

GUIDANCE TO COURTS FOR RECRUITING, HIRING, AND CONTRACTING COURT INTERPRETERS



June 2020

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
Introduction	3
Application Questions.....	4
Contracting Options.....	9
Interview Questions.....	11
Job Announcement.....	15
Posting the Job Announcement.....	19
Job Description.....	21
Orientation and Onboarding.....	24
Performance Reviews	28
Salary and Funding Options	34
Conclusion.....	36
Appendix	37

Acknowledgments

This guidance is the product of recommendations from the “Interpreter Recruitment Packet Workgroup” of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC). Members of the workgroup are:

Mr. Juan Carlos Cordova (Chair)

Court Interpreter
United States Courts, District of Arizona

Ms. Elaina Cano

Interpreter Manager
Maricopa County Superior Court

Ms. Judith Costello

Court Interpreter
Flagstaff Municipal Court

Mr. Dan Edwards

Court Administrator
Scottsdale Municipal Court

Ms. Patrice McKinney

Human Resources Analyst
Phoenix Municipal Court

Ms. Cristina Parra

Court Interpreter Supervisor
Phoenix Municipal Court

Mr. Carlos M. Reyes

Lead Court Interpreter
Yavapai Superior Court

Ms. Abril Ruiz Ortega

Court Administrator
Avondale Municipal Court

Hon. Danielle Viola

Judge
Maricopa County Superior Court

Introduction

In August 2019, the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC) established a working group with the purpose of aiding courts in the recruitment and contracting of court interpreters through the creation of a “solicitation packet.”

The workgroup met on three occasions and identified eight focus areas:

- Application Questions
- Contracting Options
- Interview Questions
- Job Announcement
- Job Description
- Orientation and Onboarding
- Performance Reviews
- Salary and Funding Options

This guide is intended as a tool to assist courts in the identification, hiring, contracting, and managing of qualified court interpreters. While CIPAC and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) work to increase the quantity and quality of court interpreter services in Arizona, the resources and templates herein may be used by courts recruiting interpreters of all languages for both staff and contract positions.

Application Questions

Finding the most qualified candidates to interview for an interpreter position is challenging. This section discusses the use of application questions to aid in sorting through the pool of applicants. This can help ensure that those with the required minimum qualifications are easily identified.

The application questions are often used by the human resources department to decide which resumes/applications are forwarded on to interpreter supervisors for further review. The most effective application questions inform supervisor decisions about which applicants to interview, as well as may help to determine interview questions. It is recommended that application questions reflect the court's priorities in hiring, as well as require the applicant to identify or expand upon their qualifications in the context of the requirements listed on the job announcement.

Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing

So the court can more easily comply with [Administrative Order 2016-02](#), it is recommended that one or more of the application questions address the applicant's current credentialing status and, if not currently credentialed, the progress of the applicant in the credentialing process.

Examples

Please indicate the Tier you possess from the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program.

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4
- None of these

Are you able to obtain a Tier 3 or Tier 4 level credential through the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program within 24 months of hire date?

- Yes
- No
- Already possess Tier 3 or Tier 4

If currently in the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program process, where/how far along are you in the process? (Please describe)

Other Certifications, Professional Memberships, and Continuing Education

Some applicants may possess another state, federal or other certification that may help inform the interpreter supervisor's decision to interview an applicant, or which can provide other important information about the applicant's experience and abilities. One or more of the application questions may inquire about certifications other than the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program, other professional memberships, and continuing education certificates.

Examples

What interpreting or translation certificates¹ do you currently possess?

Please list your memberships in any professional interpreter/translator associations such as, but not limited to, NAJIT, ACIA, ATA, AIIC, or CCIA².

In the last year, have you participated in any continuing education activities that are relevant to this position or interpreting?

Educational: _____

Skill-Building: _____

Other: _____

Interpreting Experience

Though the job announcement may specify certain experience requirements, it is recommended that one or more application questions require the applicant to elaborate on his/her interpreting experience.

Examples

In the last two years, approximately how many hours per month have you spent interpreting?

Legal: _____

What kind of experience is this?

- Employee of a court*
- Contract interpreter*
- Both*

Medical: _____

Please Describe: _____

Other: _____

Please Describe: _____

Briefly summarize your experience interpreting and translating?

Please Describe: _____

¹ Note that the word “certificate” can be misleading. Evidence of attendance at seminars or successful completion of brief training programs do not necessarily correlate to the ability to become a fully credentialed or certified interpreter. If you have questions about a certificate presented, follow-up to gather more information. The [AOC Language Access Coordinator](#) may be able to provide additional information.

² National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT), Arizona Court Interpreters Association (ACIA), American Translators Association (ATA), International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), or California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA).

Other Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

Many job announcements list Minimum Qualifications and Preferred Qualifications. Application questions that allow the candidate to elaborate on these items may be helpful to get a better idea of the candidate's qualifications for the interpreter position.

Examples

Please check the areas with which you are familiar or have education/experience in:

- Legal and Court Terminology*
 - English*
 - Spanish*
- Arizona Revised Statutes*
- Arizona Rules of Court*
- Public Administration*
- Case Management Software*
 - AZTEC*
 - AJACS*
 - [the court's software]*
- Court Procedures*
- Microsoft Office Products*
 - Word*
 - Excel*
 - PowerPoint*
 - Access*
 - Outlook (Calendaring and Tasks)*
 - SharePoint*
 - OneDrive*

Other knowledge, skills, abilities, education or experience that is relevant to the court interpreter position. Please Describe.

Ideal Responses to Application Questions

The following are examples of ideal responses to the application questions. Not all of the examples below will apply to every court or every situation. The hiring manager should evaluate the suitability of the responses and recommendations presented, taking into account recruitment objectives, circumstances, job duties, and hiring policies.

Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing

[Administrative Order 2016-02](#) directs that courts attempt to recruit Tier 3 or Tier 4 credentialed interpreters. Therefore, the ideal response to this question would indicate the candidate is credentialed at Tier 3 or Tier 4. If there is no viable Tier 3 or Tier 4 applicant at the time of recruitment, courts may hire another candidate provided they become credentialed at the Tier 3 or 4 level within 24 months of hire.

Other Certifications, Professional Memberships, and Continuing Education

Other certifications, memberships, and continuing education can illustrate an applicant's skill-level, commitment to the interpreting profession, and motivation for professional growth.

- **Certificates**
Anything that indicates training and education in the skills and profession of interpreters. But be careful as these are not necessarily good indicators of a candidate's ability to pass a skills exam if they are not already credentialed.
- **Memberships**
Any other membership group dedicated to training interpreters and improving professionalism in the field of interpreting.
- **Continuing Education (webinars, seminars, online and in-person training).** Look for longer, more formal training programs that tend to be of higher quality, such as:
 - University of Arizona, National Center for Interpretation
 - De La Mora Institute of Interpretation
 - Southern California School of Interpretation
 - Court Interpreting Training Online

Interpreting Experience and Education

The following are examples of education and experience which may indicate a candidate's suitability for a court interpreter position:

- Master's degree, or second year candidates for a master's degree in interpretation and/or translation
- Bachelor's degree in Spanish or translation and/or interpretation
- Bachelor's degree in any discipline and 2 years of relevant experience providing interpreting services in a court environment
- Associate degree and 3 years of professional interpreting experience in any setting AND 1 year of court interpreting experience
- A high school diploma or equivalent and 5 years of professional court interpreting experience
- A certificate in court interpreting and 3 years of professional interpreting experience in the Arizona courts

Other Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

If the position includes other duties, besides court interpreting, it is recommended that the hiring manager consider other knowledge, skills, abilities application questions.

- **Technology**
 - Minimal experience using Microsoft Office products

- Some experience using case management software
- Legal and Court Terminology
 - 1-2 years of court experience, in any capacity
 - Combinations of education and court experience
- Court Procedures
 - 1-2 years of court experience, in any capacity
 - Combinations of education and court experience

Contracting Options

It is important that the court clearly spell out the court's and interpreter's rights and obligations under a service agreement/contract, address court interpreter-specific requirements, and include any clauses required by the court's contracting office. This section discussed some items a court should consider when developing contract interpreter agreements.

Tools for Identifying Contractors

All of these require follow-up by the contract manager to see if the potential contractor is of the level that the court deems necessary.

- Arizona Court Interpreter Registry
 - Contact information
 - Credential level
 - Travel preferences
 - Languages spoken
- Arizona Court Interpreter Listserv
 - Contact information
 - Languages spoken
- Other State Directories
 - Contact information
 - Credential/certification level
 - Language spoken
- Arizona State Procurement Portal
 - Prices for in person interpreters
 - Spanish
 - Languages other than Spanish
 - Contact information for the contract holder

Considerations When Making an Offer

It is recommended that the contract manager consider adding a variety of clauses to the contract to help ensure the services provided meet the courts expectations of professionalism and quality.

- Credentialing guidelines and preference
- Code of ethics (entity specific and practice specific)

- Arizona Court Interpreter Code of Conduct
- Liability insurance
- Interpreter equipment needs
- Sample work requests (transcription/translation, interpreter request form, etc.)
- Scope of work
- Historical usage data or prospective anticipated needs
- Attire
- Requirements for using courtroom technology and remote interpreting resources
- Scheduling requirements (half day versus full day)
- Invoice template (to reflect minimum and detailed description of how services will be billed)
- Cancellation fees
- Travel expenses
- Performance consequences
- Preferred forms for translation/transcription

Incentivizing Contractor Credentialing for Increased Quality

Interpreter coordinators/supervisors may unexpectedly experience issues with contractor performance, professionalism, and quality of services in the courtroom. Interpreters who possess the ACICP or other certification typically have the foundational knowledge and language ability to perform within expectations.

It is recommended that, if possible, the court offer higher pay for credentialed/certified interpreters. This may be especially important for interpreters of lesser-used-languages who may need encouragement to become credentialed.

Interview Questions

The interview is crucial in selecting the right candidate for the position. The most effective interview questions require the interpreter to expand upon his/her qualifications, experiences, and education, as well as give a better idea of the candidate's problem-solving abilities, character, personality or additional relevant information. This section discusses some options for creating interview questions that more fully inform supervisors of the candidate's suitability for the position.

Ideally, the interview questions should address a variety of topic areas which reflect the position's duties and requirements.

Language Ability

It is recommended that the interviewer/panel ask the candidate a number of questions that require the candidate to elaborate on how he/she acquired his/her language skills.

Examples

How did you learn the foreign language?

Have you ever traveled or spent a large amount of time in any of the countries where the language is spoken?

How would you grade your level of proficiency in the foreign language?

Credentialing

It is recommended that one or more interview questions require the candidate to confirm that they are credentialed through ACICP, or if not credentialed, detail their progress in the process.

Examples

If not, tell us what credentialing exams you've passed and what you feel you need to achieve the required Tier 3 or Tier 4 credential.

(Interviewee should be able to definitively confirm he/she is credentialed or elaborate on the credentialing process and describe what exams need to be taken to achieve at Tier 3 or Tier 4 credential.)

Experience

It is recommended that one or more interview questions require the candidate to elaborate on his/her experience as an interpreter, as well as any other experience relevant to the position.

Examples

What is your experience working with courts?

(3 to 5 years as a staff court interpreter is great, 1 to 3 years as a staff interpreter is very good, 1 to 5 years as a freelance interpreter is good, working in court in other capacity is helpful)

What other experience do you have in the interpreting field?

(Medical interpretation, conference interpretation, and/or community interpretation experience is helpful)

What experience do you have as it relates to translation?

(Has done translation of legal documents for courts, has done commercial translation, and/or has done translation work as part of school are relevant and helpful)

Interpreting Profession

It is recommended that one or more questions ask the candidate to describe fundamentals related to the interpreting profession.

Examples

Are you familiar with the Arizona Court Interpreter Code of Conduct?

(Interviewee is familiar with the canons, can talk about the canons, or has general knowledge of interpreter ethics which match the canons.)

Are you familiar with the three modes of interpretation? If so, can you please give an example situation where you would (or have) used each skill?

(Interviewee knows about each skill (simultaneous, consecutive, and sight-translation), used each mode in the past.)

Training and Education

It is recommended that one or more questions ask the candidate to elaborate on interpreter training and education.

Examples

Can you elaborate on the type of court interpreter training you have completed?

What training and education do you have related to court interpretation? (higher education, attended courses, workshops, attended training in court on job, etc.)

Ethics, Court Procedures, Other

It is recommended that one or more questions ask candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of ethics, court procedures, or other relevant skills.

Examples & Sample Answers

If a defendant asked you for assistance with a matter that is outside the parameters of your job description, what would you do?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *"I would politely decline stating that you are not permitted to provide such assistance; then I would report the incident to a supervisor."*

What must an interpreter do when she/he hears an error made by the speaker for whom she/he is interpreting?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“I would simply interpret what the speaker says – errors and all...”*

If a defense attorney asks an interpreter to “explain” the plea to the defendant what should the interpreter’s answer be?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“I would explain that I cannot give any legal explanations, but I am happy to sight translate the document and interpret the client’s questions to you.”*

When an interpreter finds that he/she is socially acquainted with any party in a case for which he/she will interpret, what should he/she do, if anything?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“I would report this to the judge as soon as it becomes known to me. If I know ahead of time, I would report it to the person hiring me, also. Depending on the circumstances, I may need to recuse myself from the case. I would look to the judge and/or hiring manager to make that determination.”*

If an interpreter cannot hear, or keep up with a speaker or understand anything happening in court what should he/she say and/or do?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“The interpreter must ask the judge for the appropriate assistance immediately.”*

Follow-Up Question: *Exactly how should an interpreter bring this to the attention of the court? Give an example of the exact words you would use.*

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“I would ask in the third person. “Your Honor, may the interpreter request that the parties slow down / a repetition / clarification on a point?””*

What happens at an arraignment?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“There is a formal reading of the charges. The charges are read to the defendant and the defendant pleads not guilty, or a plea of not guilty is entered on the record on behalf of the defendant.... Guilty/no contest pleas are usually not entertained during an arraignment calendar.”*

What body “hands down” an indictment?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“The grand jury...”*

Who are the parties in a civil case?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“The plaintiff (person suing) and defendant (being sued). Petitioner (files petition) and respondent (opposes petition). Cross-complainant (defendant suing someone else in the same suit) and cross-defendant (person sued by cross-complainant).”*

Is there a jury at a bench trial?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“No, there is no jury because a bench trial is a trial only to the judge.”*

In sequential order, name the hearings that follow an arrest and lead up to a trial.

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“Initial appearance/arraignment, pretrial hearings and motions, trial, sentencing, and appeal...”*

Follow-Up Question: *What happens at each hearing?*

Sample Answer: (These are examples only; the hearing/event and definitions may differ from court to court):

Initial Appearance: *“Defendant informed of the charges, possible appointment of public defender.”*

Arraignment: *“The formal reading of charges, defendant pleads.”*

Preliminary Hearing [limited jurisdiction courts]: *“The court determines if there is probable cause.”*

Case Management Conference: *“The parties attempt to settle some issues before proceeding to trial.”*

Status Conference: *“The parties update information and set the trial date.”*

Pretrial Conference: *“The parties attempt to resolve the matter without going to trial, a plea offer is made at this hearing.”*

Trial: *“Both parties present witnesses and evidence and the jury decides the facts and arrives at a verdict.”*

What are the parts of a trial?

Sample Answer (appropriate for general and limited jurisdiction courts): *“Voir Dire, jury instruction, opening statements, direct examination, cross-examination, (presentation of evidence, witness testimony), closing arguments, jury charge, jury deliberations, verdict, sentencing, and appeals...”*

Job Announcement

The purpose of the job announcement is to inform potential job candidates of the opening, as well as attract the best applicants to the interpreter position. This section provides suggestions on how to create an engaging and informative job announcement, which is essential to generating interest in the position.

Introduction Section

In this section, the hiring manager should explain a little about the court and where it is located for people that might be unfamiliar with the community in which they will be working. If possible, highlight the great things the court does and the best aspects of its location.

About the Position Section

In this section the court should aim to provide a concise summation of the job description such as:

Court Interpreters provide Spanish language interpreting and translation services to the non-English speaking public during all municipal court proceedings and other court-related events. Court Interpreters are responsible for the simultaneous and consecutive interpreting services of court proceedings, as well as sight and written translation of court-related documents. Incumbents work under the direct supervision of the Court Interpreter Supervisor, who evaluates performance based on the quality of service provided and results achieved.

The court can also include any pay differentials for credentialed vs. non-credentialed candidates, as well as any benefits packages. Pay differentials or differentiated salaries for the different credential tiers can help attract more qualified applicants to apply for the position and also serve as an incentive for continued study and improvement of skills. Additionally, the court would list any travel that might be required if the position covers multiple courts.

Minimum Qualifications Section

In this section, the court should emphasize the requirement that candidates be credentialed as a primary qualification. This is to make it clear to human resources staff, candidates, and others that the credential is of vital importance.

To assist applicants, the hiring manager could add a link to the ACICP credentialing page from the job description. This will encourage applicants looking at the posting to research credentialing, and if needed, determine if they believe they can complete the process in 24 months from hire.

It is recommended that this section make clear if the requirements are “and” or “or” requirements. In other words, must an applicant satisfy all the minimum qualifications listed, certain combinations of them, or only one of them?

Examples

Must possess or be able to obtain a Tier 3 or Tier 4 certification from the Arizona Court Interpreter Credential Program within 24 months from the date of hire.

Not Credentialed? If you would like more information on how to become a credentialed court interpreter, visit www.azcourts.gov/interpreter

Bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpretation from an accredited institution.

Two years of experience providing interpreting services in a court setting

Must have experience providing oral Spanish interpretation in simultaneous and consecutive modes during complex proceedings, hearings, interviews, and other court-related events.

Qualifications and Credentialing Requirements

[Administrative Order 2016-02](#) directs that courts attempt to recruit Tier 3 or Tier 4 credentialed interpreters. If there is no viable Tier 3 or Tier 4 applicant at the time of recruitment, courts may hire another candidate provided he/she can become credentialed at the Tier 3 or 4 level within 24 months of hire.

If a court chooses to hire an applicant who is not credentialed at the Tier 3 or Tier 4 level, or their equivalent, the court should expect that a significant investment of time, effort, and resources will be needed for the interpreter to achieve a Tier 3 or Tier 4 credential within 24 months of hire. The following are some considerations for courts who experience a lack of Tier 3 or Tier 4 credentialed applicants:

- **Reciprocity**
Consider candidates with federal certification or certification from another state court's administrative office that may qualify for reciprocity with Arizona. Contact the [AOC Language Access Coordinator](#) for more information on reciprocity.
- **Tier 2 credential**
Individuals with a Tier 2 credential have passed the credentialing exam, although their scores were below the Tier 3 threshold. The Tier 2 credential is only valid for two (2) years. However, these candidates may be able to earn the Tier 3 credential with further study, practice, and retesting. Nonetheless, it will take substantial and sustained effort on the part of the interpreter to improve their skills. The court will have to consider how or if it can support the interpreter in their development.
- **Tier 1 credential**
These candidates have demonstrated that they have the basic minimum language fluency and some knowledge of courts and interpreter ethics. However, they have not yet passed an interpreting skills exam at the required level. Some may not have even attempted the skills exam. Court's should weigh this information carefully, considering the totality of a candidate's qualifications, when considering a Tier 1 interpreter. It will take even more effort than that required for a Tier 2 interpreter for a Tier 1 candidate to improve their skills to the required Tier 3 level. The court will have to consider how or if it can support the interpreter in their development over the 24-month grace period.
- **No credential**
If it is necessary to consider applicants without a skills-based credential, it is recommended that the

applicant at least have engaged with the credentialing program and be working towards completion of the Tier 1 credential. Courts can verify a candidate's status in the Arizona Court Interpreter Registry. Courts should be aware that those who have not engaged with the credentialing program, or who have not been able to earn even the basic Tier 1 credential, may have fundamental deficiencies in the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Proceed with caution.

Essential Functions Section

It is recommended that the court breakdown the essential Knowledge Skills and Abilities (KSAs) for interpreters. The AOC has a KSA document for both interpreters and supervisors to utilize. The court may choose to include some of the following KSAs in the announcement:

Provide transference from one language to another

Preserve accuracy; conserve intent, tone, style, and utterances of all messages

Accommodate for lack of equivalents in vocabulary or phrases

Accurately reflect the appropriate register of all messages

Perform effective terminological research to find accurate solutions to unknown or unfamiliar words. Their solutions maintain meaning, style, tone, and intent of the original source language

Self-monitor and self-correct

Practice and follow ethical standards at all times

Conduct business in a professional manner

Project self-confidence and self-awareness when interpreting

Establish and maintain effective working relationships with others

Work with and handle confidential and sensitive information appropriately

Multitask and cope with a high volume of work in a time critical environment

Work under pressure in highly dynamic work environments with changing demands and priorities

Think and react communicatively in all working languages

Speak with proper pronunciation, diction, and intonation in all working languages

Speak with a neutralized accent in all working languages

Speak softly but can also project when needed

Listen to, and comprehend different rates of speech in all working languages

Listen to, and comprehend various regional accents or dialectical differences in all working languages

Ignore auditory distractions and focus on source speaker

Read and comprehend overall meaning and specific details of written text in all working languages

Read and recognize various written contexts, including formal and informal text, subject-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms

Read quickly and with little preparation

Concentrate and focus

Process linguistic information quickly

Make quick linguistic decisions regarding word choice or terminology selection

Apply short-term memory skills in retaining units of information of varying size and length

Utilize predictive thinking skills to anticipate incoming messages

Analyze issues and make sound recommendations for solutions

Be computer-literate

Work Environment / Physical Demands Section

It is recommended that the court provide the working conditions under which the job will be performed, including any items required by the court's Human Resources Department and others important to the position. Some items could include:

- Working in a courthouse with exposure to persons charged with criminal behavior
- Travel requirements
- Technology systems, such as Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), with which the interpreter must become familiar

Posting the Job Announcement

One of the fundamental purposes of a job announcement is to generate interest from the most qualified candidates for the position. Unless the interpreter is actively looking for a court position, just uploading the announcement on the court's hiring webpage may not be enough to attract a robust variety of candidates. It is recommended that the court distribute the job announcement in an assortment of venues, including:

Administrative Office of the Court (AOC)

- **Arizona Court Interpreter Registry**
The AOC can email the job announcement to Registry participants on behalf of the court. The court can target a specific group of interpreters such as Spanish language interpreters with a Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 credential, etc. To make a request, please contact the AOC Language Access Coordinator.
- **Arizona Court Interpreter ListServ**
The AOC can email the job announcement to participants of the ListServ who can review the announcement, and possibly forward on to interested interpreters. To make a request, or to join the ListServ as a court supervisor/manager, please contact the AOC Language Access Coordinator.

NOTE: The Listserv is an electronic mailing list software that is designed to allow Arizona courts to communicate easily and effectively exchange interpreting/translation-related information.

- **National Language Access ListServ**
The [AOC Language Access Coordinator](#) can email the job announcement to other state's Language Access Coordinators / Program Managers through a national language access listserv. To make a request, please contact the AOC Language Access Coordinator.

Interpreter Associations

Oftentimes, a professional interpreter association has a job board or other resource to distribute information to its members. Requesting that a professional interpreter association distribute the announcement can yield a more diverse pool of candidates, including qualified and experienced interpreters who may not have considered working for the court, or freelance interpreters with court experience who may be interested in becoming a staff interpreter.

- **Arizona associations**
There are several interpreter associations in Arizona that may distribute the announcement to their members, including:
 - Arizona Court Interpreters Association (ACIA)
 - Arizona Translators and Interpreters, Inc. (ATI)
- **Regional and national associations**
Courts that are having difficulties attracting qualified candidates may wish to consider requesting that an association outside of Arizona distribute the announcement to its members. Regionally, the court could consider contacting:
 - The California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)

- Association of Independent Judicial Interpreters of California (AIJIC)
- California Federation of Interpreters
- Nevada Interpreters and Translators Association (NITA)
- Utah Translators and Interpreters Association (UTIA)
- Colorado Association of Professional Interpreters (CAPI)
- Colorado Translators Association (CTA)
- New Mexico Translators & Interpreters Association (NMTIA)
- Nationally, the court could consider contacting:
 - National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT)
 - American Translator Association (ATA)
 - International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)

Job Description

The interpreter job description is a formal account of an employee's responsibilities. The job description serves a variety of functions. For example, it ensures that employees and managers have a clear, mutual understanding of the job duties and expectations, serves as the foundation of an employee's performance reviews, and helps to determine compensation for position. This section provides suggestions on how to create a document which helps the interpreter understand his/her role and how their work contributes to the overall mission of the court.

Job Title

It is recommended that the court make the interpreter position title(s) specific. Targeted job titles are typically more effective than generic ones, so be precise by including key phrases that accurately describe the role. Further, the court should try to avoid internal lingo that may confuse the job seeker. It is recommended that the court stick to standard experience levels like "Senior" rather than "VI" or other terms people are less familiar with.

Examples

Lead Court Interpreter

Court Interpreter, Senior

Court Interpreter Coordinator

Supervisory Court Interpreter

Court Interpreter Supervisor

Court Interpreter, Spanish (for non-lead positions)

Spanish Language Court Interpreter (for non-lead positions)

Leads, Supervisors, and Coordinators

If the court expects the interpreter to perform duties other than interpreting, such as supervision or coordination of other staff, the court should consider making the job title and job description inclusive of these additional duties. It is recommended that the additional duties be clearly defined and separated from the interpreter functions in the job description. Further, with additional duties and responsibilities required, it is recommended that the salary for the position appropriately compensate for those additional duties.

Job Summary

It is recommended that the court open with a strong, attention-grabbing summary of the position. The summary should provide an overview of the court and expectations for the position. Further, the court should consider hooking the reader with details about what makes the court unique, special, and a great place to work. Finally, the job description is an introduction to the court and its brand. It's recommended that the job summary includes details about the court's culture and a summary of why a candidate would love to work for the court.

Examples

Performs a wide variety of language interpretation activities on an assigned and as needed basis for the [court] and for parties to proceedings, including witnesses, defendants, attorneys, other court personnel, and the public.

The [agency] seeks to fill a Court Clerk Lead Worker position for [court] at the [building/complex description] in [city], Arizona. This is a highly advanced, technical position requiring specialized clerical knowledge and application of detailed procedures in the Arizona Judiciary.

The [court/agency] is seeking applicants for the position of Spanish Language Court Interpreter. This position reports directly to the [interpreter supervisor position title] in [department]. The primary obligation of the staff Interpreter is to overcome language barriers so that limited English proficient parties will have meaningful access to justice and suffer no advantage or disadvantage as compared to English-speaking defendants and other parties to legal proceedings.

Responsibilities and Duties

It is recommended that the court outline the core responsibilities of the position. The court should make sure the list of responsibilities is detailed, but concise. The court may wish to consider emphasizing the duties that are unique to the organization. For example, if the court is looking to fill an “Interpreter Coordinator” position, and the role requires contract expertise or experience, be sure to include this detail. This will help ensure the applicant understands the requirements of the position, and then can determine if he/she is able to perform the job.

Further, the court should consider highlighting the day-to-day activities of the position, specifically. This will help the applicant to understand the work environment and the activities to which he/she will be engaged in on a daily basis. This level of detail will help the candidate determine if the role and court are a good fit, helping the court to attract the best candidates for the position.

Finally, it is recommended that the court specify how the position fits into the court. The court should indicate to whom the job reports, how the person will function within the court, and how the position supports the court’s mission. This helps candidates see the bigger picture and understand how the role impacts the court.

Examples

Interprets from and into English and the applicable non-English language using simultaneous and consecutive modes at court proceedings and for other court-related departments at the direction of the court; Makes sight translations of documents for the benefit of the court including, but not limited to, court petitions, reports, waivers, felony disposition statement forms, and other documents; Interprets for judges, attorneys, court staff, and other court-related departments at the direction of the court; Notifies the court of any issues or situations that may impede the interpreters' performance; Researches and understands terminology used in court and functions of the court which may include, but not be limited to, legal, technological, scientific, and/or medical terminology; Reviews the daily docket and receives daily calendar assignments from the [position title] (or others) and accurately completes daily activity logs, or other documentation as required; Performs other language interpretation duties as assigned,

such as providing general court information at an information counter to the non-English speaking public and processes documents related to interpretation.

Court Interpreters provide Spanish language interpreting and translation services to the non-English speaking public during all [name of court] proceedings and other court-related events. Court Interpreters are expected to use the proper mode of interpretation depending on the situation, i.e. simultaneous, consecutive or sight. Incumbents work under the direct supervision of the [supervisor title], who evaluates performance based on the quality of service provided and results achieved.

Qualifications and Skills

The court should include a list of hard and soft skills that the ideal candidate would possess. The job description should specify education, previous job experience, certifications and technical skills required for the role. The court should include soft skills, like communication and problem solving, as well as personality traits that the court envisions for a successful hire.

Further, it's recommended that the court keep the list of qualifications and skills concise. While it may be tempting to list out every requirement the court envisions for their ideal hire, including too many qualifications and skills could dissuade skilled potential candidates.

Examples

Must possess or be able to obtain a Tier 3 or Tier 4 certification from Arizona Court Interpreter Credential Program within 24 months from date of hire.

Not Credentialed? If you would like more information on how to become a credentialed court interpreter, visit www.azcourts.gov/interpreter

Two years of experience providing interpreting services in a court setting

Bachelor's degree or master's degree in Translation and Interpretation Studies or related field

Must have experience providing oral Spanish interpretation in simultaneous and consecutive modes during complex proceedings, hearings, interviews, and other court-related events

Demonstrate continuous effort to improve and meet the court's operational needs, minimize customer wait time, streamline work processes, and work cooperatively and jointly to provide quality seamless service to internal and external customers

Orientation and Onboarding

The orientation period serves as the mechanism to provide essential information and resources to the employee, as well as establish and nurture manager-employee relationships. Moreover, the orientation period provides the foundation for a successful integration of staff into the court and should include a blend of general agency orientation and interpreter-specific onboarding tasks. This section discusses some approaches supervisors may wish to employ when orienting new staff interpreters.

Agency/General Orientation

Many courts have a general employee orientation plan that is structured for *all* employees of the court or agency. This orientation provides the foundational knowledge the new interpreter requires as an employee of the city, county, and/or court. The topics typically include:

- Agency Mission/Goals
- Employee Benefits
- Employee Resources
- Human Resources Policies
- Ethical Requirements of Court Employees
- Network Security/IT Discussion
- Building Security/Badges/Restricted Areas
- Emergencies/Fire Protocols
- Parking
- General Organization Chart
- Holidays

It is recommended that the interpreter supervisor be familiar with any human resources/county/city-required orientation programs.

Welcoming New Employees

The first few days on the job are usually very exciting but can be stressful for new employees. Supervisors can lay the foundation for a successful working relationship by paying special attention to a few details that could include:

- Supervisor greeting on first day before general orientation
- A clean and well-stocked desk/work area for the employee upon arrival on the first day
- Lunch with the supervisor in the first few days
- Welcome card/messages from the team

- Personal introductions to team, unit, and division staff
- Clear guidance/direction for meeting after general orientation
- Photos/information about full-time judges and hearing officers

General Items for New Employees

Interpreter supervisors may be tasked with a variety of items related to employee onboarding, including:

- Tour of the building
- Badge access
- Access to technology (email, intranet, drives, laptops, tablets, etc.)
- Division/Unit email and telephone directory
- Office supplies
- Internal forms and processes
- Division/Unit policies and procedures
- Unit/Division/Court acronym guide

Interpreter Orientation

A comprehensive orientation plan for staff interpreters typically includes a variety of items and spans several weeks. In the first few days/weeks it is recommended that the interpreter be provided:

- A copy of the interpreter job description
- A copy and sign the Arizona Court Interpreter Code of Conduct
- A copy, and should sign, any court-required interpreter oath(s)
- All relevant local court rules and procedures
- All relevant language access laws
- A local glossary, or any set of locally accepted translations of court terminology
- A copy of common court forms
- A copy of common courtroom scripts used by judicial officers
- A copy of the court's Language Access Plan (LAP) and the supervisor should review the document with the interpreter

Further, it is recommended that the interpreter:

- Observe court procedures/open court for several hours

- Shadow lead-interpreter(s) in a variety of hearing types and venues for several hours prior to taking assignments
- Be provided structured and job-specific training on court software and/or case management software
- Be provided structured and job-specific internal procedures

Guidance During Orientation

Establishing a robust and comprehensive resource network is critical to providing a thorough orientation to new employees. In addition to supervisor-lead training, it is recommended that new interpreter employees be provided support through peer-lead coaching, which would handle job-specific questions and training. It is also recommended that the manager review expectations of the position, including tasks, priorities, work-quality, etc. early in the orientation process to avoid confusion between the interpreter and manager.

Additionally, peer and/or supervisor observation of the new interpreter performing a variety of interpreting tasks in various venues/hearings can be a wonderful tool in the training process. If this approach is employed, it is recommended that the supervisor create a culture of growth and learning, where the peer/supervisor would provide kind, helpful, and constructive feedback to the employee.

Goal Setting

The structure and purpose of orientation provides a great opportunity for management to set performance expectations and construct goals that could be wide-ranging, finite, or on-going. It is recommended that the interpreter supervisor address a variety of items including:

- Task-specific items (translation of forms, language access projects, etc.)
- Credentialing/certification items (ACICP/federal/other)
- Other professional development (skill-building activities, education, etc.)
- Training requirements (yearly COJET, other internal training requirements, etc.)

Orientation and Onboarding for Non-Credentialed Interpreters

Sometimes the best candidate for the position may not be credentialed or possesses a Tier 1 or Tier 2 credential through the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program (ACICP). If a staff interpreter is not credentialed at the Tier 3 or Tier 4 level, it is recommended that supervisors provide a structured and robust training plan during and after the orientation period to help prepare the interpreter for the credentialing process. Supervisors should consider the following when developing an orientation/training plan for non-credentialed staff interpreters:

- Set a deadline for earning an ACICP credential within 24 months of hire
- Schedule study time during the staff's normal 40-hour week to study

- Ensure the interpreter engages in intensive practice by limiting disruptions and providing dedicated time to study
- Budget for contract interpreter assistance during the period in which the staff is studying
- If in a smaller court, try to arrange a shadowing of credentialed interpreters in busier courts
- Acquire and make available a library of study materials such as Interpretapes, Acebo, The Interpreter’s Edge, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) Practice Exam kit (Spanish and English)
- Encourage new employees to seek out practice resources and to practice for the test outside of work hours as well

Performance Reviews

This section discusses some approaches the interpreter supervisor may wish to consider for the evaluation of interpreter performance.

Resources for Non-Spanish Speaking Supervisors

It is especially challenging for non-Spanish speaking supervisors to accurately review the core competencies of the interpreter position. Supervisors who do not possess the level of Spanish necessary to credibly appraise interpreting ability may wish to consider yearly skill-assessments from outside the court. For example:

- Request a credentialed interpreter from another court to observe the interpreter
- Contract a local federally certified interpreter or Arizona Tier 3 or 4 interpreter to observe the interpreter
- Ask local interpreter training programs such as the National Center of Interpretation at the University of Arizona to provide an evaluation of the interpreter
- Contract with nationally renowned interpreter trainers or training institutes to evaluate the interpreter. Contact the [AOC Language Access Coordinator](#) for a list of resources

Timing of Reviews

Supervisors may wish to consider a variety of review timing to see what fits best in their department and for their court as a whole. It is recommended that supervisors perform a review of interpreter performance at least twice per year, formally or informally.

First Year of Employment

The first six months of employment can be hectic for the interpreter and supervisor. It is recommended that supervisors have monthly meetings to discuss interpreter performance achievements and concerns during the first few months of employment.

A formal review after one year of employment is beneficial in many ways, but it primarily serves as a mechanism to establish performance goals and position expectations for the coming year(s).

Established Staff Interpreters in the Organization

- Quarterly
Performance review meetings every 3-4 months help monitor goals more closely which often leads to better interpreter-performance outcomes. Regular performance reviews with staff interpreters are strongly recommended.
- As-Needed
The “as-needed” performance review model provides flexibility to both the interpreter and manager that may be necessary due to heavy workloads. However, infrequent “as-needed” performance reviews may lead to the interpreter failing to meet established goals in a timely manner (e.g. interpreter rushes to meet goals at the end of the year). If this model is employed, it is

recommended that supervisors set a reminder to schedule a meeting to discuss performance mid-year to review progress on goal(s).

Areas of Review

Employee performance has many facets; however, an interpreter performance review should have a combination of human resources department/policy-driven and interpreter-specific areas of review. It is recommended that managers consider measuring skills that are specific to the interpreter profession and include a test of interpreting skill. Below are some measures the manager may wish to consider including in interpreter reviews. For courts with more than one staff interpreter, courts should also take care to promote teamwork and an even workload for their interpreter staff.

Core Competencies

Effective/Accurate Interpreting

- General
 - Demonstrates native-like proficiency in Spanish and English
 - Preserves accuracy, conserves intent, tone, style, and register of communications
 - Demonstrates ability to react communicatively in Spanish and English
 - Listens carefully to communications and renders an interpretation that conveys the meaning and concepts of the original message rather than the individual words spoken
 - Accommodates for a lack of equivalents in vocabulary or phrases appropriately
 - Speaks with proper pronunciation, diction, and intonation in Spanish and English
 - Speaks with a neutralized accent in Spanish and English
 - Demonstrates ability to listen to and comprehend different rates of speech in Spanish and English
 - Demonstrates ability to listen to, and comprehend various regional accents or dialectical differences in Spanish and English
 - Understands cultural nuances, regional variations, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialisms and interprets them appropriately in Spanish and English
 - Processes linguistic information quickly and makes appropriate linguistic decisions (word choice or terminology selection) in Spanish and English
 - Demonstrates appropriate short-term memory skill and recall
 - Performs effective terminological research to find accurate solutions to unknown or unfamiliar words (Solutions maintain meaning, style, tone, and intent of the original source language)

- Sight Translation
 - Accurately and completely interprets documents of varying register aloud in Spanish and English
 - Demonstrates strong reading comprehension, and verbal and written communication skills in Spanish and English
 - Reads and recognizes various written contexts, including formal and informal text, subject-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms and renders the appropriate interpretation in Spanish and English
 - Reads and comprehends overall meaning and specific details of written text and renders the appropriate interpretation in Spanish and English
- Consecutive
 - Consecutively interprets utterances of varying lengths and speed in Spanish and English accurately and completely.
 - Demonstrates an efficient note-taking system (relevant names, dates, places, figures, etc.) to supplement memory
- Simultaneous
 - Accurately and completely simultaneously interprets utterances of varying lengths and speed in Spanish
 - Speaks softly when simultaneously interpreting, but projects his/her voice as appropriate

Effective/Accurate Translations

- Comfortably translates a variety of documents with accuracy and precision
- Produces translations that are complete, professional in appearance, and adhere to standards of spelling, grammar, syntax, idiomatic usage of the target language
- Reads and recognizes various written contexts, including formal and informal text, subject-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms and renders the appropriate translation in Spanish and English
- Reads and comprehends overall meaning and specific details of written text and renders the appropriate translation in Spanish and English
- Demonstrates strong reading comprehension, and written communication skills in Spanish and English

Professionalism

- Explains court interpreting procedures in a clear, concise, and comprehensive manner to attorneys, litigants, and the public
- Provides prompt and reliable service to judges and the public

- Completes assignments accurately and with attention to detail
- Demonstrates appropriate time management and organizational skills
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with others
- Demonstrates a cooperative and flexible attitude
- Demonstrates ability to multitask, cope with a high volume of work, to work under pressure and adapt with changing demands and priorities
- Demonstrates ability to appropriately analyze issues and makes sound recommendations for solutions
- Uses PC, Microsoft Office products and [the court's case management] effectively
- Handles confidential and sensitive information appropriately
- Projects self-confidence and self-awareness when interpreting
- Works with integrity

Requirements

- Completed all required COJET training
 - Total of 16 hours
 - Includes 6 hours of live training
 - Includes ethics training
 - Includes computer/networking security
- Possesses or obtained during the review period a Tier 3 or Tier 4 Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program (ACICP) credential
- Complies with the Arizona Court Interpreter Code of Conduct rules while performing his/her interpreter duties
- Maintains an appropriate leave record and follows leave policies

Projects/Tasks

- Accurately tracks cases for which he/she is responsible
 - If statistical information is available, consider a multiple-percentage rating (e.g. *Accurately tracks cases [80%-100% of the time] [70% - 79% of the time] [below 69% of the time], etc.*)
- Accurately tracks calls from [specific entity]
 - Public
 - Other divisions

- Other entity(ies) specific to the court
(If statistical information is available, consider a multiple-percentage rating (e.g. *Accurately tracks calls from XXXX [80%-100% of the time] [70% - 79% of the time] [below 69% of the time]*, etc.))
- Participated in continuing education activities specific to interpreting including:
 - [Predetermined/Supervisor requested continuing education]
 - Activities that develop his/her knowledge about the social, technological, and legal changes that affect language
 - [An independent learning task as described by interpreter/supervisor through reviews]
 - Skill-building courses
 - Formal college/university courses
- Developed/Updated the court's glossary of terminology used in precedent cases
(Superiors should consider adding additional descriptors/follow-up statements for quality or quantity: (e.g. *Accurately addressed a sufficient number of subjects in glossary; Appropriately and completely defined the terms listed in glossary; Created a functional and professional document*))
- Received a [expectation of measurement] on a performance survey³ completed by judicial officers
(Measurement of this item depends on the questions presented in the tool used to gather judicial officer feedback and how each item is weighed.)
- Received a [expectation of measurement] on the yearly interpreter skills-test in the following areas:
 - Sight Translation: English > Spanish
 - Sight Translation: Spanish > English
 - Consecutive
 - Simultaneous
(Consider using the Oral Court Interpreter Exam (administered twice per year by ACICP) or other tool to measure interpreting ability)
- Provided strong, high-quality, and nuanced guidance/mentoring to new team members
- Completed the [project name] accurately, thoroughly, and on time
- Promoted an even workload with fellow interpreters by successfully managing workload
- Provided support to his/her team

³ A survey of judges who have had the interpreter in their court to get their impression of the work performed by the interpreter.

Goal Setting

In addition to any human resources department/policy-driven goals, supervisors are encouraged to set interpreter-specific performance goals. It is recommended that managers set goals using a variety of methods and measurements.

Requirements of the Position

It is recommended that yearly goals include the requirements of the position (e.g. ACICP credentialing, COJET requirements, Code of Interpreter Conduct compliance, etc.).

- Realistic/Achievable for the interpreter

It is recommended that yearly goals focus on interpreter skill improvement, developing/using new tools to improve performance (e.g. glossary, procedural changes, etc.), or have a quantifiable measurement (e.g. results of interpreter performance surveys, monitoring of cases, etc.).

- Aspirational

If possible, it is recommended that yearly performance reviews include language which encourages the interpreter to expand his/her skill-base or foster interpreter abilities. It may not be a “goal” to be achieved on the next performance review per se, but can it be helpful in the development of an interpreter’s skills. For example, supervisors may want to include language in the review that encourages well-performing employees to become mentors to interpreters who are new to the profession, suggest that interpreters with demonstrated leadership qualities lead a research project for the court, test for the federal court interpreter certificate, or participate in court management courses, etc.

Measurement

Performance review structure and approach is typically normalized throughout the court/agency, so managers may have little choice on the language used to describe the employee achievement of goals. (e.g. “Does not meet/meets/exceeds” type measurements). It is recommended that the format of goal language provides a mechanism to evaluate employee achievement clearly and concisely.

Salary and Funding Options

A common issue courts face is that the compensation range authorized for interpreter positions oftentimes fails to attract appropriately credentialed candidates or those with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to earn the necessary credential. This section discusses some compensation strategies that may aid in successful recruitment of qualified interpreters.

Talking to Funding Authorities

First and foremost, court leadership (e.g., the administrator and presiding judge) should discuss the issue with their funding authority. Providing competent interpreters to ensure meaningful access to justice is a mission-critical requirement for the courts. Local funding authorities may be unaware of this requirement or the challenges in recruiting competent interpreters. It may, therefore, help to explain these issues to the Board of Supervisors or City Council.

In addition, it can be useful to provide additional justifications for increased funding of language access services. It is recommended that courts provide their local funding authorities with the most relevant information, and use available data to support their requests:

- Statutory requirements for competent and qualified interpreters
- Information on knowledge, skills, abilities, preparation, and on-going training by interpreters to complete their job
- Disparity between pay for contractors and staff interpreters that may justify hiring a staff interpreter
- Reevaluation of job classification to better align it with job demands, qualifications, ongoing training, and preparation
- Potential for reversals and/or litigation based on language access deficiencies
- Potential for costly and time-consuming investigations based on language access deficiencies
- Supply the funding authority with well-documented data on demand for interpreters, costs, increased filings, etc., as appropriate
 - Jury trials, multi-day trials and rare language interpretation costs can be unexpectedly expensive
 - Small and rural courts report more difficulties accessing qualified interpreters
 - Costs of Spanish interpreters versus interpreters of other languages
 - The cost of delays in proceedings (continuances) when courts cannot attract interpreters, or when the need for one is not known in advance
 - Travel costs when interpreters are not local and must travel from a distant location

If approval for increased funding is not available on an ongoing basis, courts may also consider requesting a line item for emergency language access costs that can be accessed by the courts in the event of unexpected demand for interpreter services.

Cost Sharing

Sharing the burden of funding interpreter services is an effective strategy for managing costs. Courts within similar geographic regions may be able to pool resources for their mutual benefit.

- Courts can enter into an agreement to jointly hire a staff interpreter who will work between the courts and coordinate schedules to ensure the interpreter is available to each court
- Courts can agree to use one particular court's credentialed interpreter while sharing existing salary and ERE costs
- "Block Scheduling" where a court's interpreter matters are funneled to specific days or times can be very useful in ensuring all courts participating in these agreements benefit from the interpreter
- Discussions with local funding authorities may also be necessary to execute these agreements (See the IGAs section)

Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs)

When collaborating with other governmental entities, it is recommended that the agreement be formalized to document the responsibilities of each party to the agreement. When drafting the document, courts should consider any statutorily-required language and content for an IGA, including:

- Its duration
- Its purpose(s)
- The manner of financing the joint or cooperative undertaking, as well as, establishing and maintaining a budget for the undertaking
- The responsibilities of each party to the other(s)
- The permissible method(s) to be employed in accomplishing the partial or complete termination of the agreement and for disposing of property on partial or complete termination
- Any other necessary and proper matters

Grants

The court should consider exploring grant opportunities with internal court departments which manage grants that impact Limited English Proficiency (LEP) issues already. Some grants that may be appropriate for cost sharing include:

- U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Office of Justice Programs (OJP)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Office of Violence Against Women (OVW)

- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF)

In addition, courts are able to use local Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund (JCEF) and Fill the Gap (FTG) monies for interpreter expenses. In general, these funds should not be regularly used to support what are essential and ongoing operational costs of the courts. However, they may be useful in covering unexpected costs, thereby providing a buffer when existing general funds are insufficient to meet needs. Courts may contact the AOC Court Services Grants Specialist for information on these funds: CSDGrants@courts.az.gov.

Interpreter Salary and Contractor Pay Rates

Determining court staff interpreter salary and contractor pay rates represents a significant challenge for courts. It is not easy to know what is reasonable in the market or what competitive factors are at play (i.e., what are other courts paying?). Additionally, courts may be confined by limited funding.

A market study performed in 2018 for the Maricopa County area revealed the following salary averages:

	<i>Non-credentialed Minimum</i>	<i>Non-credentialed Maximum</i>	<i>Credentialed Minimum</i>	<i>Credentialed Maximum</i>
<i>Market Rate</i>	\$41,808	\$59,155	\$62,046	\$73,112

It is recommended that courts in other areas conduct interpreter salary market studies that are representative of their area, and that include salaries for similar areas in other states, such as California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, etc., which all seek to attract qualified interpreters.

Courts are also strongly encouraged to incentivize both court staff and contract interpreters to become credentialed through the use of tiered pay scales, whereby interpreters with a higher tier level are paid more than those with lower tiers, and those without a credential are paid the least. This can help courts by ensuring they do not overpay for interpreters who do not possess a Tier 3 credential. Additionally, over the long term, it demonstrates to interpreters a clear economic advantage to developing their skills further. This, in turn, benefits the courts by increasing the pool of qualified interpreters available to interpret in the courts.

Conclusion

The [AOC Language Access Coordinator](#) is available to answer questions about this or other topics relating to the hiring of interpreters, or language access in general, including:

- Language Access Plans (LAPs)
- Preference requirements for credentialed interpreters
- Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) and remote interpreting options
- Language access related Judicial Benchcards
- Lesser Used Languages (LUL) interpreter resources

Appendix

1. [Court Interpreter KSAs](#)
2. [Guidance to Courts Regarding the “Preference” Requirement in A.O. 2016-02](#)

BEING IN THE KNOW!

INTERPRETERS...

- 1) Display wide general knowledge characteristic of what a minimum of two years of general education at a college or university would provide
- 2) Have knowledge of a broad range of vocabulary, including legal terminology, subject-specific terminology, and slang
- 3) Are able to use and understand cultural nuances, regional variations, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialisms in all working languages
- 4) Are willing to continue learning about social, technological, and legal changes that affect language
- 5) Are aware of methods, techniques, and procedures used in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting; court operations and procedures; rules and regulations regarding jury activity and courtroom behavior
- 6) Can explain court interpreting procedures in a clear, concise, and comprehensive manner to attorneys, litigants, and the public

DEMONSTRATING SKILLS!

INTERPRETERS...

- 1) Must have a native-like proficiency in all working languages
- 2) Can comfortably translate with accuracy and precision
- 3) Require excellent short-term memory skills and recall
- 4) Show skill in repeating sentences and paragraphs of varying lengths and can interpret them accurately and completely.
- 5) Have an efficient notetaking system to remember relevant names, dates, places, figures, etc., to supplement their memory
- 6) Are comfortable with someone else being in the room, listening to the interpretation
- 7) Listen carefully to the meaning and concept of the communication rather than the individual words
- 8) Must be able to concentrate only on the actual communication without being distracted by external factors such as physical appearances, gestures, etc.
- 9) Must be able to listen to a message and simultaneously classify its information into a hierarchy
- 10) Must keep their languages separate from each other, and not allow one language to affect the interpretation into the other language
- 11) Must be able to complete assignments accurately and with attention to detail
- 12) Show a cooperative and flexible attitude
- 13) Are skilled in time management and organizational techniques
- 14) Possess strong reading comprehension, and verbal and written communication skills in all of their working languages

BEING READY, WILLING, AND ABLE!

INTERPRETERS...

- 1) Think and react communicatively in all working languages
- 2) Speak with proper pronunciation, diction, and intonation in all working languages
- 3) Speak with a neutralized accent in all working languages
- 4) Speak softly but can also project when needed
- 5) Listen to, and comprehend different rates of speech in all working languages
- 6) Listen to, and comprehend various regional accents or dialectical differences in all working languages
- 7) Ignore auditory distractions and focus on source speaker
- 8) Read and comprehend overall meaning and specific details of written text in all working languages
- 9) Read and recognize various written contexts, including formal and informal text, subject-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms
- 10) Read quickly and with little preparation
- 11) Concentrate and focus
- 12) Process linguistic information quickly
- 13) Make quick linguistic decisions regarding word choice or terminology selection
- 14) Apply short-term memory skills in retaining units of information of varying size and length
- 15) Utilize predictive thinking skills to anticipate incoming messages
- 16) Provide transference from one language to another
- 17) Preserve accuracy; conserve intent, tone, style, and utterances of all messages
- 18) Accommodate for lack of equivalents in vocabulary or phrases
- 19) Accurately reflect the appropriate register of all messages
- 20) Self-monitor and self-correct
- 21) Practice and follow ethical standards at all times
- 22) Conduct business in a professional manner
- 23) Project self-confidence and self-awareness when interpreting
- 24) Establish and maintain effective working relationships with others
- 25) Work with and handle confidential and sensitive information appropriately
- 26) Multitask and cope with a high volume of work in a time critical environment
- 27) Work under pressure in highly dynamic work environments with changing demands and priorities
- 28) Analyze issues and make sound recommendations for solutions
- 29) Perform effective terminological research to find accurate solutions to unknown or unfamiliar words. Their solutions maintain meaning, style, tone, and intent of the original source language
- 30) Are computer-literate

Guidance to Courts Regarding the “Preference” Requirement in A.O. 2016-02



Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Expected Protocol for Demonstrating Preference.....	3
Breadth of Searches for Credentialed Interpreters.....	5
Additional Factors to Consider.....	5
Appendices.....	6
Appendix 1: Definitions.....	6
Appendix 2: Preference Flowchart.....	7

Acknowledgments

This guidance is the product of recommendations from the “Preference” Guidance Workgroup of the Court Interpreter Program Advisory Committee (CIPAC). Members of the workgroup are

Mr. Juan Carlos Cordova
Court Interpreter
Federal Courts

Ms. Kathy Schaben
Court Administrator
Yuma County Superior Court

Mr. Scott Robert Loos
Court Interpreter (ret.)
Maricopa County Superior Court

Introduction

In furtherance of its Strategic Agenda, “Advancing Justice Together”, the Arizona Supreme Court issued [Administrative Order 2016-02](#) in January of 2016, thereby establishing the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program (ACICP). The Administrative Order states, “[e]ffective July 1, 2017, judges should give appointment preference to credentialed contract interpreters, if available.”

It is important that courts seek out and use credentialed interpreters whenever possible to ensure not only the same level of professionalism and competency by interpreters throughout the courts across the state, but also to ensure that access to justice and communications with limited English proficient (LEP) persons are meaningful as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.; 45 C.F.R. § 80.1 et seq.; and 28 C.F.R. § 42.101–42.112). The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to the courts on complying with the “preference” requirement for freelance interpreters contained in Administrative Order 2016-02.

Expected Protocol for Demonstrating Preference

The preference requirement is intended to promote the use of credentialed contract interpreters over uncredentialed contract interpreters while still permitting courts a certain flexibility to conduct business with an interpreter who is not credentialed should circumstances so warrant. The use of uncredentialed interpreters is to be limited to the following situations:

- No interpreters credentialed by ACICP in the language required; or
- No interpreters credentialed by ACICP in the language required within a reasonable radius of the court, or in a timely manner.

When an interpreter is needed, the following steps should be followed to locate a credentialed interpreter:

1. Identify the language of the LEP person
2. Use the [Arizona Court Interpreter Registry](#) to view the credentialed interpreters in that language. The Registry can be searched by the language spoken, an interpreter’s county of residence, Tier level, etc., or any combination of criteria. Contact the AOC [Language Access Coordinator](#) for instructions on how to use the Arizona Court Interpreter Registry.

- a. Alternatively, the [Public Roster of Credentialed Interpreters](#) may also be used to locate an interpreter. The Public Roster is updated throughout the year. Court staff printing the Public Roster must verify they are working from the current version.

NOTE: The [Registry](#) is always the most complete and up-to-date tool for ACICP interpreter records.

- b. Courts with their own lists of interpreters are encouraged to verify the credential status of their interpreters using the tools listed above. Additionally, courts are encouraged to use these tools to augment their lists, thereby increasing the number of credentialed interpreters from which to choose for court proceedings.
3. If a credentialed interpreter is reasonably available to appear for the hearing or event, then such interpreter is to be contracted by the court.
 - a. An interpreter does not necessarily have to appear in person. Remote interpreting (RI) may be an option for some hearings and events. For example, for short, procedural hearings and events when the interpreter is located far away.
 - b. Courts must consider the interpreter's level of credential (Tier) when determining the appropriate interpreter to hire. See the [Overview of Tiers](#) for more information. The progression for preference is as follows:
 - i. Look first for a Tier 3 or Tier 4. These interpreters have passed the required interpreting skills exam at a level sufficient for a permanent credential. If no Tier 3 or Tier 4 interpreters are available, proceed to Step 3(b)(ii).
 - ii. Look for a Tier 2 interpreter. These interpreters have passed the required interpreting skills exam at a level sufficient for a temporary credential. If no Tier 2 interpreters are available, proceed to Step 3(b)(iii).
 - iii. Look for a Tier A or Tier 1 interpreter. These interpreters have passed the required exams to demonstrate proficiency in English and the foreign language. However, they have either not taken or not passed the skills exam required for higher tiers. Some languages may not have an interpreting skills exam available. Interpreters of these languages will only be able to earn a Tier 1 or Tier A credential.

NOTE: Courts near other counties or other states may consider contracting credentialed interpreters who have passed an interpreting skills exam from those areas prior to contracting with a Tier 1 interpreter.

- iv. When no credentialed interpreters are available, courts may consider using uncredentialed, but otherwise qualified individuals to provide interpreter services. Contact the AOC [Language Access Coordinator](#) for information on qualifying an interpreter.

NOTE: It is not sufficient to only look for interpreters in the same city or town as the court. It is also not sufficient to rely solely upon the court's own internal list of interpreters. The ACICP creates a statewide network of credentialed interpreters and courts are expected to use the tools listed above to find qualified interpreters, even if it means hiring someone previously unknown to the court. The requirement to provide meaningful access for LEP persons requires courts to search for and use qualified interpreters.

Breadth of Searches for Credentialed Interpreters

For steps 3(b)(i – iii) above, courts are expected to search within their own county first. For each step, if no interpreter is available in the same county as the court, then the search should be expanded to neighboring counties before proceeding to the next step in the progression. The nature and complexity of a given hearing or event, and the language needs of LEP persons, will at times require the court to search even more broadly for a credentialed interpreter, be that across the state or, in some cases, across the country.

Additional Factors to Consider

An in-person interpreter is recommended for trials, evidentiary hearings, and any other hearing or event with multiple parties who need an interpreter, or which are expected to last 30 minutes or longer. Shorter, simple hearings and events may lend themselves to the use of remote interpreter options if a credentialed interpreter is not available to appear in person. In many instances, interpreters for languages other than Spanish will only be available remotely. Contact the AOC [Language Access Coordinator](#) for information on managing remote events and events in which uncredentialed interpreters are being used.

In addition, courts are encouraged to include information on their policies and procedures for demonstrating preference for credentialed interpreters in their Language Access Plans and in their contracts with vendors. Contact the AOC [Language Access Coordinator](#) for suggested language.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Definitions

- **Arizona Court Interpreter Code of Conduct** – In the context of the ACICP, refers to the Arizona Court Interpreter Code of Conduct, applicable to all who provide interpreter services for the courts.
- **Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program (ACICP)** – The interpreter credentialing body created by Arizona Supreme Court Administrative Order 2016-02.
- **Arizona Court Interpreter Registry** – A searchable database of interpreters and interpreter candidates in Arizona that indicates if a particular interpreter has earned a credential issued by ACICP.
- **Arizona Public Roster of Credentialed Interpreters** – A publicly available list of interpreters credentialed by the ACICP.
- **Certified** – said of an interpreter holding a qualification as required by a specific jurisdiction other than the State of Arizona. For Arizona’s qualification system, see “Credentialed.”
- **Credentialed** – said of an interpreter who has earned any tier of credential from the Arizona Court Interpreter Credentialing Program. Not synonymous with “certified” as used in other jurisdictions and which may connote other requirements for its grant.
- **Interpreter** – a person who orally translates between English and the language of a limited-English-proficient party or court customer for two or more people who would not otherwise understand each other.
- **LEP** – Limited-English-Proficient or Limited-English-Proficiency.
- **Otherwise qualified** – refers to a person who is not credentialed to interpret but who may have some training, knowledge or experience interpreting or other qualifications making them potentially viable for certain interpreting assignments.
- **Preference** – in the context of A.O. 2016-02, “preference” refers to the priority that courts must show in appointing credentialed interpreters over uncredentialed interpreters.
- **Public Roster** – see Arizona Public Roster of Credentialed Interpreters.
- **Registry** – see Arizona Court Interpreter Registry.
- **Remote Interpreting (RI)** – a term use to describe interpreting services that are not offered on-site. Typically refers to telephonic and video remote interpreting services.

Appendix 2: Preference Flowchart

PREFERENCE FLOWCHART

