NORTH CAROLINA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
of the COURTS

N.C. COURT INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC), through its membership in the National Center for State Courts' Consortium for Language Access in the Courts (CLAC), has developed a process to test and certify persons serving as spoken foreign language interpreters in court proceedings in the State. *Effective January 1, 2013*, only certified Spanish language court interpreters will be allowed to interpret for all court proceedings for which the state bears the cost of representation. The testing and certification process is mandatory for all new Spanish language court interpreters and preferable for LOTS (Languages Other Than Spanish) interpreters, depending upon the availability of a certification examination for the interpreter's language of expertise.

Certification ensures that spoken language interpreters possess the minimum qualifications that are essential to interpreting in a court environment. In addition, the testing and certification process produces a Spanish Foreign Language Registry and a directory of certified spoken foreign language interpreters who have satisfied all certification requirements. Currently, the Spanish Foreign Language Registry consists of three levels of qualification: Level A – Certified, Level B – Eligible, and Level C – Minimally Qualified. *Effective March 2011*, all Level B and Level C interpreters must meet the requirements for Level A by December 31, 2012. Those who do not will be removed from the Registry and will no longer be contracted with NCAOC to provide service to the courts. Also effective March 2011, no new contracts will be issued at the Level B and Level C classifications.

The *Spanish Foreign Language Registry*, the directory, and the statewide *Policies and Best Practices for the Use of Foreign Language Interpreting/Translating Services in the North Carolina Court System* are public information and are available by contacting the Interpreting Services Program, or by visiting the North Carolina Judicial System's website, http://www.nccourts.org/Citizens/CPrograms/Foreign/Default.asp. The directory serves as a resource for the courts and the public in order to contact certified Spanish language court interpreters and to arrange for their services as needed.

Testing and certification requirements for spoken foreign language court interpreters

All North Carolina Test Candidates Taking the North Carolina Court Interpreter Certification Examination (NCCICE)

1. **North Carolina Court Interpreter Orientation Training Session**
   a. Submit the registration form and fee
   b. Attend both full days of training and instruction
   c. Pass both the written English multiple choice screening test (80% or better) and pass the written foreign language assessment test (Pass/Fail rating), if one is available in the candidate's language of expertise, to be given at the close of the orientation training session

2. **Mandatory Skill Building Workshop**
   a. Submit the registration form and fee for a NCAOC approved course
   b. Attend the workshop in its entirety

3. **North Carolina Court Interpreter Certification Examination (NCCICE)**
   a. Submit the registration form and fee
   b. Receive passing scores (70% or higher) on all three sections of the oral NCCICE exam

4. **Additional Certification Requirements**
   a. Provide four letters of recommendation from a judge, clerk, district attorney, public defender or magistrate, **or a person of equivalent rank in another area in which the candidate has performed interpreting services, or if the person has never interpreted, a supervisor for whom they have worked**
   b. Demonstrate good character and fitness (letters of recommendation may address this)
   c. Pass criminal background check (must not have been convicted of any crime which would affect one's credibility in court)
   d. Agree in writing to abide by all official guidelines established by the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts for legal interpreting, including the *Code of Ethical Conduct for Court Interpreters*.
   e. Sign and notarize the Oath of Interpretation
   f. Agree in writing to include updated contact information in the directory of certified court interpreters.
   g. Adhere to any evaluation process, criminal record check, renewal fee, certification renewal exam, post-certification sessions or continuing education classes required by the NCAOC in the future.

Candidates Who Have Passed the Federal Exam (FCICE) or the CLAC's oral proficiency examination in a Member State

a. Submit an Application to be a Registered Court Interpreter
b. Pass criminal record check
c. Provide proof of passing exam scores
d. Enter into a contract with NCAOC to provide service to the courts and agree in writing to abide by the North Carolina Policies and Best Practices for the Use of Foreign Language Interpreting and Translating Services in the North Carolina Court System, including the Code of Ethical Conduct
e. Sign and notarize the Oath of Interpretation
f. Agree in writing to include contact information in the directory of certified interpreters
g. Adhere to any evaluation process, criminal record check, renewal fee, certification renewal exam, post-certification orientation sessions or continuing education classes required by the State in the future.

The North Carolina Court Interpreter Certification Exam is administered in Raleigh in October each year. Only those candidates who receive passing scores on both written screening tests are eligible to proceed to the State certification exam. Eligible candidates will receive information on scheduling the one-hour time slot necessary for test administration. Additional information on taking the State certification exam will be provided to all eligible candidates once they have scheduled a time slot. Examination scores are typically returned within two months.

Court interpreter certification costs

North Carolina Court Interpreter Orientation Training Session and Written Screening Tests

The two-day orientation training session is currently offered at a cost of $150.00, payable in advance to the NC Administrative Office of the Courts. This fee covers the cost of the training session as well as the rating of the written screening tests. Once accepted into the class, the registration fee is not refundable. If a candidate is accepted and fails to attend the orientation session without notice, the fee will not be returned and the candidate will not receive a credit towards a later session. If a candidate gives notice that he will not be able to attend after he has been accepted, then a credit can be applied to a later orientation training session.

If a candidate is not accepted into the orientation session, the candidate will be given the option of having the registration fee returned or deposited and applied to a later session. Those who choose to have the fee credited to a later session will be given preference for the session of their choice, provided they submit the required registration application for that session by the deadline stated.

NCCICE – North Carolina Court Interpreter Certification Examination

The registration fee to take the NCCICE is currently $250. Candidates will receive test instructions via email after an examination time has been assigned. Again, **candidates will not qualify to take this exam unless they successfully pass both written screening tests.** At the time of exam registration a deadline will be set for refunds. **If the deadline for withdrawal is not met, the test fee is not refundable, but can be credited to a later NCCICE administration.**

Frequently asked questions and answers

1. What if I pass both written tests, register to take the exam and decide not to take it?

Candidates who pass the written screening tests and register for the NCCICE may decide not to take it**.** At the time of the NCCICE registration, a deadline for applications will be set. A candidate may withdraw his/her application and his/her original form of payment will be returned. ***However, if a candidate does not withdraw by the posted deadline, the test fee will not be refunded.***

2. What other types of court interpreter certification does North Carolina accept?

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts considers presumptively eligible for certification any person who has successfully completed the requirements for federal court interpreter certification by passing the FCICE or certification by a member state participating in the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts administered by the National Center for State Courts. Please visit the Consortium's website at http://www.ncsc.org/Education-and-Careers/State-Interpreter-Certification.aspx for additional information. Eligible persons who provide required documentation may be granted reciprocity and added to North Carolina's list of certified Spanish language court interpreters.

If an individual falls into this category, please contact the Interpreting Services Program of the Administrative Office of the Courts to initiate the required paperwork for addition to North Carolina's certified Spanish language court interpreter directory.

3. I live in another state. May I sit for the oral Consortium exam and go through the certification process in North Carolina?

Yes. The out of state registration fee to sit for the NCCICE is $375.

4. How are Spanish foreign language interpreters appointed to work in North Carolina?

Once contracted with NCAOC, your name and contact information will appear online on the Spanish Foreign Language Registry under the districts in which you have chosen to provide service. The Registry is available online and updated monthly. The appointment and scheduling of interpreters for court is a local court function, with the exception of Districts 10, 11, 14, 15B, 18, 21, 26 and 28, which have staff court interpreters. In these districts, the staff court interpreter schedules Spanish language interpreters and LOTS interpreters as needed.

5. Whom do I contact if I have additional questions not answered in this notice?

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