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# Interpreting in Church, Religious Settings and Beyond

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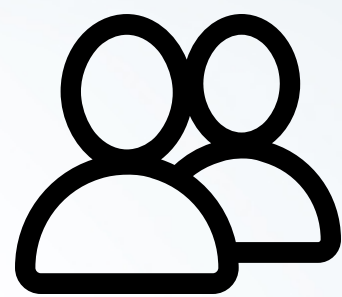
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# Church Interpreters: Who Are They and What's Their Motivation?



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## BACKGROUND

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (2007) recognizes that some among the interpreting community enter the field by way of religious or church interpreting.

For 20 years the following is the story about Church Interpreters among the ASL/English interpreting communities:

-“Church interpreters” often have a negative stigma (James, 1998) and a bad reputation (Grindrod, 1998) among professionally certified interpreters.

-They are assumed to be people, who primarily interpret in church and are most often unskilled, untrained, and non-certified (James, 1998).

Although, according to Warford (2000)“interpreting in religious settings is a continual and dynamic mix of art of humanity and technical expertise; generous interpreters who continually give their service, without thought of payment, should be appreciated and applauded”(p.13), that is not the case. These interpreters continue to...

- Balance roles of professional, friend, and spiritual person
- Volunteer for little to no compensation

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the 20-year old belief about church interpreters being unqualified provide an accurate depiction of the interpreters currently doing the work in church settings today?

## METHOD

A survey was emailed across the US and the UK inquiring about current and past work and demographic information. Qualifications:

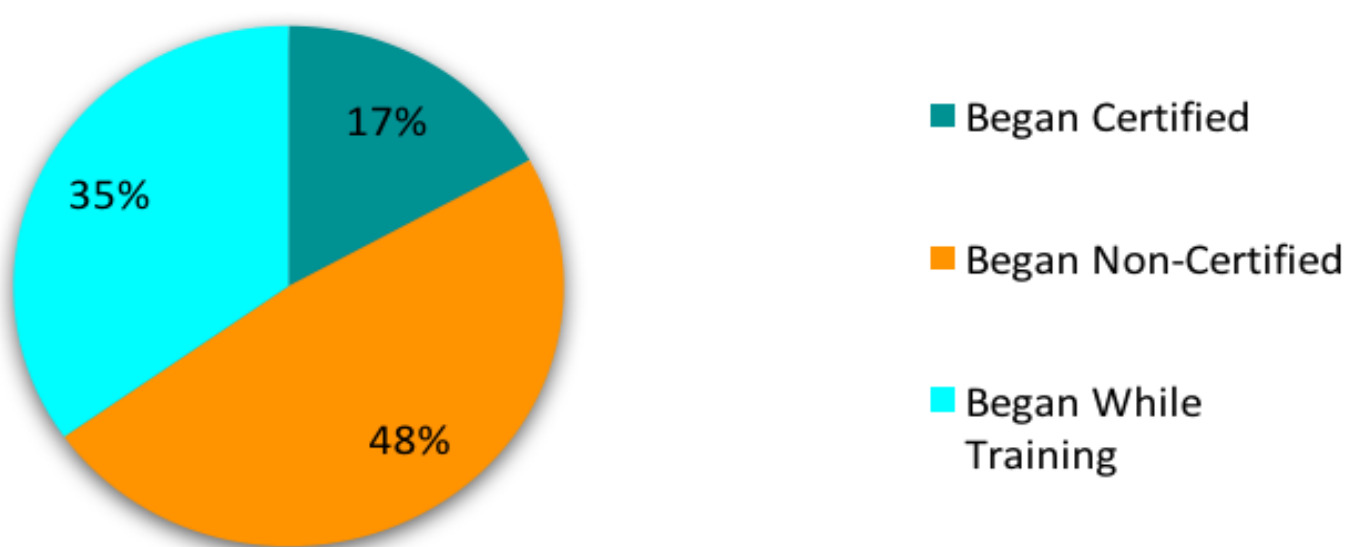
- 18 years of age or older
- have previous experience or are currently interpreting in a church or religious setting

## WHO?

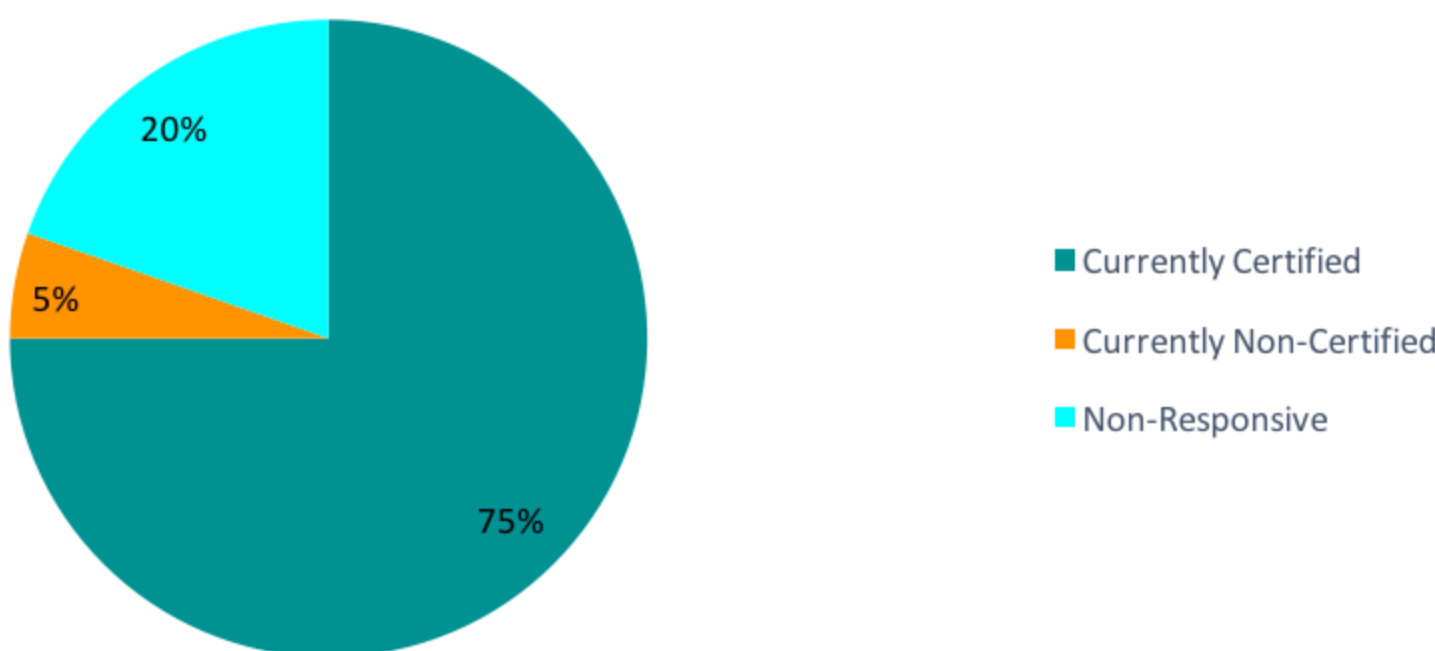
112 Participants (92% Female, 8% Male) (Age Range 18-70+)  
65% have earned a Bachelors Degree or Higher  
94% Receive little to no compensation for church work  
75% Personally affiliated with the church in which they interpret  
53% Interpret weekly at church  
63% Regularly team with other certified interpreters or ITP students in church settings

## RESULTS

Certification Status Beginning Church Interpreting

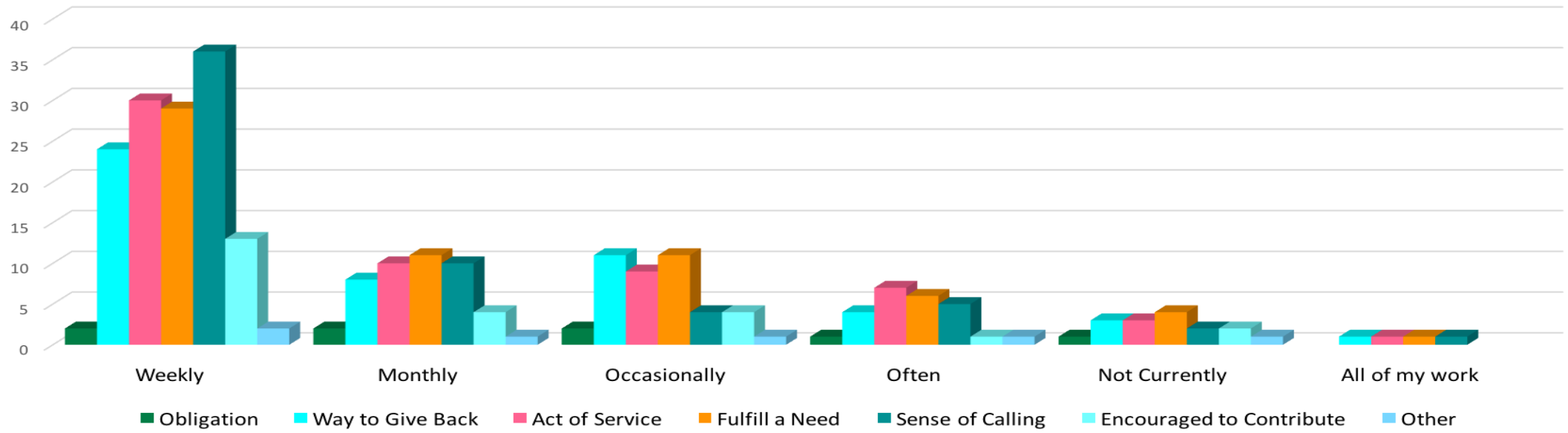


Current Certification Status

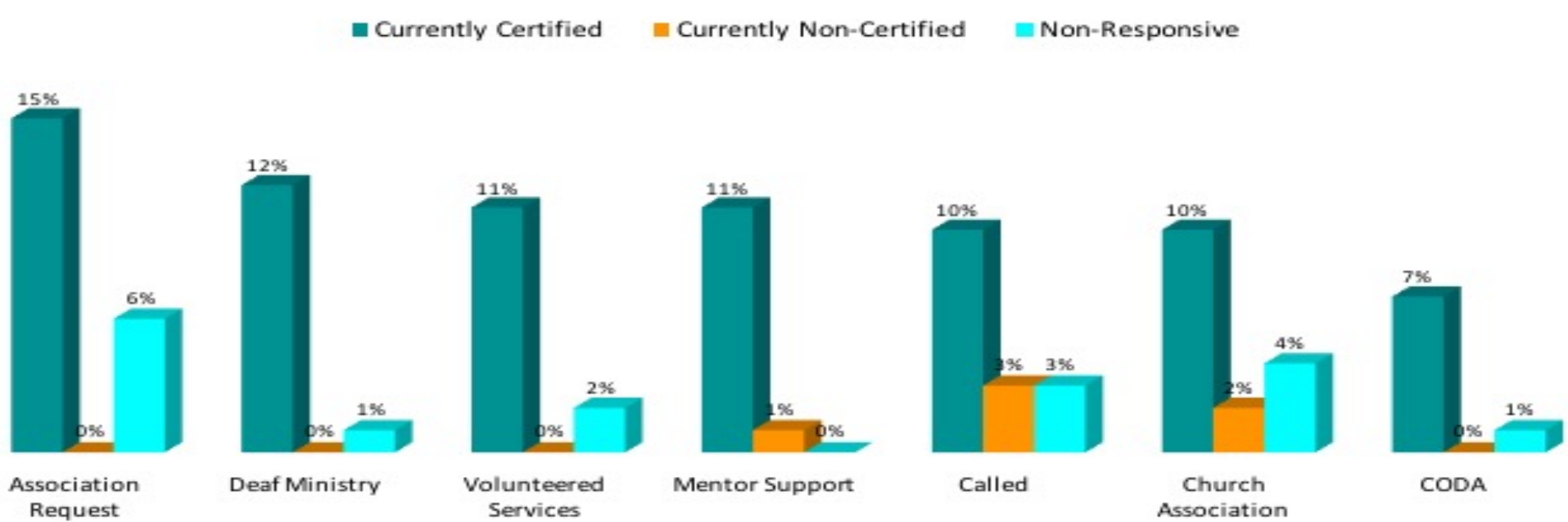


## MOTIVATION FINDINGS

Frequency & Motivation for Continuous Religious Work



Open Coded Reason For Church Interpreting



## REFERENCES

Grindrod, R. (1998). Interpreting in religious settings. Views,15(3), 12-14.  
James, R. (1998). Me, a religious interpreter? No way! Views,15(3), 15-17.  
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. (2007). *Interpreting in Religious Settings*. Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. Retrieved from [http://www.nwasla.com/Religious\\_SPP.pdf](http://www.nwasla.com/Religious_SPP.pdf)  
Warford, P. (2000). Religious interpreting: The art, the dance. Views, 17(12), 12-13.

## CONCLUSION

- 70% of church interpreters who began non-certified or while training have since obtained credentials.
- Among the 83% who began non-certified, 3/4 pursued professional training and obtained certification.
- The view of church interpreters from two-decades ago does not align with the current sampling. The majority are now more educated, professionally trained and certified.
- While the motivations are numerous, a sense of calling and connections individuals have inspire these interpreters to continue their church work despite receiving little or no compensation and potentially being stereotyped as inferior or unskilled.