

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NAI

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) was formed in 1988 from two existing organizations—the Association of Interpretive Naturalists and the Western Interpreters Association. Both of those groups were created in the 1950s to provide training and networking opportunities for interpreters of natural and cultural history in nonformal settings (parks, zoos, nature centers, museums, and aquaria).

For over 30 years, the Association of Interpretive Naturalists and Western Interpreters Association operated as two separate professional organizations with offices in Maryland and California, respectively. After merging to form NAI in 1988, a partnership was created with Colorado State University's Department of Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism. CSU students work in the NAI office as interns and work-study employees.

NAI strives to meet the needs of interpretation professionals in North America and worldwide. Its certification program is one of many services designed to further the work of the profession. Please let us know what we can do to serve your needs.

More information about NAI, the certification program, and other products and services is available on our website, www.interpnet.com.



For More Information

Contact NAI's national office at 888-900-8283 (toll free) or visit www.interpnet.com and click on "Certification."

OVERVIEW OF NAI CERTIFICATION

NAI offers a professional certification program to recognize individuals who exhibit knowledge and skills necessary to assure quality interpretive services to all audiences. Certification is currently available in six categories:

- Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)
- Certified Heritage Interpreter (CHI)
- Certified Interpretive Manager (CIM)
- Certified Interpretive Trainer (CIT)
- Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP)
- Certified Interpretive Host (CIH)

This brochure answers some common questions about NAI's CIG program, which has different requirements than other categories. For additional information regarding NAI and the professional certification program, please contact the NAI office or visit the website.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the CIH program?

The Certified Interpretive Host category is designed for staff and volunteers at interpretive sites who have public contact but don't usually deliver interpretive programs. Receptionists, maintenance workers, law enforcement officers, campground hosts, greeters, and sales clerks are among the individuals who may find the program helpful. CIH training combines customer service with informal interpretation to help participants improve their responses to guests in general while helping achieve stewardship goals of the organization.

Who can participate in the CIH program?

Anyone age 16 or over with a desire to improve their public contact skills and further their interest in interpretation. Membership in NAI is not required, but fees are discounted for NAI members.



What's the benefit of CIH status?

The CIH program helps agencies achieve their missions by encouraging positive public interaction with the resources through informal interpretation and excellent customer service.

What's the difference between this certification category and the other categories?

The CIH category offers recognition of a basic understanding of and ability to apply interpretive techniques that improve the quality of public interaction at an interpretive site with natural and cultural resources. This category is most likely to be used by employees or volunteers who want to enhance their job performance, but who have had little or no previous exposure to customer service or interpretive training. The other four categories are designed to recognize a professional commitment to interpretation and have additional experience and/or education criteria as minimum qualifications.

How do I achieve CIH status?

You must complete 16 hours of documented training conducted by NAI or NAI-certified trainers. You must also pass an exam of written and video components with a score of 80% or better. Both of these requirements can usually be met by attending the two-day NAI CIH training course. Visit the website (www.interpnet.com) for information on upcoming dates and locations for this and other training courses.

Can NAI run a CIH course for my company?

Yes. Employers can set up an on-site CIH training course for groups of 10 to 30 employees. NAI provides access to certified trainers and all the materials needed for your employees to become Certified Interpretive Hosts. Call or e-mail the NAI office for details. A qualified trainer from your company can earn the Certified Interpretive Trainer credential with sanction to teach the CIH course within your company. For information on this go to <http://www.interpnet.com>.

Can I apply my CIH status to one of the other professional certification categories?

No. The requirements for other categories are different, so the CIH certificate cannot be applied to those categories.



Can I apply for CIH status even if I meet the minimum qualifications for the professional certification categories or hold a Certified Interpretive Guide certificate?

Yes. In fact, many people prefer to augment the skills they learn in the CIG course with the CIH or use these courses as a refresher prior to completing their professional certification package.

Does CIH status last a lifetime?

No. Once certified, you can renew your certification every four years if you continue your education by attending college courses or NAI-approved training. Documentation of 40 hours of continued education over the four-year period is the responsibility of the applicant.

How much does it cost?

NAI members pay an application fee of \$80. Renewals are \$35. Non-members pay an application fee of \$130 with renewal fees of \$85. This fee does not include the fee for a training session.

What if I take the test and don't pass?

You will need to take the entire course and exam again to become certified.