The demand for Sign Language Interpreters is expected to rise 46% from 2012 to 2022, an increase of 29,300 jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Scott Community College offers an American Sign Language/English Interpreter Program. The three-year program can qualify a graduate for entry-level positions ranging from $20-$25 an hour.

"Many of the interpreters working in the Quad Cities currently have graduated from this program," said Teacher, Diane Roebuck. "Most Quad Citians would not expect that there are probably between 200 and 300 deaf community members living and working around them."

Right now, Roebuck says only 80% of interpreting requests can be filled - and the need is only going to get greater.
"We just don't have enough interpreters to fill all of them and with all the baby boomers retiring, we're going to be struggling very hard to keep up with the demand," she explained.

There are several other reasons why the demand is high. Roebuck says more people who are deaf or hard of hearing are in public situations more often, including children who are going to public schools more frequently. That means more interpreters are needed in schools.

"Those students then graduate and they go to local colleges whether they require interpreting services and then all the way through their childhood and all their way through adulthood they go to doctors, they go to lawyers, they go to banks and other things that all of us do in our daily life," added Roebuck. "Interpreters facilitate their ability to understand what's going on."

The career can be full-time or part-time, too. That flexibility allows people to take care of their families or continue their education and get a Bachelor's or Master's Degree.

"It gives our students a lot of choice and a lot of marketable skills to take with them wherever they decide to go," Roebuck concluded.