

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.

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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For More Information

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



Do you create meaningful experiences and memories that last a lifetime? As an interpreter, you connect the minds and hearts of your guests to the beauty of nature and the mysteries of history. Now you can become the best interpretive guide you can be by earning the Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) credential with the National Association for Interpretation. The CIG credential is gaining recognition and respect by tour and cruise companies, parks, zoos, museums, nature centers, and aquariums around the world. Join in and be part of the growing profession of interpretation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the CIG program?

The Certified Interpretive Guide category is designed for seasonal or temporary guides who lack the experience or educational background in interpretation required for certification in other professional categories. The CIG program offers an opportunity to train guides in interpretive techniques and then acknowledge that training with an internationally recognized certification.

Who can participate in the CIG program?

Anyone age 16 or over with a desire to increase their knowledge and skills related to interpretation may participate. Membership in NAI is not required, but fees are discounted for NAI members.



What's the benefit of CIG status?

The CIG program enhances tour guides' communication skills and may provide a competitive edge in the tourism industry.

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

The CIG category offers recognition of a basic understanding of and ability to apply interpretive techniques to guided talks and informal situations. This category is most likely to be used by new hires, seasonal employees, volunteers, or docents who want to enhance their performance. The other four categories are designed to recognize a professional commitment to interpretation and have additional experience and/or educational criteria as minimum qualifications. (See back panel.)

Does CIG 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 continued education is the responsibility of the applicant.

How do I achieve CIG status?

You must complete 32 hours of documented training conducted by NAI or NAI-certified trainers. You must also pass a written exam with a score of 80% or better and demonstrate proficiency in a practical application of interpretation. All of these requirements can usually be met by attending the NAI CIG training course. Visit www.interpnet.com for information on upcoming dates and locations for this and other training courses.

Can NAI run a CIG course for my company?

Yes. Employers can set up an on-site CIG 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 Guides. Call or e-mail the NAI Program Director for information for details.

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

Yes. If you hold a valid CIG certificate, you may apply for certification in other categories once you meet the minimum qualifications for those categories.

Can I apply for CIG status even if I meet the minimum qualifications for the professional certification categories?

Yes. In fact, many people prefer to take the CIG course as a refresher to help them prepare for the written exam prior to completing their professional certification package. In the CIG course, you'll be brought up to date with the latest publications and research on interpretation, so it can be a wise investment.

How much does it cost?

NAI members pay an application fee of \$75. Renewals are \$35. Nonmembers pay an application fee of \$125 with renewal fees of \$85. This fee does not include the required training session, and training fees vary according to location and sponsor.

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

You can retest within 90 days with no additional fee or training requirement. If you wait beyond the 90-day limit, you must pay the application fee and retake the 32-hour training course to attempt the test again.

