

Court Interpreter FAQ'S

This sheet answers frequently asked questions for court interpreters.

Q: What is a court interpreter?

A court interpreter is an individual that possesses native-like mastery of both English and another language and facilitates communication in the courtroom. Court interpreters take an oath to interpret accurately and to the best of their ability.

Q: What is the role of a court interpreter?

Court interpreters enable all individuals in the courtroom (judges, jurors, etc.) to react in the same manner to a non-English speaking individual as they would to an English speaking individual. Court interpreters do not advocate for the limited-English proficiency (LEP) individual, but they directly interpret what is being said.

Q: What is the difference between an interpreter and a translator?

An interpreter works with spoken language and interprets speech orally from a source language to a target language. A translator works with written text and translates written documents from one language to another.

Q: Does the AOIC hire court interpreters?

No, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) does not hire court interpreters. The AOIC is responsible for the certification of court interpreters. Individual circuit courts hire court interpreters for assignments. If you are interested in a specific circuit court, reach out to that circuit court directly.

Q: What is the pay range for a court interpreter in Illinois?

There is no set pay range in Illinois. Each circuit court has their own budget and resources available. As such, the rate of pay can vary by circuit court.

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Q: Does the AOIC offer interpreter reciprocity with other states?

Yes, the AOIC offers reciprocity. Submit a reciprocity application, along with your exam results and /or orientation completed. If you are currently listed on a different state's registry, you must submit a letter or email of good standing from that state.

Q: Do I have to be certified to work as a court interpreter?

No, it is currently not required. However, circuit courts are strongly encouraged to utilize certified or registered interpreters when available per the Illinois Supreme Court's Language Access Policy.

Q: Will I be employed as a court interpreter once certified and/or registered?

No, being certified or registered does not guarantee employment with a circuit court. Unless a specific circuit court hires you as an employee, you will work as an independent contractor.

Q: Is being bilingual enough to be a court interpreter?

No, being bilingual is a good starting point, but not nearly enough to be a court interpreter. Court Interpretation is a skill that needs continuous work and improvement.

Q: Who can I contact for more information on becoming a court interpreter?

For additional questions, please reach out to Senior Program Manager, Language Access, Noor Alawawda at, nalawawda@illinoiscourts.gov.

