

Director of State Courts Office

# Wisconsin Court Interpreter Program Policies

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## **1. Scope and Authority**

The Wisconsin Supreme Court is committed to providing language services and access to justice for people of limited English proficiency (LEP). As part of that commitment, the Director of State Courts Office (“the Director”) developed the Court Interpreter Program (“CIP”) to train and test interpreters, educate court officials on compliance with state and federal laws regarding language access and best practices for using interpreters, translate court forms, and address related language access issues. This document outlines the procedures and policies for the recruitment, training, and certification of persons to act as qualified interpreters in a court proceeding and court-related events; and for the coordination, discipline, retention, and training of those interpreters. Policy direction is provided by the Committee to Improve Interpreting and Translation in the Wisconsin Courts (“the Committee”) which has been working on policy and program development since 1999.

## **2. Council of Language Access Coordinators**

Wisconsin is a member of the Council of Language Access Coordinators (“CLAC”) which is a partnership of US states and territories that have pooled financial and other resources to develop, maintain, and administer court interpreting exams to support court interpreter certification programs and other language-access services. The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) through its Language Access Services Section (LASS) houses and provides support for CLAC. The CLAC evolved from its origins as the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts after the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) determined that language access is a vital and fundamental court service. As a result of that determination, COSCA and CCJ voted to establish a subcommittee of the CCJ/COSCA’s joint Access, Fairness, Public Trust and Confidence (AFPTC) Committee. This subcommittee, the Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC), is comprised of COSCA members and non-voting CLAC liaisons who are dedicated to providing national leadership on language access issues and initiatives affecting court systems.

## **3. Training**

### **3.1 Orientation**

The CIP offers introductory orientation programs twice a year online. This orientation is designed to give interpreters an overview of the needs and expectations of the court, and is appropriate for both spoken and qualified sign language interpreters. The program covers ethical conduct, protocols for court interpreting, legal terminology and procedure, and basic interpreting skills. The orientation program lasts eighteen (18) hours, and attendance on all the training sessions is a mandatory first step for all interpreter candidates. Training materials are provided by the CIP through a file hosting service or flash drive.

All interested participants must submit an application detailing their personal contact information, interpreting experience, qualifications, and interest. Participants must be at least 18 years old to attend. American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters must hold a Certificate of Interpretation (CI) and a Certificate of Transliteration (CT) or NIC (National Interpreter Certification) from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), Board for Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) Advanced or BEI Master, or an equivalent credential from an approved entity, and be licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) to be eligible to attend orientation training.

Complete fee refunds may be allowed if the request is received by the CIP at least five (5) business days prior to the training date. All other requests for refunds will be considered individually and may include a refund less a \$50 late cancellation fee to cover administrative fees. The CIP may cancel an orientation if a minimum number of applicants have not registered by the corresponding deadline. In the event an orientation is cancelled, individuals who have registered will be given the opportunity to apply the fee to the next scheduled session or receive a complete refund.

### **3.2 Skills-Building Workshops**

The CIP may offer additional language-specific or language-neutral skills-building workshops for interpreters. The purpose of the workshops is to improve interpreting skills, build vocabulary, and learn techniques for self-assessment. Interpreter candidates who have attended orientation and begun the testing process are eligible to attend. Space is generally limited and preference will be given to interpreters who are eligible to take the

oral examination and who demonstrate a commitment to work in court. Complete fee refunds may be allowed if the request is received by the CIP at least five (5) business days prior to the training date. All other requests for refunds will be considered individually and may include a refund less a \$50 late cancellation fee. The CIP may cancel a skill-building workshop if a minimum number of applicants have not registered by the corresponding deadline. Complete refunds will be issued to individuals in the event of a cancellation by the CIP.

### **3.3 Accommodations at Trainings**

An individual with a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) who requires a reasonable accommodation to participate at a training must submit a request with the application at least 30 days before the orientation. The program manager will consider timely requests and advise the applicant of the accommodation that can be provided.

## **4. Interpreter Record-Keeping**

The CIP maintains an interpreter database which stores and tracks individual information on each person who is registered with the CIP, provides services to the courts, participates in the program, or whose certification is recognized by the CIP through reciprocity. An interpreter candidate's personal information will be entered into the application, which automatically assigns a number to each candidate serving as his or her Wisconsin interpreter identification (ID) number. The CIP is responsible for timely upkeep of the database which is maintained by regularly entering test scores, results of background checks, roster status, continuing education courses, changes in contact information, and any other relevant details.

### **4.1 Registration with the CIP**

Any individual working independently or through an agency who is providing interpretation services to the courts and who has not participated in the CIP certification program must complete a "New Interpreter Registration Form." This form collects important information such as contact information, date of birth, agency affiliation, description of credentials, and a signed affirmation that the individual will abide by Wisconsin's Code of Ethics for Interpreters. The CIP will create a profile for the interpreter based on the information provided on the "New interpreter Registration Form" and will assign the interpreter an ID number. The interpreters who do not participate in the CIP, but work 40 hours or more per calendar year in any circuit court in Wisconsin, will be required to attend the orientation for court interpreters.

## **5. Certification and other Credentialing**

The Director through the CIP is the only entity in the state that offers certification and credentialing for court interpreters of spoken languages. The CIP offers two tracks of credentialing: 1) Certified languages track and 2) Authorized languages track.

### **5.1 Certified Languages Track**

Interpreter candidates who speak the following languages must follow the Certified languages track in order to obtain their certification: Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian (BSC), Cantonese, French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish, and Vietnamese. Certified interpreters hold the highest credentials for court interpreting in the legal system.

### **5.2 Authorized Languages Track**

Interpreter candidates who speak the following languages may follow the Authorized languages track in order to obtain their credentials: Afrikaans, Akan-Twi, Albanian, Armenian, Assyrian, Azerbaijani, Baluchi, Bengali, Bulgarian, Burmese, Cebuano, Chavacano, \*\*Chechen, Czech, Danish, Dari, Dutch, Finnish, Ga, Georgian, German, Greek (Modern), Gujarati, Hausa, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Ilocano, Italian, Iraqi, Japanese, Javanese, Kazakh, Kikongo-Kongo, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Krio, \*\*Kurdish-Kurmanji, Kurdish-Sorani, Lao, \*\*Lingala, Malay, Malayalam, Mandingo-Bambara, Marshallese, Mongolian, Nepali, Norwegian, Pashto, Persian Farsi, Punjabi, Romanian, \*\*Sindhi, Sinhalese, Slovak, Swahili, Swedish, Tajik, Tamil, Tausug, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Turkmen, Uighur, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Wolof, Yoruba, and Zulu.

### 5.3 Other Languages

The CIP may use other test instruments for assessing qualifications of interpreter candidates who speak a language not included in either the Certified languages or Authorized languages track.

## 6. Testing

The CIP uses written and oral test instruments developed and maintained by the NCSC or other valid test instruments developed by approved organizations as part of its credentialing process. The CIP abides by test administration standards and protocols developed by the NCSC when using its test instruments that are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding on State Court Interpreter Testing.

### 6.1 Written Examination

The written examination is a mandatory screening device all spoken and sign language candidates must take regardless of the track he or she is following. The NCSC developed this multiple-choice test to measure the candidates' knowledge of the three areas central to the work of a court interpreter at the level of a minimally qualified professional: 1) English language, 2) court-related terms and usage, and 3) ethics and professional conduct.

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The written examination is offered approximately four (4) weeks after orientation. Upon completion of the orientation training, interpreters may register for the written examination by filling out a registration form and paying the fee by the corresponding deadline. The CIP will send a confirmation notice to test registrants at least one (1) week before the testing date by email or US mail if no email address is on file. Test candidates who are unable to take the exam and notify the CIP at least five (5) business days prior to the candidate's test date may be allowed to transfer payment once to the next available testing opportunity or be issued a complete refund of their test fee. Test candidates who notify the CIP less than five (5) business days prior to the candidate's test date will not be issued a refund of the test fee. Walk-ins are not allowed. All test candidates must show valid photo identification prior to testing.

A passing score on the written exam is 80%. Test candidates will receive their results within 10 business days after the test date via email or US mail if no valid email address is on file.

Candidates are no longer eligible to take the oral examination based on a passing Written Language Assessment (WLA) score. The Written Language Assessment was a testing tool that the CIP retired in 2014. Candidates who passed the WLA and still need to pass the oral examination must pass the NCSC multiple-choice test to be eligible for the oral examination.

#### 6.1.1 Retake on Written Examination

If another version of the multiple-choice test is available, the interpreter must wait at least six (6) months before re-taking. An interpreter candidate may take the same version of the test after twelve (12) months, but no candidate will be allowed to take any version of the multiple-choice test more than twice.

#### 6.1.2 Rescore on Written Examination

All scores on the multiple-choice examination are considered final. There is no option for requesting a re-score for the written test.

#### 6.1.3 Waiver of Written Examination

Interpreters who are certified by the US Administrative Office of the Courts (US AOC), other states, or another approved entity who have been granted reciprocity by the CIP may waive the written examination. The requirement to take the written examination will be waived for interpreter candidates who have already passed the test and are retaking orientation per Sec. 10.

### 6.2 Certified Languages Track



### **6.2.1 Oral Certification Examination**

Candidates who have passed the written exam and are following the Certified languages track are eligible to take an oral certification examination. Oral certification examinations are performance tests developed by the NCSC. The level of performance the test measures is the minimum acceptable level for entry into the profession of spoken language court interpretation. The oral exams are developed to measure a candidate's ability to faithfully and accurately interpret the range of English ordinarily used in courtrooms into another language, and to understand and interpret into English what is said by a native speaker of another language. Every test includes a scoring dictionary and follows one of the two oral performance test models. The "standard model" is the original model used since the initial development of NCSC court interpreter exams and is sometimes referred to as a "full test" or a "whole test." It includes all three sections: sight translation, consecutive, and simultaneous interpretation. The "abbreviated model" includes a simultaneous section and a measure of conversational proficiency in English to be chosen from a list of available standardized tests promulgated and maintained by the LASS.

Interpreter candidates who have passed the written examination and are following the Certified languages track may register to take the oral certification examination. Open testing periods are generally offered two (2) times per year with registration closing forty-five (45) business days prior to the first day of testing. To register for the oral certification examination, candidates must fill out an application and submit it to the CIP. Slots are held on a first come first serve basis. Complete test fees must be received by the registration deadline. Test candidates who are unable to take the exam and notify the CIP at least five (5) business days prior to the candidate's test date may be allowed to transfer payment once to the next available testing opportunity or be issued a complete refund of their test fee. Test candidates who notify the CIP less than five (5) business days prior to the candidate's test date may be issued a refund of the test fee less a \$50 processing fee. Walk-ins are not allowed. All test candidates must show valid photo identification prior to testing.

The passing score is 70% or higher for each of the three sections (Sight Translation, Consecutive and Simultaneous) and an overall score of 70% or higher. For the Sight Translation part, test candidates must score 65% or higher on each individual portion of the Sight Translation with an overall score of 70% or higher. The tests are graded by a team of NCSC-approved test raters. Test candidates will receive their results within six (6) to eight (8) weeks after the test date via email or US mail if no valid email address is on file.

### **6.2.2 Retake on Oral Certification Examination**

If another version of the oral test is available, the interpreter candidate must wait at least six (6) months before retaking it. An interpreter may take the same version of the test after twelve (12) months, but no interpreter will be allowed to take any version of the oral examination more than twice unless the program manager determines a valid reason for doing so exists. For languages where only one version of the oral certification exam exists, no candidate will be allowed to retake the oral certification exam more than four (4) times.

If an interpreter candidate passes one (1) or two (2) parts of the oral examination, he or she may opt to retake only that section or sections the candidate did not pass up to a period of eighteen (18) months from the date the test candidate first took the oral examination. If a test candidate does not pass the remaining section(s) of the oral examination within an 18-month period, he or she must retake the entire oral exam and a new 18-month period will commence.

### **6.2.3 Rescore on Oral Certification Examination**

If a test candidate passes two (2) parts of the oral examination and scores 67% or higher on the third part, an automatic rescore will be done on the failed section. If a test candidate passes one (1) part of the oral examination and scores 67% or higher on the remaining two (2) parts, an automatic rescore will be done on the two (2) failed sections. The CIP will bear the cost of an automatic rescore. The score(s) on any re-rated section will be considered the final score(s) of the candidate. No test candidate may request a re-score once he or she has been notified of the test results.

### 6.2.4 Oral Test Raters

The CIP uses a team of two (2) NCSC-approved raters who will rate each oral certification examination in accordance with the standards and procedures established by the NCSC. The rating team will identify who will serve as the lead rater. Each member of the team or the lead rater of the team will be required to sign a rater agreement letter with the CIP prior to commencement of the rating. When raters have yet to achieve lead rating status, the rating process will require an experienced third rater to supervise the rating process.

### 6.2.5. Additional Skills Evaluation

An Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) offers an accurate assessment of the candidate's language skills, allowing interpreters to identify any fluency deficiencies early in the process. Accordingly, candidates who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for taking the Oral Certification Examination shall be required to complete an OPI in their working languages and obtain at least an Superior score on the ACTFL scale before the Oral Certification Examination is scheduled through this program. Such requirements may be waived at the discretion of the CIP manager.

## 6.3 Authorized Languages Track

### 6.3.1 Oral Proficiency Interview

Candidates who have passed the written examination and are following the Authorized languages track may register for an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). An OPI assesses a candidate's language proficiency by measuring his or her ability to use the language effectively and appropriately in real-life situations. The OPI does not test a candidate's interpreting skills. The CIP requires an OPI in English and the non-English language to verify the candidate's proficiency in **both** languages. A passing score on the OPI is a score at the Superior level on the ACTFL scale.

### 6.3.3 Scheduling and Fees

Open testing periods are offered throughout the year depending upon availability of the CIP staff and test proctor. To schedule an OPI, candidates must contact the CIP to set up an individual appointment. Complete testing fees must be received at least fifteen (15) business days prior to the testing date in order to hold a candidate's slot. If an applicant is unable to take the test and provides notice of cancellation within twenty-four (24) hours of the test time and date, the applicant may be provided a full refund upon request. Test candidates who do not cancel within twenty-four (24) hours of the test time and date may be provided a refund less a late-cancellation fee. All test candidates must show valid photo identification prior to testing.

### 6.3.4 Retake on the Oral Proficiency Interview

Candidates must wait at least six (6) months before re-taking an OPI.

### 6.3.5 Rescore on the Oral Proficiency Interview

There is no option for requesting a re-score on an OPI.

## 6.4 Accommodations for Tests

A test candidate with a disability under the ADA may request an accommodation by submitting a timely written request. Requests for an accommodation during the written exam must be submitted on the form entitled "Documentation of Accommodation for the Court Interpreter Written Exam" at least thirty (30) business days in advance of the written testing date. (See Appendix A) Requests for an accommodation during the oral exam must be submitted on the form entitled "Documentation of Accommodation for the Court Interpreter Oral Certification Exam" at least thirty (30) business days in advance of the oral testing date. (See Appendix B) Requests for an accommodation during the OPI must be submitted in writing at least thirty (30) business days in advance of the testing date. The request for an accommodation during the OPI should document the disability, the specific accommodation being requested and be signed by a professional. The program manager will consider all timely requests and advise the applicant of the accommodation that can be provided.

## 7. Reciprocity of Equivalent Test Scores

Reciprocity refers to recognition of an applicant's score on the NCSC oral examination that was administered in a different state or recognition of an applicant's score on an equivalent performance examination administered through an approved entity.

### 7.1 Spoken Language

The CIP recognizes any of the following as equivalent:

- Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (FCICE);
- NCSC's oral examination administered in another state or territory with a score of 70% or higher on each section (Sight Translation, Consecutive, and Simultaneous) and an overall score of 70% or higher within one state or territory. Verification must be provided to the CIP that the candidate did not take the same version of the examination more than two times and did not retake the test more than once in a 10-month period;
- National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) examination

### 7.2 Sign Language

- RID's Special Certificate: Legal (SC:L) or Conditional Legal Interpreting Permit-Relay (CLIP-R) from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID); CDI
- BEI Court Interpreter Certification (CIC) or BEI Master
- Interpreters with the BEI-Advanced or NIC may apply for Provisional status through reciprocity. All the roster requirements detailed in policy 15.3 & 15.4 must be fulfilled by the interpreter.

Test scores from other non-NCSC examinations offered by approved entities may be considered by the CIP for purposes of reciprocity.

Certified interpreters from other jurisdictions who are seeking reciprocity with Wisconsin must submit an "Application for Reciprocity and Roster Status" form with supporting documentation to the CIP. A non-refundable \$150 application fee must be paid to the CIP. After the interpreter's supporting documentation has been verified, the interpreter seeking reciprocity must take the following sections of the CIP orientation for court interpreters: Overview of the Wisconsin Court System, Civil and Criminal Terminology, and SCR 63 Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters. After successful completion, the CIP will notify the interpreter if his/her request for reciprocity has been approved.

## 8. Out-of-State Test Candidates

Out-of-state candidates who did not begin the certification process in Wisconsin but are seeking to test only in this state may be given the opportunity to do so at the discretion of the CIP manager. Wisconsin candidates will be given priority for testing slots over out-of-state candidates. For the oral exam, candidates in this category are required to sit for the entire test and must comply with the mandatory 6-month waiting period between testing. The oral examination fee for out-of-state candidates is \$600.

## 9. Requirements for Certification

To be considered certified by the Director, an interpreter must meet all requirements listed below:

### 9.1 Spoken Language

- Complete orientation; and
- Pass the NCSC's multiple choice examination at 80% or higher; and
- Pass an oral certification examination with a score of 70% or higher on each section: Sight Translation, Consecutive, and Simultaneous; and
- Successfully complete a character and fitness screening which includes a criminal background check; and
- Complete at least eight (8) hours of circuit court observation with verification submitted on form CS-254; and
- Submit a notarized Oath of Office form to the CIP; and

- Maintain current contact information with the CIP which includes mailing address, telephone number(s), email address, and name changes; and

## 9.2 Sign Language

- Hold RID's SC:L, CLIP-R, or CDI; BEI CIC; or other credential deemed to be an equivalent; and
- Complete orientation; and
- Pass the NCSC's multiple-choice examination at 80% or higher; and
- Successfully complete a character and fitness screening which includes a criminal background check; and
- Submit a notarized Oath of Office form to the CIP; and
- Maintain current contact information with the CIP which includes mailing address, telephone number(s), email address, and name changes

## 10. Deadlines and Requirements for Interpreter Candidates

### 10.1 Spanish & LOTS deadlines

Spanish interpreter candidates have a 2-year deadline to attain certification. Beginning January 1, 2016, all Languages Other Than Spanish (LOTS) candidates have a 5-year deadline to attain certification or achieve roster status. The two (2) or five (5) year period begins when the candidate first attends orientation.

If a Spanish interpreter candidate does not achieve certification within two (2) years of attending orientation; or if a LOTS interpreter candidate does not achieve certification or roster status within five (5) years of attending orientation, he or she must start the process over by retaking the orientation. Interpreters who have unsuccessfully attempted to pass the oral examination within a 3-year period, will be required to take an Advanced Skills Course to improve their skills.

### 10.2 Sign Language (Hearing)

Beginning January 1, 2019, new sign language interpreters applying for roster appearance at the Provisional level will have five (5) years from entering the roster to achieve legal certification status. Provisional level interpreters listed on the roster as of January 1, 2019, will have five (5) years to move up to the Certified level or until February 1, 2024. If a Provisional level sign interpreter fails to achieve legal certification within the 5-year deadline, the CIP will remove them from the roster.

**\*\*The 5-year deadline is temporarily suspended until a legal certification exam other than BEI becomes available, and a new deadline is set in this policy for attaining certification. Provisional interpreters will be required to comply with 10 hours of continuing education in **legal interpretation** annually. These CEUs must be submitted to the Court Interpreter Program by October 1 every year. \*\***

## 11. Courtroom Observation

All candidates seeking certification through the Director of State Courts must attend at least eight (8) hours of observation in circuit court upon completion of orientation and preferably prior to sitting for the oral certification examination or OPI. Form CS-254 must be completed by the interpreter candidate and submitted to the CIP. For sign language interpreters, court observation is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

## 12. Interpreter Identification

All certified spoken language interpreters whose credentials were conferred by Wisconsin will be issued identification consisting of a photo identification, plastic cover, and lanyard showing the interpreter's status as a certified interpreter and Wisconsin interpreter ID number. Sign language interpreters who attain legal certification and who reside in Wisconsin or work in Wisconsin courts will also be issued the same identification from the CIP once the CIP is notified of the legal credential. Certified interpreters who are working in any court throughout Wisconsin are required to wear this identification at all times and must abide by the terms and conditions associated with the identification established by the CIP. If at any time an interpreter's certification is revoked or

suspended, the interpreter must return both the badge and lanyard to the CIP during the pendency of the revocation or suspension.

### **13. Character and Fitness Requirement**

In order to protect the integrity of court proceedings and the safety of the public, interpreters are required to meet a character and fitness standard. A court interpreter should be one whose record of conduct justifies the trust of the courts, witnesses, jurors, attorneys, parties, and the public. A record manifesting significant deficiency in the honesty, trustworthiness, diligence, or reliability of an applicant is material to performance as a court interpreter and may warrant a denial of participation within the certification program or removal from the roster of interpreters.

#### **13.1 Criminal Background Check**

The CIP will conduct a criminal background check on all new participants who complete orientation. In addition, the CIP will conduct a criminal background check annually on all interpreters listed on the roster.

For new participants, if the CIP finds a criminal conviction that may be material to the candidate's performance as a court interpreter, but the candidate does not intend to pursue certification, no action will be taken. If the CIP finds a criminal conviction that may be material to the interpreter candidate's performance as a court interpreter and the candidate intends to pursue certification, the matter will be referred to the Character and Fitness Sub-Committee. Cause for referral to the Character and Fitness Sub-Committee may include arrests; conviction of a felony; crimes involving dishonesty, deceit, or misrepresentation; crimes requiring registration as a sex offender; arrests or convictions of similar offenses in other jurisdictions; or other illegal behavior. In making a determination whether referral to the sub-committee is appropriate, the CIP manager may take into consideration other factors such as age of candidate when the conviction occurred, length of time from when the crime was committed; nature and seriousness of the offense; and disposition.

For interpreters listed on the roster, any new criminal conviction(s) will automatically be referred to the Character and Fitness Sub-Committee for review. While a character and fitness review is pending, the Director may suspend the interpreter's certification or appearance on the roster if it appears the interpreter's continued practice as an interpreter poses a substantial threat or harm to the public or to the integrity of the court system.

#### **13.2 Character and Fitness Sub-Committee**

The Character and Fitness Sub-Committee ("the Sub-Committee") is a permanent group consisting of three (3) rotating members of the Committee. The composition of the Sub-Committee at all times will include at least one (1) judge. The Sub-Committee's charge is to consider all relevant information presented and to make a recommendation to the Director as to whether the interpreter's character and fitness are sufficient to ensure the integrity and competence of interpreting services and the maintenance of high standards in the administration of justice.

#### **13.3 Character and Fitness Review Process**

If the matter is referred to the Sub-Committee, the CIP manager will gather relevant information related to the conduct in question. Relevant information may include but is not limited to search results from the DOJ-CIB, records from WCCA, criminal complaint, information, conditions of bond or release, judgment of conviction, and law enforcement investigative reports. The CIP manager will send a cover letter along with a copy of all supporting information via e-mail and US postal service to the individual. The individual will have twenty (20) business days from the date listed on the cover letter to submit a signed written response to the CIP either via email or postal service.

The individual may also request a hearing with the Sub-Committee in lieu of submitting a written response or in addition to submitting a written response. If a hearing is requested, the Sub-Committee will set a hearing when all members can meet. The hearing may be heard in person or virtually at the Sub-Committee's discretion. The CIP will provide the interpreter with written notice of the hearing via email and postal service. The interpreter may be represented by counsel and may present evidence. The Sub-Committee may request

or gather additional information at the conclusion of the hearing. All hearings will be recorded and shall be private and confidential.

Within ninety (90) days of submission of a written response or within ninety (90) days of the conclusion of the investigation, the Sub-Committee will issue a report and recommendation to the Director as to whether the interpreter candidate possesses the character and fitness necessary to perform the duties of a court interpreter. If the individual did not provide a written response to the Sub-Committee for consideration, members shall make a recommendation with the supporting information alone. Members may consider the individual's lack of response when making its recommendation. The Sub-Committee may request a deadline extension to the Director of State Courts when necessary.

Upon receipt and review of the Sub-Committee's report and recommendation, the Director will issue a final decision as to whether the interpreter will be allowed to remain on the roster or whether the individual will be allowed to continue with the certification process if he or she is not currently on the roster. A letter shall be sent to the interpreter informing him or her of the Director's decision along with the report and recommendation of the Sub-Committee and copies of any information the Sub-Committee may have considered in making its recommendation.

If an interpreter has been removed from the roster or not been allowed to continue with the certification process, the interpreter may apply for reconsideration after a 2-year period from the date of removal or denial has passed or other specified date as determined by the Director. The review process governing character and fitness evaluations, along with any supporting documents submitted on behalf of the interpreter are confidential and will be shared only with the interpreter and court officials involved. The outcome of the review is public.

## **14. Disciplinary Policy**

The opportunity to provide interpreter services to the courts under the direction of the Director of State Courts office is at the Director's complete and continuing discretion because of the critical reliance the courts must have on the skills, performance, and integrity of the interpreter in performing duties for the court. Any interpreter who is registered with the CIP is subject to discipline from the Director's Office for ethics violations.

### **14.1 Possible Reasons for Discipline**

Possible reasons for discipline include:

- (a) Violation of the Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters;
- (b) Conviction of any felony or misdemeanor; in particular, crimes involving moral turpitude, fraud, corruption, dishonesty, misrepresentation, or false statements;
- (c) False or deceptive advertising after receipt of notification to discontinue;
- (d) Knowing and willful disclosure of confidential or privileged information obtained while serving in an official capacity;
- (e) Gross incompetence;
- (f) Non-compliance with the program's policies and procedures;
- (g) Incapacity to perform the duties of a court interpreter which may include but is not limited to medical incapacity or incarceration;
- (h) Engaging in action that calls into question the interpreter's ability to work effectively in court.

### **14.2 Complaint Process**

Any person may initiate a complaint against an interpreter by filing it with a judge, clerk of court, District Court Administrator (DCA), or CIP. All complaints must be in writing, must be signed, and must describe the alleged inappropriate conduct. Within twenty (20) business days of receipt of a complaint, the CIP manager will commence review of the complaint to assess its merit.

If the CIP manager determines the complaint is insufficient or the Director does not have jurisdiction to review the complaint, the CIP manager will send a written notice informing the complainant that no further action will be taken. The interpreter will not receive a copy of the complaint.

If referral to the Sub-Committee is required, the interpreter will be provided with a cover letter and a copy of the complaint with any supporting documentation. Any response to the allegation must be received by the CIP within twenty (20) business days of the date listed on the cover letter.

Upon receipt of the interpreter's response, the CIP manager will forward the complaint, response, and any supporting documentation to the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee shall confer to determine whether further action is required. Members of the Sub-Committee may consider information obtained from sources other than the complaint and response. If the complaint is found to have no merit, the complaint shall be dismissed and the complainant and interpreter shall be notified in writing that no further disciplinary action will take place.

If it is determined by the Sub-Committee that an ethical violation probably occurred, or if no response is filed by the interpreter, members of the Sub-Committee may determine what further action is required. The Sub-Committee may set a hearing to review the complaint, or review the matter by considering all information as submitted. If no hearing is set, the Sub-Committee will issue a recommendation to the Director as to a possible disposition and proposed sanctions, if any.

If a hearing is set, the interpreter shall be notified by mail of the time and date of the hearing, which shall be set no later than 90 days after a determination that probable cause exists. The interpreter shall receive a copy of any additional materials the Sub-Committee may have considered in making a determination that an ethical violation probably occurred.

While a disciplinary proceeding is pending, the Director may suspend the interpreter's certification or appearance on the roster if it appears the interpreter's continued practice as an interpreter poses a substantial threat or harm to the public or to the integrity of the court system.

### **14.3 Informal Resolution**

Efforts to resolve the complaint informally may be initiated by the interpreter and the complainant at any time. Any resolution reached must be submitted in writing to the Sub-Committee for approval. Upon approval of any resolution reached informally, or subsequent to any review without a hearing, the Sub-Committee will notify the complainant and the interpreter of its written approval of the informal resolution.

### **14.4 Voluntary Resignation of Certification by the Interpreter**

An interpreter who desires not to contest or defend themselves against an allegation of unethical conduct may at any time voluntarily resign their certification in lieu of further disciplinary proceedings. The allegations against the interpreter are presumed to have been proven for purposes of considering reinstatement.

### **14.5 Hearings**

All hearings will be recorded and shall be private and confidential. The Sub-Committee may, in its discretion, call witnesses, consider, or clarify any evidence presented, giving such evidence the weight it deems appropriate. The interpreter may be represented by counsel, and shall be able to testify, comment on the allegations, and call witnesses. All testimony taken shall be under oath.

### **14.6 Recommendation by the Sub-Committee to the Director**

Within twenty (20) business days of the hearing, the Sub-Committee will issue a recommendation to the Director as to a possible disposition and proposed sanctions if members find the interpreter committed any of the actions outlined but not limited to those listed in Sec. 14.1.

### **14.7 Final Determination by the Director**

Upon receipt and review of the Sub-Committee's recommendation, the Director will issue a final determination as to whether the interpreter committed any of the actions described in Sec. 14.1 or other infraction. A written letter shall be sent to the interpreter with the decision and proposed sanctions if applicable with the report and recommendation issued by the Sub-Committee along with all supporting material the Sub-Committee or the Director may have considered in making their decision. The complainant



will receive a copy of the decision letter and if appropriate, the report and recommendation of the Sub-Committee. In cases where a private reprimand is issued, the complainant will receive a decision letter informing him or her that a private reprimand was issued against the interpreter.

#### **14.8 Possible Sanctions**

Possible sanctions the Sub-Committee and the Director may consider include but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- a. Private or public reprimand (see Sec. 14.10 Notification to the Courts and Other Entities)
- b. Imposition of costs and expenses incurred by the Sub-Committee related to the proceeding;
- c. Restitution;
- d. A requirement that specified education courses be taken;
- e. A requirement that one or more parts of the oral certification examination be retaken;
- f. A modification of or suspension from the list of interpreters eligible to work in court;
- g. A requirement that work be supervised or monitored over a period of time;
- h. A suspension of certification for a specified period of time;
- i. Permanent revocation of certification;
- j. A refusal to confer certification to a non-certified interpreter for a specified period of time or under certain circumstances, permanently;
- k. Denial of state payment to a county or counties where interpreter's services are used for a specified period of time or under certain circumstances, permanently;
- l. Notice to the affected court for possible contempt action;
- m. Referral to law enforcement or district attorney for prosecution where appropriate

The specific disciplinary action and the degree of discipline to be imposed will depend upon factors such as the seriousness of the violation, the effect of the improper activity on others or on the judicial system and the existence of aggravating or mitigating factors.

Aggravating factors may include prior disciplinary action against the same interpreter; experience as an interpreter; intentional, premeditated, knowing, grossly incompetent or grossly negligent act; bad faith or obstruction; a pattern of misconduct, multiple offenses; failure to cooperate during disciplinary proceeding; refusal to acknowledge conduct; vulnerability of victim; or illegality of conduct.

Mitigating factors may include absence of prior disciplinary action; good faith effort to rectify consequences of misconduct; nature of conduct and likelihood of reoccurrence; isolation of event; experience as an interpreter; implementation of remedial measures to mitigate harm or risk of harm; self-reporting; voluntary admission of violation; or temporary circumstances outside of interpreter's control.

#### **14.9 Reinstatement by the Director**

A court interpreter whose certification or roster status has been suspended or revoked may apply in writing to the Director for reinstatement pursuant to any timeframes established in the final decision. This request shall explain why the applicant believes reinstatement should occur. The Director shall have the sole discretion whether to grant or deny reinstatement or to impose conditions upon reinstatement as deemed appropriate.

#### **14.10 Notification to the Courts and Other Entities**

If an interpreter has been disciplined for an ethical violation, the CIP manager may notify all clerks of circuit court and DCAs of the results. The CIP manager may also notify municipal courts, federal courts, or any other agency deemed appropriate by the Director of the results including the NCSC if the interpreter is listed on the National Database of Court Interpreters.

#### **14.11 Duty to Self-Report**

An interpreter who has been sanctioned for discipline by the Director has a duty to report the disciplinary outcome within twenty (20) business days of the imposition of the sanctions to all other states and jurisdictions where the interpreter's credentials may be recognized. Failure to self-report may be considered by the Director when determining if reinstatement is appropriate.



## 15. Roster of Interpreters

The CIP maintains a statewide roster of certified or otherwise qualified court interpreters for use by judges, clerks of court, attorneys, law enforcement, social service agencies, and others needing legally-trained interpreters. The roster is a searchable application available on the court's public website. The roster shows language, name of the interpreter, phone number(s), e-mail address, city, and state of residence, and the counties in which an interpreter is willing to work. When using the roster, the Director strongly recommends:

**Certified Track Languages:** Certified interpreters should always be the first choice for legal work either in-person or remotely. Provisional and Provisional-B interpreters may be considered a second choice for legal work either in-person or remotely if no certified interpreter is readily available.

**Authorized Track Languages:** Authorized plus or Authorized interpreters should be the first choice for legal work either in-person or remotely in all the languages where there is no certification exam.

The purpose of the roster is to help courts and other law-related agencies hire well-qualified interpreters on a freelance basis. The fact that an interpreter is listed on the roster does not indicate an employment relationship with the Wisconsin Supreme Court or any circuit or municipal court. Court interpreters working on an individual contract basis or for agencies are not employees of the courts. Interpreters listed on the roster may request inactive status by contacting the CIP. Interpreters may reactivate at any time upon notification to the CIP manager provided other program requirements have been met. The general criteria for all spoken and sign languages are listed below:

- Complete the CIP's orientation; and
- Successfully complete a character and fitness screening which includes a criminal background check; and
- Submit a signed oath of office which is kept in the interpreter's individual file with the CIP; and
- Maintain current contact information with the CIP which includes mailing address, telephone number(s), email address, and any name changes; and
- Comply with continuing education requirements, if applicable.

In addition to the general criteria listed above, specific testing and other criteria for inclusion on the roster are listed below:

### 15.1 Roster Requirements: Spanish

Requirement	Classification Level on Roster: Spanish	
	Certified	Provisional
<b>Written Testing</b>	Pass NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher	Pass NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher
<b>Oral Testing</b>	Pass all three parts of NCSC oral certification examination at 70% or higher with an overall score of 70%. A passing score on the Sight Translation means 65% or higher on both Sight-Foreign and Foreign-Sight sections.	Score 65% or higher on at least two out of three parts of the NCSC oral certification examination.
<b>Court Observation</b>	Complete a minimum of 8 hours of court observation	Complete a minimum of 8 hours of court observation
<b>Duration</b>	N/A	Eighteen (18) months to move up to Certified level. A Spanish candidate may only appear on the roster as Provisional for one two-year cycle.

## 15.2 Roster Requirements: Spoken Languages Other than Spanish (LOTS)

### 15.2.1 Certified Track.

The requirements below, apply to Arabic, Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, Cantonese, Filipino (Tagalog), French, Haitian Creole, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish and Vietnamese.

Requirement	Classification Level on Roster: LOTS		
	Certified	Provisional	Provisional-B
<b>Written Testing</b>	Pass NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher	Pass NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher	Pass NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher
<b>Oral Testing</b>	Pass all three parts of NCSC oral certification examination at 70% or higher with an overall score of 70%. A passing score on the Sight Translation means 65% or higher on both Sight-Foreign and Foreign-Sight sections.	Score 65% or higher on at least two out of three parts of the NCSC oral certification examination.	Score 55% or higher on at least two out of three parts of the NCSC oral certification examination.
<b>Court Observation</b>	Complete a minimum of 8 hours of court observation	Complete a minimum of 8 hours of court observation	Complete a minimum of 8 hours of court observation
<b>Duration</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A

### 15.2.2 Authorized Track

Interpreters who speak a language without a certification exam must follow the Authorized track to appear on the roster.

Requirement	Classification Level on Roster: LOTS	
	Authorized Plus	Authorized
<b>Written Testing</b>	Pass the NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher	Pass the NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher
<b>Oral Proficiency Interview</b>	Achieve a "Superior" level on Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) administered through Language Testing International (LTI) in English and in the non-English language.	Achieve an "Superior" level on Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) administered through Language Testing International (LTI) in English and in the non-English language
<b>Court Interpreting Training</b>	Complete 100 hours of court interpreting training or education.	N/A
<b>Court Observation</b>	Complete a minimum of 8 hours of court observation.	Complete a minimum of 8 hours of court observation.

## 15.3 Roster Requirements: Sign Language: Hearing

Requirement	Classification Level on Roster: ASL-Hearing	
	Certified	Provisional
<b>Certification or Credential</b>	RID SC:L; BEI CIC, BEI Master; or other credential deemed to be an equivalent of RID's SC:L	RID NIC, NIC-Master, NIC-Advanced, CSC, or CI/CT; NAD IV or V; or BEI Advanced

<b>State Licensure</b>	Hold a valid license from the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS)	Hold a valid license from the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS)
<b>Written Testing</b>	Pass NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher	Pass NCSC multiple choice test at 80% or higher
<b>Court Interpreting Training or Education</b>	Interpreters who appear as certified should have completed a total of 120 hours (or 12 CEUs) of court interpreting training.	Complete a minimum of 40 hours (or 4 CEUs) of court interpreting training at the time of application to the roster
<b>Court Interpreting Practice</b>	Interpreters who appear as certified should have completed a total of 100 hours of court interpreting practice under the supervision of a certified court interpreter.	Complete a minimum of 10 hours of court interpreting practice under the supervision of a certified court interpreter at the time of application to the roster.
<b>Deadline</b>	N/A	<b>*Temporary suspension of the five-year condition to become certified</b> An ASL candidate may continue to appear on the roster as Provisional until a legal certification exam is available.
<b>Continuing Education</b>	Comply with RID continuing education requirements.	Comply with RID continuing education requirements; <b>and</b> Complete 16 hours of legal interpreting continuing education every two years, and report them to the CIP by Oct. 1 every two years.

## 15.4 Roster Requirements: Sign Language: Deaf

Requirement	Classification Level on Roster: ASL-Deaf	
	Certified	Provisional
<b>Certification or Credential</b>	RID SC:L, CLIP-R, or CDI; BEI CIC, ,BEI Level V Intermediary; or other credential deemed to be an equivalent of RID's SC:L, CLIP-R, or CDI	None. However, it is highly encouraged to hold the BEI Level III or IV Intermediary.
<b>State Licensure</b>	Hold a valid license from the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS)	Hold a valid license from the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS)
<b>Court Interpreting Training or Education</b>	Interpreters who appear as certified should have completed 120 hours (or 12 CEUs) of court interpreting training or education.	Complete a minimum of 40 hours of court interpreting training
<b>Court Interpreting Practice</b>	Interpreters who appear as certified should have completed 100 hours of court interpreting practice under the supervision of a certified court interpreter.	Complete a minimum of 10 initial hours of court interpreting practice under the supervision of a certified court interpreter and a minimum of 10 hours annually thereafter.
<b>Deadline</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Continuing Education</b>	Comply with RID continuing education requirements	Comply with RID continuing education requirements; <b>and</b> Complete 10 hours of legal interpreting continuing education every two years, and report them to the CIP by Oct. 1 every two years.

## 15.5 Court Interpreting Training or Education

Court interpreting training or education includes any training or educational activity that focuses on court procedure, the work of the judicial branch, or enhances the skills needed to perform legal interpreting during

court proceedings (civil or criminal) or court-related events. Court-related events may include but are not limited to hearings in front of court commissioners, administrative law judges, mediations, arbitrations, depositions, and other forms of alternative dispute resolutions.

Court interpreting training or education should include topics on criminal law process, civil law process, legal terminology, and ethical practices for court interpreters. Events may include courses offered at accredited institutions of higher learning, local and national interpreting or translation conferences, workshops sponsored by professional organizations, educational events organized by the CIP, online courses, webinars, activities approved for continuing legal education credit (e.g. teaching a relevant workshop or class), and group or activities approved by RID, an RID sponsor, or a similar organization.

## **15.6 Court Interpreting Practice**

Court interpreting practice includes on-the-record interpreting during proceedings (civil or criminal) or court-related events measured in clock hours. Sign language interpreters required to complete court interpreting practice must document their time and identify the supervising certified interpreter on a form provided by the CIP. A certified interpreter is an individual who has met the requirement outlined in Sec. 9.2

## **16. Recruitment of Interpreter Candidates**

The CIP will engage in recruitment of promising interpreter candidates through the development of promotional materials as well as targeted outreach to interested individuals, language departments at institutions of higher learning, community based agencies, cultural associations, and other suitable organizations. The CIP may also recruit candidates from other interpreting disciplines such as medical, educational, and social services.

## **17. Multiple Languages**

Interpreter candidates who interpret in more than one language may seek certification or qualification for as many languages as appropriate and may be listed on the Roster for more than one language provided all requirements for inclusion on the roster are met.

## **18. Confidentiality of Test Instruments and Test Scores**

The CIP uses NCSC written and oral test instruments under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding on State Court Interpreter Testing entered into between the NCSC and the Director. The CIP manager is responsible for maintaining the security of all test instruments. No test content may be released in any form to any person who is not authorized to be in possession of the materials.

Written and oral test scores of individual interpreters are maintained internally and are not available to the general public unless the interpreter signs a waiver of confidentiality directing the CIP to release his or her scores to a designated individual or entity. Test scores of individual interpreters may be shared by the CIP manager with an appropriate court official or any CLAC representative in order to evaluate interpreter qualifications for purposes of hiring, training, testing, or reciprocity. The confidentiality of this information must be maintained by the court official or CLAC representative with whom it is shared. Statistical information relating to the test and applicants may be released at the discretion of the CIP manager.

## **19. Oath of Office**

Interpreters who wish to be listed on the roster must sign and return a notarized oath of office form which states that the interpreter “will interpret accurately, completely, and impartially, in accordance with the standards prescribed by law, the code of ethics for court interpreters, and Wisconsin guidelines for court interpreting.” This form will be kept by the CIP as part of interpreter’s file.

## **20. Continuing Education**

All interpreters working in Wisconsin courts are strongly encouraged to seek out additional educational activities and professional development to expand their knowledge and enhance their language and court interpreting skills. All spoken language interpreters who appear on the Roster are required to obtain Continuing Education (CE) credits during a 2-year compliance period in order to maintain their certification or other qualification with the CIP.

## 20.1 Application

Interpreters subject to CE requirements include:

- Certified interpreters whose credentials were conferred through the CIP and who reside in Wisconsin;
- Certified interpreters whose credentials were conferred through the CIP and who reside in a state or territory without a CE requirement;
- Certified interpreters whose credentials were conferred from another state, territory, or entity who reside in a state or territory without a CE requirement who appear on the roster through reciprocity;
- Provisional interpreters in any spoken language other than Spanish; and
- Provisional-B and Authorized Plus and Authorized interpreters
- Provisional American Sign Language interpreters that appear on the roster

Spoken language interpreters listed on Wisconsin's roster who reside in a state with a CE requirement must provide proof of compliance with that jurisdiction's policies and procedures by the applicable deadline. ASL interpreters who appear on the roster as Certified or Provisional must complete CE requirements established by RID or BEI and provide proof of compliance to the CIP at the end of their reporting cycle.

## 20.2 Requirements

Interpreters outlined in Sec. 20.1 are required to complete CE credits every two (2) years in accordance with their credential level to maintain in good standing with the CIP.

### 20.2.1 Spoken-language interpreters

Level on Roster	Number of Credits	Compliance Period	Ethics Requirement
Certified	16 credits	Every two (2) years	Two (2) out of the sixteen (16) credits must include ethics
Provisional*, Provisional-B, and Authorized	10 credits	Every two (2) years	Two (2) out of the ten (10) credits must include ethics

*\*Spanish interpreter candidates listed as Provisional on the roster are not required to complete CE credits.*

Every clock hour shall be counted as one (1) credit hour of CE, up to a maximum of eight (8) credit hours per single educational topic. Continuing education credit is approved for a minimum of one (1) hour and is measured in quarter-hour increments.

A maximum of six (6) CE credits earned in excess of the sixteen (16) or ten (10) hour requirement in any compliance period will be eligible to be carried over to the next 2-year compliance period. If an interpreter earns more than two (2) ethics credits in a compliance period, the additional credits may carry over as general credits but will not be counted toward the ethics requirement for the next reporting period.

### 20.2.2. Continuing education requirements for Provisional American Sign Language interpreters

Provisional ASL interpreters	Credits as defined by RID	Period	Topics required
Hearing interpreters	1.6	Every two (2) years; due on Oct. 1	Credits must include legal topics
Deaf interpreters	1	Every two (2) years; due on Oct. 1	Credits must include legal topics

## 20.3 Compliance Period

### 20.3.1. Spoken Languages

All rostered interpreters must report their continuing education credits every two years. “Compliance period” means the two-year period ending on April 1, during which an interpreter must satisfy and report the continuing education requirement set forth by SCR 63.10 of the Code of Ethics for Court Interpreters. The compliance period for an interpreter is determined by the year he or she was certified or became active on the roster in Wisconsin. Starting on April 1, 2022, the compliance period for an interpreter whose certification or roster activation date took place in an even-numbered year shall end on April 1 of an even-numbered year. The compliance period for an interpreter whose certification or roster activation date occurred in an odd-numbered year shall end on April 1 of an odd-numbered year.

<b>Certification or Roster Activation Date:</b>	<b>Next reporting cycle by:</b>
Even-numbered year	April 1, on even-numbered years
Odd-numbered year	April 1 on odd-numbered years

For example, interpreters who are certified or authorized on the roster in 2024 will be required to report continuing education credits in 2026.

### 20.3.2. Sign Language Interpreters

All Provisional American Sign Language Interpreters must report their continuing education credits every two years. “Compliance period” means the two-year period ending on October 1. The first reporting cycle for Provisional American Sign Language interpreters is **October 1, 2025**.

## 20.4 Accepted Training

### 20.4.1. Spoken Languages

Accepted CE activities are activities approved by the CIP. They may include courses offered at accredited institutions of higher learning, local and national interpreting or translation conferences, workshops sponsored by professional organizations, educational events organized by the CIP, online courses, webinars, activities approved for continuing legal education credit (e.g. teaching a relevant workshop or class), and group or self-study activities approved in advance by the CIP.

Continuing education should reflect a variety of training, and therefore no single educational topic shall be awarded more than eight (8) credit hours. The CIP will maintain a list national, state, and local providers considered preapproved sponsors of CE activities along with approved courses listing the number of general and ethics credits on the court system’s website. This list will be updated regularly as new activities are added. Other activities or events offered by a provider not yet approved as a sponsor of CE must obtain approval by the CIP before being included on the CE compliance form.

### 20.4.2 Provisional American Sign Language interpreters

Provisional American Sign Language interpreters may take any legal interpreting training offered by RID, the Court Interpreter Program or credits from the list of approved continuing education courses.

## 20.5 Training Approval

All continuing education courses must be approved by the Court Interpreter Program. Approved courses are published on the program’s website: <https://www.wicourts.gov/services/interpreter/docs/cecreditssummary.pdf>

### 20.5.1. Request: Participant

An interpreter who seeks CE credit for a course or workshop being offered by a provider that is not a pre-approved sponsor may request approval by submitting a form “Continuing Education Approval Request – Participant” at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the event. The CIP manager will inform the interpreter of the result of the request via email which will include the number of CE credits if the event has been approved.

### **20.5.2 Approval Request: Provider**

A provider who is not a pre-approved sponsor who seeks CE credit for an event the provider is offering may request approval by submitting a completed “Continuing Education Approval Request – Provider” application form and application fee at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the event. The non-refundable application fee is \$50 per course, not to exceed \$300 per provider per calendar year. The CIP manager will inform the provider of the result of the request via email, and the result will include the number of CE credits, if the event has been approved. Approval is granted for one calendar year only. The CIP committee shall annually review the application fee requirement.

### **20.5.3 Credit for Teaching (Spoken-language interpreters only)**

Interpreters who serve as instructors for interpreter-related educational activities sponsored or approved by the CIP are eligible to receive CE credit related to that activity up to a maximum of eight (8) hours per compliance period. Interpreters who serve as faculty for the CIP during orientations may claim working at one (1) orientation as CE per (1) compliance period. Interpreters who serve as a lecturer and a small group leader may claim no more than eight (8) CE credits per orientation while interpreters who serve as a small group leader may claim no more than six (6) CE credits per orientation.

## **20.6 Verification of Compliance**

Every interpreter who is required to comply with CE policies is responsible for completing the CIP’s “Continuing Education Compliance Reporting Form” listing qualifying activities by the appropriate deadline and submitting it to the CIP. The interpreter must maintain supporting documentation to verify compliance with minimum CE requirements for a 3-year period and be prepared to submit to the CIP if requested.

## **20.7 Non-Compliance**

If an interpreter fails to submit a compliance form or proof of compliance from by the 2-year reporting period deadline, then he or she will be deemed out of compliance by the CIP. The CIP manager will inform the interpreter in writing that he or she is not in compliance with the CE requirement. The interpreter will have a 60-day grace period in which to meet CE requirements and provide proof to the CIP. During this 60-day period, the interpreter’s name will be suspended from the roster and will not reappear until the interpreter submits proof of CE compliance and the CIP verifies the evidence. If the interpreter remains in non-compliance at the end of the grace period, it will be treated as an ethical violation and the CIP manager will automatically refer the matter to the Sub-Committee to review and make a recommendation to the Director as to an appropriate disposition.

## **21. Other Program Functions**

The CIP is charged with maintenance of the program’s website, translation of vital court forms, implementation of the Director’s statewide Language Access Plan (LAP), monitoring county LAPs , coordination with other government and non-government agencies to improve interpreter services, overseeing compliance with federal laws governing provision of services to LEP persons in the courts, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), evaluating and improving all program functions, and presenting programs and materials on language access in the courts to various audiences.

## **22. Translation of Vital Documents**

### **22.1 Purpose**

This policy establishes a standardized framework for identifying, prioritizing, and translating vital court forms to ensure meaningful access to judicial services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP), in accordance with Title VI and Title II of the Civil Rights Act and Supreme Court Rule (SCR) 70.155.

### **22.2 Scope**

This policy applies to all statewide court forms under consideration for translation by the Records Management Committee (RMC), the Children’s Court Improvement Program (CIP), and related subcommittees. It governs translated forms posted on the court’s public website and CourtNet.



## 22.3 Definition of Vital Forms

A vital form is any court document that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- **High usage by non-English speakers:** Frequently used in court proceedings by individuals requiring language assistance, as indicated by case data marked “interpreter needed.”
- **Critical for access to services:** Necessary for obtaining essential court services (e.g., fee waivers, applications for court-appointed counsel, protective orders).
- **Related to fundamental rights:**
  - Tier 1 (Highest Priority):** Forms affecting constitutional rights or personal safety (e.g., loss of liberty, protection from harm).
  - Tier 2:** Forms affecting statutory rights (e.g., custody, housing).
  - Tier 3:** Forms affecting monetary interests or administrative matters.
- **Likelihood of change:** Forms that are stable and unlikely to undergo frequent revisions.
- **Complexity of response:** Forms requiring open-ended narrative responses that may be difficult for LEP individuals to complete without translation.

## 22.4 Review and Recommendation Process

1. Submission: RMC may receive requests from court system stakeholders to translate existing court forms. Alternatively, RMC may proactively initiate a request to translate a form.
2. Evaluation: RMC reviews each form against the criteria in 22.3 to determine whether it qualifies as vital.
3. Target languages are determined using the top languages used in the Wisconsin court system and/or the most current U.S. Census data for the state.
4. RMC may consult with local court officials to validate the use of forms and translation needs.
5. RMC may request usage data from the Court Data and Analytics team to assess the relevance of the form to LEP populations.
6. If funding is required following these assessments, a final recommendation shall be submitted to the Director of State Courts for approval.

## 22.5 Translation Process

Once a form is approved by RMC for translation:

- The CIP manages the translation process and will follow procurement rules to secure translators.
- Translations are posted on the court’s public website and CourtNet in compliance with SCR 70.155.

## 22.6 Translation Quality Assurance

- Translations shall be reviewed by qualified translators to ensure accuracy and cultural relevance.
- Glossaries and style guides shall be maintained by the CIP and updated to ensure consistency across translated materials.

## 22.7 Technology and Cost Efficiency

The court system shall explore investment in translation management software to:

- Support the creation of a translation memory (TM).
- Reduce redundancy in translation requests.
- Improve consistency.
- Improve long-term cost efficiency.

## 23. Forms

All CIP forms are available upon request to the CIP manager and most can be found at <https://www.wicourts.gov/services/interpreter/forms.htm>



## 24. Fees

The expenses for administering the CIP may be paid by program fees as well as from grants and other state funding. The fees are set by the Director's Office and may be revised as necessary.

Fee	Program Service
\$175	Online Orientation
\$75	Multiple-Choice Examination – First-time test takers
\$60	Multiple-Choice Examination – Repeat test takers
\$450	Oral Certification Examination – Entire test
\$200	Oral Certification Examination – Per section
\$600	Oral Certification Examination (out-of-state residents who are only seeking to test in Wisconsin and who have begun the certification process in a state other than Wisconsin)
\$165	Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
No Fee	Criminal Background Check
No Fee	Certified interpreter identification badge
\$200	Reciprocity application

## 25. Open Records Policy

All records of the CIP are presumptively open for inspection. However, maintaining the confidentiality of certain records for public policy reasons may outweigh this presumption.

## 26. Website

More information on the CIP is found on the court website. This website includes the code of ethics for interpreters working in the Wisconsin courts, and links to training materials. It also includes the Director's Language Assistance Plan, developed to assure compliance with Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the ADA. The court interpreter website is found at <https://www.wicourts.gov/services/interpreter/index.htm>

## 27. Contact Information

Court Interpreter Program, Office of Court Operations, 110 East Main Street, Suite 410, Madison, WI 53703; phone: 608-266-8635; fax: 608-267-0911; alexandra.wirth@wicourts.gov

## Appendix A: Documentation of Accommodation for the Court Interpreter Written Exam

This document must be completed by an appropriate professional (doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or education professional) to certify that the applicant's disabling condition requires an exam accommodation.

If there is existing and current documentation of having the same or similar accommodation provided to the applicant in another test situation, it may be submitted instead of having this portion of the form completed.

### Exam Description

The court interpreter written exam is designed to test a candidate's level of English vocabulary, familiarity of legal terminology, and application of interpreter professional standards. There are 135 multiple choice questions on the exam. All questions and answers are in English. The questions are typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. To record answers, candidates will be required to mark with an "X" the appropriate letter response on a separate 1-page answer sheet. Candidates are given two (2) hours and fifteen (15) minutes to complete this exam. Restroom breaks are permitted during the exam, but are controlled so that not too many candidates are outside the testing room at the same time.

For questions about exam content and conditions, please contact Carmel Capati, Court Interpreter Program Manager at [alexandra.wirth@wicourts.gov](mailto:alexandra.wirth@wicourts.gov) or 608.266.8635.

### PROFESSIONAL'S DECLARATION

I have known \_\_\_\_\_ since \_\_\_\_\_.  
(applicant's name) (date)  
As a \_\_\_\_\_ I have diagnosed or evaluated the applicant myself  
(patient or other professional relationship)

and I am not relying upon facts related to me by the applicant.

My diagnosis is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(describe medical or other condition)

The applicant's functional limitations due to the disability that lead to the need for an accommodation are:

I have reviewed the exam description on pages 1-2. It is my professional opinion that because of the applicant's disability, he/she should be accommodated by providing the following:

- ☐ Large print type (font size \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ An alternate testing area (describe \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Extra time (how much time? \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ A reader
- ☐ Sign language interpreter
- ☐ Other accommodation (describe \_\_\_\_\_)

Additional Comments:

SIGNATURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME OF THE PROFESSIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the original of this completed form at your earliest convenience to:

Director of State Courts Office of Court Operations  
110 East Main Street, Suite #410  
Madison, WI 53703-3328  
Attn. Court Interpreter Program

## Appendix B: Documentation of Accommodation for the Court Interpreter Oral Exam

This document must be completed by an appropriate professional (doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or education professional) to certify that the applicant's disabling condition requires an exam accommodation.

If there is existing and current documentation of having the same or similar accommodation provided to the applicant in another test situation, it may be submitted instead of having this portion of the form completed.

### Exam Description

The court interpreter oral certification exam is designed to determine whether test-takers possess the minimum levels of language knowledge and fluency in both languages, and the ability to successfully render meaning from one language into another in each of the three modes of interpreting that are required of court interpreters. The three modes of interpreting are:

- Sight translation of documents;
- Consecutive interpreting; and
- Simultaneous interpreting.

Each portion of the exam is administered as follows:

***Sight Translation:*** This part of the test simulates an interpreter reading (1) an English document aloud into the non-English language, and (2) a non-English document into English. Each of the two documents is approximately 225 words in length. After instructions are given, the candidate is allowed six minutes to complete the English document, and six minutes to complete the non-English document. The test taker's oral renditions are digitally recorded.

***Consecutive Interpreting:*** This is the appropriate form of interpreting for non-English speaking witnesses, and other question-answer situations. During this portion of the test, the test taker listens to an audio recording at normal conversational pace, and interprets English language questions (segments) into the foreign language, and foreign language answers (segments) into English. The test taker may ask to have two of the segments repeated. Candidates are encouraged to take notes to assist their memory. The consecutive script is 850-950 words in length. The test taker is given approximately twenty minutes to complete this portion of the exam, but the precise time depends on the actual number of words in the test version. The test taker's oral renditions are digitally recorded.

***Simultaneous Interpreting:*** Simultaneous interpreting occurs when a person interprets what someone is saying, at the same time they are saying it. This is the appropriate mode of interpreting for many situations interpreters encounter in the courtroom, for example, interpreting for defendants during hearings and trials. This part of the exam consists of an audio recording of a simulated attorney's opening or closing statement to a judge or jury. It is approximately 800 to 850 words in length, is recorded at an approximate speed of 120 words per minute, and is approximately seven minutes long. The test taker listens to the prerecorded English passage through over-the-ear headphones and, while listening, interprets aloud into the non-English language. The test taker's oral renditions are digitally recorded.

***Standard Testing Conditions:*** The exam is given in its entirety, and typically takes less than one hour to complete. The exam is typically administered in a meeting room, and the test taker will take the exam in the presence of only one proctor.

For questions about exam content and conditions, please contact Alexandra Wirth, Court Interpreter Program Manager at [alexandra.wirth@wicourts.gov](mailto:alexandra.wirth@wicourts.gov) or 608.266.8635.

## PROFESSIONAL'S DECLARATION

I have known \_\_\_\_\_ since \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Applicant's Name) (Date)

As a \_\_\_\_\_ I have diagnosed or evaluated the applicant myself  
(patient or other professional relationship)

and I am not relying upon facts related to me by the applicant.

My diagnosis is \_\_\_\_\_  
(describe medical or other condition)

The applicant's functional limitations due to the disability that lead to the need for an accommodation are:

I have reviewed the exam description on pages 1-2. It is my professional opinion that because of the applicant's disability, he/she should be accommodated by providing the following:

- ☐ Large print type (font size \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ An alternate testing area (describe \_\_\_\_\_)
- ☐ Extra time (how much and which test section(s))? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ A reader for the sight translation portion
- ☐ Other accommodation (describe \_\_\_\_\_)

Additional Comments:

SIGNATURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED NAME OF THE PROFESSIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

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