



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
Court Programs and Management Services Division
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December 13, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superior Court Judges
District Court Judges
Clerks of Superior Court
Magistrates
Public Defenders
Trial Court Administrators
Trial Court Coordinators
Malcolm Ray Hunter, Jr.
Danielle Carman

FROM: Ralph Walker, Director
Gregg Stahl, Senior Deputy Director

SUBJECT: Changes to Foreign Language Interpreter Practices

We would like to provide you with information on the transition to the new policies and procedures related to foreign language interpreters for the courts. The policy changes apply only to foreign language interpreters, not deaf interpreters. The new policies will be effective February 1, 2007.

During the 2006 legislative session, the General Assembly authorized the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to adopt policies and procedures for the appointment and payment of foreign language interpreters (G.S. 7A-314(f) and G.S. 7A-343(9b)). These policies and procedures are to be applied uniformly throughout the General Court of Justice. The policies adopted by the AOC for foreign language interpreting are contained in this memorandum.

Requirement to Register

On September 21, 2006 the Director of the AOC sent a memorandum to N. C. foreign language court interpreters requiring interpreters to register with AOC by December 1, 2006 in order to continue to be paid for interpreting services.

Requirement to Contract with the AOC

Effective February 1, 2007 judges will no longer have to appoint foreign language interpreters or authorize a payment rate. The AOC will contract directly with foreign language interpreters and will set the payment rate, but the access to and scheduling of interpreters will remain a local court function. The contracts are being mailed to interpreters this week. They are due back to the AOC no later than January 4, 2007. Only interpreters who are under contract with the AOC may work in the courts as an interpreter after February 1, 2007.

The contract authorizes a pay rate based on a classification level. The classification levels are based on proficiencies documented by attendance at required AOC classes and scores on standardized written and oral tests. The pay rate may be amended by the AOC as interpreters gain higher proficiencies.

Submission of Monthly Invoice

As of February 1, 2007 district court judges will no longer use G107 forms for foreign language interpreters; superior court judges will continue to use this form. Interpreters will complete a Monthly Invoice of Hours Worked which details days and hours worked for district court, superior court, district attorneys, assigned indigent counsel, and magistrates.

December 2006- January 2007

-Court officials will continue to appoint interpreters using the G107. We are currently completing the registration of interpreters. Almost 300 individuals have registered as interpreters and we expect that number to increase. Before you make an appointment in December and January, please ask the interpreter if they are registered and let him/her know that to be paid after February 1st they must be registered with the AOC. The registration forms are available on the AOC's Web site.

Based on information provided by the registrants and a vetting process, AOC will assign a classification level to each interpreter. The levels and pay rates are contained in the chart below.

An analysis of the registry information submitted through 12/04/06 as to districts interpreters have indicated in which they are willing to serve suggests that current coverage will not change, and that certified interpreters are willing to serve in all districts. After we receive contracts back from registered interpreters, a list by district will be available to you through the AOC Web site.

A new policy and procedure document will be available prior to February 1,

2007. These policies will indicate that State certified interpreters shall be used whenever possible and shall be used in superior court and district court trials.

Bids are being posted for vendors to provide after-hours telephone interpreting services for the magistrates' offices. Additional information will be provided to magistrates when the vendor is selected. This service may be expanded to other court processes in the future.

Staff Changes

Stephanie Scarce, who was manger of Interpreting Services, is no longer employed by AOC. Until her position is filled, you may contact the following Court Programs and Management Services Division staff for assistance in the following areas:

-Information on the Interpreter Registry and District Coverage - Vicki Fels (919-420-7933 or Barbara Inabinett (919) 571-4129

-Policy or procedural questions, complaints regarding interpreters - Sandy Pearce (919-789-3624

-Legal questions - Matt Osborne (919-715-5231)

We know that we can count on you to assist us to implement the recent legislation that authorized the AOC to set policies and procedures related to interpreter services in order to improve the quality and cost-efficiency for foreign language services in North Carolina.