

Court Interpreter Program

Court Interpreter Program Advisory Board

I. Introduction.

Competent and ethical court interpreters are critical to ensure that non-English speakers and those who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing may enjoy equal access to justice. Interpreters are highly skilled professionals who fulfill an essential role in the administration of justice. Delaware court interpreters act as officers of the court while providing interpretation services. They are subject to Delaware certification and registration requirements and must adhere to the [Code of Professional Responsibility for Court Interpreters](#) adopted by the Delaware Supreme Court.

The Administrative Office of the Courts' ("AOC") Court Interpreter Program ("Program") is responsible for administering language services through its Program Coordinator. The Coordinator manages the day-to-day administration of the Program, including fiscal oversight of the Program, interpreter testing and certification, scheduling, discipline, and maintaining the registry of active interpreters. The Coordinator regularly communicates with interpreters and the Court Interpreter Advisory Board ("Board") on the Program's operations, policies, and procedures. The Coordinator is the Program's public point of contact.

Below is a description of the composition and role of the Board.

II. History.

The Program was established within the AOC by Supreme Court *Administrative Directive 107* on April 4, 1996. The Board and a disciplinary process was created in 2007. *See, Supreme Court Administrative Directive 163* (September 4, 2007). *Administrative Directives 107* and *163* were rescinded August 19, 2015, by *Administrative Directive 187*, which adopted [The Judicial Branch Operating Procedures](#), Section V, 6, [Court Interpreters](#). This document supplements the *Judicial Branch Operating Procedures* by outlining the Board's operational details and function.

III. Program Advisory Board.

The Board's composition, terms, and role shall be as follows:

A. Composition, term of office, and support staff.

The Board shall consist of the State Court Administrator, or their designee, and no less than four judicial members appointed by the Chief Justice.

Appointed members shall serve a four-year term, with one member serving as Chair and another member serving as Vice-Chair. The position of Chair and Vice-Chair shall rotate among the appointed members thereafter, with each member serving at least once in the Chair or Vice-Chair positions. Appointment terms are staggered.

The Coordinator shall serve as staff to the Board and shall be responsible for preparing agendas, keeping minutes, and providing materials for Board meetings.

B. Meetings.

The Board shall meet annually but may otherwise meet as frequently as necessary and at such times and places as the Chair may designate. Board meetings may be held in person or remotely at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair or Vice-Chair must be present to lead the meeting.

An appointed member who is unable to attend a meeting may submit prior written comments on any topic that is on the meeting's agenda to the Chair, Coordinator, and other Board members or, at the Chair's discretion, designate someone from their court to speak on their court's behalf. The Chair may also allow for comments to be submitted electronically at a time and day set after the meeting.

C. Role of the Board.

The Board is an advisory body that serves as a liaison between the Program and the courts. The Coordinator will provide the Board with updates on any of the following and may ask for the Board's advice on:

- The Certification program for court interpreters, including certification results and the Program's continuing education requirements.
- The Program's fiscal policies and procedures, including recruitment and retention efforts.
- Program initiatives to enhance awareness of the availability of Program services, as well as current Program limitations. This includes action items listed in the [Delaware Judiciary Language Access Plan](#).
- The [Court Interpreters Code of Professional Responsibility](#) included as Appendix G of the [Judicial Branch Operating Procedures](#).
- Any other functions as may be required for the benefit of the Program.

Disciplinary matters involving the conduct of interpreters are not reviewable or appealable to the Board.

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