

## INTRODUCTION

One of the manifestations of linguistic diversity in the United States is the frequent use of interpreters in the court system. In 2008, there were 95,991 events for Spanish required interpreter services. Most states, some more than others, are experiencing the effects of the ever-growing population that is limited in its English proficiency (LEPs). Although government agencies have long used interpreters, the importance of professional interpreters in the court system has only recently been recognized.

**How Do Self-Represented (Pro Se) Parties Request Interpreting and Translating Services?** A person who is not represented by an attorney and who needs interpreting and translating services should be directed to the Clerk's Office, Court Service Center, or other Judicial Branch staff member to request interpreting and translating services for a court hearing.

## INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR SERVICES

Interpreter and Translator Services is a unit of the Superior Court Operations Division. It was established to serve the judiciary in court-related proceedings at no cost to the parties. Interpreters are provided for defendants, victims, witnesses, and family members in criminal cases. Fundamental fairness in court proceedings requires that every participant be able to understand and communicate effectively. A paramount concern of Judges, attorneys, and citizens taking part in legal actions should be that no person be denied this ability by reason of impairment. Skilled interpretation by court interpreters enables courts to accurately gather all the facts in order to arrive at the truth in reaching informed decisions. State and federal court opinions, such as United States ex. rel. Negrón v. State of New York, 434 F.2d 386 (2d Cir.1970); cf. 28 U.S.C. § 1827 (1988 - Court Interpreters' Act), established that the right to an interpreter is protected under the Constitution.

The Judicial Branch of the State of Connecticut believes that competent language service is a crucial component of 21st century justice.

## INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR SERVICES *(continued)*

It is the firm belief of the Judicial Branch that in order to protect the rights of the fast-growing LEP speaking population in Connecticut, and the integrity of court proceedings, language services should be fortified and brought to a professional level whenever possible.

As evidence of the Judicial Branch's commitment to this issue, the Branch joined the National Center for State Courts Consortium (NCSC) for State Court Interpreter Certification in 2001.

Under the auspices of the NCSC, the primary focus of the Consortium is to provide comprehensive, statewide mechanisms for ensuring that interpreters possess the appropriate minimum skills required for interpreting in a legal setting.

Without those standards, equal access to justice by a LEP remains an unfulfilled obligation of the American system of justice.

## ROLE & FUNCTION OF THE INTERPRETER

The interpreter's function is to ensure that every participant in a judicial process is able to communicate effectively whenever the case involves a LEP.

It is the interpreter's role to put the LEP on the same footing as any English speaker who comes before the court.

Briefly stated, the interpreter's job is to interpret everything that the defendant, Judge, attorneys, and others present in court would hear if no language barrier existed. Qualified court interpreters are highly skilled language specialists who perform simultaneous, consecutive, and sight interpretations. Interpreters render the meaning of the speaker's words into the language of the listener.

Interpreters are never the authors of the speech; however, they must grasp the meaning and style of discourse rapidly, find an equivalent in the other language, and be able to articulate it accurately.

## ELEMENTS NEEDED FOR EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION

Professional interpreter organizations and language experts have identified the following elements needed for effective interpretation:

- High standards of professionalism and ethics.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the source and target language.
- Ability to listen, comprehend, and discern the message conveyed in the source language.
- Ability to grasp and maintain communication logic and distinguish between primary and secondary points.
- Technical ability for short-term memory, simultaneous listening, and note taking.
- Extensive vocabulary, specialized terminology, and general knowledge of many subject areas.
- Message production, good diction, and pronunciation.
- Knowledge of and familiarity with various dialects, colloquialisms, regionalisms, and cultural differences.
- Ability to preserve language register, formal to formal and informal to informal, for a variety of speakers with diverse educational backgrounds.
- Knowledge of idiomatic expressions in both languages.

For information on Court Interpreter Written and Oral Entrance Examinations, please contact:

**Program Manager**

**State of Connecticut Judicial Branch  
Interpreter and Translator Services  
90 Washington Street, Third Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106**

**Telephone: 860-706-5042**

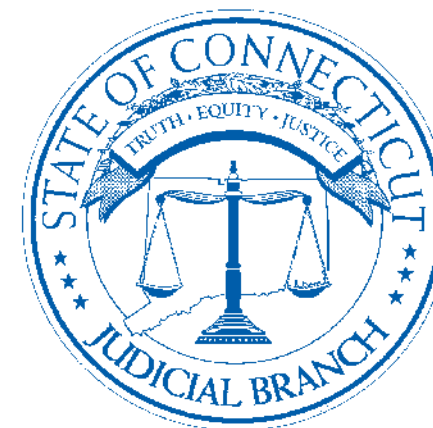
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## STATE OF CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

### Superior Court Operations



## Interpreter and Translator Services

**State of Connecticut  
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90 Washington Street  
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# Interpreter & Translator Services

## MODES OF INTERPRETATION

**Simultaneous:** Simultaneous interpretation is the technique used to render everything said in the source language into the target language as it is spoken. It is performed within seconds of the original speech. The simultaneous mode is used by interpreters when interpreting proceedings in the courtroom for LEP defendants and witnesses. Simultaneous interpretation requires that interpreters listen and speak almost concurrently with the primary speaker whose words are being translated. In effect, interpreters are performing two tasks simultaneously in the field of language communication that otherwise are always practiced separately: speech and understanding.

It is important to note that interpreters are not performing a word-for-word interpretation, but rather are transferring thoughts and ideas accurately and completely from a source to a target language. As a consequence, there is a time lag that may vary from a fraction of a second to a few seconds. Concentrated listening is crucial for an exact rendering of the original message. Thus, it is important to have adequate listening conditions, acoustics, use of microphones by the speakers and availability of appropriate equipment.

**Consecutive:** Consecutive interpretation is the “question-and-answer” mode in which the speaker completes a statement and the interpreter begins to interpret after the statement is completed. The consecutive mode is utilized with witnesses on the stand. Traditionally, consecutive interpreting is divided into long and short versions. While the long method is generally reserved for some forms of conference interpreting, in the legal setting, the short method is preferred because it emphasizes the verbatim rendition required in legal proceedings. In short, consecutive interpretation is a mode by which interpreters relay a message in the target language in a sequential manner after the speaker.

## MODES OF INTERPRETATION

*(continued)* This mode requires that the primary speaker pause at intervals, not in mid-sentence, to allow the interpreter to convey the utterances. It is used for testimony in trials, depositions, sentencings, and other legal proceedings. For instance, when a LEP witness testifies, the interpreter, who is located next to the witness, interprets questions from English for the witness. After the witness answers, the interpreter renders the English interpretation of the response for the benefit of all English-speaking individuals in the courtroom. It is the interpreter’s rendition in English and not the witness’ source language utterance that constitutes the official court record.

**Sight:** Sight interpretation is a mode of interpreting in which the interpreter is provided with a written document in the source language. The interpreter must take sufficient time to read and review the document before rendering it aloud in the target language, while reading it silently in the source language.

## LANGUAGES

Interpreter and Translator Services of the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch maintains a staff of 34 full-time Spanish court interpreters, as well as over 21 temporary hourly court interpreters for languages such as Polish, Spanish, Portuguese and many others.

## LANGUAGE SKILLS

A common misconception is the belief that a person who knows two languages can interpret by virtue of being bilingual. Interpreters must be bi-cultural and possess a mastery of both source and target languages, as well as the technical ability to interpret.

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elements needed for effective interpretation*

## CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COURT INTERPRETERS IN CONNECTICUT

Court interpreters are appointed to serve the court. This is the Code of Professional Responsibility for Court Interpreters that Court Interpreters in Connecticut are required to follow:

**Canon 1.** Court interpreters shall act strictly in the interest of the court they serve.

**Canon 2.** Court interpreters shall reflect proper court decorum and behave with dignity and respect toward the court officers and personnel.

**Canon 3.** Court interpreters shall avoid professional or personal conduct that could discredit the court.

**Canon 4.** Court interpreters shall not disclose any information of a confidential nature about court cases obtained while performing interpreting duties.

**Canon 5.** Court interpreters shall respect the restraints imposed upon them by the need for confidentiality and secrecy as protected under applicable state and federal law. Interpreters shall disclose to the court and parties any prior involvement with a case or involvement with parties or others significantly involved in a case.

**Canon 6.** Court interpreters shall work unobtrusively with full awareness of the nature of the proceedings.

**Canon 7.** Court interpreters shall interpret accurately and faithfully without indicating any partiality or even the appearance thereof.

**Canon 8.** Court interpreters shall maintain impartiality by avoiding undue contact with witnesses, attorneys, defendants and their families, and by avoiding any contact with jurors. This should not limit, however, those appropriate contacts necessary to prepare adequately for their assignment.

**Canon 9.** Court interpreters shall refrain from giving advice of any kind to any party or individual concerning court procedures and legal matters, and shall not express personal opinions concerning any matter before the court.

**Canon 10.** Court interpreters shall perform to the best of their ability to assure due process for the parties, accurately state their professional qualifications, and refuse any assignment for which they are not qualified or assignments in which conditions substantially impair their effectiveness.

**Canon 11.** Court interpreters shall accept no remuneration, gifts, gratuities, or valuable consideration in excess of their authorized compensation in the performance of their official interpreting duties. Additionally, they shall avoid any conflict of interest or even the appearance thereof.

**Canon 12.** Court interpreters shall maintain accurate and detailed time records of services rendered.

**Canon 13.** Court interpreters shall support other court interpreters by sharing knowledge and expertise with them to the extent practicable in the interest of the court and by never taking advantage of knowledge obtained in the performance of official duties, or by their access to court records, facilities, or privileges, for their own or another’s personal gain.

**Canon 14.** Court interpreters shall inform the court of any impediment to adherence to this code, or of any effort by anyone else to cause this code to be violated.

## SOME OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND DEPARTMENTS

- Arraignments.
- Hearings for Probable Cause.
- Motions to Suppress Evidence.
- Victim Interviews.
- Pre-Trial Interviews and Hearings.
- Criminal Jury and Non-Jury Trials.
- Pre-Sentence Investigations.
- Psychological Evaluations.
- Probation Intake Interviews and Hearings.
- Competency Interviews and Hearings.
- General Information and Clerk’s Office.
- Motor Vehicle Infractions.
- Domestic Violence Proceedings.
- Attorney/Client Interviews.
- Juvenile Hearings and Trials.
- Support Enforcement and Family Matters.
- Restraining Orders Proceedings.
- Housing Matters.