



“I enjoy ... the ability to facilitate communication between the courts and those who otherwise wouldn't be able to have their say.”

Andrew Erickson  
California court interpreter

## What are the benefits of being a court interpreter?

As a California court interpreter, you can help make justice more accessible for millions of people. California court interpreters enjoy:

- A chance to provide a valuable community service
- A stable career
- A minimum full-time starting salary of \$68,000
- A comprehensive benefits and retirement package

## How do I find out more about becoming a court interpreter?

You can obtain information from the Court Interpreters Program at the Administrative Office of the Courts by calling **866-310-0689** or visiting **[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters)**



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OF THE COURTS

COURT INTERPRETERS PROGRAM

455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102-3688  
866-310-0689 • [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters)

Copyright © 2008 Judicial Council of California/  
Administrative Office of the Courts. All rights reserved

Discover a career  
that puts your  
second language –  
*first.*





## Are court interpreters in demand?

Very much so. According to a recent study, more than 200 languages are spoken in California. Of the state's 36 million people, about 20 percent speak English less than "very well." That's almost 7 million Californians who would need help from an interpreter if they found themselves in court.

## What does it take to become a court interpreter?

First, interpreters need to be fluent in a second language. Right now, court interpreters can be **certified** in American Sign Language and 12 spoken languages:

- Arabic
- Armenian (Eastern)
- Armenian (Western)
- Cantonese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mandarin
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

People who know other languages can become **registered** interpreters with the same full-time pay and benefits that certified interpreters receive.

Court interpreters:

- Interpret speech and text from English into a second language and back again in real time. The interpretation must be accurate without any editing, summarizing, omissions, or change in meaning
- Maintain good working relationships with judges, attorneys, other court personnel, supervisors, and co-workers
- Understand a variety of court procedures and practices

## What are the steps to becoming a court interpreter?

1. **Master a second language.**
2. **Pass the test to become either a certified or a registered interpreter.**
3. **Register with the Judicial Council of California.**

For more information, visit

[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters)  
or call 866-310-0689.

## What do court interpreters do?

California court interpreters have an important job in the courtroom: they interpret court proceedings for witnesses and defendants with limited English skills. The position also requires strong memory and communication skills. Court interpreters shift between two different languages, in real time, accounting for different types of speech and grammar. They also know legal terms and commonly used courtroom forms and reports.



# JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OF THE COURTS

## **What is a court interpreter?**

A court interpreter interprets in a court proceeding for a witness or defendant who speaks or understands little or no English.

## **Is special training required to become a court interpreter?**

Special training is highly recommended, but not required. Court interpreting is a very demanding job that requires complete fluency in both English and a given foreign language. The level of required fluency is far greater than that used in everyday bilingual conversation.

## **Where is training available?**

Currently, there are colleges and universities throughout California that offer introductory courses and certificate programs in interpretation or translation. We encourage you to contact the schools and request information about their programs. A list of locations can be found on our website at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters).

## **What is the difference between a certified and a registered interpreter?**

Interpreters who pass the Court Interpreter Certification Examination and fulfill the corresponding Judicial Council requirements are referred to as certified court interpreters. Currently, there are Court Interpreter Certification Examinations for 12 designated spoken languages: Arabic, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Interpreters of spoken languages for which there is no state certifying examination are required to pass the English Fluency Examination and fulfill the corresponding Judicial Council requirements in order to become registered interpreters of a non-designated language.

## **What are the requirements for becoming a certified court interpreter?**

- Pass the Court Interpreter Certification Examination, offered by an approved testing entity;
- File for certification with the Judicial Council;
- Pay the annual \$85 fee; and
- Attend a Judicial Council Code of Ethics Workshop.

## **What are the requirements for registered interpreters of non-designated languages?**

- Pass an English Fluency Examination, offered by an approved testing entity;
- File for registration with the Judicial Council;
- Pay an annual fee of \$50;
- Attend a Judicial Council Code of Ethics Workshop; and
- Attend a Judicial Council Orientation Workshop.

## **What entity administers the Court Interpreter Certification and Registration Exams?**

The Administrative Office of the Courts has contracted with Prometric to administer the Certified Court Interpreter and Registered Interpreter examinations. Detailed information on the test dates and locations, registration, study materials and more can be obtained by visiting [www.prometric.com/California/CACourtInt.htm](http://www.prometric.com/California/CACourtInt.htm).

## **Is certification required to become an American Sign Language Interpreter?**

To be qualified to interpret in the California courts, the Judicial Council requires American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to hold one of the following two certificates:

- "Specialist Certificate: Legal" issued by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)
- "Legal Interpreting Certificate" issued by the California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCASDHH).

## **What should I do if I'm interested?**

Visit our Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/interpreters), call us at **866.310.0689**, or send an email to: [courtinterpreters@jud.ca.gov](mailto:courtinterpreters@jud.ca.gov).