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COVID-19 Situation Impacting IL BEI Interpreter Testing
Updated February 8, 2021

- 1) **Q: Why didn't IDHHC restart the IL BEI written test in January 2021 as planned?**
A: IDHHC had tentatively started planning to restart the IL BEI written test, Test of English Proficiency, in January 2021 barring any unforeseen circumstances due to the ongoing pandemic. In November 2020, a new wave of COVID-19 cases surged across the state resulted in IDHHC and other state agencies remote working 100% in adherence to the Illinois Governor's November 20, 2020 Tier 3 Mitigations.

- 2) **Q: All regions in Illinois are now in the Phase 4 reopening. Most employers, schools, and other industries are reopening with safety precautions. Why isn't IDHHC doing the same thing?**
A: While the Tier resurgence mitigations or Phases reopening plans are issued to the general public, businesses and other industries, the internal health and safety guidelines are issued more restrictive for state governments and employees. For example, with Phase 4 guidelines in effect, other industries offices may operate at maximum occupancy of 50% of office capacity, the internal guidance requires IDHHC and other state agencies to employ staff 100% remotely.

- 3) **Q: When will IDHHC staff return to the office to resume the IL BEI Interpreter Testing?**
A: A team of two IDHHC staff is required to arrange and administer the testing in the office. Central Management Services guidance requires state agencies to employ state employees remotely which is still in effect until further notice. The below table illustrates the staffing office usage with the IL BEI Interpreter Testing impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions.

Date	Staff in IDHHC Office	IL BEI written test (TEP)	Performance Test
Before March 2020	All staff	Normal Schedule	Normal Schedule
March 2020 to November 2020*	Remote & 50% Reduced Capacity	Suspended/Evaluate	Suspended
November 2020 to Current**	100% Staff Remote	Suspended/Evaluate***	Suspended

*Illinois Department of Public Health Guidelines & Governor's Executive Orders Disaster Declaration
 **Central Management Services Internal Guidance for State Employees, Adhering November 20, 2020 Tier 3 Mitigations
 ***Due to the 100% Staff Remote, IL BEI Written test cannot be administered without at least two staff manning in the office.

- 4) **Q: Why are both IL BEI written test and Performance Test suspended? Why can't IL BEI written test be offered now with social distancing and wear face masks in the testing space?**
A: An advisory division within the Illinois Department of Public Health reviewed the standard operation and testing procedures of the IL BEI Testing at the IDHHC Office, with proposed safety precautions during the pandemic, recommended Performance Test suspended indefinitely until further notice. While IL BEI written test can safely resume with social distancing and face coverings, other restrictions prevent this option including county and regional level risk metrics, mandated reduction in the office capacity and/or staff employing 100% remotely.

- 5) **Q: There are license exams for other professions taken during the pandemic. For example, the examination of nursing licenses is accepted and processed during the pandemic. Why isn't IDHHC doing the same thing with the testing for candidates?**

A: The examinations of other profession licenses are processed differently than the IL BEI Interpreter Testing. For example, the Illinois nursing licenses are issued by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) in either endorsement or examination through online services portal with an approved vendor for the computerized adaptive tests. The IL BEI Interpreter Testing is designed for an in-person testing of both IL BEI written test (TEP) and Performance Test and can only be administered at the IDHHC Office. In addition, the IL BEI Interpreter Testing operates independently from the IDPFR which is also responsible for issuing other professional licenses.

- 6) **Q: Why isn't IDHHC offering virtual/online testing or to other space to safely resume testing?**

A: The IL BEI Interpreter Testing is a leased interpreter testing from the State of Texas. IDHHC is not authorized to modify the leased interpreting test by offering virtual/online testing, remote format, or to unauthorized persons or spaces outside the IDHHC Office to safely resume testing.

- 7) **Q: The State of Texas's BEI Testing allow subcontracting to some colleges in Texas to proctor BEI written test. Why isn't IDHHC doing the same thing to subcontracting Illinois ITP colleges?**

A: The subcontracting option is not available in the leased interpreter testing. IDHHC is not authorized to modify the leased interpreting test by subcontracting with the Illinois ITP colleges.

- 8) **Q: Other state has resumed the TEP written test. Why isn't Illinois doing the same thing?**

A: Other state may have its own health and safety guidelines deemed safe to resume testing. IDHHC, under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Governor, acts within the combination of the public health and safety executive orders and guidelines issued by the Governor's Disaster Declaration and Illinois Department of Public Health, and the internal health and safety guidance issued by the Central Management Services for state employees for the ongoing COVID-19 situation. In addition, IDHHC Office is located in the Sangamon County where the county's level COVID-19 risk metrics may experience stable while, for example, receive warning signs about the other counties' county-level COVID-19 risk metrics going in the wrong direction affecting the closure or reopening plans designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 virus within the Sangamon County.

- 9) **Q: Is IDHHC waiting until everyone is vaccinated to resume the IL BEI Interpreter Testing?**

A: No. IDHHC continues to evaluate and work diligently with our state partners to determine the best course of action to safely resume the IL BEI Interpreter Testing.

Next Steps

Once the IL BEI Interpreter Testing has resumed, the priority of the testing times will be offered first to those who had pending tests cancelled and then to applicants who have sent in a completed application and fee in the order they were received.

Continued Services

IDHHC continues to process annual renewals, restorations and although testing and scheduling are temporarily on hold, applicants may continue to submit applications and related documents.

Fee/Refunds

IDHHC will process refunds/credit for the testing fees upon request.

Contact Information

For more questions or clarification, please contact DHH.Interpreter@illinois.gov