



**STATE OF DELAWARE
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
COURT INTERPRETER PROGRAM
Qualification and Registration**

Recognizing the growing diversity of people who appear before and utilize the Delaware courts, and in order to ensure equal access to all persons before the court, the Supreme Court of the State of Delaware issued Administrative Directive 107 on the 4th day of April, 1996 charging the Administrative Office of the Courts with the responsibility to develop and administrate a Court Interpreter Program.

QUALIFICATION PROCESS

Orientation Seminar

The orientation seminar is the first step of the qualification process. It is a one -day seminar that introduces the candidates to the court interpreter profession. The seminar covers the role of the court interpreter, ethical requirements of the profession, the modes of interpretation as well as an overview of criminal judicial procedure.

Orientations are given at different times a year in all three Counties. Orientations will be advertised on the Delaware Courts website and a registration form will be available with the announcement. Please visit <http://courts.delaware.gov/AOC/courtinterpreter/>

Written Exam

The written exam is the second step in the credentialing process. It consists of 135 multiple choice questions in English. The written test measures candidate's knowledge of: a) the English language; b) court-related terms and usage; and c) court interpreter ethics and professional conduct. The test will be administered several times a year, following the orientation seminar. Only Candidates who have attended an orientation seminar may take this test. Candidates must score at least 80% on the written test in order to proceed with the next step in the qualification process.

Criminal Background Check

Upon receipt of application, the AOC will submit candidate's information to DELJIS for a criminal background check. Only those candidates that pass the criminal check will be allowed to interpret in the Delaware Courts. The AOC will notify candidates only if there is a negative result.

Oral Performance Exam

The National Center of State Courts' oral performance exam is "designed to determine whether candidates possess the minimum levels of language knowledge and interpreting skills required to perform competently during court proceedings." The test measures candidate's command of his/her language pair as well as interpreting skills in the three modes of interpretation: simultaneous, consecutive and sight translation.

Candidates may be tested in any of the languages available through the National Center of State Courts. Languages for which there is a full exam are: Arabic, Cantonese, French, Haitian-Creole, Hmong, Ilocano, Italian, Korean, Laotian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Languages for which there is an abbreviated exam are: Arabic (Egyptian Colloquial), Bosnian, Croatian, German, Serbian, and Turkish. For more information on the test, visit <http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx>

The full proficiency exam consists of four separate sections:

- ✓ Sight translation of a document written in English into the oral foreign language.
- ✓ Sight translation of a document written in the foreign language into oral English.
- ✓ Consecutive interpretation of oral testimony from English into foreign language and from foreign language into English.
- ✓ Simultaneous interpreting from English into foreign language.

Minimum qualification for Certification is a score of 70% overall and on each of the four sections of the exam, independently. The AOC may consider a Candidate's request for a rescoring of his/her oral performance exam under these circumstances:

- ✓ The candidate requests rescoring within 30 days from the date when AOC mailed test scores.
- ✓ The candidate scored a minimum of 68% on each portion of the exam.
- ✓ The candidate covers all costs associated with the rescore. (Note: rescoring is costly.)

Court Interpreter Registry

The Court Interpreter Registry includes all interpreters, spoken language and deaf/hard of hearing, who have been duly qualified and have entered into service agreements with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The Registry will be maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts and will be updated annually or as necessary. In order to remain in the Registry, interpreter must comply with all steps and requirements of the program as outlined in the Court Interpreter Program Policy Directive. Interpreters included in the Registry are in good standing and have entered into service agreements with the AOC.

1. Court Interpreter Qualifications

There are three foreign spoken language interpreter categories in Delaware as they appear in the Court Interpreter Registry: 1) Certified Interpreter; 2) Conditionally-Approved Interpreter; and 3) Registered Candidate. All interpreters in these three categories have:

¹ <http://www.ncsc.org/Services-and-Experts/Areas-of-expertise/Language-access/Written-and-Oral-Exam-Resources.aspx>

- Attended a one or two-day Orientation seminar.
- Successfully completed a criterion-based, English-only written exam.
- Passed a criminal background check as required by the Judicial Branch.
- Submitted the AOC application with a copy of their most recent CV.
- Submitted copies of a W-9 form and Delaware business license for Professional Services (and renew said license on a yearly basis).
- Additionally, interpreters in the Registry are required to:
 - Comply with the Continuing Education Credit requirements described in the AOC's Continuing Education Policy of March 2006.
 - Comply with the Court Interpreter Code of Professional Ethics.
 - Sign acknowledgement of receipt and agreement with Court Interpreter Policies and Procedures Sheet.

The Registry classification is based on certification exam scores as follows:

A **Certified Interpreter** is that candidate who passed a 3-part oral performance exam in his/her particular language combination with a minimum score of 70% overall and in each of the 3 sections independently. Certified Interpreters from other jurisdictions that have attained certification through another Consortium member state or the Administrative Office of the United States and who wish to work in Delaware may apply for reciprocity. In order to be accepted and included in the Court Interpreter Registry, Interpreter must submit a letter, on State letterhead, from the Program Manager of the state in which he/she obtained certification verifying that interpreter attended an orientation and has completed the state's credentialing or qualifying process as well as, include copies of the written and oral proficiency exam scores. The scores must fall into the qualifying scores for Delaware for reciprocity to be granted. The applicant interpreter must then attend a Delaware Orientation, agree to the Uniform Payment Rate and comply with Delaware Court Interpreter Program policies.

A **Conditionally-Approved Interpreter** is that candidate who sat for the 3-part performance exam in his/her particular language combination and obtained a minimum overall score of 60%, scoring 70% in at least one section, and scores of or above 55% in the remaining two sections. A Conditionally Approved interpreter must take all three parts of the oral exam when offered until he/she passes. If after three attempts the Conditionally Approved Interpreter does not reach the Certified Interpreter category, said interpreter may have to submit proof of training additional to that required under CE Policy before taking the oral performance test for the fourth and last time.

Included under this category are qualified interpreters in languages for which there is not a Consortium oral performance exam. In such instances, interpreters are qualified by means of Oral Proficiency Interviews, OPI, in English and the foreign language. The OPI is designed to assess foreign language functional speaking ability during the course of a telephone based interview session. These interviews were developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and are conducted and rated by ACTFL certified proficiency testers. Each interview is tape recorded and rated by one or more certified testers. The OPI Program is administered by Language Testing International (LTI). The candidate must perform at the advanced high or superior level to be included in the Registry. These candidates will also have to complete the continuing education requirements in an expedited calendar, 12 to 18 months, in order to ensure they possess adequate interpreting skills. Lastly, candidates in this category must also agree to take and pass a full or partial oral proficiency exam in their foreign language if and when one becomes available

A **Registered Candidate** is that candidate who sat for the 3-part performance exam in his/her particular language with a minimum overall score of 50% overall and no individual scores

under 50%. Registered Candidates have two years to complete requirements under Conditionally Approved Interpreters. Otherwise, Candidate shall start the credentialing process anew only after submitting proof of additional training in court interpreting.

American Sign Language interpreters are included under their own listing in the Court Interpreter Registry. All RID (National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf) certified interpreters must provide proof of their certification to the AOC with their application. For hearing interpreters for the deaf, either a SC:L, CI, CT, CSC, or OIC:C certification; In the case of deaf interpreters, either CLIP or CDI certifications.

Continuing Education Requirements

Effective July 2006, **ALL** spoken language Delaware interpreters who are registered with the Administrative Office of the Courts must complete 12 hours of continuing education every two years. Of these 12 credits, at least 3 must be on Ethics and 3 others on skills building on modes of interpretation. CE credits may be obtained through programs approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts such as, and among others, the Consortium for State Court Interpreters Certification Skills Building Workshops, NAJIT/ATA conferences, educational programs offered by colleges or universities, or training programs offered by other Consortium member states. Interpreter must submit course information for approval from the Coordinator of the Certified Interpreter Program 30 days prior to attending in order to ensure proposed course meets CE requirements. Some of the educational areas in which an interpreter may obtain CE credits are: modes of interpretation (language specific or language neutral); language development- specialized/technical vocabulary; professional ethics; courtroom protocol; law and judicial procedure.

Interpreters for the Deaf and hard of hearing must complete the RID required 8.0 CEUs (80 hours) in a cycle (4-years). These eight CEUs are divided into two Content Areas: Professional Studies and General Studies. Participants must work with an RID-Approved or Sponsored workshops to earn CEU credits.

The Interpreter must report all continuing education credits earned to the Coordinator of the Delaware Court Interpreter Program within 60 days of completion of the course. The Coordinator will, in turn, keep track of the continuing education credits for each interpreter and send an annual report in January of each year. CE credits may not carryover after the two-year period ends (4 year for RID certified ASL interpreters).

Failure to complete the required CE credits in the prescribed period (two years for language interpreters and four for deaf/hard of hearing) may result in the removal of the interpreter's name from the active Court Interpreter Registry maintained by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Should you have any questions, contact Jennifer Figueira, Coordinator, Court Interpreter Program via email Jennifer.figueira@state.de.us or telephone at 302.255.0166.