you deserve rights on the job.

Our plan is for L&I interpreters to be certified as an exclusive bargaining unit with its own contract. Your contract negotiated with L&I will outline your work conditions, including - but not limited to - your pay scale, time units, grievance procedures, and a fair policy to address impacts of cancellations/no-shows.

By selecting Interpreters United (WFSE) on your ballot, you’ll be on your way to having a strong voice in your profession. Here’s how your L&I bargaining team and contract would fit within WFSE and our greater labor movement.

- This arrangement will ensure that ONLY L&I interpreters are entitled to:**
- Participate in the election of the L&I bargaining team
 - Hold any position on the L&I bargaining team
 - Vote on whether to accept any negotiations (including a first contract) recommended by the L&I bargaining team

L&I Interpreters United (WFSE) will be a union for L&I interpreters represented by L&I interpreters.

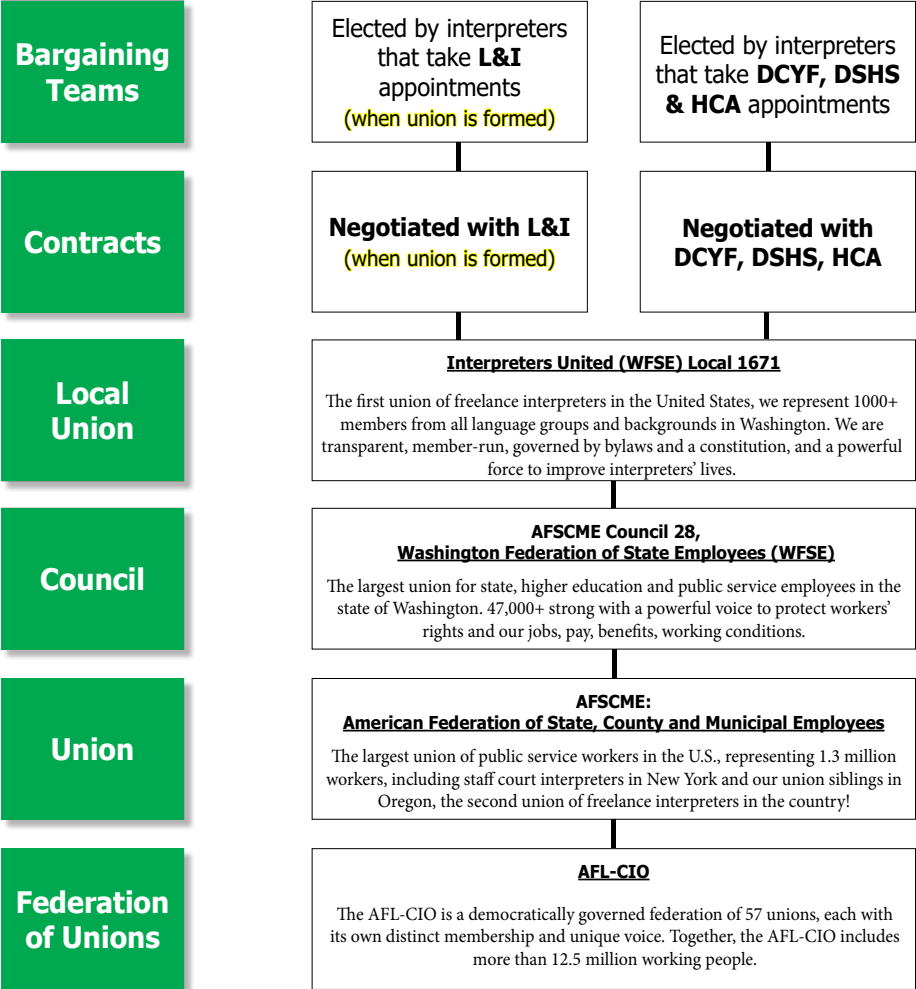
There is only one winning option on the L&I election ballot—Interpreters United (WFSE).

Our union is founded on the principle of democracy, which has its members’ rights codified in a constitution and bylaws at the [local](#), [council](#) and [national](#) level. Interpreters United (WFSE) guarantees the right to decide what kinds of conditions you will accept in your contract.

It has been my honor to witness and support the work undertaken by our interpreter members these last few years—winning the right for freelance interpreters to negotiate for state-funded health insurance, winning in-person rates for remote interpreting appointments during the pandemic, and just recently passing House Bill 1153, which will increase language access for parents with limited English proficiency and create more good-paying jobs for interpreters.

There is more work to be done to ensure all interpreters in Washington are respected on the job, and I look forward to taking on that work alongside all of you.


Leanne Kunze,
Executive Director
AFSCME Council 28/WFSE



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